



FEMINIST AID

A call for G7 leaders to beat inequality

www.oxfam.org



OXFAM

In an increasingly unequal world, advancing gender equality is fundamental to tackling inequality and poverty. The G7 has made important gender equality commitments and all G7 countries have gender equality integrated in their aid strategies. But efforts continue to fall short as they too often neglect to address the underlying structural and systemic barriers that keep women poor and undermine their fundamental rights and freedoms. Feminist aid has the potential to be a game changer in that it challenges us to rethink how aid is delivered and truly transform systems of unequal power. The time is now for the G7 to make a historic commit to a feminist aid agenda.

© Oxfam International May 2019

This paper was written by Diana Sarosi and Sandra Lhote Fernandes. Oxfam acknowledges the assistance of Julie Seghers, Francesca Rhodes, Nathan Coplin, Lauren Ravon, Laura Haylock, Aria Grabowski and Marc Cohen in its production. It is part of a series of papers written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.

For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email advocacy@oxfaminternational.org

This publication is copyright but the text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged. E-mail policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk.

The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International under ISBN 978-1-78748-435-1 in May 2019. DOI: 10.21201/2019.4351
Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.

Cover photo: Pollisree officials pose as 'empowered women' in Rangpur, Bangladesh, as part of Oxfam Canada's Creating Spaces project. Photo: Abir Abdullah/Oxfam

SUMMARY

Gender inequality is one of the oldest and most pervasive forms of inequality in the world. It persists in the economy and in political decision making. It manifests itself in violence against women and girls and in restrictions on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, on their access to productive assets and land ownership, and on their rights to vote and engage in political processes. These infringements on women's rights prevent many women from escaping poverty and determining their own destinies.

Today's unacceptable levels of extreme economic inequality, where 26 billionaires own more wealth than the bottom 3.8 billion people is driven by an economic model which is incompatible with gender equality. Women are consistently over represented in the lowest-paid jobs and the informal sector, where they make poverty wages, face exploitative conditions and lack job security. Women are also largely absent from the corridors of power. According to the World Economic Forum, at the current rate of progress, it will take an estimated 202 years before women and men participate equally and are paid the same, and gender equality in the economy is achieved.¹

It will take an estimated 202 years before gender economic parity is achieved.

World Economic Forum,
2018

While advances have been made in mainstreaming gender considerations in policies, laws, programs and budgets, these initiatives are often done on the cheap, take a piecemeal and incoherent approach to addressing gender inequality, focusing on individual women and girls and failing to address underlying power imbalances and discriminatory social norms. For instance, policies designed to increase job opportunities for women often lack measures to ensure living wages, promote adequate working conditions, or address women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work. These shortcomings apply to aid as well. Initiatives to promote women's economic empowerment, for example, often neglect to address structural barriers, such as discriminatory laws that prevent women from working in certain sectors or social norms that undervalue women's work and keep their work informal.

'I refuse to accept the idea that we can simply shoehorn women into a global economy that is exploiting them, and then celebrate it as women's economic empowerment. The G7 – as a gathering of most of the world's richest nations – must now responsibly redesign the economies to work for women, and support a far broader shift in the global economy.'

—Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of Oxfam International ²

In its rhetoric and commitments, the Group of Seven (G7) has pushed the needle forward in support of gender equality. Canada broke new ground during its G7 presidency in 2018 when it mainstreamed gender throughout all G7 themes on the agenda, while also making gender equality and the empowerment of women a stand-alone focus. An unprecedented number of gender equality commitments were made, and the first-ever Gender Equality Advisory Council released a report with a comprehensive list of recommendations for closing the gender gap and ensuring that women, in all their diversity, can enjoy their rights and freedoms.

For the 2019 French presidency, France has signalled its ambition to build on Canada's momentum and committed to putting gender equality at the heart of its G7 agenda. France announced a reconstituted Gender Equality Advisory Council

tasked with compiling a package of best-practice laws and legislation that advance gender equality from across the globe. For the first time it has also included a ministerial meeting of women and gender equality ministers.

Now is the time for the G7 to move gender equality and women's empowerment to the next level by adopting a declaration at the Biarritz summit committing to a feminist aid agenda.

A feminist approach to aid has the power to transform societies. It can tackle deep-seated and historical power imbalances and shift power relations and discriminatory social norms that keep women in poverty. It emphasizes learning, collaboration, participation, inclusivity and responsiveness in its processes and partnerships. It follows a rights-based, transformative approach to strengthen women's and girls' capacity to mobilize their own power, and that of other stakeholders, to shape their own futures.

A feminist approach is novel and requires an institutional and cultural shift in how donors and partners do business. Such a shift is doable. Many donors are already well on their way to increasing gender equality programming in their foreign aid. Sweden adopted a feminist foreign policy in 2014, and Canada launched its first feminist international assistance policy in 2017. Most donors have in place gender strategies and targets for dedicated gender programming: Canada, Ireland and Sweden focus more than 80% of their aid on gender equality (primary and secondary objectives – OECD DAC markers 1 and 2). A feminist approach takes this progress to the next level by incorporating the key feminist principles of transformative change, intersectionality, agency and process, essentially defining new ways to deliver aid, measure results and work with partners to truly transform gender and power relations.

Canada, Ireland and Sweden focus more than 80% of their aid on gender equality.

Experts worldwide agree that the most effective way to achieve gender equality is through a twin-track approach that combines dedicated resources for women's rights with a robust system for mainstreaming gender across all sectors. Feminist aid combines this twin-track approach with a core strategy of pursuing transformational change that tackles unequal gendered power relations. In doing so, it challenges systemic inequality, unjust power systems, and discriminatory laws, policies and programs – at local, national, regional and global levels. This approach will require both political leadership and significant investment.

A feminist approach requires bolstering the resources available to women's rights organizations and feminist movements. Evidence confirms that such groups are fundamental in catalysing change towards gender equality. Although donors have recognized the importance of investing in women and girls, aid to women's organizations remains low.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), total aid by DAC donors to women's institutions and organizations (governmental and non-governmental) amounted to US\$435m on average per year in 2016–2017. Out of this, \$177m on average per year was committed specifically to non-governmental women's organizations, and only \$31m went directly to women's organizations based in developing countries.³

Only 0.12% of total aid was committed to non-governmental women's organizations, only 0.02% to women's organizations based in developing countries.

France has set an ambitious gender equality agenda for its G7 presidency. At the 2018 UN General Assembly, President Emmanuel Macron announced France's priorities for its presidency and stated: 'I have made gender parity in France the

great cause of my five-year term, and I issue an appeal here to make this a great global cause with you'.⁴ One of the biggest contributions G7 countries can make towards the global movement to end poverty and gender inequality is to adopt a feminist approach to aid.

As a first step to becoming champions of feminist aid, G7 leaders must put the fight against inequality – both gender and economic inequality – at the front and centre of their aid agenda.

At the Biarritz summit they should **adopt a declaration committing to a feminist approach to their aid policies** that encompass the following core components:

1. Make gender-based analysis mandatory across all aid strategies, frameworks, programming and monitoring, and ensure that all aid integrates gender equality with at least one well-resourced intermediate-level outcome that specifically addresses structural gender inequalities (i.e. scoring at least 1 on OECD gender markers).
2. Invest in stand-alone programming that addresses the structural causes of gender inequality, and significantly increase aid to advance gender equality as the principal focus (i.e. scoring 2 on OECD DAC gender markers).
3. Invest in women's rights and feminist organizations, and ensure that funding mechanisms foster their agency and sustainability.
4. Ensure feminist implementation that fosters women's agency and learning and applies feminist principles to monitoring and evaluation.

1 WHY DOES GENDER JUSTICE MATTER IN AN INCREASINGLY UNEQUAL WORLD?

In the lead-up to the 2019 Davos World Economic Forum, Oxfam published its annual report on inequality.⁵ The findings were clear: inequality is out of control. In 2018 the wealth of the world's billionaires increased by \$2.5bn a day, while the poorest 3.8 billion people saw their wealth shrink by \$500m a day. More than a billion people worldwide live in extreme poverty, while the number of billionaires has now reached 1,900, with a new billionaire created every two days. Extreme inequality is undermining the fight against poverty, damaging our economies and fuelling public anger across the globe. It is also one of the drivers of the economic gender gap.

Inequality is bad for all, but it has particularly adverse consequences for the women who make up the majority of the world's poor people.⁶ Much of the wealth of the super-rich is built on the backs of hard-working women who cannot escape poverty. Women are concentrated in the lowest-paid jobs, where they have minimal job security and physical safety, and they shoulder a disproportionate amount of unpaid care work. Systematic discrimination against women and girls is both a cause and a result of the inequality that drives poverty. Gender justice is therefore crucial to ending poverty and inequality.

Much of the wealth of the super-rich is built on the backs of hard-working women who cannot escape poverty.

Gender inequality is one of the oldest and most pervasive forms of inequality in the world. It persists through unequal power relations between women and men and through patriarchal norms and structures that shape society. The result is that women have lower economic status and financial security, and their physical and sexual health and personal rights and freedoms are restricted. Violence against women and girls, which persists in every country, is an expression of unequal power and harmful gender norms that serve to maintain gender inequality in families, communities and societies. This reality explains these harrowing statistics:

- At current rates of progress, it will take 202 years to close the global economic gender gap.⁷
- More than half of the world's women are legally restricted from working in certain sectors because of their gender.⁸
- It is estimated that 650 million women and girls worldwide were married before the age of 18, many of them facing violence and other severe violations of their rights.⁹
- At least 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation in the 30 countries with representative data on prevalence.¹⁰
- Thirty-five percent of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.¹¹
- Every day women do 16.4 billion hours of unpaid care work – at least twice as much, and in some settings ten times as much, as men.¹²

- Each year worldwide more than 200 million women want to avoid pregnancy but do not use modern contraception, and 25 million unsafe abortions take place.¹³
- Globally more than 130 million school-aged girls do not attend primary or secondary school.¹⁴

In addition to undermining women's rights, gender inequality imposes a huge social cost. Gender inequality in the economy costs women in developing countries \$9 trillion a year – a sum that would not only give new spending power to women and benefit their families and communities, but also provide a massive boost to the economy as a whole.¹⁵ Countries with higher levels of gender equality tend to have higher incomes, and evidence from a number of regions and countries shows that closing the gender gap leads to a reduction in poverty. In Latin America, for example, an increase in the number of women in paid work between 2000 and 2010 accounted for about 30% of the overall reduction in poverty and income inequality.¹⁶

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has injected a sense of urgency and renewed interest in a coordinated global effort to fight poverty and inequality. It highlights women's empowerment as a precondition for ending poverty and inequality, as exemplified by a stand-alone goal on gender equality (Sustainable Development Goal 5, or SDG 5) and the mainstreaming of gender equality across all other goals. So far, however, the much-touted slogan of 'putting women and girls at the heart of sustainable development' has not translated into funding shifts and transformative approaches that would address the structural barriers women face. A Brookings Institution study assessing progress on the SDGs found that gender equality measures were nowhere near on track to be achieved by 2030 and that roughly 25% of people will still be left behind by 2030.¹⁷

Efforts to end poverty and inequality will fall short unless they tackle the underlying structures that compound gender inequality. A transformative approach is needed that puts women, especially feminists from the Global South, front and centre, and boosts their agency so they can tackle gender and power relations head on by transforming the discriminatory structures and social norms that underpin inequality and poverty. These women know their communities best and know what needs to be done to advance women's rights and gender equality. What they need is support and resources to test their locally grounded solutions and learn from their setbacks.

Box 1: A feminist vision for the G7

During Canada's G7 presidency, the first-ever feminist Women7 (W7) was held, bringing together more than 60 feminists from Canada, the G7 countries and the Global South to establish a feminist vision for the G7. Collectively, they called on G7 leaders to adopt a feminist approach to the G7 that dramatically shifts how decisions are made by putting feminist leaders' voices front and centre in decision-making processes. To them a feminist approach is one that:

- Integrates intersectionality by recognizing the multiple and intersecting aspects of identity that play out in women's lives and experiences and centring the most marginalized women in all decision making;
- Centres the diversity of lived experiences and expertise – especially of those most affected by G7 decisions, policies and programmes – through meaningful participation in policy processes by women who represent the full range of feminist organizing;
- Guarantees resources for feminist movements and organizing to ensure that those with direct impact on local communities have the resources they need and that funding mechanisms support collaboration and movement building;
- Establishes a new economic model based on sustainability and social, political and economic rights for all, in both the formal and informal economy; and
- Grounds itself in accountability to those most affected by G7 policies and actions.

Feminist aid, when done well, can be a game changer. A feminist approach to aid is novel. It challenges us to rethink how we work and whom we work with. The current approach of 'add women and stir' – which operates on the logic that adding more women as beneficiaries will increase gender equality – is not working. Addressing the structural discrimination embedded in society depends on increasing women's agency. Yet women in affected communities are rarely involved in designing programming, let alone implementing, monitoring and evaluating it. A feminist approach also challenges us to investigate how race, ethnicity, religion, class, caste and sexuality influence the way women experience inequality and discrimination and further compound and exacerbate oppression.

Box 2: Intersecting barriers

In India, gender, religion, class and caste combine to shape women's experiences of social and economic inequality. Estimates suggest that India has 1.3 million manual scavengers, mostly Dalit women, who are considered the lowest caste. Manual scavenging involves cleaning the dry latrines of the wealthy and carrying the excreta to dumps. Employing manual scavengers has been banned for reasons of health and sanitation, and this work has been deemed the responsibility of government, but many states do little to enforce these rules. The women are under social pressure to do the work and unaware that they have the right to refuse. Victims twice over, they face discrimination in their homes for the job they do, in addition to discrimination from the upper caste.

FEMINIST PRINCIPLES

Central to the implementation of a feminist approach to aid are the following feminist principles.

- **Transformative change:** A transformative change approach seeks to redress the historical power imbalances between men and women. It challenges and shifts power relations and discriminatory social norms that devalue women and girls in all their diversity (and that have negative impacts on men and boys as well). Such approaches are long term and sustainable, and they often require collective action and strategies that work towards changes at multiple levels: within individuals, within households, within society and within institutions.
- **Intersectionality:** Intersectionality refers to the multiple aspects of identity that play out in people's lives and experiences (such as gender, class, age, race, sexuality or ethnicity) and that can compound and exacerbate oppression. An intersectional approach in policy takes account of the complex ways that multiple identities intersect and influence interests, participation and outcomes.
- **Agency:** Agency is an individual or group's ability to make choices and to transform those choices into desired outcomes. Incorporating agency into policy requires contemplating issues of autonomy, choice, empowerment and meaningful engagement. A feminist lens on agency moves beyond seeing women as participants or beneficiaries; it means that women in all their diversity are experts on their own experience, agents of their own lives and actors in their community and society.
- **Process:** A feminist policy prioritizes not only results (the advancement of the rights of women and girls), but the process used to achieve them (ways of working, program design and implementation, the values underpinning decisions). Fundamental aspects of feminist process include integrity, contextualization, learning, collaboration, participation, inclusivity and responsiveness.

A feminist approach to aid is particularly relevant in the current context of the aid sector's 'me too' reckoning. Feminists from the Global South have long pointed to the inherent power imbalances that shape the sector and give rise to abuse and exploitation. Although feminist activists have been integral to putting women's rights on international agendas, they have been largely shut out of processes and decision-making spaces that decide on actions to advance women's rights. Too often, aid donors do gender work superficially or use it to access more resources while ignoring the issues of misogyny, race, class and imperialism that give rise to sexual misconduct and cultures of impunity. It is critical for the sector itself to go beyond technical responses designed to safeguard policies and deeply examine its own complicity in reinforcing privilege, power and exclusion. Oxfam acknowledges that we ourselves have much progress to make in this area.

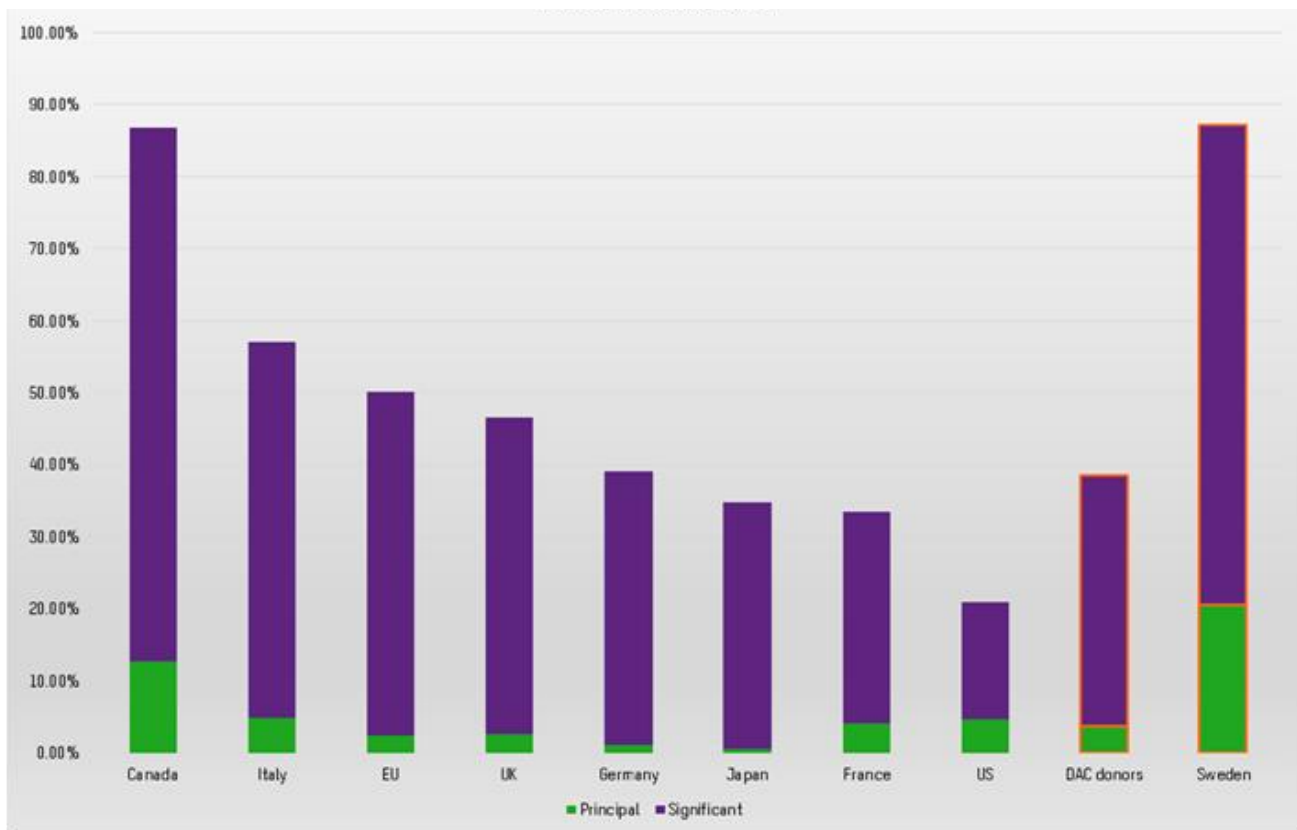
In the sections that follow, this paper will outline the rationale for prioritizing gender justice in aid and analyse current trends in G7 donor spending on gender equality. Next it will explain the need for gender-transformative, inequality-busting aid to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Finally, it will lay out the key components of a feminist aid approach.

2 HOW G7 DONORS ARE INTEGRATING GENDER IN THEIR AID

All G7 donors have adopted gender equality strategies for their aid spending. But aid in support of gender equality and women’s empowerment is insufficient, and donors have not evenly mainstreamed gender within their development cooperation policies. Aid that targets gender equality as a principal objective remains consistently low: in 2017 it represented less than 4% of aid.¹⁸ In fact, 62% of aid continues to be gender-blind. Dedicated gender equality programming represented 1% of total aid going to the economic and productive sectors; the OECD has called this amount ‘a drop in the ocean’.¹⁹

Aid that targets gender as a principal objective represented less than 4% of aid in 2017; 62% of aid continues to be gender-blind.

Figure 1: Aid in support of gender equality and women’s empowerment – G7 donors’ performance 2017 (OECD Marker 1 and 2)



Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) database – 2017 data

Box 3: The OECD gender equality policy marker

The OECD tracks aid in support of gender equality and women's rights using the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender equality policy marker – a statistical tool designed to show the degree to which each aid activity targets gender equality as a policy objective. The gender equality policy marker is based on a three-point scoring system:

- Principal (marked 2) means that gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental to its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this objective.
- Significant (marked 1) means that gender equality is an important and deliberate objective but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.
- Not targeted (marked 0) means that the project/programme has been screened against the gender marker but has not been found to target gender equality.

DAC members incorporate the gender equality policy marker when they report annually on their aid activities to the DAC. The policy markers apply to donors' spending commitments, and as such they measure planned investments and not disbursements. Markers apply to bilateral allocable aid and exclude core contributions to multilateral organizations. The marker does capture, however, all funding for activities channelled through multilaterals and NGOs for the implementation of specific projects (earmarked contributions).

At present, 92% of total bilateral 'sector-allocable' aid is screened against the gender equality marker.

For more information, see the OECD's *Handbook on the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker* at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Handbook-OECD-DAC-Gender-Equality-Policy-Marker.pdf>

Canada

Canada made waves in 2017 when it launched its Feminist International Assistance Policy. This policy set ambitious targets for aid spending, with 15% of all aid going towards programs that have gender equality as their principal focus and 80% of all aid integrating gender equality goals (OECD DAC markers 1 and 2). The policy also applies a twin-track approach of dedicating one of the pillars to stand-alone gender equality and women's empowerment programming while mainstreaming gender equality across all other action areas. Moreover, it recognizes the role of women's rights organizations in advancing gender equality and has launched two major initiatives to support women's movements: the Women's Voice and Leadership Program, with an investment of C\$150m over three years to support women's rights organizations, and the Partnership to Fund Gender Equality, which aims to leverage private finance through a public investment of up to C\$300m.

France

France launched its first 'gender and development' strategy in 2007 and has progressively increased its international leadership on promoting women's rights. In 2014 the French development agency launched its first framework on integrating gender by developing sectoral and geographical roadmaps and toolkits to mainstream gender. France launched a 'feminist diplomacy' initiative in

2018, promoting women's rights globally and women's participation within the foreign office staff. Despite strong rhetorical commitment and leadership, France is lagging behind in terms of integrating gender into its actions and resource allocations. In 2013 France first committed to mainstreaming gender in 50% of aid spending by 2017 (OECD DAC markers 1 and 2), but in 2018 it postponed this objective to 2022. The latest DAC figures show that France integrates gender into less than one-third of its aid, and only 4% of aid has gender equality as a principal objective.

Germany

The German strategy 'Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality' (Gender Action Plan = GAP II 2016–2020) shows some good approaches and entry points and sets out the priorities and concrete measures through which the three-pronged approach of gender mainstreaming, empowerment and policy dialogue should be implemented in German development cooperation (policy making, programming and projects). But the plan lacks concrete indicators to measure the progress the strategy aims to reach. Indeed, the past years have shown that the implementation is lacking and the annual roadmaps to implement the strategy are vague, not ambitious enough and often delayed. Furthermore, aid spending on gender equality has decreased in the past years and has fallen from 46.5% in 2015 to 39.2% in 2017.

Italy

Following 2014 OCDE-DAC Peer review recommendations in recent years Italy has strengthened its twin-track approach, ensuring on one side specific aid funding for women's empowerment initiatives in fragile contexts (i.e. refugee camps in Lebanon); and on the other side cross-cutting gender objectives included in all development cooperation initiatives. Moreover the Italian Development Agency is currently working on specific guidelines on gender equality and women's empowerment that are in their final phase of consultation with Italian stakeholders. The draft version of this document set out some relevant targets: at least 10% of Italian aid should be allocated to specific initiatives on gender equality and women's empowerment, at least 20% of the Italian contribution to multilateral agencies working on gender equality. In 2017, Italy was the second donor of the G7 with 57% of aid integrating gender equality goals (OECD DAC markers 1 and 2).

Japan

In its 2015 development cooperation charter, Japan made promoting women's participation one of its eight principles for 'securing the appropriateness of development cooperation'.²⁰ Japan's aid agency seeks to prioritize the participation of women at every phase of development cooperation and to be more proactive in ensuring that women share equitably in the fruits of development, while giving consideration to women's possible vulnerabilities and special needs. In 2017 Japan integrated gender equality into less than 35% of its aid (OECD DAC markers 1 and 2), less than the DAC average, and only 0.64% of aid targeted gender equality as a principal objective.

United States

The United States has a strong history of promoting gender equality in its development activities. It has taken steps to incorporate gender equality components in its programs through, for example, the 2012 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment policy of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). In early 2019 the United States enacted the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act, which states that US international development policy is to reduce gender disparities. The law requires USAID to use gender analysis in shaping its strategies, projects and activities. Implementation of the law, however, is inconsistent across agencies, and any focus on the root causes of gender inequality across all sectors seems to have been deprioritized. Nowhere is this more evident than in the expansion of the Mexico City Policy, which blocks federal funding for non-government organizations that provide abortion counselling or referrals, advocate decriminalizing abortion, or seek to expand abortion services. Additionally, the Trump administration has made large cuts in funding for gender equality aid programs, as shown by both its budget requests and its reporting on official development assistance (ODA).

United Kingdom

The UK government has played a role in global advocacy on gender equality. It convened both the Girl Summit and the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2014, and it supported the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. In 2018 the UK Department for International Development (DFID) renewed its 'Strategic Vision for Gender Equality: Her Potential, Our Future,' which sets the UK's aid priorities and vision of gender equality for 2018 to 2030. This strategic vision rests on five pillars: women's economic empowerment, girl's education, women's political empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and ending violence against women and girls. The policy also commits the UK to integrating gender further across UK aid, and the UK's Gender Equality Act (2014) means that, by law, all development and humanitarian assistance must consider gender equality at the outset. Nonetheless, less than 46% of UK aid has gender equality as a secondary or primary objective, showing that more needs to be done to translate this legal mandate into effective gender mainstreaming.

European Commission

In its strategy 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016–2020', the European Commission commits to an institutional culture shift and the integration of gender as a principal or significant objective in 85% of all new projects by 2020. This is an ambitious target given that in 2017 only half of EU aid integrated gender and less than 3% had gender as its principal objective.

These strategies are steps in the right direction, but they fall short of tackling the systematic barriers women and girls face and transforming the unequal power relations that keep women poor, exploited and abused. One factor that contributes to the shortfall is the lack of funding for women's rights organizations. Evidence confirms that women's rights organizations and movements are fundamental in catalysing change towards gender equality. While donors have

recognized the importance of investing in women and girls, aid to women’s organizations remains low.

Table 1: G7 support to women’s equality organizations and institutions

Donors	Support to women’s equality organizations and institutions* (Million US\$) 2017	As % of aid
<i>Canada</i>	2.7m	0.1%
<i>France</i>	0.26m	0.002%
<i>Germany</i>	33.6m	0.13%
<i>Italy</i>	7m	0.2%
<i>Japan</i>	14m	0.07%
<i>United Kingdom</i>	35.5m	0.5%
<i>United States of America</i>	3.8m	0.01%
<i>EU institutions</i>	101m	0.4%
<i>Sweden</i>	43m	1.2%
<i>DAC members average</i>	299m	0.24%

*representing the purpose code for women’s equality organizations and institutions which covers support for institutions and organizations working for gender equality and women’s empowerment. This code helps to track donors’ support to women’s organizations and ministries and go beyond non-government organizations and feminist movements, which represent less than half of those funds.

Source: OECD CRS database

Truly achieving the transformative change needed to realize women’s fundamental rights and freedoms requires a bold new approach. Donors should deliver aid in ways that will maximize its positive impact on inequality and poverty reduction. They should follow the examples of Canada and Sweden, which have set new standards in mainstreaming gender throughout their aid policies and programming while ensuring dedicated funding for women’s rights organizations.

Box 4: Sweden’s feminist foreign policy

In October 2014 Sweden became the first country to launch a feminist foreign policy, which aims to apply a systematic gender equality perspective to Sweden’s whole foreign policy agenda. In 2018 Sweden renewed its commitment to a feminist approach by publishing a handbook outlining this approach and the four Rs that lie at its heart: it is a **rights**-based approach that promotes women’s **representation** at all levels and in all areas and ensures that **resources** are allocated to promoting gender equality and women’s rights. In addition, all foreign actions are based on the **reality** of women’s lived experiences. The handbook includes tools and methodologies to improve analyses and gender mainstreaming and to help change norms. As a donor, Sweden leads the way in supporting gender equality: 20.6% of its aid is dedicated to gender equality and women’s empowerment as its principal objective, and 87.2% of aid integrates gender.²¹

3 WHY INEQUALITY-BUSTING AID MATTERS TO A FEMINIST APPROACH TO AID

In April 2019 Oxfam published its new vision of aid in *Hitting the Target: An Agenda for Aid in Times of Extreme Inequality*,²² showing how development aid can successfully beat poverty by putting inequality at the front and centre of aid strategies and programs. A mounting body of evidence demonstrates that economic and gender inequality is a significant barrier to poverty reduction. Inequality-busting aid is aid that targets public services and social protection in the poorest countries, supports progressive tax collection and active citizenship, and respects the principles of development cooperation effectiveness.

AID THAT STRENGTHENS ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

There is strong evidence that free public health and education systems, coupled with social protection, are crucial to meeting the rights of citizens, reducing economic and gender inequality, and breaking down the intergenerational transmission of poverty.²³ Because of discrimination and social norms, women have less income and assets than men, do more unpaid care work and are more likely to work in the informal sector. Therefore, when access to healthcare, education or water is expensive, women in poor households are the first to go without them, resulting in a vicious circle where women are both more in need of public support and less able to access it.

To tackle gender inequalities, aid must contribute to a situation in which women benefit from universal access to essential public services and social protection without suffering from financial or socio-cultural hardship. This aid to social services should adopt a feminist approach that supports gender-responsive and transformative public policies and takes into account women's needs and priorities in the knowledge that these are influenced by intersecting discriminations.

Designed around the model of a male breadwinner, social protection systems assume an uninterrupted and full-time career in the formal economy. This model tends to penalize women, who are paid less, are disproportionately represented in precarious and informal work, and shoulder most unpaid care. As a result, women receive substantially lower coverage rates and benefit levels. The inadequacy of maternity leave throughout the world is particularly striking: 69% of mothers of new-borns receive no benefit of any kind.²⁴ Inadequate childcare penalizes women by confining them to roles of reproducing and care-giving; in the long run keeping them away from higher pay and safer jobs. Given these intersecting inequalities, women often arrive at an older age with few economic, social and cultural assets to call upon, resulting in an urgent need for adequate social protection. Aid should foster public investment not only in gender-responsive, high-quality social protection schemes such as childcare and elder care services, but also in the improvement of women's rights in the labour market.

69 percent of mothers of new-borns in the world receive no benefit of any kind.

Women also suffer from unmet need in terms of access to healthcare, with tragic consequences. For example, poor-quality maternal health infrastructure and care results in high rates of maternal death. During the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) era from 2000 to 2015, aid significantly contributed to a decline in maternal death in developing countries. Yet in the poorest countries access to maternal care is still an important challenge. The maternal mortality ratio in Africa is more than twice as high as the global average. Inequality is also high within countries, where women who are extremely poor or who live in rural areas lack access to good-quality public health services. In Senegal, for example, skilled health personnel attend 80% of births among the richest women but only 30% among the poorest women.²⁵ The absence of skilled health personnel increases the risk of maternal mortality, especially for poor rural women. Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is also crucial to prevent unwanted pregnancies and to give women the right to make decisions about their own bodies.

Box 5: Sexual and reproductive health and rights are key to feminist aid

Achieving sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is part of a feminist agenda, crucial for gender equality and improved health outcomes globally, and fundamental to the universal achievement of human rights. Working to advance SRHR globally – particularly in neglected areas such as abortion, advocacy, and comprehensive sexuality education – is feminist in its own right. Ensuring that women, girls, men, boys and individuals of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions have full autonomy over their lives, bodies and sexuality is also critically feminist. Therefore bodily autonomy and choice should be at the heart of a feminist approach to international assistance. Furthermore, SRHR programming can be transformational when the agency, autonomy and choice of women and people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions are prioritized.

SRHR is a thematic area that raises deeper issues of sexism, gender inequality and stigma surrounding sexuality and women's and young people's control over their own bodies. As a result, some SRHR issues are more neglected than others. The most neglected areas include adolescent SRHR, including comprehensive sexuality education; comprehensive contraceptive care; safe abortion care; advocacy for SRHR; and SRHR in emergency settings. These areas also tend to be overlooked by funders, creating gaps in service delivery and starving these areas of much-needed resources. Without resources, it is difficult to compile data and conduct research, a situation that leads to misinformation and a lack of understanding of the issues.

Investments in a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services and advocacy will support progressive changes in laws and policies. These investments must be targeted to address the rights and lived realities of people in communities, particularly young women and girls, placing autonomy and bodily integrity at the centre of a feminist approach to international assistance.

The impact of education in reducing gender inequality is also well documented. Giving girls more control over their own lives means, for example, that they marry later²⁶ and have fewer children. Educating girls helps tackle inequality of earnings between men and women. The World Bank has found that one additional year of schooling can increase a woman's earnings by 10% to 20%.²⁷ The effect can be lifesaving; the Education Commission estimates that between 1970 and 2010,

educating girls averted the deaths of 30 million children under 5 and 100 million adults aged 15 to 60.²⁸

At least 70% of the world's poor people live in rural areas, and women on average make up almost half of the agricultural labour force in developing countries. According to the Oxfam paper *Ten Years after the Global Food Price Crisis, Rural Women Still Bear the Brunt of Poverty and Hunger*, women farmers balance on a razor's edge, vulnerable to extreme shocks to the system, in a warming world where increasing hunger and violent conflicts lead to record numbers of forcibly displaced people.²⁹ This situation puts the SDG mandate to 'leave no one behind' in serious jeopardy.

Indeed, in every region of the world, women are more likely to be food insecure than men, especially in contexts of heavy reliance on markets. Poor female smallholders face discrimination and barriers to obtaining financial and agricultural resources and extension services; they have limited legal benefits and protection, extensive time burdens, and limited decision-making power; and thus they have fewer options than men for overcoming food price crises and a greater risk of losing assets and formal sector jobs. At the household level, women tend to buffer the impact of crises with extreme coping strategies such as reducing their own consumption to leave more food for other household members and eating less diverse diets. But when women enjoy the same access to resources and services as men, the result is increased agricultural productivity that benefits society as a whole.

If development policies do not aim to transform women's roles in smallholder farming systems and rural food security, the gender gap in agriculture will never be closed and the root causes of chronic food insecurity and hunger will never be addressed.

Support to other sectors, such as public water and sanitation systems, is also key to reducing gender inequities. Poor women often spend a significant proportion of their income and time obtaining water for their households.

AID THAT STRENGTHENS DOMESTIC REVENUE MOBILIZATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Evidence from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) shows that tax systems that redistribute wealth and boost spending on public services are one of the most effective ways for governments to reduce inequality and poverty while sustaining growth.³⁰ As Oxfam demonstrates in the paper *It's Not All about the Money*,³¹ domestic revenue mobilization is not about just collecting more but about collecting better. It is about creating a more equitable, gender-responsive, and transparent system for collecting revenues in which individuals and companies pay their fair share. Increasing indirect taxes may be an easier path to raise revenue, but this approach hits poor households and women the hardest. Fortunately, there are better ways for governments to mobilize domestic revenues. Fairer tax systems that do not squeeze average taxpayers have a big potential for domestic revenue mobilization.

To pursue gender equity in the context of domestic revenue mobilization, countries must eliminate both explicit and implicit gender biases in their revenue systems.

Explicit bias is written into tax codes. For example, the Moroccan tax system automatically assigns 'allowances for children' to men, thereby reducing men's tax burden relative to women. Female taxpayers can claim this exemption, but only if they prove *in a court of law* that they are the head of household.³² Some countries, from Ireland to Malaysia to South Africa, have revised their tax laws to remove explicit bias.³³ Other countries have introduced positive discrimination into the tax system. In Nepal, a tax exemption for the transfer of assets to women has promoted more land registration in women's names.³⁴ In India, to encourage more women to enter the workforce, women receive a higher exemption for income tax than men.³⁵ However, because only 0.27% of working-age women in India are actually 'tax-paying women', the transformative power of this policy is limited.³⁶

In addition, revenue systems often incorporate implicit gender biases. Because of the differences between women and men – in areas such as income, access to resources, decision-making power and caregiving responsibilities – they are affected differently by taxation. Women, who carry out the majority of unpaid care work, are more affected by taxes on the goods and services needed to care for children, the elderly, or others (such as taxes on food, clothing and health supplies). Women are also disproportionately affected by government spending cuts, which can result when revenue mobilization is too weak. Smart reforms, including tax exemptions on basic consumption goods, are essential to help address some of these implicit gender biases in tax systems. Of course, such policies must be accompanied by broader changes to the economic structures and norms that perpetuate gender inequality.

Gender-disaggregated studies and assessments based on incidence analysis and taxpayer surveys are providing some early insights, such as evidence on the horizontal inequities between male- and female-owned business and economic activities. More knowledge is needed, however, in order to develop gender-transformative revenue mobilization policies and laws that reflect the different realities of women and men from different groups. Governments will need to collect, manage and publish sex-disaggregated data on income, consumption, landownership and unpaid care work. Collecting such data should be a principal objective of donors keen to support domestic resource mobilization by building countries' statistical capacity. Unfortunately, only about 0.3% of total ODA is invested in building statistical capacity in partner countries,³⁷ and less than 1% of the domestic resource mobilization projects funded by donors that appear in the Aid Transparency Index (ATI) include a focus on gender.³⁸

4 A FEMINIST APPROACH TO AID

There is no singular definition of feminism or a feminist approach, and there are many schools of feminist thought with rich and varied perspectives. They all share, however, the objectives of breaking down inequalities based on gender and transforming systems of unequal power. To do this, it is necessary to see gender inequality as structural, systemic and socially constructed – in other words, transformation requires changes that go beyond the level of individuals and extend to institutions, norms and behaviours.

Feminist aid seeks to transform unequal power relations and structures and to increase women's agency. Current economies and political systems – as well as the aid system – reproduce patriarchy and inequality because they are not designed to prioritize gender equality, and women have less decision-making power and agency to shape these systems.

Feminist aid seeks to transform unequal power relations and structures and to increase women's agency

In practice, a feminist approach must go hand in hand with a human rights-based approach to international assistance because both frameworks position rights holders (and their needs) at the centre. A feminist approach also means shifting from a supply-driven approach, which prioritizes service delivery, to a demand-driven approach that positions individuals' needs and realities at the centre of all initiatives.

A feminist approach does not mean focusing exclusively on women and girls or supporting only women's rights and feminist organizations. Transforming power relations requires working with a wide range of organizations to build their capacity to advance gender justice. Working with men and boys is critical to challenging and shifting the social norms that underpin gender and other forms of discrimination. But such work cannot come at the expense of working with women's rights and feminist organizations. Their leadership and expertise are integral to a feminist approach because they know their contexts and constituencies and are thus key agents in realizing visions of gender justice in those contexts. Feminist and women's rights organizations are best placed to support programs and advocacy that address the root causes of gender inequality and other forms of exclusion, particularly the stubborn and deep-seated discriminatory social norms that value cisgender men over women and people of diverse sexual orientations, expressions and identities.

Box 6: Creating Spaces in Bangladesh

Oxfam Canada's Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence against Women program, spanning six countries throughout South and East Asia, takes a comprehensive approach to addressing violence against women and places local organizations at the heart of its theory of change. This local approach – coupled with feminist monitoring, evaluation and learning – places women's needs and realities at the centre of all activities, recognizes the power of local organizations and prioritizes their capacity and sustainability.

With the support of the Creating Spaces program in Bangladesh, Shampa has set up a small business. She has a newfound sense of independence and confidence, and she and her business partner, Ferdousi, support each other in business and in action against domestic violence.

'Before I started my business, my husband used to avoid me and didn't pay any attention to my opinion. Now his attitude is changing gradually. Now that I earn money, I participate in making the decisions for my family. If I say something to my husband now, he listens to it carefully.... I want to suggest all the women all over the world who have the same situation as me that from my own experience ... if you don't have economic empowerment, you will not get that respect from your family'.

—Shampa, Chakul village, Rangpur, Bangladesh

For more information, see Oxfam's Creating Spaces page at <https://www.oxfam.ca/creatingspaces>.

CORE COMPONENTS OF A FEMINIST APPROACH

G7 countries should adopt a declaration at the Biarritz summit committing to a feminist approach to their aid policies and operations that encompasses the following core components.

1. Make gender-based analysis mandatory across all aid strategies, frameworks, programming and monitoring, and ensure that all aid integrates gender equality with at least one well-resourced intermediate-level outcome that specifically addresses structural gender inequalities (i.e scoring at least 1 on OECD gender markers).

Feminist mainstreaming is an important strategy to increase programming for transformative change and to address the root causes of gender inequality through an intersectional power analysis. The G7 should ensure that all new aid investments include at a minimum a well-resourced objective at the intermediate outcome level that advances gender equality and addresses the structural barriers faced by women and girls. Such a shift would require a clear strategy in order to significantly increase aid investments that qualify for the OECD DAC gender marker 1.

Analysing power is essential to ensuring that programming seeks to shift power relations as a core aim. Too often aid activities apply an approach of 'add women and stir', which treats women as beneficiaries rather than agents and fails to address power imbalances. Such an approach can undermine efforts to advance gender equality. Gender-based analysis, including a power analysis, must be effectively applied to all program development and implementation. It is crucial to understand who has agency over how programming is designed, implemented and evaluated in order to rebalance power in these processes.

Projects must be designed with the leadership and meaningful participation of affected communities, particularly women's rights and feminist organizations. The feminist principle of 'nothing about me without me' acknowledges that these organizations know best how to transform their lives and societies. Applying a feminist approach to working with partners and communities means igniting agency and ensuring that women and their organizations are included in decision-making processes in all matters that affect their lives.

The current approach of 'add women and stir' – which operates on the logic that adding more women as beneficiaries will increase gender equality – is not working.

This shift will require investments to increase the capacity of aid agencies to do robust gender analysis and assess the quality of analyses provided by aid recipients. Realizing this change requires champions at all levels within aid departments and adequate investments in leadership to ensure that aid agencies fully understand, own and integrate a feminist approach. It will require building, mentoring and rewarding feminist leadership, as well as empowering gender-equality champions within departments. The best way to do so is to ensure that gender-equality goals are integrated into performance management systems and thus nurture high-level leadership. Quality control is critical, and periodic independent audits should be required to assess the quality of the gender-based analysis and the project objectives to avoid the 'pink-washing' of aid projects. Staff must have the power to turn down project proposals that do not meet minimum standards in terms of shifting power relations and advancing gender equality.

Box 7: A feminist approach to women's economic empowerment

France announced that an initiative would be launched at the Biarritz summit to promote women's economic empowerment, including in Africa; to support funding for women's projects and businesses; and to create a financial institute to top up microfinance. This initiative is welcome, but unless the G7 tackles gender inequality and economic inequality simultaneously, it will be impossible to realize women's economic empowerment.

Effective economic empowerment for women includes women's right to control and benefit from resources as well as the autonomy and self-confidence to make changes in their own lives. They must have the agency and power to organize and influence decision making while enjoying equal rights to men and freedom from violence. Focusing on economic inclusion alone cannot guarantee women's economic empowerment – a feminist approach is needed to transform unequal social power relations, norms, laws and structures that make it impossible for women to escape poverty. Moreover, an intersectional approach is needed to address the social, economic and political disadvantages that women face – as workers, as members of different classes, or as members of specific groups (such as racialized women, indigenous women, informal workers and women with disabilities). It is also critical to understand how promoting a macroeconomic model that drives economic inequality and relies on the paid and unpaid care work of women undermines their economic empowerment.

Attention must turn to neglected areas of programming on women's economic empowerment. These include programs that address paid and unpaid care work, support gender-sensitive and progressive macroeconomic policies, improve labour rights, challenge harmful social norms, address the relationship between gender-based violence and women's economic empowerment, and promote women's participation in decision making. Support for women's collective organizing is crucial to achieving change on these issues. Local women's movements and organizations are key partners in mobilizing communities and effecting changes in legal and social norms; they require resources to conduct their advocacy work and programming, build capacity, mobilize, innovate and grow.

2. Invest in stand-alone programming that addresses the structural causes of gender inequality and increase significantly aid advancing gender equality as its principal focus (i.e. scoring 2 on OECD DAC gender markers).

Experts worldwide agree that the most effective way to achieve gender equality is through a twin-track approach that combines dedicated resources for women's rights with a robust system of mainstreaming gender across all sectors. Stand-alone initiatives should focus on the structural determinants of gender inequality that impede women's empowerment, agency and full realization of their rights. Such initiatives could include the following:

- Creating the systems and environment that promote women's agency in public and private spheres;
- Investing in support for women's advocacy of sexual and reproductive health and rights and supporting the scaling up of high-quality sexual and reproductive health services, including comprehensive abortion services;
- Addressing the pandemic of violence against women by looking holistically at gender discrimination in all its forms, including social norms, laws, policies and institutions;
- Supporting advocacy to hold governments accountable and to benefit from the expertise of civil society;
- Investing in expansion of women's and girls' capabilities, resources and opportunities and supporting their organizing and collective actions; and
- Building national capacities to advance women's rights through gender-responsive public services and budgeting and increased capacity to collect sex-disaggregated data.

To translate commitment to action, a stand-alone women's rights and gender-equality pillar within international assistance must be as well-resourced as other high-priority pillars. G7 countries should increase significantly aid investments that have as their principal focus the advancement of women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality (i.e., scoring 2 in the OECD DAC gender marker).

3. Invest in women's rights and feminist organizations, and ensure that funding mechanisms foster their agency and sustainability.

Evidence confirms that women's rights organizations and movements are fundamental in catalysing change towards gender equality. These organizations, however, receive little support. Although donors have recognized the importance of investing in women and girls, aid to women's organizations remains low, at only about 0.3% of all aid investments.³⁹ Unfortunately, donors' much-touted slogans about investing in women and girls have not translated into meaningful and sustainable new funding for women's rights organizations themselves, let alone feminist initiatives. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), total aid by DAC donors to women's institutions and organizations (governmental and non-governmental) amounted to US\$435m on average per year in 2016–2017. Out of this, \$177m on average per year was committed specifically to non-governmental women's organizations, and only \$31m went directly to women's organizations based in developing countries.

Only 0.12% of total aid was committed to non-governmental women's organizations, only 0.02% to women's organizations based in developing countries.

A core component of a stand-alone pillar on women's rights and gender equality within a feminist aid policy must include a mechanism to fill the funding gap for women's rights organizations and feminist movements. Within the G7, Canada and France have stepped up their efforts in this regard. Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy includes the Women's Voice and Leadership Program,⁴⁰ which aims to support local women's rights organizations and allocates C\$150m over three years. Canada also launched the Partnership to Fund Gender Equality in April 2018 and pledged up to C\$300m for this public-private partnership to grow resources for women's rights organizations. As part of France's G7 presidency, President Emmanuel Macron announced on International Women's Day 2019 that France will allocate €120m for women's rights organizations in developing countries. These investments will make a difference for women's rights organizations around the world, but a more sustainable approach is needed, and donors need to critically examine how funds are disbursed.

Most existing funding mechanisms remain inherently un-feminist: they carry onerous administrative and reporting burdens, neglect advocacy and the need for core funding, and encourage short-term and thematically narrow projects. Calls for proposals prioritize donor-defined programs over programming designed and led by local communities, which are responsive to realities on the ground. They also create an environment of competition over limited resources, in which smaller organizations tend to lose out. Complex compliance mechanisms further squeeze out small organizations in favour of bigger NGOs that can afford to hire expertise.

A feminist approach to aid must take a responsive approach to funding partners. The G7 countries should allocate significant and dedicated resources for women's rights organizations and feminist movements and ensure long-term, predictable and flexible funding that includes funds for advocacy and public engagement as well as core operational funding. Predictability is key for women to have agency, define their own agendas, increase their capacity to work on issues that they themselves have prioritized, strengthen their organizations and build movements for social change.

It is also critical to ensure that partnerships with women's rights organizations and feminist movements are based on the same feminist principles of intersectionality, agency and process. Women's rights organizations are too often enlisted to carry out the agendas of donors or large international organizations rather than being centred in development processes as the bearers of knowledge, networks and solutions. These dynamics only reinforce the power imbalances entrenched in global and local systems. Meaningful partnerships rest on dialogue and collaboration that foster trust and autonomy. Social change takes time, and donors need to recognize the leadership and vision of women's rights organizations and offer support and solidarity over the long term.

Box 8: A feminist approach to humanitarian action

It is widely acknowledged that women and girls suffer disproportionately during emergencies and that their voices and leadership are undervalued and underutilized.

Conflicts and crises radically affect social, cultural and political structures. While such events create risks for women, they can paradoxically create opportunities for change. Feminist humanitarian assistance should capitalize on these openings to transform gender roles and address underlying causes of conflict. A feminist approach to humanitarian assistance boosts the capacity and influence of local women's rights actors and invests in stand-alone gender programming.

Local women's rights actors are often best suited to do work that changes gender norms and addresses women's needs and challenges. Feminist humanitarian action should seek to strengthen and shift power to these actors. As established members of their communities, they can deliver assistance quickly and in culturally appropriate ways. Globally, there is little investment in stand-alone gender programming – the type of programming that has advancing gender equality as a main goal – in crisis settings. Most gender interventions in humanitarian settings are mainstreamed. Gender mainstreaming is crucial, but it does not tackle the root causes of gender inequality. A feminist approach to humanitarian action should seek to transform power imbalances between men and women.

Local organizations changing gender norms in refugee camps in Uganda⁴¹

Jackie Aciro is a wife, mother and refugee from South Sudan. As she cares for her young children and prepares a family dinner, her husband, Yoweri, sits by her side, plucking greens from their stems for the meal. It is not what he was raised to do back home, but he cooks and cleans and does whatever is needed for his family in a refugee camp in Uganda. There, Yoweri is part of a men's group organized by a Ugandan women's rights organization. Through this experience, he has come to believe in gender equality. His change in attitude has improved his relationship with his wife, he says, and she agrees. 'When your husband shares the workload with you, you feel like he cares about you,' she says. 'You feel you can trust him'. 'When I return to South Sudan, I'll take these beliefs with me', says Yoweri. 'Now, they're part of me'.

4. Ensure feminist implementation that fosters agency and learning and applies feminist principles to monitoring and evaluation

Structural changes are non-linear and slow to take hold. They involve a complex interplay among individual, household, community and societal factors that influence how gender power relations and social norms operate in different contexts. Feminist work requires prioritizing knowledge building, opportunities to learn from experience, and mutual learning through exchanges and collaboration. The creation, dissemination and use of knowledge are all political processes. Research agendas, research methodologies, knowledge generation and views on what counts as evidence are all gendered. The process by which knowledge is produced and used can either transform gender relations or uphold existing power relations. Thus a feminist approach to knowledge generation seeks to support processes through which stakeholders co-create and co-own knowledge.

A feminist approach to monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) involves innovative mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of feminist policies and programming while challenging us to think differently about what is considered evidence. It pushes the boundaries of how evidence is

captured and asks who gives it meaning and relevance. It seeks to bring diverse perspectives to the surface, emphasizing women's unique perspective, in order to interrogate structural and systemic power relations. It focuses on exposing gender-based discrimination and underscores how intersecting identities further marginalize specific groups. Feminist MEAL processes are empowering and give participants agency, thereby positioning MEAL as an integral part of social transformation rather than a process merely included at the end of a program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a first step to becoming champions of feminist aid, G7 leaders must put the fight against inequality – both gender and economic inequality – at the front and centre of their aid agenda.

G7 donors must increase their aid to meet the existing target of 0.7% of GNI. They must ensure that aid is designed and delivered in ways that will maximize its impact on inequality and poverty reduction in the poorest countries. This includes targeting sectors that are proven to tackle inequality, supporting progressive tax collection and active citizenship, and respecting development effectiveness principles.

The G7 should also **adopt a declaration at the Biarritz summit committing to a feminist approach to their aid policies**, including budgets and resource allocations that encompass the following core components.

1. Make gender-based analysis mandatory across all aid strategies, frameworks, programming and monitoring, and ensure that all aid addresses structural gender inequalities (i.e. scoring at least 1 on OECD gender markers):
 - Invest in increased gender-based analysis capacity, and nurture high-level leadership by ensuring that staff are well trained, have adequate guidance on what a feminist approach entails and are empowered to turn down projects that do not meet quality standards.
 - Boost women's agency by ensuring that women's rights and feminist organizations are meaningful participants in program design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.
 - Ensure that all programming has at least one well-resourced intermediate-level outcome that specifically addresses structural gender inequalities (OECD DAC gender marker 1).
2. Invest in stand-alone programming that addresses the structural causes of gender inequality, and increase significantly aid advancing gender equality as its principal focus (i.e. scoring 2 on OECD DAC gender markers).
 - Increase significantly aid that has as its principal focus advancing women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality, applying a gender-transformative approach.
 - Support initiatives that promote women and girls' rights and agency in public and private spheres, and safeguard civil society space and action.
 - Support initiatives that provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services such as safe abortion, post-abortion care and family planning/contraception, and address the pandemic of violence against women.

- Invest in women and girls' organizing and collective action to advance gender equality, and support advocacy to hold governments accountable.
 - Build national capacities to advance women's rights through gender-responsive public services and budgeting and increased capacity to collect sex-disaggregated data that is further broken down by other identity factors (such as race, age, ability, ethnicity and geolocation).
3. Invest in women's rights and feminist organizations, and ensure that funding mechanisms foster their agency and sustainability.
- Put in place innovative funding mechanisms that cut down on administrative burdens, build the capacity of women's rights organizations, and provide long-term, predictable and core funding.
 - Continue to increase investments in women's rights and feminist organizations to ensure adequate, sustainable and predictable resourcing.
4. Adopt a feminist approach to implementation that fosters women's leadership and learning and applies feminist principles to monitoring and evaluation.
- Apply a feminist approach to research, partnership, monitoring and evaluation that incorporates the feminist principles of intersectionality, agency and process.
 - Adopt a feminist approach to knowledge generation that supports processes in which knowledge is co-created and co-owned by stakeholders.

NOTES

- 1 World Economic Forum. (2018). The Global Gender Gap Report 2018. Geneva: World Economic Forum. Retrieved 30 April 2019, from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018>
- 2 W. Byanyima. (2018). The Global Economy Isn't Working for Women. Here's What World Leaders Must Do. World Economic Forum. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/06/why-economic-inequality-feminist-issue-winnie-byanyima/>
- 3 OECD CRS database.
- 4 United Nations General Assembly: Speech by President Emmanuel Macron (25 September 2018). Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/united-nations/events/united-nations-general-assembly-sessions/unga-s-73rd-session/article/united-nations-general-assembly-speech-by-president-emmanuel-macron-25-09-18>
- 5 M-K Chan, A. Parvez Butt, A. Marriott, E. Ehmke, D. Jacobs, J. Seghers, J. Atienza, R. Gowland, M. Lawson, F. Rhodes (2019). Public Good or Private Wealth? Universal health, education and other public services reduce the gap between rich and poor, and between women and men. Fairer taxation of the wealthiest can help pay for them. Oxfam. Retrieved 29 April 2019, from <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/public-good-or-private-wealth>
- 6 Oxfam International. (2017). Why the Majority of the World's Poor Are Women. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.oxfam.org/en/even-it/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women>
- 7 World Economic Forum. (2018). Closing the Gender Gap. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.weforum.org/projects/closing-the-gender-gap-gender-parity-task-forces>
- 8 K. Georgieva. (2018). Changing the Laws That Keep Women out of Work. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2018/03/29/changing-the-laws-that-keep-women-out-of-work>
- 9 UN Women. (2018) Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 World Health Organization (WHO). (2017). Violence against Women. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>
- 12 International Labour Organization (ILO). (2018). Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work. Geneva. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_633135/lang-en/index.htm

- 13 Ann M. Starrs, et al. (2018). Accelerate Progress—Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for All: Report of the Guttmacher–Lancet Commission. *Lancet*, 391(10140), 2642–2692. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)30293-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)30293-9)
- 14 PLAN International. (2019). Girls' Rights Statistics. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://planCanada.ca/girl-facts>
- 15 ActionAid. (2015). Close the Gap! The Cost of Inequality in Women's Work. London. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.actionaid.org.uk/close-the-gap-the-cost-of-inequality-in-womens-work>
- 16 Oxfam International. (2017). Why the Majority of the World's Poor Are Women. Op. cit.
- 17 H. Kharas, J. W. McArthur, and K. Rasmussen. (2018). How Many People Will the World Leave Behind? Global Economy and Development Working Paper 123. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/HowManyLeftBehind.pdf>
- 18 OECD. (2019). Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Retrieved 29 April 2019, from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/aidinsupportofgenderequalityandwomensempowerment.htm>
- 19 OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality. (2016). Tracking the Money for Women's Economic Empowerment: Still a Drop in the Ocean. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee. Retrieved 11 July 2018, from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Tracking-the-money-for-womenseconomic-empowerment.pdf>
- 20 Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2015). Cabinet Decision on the Development Cooperation Charter. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000067701.pdf>
- 21 Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2018). Handbook: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy. Government Offices of Sweden. Retrieved 29 April, 2019, from https://www.government.se/4a4752/contentassets/fc115607a4ad4bca913cd8d11c2339dc/handbook_swedens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf
- 22 E. Seery and J. Seghers (2019). Hitting the Target: An Agenda for Aid in Times of Extreme Inequality. Oxfam. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620721/bp-hitting-the-target-aid-inequality-agenda-080419-en.pdf>
- 23 M-K Chan et al.(2019). Public Good or Private Wealth? Oxfam. Op. cit.(section 2).
- 24 Gender and Development Network. (2019). How Social Protection, Public Services and Infrastructure Impact Women's Rights. London. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <http://gadnetwork.org/gadn-news/2019/1/8/new-briefing-how-social-protection-public-services-and-infrastructure-impact-womens-rights>
- 25 WHO. (2015). Global Health Observatory Data Repository: Births Attended by Skilled Health Personnel. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.nHE-1570?lang=en>
- 26 Each year of secondary education reduces the likelihood of marrying before the age of 18 by 5 percentage points or more. World Bank. (2017). Economic Impacts of Child Marriage: Global Synthesis Report. Washington, DC.
- 27 World Bank. (2002). Returns to Investment in Education. Washington, DC.
- 28 International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, The Learning Generation, p. 34. Retrieved 29 April 2019, from <https://report.educationcommission.org/downloads/>
- 29 H. Botreau and M.J.Cohen (2019). Ten Years after the Global Food Crisis, Rural Women Still Bear the Brunt of Poverty and Hunger. Briefing Note. Oxford, UK. Retrieved 29 April 2019, from <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/ten-years-after-global-food-price-crisis/>
- 30 International Monetary Fund (IMF). (2015). Fiscal Policy and Long-Term Growth. IMF Policy Paper. Washington, DC. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2015/042015.pdf>
- 31 N. Coplin and A. Nwafor (2019). It's Not All About the Money. Oxfam. (forthcoming publication)
- 32 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2010). Gender Equality and Poverty Reduction: Taxation. Issues Brief 01. New York. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/taxation-note.html>
- 33 J. G. Stotsky. (1997). How Tax Systems Treat Men and Women Differently. *Finance and Development*, 34(1), 30–33. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/1997/03/pdf/stotsky.pdf>
- 34 International Organization for Migration. (2016). Barriers to Women's Land and Property Access and Ownership in Nepal. Kathmandu. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/barriers_to_women.pdf
- 35 C. Grown and I. Valodia, eds. (2010). Taxation and Gender Equity: A Comparative Analysis of Direct and Indirect Taxes in Developing and Developed Countries. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre. Retrieved 29 April 2019 from <https://www.idrc.ca/en/book/taxation-and-gender-equity-comparative-analysis-direct-and-indirect-taxes-developing-and>
- 36 Ibid., p. 103.

- 37 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2017). Development Co-operation Report 2017. Paris. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/development-co-operation-report-2017_dcr-2017-en
- 38 Oxfam America. (2018). Doubling Down on “DRM”: Are We Making the Right Bets? Boston. Retrieved 29 April 2019 from https://www.oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/DOUBLING_DOWN_ON_DRM_-_2018.pdf
- 39 OECD. CRS database.
- 40 Government of Canada. (2019). Women’s Voice in Leadership. Retrieved 28 April 2019, from https://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/gender_equality-egalite_des_genres/wvl_projects-projets_vlf.aspx?lang=eng
- 41 B. Lambert (2018). Protected and Powerful: Putting Resources and Decision Making Power in the Hands of Women in Conflict. Ottawa: Oxfam Canada. Reprinted with permission from Oxfam Canada Retrieved 28 April 2019, from <https://www.oxfam.ca/publication/protected-and-powerful/>

OXFAM

Oxfam is an international confederation of 19 organizations networked together in more than 90 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty. Please write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit www.oxfam.org

Oxfam America (www.oxfamamerica.org)	Oxfam India (www.oxfamindia.org)
Oxfam Australia (www.oxfam.org.au)	Oxfam Intermón (Spain) (www.oxfamintermon.org)
Oxfam-in-Belgium (www.oxfamsol.be)	Oxfam Ireland (www.oxfamireland.org)
Oxfam Brasil (www.oxfam.org.br)	Oxfam Italy (www.oxfamitalia.org)
Oxfam Canada (www.oxfam.ca)	Oxfam Mexico (www.oxfammexico.org)
Oxfam France (www.oxfamfrance.org)	Oxfam New Zealand (www.oxfam.org.nz)
Oxfam Germany (www.oxfam.de)	Oxfam Novib (Netherlands) (www.oxfamnovib.nl)
Oxfam GB (www.oxfam.org.uk)	Oxfam Québec (www.oxfam.qc.ca)
Oxfam Hong Kong (www.oxfam.org.hk)	Oxfam South Africa (www.oxfam.org.za)
Oxfam IBIS (Denmark) (www.oxfamibis.dk)	

Observers

KEDV (Oxfam Turkey)