

Aid to gender equality and women's empowerment

AN OVERVIEW

THE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE:
ENABLING EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

OECD DAC NETWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY
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Aid to gender equality and women's empowerment: An overview

Achieving strong gender equality outcomes requires adequate, sustained financing in support of gender equality and women's empowerment. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, stakeholders committed to working "for a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap".¹

Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocated by members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is one important contribution to funding gender equality and women's rights in developing countries.² This paper provides an overview of bilateral allocable aid committed by DAC members in 2015-2016. The OECD tracks bilateral aid that targets gender equality and women's empowerment as either a principal (primary) or significant (secondary) policy objective, using the DAC gender equality policy marker – a qualitative statistical tool to record ODA activities.³

Aid integrating gender equality is increasing overall, but funding for dedicated gender equality programmes is lagging behind.

In 2015-2016 an average of **USD 41.7 billion** per year, corresponding to **37%** of bilateral allocable aid, targeted gender equality and women's equality as either a significant (secondary) or principal (primary) objective. This is higher than ever before.

It is important to analyse this rising figure to consider where donor efforts should focus going forward. The bulk of this aid (USD 37.1 billion), was committed to programmes that include gender equality as a significant objective. Support to programmes dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment as their principal objective remains consistently below USD 5 billion per year. In 2015-2016, **dedicated gender equality programming amounted to USD 4.6 billion per year, representing only 4% of DAC members' total bilateral allocable aid.**⁴

Looking at **fragile and conflict-affected countries** specifically, a total of USD 18.5 billion on average per year targeted gender equality as either a significant or principal objective in 2015-2016. This is an increase compared to previous years and corresponds to 40% of bilateral allocable aid to fragile and conflict-affected countries.

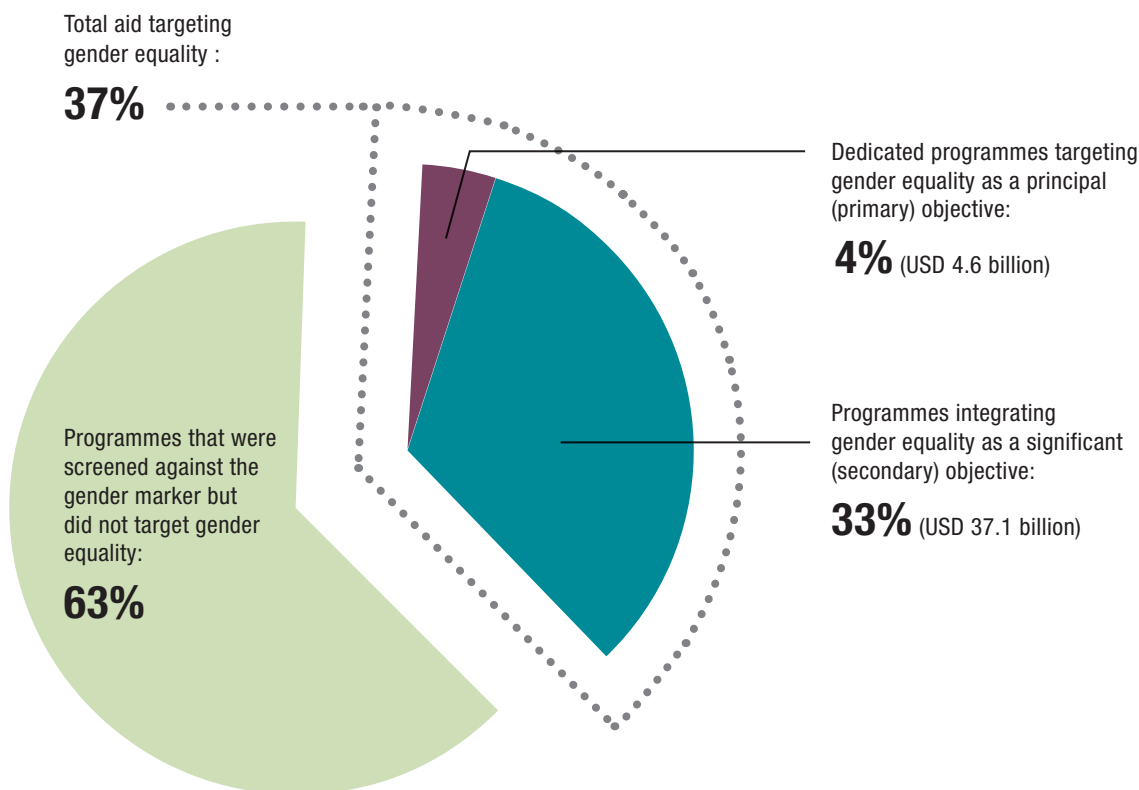
¹ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015 (A/RES/70/1)

² DAC members also provide core support to multilateral organisations. Some of the outflows from these multilateral organisations target gender equality and women's empowerment (see box below). In addition, developing countries' public spending, as well as remittances, flows from civil society, foundations and from other private actors can all contribute financial resources for gender equality in developing countries.

³ All DAC members except Hungary reported against the marker on their 2016 ODA flows.

⁴ For examples of programmes that target gender equality as a "principal" or "significant" objective, see the *Handbook on the OECD-DAC Gender equality Policy Marker* (OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality, December 2016): <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm>

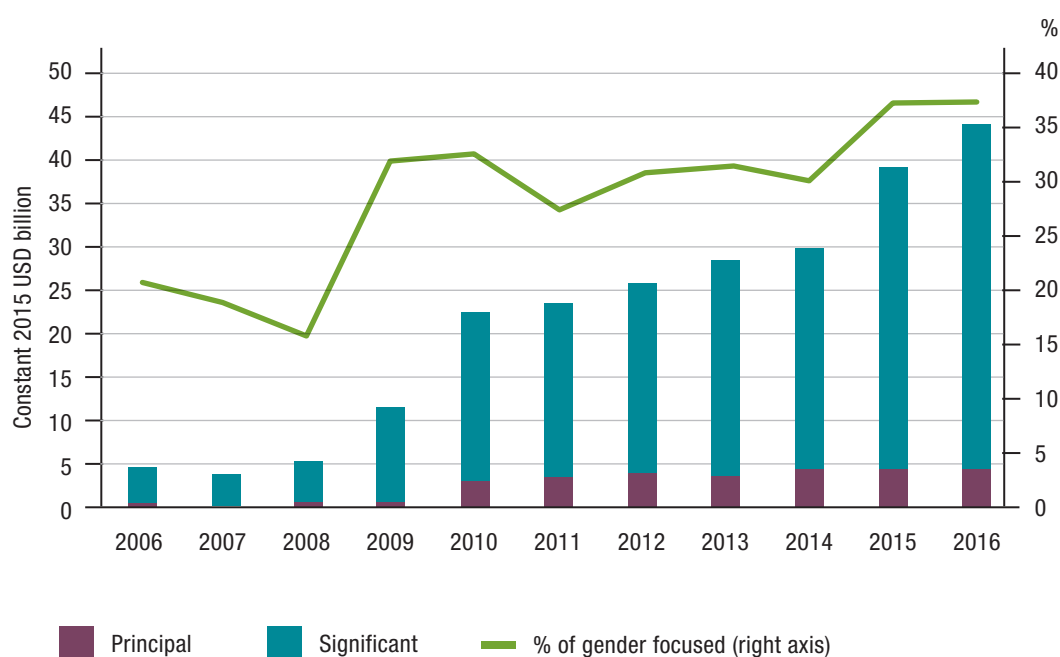
Chart 1: Gender equality focus of bilateral allocable aid, 2015-2016



The DAC recommends that donors adopt a twin-track approach to gender equality in their development co-operation portfolio, which combines gender mainstreaming (usually corresponding to activities targeting gender equality as a “significant” objective), and dedicated programmes or projects for gender equality and women’s empowerment (usually corresponding to activities targeting gender equality as a “principal” objective). While funding for programmes integrating gender equality as a significant objective has increased, support for programmes targeting gender equality and women’s empowerment as a principal objective lags behind (Chart 2). This indicates that donors are failing to implement effectively a twin-track approach and should increase support for dedicated programmes with gender equality and women’s empowerment as a principal objective, in order to respond to commitments in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Chart 2: Bilateral ODA to gender equality and women's empowerment, trends 2006-2016

Constant 2015 prices



Allocations by multilateral organisations targeting gender equality

Total development flows from multilateral organisations reported to the OECD as targeting gender equality and women's empowerment amounted to **USD 13.2 billion on average per year** in 2015-2016 (as either a principal or significant objective). This figure is based on allocations by the 14 multilateral organisations that applied the DAC gender equality policy marker when reporting outflows (i.e. their spending using core funding) to the OECD.

A total of 38 multilateral organisations report their overall development flows to the OECD. A more complete picture of multilateral spending on gender equality could be achieved if more multilateral organisations reported against the DAC gender equality policy marker. This would help facilitate transparency and accountability for implementing SDG5.

Allocations by global philanthropy for women and girls

An OECD survey on Private Philanthropy for Development indicate that philanthropic giving in support of women and girls in developing countries amounted to over **USD 3.7 billion on average per year** in 2013-2015. This corresponds to 16% of total philanthropic giving.

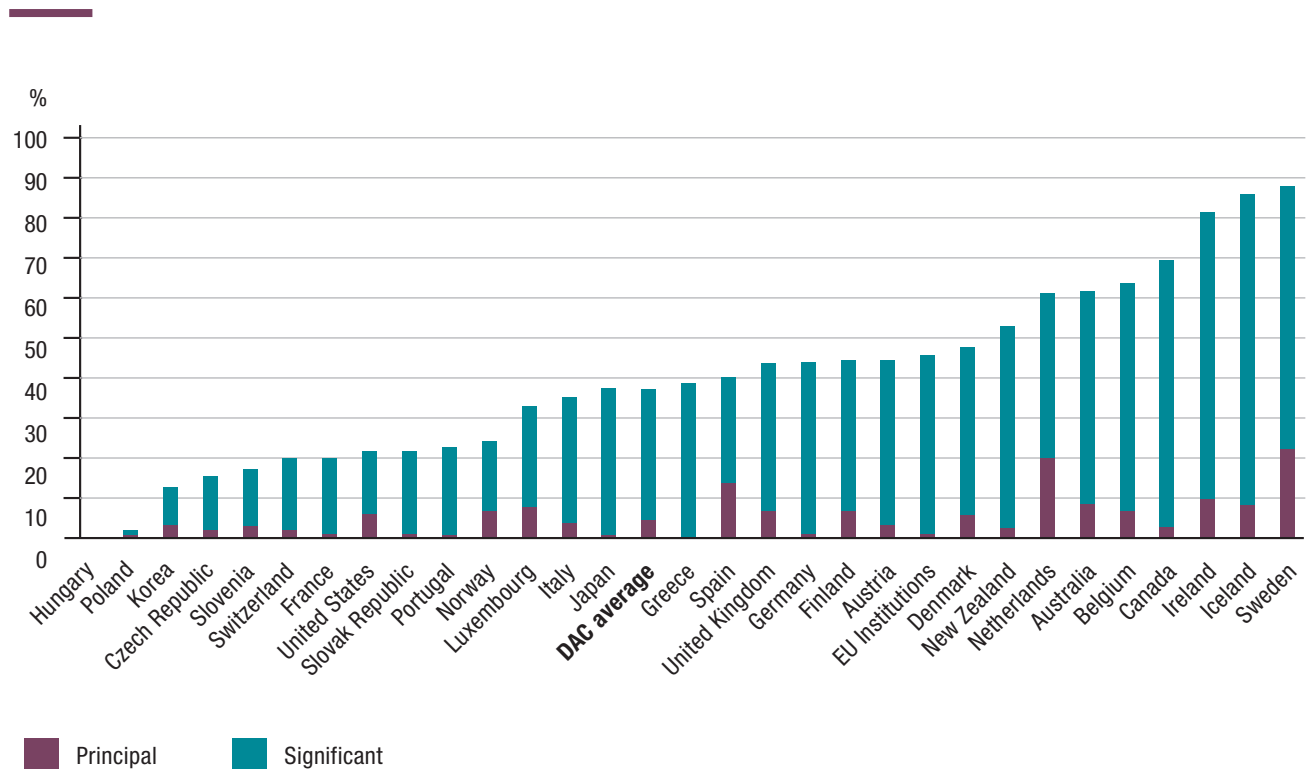
These results are based on a desk study and not on reporting against the DAC gender equality policy marker. See www.oecd.org/dac/stats/beyond-oda-foundations.htm

Individual DAC members' support for gender equality and women's empowerment: a mixed picture

In 2015-2016, **Sweden** and the **Netherlands** both committed more than 20% of their aid to dedicated programmes or projects that target gender equality and women's empowerment as a primary objective – exceeding by far the 4% DAC average.⁵

Looking at total aid integrating gender equality as either a principal or significant objective, eight DAC members exceed 50%. **Iceland, Ireland and Sweden** all focussed more than 80% of their aid on gender equality. It is positive that some DAC members have set clear objectives for the shares of aid that should target gender equality in the future.⁶ For more information about each DAC member, see Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Donor Charts.

Chart 3: Average share of aid targeting gender equality per year in 2015-2016



⁵ The Gender Equality Advisory Council for Canada's G7 Presidency in 2018 recommended that at least 20% of aid targets gender equality as a principal objective.

⁶ The EU gender action plan *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020* sets the target of 85% of new programmes that target gender equality as either a principal or significant objective by 2020. This target applies to both the European Commission and its Members States. In its 2017 Feminist international assistance policy, Canada commits to targeting at least 95% of its ODA on gender equality as either a principal or significant objective, out of which at least 15% should target gender equality as a principal objective, by 2021-22.

When looking at amounts of aid rather than the shares of aid targeting gender equality, the largest contributors are the **EU Institutions, Japan, Germany and the United States**. Together, these four donors make up for more than half of total bilateral aid targeting gender equality in 2015-2016. The EU institutions and Japan have both considerably increased the amounts of aid targeting gender equality as a significant (secondary) objective compared to in 2013-2014.

Sectoral distribution: promising levels of dedicated support for gender equality in government and health but more is needed in the economic sectors

The USD 41.7 billion of total aid focussed on gender equality and women's empowerment as either a principal or significant objective is spread relatively evenly across different sectors, with the largest share of aid committed in the sector of "government and civil society". Aid to programmes targeting gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal objective is not distributed as equally among the different sectors.

Sectoral focus of dedicated aid programmes targeting gender equality as the primary objective

Out of the USD 4.6 billion of aid for dedicated programmes targeting gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal objective, almost one third was allocated in the **government and civil society sector**: USD 1.3 billion on average per year (Chart 4). This comprises programmes and projects focussed on a range of topics including public sector policy, legal and judicial development, human rights, and conflict prevention and resolution, as well as aid to women's institutions and organisations and to programmes focussed on ending violence against women and girls.

Aid to women's institutions and organisations

Total aid to women's institutions and organisations (governmental and non-governmental) amounted to **USD 464 million** on average per year in 2015-2016.⁷

Out of this, **USD 225 million on average per year was committed specifically to non-governmental women's organisations**.⁸ The largest donors were the Netherlands (USD 91 million), and Sweden and Norway (both at USD 35 million each).

Out of the aid to non-governmental women's organisations, **USD 38 million on average per year went directly to women's organisations based in developing countries**.⁹

Support for women's organisations is essential, as evidence shows that women's rights activism and movements are the key drivers of legal and policy change to address gender equality. Women's rights organisations and movements are also fundamental to transforming entrenched social norms and practices.¹⁰

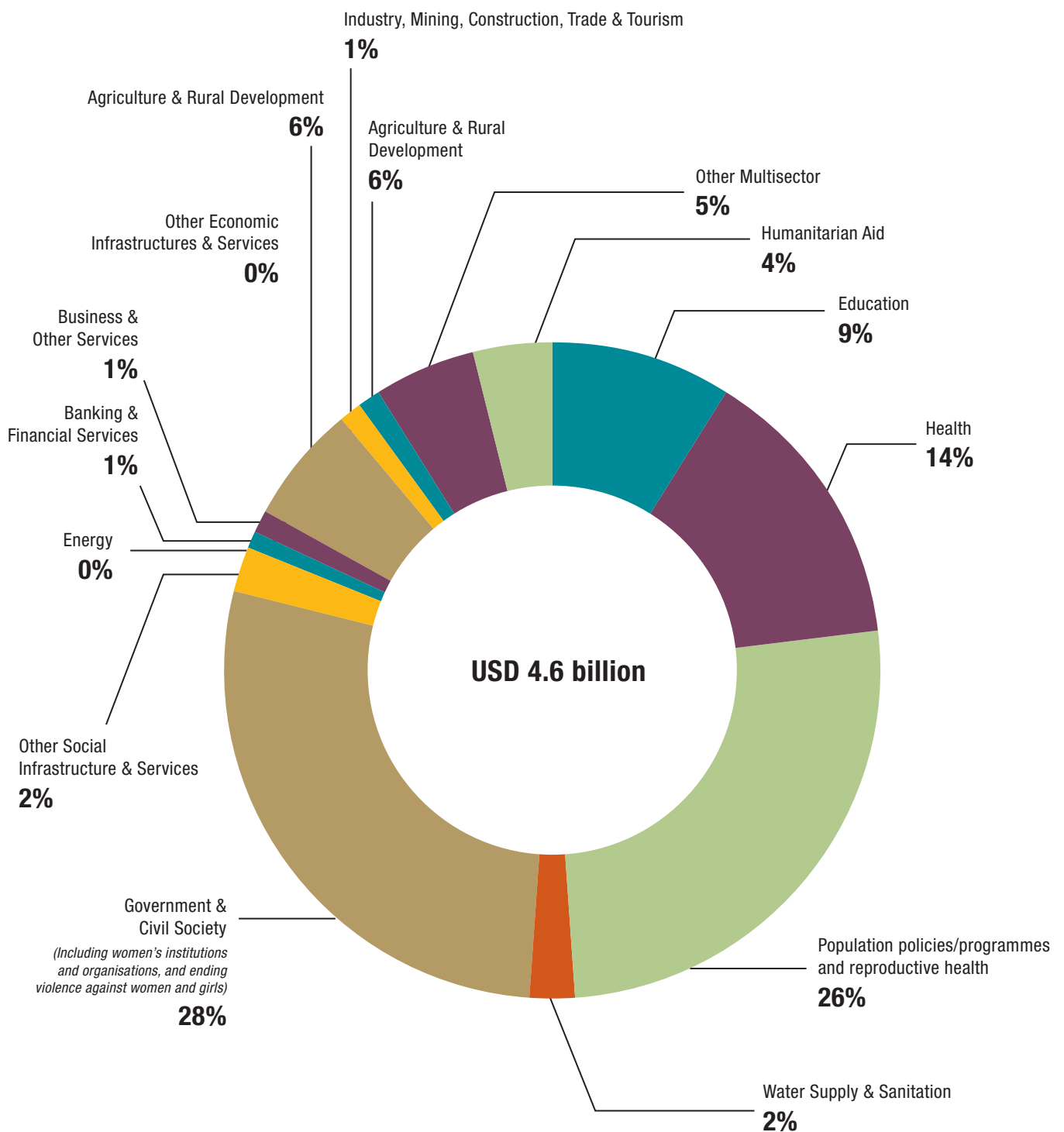
⁷ This corresponds to activities reported against Creditor Reporting System (CRS) purpose code 15170, intended to capture "support for institutions and organisations (governmental and non-governmental) working for gender equality and women's empowerment. All aid reported against this code by default targets gender equality as a principal objective. This figure is part of the USD 1.3 billion on average per year of aid targeting gender equality as a principal objective committed in the government and civil society sector.

⁸ International, donor-country based or developing country based NGOs working on gender equality.

⁹ This figure was obtained by selecting CRS purpose code 15170 where the channel code was 23000 (developing country based NGOs).

¹⁰ *Donor support to southern women's rights organisations*. OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET, November 2016).

Chart 4: Sectoral allocation of aid targeting gender equality as a principal objective in 2015-2016



Aid dedicated to ending violence against women and girls

Total aid dedicated to ending violence against women and girls amounted to **USD 131 million in 2016**,¹¹ with Australia reporting the highest amount (USD 38 million), followed by Norway (USD 33 million), Canada (USD 13 million) and the United Kingdom and Spain (both at USD 10 million). These commitments were reported against a new CRS purpose code capturing aid focussed on ending violence against women and girls, introduced in the OECD statistical database for reporting as of 2016 aid flows. Only 18 out of the 30 DAC members reported against this code in the first year of reporting.

Increasing support for programmes and projects dedicated to ending violence against women and girls is essential for implementing SDG 5.2, “Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation”.

A large part of aid dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective was committed in the sectors of **population and reproductive health** (USD 1.2 billion on average per year) and **health** (USD 625 million). Support for gender equality in these sectors is essential in order to implement SDG 5.3 to “eliminate all harmful practices” and SDG 5.6 to “ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights”.

On the other hand, very little aid dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective is committed in the **sectors of economic infrastructure and services, business, banking and financial services**. This is consistent with earlier findings by the GENDERNET¹² that DAC members should strengthen their **gender equality programming in the economic and productive sectors**, which are of particular importance for women’s economic empowerment and for implementing SDG 5a “to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services (...)”.

The unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men – such as looking after children, caring for elderly and the sick, cooking, cleaning and collecting water and fuel – also hampers women’s economic opportunities. The low levels of funding for dedicated gender equality programmes in the sectors of **social infrastructure services, energy and water supply** indicate that increased donor support is needed in sectors that are likely to help reduce women’s unpaid care and domestic work and support implementation of SDG 5.4 to “recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work”.

¹¹ This figure is part of the USD 1.3 billion on average per year of aid targeting gender equality as a principal objective committed in the government and civil society sector.

¹² *Tracking the money for women’s economic empowerment: still a drop in the ocean* (OECD, June 2016).

Country distribution of aid targeting gender equality: focus on Asia and Africa

Almost half of the bilateral aid targeting gender equality is committed in least developed countries and other low-income countries.

The majority, including the top three, of the countries receiving the largest amounts of **total aid targeting gender equality and women's empowerment** as either a principal or a significant objective are in Asia.

Table 1: Total aid targeting gender equality (principal or significant objective) in USD million (2015-2016 average)

1. Afghanistan	1,611
2. India	1,399
3. Philippines	1,245
4. Ethiopia	1,180
5. Vietnam	1,126
6. Turkey	1,122
7. Bangladesh	1,117
8. Tanzania	860
9. Pakistan	717
10. Kenya	712

Looking only at aid targeting gender equality as the **principal objective**, seven of the ten countries receiving the largest amounts of funding are in Africa and the remaining in Asia.

Table 2: Aid dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective in USD million (2015-2016 average)

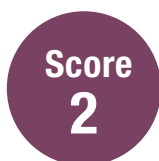
1. Tanzania	248
2. Bangladesh	204
3. Ethiopia	202
4. Democratic Republic of the Congo	129
5. Kenya	113
6. Afghanistan	99
7. Mali	96
8. Mozambique	95
9. Pakistan	95
10. Uganda	85

Methodology

The OECD tracks bilateral allocable aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment using the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender equality policy marker – a qualitative statistical tool to record ODA activities that target gender equality and women's empowerment as a policy objective. The gender equality policy marker is used by DAC members as part of the annual reporting of their aid activities to the OECD. All DAC members except Hungary reported against the marker on their 2016 ODA flows.

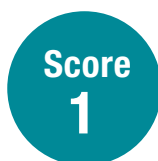
Bilateral allocable aid, which is screened against the marker, includes sector budget support, support to NGOs, support to specific funds managed by international organisations, pooled funding, projects, donor country personnel and other technical assistance, and scholarships in donor countries. It excludes core contributions to multilateral organisations, general budget support, imputed student costs, debt relief, administrative costs, development awareness and refugee costs in the donor country.

The data generated by the DAC gender equality policy marker provide an estimate of aid in support of gender equality but is not an exact quantification. The gender equality policy marker is based on a three-point scoring system¹³:



Principal

“Principal” objective means that gender equality is the primary objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this objective.



Significant

“Significant” objective means that gender equality is an important but secondary objective, and not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme. It is possible that only a portion of the budget targets gender equality objectives, but the amount recorded in the database relates to the entire budget of the programme/project.



Not targeted

“Not targeted” means that the project/programme has been screened against the gender marker but has been found to not target gender equality.

The marker cannot and does not intend to measure the outcome and impact of a development programme or project. Monitoring and evaluation instruments are needed for this.

¹³ Handbook on the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker (OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality, December 2016)



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