



TRANSFORMING LIVES?

EU Gender Action Plan II From Implementation to Impact

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ABOUT THIS PAPER

In September 2015, the EU adopted the Joint Staff Working Document 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020', also known as 'GAP II'. Two years later, its first annual progress report showed that although some important steps were taken to implement the EU commitments, a lot has been about process, awareness raising and capacity building, whereas it remains unclear to what extent GAP II has had or will have a transformative impact on women's and girls' lives. Key challenges remain and much still needs to be done to ensure all EU actors meet GAP II commitments and all key priorities and gender-related SDGs are adequately addressed in the EU's external action.

With this report, CONCORD aims to demonstrate, with the help of examples, how the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 is being implemented, and give recommendations on how to bring about a more impactful implementation, in particular in light of the GAP mid-term review, as an important contribution to women's and girl's human rights and the achievement of sustainable development worldwide.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Description: Pottery

Credit: Photo by Swapnil Dwivedi on Unsplash

The EU's second Gender Action Plan (GAP II) is the framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the EU's external relations. Lessons learnt from its predecessor, GAP I, have indicated that the quality of implementation will be key in GAP II. The European Commission's first annual report is critical and reflective. However, qualitative studies are needed to complement its focus on quantitative data and process. **This report aims to go beyond the question of whether or not GAP II is being effectively implemented to ask whether it is having an impact on the lives of diverse groups of women and girls, men and boys, in the partner countries.** Impact is context-specific and needs to be measured within the broader social, economic, political and cultural environment. The experiences and views of civil society organisations (CSOs) and beneficiaries, as well as those responsible for implementing the GAP, are crucial to the case studies, which ask what lessons have been learnt and what challenges remain.

GHANA

The wider external environment is relatively conducive to policy and practice that advance gender equality. Legal and policy frameworks are in place, but implementation remains a concern. Challenges include the influence of patriarchal cultural norms, beliefs and practices; poverty; and the lack of resources, including the effect of declining overseas development aid (ODA). Gender inequalities intersect with regional diversity and are accentuated for women with disabilities. Implementation of GAP II has been

stalled by the failure to conduct a Country Gender Analysis before 2018. Efforts are being made to increase coordination between the European Union Delegation (EUD) and Member States (MS) around GAP II. In Ghana, as in the other countries in this study, Member States are critical of the reporting template and timetable, and there is under-reporting of their activities. Projects funded by the EU and the Member States, and implemented by CSOs, are having an impact in communities and contributing to the transformation of ideas, beliefs and practices at the local level. A causal link between GAP II and positive change is hard to establish. However, the efforts of the various actors are mutually reinforcing and, combined with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have a positive effect in galvanising support for shared objectives. Awareness of GAP II outside the EU Delegation is low and communication with, and coordination of, the various actors could be improved and could be harnessed into GAP II impact. CSO activity is bringing about change, but this is not reflected in the GAP II process. CSOs are keen to engage with the EU Delegation and call for closer collaboration in order to achieve shared aims.

VIETNAM

The wider context is relatively conducive to gender equality policy and practice. Political will and leadership exist. There is increased awareness and a commitment to the SDGs. Constitutional, legal and policy commitments to gender equality are in place, but implementation remains weak, and social

and cultural norms act as a barrier to the realisation of gender equality. Vietnam's progress towards gender equality masks significant differences across regions, ethnic groups and social classes. Declining overseas development aid and the increasing role of non-traditional donors represent a challenge for the sustainability of gender projects and programmes. There was no Gender Impact Assessment for the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement, due to be signed in 2018, despite the fact that all trade agreements need to be gender sensitive in order to avoid adverse gendered effects. The EU Delegation is showing signs of good practice in its implementation of GAP II. There is internal commitment and gender champions, and there is some external advocacy, including policy dialogue. There is also some collaboration with CSOs. Some Member States are very active on gender, but this is not always reflected in GAP II reporting. Projects and programmes funded by the EU Delegation and Member States and implemented by CSOs are having a positive impact on the lives of women and girls and on gender relations at the community level. However, the EU Delegation should engage more actively with CSOs around GAP II to enhance the positive impact of their work on the ground.

RWANDA

Rwanda has perhaps been a victim of its own perceived success as a country where gender equality is seen as an issue which has been solved. The wider external environment is eminently conducive to gender equality policy and practice. There is strong political will and commitment by the country's leadership. Gender-responsive budgeting is a requirement for all sectors. Laws and policy on gender are extensive. However, implementation remains a challenge and inequalities persist. Mindsets and social norms need to change, particularly in rural areas. The EU Delegation has a committed Gender Focal Point, but no senior gender champions. It has not yet conducted a Country Gender Analysis, and neither of the two policy dialogues in 2017 mentioned gender. Engagement with CSOs around GAP II is limited, although at the community level, CSOs (sometimes funded by the EU Delegation or the Member States) are bringing about change and contributing to the achievement of GAP II objectives. The EU Delegation's gender mainstreamed agricultural programmes could be more visible, and the EU Delegation could play a more active leadership role on gender, bringing the Member States together to speak with a single voice, engaging fully with CSOs, and reaching out to government. This requires commitment throughout the EU Delegation. Member states are active around gender. However, many of their activities have not been reported through the GAP process.

CONCLUSION

The impact of GAP II could not have been fully realised in the short time since its introduction. However, this study shows evidence of enabling factors for its positive impact in the mid-long-term. In all three countries, there is an awareness of, and political commitment to, gender equality and women's empowerment. Policies and gender machinery are in place, although questions remain around implementation, and impact varies across population groups. Where the objectives of GAP II

match those of other donors and of the SDGs, strategic efforts to achieve them have a mutually reinforcing effect. The EU Delegation can play a leadership role in this coordination. In the three countries studied here, this potential for leadership has not been fully realised. GAP II has had little impact in areas of EU external action traditionally untouched by gender, including trade, energy and migration. In all three countries, there needs to be increased knowledge and commitment within the sectors and amongst those responsible for programming, especially in the priority sectors where large sums of money are directed to government through budget support. There are examples from all three countries of projects and programmes which reflect the priorities outlined in GAP II and where positive change has been experienced by diverse groups of women and men. Projects funded by the EU and Member States and implemented by CSOs are transforming lives, contributing to the achievement of the GAP II objectives. Changes in ideas, practices and beliefs are taking place more slowly, although this study has highlighted some examples of projects which are changing social norms and gender relations at the community level. EU Delegations, Member States and CSOs should coordinate their work with government to change social norms, so that existing laws and policies can be effectively implemented and gender equality achieved. CSOs have the knowledge, expertise and contacts on the ground to engage all sections of the population in a way that is informed by and sensitive to the local context. The EU must promote CSO inclusion at all levels if GAP II is to achieve its goal of transforming the lives of women and girls.

Key recommendations are that the EU should build on the good practice identified in this study to enhance the positive impact of GAP II. The EU should play an active role in bringing about the transformation of gender relations, using its position to influence government and to coordinate partners. The EU must promote CSO inclusion at all levels. Trade agreements should be gender sensitive to ensure that they do not exacerbate existing inequalities or create new ones. Implementation is a pre-condition for impact. GAP II therefore needs to be fully implemented by all actors, including those at a senior level. The final evaluation for GAP II, and the drafting process of GAP III, should highlight enabling factors and markers of change, as this will be the best way to evaluate its impact.

INTRODUCTION

The EU's second Gender Action Plan (GAP II) is the framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the EU's external relations. This report aims to establish what impact it is having on the lives of women and girls, men and boys, in the partner countries. It introduces GAP II and gives an overview of its implementation, before presenting the three case studies: Ghana, Vietnam and Rwanda. The report ends with some conclusions and recommendations.

BACKGROUND TO GAP II

Awareness of, and commitment to, gender equality has long featured in EU development policy. The first Gender Action Plan (2010-15) was an attempt to bring this commitment into practice, setting out clear plans for implementation. Despite its innovative nature and the drive and commitment of those who brought it to fruition, its success was limited, as reported in a number of internal and external evaluations. An independent report published in 2015 produced a scathing critique, highlighting the gap between the EU's level of commitment to gender equality and its internal institutional capacities to implement it.¹ It criticised the lack of necessary institutional architecture, leadership and human resources, stating that any positive results that had been achieved were due to the efforts of committed individuals. Another external evaluation found that 'Gender is never the priority'.² The GAP had little influence in top priority agenda matters, such as foreign and security, trade, environment and agriculture.

GAP II

The second Gender Action Plan is a Joint Staff Working Document produced by the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy: 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-20'.³ GAP II justifies the emphasis on gender equality with the dual argument that gender equality is important in and of itself, and also essential to sustainable development and economic progress. It retains the three-pronged approach introduced in the first GAP: gender mainstreaming, specific actions and political dialogue. It makes systematic gender analysis

mandatory for all new external actions, and extends the reach of GAP II to all areas of external action, not just development cooperation. The guidance note produced by DEVCO states that: 'The implementation of the GAP II is integral to, and integrated across, the day-to-day work and activities of DEVCO and EEAS, both at HQ and Delegation level. *The guidance therefore applies to all staff at all levels*' (emphasis added).⁴

GAP II focuses on four pivotal areas – three thematic and one horizontal:

- Ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity (including commitments on violence against women and girls, and sexual and reproductive health and rights);
- Promoting the economic and social rights/empowerment of girls and women;
- Strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation;
- Shifting the Commission services and the EEAS institutional culture to more effectively deliver on EU commitments.

HOW HAS GAP II BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

Implementation is a priority for GAP II, following lessons learnt from its predecessor. Reporting takes place annually and all actors are required to report. The European Commission released its first annual implementation report for 2016 in August 2017.⁵ Other reports have been published by the European Parliament Research Service⁶ and the Kosovo Women's Network.⁷ Together, these reports show that progress has been made in some areas, but that challenges remain.

The EC's first annual report is critical and reflective. However, the picture it paints is strongly influenced by the methodology used. While monitoring plays an essential role in ensuring implementation, the tick-box nature of the reporting accords more importance to the number of activities or references to gender equality and women's empowerment than to their quality and impact. For example, measuring the number of training events organised does not tell us whether there has been a change in attitudes and actions. **Qualitative studies are needed to complement the quantitative data and the focus on process in the EC annual report.**

1 Francis Watkins et al., "Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries" (Brussels, 2015).

2 Helen O'Connell, "Implementing the European Union Gender Action Plan 2010-2015: Challenges and Opportunities" (London, 2013).

3 European Commission; High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, "Joint Staff Working Document. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020, SWD(2015) 182 Final" (Brussels, 2015).

4 European Commission, "Guidance Note on the EU Gender Action Plan 2016 – 2020. For DEVCO HQ and EUD Operational Staff" (Brussels, 2016), 3.

5 European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, "Joint Staff Working Document. EU Gender Action Plan II 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020' Annual Implementation Report 2016. SWD(17)288," 2017.

6 European Parliamentary Research Service, "EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 at Year One. European Implementation Assessment, Author Isabelle Ioannides, PE603.256," 2017.

7 Nicole Farnsworth and Iliriana Banjska, "Mind the Gap. An Independent Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU GAP2 in Western Balkan Countries for the Kosovo Women's Network," 2018.



*Description: Women in South Sudan
Credit: John Ferguson/Oxfam*

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) Gender Marker is used by the institutions to identify activities that have gender equality as a principal or significant objective (Gender marker 2 or 1).⁸ The EC first annual report shows that there has been an increase in resources accorded to programmes which have gender equality as a significant objective. However, **it is not always clear how the Gender Marker is being applied, and whether it demonstrates more than a tick-box commitment to the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment.** It can also be noted that the OECD DAC Gender Marker is the only way in which the EC monitors its funding for gender equality.

GAP II requires all new external actions to be based on a rigorous gender analysis. In addition, EU Delegations (EUDs), Commission services, the EEAS and EU Member States (MS) must have a gender analysis at the correct level of intervention (context specific, and, as appropriate, at sector, project or national level), which will inform the selection of thematic objectives and indicators and the design and formulation of all project actions. During 2016, **only 42 Delegations reported having completed a Gender Analysis Study.** Moreover, the EC found that **'most were inadequate for use in the design of action documents on the EU's selected concentration areas'**. Civil society organisations (CSOs) should be involved

in producing this analysis. Our research shows that this is not currently the case.

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The first annual report highlights a number of limitations and challenges for the implementation of GAP II. For example, it finds that **'there has been minor progress in mainstreaming gender perspectives into political and policy dialogues with partners'**. It also states that the scarcity of programmes specifically targeting the **change of social norms** (Objective 19) points to the need to put more emphasis on the **necessity of social transformation** to reach the goal of gender equality. Another limitation identified in the first year of monitoring was the **selection of a small number of Objectives** by the majority of EU Delegations, meaning that others were rarely chosen. Other limitations and challenges are associated with missing data, with the presentation of data, and with the reporting template and indicators used. Throughout the report, the data is presented by region, and illustrated with occasional references to individual countries. There is also **little evidence of engagement of CSOs** in the implementation of GAP II, despite the wording of the October 2015 Council Conclusions: **'Engagement with civil society needs to be ensured throughout the full cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the GAP'**.⁹

⁸ OECD, "Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Donor Charts March 2018," 2018, 3.

⁹ Council of the European Union, "Council Conclusions of 26 October 2015 on Gender Action Plan, 13201/15" (Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2015).

Areas in which a better understanding of implementation is still required include: the extent to which gender is included in **sector dialogues**, such as trade and energy; changes in **attitudes** in senior management, which can only be revealed through qualitative research; and the **relation between GAP II and migration and security**. There is also a gap around the relation between gender and **other inequalities**, including class, age, ethnicity, sexuality and ability. This is acknowledged in GAP II, which states that ‘the gender gap is even larger when gender inequality intersects with other forms of exclusion’, but the monitoring process has not so far brought these intersections to the fore.

This report aims to go beyond the question of whether or not GAP II is being effectively implemented to ask whether it is having an impact on the lives of women and girls, men and boys, in the partner countries. The next section asks how this can be measured.

Box 1 WHAT IS IMPACT?

The OECD DAC defines impact as: ‘The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators.’¹⁰

MEASURING IMPACT

A review of the literature on impact evaluation has produced the following principles¹¹:

1. GAP II is new, and impact is likely to be mid-long-term. At this stage, we need to include the presence of enabling factors as positive signs.
2. Quantitative data must be accompanied by qualitative data in order to reveal the changes in the lives of women and men and in gender relations. This means, for example, asking not just *how many* women are in parliament, but which women and what influence are they able to exert.
3. GAP II does not exist in isolation, and the influence of the broader context must be considered. The impact of GAP II will be inextricably linked with the impact of other EU and non-EU actions, and of external factors, including the social, economic, political and cultural context.

4. It will not be possible to attribute change to GAP II with any certainty. The co-existence of GAP II with markers of change, and the absence of any evidence that GAP II was not responsible, will be taken as positive.
5. There may be unintended consequences including negative outcomes and impacts, and these must be considered.

Our framework for measuring the gendered impact of GAP II embodies these principles. It has three levels, enabling us to describe, explain and evaluate gender-related changes that matter.¹² We use an understanding of women’s empowerment which moves beyond individual self-improvement. **‘Women’s empowerment’ is often used to describe increased participation in the labour market, and is seen as a positive contribution to economic growth and development. The danger with this approach is that it risks obscuring the structural inequalities** that can persist even as the number of women in employment increases. These include the gender pay gap, the gendered division of domestic labour and care, and gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. Feminist scholars and practitioners have contributed a more nuanced understanding of women’s empowerment, which moves beyond individual women’s access to resources.¹³ It is context-specific and requires analysis of the gendered (and other) power relations in which women live their lives. In this study of the changes brought about by GAP II, we argue that **empowerment involves more than individual self-improvement; it requires the transformation of the power relations and structures that reinforce gendered inequalities.**

It is necessary to consider GAP II in the context of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development and ask whether there are unintended consequences of other EU policies; whether there are gender-blind sectors, programmes and projects; and whether GAP II is having an impact in sectors such as energy, climate change and trade. Impact Assessments need to include analysis of gendered impact as well as impact on partner countries, and these should be considered in an integrated fashion, not separately.¹⁴

¹⁰ OECD, “DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance,” accessed April 4, 2018, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

¹¹ Details of the methodology used for this study and a full list of references are available in the Annex.

¹² We draw heavily on Gillian Fletcher, “Addressing Gender in Impact Evaluation: What Should Be Considered?,” ODI Methods Lab October (2015).

¹³ Emily Hillenbrand et al., “Measuring Gender-Transformative Change: A Review of the Literature and Promising Practices,” CARE USA Working Paper, 2015, 10.

¹⁴ Gill Allwood, “Gender Mainstreaming and Policy Coherence for Development: Unintended Gender Consequences and EU Policy,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 39 (2013): 42–52; Gill Allwood, “Horizontal Policy Coordination and Gender Mainstreaming: The Case of the European Union’s Global Approach to Migration and Mobility,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 48 (2015): 9–17.

CASE STUDIES

GAP II aims to ‘transform the lives of women and girls’. How much progress has been made towards this aim and what further steps need to be taken? Country-level studies are essential to complement the quantitative data that is being collected by the EC. Impact is context-specific and needs to be measured within the broader social, economic, political and cultural environment. The experiences and views of CSOs and beneficiaries, as well as those responsible for implementing the GAP, are crucial to our understanding of the impact it is having on the ground. The case studies aim to tell us more about how the implementation of GAP II impacts on the lives of diverse groups of women and men, what lessons have been learnt and what challenges remain.

The case studies were selected to give regional diversity (West Africa, East Africa, Southeast Asia). Countries were considered for selection if there was some evidence of engagement with GAP II and of relations between CSOs and the EU Delegation and Member States present in the country. The countries selected were Ghana, Vietnam and Rwanda. Interviews were conducted with EU Delegations, Member State Embassies, national governments, international organisations and CSOs (see Box 2).

Box 2: List of Respondents

	GHANA	VIETNAM	RWANDA
EU delegation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Gender Analysis Consultant CSO Liaison Gender Focal Point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Head of Cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Focal Point
Embassies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachée de coopération, France Deputy Head of Mission, Head of Cooperation, Switzerland Gender and Social Development Advisor, DFID, UK Head of Development Cooperation, Denmark Political and Protocol Section and Development Cooperation, Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Officer, GIZ, Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Resident Representative, ENABEL, Belgian Development Agency Gender Focal Point, Embassy of Belgium Head of Rights-Based Programme, GIZ, Germany Minister Counsellor Development Cooperation, Embassy of Belgium One Mainstreaming and Advisor Rights-Based Programme, GIZ, Germany
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director, Gender Equality Department, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Gender Equality Department, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs - MOLISA Integration Policy and Strategy Division (ISIP), Institute for Industrial Policies and Strategies (IPSI), Ministry of Industry and Trade – MOIT 	/ International organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Representative International Monetary Fund (IMF) Country Representative UN Women
NGOs/CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABANTU Gender Centre Ghana Network for Women’s Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) Plan International Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Aid Vietnam (AAV) CARE International in Vietnam Centre for Development and Integration (CDI) Centre for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender – Family – Women and Adolescents Inclusive Development Action (IDEA) Save the Children Vietnam International Organisations UN Women Academia/Research Centre for Gender and Women’s Leadership (GELEAD), Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics Department for Macroeconomic Policy and Integration Studies, Central Institute for Economic Management- CIEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CARE International in Rwanda International Alert Oxfam in Rwanda Rwanda Women’s Network UNABU – Rwandan Organisation of Women with Disability

GHANA



Ghana has been one of the most stable countries in West Africa since its transition to democracy in 1992. It experienced rapid growth between 2007 and 2011, leading to its recognition as a Lower Middle Income Country. However, this has been accompanied by rising levels of inequality. As a middle-income country, Ghana's receipt of overseas development aid is declining. Non-traditional donors, including China, Turkey, Brazil, India and the private sector, are playing a growing role.¹⁵

Civil society organisations are free to publish research reports and to criticise government policy without fear of being harassed. However, civil society is fragmented, not actively involved in decision making, and links between urban-based policy networks and grassroots organisations are weak.¹⁶

NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERY, LAWS AND POLICY

Ghana's national gender machinery dates from 1975. There is a Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, a Parliamentary select committee on gender and children, and a Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit in the Ghana police service. Equal rights and maternity rights are protected by the Labour Law of 2003, and a Domestic Violence Act was passed in 2007. The **National Gender Policy** (2015) is supported

by a Strategic Implementation Plan (2016-20). However, **implementation has been limited**. The Gender Equality Department (GED) reports that resources are inadequate to fund its activities and that it is difficult to reach all parts of the country.¹⁸ There are references to **Gender Responsive Budgeting** (GRB) in national development planning and other government documents, but it has not been operationalised. In 2007, there was a series of pilots. Since then, GRB has lain dormant, although there are plans to revive it.¹⁹ In summary, **legal and policy frameworks for gender equality are in place, but there are still serious challenges due to the lack of implementation. The decline in overseas development aid has implications for the realisation of the National Gender Policy.**

GENDER EQUALITY

Ghana has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.547, ranking it 131 out of 159 countries.²⁰ (see Table 1).

The main gender equality issues cited by respondents in this study are:

- Women's economic empowerment, including access to land and land ownership. Land tenure security is a key issue for women farmers, as is the lack of women's voice in land management and administration;
- Low participation of women in decision-making at all levels, despite the notional 40% quota introduced in the Affirmative Action Policy of 1998. Since the elections of 7 December 2016, women have made up 12.7% of the national parliament. This puts Ghana in 141st place out of 193 countries in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's ranking

Table 1 Ghana's Gender Inequality Index (GII) for 2015¹⁷

	GII VALUE	GII RANK	MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO	ADOLESCENT BIRTH RATE	FEMALE SEATS IN PARLIAMENT (%)	POPULATION WITH AT LEAST SOME SECONDARY EDUCATION (%)		LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (%)	
						Female	Male	Female	Male
Ghana	0.547	131	319	66.8	10.9	51.8	68.5	75.5	78.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.572	---	551	103	23.3	25.3	33.9	64.9	76.1

15 European Union Delegation in Ghana, "European Partners Working Together in Ghana. Joint Cooperation Strategy 2017-20," 2016, 7.

16 CONCORD Denmark, "Country CSO Roadmaps: How EU Delegations Can Strengthen Engagement with Civil Society," 2013, 17.

17 Maternal mortality ratio is expressed in number of deaths per 100,000 live births and adolescent birth rate is expressed in number of births per 1,000 women ages 15-19.

18 Gender Equality Department, "Annual Report 2017" (Accra, 2017).

19 National Development Planning Commission, "Implementation of the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA)II, 2014-17," 2016, 228.

20 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Human Development Report 2016. Ghana," 2017, 5.



Description: Vegetables market in Kumasi
Credit: sanjeri, istockphoto.com

of women in national parliaments.²¹ An Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Bill, which aims to increase the number of women in decision-making, has been under discussion since 2013, but has yet to be passed;

- Violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, sexual violence against adolescent girls in schools, sexual harassment and workplace violence, political violence against female candidates, cyber violence, defilement and rape;
- Education, with girls' enrolment declining as they progress through the education system. There is regional diversity, with the Northern Region having the lowest share of female enrolment and the greatest difference in completion rates²²;
- Health and access to healthcare, particularly in rural areas, teenage pregnancies, and high maternal mortality rates, particularly in rural areas;
- Long-standing cultural practices and values, based on patriarchal social norms, such as child marriage, female genital mutilation, and witch camps. All of these issues are accentuated for women with disabilities.

EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN GHANA

The **National Indicative Programme for Ghana (2014-20)** sets out the main focal sectors for EU cooperation with the country under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF). The EDF is the **EU's main instrument for providing development aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries**. The three key development priorities which are being supported through the 11th EDF in Ghana are: governance (EUR 75 million), **productive investment for agriculture in the Savannah Ecological Zones** (EUR 160 million); **employment and social protection** (EUR 75 million).²³ A **Regional Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)** between the EU and West Africa was signed by Ghana in December 2014.²⁴ An interim EPA between the EU and Ghana came into force in December 2016. This 317-page document makes no mention of either women or gender. Trade agreements should be gender sensitive to ensure that they do not exacerbate existing inequalities or create new ones.²⁵

Ghana was a pilot for the first phase of **Joint Programming 2013-16** and now has a **Joint Cooperation Strategy 2017-20**, aligned with the five main objectives in the National Development Plan. The **indicative financial allocations** are broken down by Goal and by Sector/Sub-Sector²⁶, but there is **no mention of gender**. Gender, and a reference to GAP II, appear in the section on crosscutting issues. Joint

21 Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments. Situation as of 1 March 2018," 2018.

22 National Development Planning Commission, "Implementation of the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA)II, 2014-17, Annual Progress Report 2016," 2017, 144.

23 Republic of Ghana and European Union, "National Indicative Programme 2014-2020," 2013, 7-8.

24 European Union Delegation in Ghana, "European Partners Working Together in Ghana. Joint Cooperation Strategy 2017-20," 11.

25 CONCORD and WIDE+, "Women's Rights and Trade. Time for a Radical Shift" (Brussels, 2018).

26 European Union Delegation in Ghana, "European Partners Working Together in Ghana. Joint Cooperation Strategy 2017-20," 33.

Programming in support of Goal 1 (Build an industrialised, inclusive and resilient economy) stresses that growth must be inclusive of 'all sectors of the population, notably young people, women and marginalised groups'. However, the emphasis on enhanced competitiveness and support for the private sector raises questions about whether this approach is compatible with inclusiveness. Funding has been made available to CSOs, including community-based groups and networks, through STAR Ghana (Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness), a multi-donor pooled funding mechanism funded by the EU, DANIDA and DFID. This includes a call for proposals for Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion.

HOW IS GAP II BEING IMPLEMENTED?

There is an **effort to increase coordination between the EU Delegation and Member States around gender. The downside is that this has slowed down implementation of GAP II.** There is a Gender Focal Point (GFP) in place, but the Country Gender Analysis (CGA) is only now being done. The delay is justified on the grounds that it has been a collaborative process, involving the EU Delegation, Member States and the Government of Ghana. This collaboration is expected to coalesce after completion of the Country Gender Analysis and turn into a regular dialogue between the EUD Gender Focal Point and Member State Gender Focal Points to ensure there is no duplication in programming, to monitor each other's activities, and to facilitate annual reporting.²⁷ The Country Gender Analysis will be structured around the National Indicative Programme (NIP) and the priority sectors of the Member States, so that it will be useful for both the EU Delegation and the Member States. The focal areas are therefore governance and accountability, agriculture, and social protection. Objectives have been selected to correspond to the thematic priorities of GAP II, and EU Delegation and Member State programmes contribute to them. The EU Delegation reports that every manager takes gender into account, and gender is mainstreamed into all programming. For example, colleagues in the agriculture sector have set gender-related indicators in discussion with colleagues in DEVCO. The Country Gender Analysis is expected to produce information which will feed into the sectors and further enhance this process. The OECD DAC Gender Marker is used to ensure that all programmes take gender into account. There is some evidence of institutional cultural shift in the EU Delegation as a result of the introduction of GAP II: there is raised awareness throughout the Delegation, all task managers are engaging with the Country Gender Analysis, and International Women's Day is used as a focus for discussions around gender.

Much more is being done by the Member States than is being reported. For example: 'The implementation of the DANIDA funded programmes in Ghana is in line with the strategic priorities of the GAP II. **However, the Embassy of Denmark has not made any formal reporting on implementation in relation to the GAP II.**'²⁸ Examples of Denmark's activities which contribute to GAP II objectives but have not been reported include: training of judges on gender issues; ensuring equal opportunities

in the recruitment of new staff into the Local Government Service; increasing awareness and understanding of gender equality among private sector organisations; and targeted programmes and gender mainstreaming in the Ghana Climate Innovation Centre. In Ghana, as in the other countries in this study, **Member States find the GAP II reporting timetable and template frustrating.** They find it difficult to match their activities to the indicators and would prefer to have the template at the beginning of the year so that they can plan around it, rather than trying to shoe-horn their actions into the report retrospectively.

WHAT IMPACT IS GAP II HAVING?

We can find examples of **change in women's and men's lives in projects funded by the EU and the Member States** across the country (See Box 3). The EU Delegation is funding projects that focus on women's economic empowerment at the local level, leading to job creation for women, persons with disabilities and youth. A project delivered by Action Aid, for example, is supporting women who have migrated from the Northern region to receive training and start businesses.²⁹ Change in cultural norms is slow to achieve, but CSOs have been championing awareness within communities and districts in Ghana, and this is contributing to the **transformation of ideas, beliefs and practices at the local level.** The wider external environment is relatively conducive to policy and practice that advance gender equality. Some political will exists, although there are marked inequalities within the country, with women and girls in the Northern region scoring less well against indicators for health, education, economic and political empowerment. In Ghana, a direct causal link between GAP II and positive change is hard to establish, although there is evidence that **GAP II has led to discussions between the EU Delegation and the government of Ghana and has contributed to an increasingly coordinated approach to addressing gender issues.** There has been some progress in terms of awareness-raising, engagement and women's empowerment. Some Member States are engaged in activities that make a very positive contribution to achieving the objectives of GAP II. This includes Denmark, France, Germany and the UK. However, this is driven by their national overseas development policy, and actors do not necessarily make a link with GAP II. Some of these activities are not reported through GAP II processes, and some Member States do not engage with the annual report. GAP II priorities overlap with those of other donors, including Canada, and the Ministry of Gender, so it is difficult to isolate the impact of GAP II. This means, however, that the efforts of these various actors are mutually reinforcing and, combined with the SDGs, have a positive effect in galvanising support for shared objectives. Awareness of GAP II outside the EU Delegation is low, and communication with CSOs could be improved and could be harnessed into GAP II impact. Commissioning the Country Gender Analysis in early 2018 was a conscious step to advance this process. However, the fact that Ghana is only now conducting its Country Gender Analysis has severely delayed GAP II's implementation and, consequently, its impact.

²⁷ Interview, EU Delegation Ghana.

²⁸ Interview, Embassy of Denmark, Ghana

²⁹ Interview, EU Delegation, Ghana

Box 3:
EXAMPLE OF IMPACT OF MEMBER STATE ACTIVITIES

'DANIDA programmes have seen some positive results. This includes **more women gaining access to justice** through alternative dispute resolution and gender based violence courts, **more women gaining access to land rights in rural areas, more women engaged in the development of green businesses** as well as improvements on a number of other gender related issues through various CSO and international NGO activities supported through STAR Ghana. These results have **helped reduce gender inequality** in relation to human rights, living standards and social inclusion. They have also **helped empower women** to partake in the continued political, economic and social development of Ghana in part by becoming positive role models for future generations of young Ghanaians. [...] Our impression is that more independent, skilled and innovative women in Ghana's private sector have had a **positive effect on the narrative around women in Ghana**. Women in rural areas with land rights play a different role in local communities, and are seen as important, independent parts of a greater move towards increased living standards, prosperity and sustainable development.'³⁰

'DFID Ghana works with the Government of Ghana, World Bank and UNICEF on Ghana's flagship social protection programme – Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP). It supports 213,000 of the very poorest households and 943,842 beneficiaries in 216 districts Ghana, 56% of whom are women and girls, to receive regular cash grants. LEAP households (predominantly female headed households) demonstrated **important improvements in their productive activities and financial position**. [...] **Savings** – increased social inclusion with women joining village savings and loans groups which enhanced their social networks, connections and strengthened social ties; **Borrowing** – at baseline, women believed borrowing was shameful but at midline women had more access to a broader range of services for borrowing which created more trust with their communities. **Lending** – increases in lending helped to support family members. At baseline none of the women were able to lend but at midline they were able to support other family members and their wider communities.'³¹

CSO activity is bringing about change, but this is not reflected in the GAP II process. There has been no contact between the EU Delegation and CSOs around GAP II, even though civil society liaison appears active outside the gender sector and efforts have been made to address criticisms of low civil society

engagement.³² This is partly an unintended consequence of internal restructuring of EU Delegation responsibilities. When the Gender Focal Point role was moved to the economy and trade section, partly to facilitate links with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, it was separated from CSO liaison. This has reduced contact between women's rights CSOs and the EU Delegation around gender equality issues. CSOs are keen to engage with the EU Delegation and call for closer collaboration in order to achieve shared aims, although there has been some positive engagement. For example: **'The EU hasn't directly engaged CSOs' input into GAP II implementation and the gender analysis. However, over the years, some CSOs have benefited from EU funding** that has promoted awareness and elimination of early and forced marriages in Ghana, and this also addresses the issue of gender equality.'³³

'We are a civil society actor. The government is a partner, but also a target for us in terms of policy advocacy and engaging them to implement their mandates. So having technical support, financial backing from the EU is absolutely critical for our work. [...] So having the EU in country and open to us and giving us technical and financial support, that would be an important factor. [...] **We want to engage with and work more closely with the EU Delegation and individual embassies**.'³⁴

'Through its mandate to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law, **the EU could help Ghana address key gender equality issues** such as increased representation of women in local governance structures and the elimination of violence against women and girls through the push for the implementation of existing laws like the Domestic Violence Act and Children's Rights Act.'³⁵

CONCLUSION

Positive change is being brought about through the activities of Member States and CSOs. The challenges mentioned by all respondents are the influence of patriarchal cultural norms, beliefs and practices; poverty, particularly in rural areas; and the lack of resources. The EU Delegation needs more resources and capacity and has asked the European Commission for a **regional Gender Focal Point support network**, which would enable it to share best practice with actors in similar circumstances, creating a focused, relevant and effective network at the regional level. A major challenge in terms of resources is the withdrawal of donors. Denmark, for example, is phasing out all development assistance to Ghana by 2020, and all development activities related to Good Governance by the end of 2018.³⁶ To ensure sustainability of programmes and projects, actors are seeking to work more with private sector partners. There are concerns that resources for gender equality will suffer as a result.³⁷

³⁰ Interview, Embassy of Denmark, Ghana

³¹ Interview, DFID, Ghana

³² European Commission, "Action Document for the Project: Civil Society Organisations in Research and Innovation for Sustainable Development (CSO-RISE). ANNEX 1 of the Commission Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2016 in Favour of the Republic of Ghana," 2016.

³³ Interview, CSO Ghana

³⁴ Interview, CSO Ghana

³⁵ Interview, CSO Ghana

³⁶ Interview, Embassy of Denmark, Ghana

³⁷ We were not able to interview private sector actors on this.

VIETNAM



Description: Food street spot in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.
Credit: Photo by Hiep Nguyen on Unsplash



Vietnam is a one-party state ruled by the Communist Party of Vietnam. It has had relatively stable growth since the late 1980s and, since the introduction of its market-orientated reform policy ('Doi Moi'- Renovation) in 1986, has been transforming the structure of its economy and opening up internationally. In 2010, it became a Lower Middle Income Country. There has been a dramatic decrease in poverty (58% to 20.7% in 1993-2010)³⁸, but this has been accompanied by growing inequality and under-investment in social services. Poverty remains higher in female-headed households, the elderly, and in mountainous and remote areas, with a high concentration among ethnic minorities and female migrant workers. The intersection of gender-based discrimination and economic deprivation means

that women from poor households are more likely to struggle to meet their basic needs than men from poor households, and more likely to slide into greater poverty in situations of crisis.³⁹

Vietnam has signed regional and bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Negotiations on the **FTA between the EU and Vietnam** were formally concluded in Brussels in December 2015⁴⁰ and it is **due to be signed later in 2018**. The impact assessment for this FTA suggested that emerging high-value sectors could lose out to low-value-added production in garment and footwear sectors, and that labour rights and gender equality could be adversely affected.⁴¹ **There was no Gender Impact Assessment for the FTA**. All trade agreements should be gender sensitive in order to avoid negative impacts on women's economic rights.⁴²

NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERY, LAWS AND POLICY

Vietnam's first Constitution (1946) stipulated that 'women and men have equal rights in all areas'. Vietnam was one of the first signatories of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which it ratified in

38 European Union, "EU Cooperation in Viet Nam: An Enhanced Response to the Development Challenges. The Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Viet Nam 2014-2020," 2014, 2.

39 UN Women, "Briefing Note on the Situation of Ethnic Minority Women and Girls in Viet Nam" (Hanoi, 2015), 5.

40 European External Action Service, "Vietnam and the EU," 2016, 4.

41 Action Aid Vietnam, "What a Way to Make a Living. Using Industrial Policy to Create More and Better Jobs. Written by Ruth Kelly" (Hanoi, 2017), 28–29.

42 CONCORD and WIDE+, "Women's Rights and Trade. Time for a Radical Shift."

1982. In 2006, it passed the Law on Gender Equality, leading to the establishment of the Gender Equality Department in the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). A Law on the Prevention and Control of Domestic Violence was passed in 2007. Other significant laws, policies and strategies include the **National Strategy on Gender Equality** (2011-20); the Amendment to the Constitution (2013) placing an obligation on the State to ‘guarantee the right to and opportunities for gender equality’⁴³; the Land Law (2013) permitting land-use certificates in the name of both spouses; the inclusion of gender equality in the **State Budget Law** (2015); and the Revised Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents (2015), which requires gender equality to be mainstreamed in all draft legal documents.⁴⁴

The government has responded to pressure from donors to report on gender indicators. However, gender is seen as the remit of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and the Women’s Union, not the Ministry of Planning and Investment, for example. Trade and Industry Policy is not gender sensitive, as Action Aid’s call for a gender-just industrial policy has demonstrated.⁴⁵ Gender-responsive budgeting is slowly emerging as an issue for government attention, largely because of action by donors. Vietnam’s new State Budget Law (2015) mentions gender equality for the first time. In summary, **constitutional, legal and policy commitments to gender equality are in place, but implementation remains weak, and social and cultural norms act as a barrier to the realisation of gender equality.**

GENDER EQUALITY

Vietnam’s Gender Inequality Index value ranks it 71/159 countries in the 2015 index.

Vietnam has made good progress towards gender equality compared with other countries in Asia.⁴⁷ It achieved all of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); it has closed the gender gap in primary and secondary education; and the proportion of women participating in the workforce is high. The percentage of women in the National Assembly is the third highest in the Asia-Pacific region at 26.7%. This places Vietnam in joint 62nd place out of the 193 countries in the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s global ranking.⁴⁸ **These aggregate countrywide indicators, however, mask significant differences across regions, ethnic groups and social classes.**⁴⁹ Women with disabilities, rural women and ethnic minority women experience particular forms of discrimination. Government has policies for vulnerable groups, ethnic minorities and the poor, but they are poorly implemented. For example, the poor are entitled to free education and healthcare, but this is not necessarily of good quality or close enough to access.⁵⁰ The maternal mortality rate dropped from 80/100,000 live births in 2005 to 67/100,000 in 2012. However, particularly high maternal mortality rates are found in mountainous areas and among ethnic minority women, where maternal mortality rates can be four times as high as that of the majority Kinh.⁵¹

Key gender issues identified by respondents include:

- Economic empowerment: poverty; financial decision making; access to jobs, land and loans; list of jobs that women are not allowed to do; equalisation of retirement age; social security and pensions. The Land Law (2013) provides for the issue of land-use certificates in the name of both spouses. However, in practice, male-only certificates are often issued.⁵² The proportion of households with men as single land title owners rises to 74.2% for ethnic minority groups (40.6% for Kinh).⁵³

Table 2 Vietnam’s Gender Inequality Index (GII) for 2015⁴⁶

GII VALUE	GII RANK	MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO	ADOLESCENT BIRTH RATE	FEMALE SEATS IN PARLIAMENT (%)	POPULATION WITH AT LEAST SOME SECONDARY EDUCATION (%)		LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (%)	
					Female	Male	Female	Male
0.337	71	54	38.6	24.3	64.0	76.7	73.8	83.2

43 UN Women, “Gender Equality and Taxation in Vietnam: Issues and Recommendations” (Hanoi, 2016), 14.

44 UN Women, “Gender Responsive Budgeting in Vietnam,” 2015, 1.

45 Action Aid, “Not Just Lip Service. Advancing Women’s Economic Justice in Industrialisation. Written by Lila Caballero,” 2017, 4.

46 Maternal mortality ratio is expressed in number of deaths per 100,000 live births and adolescent birth rate is expressed in number of births per 1,000 women aged 15-19. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “Human Development Report 2016. Viet Nam,” 2017, 6.

47 Australia in Vietnam, “Gender Equality Strategy 2016-20” (Hanoi, 2016), 2.

48 Inter-Parliamentary Union, “Women in National Parliaments. Situation as of 1 March 2018.”

49 UN Women, “Towards Gender Equality in Vietnam: Making Inclusive Growth Work for Women” (Hanoi, 2016), 18.

50 Interview, CSO Vietnam

51 UN Women, “Briefing Note on the Situation of Ethnic Minority Women and Girls in Viet Nam,” 6.

52 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, “Concluding Observations on the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports of Viet Nam,” 2015, 11.

53 UN Women, “Briefing Note on the Situation of Ethnic Minority Women and Girls in Viet Nam,” 5.

- Gender-based violence, including sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sex-selective abortions.
- Political representation. Women holding ministerial or equivalent posts fell from 12% 2007-11 to 4.5% 2011-16. Ethnic minority women are particularly under-represented. Gender-based stereotypes are the most pervasive barrier to women's leadership.

Vietnamese society is conservative and influenced by Confucianism. Traditional views of the family and of women's role prevail. Women are very active in the economy, but their contribution is frequently unrecognised. Attitudes remain traditional and women shoulder most of the burden of unpaid care in the home⁵⁴, which has an adverse effect on their ability to access well-paid jobs and to participate in community decision making.⁵⁵

EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN VIETNAM

The EU, with its Member States, has become the largest grant donor in Vietnam and is Vietnam's second largest export market after the US.⁵⁶ The Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Vietnam 2014-20 advocates moving from overseas development aid to the creation of an enabling environment for attracting investment. Its key focus areas are **sustainable energy** (EUR 346 million) and **governance/rule of law** (EUR 50 million). These align with the priorities of the government of Vietnam. The bulk of EU funding goes to government, and there is a strong grant portfolio that goes to CSOs. A number of Member States have phased out their grant-based overseas development aid to Vietnam, including Sweden, Spain, Denmark, Luxemburg and DFID.⁵⁷ The new **CSO Roadmap 2018-20** has been approved by the EU Delegation and all Member States, in a context of shifting donor landscape and increased engagement with the private sector. The priorities are: promoting an enabling environment for CSOs; enhancing the engagement of CSOs in domestic policies; improving the coordination and networking amongst CSOs and with other stakeholders; and preparing and building a better CSO response to the development perspectives of Vietnam.

HOW IS GAP II BEING IMPLEMENTED?

The **EU Delegation is showing many signs of good practice in its implementation of GAP II**. Internally, awareness of gender is high, including among senior staff: 'Throughout the EU Delegation there used to be a handful of colleagues who cared about gender. Because of the GAP requirements, people

are now much more aware'.⁵⁸ GAP II has been embraced as an opportunity to reflect on the Delegation's practices and its integration of gender in its projects and programmes. A gender analysis was conducted in 2016 and is used to inform programming. It argues that women's (and men's) economic rights can only be realised by adopting a model of economic growth that is inclusive.⁵⁹

Gender is raised in policy dialogues, and the selection of GAP II objectives exceeds the minimum requirements of one objective for each thematic priority. In addition, the EU Delegation was already prioritising gender-based violence independently of GAP II. Following a dedicated dialogue session with CSOs, preventing gender-based violence was included as a priority area in the 2017 call for proposals under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).⁶⁰ The EU Delegation also supports the Spotlight Initiative on Violence against Women, in cooperation with UN Women.

Some Member States are very active on gender, but this is not always reflected in GAP II reporting. Ireland, for example, has not engaged at all with the reporting process, despite its commitment to gender equality activities in Vietnam. The Irish Embassy commissioned CARE to advise them on improving their gender strategy, for example, and also funds CARE's work on ethnic minorities through bilateral funding. Germany has three priority areas (vocational training, environmental policy and sustainable use of natural resources, and energy), and they are all gender mainstreamed at the design and implementation stage. The German development agency GIZ works with the government to try to insert a gender perspective. However, there are challenges when ministries focus on economic aspects, seeing gender as an add-on luxury.⁶¹

Through EIDHR, the EU is funding projects implemented by CSOs, on the participation of women from ethnic minorities, gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence, amongst others. The EU Delegation tries to bring CSOs together and feed their concerns into discussions with government.⁶² CSOs appreciate this and want the EU Delegation to use its powerful voice to influence government and advocate on their behalf: **'We want closer relations with the EU Delegation and Member States which are not just about funding**. CSOs are increasingly working on advocacy, not just as service providers. CSOs can provide important knowledge and expertise. The EU is a big partner of the Vietnam government. So how can they transfer our message to the Vietnam government?'⁶³

54 Action Aid Vietnam, "Unpaid Care Work. Redistribution for Sustainable Development" (Hanoi, 2017).

55 UN Women, "Towards Gender Equality in Vietnam: Making Inclusive Growth Work for Women," 67.

56 European External Action Service, "Vietnam and the EU," 1.

57 Capacity4dev, "Country Joint Programming Fact Sheet: Vietnam," 2015, 1, <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/joint-programming/document/fact-sheet-vietnam>

58 Interview, EU Delegation Vietnam

59 UN Women, "Towards Gender Equality in Vietnam: Making Inclusive Growth Work for Women," 20.

60 Interview, EU Delegation Vietnam

61 Interview, GIZ Vietnam

62 Interview, EU Delegation Vietnam

63 Interview, CSO Vietnam



Description: Floating market
Credit: Photo by Hamzy Selamat on Unsplash

CSOs have gender focused and gender mainstreamed projects. They have a good working relationship with the government around gender: '[The Gender Equality Department] is the best office in the government for being open to CSOs and for taking ideas from them. However, it is just a small department in a bigger Ministry. We need a proper Ministry for Gender, like Cambodia'.⁶⁴ **CSOs are not very well informed about GAP II.** They may have seen references to it in funding calls, but they have not been invited to discuss its implementation with the EU Delegation.

WHAT IMPACT IS GAP II HAVING?

In Vietnam, there is evidence of gender being raised in policy dialogue and of gender being taken seriously by senior staff in the EU Delegation. These are key enabling factors likely to lead to a positive impact for GAP II. CSOs are engaged in a wide range of projects which have positive impact on gender relations and on the lives of women and girls, men and boys. Some of these are funded by the EU and the Member States. CSOs are also working well with government. The EU Delegation could better support them to do this. Although the EU Delegation is actively implementing aspects of GAP II, both internally and externally, **its profile as a gender actor could be raised: 'The EU doesn't have much presence in gender**

networks. Normally, it is UN Women, the Australian Embassy, the Dutch, Irish, German and some others. We have the Gender Action Partnership Working Group – led by UN Women and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), ministries, government and NGOs. We haven't really noticed an active presence of the EU Delegation in this network.⁶⁵ The Gender Equality Department, for example, reports no contact with the EU Delegation around gender, although it works with UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, Plan, Action Aid and CARE: 'We want to cooperate with other organisations to make sure that the laws are revised. We have no direct communication with the Embassies. We used to have contact with the Australian project on women in leadership. GIZ also organised some training for the Ministry. The EU has many good models for gender, but the **Gender Equality Department wants more opportunities to cooperate with the EU** - directly or through partners - on this issue. Some of our staff can communicate in English, so it would be good if the EU Delegation invited them to activities for sharing information on gender equality. Japan and Korea invite Gender Equality Department staff for training, for example, the UK is also very good at that.'⁶⁶

The wider external country context is relatively conducive to gender equality policy and practice. Political will and leadership exist where it fits the Communist Party and government

⁶⁴ Interview, EU Delegation Vietnam

⁶⁵ Interview, GIZ Vietnam

⁶⁶ Interview, Gender Equality Department Vietnam

objectives. There is increased awareness and a commitment to the SDGs, which can be a useful lever for advocacy work. UN Women, government and international NGOs work together with a shared strategic goal. In the EU Delegation there is internal commitment and gender champions, and there is some external advocacy, including policy dialogue. There is also some collaboration with CSOs. The withdrawal of overseas development aid raises questions about the sustainability of any gender equality work that has been done by donors, including the EU Delegation and the Member States.

Box 4: EXAMPLES OF IMPACT OF CSO ACTIVITIES

Engaging Men

Like many men in Uong Bi City, Mr. Le Van Toan believed that housework is a woman's job. At the beginning of Action Aid's training on unpaid care work in December 2015, he said 'In a family, it is absolutely the man who is the breadwinner. Women know nothing and can do nothing. How could they handle big jobs like men can!' Mr. Toan's views were very similar to other people at the training, particularly around patriarchy and a woman's role in the home. After participating in the training, Mr. Toan's **view on unpaid care work has completely changed**. He has been provided with skills, tools, and knowledge about how much work women do in the home. The training includes asking both men and women in the group to make a Time Diary, which lists all of the jobs that they do in a day. They then place the lists side by side to allow men to see how much unpaid work women do daily. He said, "after two days of training with exercises and tools provided by the trainers, I have realised the importance of women in the family. Looking at the list of daily work of a man and a woman, I am really surprised at how little a man does compared to how much a woman does. If I switched roles, I might not be able to handle the amount of work like that. Before, I thought that these women just stay at home doing easy tasks.' (Action Aid Vietnam).

Voice and Rights

'CARE in Vietnam has a project funded by the EU called Voice and Rights for Ethnic Minority Women in Vietnam. This project creates a space for **ethnic minority women** where they can gather, decide on a problem that they want to understand and find solutions to, research it, propose actions, and take their proposal forward to relevant parties. While this doesn't sound like a breakthrough for communities or researchers elsewhere, it is truly a novel approach to community-based action research in the context of ethnic minority development in Vietnam, given that ethnic minority women are often left behind in various aspects, from education or business skills to social capital and decision making power in the family and community.'⁶⁷

CONCLUSION

Projects and programmes funded by the EU Delegation and Member States and implemented by CSOs are having a positive impact on the lives of women and girls and on gender relations at the community level. The EU Delegation in Vietnam shows signs of best practice in its internal institutional cultural shift. Gender is taken seriously by those with influence within the Delegation and is reported upon in detail. However, it could use its influence more actively to bring gender equality issues to government. It should engage more actively with CSOs around GAP II to enhance the positive impact of their work on the ground.

'The EU Delegation needs to bring gender equality issues to government in dialogue at different levels to increase their commitment. It also needs to focus on monitoring and evaluation to make sure gender is really implemented. The EU Delegation needs to work with government not just on policy, but on changing social norms. They need to have campaigning activities, raise awareness for policymakers and normal people. Public pressure towards policymakers can be powerful. For example, sexual harassment in showbiz and gender-based violence – this has pushed the government through the media and social media. The EU Delegation should work with the public.'⁶⁸

67 Interview CARE in Vietnam

68 Interview CSO Vietnam

RWANDA



*Description: Tea plantation in Rwanda
Credit: Photo by maxime niyomwungeri on Unsplash*



Rwanda has experienced strong economic growth in the past ten years. Between 2004 and 2014, the poverty rate declined by almost 18 percentage points to 39%, while extreme poverty fell to 16%.⁶⁹ However, Rwanda is still a low-income country with a relatively high level of inequality. 85% of its population lives in rural areas and almost half of the rural population lives below the national poverty line. Rwanda has effective leadership and service delivery, strongly centralised decision making, and low levels of corruption. It has ratified all core United Nations Human

Rights conventions and most optional protocols. Concerns remain around freedom of speech and media, human rights and the accountability of government.⁷⁰ Rwanda achieved MDG4 on reducing child mortality, exceeded the MDG3 target on equal representation in parliament by 14% and went beyond the MDG2 target by extending it to 12 years of basic education.⁷¹ The Government's national development strategy, the second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, is structured around the following four strategic thematic areas: (i) economic transformation for rapid growth; (ii) rural development; (iii) productivity and youth employment; and (iv) accountable governance and foundational issues. There has been a rapid growth in the number of CSOs. Most are engaged in service provision. Very few are engaged in advocacy and few are able to influence government decision-making processes at local and national level.⁷² Registration requirements introduced in 2012 are described by the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as 'cumbersome'.⁷³

⁶⁹ International Monetary Fund, "IMF Country Report No. 17.214 Rwanda. Selected Issues" (Washington DC, 2017), 24.

⁷⁰ European Union and the Republic of Rwanda, "National Indicative Programme 2014-20" (Brussels, 2014), 7.

⁷¹ Republic of Rwanda, "Country Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)," 2014, 12.

⁷² European Union Delegation to Rwanda, "Rwanda EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2016-20," 2015, 1.

⁷³ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), "Concluding Observations on the Combined Seventh to Ninth Periodic Reports of Rwanda," 2017, 4.

NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERY, LAWS AND POLICY

There is a broad consensus that Rwanda has a conducive environment for policy on gender equality and women's empowerment. There is strong political will and commitment by the country's leadership, including at the highest level. President Paul Kagame was among the global champions for gender equality and women's empowerment through the He for She Campaign, that aims to encourage men and boys to support gender equality and women's empowerment. This was launched in Rwanda in September 2015. Gender is highlighted as a crosscutting issue in all sectors in the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy. **Gender-responsive budgeting** is a requirement for all sectors and was institutionalised through the Organic Budget Law (2013). This builds on the initiative introduced in 2002 as part of a broader gender mainstreaming programme supported by DFID with the Ministry of Gender and with close collaboration from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.⁷⁴ **Laws and policy on gender are good, as are laws and policy on disability. Implementation remains a challenge and inequalities persist.**

The national gender machinery consists of the **Ministry of Gender and Family Protection** (MIGEPROF); the Gender Monitoring Office; and the National Women's Council. There is a **National Gender Policy** (2010) and Strategic Plan (2016-20); Agriculture Gender Strategy (2010); and National Policy against Gender-Based Violence (2011) and Strategic Plan (2011-16). One Stop Centres funded by the Netherlands through One UN⁷⁵ in Rwanda provide multi-agency support for survivors of violence. The Gender Cluster, which brings together government, development partners and civil society, was revived in March 2018 by UN Women and MIGEPROF.

GENDER EQUALITY

Rwanda has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.383 ranking it 84/159 countries in the 2015 index.

Table 3: Rwanda's Gender Inequality Index (GII) index for 2015.⁷⁶

GII VALUE	GII RANK	MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO	ADOLESCENT BIRTH RATE	FEMALE SEATS IN PARLIAMENT (%)	POPULATION WITH AT LEAST SOME SECONDARY EDUCATION (%)		LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (%)	
					Female	Male	Female	Male
0.383	84	290	26.3	57.5	10.5	16.4	86.4	83.2

Rwanda is ranked number 1 in the world in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's league table of **women in parliament**, with women making up 61.3% of the lower chamber.⁷⁷ Women's representation is better at the national level than the local, but they are nevertheless present in significant numbers in legislative, executive and judicial bodies. Individual women occupy some very influential posts and can make a difference. Women with disabilities are under-represented in decision-making at all levels.⁷⁸

The main gender equality issues cited by respondents in this study are:

- Economic empowerment – access to the formal sector, equal pay, economic decision making, unequal distribution of care work;
- Health. Access to healthcare facilities is problematic for many women and girls. Rwanda's maternal mortality rate remains high. The criminalisation of abortion leads to high numbers of unsafe abortions. Access to modern forms of contraception is inadequate;⁷⁹
- Poverty, especially among female-headed households and in rural areas;
- Cultural norms impeding change, particularly in rural areas. Men are the decision makers in the household, despite inheritance and property laws. Socio-cultural norms determine the division of labour in the family; discrimination against women and girls in schooling, participation in politics, access to finance, land inheritance and implementation of marriage laws;
- Gender-based violence;
- Discrimination against lesbians, women with disabilities, sex workers. Gender-based violence is particularly high among women and girls with disabilities.

⁷⁴ International Monetary Fund, "IMF Country Report No. 17.214 Rwanda. Selected Issues," 35.

⁷⁵ Rwanda is one of eight countries involved in the One UN pilot, where all UN agencies work together as one.

⁷⁶ Maternal mortality ratio is expressed in number of deaths per 100,000 live births and adolescent birth rate is expressed in number of births per 1,000 women aged 15-19. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Briefing Note for Countries on the 2016 Human Development Report: Rwanda," 2017, 6.

⁷⁷ Interparliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments. Situation as of 1 June 2017," 2017, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

⁷⁸ A Coalition of National Non-Governmental Organisations Registered and Operating in Rwanda, "Shadow Report to the Combined 7th, 8th and 9th Report of the Government of Rwanda to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)," 2017, 14.

⁷⁹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), "Concluding Observations on the Combined Seventh to Ninth Periodic Reports of Rwanda," 11.

EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN RWANDA

EU support to Rwanda is concentrated in three sectors: **sustainable energy** (EUR 200 million); **sustainable agriculture and food security** (EUR 200 million); and **accountable governance** (EUR 40 million). An additional EUR 10 million is allocated to measures in favour of civil society.⁸⁰ The **National Indicative Programme 2014-20** committed the EU to **gender mainstreaming** both the agriculture and energy sectors in order to 'ensure that both men and women benefit equally and equitably from EU project and programming activities'. **Joint programming** exists on paper, with Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK coordinating their support for the government's development strategy. However, there is limited active coordination on the ground, partly because there is little overlap in the Member States' priority sectors. The **Country Roadmap for engagement with civil society** highlights three priorities: promoting a conducive legal and institutional environment for CSOs, promoting participation of CSOs, and increasing local CSOs' capacity.⁸¹

HOW IS GAP II BEING IMPLEMENTED?

No senior gender champions have been appointed in the EU Delegation so far. The EU Delegation has a very committed Gender Focal Point, who has held this role since 2010 as a fraction of her overall post and alongside her other responsibilities. She takes primary responsibility for gender in the EU Delegation and attended the GAP II launch in Brussels in 2015, but has had no gender training since then. The EU Delegation has not acted in a leadership role in the coordination of GAP II implementation. **Sweden** has been a lead donor on gender issues, but did not contribute to the 2017 Annual Monitoring Report. **UN Women** co-chairs the recently revived National Gender Coordination Mechanism with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion. **The EU Delegation has not yet conducted a Country Gender Analysis.** When GAP II was launched, programming was already in place for the 11th European Development Fund. It is therefore intended to have a Country Gender Analysis to inform the next round of programming. The EU Delegation reports that in the last call for proposals, promoting gender equality was one of the overarching principles. **Neither of the two policy dialogues in 2017 mentioned gender.**

This study revealed a **strong sense of missed opportunity in Rwanda.** Many respondents stressed that the EU occupies a very influential position and could do more to press the government to implement policies which benefit gender equality and women's empowerment. Given the large amounts of money invested by the EU in the energy and agriculture sectors, they could bring about significant change by insisting that everything that grant recipients do is gender sensitive. Some of the mainstreaming which is being done in agriculture and energy is going unnoticed and needs

to be given more prominence: **'In a country where everyone supports the principle of gender equality, the EU could raise its profile by making its gender mainstreamed agricultural programmes more visible.'**⁸² Many respondents called for the EU to play a more active coordinating role on gender, bringing the Member States together to speak with a single voice, engaging fully with CSOs, and reaching out to government. There is a very widely shared perception that the EU Delegation is not currently implementing GAP II, although one respondent said: 'Either they are doing it and communication is lacking, or they are not doing it and should get onto it.' There are gender experts on the ground who want to work with the EU Delegation to advance the GAP II agenda, and they currently feel excluded: **'The EU Delegation didn't consult on implementation or reporting, even though we asked them last year what they were doing and how we could help. Civil society is really willing to engage.** The EU has huge funding for Rwanda and can influence government. It is working in the agriculture and energy sector, where it can be hard to insert gender. The EU Delegation could do this. The EU should insist that the programmes it funds are gender mainstreamed.'⁸³

Member states are active around gender. However, many of their activities have not been reported through the GAP process. This is not unique to Rwanda, as noted elsewhere in this study. In Rwanda, only Belgium, Germany and the EU Delegation contributed to the 2017 annual report, so activities by Sweden, the UK and the Netherlands were not included. These are significant omissions: **Sweden** has a gender programme, funds UN Women and supports the national gender machinery; **DFID** is committed to gender, funds a project run by the CSO UNABU which aims to increase the access of women with disabilities to gender-based violence services, and works with CARE International on gender, funding a gender-based violence network, and helping the government to engage men and boys and to communicate about transformation; and **the Netherlands** makes a significant contribution to the justice sector working group, as well as funding the One-Stop Centres for survivors of gender-based violence.

Most CSOs report that contact with the EU Delegation is limited: 'We would love to see more engagement with the EU Delegation. This is not about money. For me, I would like to see the EU developing strategies that are gender transformative and that engage with CSOs. They have the voice to influence government. They have been quite limited regarding gender.'⁸⁴ Relations between the EU Delegation and CSOs are much better on the project level: 'We have excellent relations with the EU Delegation. We have a strong focus on gender, but the Head of Rural Development also makes sure it is there in project proposals and it is clearly expressed. The EU Delegation convenes a meeting of people working in the same area, including, but not only, EU grant recipients. **The EU Delegation is very supportive at the project level** and wants to ensure that its projects have impact.'⁸⁵

⁸⁰ European Union and the Republic of Rwanda, "National Indicative Programme 2014-20," 7.

⁸¹ European Union Delegation to Rwanda, "Rwanda EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2016-20," 2-3.

⁸² Interview, CSO Rwanda

⁸³ Interview, CSO Rwanda

⁸⁴ Interview, CSO Rwanda

⁸⁵ Interview, CSO Rwanda



*Description: Games, Rwanda
Credit: Photo by Umberto Battista on Pixabay.com*

WHAT IMPACT IS GAP II HAVING?

The country gender analysis which should inform the implementation of GAP II has not yet been completed, and implementation is expected to gain momentum once this has been done. Member States and CSOs are delivering some outstanding projects and programmes, although largely independently of GAP II. For example, one CSO reported: ‘We work closely with DFID. DFID have invested in our organisation, have created women’s safe spaces. We have seen a lot of change as a result of creating these safe spaces. Now men are gradually coming to the spaces and we have created male gender champions who are contributing to training on gender equality and women’s empowerment in parents’ forums.’⁸⁶ CSOs work closely with government, but are not necessarily

able to challenge it. Most CSOs do service delivery. This provides them with data that they can use for advocacy. CSOs take a strategic collaborative approach, which is evidence based and non-confrontational. International NGOs work to strengthen national actors, providing training tools and growing capacity. Some have excellent relations with the Ministry of Gender and Family Protection, participating in joint events and activities, providing technical support including financial support for key events like rural women’s day and International Women’s Day.

⁸⁶ Interview, CSO Rwanda

Box 5: EXAMPLES OF IMPACT OF CSO ACTIVITIES

Empowering women farmers

'With funding from the European Union, International Alert and Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe are implementing the *Inclusive Engagement for change Project*. It is a three-year project (2016-2018) implemented in Huye (Nyamagbe and Huye district) with the aim of contributing to the promotion of sustainable agriculture and food security in Rwanda through ensuring participatory, transparent and accountable district planning and budgeting. One of the project activities is community dialogue through which the project created community spaces where farmers and local leaders at cell level and village level discuss issues in agriculture and food security. To date, there are 46 community dialogue groups across the three districts of intervention with about 1,890 farmers, of whom 55% are women. Through carefully facilitated inclusive community dialogue, farmers learn how to clearly and effectively publicly express their needs in the presence of local leaders and jointly, they identify solutions. One of the achievements of the community dialogue is women's empowerment. At the beginning, when community dialogue groups were created, rooted in Rwandan culture, women would hardly talk but a number of women have been observed becoming more open and articulate participants during community dialogue meetings. To date, 20 of the 46 community dialogue groups are led by women.'⁸⁷

Empowering cross-border traders

'Sweden has funded a regional project in the Great Lakes region, implemented by International Alert and its partners. The project supports women's economic empowerment promoting small-scale cross-border trade between Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. This trade is largely conducted by women. The project ran between June 2014 and May 2018. It focuses on women's empowerment and aims to improve women's access to economic resources and to skills for cross-border trade; to improve their confidence and increase cooperation on women's empowerment; and to enable a more gender-balanced environment. 'Thanks to the Tushiriki Wote Project, I am not longer beaten and abused', says Madame Akimanizanye Odile. Odile was a cross-border trader, but was not earning enough to support her family. Her husband drank and hit her. Sometimes she and her children sought refuge elsewhere. In 2015, Odile joined the Tushiriki Wote project. Neither she nor her husband believed it would be of any benefit. 'I did the training. This really helped me improve my work and motivated me to join the JYAMBERE/Gisenyi Cooperative'. As the project progressed, Odile's husband was invited to join discussion groups where he met other husbands. The most useful were on gender and the fight against domestic violence. Odile saw a gradual change in her husband and was no longer beaten or abused. Decisions about household goods are now shared and they plan together. Odile said: 'I had been living in fear. Apart from my trade and household tasks, I couldn't go anywhere. Now I have my rights. I take part in the activities of my cooperative and my family.' They have been able to save and are building their own house and have bought a cow to benefit their children's nutrition.'⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Interview International Alert, Rwanda

⁸⁸ Interview, International Alert, Rwanda

CONCLUSION

Rwanda has perhaps been a victim of its own perceived success as a country where gender equality is seen as an issue which has been solved. The wider external environment is eminently conducive to gender equality policy and practice, and Rwanda has a regional and international reputation as a frontrunner in advancing gender equality. This reputation is derived from a limited set of indicators – the proportion of women in national parliament provides a massive boost to the country in international league tables. On maternal health, figures are less impressive. International reputation can be used effectively to pressure government to perform, and UN women works closely with government to improve performance. **The EU is missing the opportunity to play an influential role in this work.** There could be more leadership, gender knowledge and strategic planning around gender at the EU Delegation level. There is weak internal commitment and no senior internal gender champions. The EU Delegation collaborates well with CSOs at the project level, but has not yet included them in GAP II implementation. There are some strong gender actors, some of whom network informally and formally. The revived Gender Cluster has the potential to channel the high levels of knowledge and expertise into actions with significant impact. The EU Delegation could play an important coordination and leadership role, but this requires commitment across the Delegation.

CONCLUSION



*Description: Women farming in Sierra Leone
Credit: Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash*

The impact of GAP II could not have been fully realised in the short time since its introduction. However, **this study shows evidence of enabling factors for its positive impact in the mid-long-term.** For example, in all three countries, there is an awareness of, and political commitment to, gender equality and women's empowerment. Policies and gender machinery are in place, although questions remain around implementation, and impact varies across population groups. Access to, and benefits from, resources, services and opportunities, vary by ethnicity, physical ability and rural-urban divide. There are also **examples from all three countries of projects and programmes which reflect the priorities outlined in GAP II and where positive change has been experienced by diverse groups of women and men.** Projects funded by the EU and Member States and implemented by CSOs are transforming the lives of women and girls, men and boys, in communities in all three countries, contributing to the achievement of the GAP II objectives. Changes in ideas, practices and beliefs are taking place much more slowly, although this study has highlighted some **examples of projects which are changing social norms and gender relations at the community level.**

The impact of GAP II is linked with the impact of other EU and non-EU actions, and of external factors, including the social, economic, political and cultural context. It is therefore impossible to isolate the effects of GAP II. However, **where the objectives of GAP II match those of other donors and of the SDGs, strategic efforts to achieve them will have**

a mutually reinforcing effect. Coordination between all the relevant actors, including the EU Delegation, Member States, CSOs, government and other donors present in the country will accentuate the positive effects. The EU Delegations can play a leadership role in this coordination. In the three countries studied here, this **potential for leadership has not been fully realised. Engagement with CSOs has been inadequate** for GAP II's objectives to be achieved.

Respondents in this study do not make a connection between the changes observed and GAP II. Explanations for the changes include both top-down (the influence of international conventions and international organisations, for example) and bottom-up (the work of CSOs on the ground). Respondents are, on the whole, dissatisfied with the role played so far by the EU Delegations around gender, but stress that **the position of the EU offers a window of opportunity.** One CSO in Ghana, for example, commented: **'I think the EU's GAP II is really significant, as its objective of promoting gender equality and women and girls' empowerment makes it a great tool for the achievement of the SDGs particularly goal 5.'** Respondents call for the EU to use its influential position in the country to influence government around gender. This includes in those sectors where it can be more difficult to introduce a gender analysis, including state budget, infrastructure, agriculture and energy. GAP II has had little impact in areas of EU external action traditionally untouched by gender, including trade, energy and migration. In all three countries, there needs

to be increased knowledge and commitment within the sectors and amongst those responsible for programming, especially in the priority sectors where large sums of money are directed to government through budget support.

‘Donors are very important. They can hold other stakeholders accountable [...] We need donors to put pressure on countries to implement the UN Convention on Persons with Disabilities and this is something they have the influence to do. The EU should be inclusive and think of the segments of the population who are left behind. It should hold accountable all of the actors that it is supporting. The EU has disability policies. Does it require recipients of its grants to report on how many people with disabilities they are reaching? The EU has a lot of power. Its voice is heard more than ours. It should think about the development of women who need special assistance.’⁸⁹

Challenges include the need to increase coordination between EU Delegations, Member States and CSOs around gender; the need to increase awareness of GAP II objectives; and the need for all actors to commit themselves to integrating gender into all external actions. Knowledge about GAP II outside the EU Delegations is very low. Few CSOs have been involved in GAP II implementation at any stage or in any capacity. Amongst EU Delegations and Member States, there is a widespread sense that GAP II is more about monitoring and reporting than activities. The reporting template is perceived as inaccessible, a poor fit with actual activities, onerous and irrelevant. Some

Member States refuse to engage with the reporting process for this reason. Others regret the fact that their activities do not match the indicators and are therefore under-reported. The reporting template is also made available very late in the year, accentuating the impression that GAP II is just about reporting, rather than informing planning and reflection throughout the annual cycle.

‘We need to see the template at the beginning of the year. That way, we can plan and we can send it to the Head of Cooperation so that GAP II is part of our planning and activities and not just a reporting process.’⁹⁰

Often, laws and policies are already in place and political will already exists at the level of rhetorical commitment. The next step is to ensure that these laws and policies are implemented and the rhetorical commitment translated into practice. This involves **changing mindsets and reaching beyond the urban elite to transform gender relations in all sections of the population.** EU Delegations, Member States and CSOs should coordinate their work with government to change social norms, so that existing laws and policies can be effectively implemented. **CSOs have the knowledge, expertise and contacts on the ground to engage all sections of the population in a way that is informed by and sensitive to the local context.** Working with them, listening to them, and supporting them in this work is the **best way to maximise the impact of GAP II.** The EU must promote CSO inclusion at all levels if GAP II is to achieve its goal of transforming the lives of women and girls.

⁸⁹ Interview, CSO Rwanda

⁹⁰ Interview, EU Delegation Rwanda.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Description: Musical school in a floating Restaurant, Loboc, Philippines
Credit: Photo by Austin Nicomedez on Unsplash

1 THE EU SHOULD BUILD ON THE GOOD PRACTICE IDENTIFIED IN THIS STUDY TO ENHANCE THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF GAP II

- GAP II, combined with political commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in the partner countries and the leverage added by Agenda 2030, produces favourable conditions for the transformation of gender relations. **The EU should play an active role in bringing about the transformation of gender relations, using its position to influence government and to coordinate partners.**
- EU Delegations should pay particular attention to specific groups of women and girls in an **intersectional perspective** (geographic area, disability status or sexual orientation for example as shown in our case studies).
- EU Delegations, Member States and CSOs should coordinate their work with government to **change social norms**, so that existing laws and policies can achieve their stated goals.
- **Communication and coordination** should be improved and harnessed into GAP II impact.

2 IMPLEMENTATION IS A PRE-CONDITION FOR IMPACT. GAP II THEREFORE NEEDS TO BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED BY ALL ACTORS, INCLUDING THOSE AT A SENIOR LEVEL

- Programming should be informed by a relevant and credible gender analysis.
- Gender issues need to be included in policy dialogue at all levels.
- Responsibility for gender needs to be shared more widely across the EU Delegation, including among senior staff and sector specialists.
- Particular attention should be given to gender mainstreaming in non-social sectors such as trade, agriculture and infrastructure as these are often key areas of cooperation and the ones where a gender-sensitive perspective is the least applied by both governments and the EU Delegations.
- The understanding of sustainable development and economic growth must be reassessed in cooperation mechanisms so that they can better include gender equality and are not detrimental to women and girls, in particular the most marginalised.
- Gender mainstreaming should particularly be applied to Joint Programming and the financial allocations it determines.

3 THERE SHOULD BE A SHIFT FROM REPORTING TO ACTION

- The reporting template should be available to EU Delegations and Member States at the beginning of the year, so that it informs their activities.
- The reporting template and timetable should be redesigned to encourage better reporting by the Member States.
- Clearer guidance should be made available to the Member States so that they can better match their activities to the indicators.
- Regional meetings of Gender Focal Points should be organised as suggested by the EU Delegation in Ghana. These would be more focused, relevant and helpful than the global network and would function as a support network and information exchange.
- The Gender Focal Point should identify existing gender networks in the country and participate in them.

4 THE EU MUST PROMOTE CSO INCLUSION AT ALL LEVELS

- CSOs have knowledge, expertise and contacts on the ground that can be used to engage all sections of the population in a way that is informed by and sensitive to the local context. EU Delegations and Member States should **engage more actively with CSOs** around GAP II to enhance the positive impact of their work on the ground, in particular grassroot and community-based organisations which require particular funding modalities.
- **Linkages between the gender and CSO focal points in the EU Delegation** should be reviewed to facilitate CSO engagement on gender equality as well as gender balance in overall CSO engagement, which would maximise resources, help strengthen relationships with civil society as a whole, and ensure a coherent approach.
- **Dedicated dialogue sessions with CSOs** should be used to shape gender mainstreamed calls for proposals under various instruments.

5 POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES ACTION BEYOND DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

- **Trade agreements** should be gender sensitive to ensure that they do not exacerbate existing inequalities or create new ones. **Gender impact assessments** must be conducted.
- Policy in other areas of external action, including migration and climate change, must also be gender sensitive, and gender issues must be included in political dialogue between EU Delegations and governments.
- Gender equality must be fully mainstreamed into Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, as it should in all areas of external action. This must involve all stakeholders, including CSO.

6 LOOKING AHEAD

- EU Delegations and Member States need to find ways to ensure the **sustainability** of gender projects and programmes in the face of declining overseas development aid and phasing out of EU overseas development aid and the increasing role of non-traditional donors.
- **The final evaluation for GAP II, and the drafting process of GAP III, should highlight enabling factors and markers of change, as this will be the best way to evaluate its impact.**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
CEDAW	Convention/Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGA	Country Gender Analysis
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DFID	(UK) Department for International Development
EDF	European Development Fund
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EUD	European Union Delegation
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GED	Gender Equality Department
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
LEAP	Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Protection
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MS	Member State(s)
NIP	National Indicative Programme
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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