

# Development finance for gender equality and women's empowerment: A 2021 snapshot

OECD DAC NETWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY (GENDERNET) • 2021

**A**chieving 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.” This is ever more pressing in the face of the COVID-19 crisis which demands an enhanced focus on gender equality and women's empowerment across the globe.<sup>1</sup>

This Snapshot provides ***an overview of development finance for gender equality and women's empowerment*** based on data reported to and analysed by the OECD, broken down by development partner and by sector. The OECD Development Co-operation Directorate tracks and analyses development finance for gender equality using the *DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker* of the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS), providing strategic policy advice to development partners.<sup>2</sup>

The most established and extensive data available are those for bilateral official development assistance (ODA) provided by members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). DAC members have been using the DAC gender marker to report their ODA for the past two decades, which allows the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate to provide a reliable overview of financing annually and trends over time.<sup>3</sup> In addition, some DAC members also report their “other” development finance, which does not meet ODA criteria, against the gender marker. Development actors such as private philanthropy and multilateral organisations are now also using the DAC gender marker to report their activities. With this, the ***information available on financing for gender equality is increasingly complete, even though there is still scope for more development actors to report more of their development finance against the DAC gender marker.***

Each year, the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate produces strategic analysis on flows to gender equality to help inform donor policy and investment decisions. This includes annual donor charts setting out detailed information about each DAC member's ODA for gender equality, and analyses of thematic areas such as funding for women's economic empowerment<sup>4</sup> and funding for gender equality in fragile contexts.<sup>5</sup> The OECD DCD will also provide analysis about the financing available for the themes addressed by the different **Generation Equality Forum Action Coalitions** designed to accelerate implementation of global commitments to gender equality. In addition, analysis will be undertaken on blended finance for gender equality and women's empowerment in 2021. These analyses will also feed into new Guidance on gender equality and women's empowerment in development co-operation.

Updated April 2021

# Bilateral development finance by members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

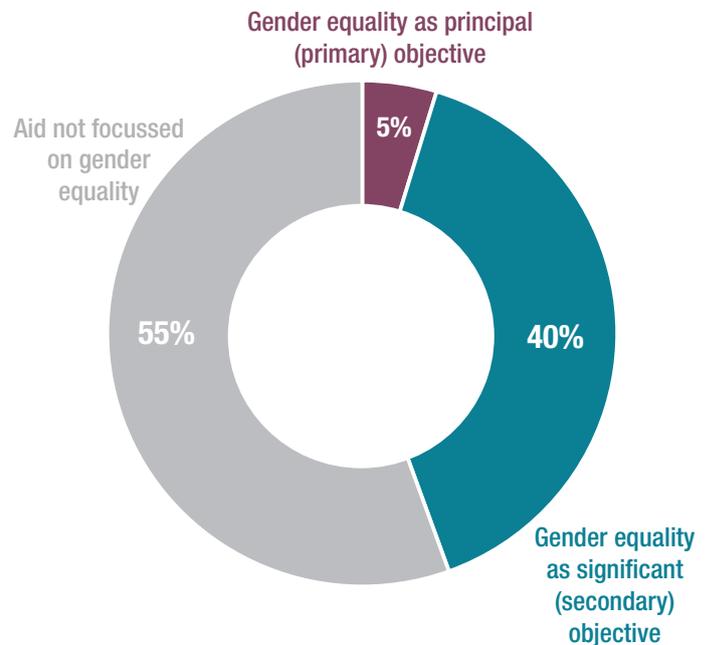
## Overview of bilateral aid for gender equality and women's empowerment

Bilateral allocable ODA for gender equality and women's empowerment is steadily increasing and is now at an historical high level. DAC members committed **USD 53 billion** ODA in total on average per year in 2018-19 for gender equality. This represents **44.5%** of bilateral allocable ODA.

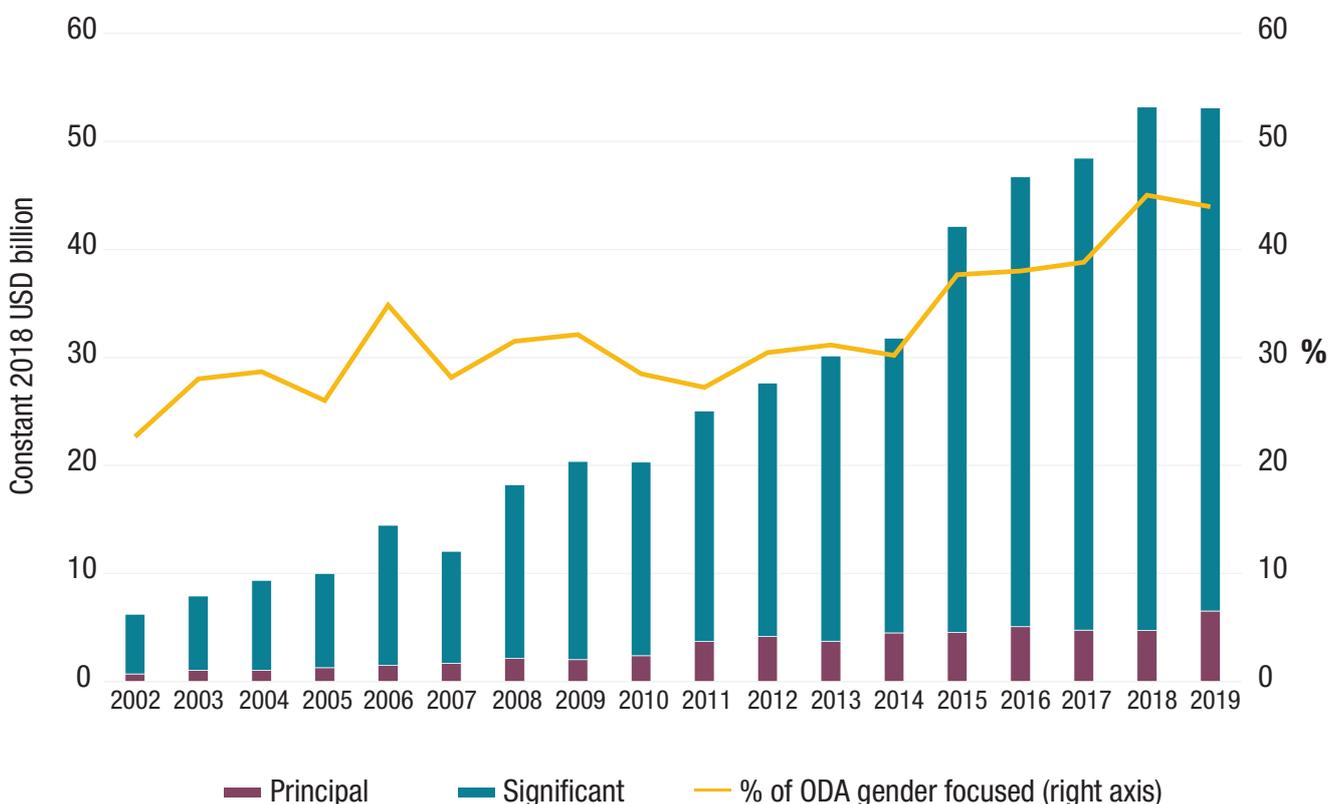
The bulk of aid towards gender equality was committed to programmes that integrate gender equality as a significant, or mainstreamed, policy objective: **USD 47.4 billion**, representing **40%** of total bilateral aid.

Total support to programmes dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment as the principal objective remains relatively stable over time. In 2018-2019, it amounted to **USD 5.6 billion** per year, representing **5%** of total bilateral aid, a slight rise from the prior period. This indicates that while gender equality is a rising priority across sectors, DAC members can still build up more dedicated resources to be fit to deliver most effectively on this agenda.

SHARE OF ODA FOR GENDER EQUALITY FROM DAC MEMBERS  
Average per year 2018-19



HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF ODA COMMITMENTS FOR GENDER EQUALITY FROM DAC MEMBERS 2002-2019

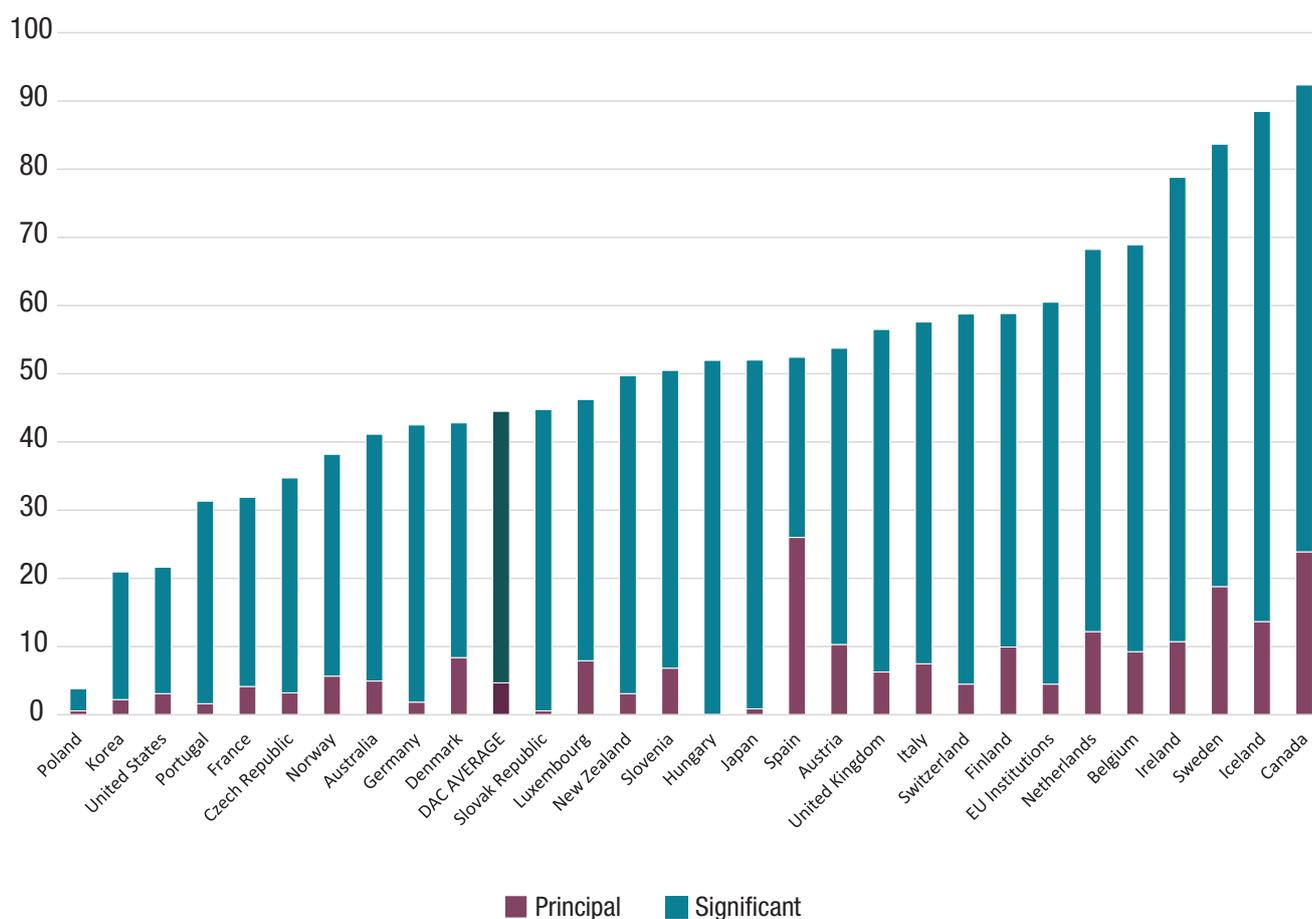


## Bilateral aid for gender equality by DAC member

Canada, Iceland, Sweden and Ireland rank first among DAC members in 2018-19 when looking at the **shares** of bilateral allocable ODA integrating or dedicated to gender equality.

Spain, in turn, has a particularly high share of aid dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective, with gender programming especially in the governance sector with support for women's rights organisations and ending violence against women.

SHARE OF ODA (%) FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY DAC MEMBER  
Average per year 2018-19



As for the **volume of aid in USD** for gender equality and women's empowerment: the European Union (EU) and Germany each integrate gender equality as a secondary (significant) objective into more than USD 8 billion of their ODA respectively per year, making them the largest donors. They both committed the largest parts of this aid in the sectors of government and civil society, and agriculture including rural development.

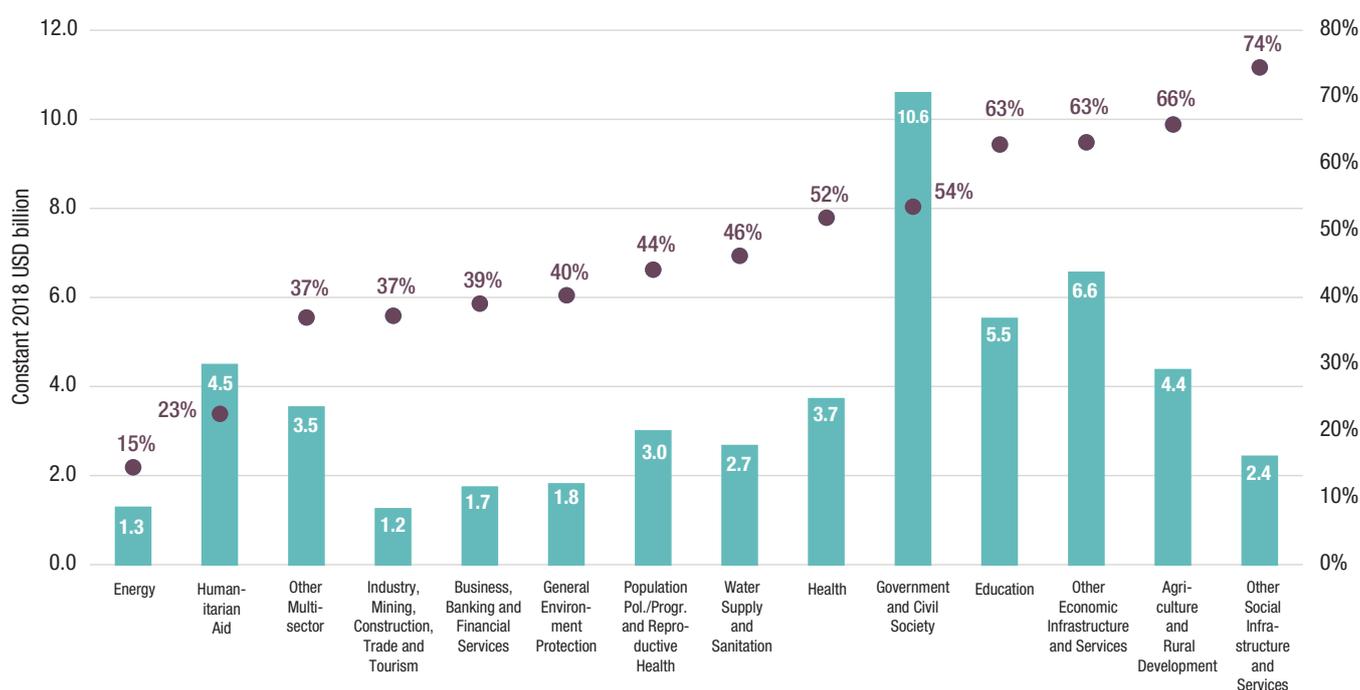
Looking only at dedicated programming with gender equality as the principal objective, the United States is currently the top donor in terms of volume of aid, with USD 829 million per year dedicated to gender equality. About half of this aid was committed in the sectors of health and population policies/reproductive health.

## Bilateral aid for gender equality and women's empowerment by sector

The sectors with the highest **shares** (%) of bilateral aid integrating gender equality (dots in the table below) are social infrastructure and services (including employment policies, housing, social protection), agriculture and rural development, and economic infrastructures and services including transport.<sup>6</sup> The focus on gender equality is particularly low in the sectors of energy and humanitarian aid.

Government and civil society is the sector where the highest **volume of USD** is allocated for gender equality and women's empowerment (bars in the table below).

BILATERAL ODA FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY SECTOR (SHARE AND VOLUME)  
Average per year 2018-19



### Bilateral aid to women's rights organisations

Women's rights organisations and movements are important actors in achieving transformational change for gender equality. A dedicated statistical code in the OECD Creditor Reporting System captures support for "women's rights organisations and movements, and government institutions." In 2018-19, an average of **USD 690 million** of bilateral aid went to these women's rights organisations and movements (part of the "Government and civil society" sector). This figure should be on the rise in the future, notably in the COVID-19 crisis when local women's organisations are taking on health service delivery required.

### Bilateral aid to ending violence against women

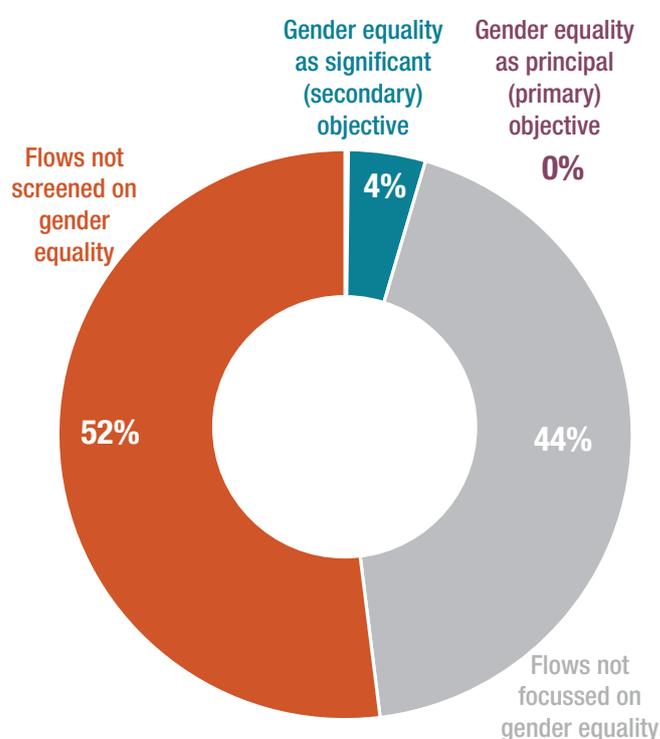
DAC members committed **USD 541 million** on average per year in 2018-19 to ending violence against women and girls. Out of this, USD 138 million were allocated through civil society organisations (part of the "Government and civil society" sector).

### **Bilateral “other official flows” for gender equality from DAC members**

About half of DAC members report their development finance that does not meet ODA criteria.<sup>7</sup> A number of these flows are additionally examined against the DAC gender marker. These other official flows (OOFs) reported to the OECD amounted to USD 10.5 billion on average per year in 2018-19, two third of which were examined against the DAC gender marker. In total, USD 471 million of reported other flows integrated, or were dedicated to, gender equality and women’s empowerment.

These flows for gender equality include contributions, often by DAC members’ financial institutions, for example to: investment funds lending money to micro-finance institutions and farmers’ co-operatives; funds investing in financial and health services; and the IFC Women Entrepreneurs Debt Fund – a loan fund that lends to banks.

SHARE OF OTHER OFFICIAL FLOWS (OOF) FOR GENDER EQUALITY FROM DAC MEMBERS  
*Average per year 2018-19*



While reporting the extent to which OOF address gender equality remains a voluntary exercise for DAC members, reporting these flows can significantly increase the ability to both find existing gaps in financing gender equality, and create a more holistic picture of the financing landscape with regard to gender equality. The OECD explored this issue further and identified principles for future work in the 2020 policy paper [Putting finance to work for gender equality and women’s empowerment - The way forward](#).

## Development funding for gender equality by multilateral organisations

Multilateral organisations play a major role in supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment in developing countries. While their financing flows in support of gender equality are likely sizeable, there is no single or streamlined system used by all multilateral organisations to track their outflows. Some however report their outflows to the OECD, and against the DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker.

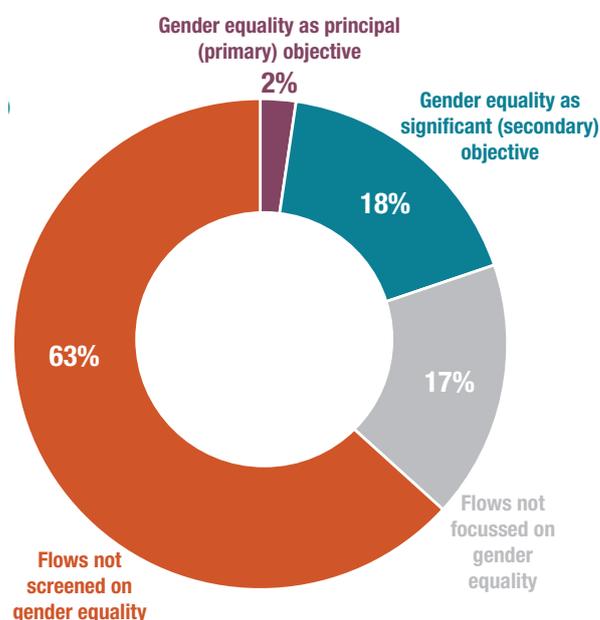
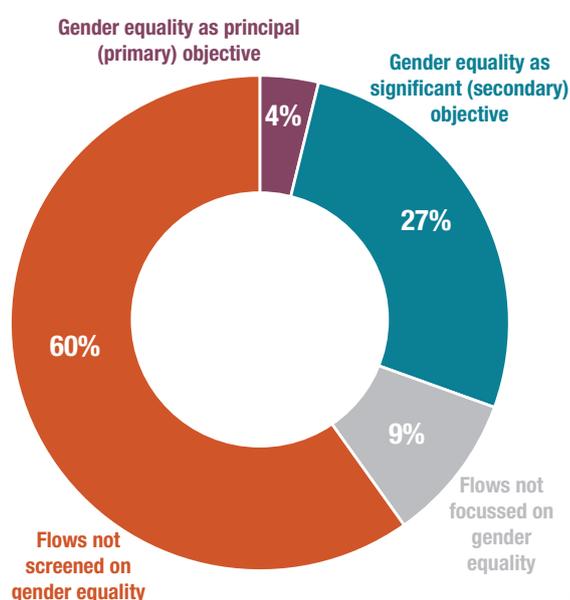
Total multilateral outflows that qualify as ODA and were reported to the OECD represented USD 45 billion on average per year in 2018-19. Other flows, beyond ODA, reported to the OECD amounted to USD 99 billion on average per year. However, less than half of these multilateral outflows were examined against the DAC gender equality policy marker.

### ODA by multilateral organisations

Out of the funding by multilateral organisations that qualify as ODA and that were examined against the DAC marker, **USD 13.6 billion** addressed gender equality in 2018-19.

### Other official flows by multilateral organisations

Out of the “other official flows” (OOF) from multilateral organisations that were examined against the DAC marker, **USD 19.6 billion** addressed gender equality in 2018-19.



Multilateral organisations reporting ODA for gender equality:

Adaptation Fund, Arab Fund (AFESD), Asian Development Bank, Caribbean Development Bank, Central Emergency Response Fund, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Global Green Growth Institute, Green Climate Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, International Labour Organisation (ILO), Islamic Development Bank, Nordic Development Fund, UN Peacebuilding Fund, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, World Tourism Organisation, World Bank International Development Association (IDA), World Health Organisation

Multilateral organisations reporting “other official flows” for gender equality:

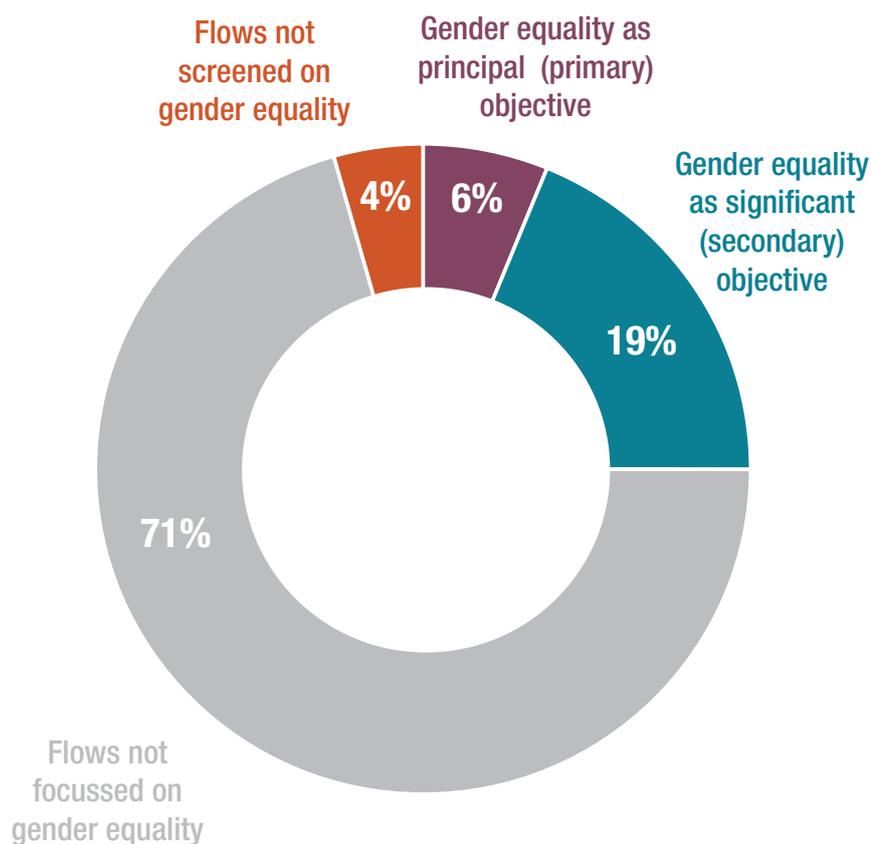
Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Green Climate Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), World Bank International Development Association (IDA).

## Development flows for gender equality by private philanthropy

Out of the private foundations that report their financing flows to the OECD, 31 foundations reported their financing for gender equality using the DAC gender marker. Out of the total of USD 7.6 billion provided by these 31 foundations, **USD 1.9 billion** integrated or were dedicated to gender equality, corresponding to 25% of financial flows.

### SHARE OF FLOWS FROM PRIVATE PHILANTHROPY FOR GENDER EQUALITY

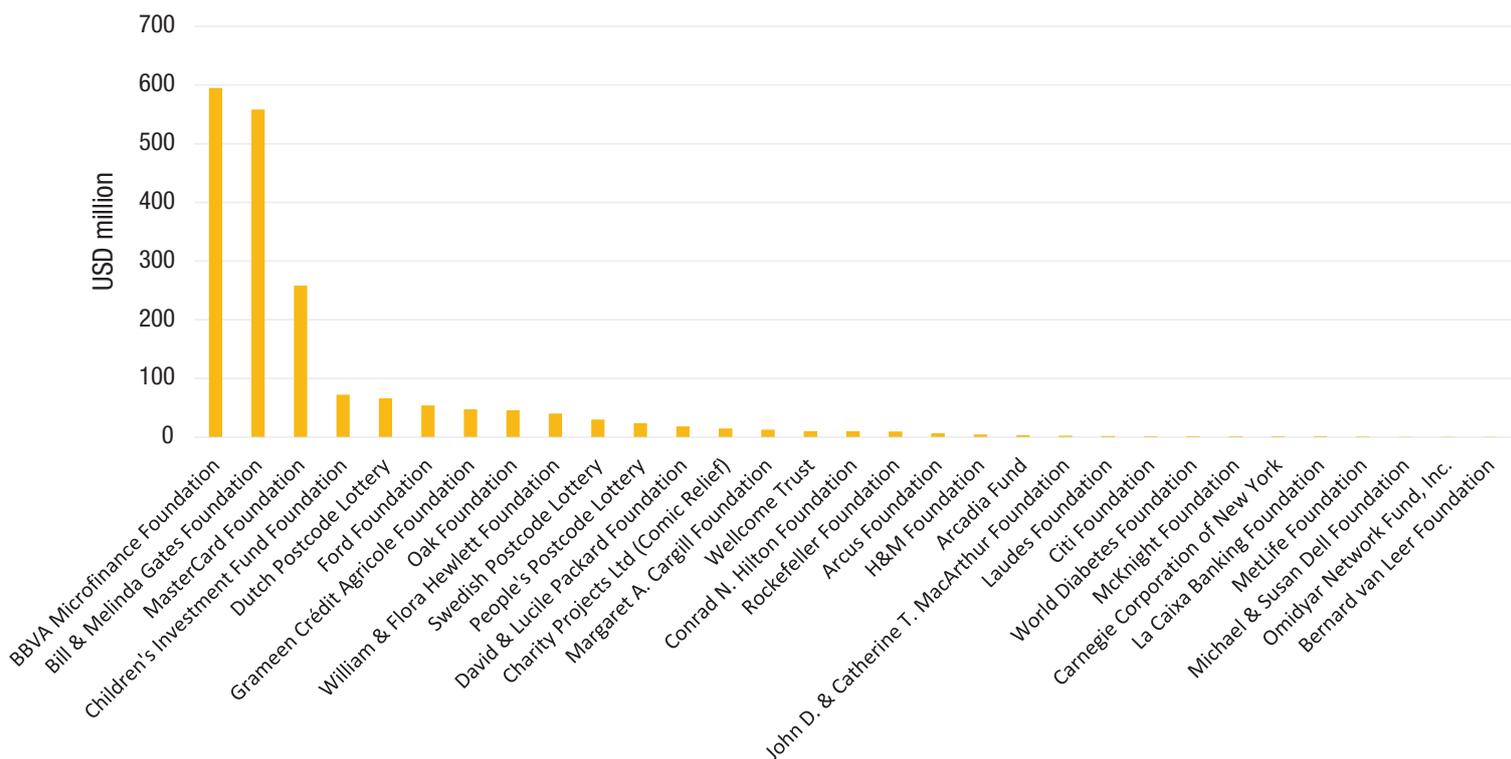
*Average per year 2018-19*



BBVA Microfinance Foundation contributed USD 595 million to gender equality, making it the foundation with the largest amount of funding for gender equality, followed by the Gates foundation with USD 558 million on average in 2018-19.

VOLUME OF FINANCIAL FLOWS FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY FOUNDATION  
Average per year 2018-19

Foundations reporting gender equality activities

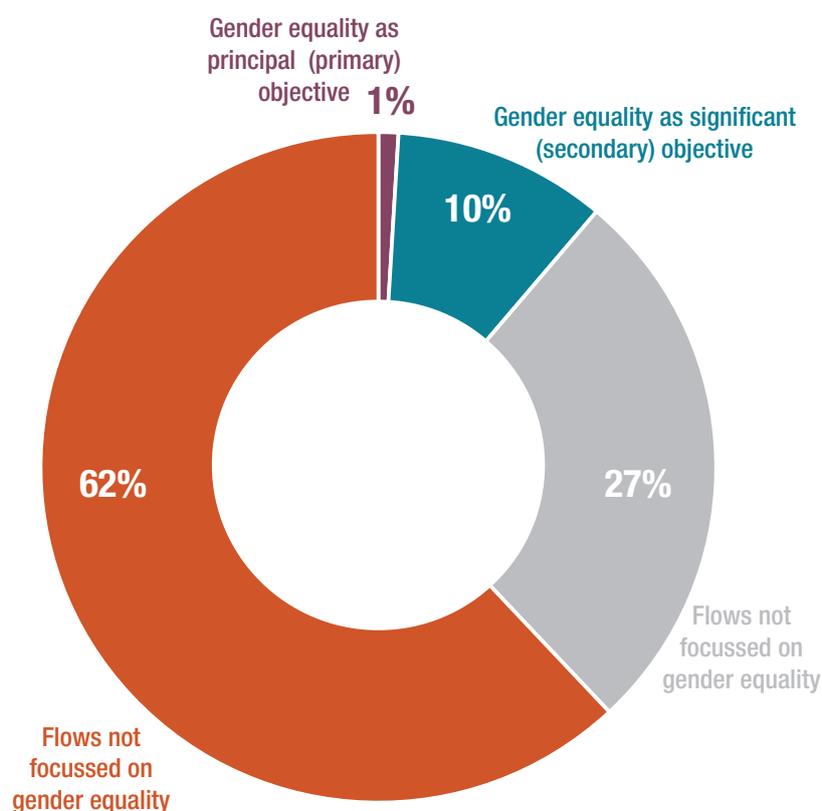


## Flows from private actors for gender equality mobilised by public development finance

The OECD collects information about the flows mobilised from private actors by DAC members' public development finance (ODA or other flows). Some, though less than half, of these private flows mobilised were examined against the DAC gender marker.

Out of the USD 12.7 billion of private flows examined against the gender marker in 2019, **USD 1.4 billion** integrated or were dedicated to gender equality, representing 11% of flows examined against the marker. There is potential to increase the share of private flows mobilised that are examined against the DAC gender marker.

SHARE OF PRIVATE AMOUNTS MOBILISED BY PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY  
*2019 flows*



**1** See *Response, recovery and prevention in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in developing countries: Women and girls on the frontlines* (OECD, 2020)

**2** The DAC gender equality policy marker is a qualitative statistical tool which enables the examination of development finance and the identification of gender equality as either a principal policy objective (dedicated funding, “score 2” against the marker), a significant objective (funding integrating/mainstreaming gender equality, “score 1” against the marker), or not an objective (“score 0” against the marker)

**3** See *Aid Focussed on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: A snapshot of current funding and trends over time in support of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (OECD policy brief 2020)

**4** *How does aid support women’s economic empowerment?* (OECD Policy Brief, 2021)

**5** *Twentieth Anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325: Financing gender equality and women’s empowerment in fragile contexts* (OECD Policy Brief, 2020)

**6** Among the largest programmes integrating gender equality in the transport area are Japan’s loans to India (USD 3 billion) and the Philippines (USD 1.9 billion) for mass transportation improvement. See *How does aid support women’s economic empowerment?* (OECD policy brief, 2021).

**7** Other official flows (OOF) are defined as official sector transactions that do not meet ODA criteria. OOF include: grants to developing countries for representational or essentially commercial purposes; official bilateral transactions intended to promote development, but not reaching the minimum grant element for a given recipient ; and, official bilateral transactions, whatever their grant element, that are primarily export-facilitating in purpose. This category includes, by definition: export credits extended directly to an aid recipient by an official agency or institution (official direct export credits); the net acquisition by governments and central monetary institutions of securities issued by multilateral development banks at market terms; subsidies (grants) to the private sector to soften its credits to developing countries; and, funds in support of private investment.