



The State of Girls

in EU Development Cooperation



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Foreword



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It's time to put girls at the heart of our development commitments

We, as members of the European Parliament, stand proud in calling upon the European Union to enact an ambitious strategy to promote the political, social and economic empowerment of girls.

It is time for the EU to break the invisibility of 250 million girls living in poverty in the developing world, and it must start by protecting their human rights. They are among the most disadvantaged people on the planet, facing dual discrimination on account of their age and gender. And, while girls experience more violence than their male counterparts, they are also too often forced to suffer in silence.

The European Parliament is determined to support the right for every girl in the world to live a life of dignity. This report examines the place occupied by girls in EU development cooperation policies. It highlights practices in programming EU funds for gender equality and children and addresses the lack of focus on their specific vulnerabilities. The report also formulates strong recommendations towards greater integration of gender equality and children's rights in its main aid instruments. And it contains a clear presentation of EU commitments which should favour girls in all parts of the world. The message carried by EPF and its partners in this report is that girls must become a true priority in global development cooperation. The implementation of basic common principles for girls among European donors is essential in order to create a better environment and

greater social justice for girls around the world. And yet most European governments and the European Commission are still far from reaching the aid commitments they pledged to reach by 2015.

This illustrative guide on EU policies for girls will therefore help policy-makers to recognise their responsibility towards promoting and protecting the rights of the most vulnerable girls in the world. It is time to make sure that girls receive their fair share of EU development aid. The EU must devise and enact an ambitious action plan for girls worldwide.

It is a big message of hope; for one of the world's greatest challenges is also one of its greatest opportunities. As EU budget negotiations continue and with development aid stretched to the limit, investing in girls will pay the world considerable dividends. The situation of young girls in Europe and beyond is at the root of many of our development challenges. Investing in the economic and social potential of girls, starting with their access to health and education, has been proven to be a safe investment which drives economic growth and has a disproportionately beneficial effect in alleviating poverty. It is time to increase our understanding of this vital matter and to do more to protect our most valuable asset.

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Executive Summary

On the occasion of the first International Day of the Girl Child on 11th October 2012, the EU Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs stated that “*girls can be the agents of change*” and play an important role in helping their local communities to progress.¹

Girls should have the same rights as boys, and these rights are reinforced by a number of international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These treaties are part of the core values of the European Union.

However, girls and boys are treated differently in most of the developing world, with girls suffering far worse than their male counterparts in a variety of spheres of life, which include their access to nutrition, to basic health care and education. There are 250 million girls living in poverty in the developing world with limited means to change or control the decisions that affect them. Girls are often taken out of school and forced to marry at an early age; they also bear the heaviest burden of domestic chores and are regularly engaged in unpaid and hazardous labour practices.

Girls are subjected to a number of gender specific health risks and basic human rights violations, such as the extremely harmful and inhuman practice of female genital mutilation (FGM). Child marriage also brings with it complications relating to early pregnancy and childbirth (which is the leading cause of

death for girls aged 15 to 19) and other severe health risks such as HIV. Girls are also more vulnerable to physical and sexual forms of violence, with nearly 50% of all sexual assaults being perpetrated against girls aged 15 or below. Addressing discrimination against girls worldwide must become the duty of everyone, as failing to do so is economically, politically and socially unsustainable. Yet the injustice they suffer is often overlooked by the debates on international development.

Without justice for girls, none of the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved. There are nearly 600 million girls living and growing up in developing countries, and girls who grow up in security, who are provided with good education and who are given a sense of social responsibility will become adults who can make a real contribution to society. **An increase of only 1% in girls’ secondary education attendance has been calculated to add 0.3% to a country’s GDP.**² Throughout the developing world higher economic activity rates for young women would also translate into a substantial increase in annual GDP growth rates.³

Acknowledging the gender bias affecting girls worldwide, the European Union has developed its own arsenal of commitments to protect the rights of girls worldwide. These commitments are embedded

in the range of its cross-cutting gender equality and children’s rights policies. But these issues must still be more widely mainstreamed across all EU external actions, including all horizontal and thematic instruments.

The analysis in this report firstly reveals **a critical lack of effective mainstreaming of gender equality issues across all of the EU’s geographic programmes** (EDF, DCI, ENPI). It then gives an overview of the projects financed by the EU’s thematic instruments and examines country cases where girls are vulnerable to indicate that in some instances girls have benefited from programmes targeting their empowerment as well as those aiming to improve their health and education. However, as precise data on girls aged 10-19 is missing, it is uncertain how EU development aid reaches girls at this particularly vulnerable age between childhood and adulthood, especially the poorest girls in the poorest communities. It is certain, however, that more attention needs to be given to anchoring girls’ rights and investing in their assets worldwide.

Effectively addressing the specific vulnerabilities and socio-economic situation of adolescent girls worldwide requires imperative targeted actions to enable them to attract more attention. In order to secure progress on protecting girls’ rights and enabling them to realise their full potential the present report calls on the European Union Institutions to **develop and promote a comprehensive EU Action Plan for Girls, and urges them to:**

- Develop indicators for the number of girls in situations of poverty and exclusion, such as out-of-school, forced into wedlock or engaged in child labour, as a means to develop girl-friendly measures, while promoting gender equality in all EU interventions.
- Ensure that there are adequate financial and human resources to support gender equality and girls’ empowerment programmes in development cooperation

instruments, including the participation of girl children, adolescent girls and young women.

- Ensure that special attention is given to improving access for young and adolescent girls to secondary schools and technical and vocational training when designing, negotiating and implementing education programmes and projects with aid recipients.
- Contribute to the setting up of national social security systems which include a child benefit scheme enabling parents to enrol their children, and girls in particular, into secondary education or technical and vocational training.
- Stress the need for adequate legislation, police services, and judicial support to guarantee that young and adolescent girls are protected from trafficking and all forms of exploitation, as these girls are most susceptible to fall victim to these criminal activities.
- Stress the need for the protection of young and adolescent girls from harmful activities such as female genital mutilation and child marriage.
- Support sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including family planning, as a means to empower young women, particularly in those recipient countries that show no progress in reducing maternal mortality and improving contraceptive prevalence rate among young people.

While adolescent girls in poverty worldwide are mainly seen as victims, they also provide us with 250 million opportunities to change the world: for themselves, their families, their communities and their countries.

¹ Piebalgs, A. (2012) *Better Education for girls; better future for the world, Girls’ Rights Gazette, International Day of the Girl Child, Thursday 11 October 2012.*

² Plan International (2008) *Paying the Price, the economic cost of failing to educate girls.* Plan International. (Plan International, 2008). <http://plan-international.org/about-plan/>

³ Jad Chaaban and Wendy Cunningham (2011). *Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls: The Girl Effect Dividend*, Policy Research Working Paper 5753, World Bank.

Introduction

11th October 2012 marked the first ever International Day of the Girl Child. This event provided the impetus for various policy-makers both at the EU and International levels to comment on the importance of committing to realizing girls' rights.¹ According to the EU Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs, *"girls can be the agents of change"*, and he emphasized how *"important women and girls are in helping their local communities to progress"*.² However, statistics reveal that much more needs to be done to translate commitments into reality.

The most vulnerable group in society are children. Susceptible to abuse or neglect, many have no means to defend themselves. Within this group, in many parts of the world girls are even more vulnerable due to their second-class status, which becomes obvious even before they are born.

Discrimination begins with the practice of female foeticide, which results in an estimated 100 million missing women worldwide.³ It continues during all phases of growing up, with girls more likely to be malnourished or abused and with lower chances of obtaining an education. These factors can all result in long term implications on their health, status, earning power and relationships with others.

Some of the most shocking statistics relating to girls are:

- 75 Million girls worldwide are out of school, and one in three girls is denied secondary education, while only an extra year in secondary school could make a 15% to 25% difference in a girl's future wage.⁴

- Every year, 10 million girls are forced into marriage, which results in one in every three girls in the developing world being married by the age of 18.⁵
- Girls married before the age of 18 have an increased risk of contracting HIV. An estimated 7.3 million young women live with the disease, in comparison to 4.5 million young men.⁶
- Every year, 2 million girls worldwide have to face the practice of genital mutilation, violating their right to health as well as their basic human rights.⁷
- One thousand girls die every day in childbirth,⁸ predominantly in developing countries. This is the leading cause for the death of girls between the ages of aged 15 and 19 in the developing world.⁹
- More than 100 million girls between the ages of 5 and 17 are involved in child labour, while nearly 6 out of every 10 girls are involved in unpaid household services.¹⁰

The role of this report is to explore the specific socio-economic inequalities affecting adolescent girls (10-19) worldwide and to identify the actions taken by

the European Commission in addressing girls' rights through its Official Development Assistance (ODA). Particular attention is paid to the 2008-2013 framework of action while touching upon policy frameworks and foreseen commitments for future multi-annual financing engagements (2014-2020) as proposed by the European Commission and negotiated with the European Parliament and the European Council.

The report is organised into three parts. The first section explores the state of girls worldwide, examining the specific situation they are facing, and it explains the underlying factors causing the low socio-economic status that they often are forced to face. This section also explores how girls' issues are addressed by the Millennium Development Goals and what progress has been made in areas affecting girls, directly or indirectly. The section finally makes the case for girls' rights and girls' education, explaining how girls who realise their full potential foster economic growth and impact on development.

The second section focuses on the European Commission's ODA policies, strategies and funding targeting girls. It describes the policies and commitments currently in place for promoting girls' rights and the specific role of the relevant actors in the decision-making processes. However, it has to be noted that there is no framework in place that addresses the specific situation of adolescent girls. The policies touching upon the issue of their situation are either grouped under children's rights policies or gender equality policies that tend to have a stronger focus

on adults. Financing projects which address girls' rights are no different, as they are filtered through projects aimed at protecting and promoting children's rights or empowering women.

For a comprehensive overview of the EC's action, this section reviews some of the Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) in place in three selected countries where girls are vulnerable, examining the main sectors targeted in the EC's strategies, policies and financial disbursements.

The third section is based on the findings of the previous two sections and include specific recommendations to the European Union Institutions. Recommendations touch upon improving the EC ODA instruments for girls and how to better address the issue of girls in the design, decision making, programming and implementation of EC ODA programmes.

- 1 The International Day of the Girl Child was established through the UN General Assembly resolution 66/170 in 2011.
- 2 Piebalgs, A. (2012) *Better Education for girls; better future for the world*, *Girls' Rights Gazette, International Day of the Girl Child*, Thursday 11 October 2012.
- 3 Plan International (2007) *Because I am a Girl – The State of the World's Girls 2007*. Available at <http://plan-international.org/files/global/publications/campaigns/becauseiamagirl.pdf>
- 4 Psacharopoulos, G. et al. "Returns to Investment in Education: A further Update." Policy Research Working Paper 2881 (Washington, DC: World Bank 2002).
- 5 UNICEF (2011), *"The State of the World's Children 2011, Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity"*, New York: UNICEF Population Council.
- 6 Plan International (2007) *Because I am a Girl – The State of the World's Girls 2007*. Available at <http://plan-international.org/files/global/publications/campaigns/becauseiamagirl.pdf>
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ashton, C. (2012) *Every day should be the Day of the Girl*, *Girls' Rights Gazette*, October 2012. Plan International.
- 9 World Health Organization WHO, (2009.) *Women and Health*, Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs334/en/index.html>
- 10 ILO (2009) *Assessing the Gender Gap: Evidence from SIMPOC Surveys*. Working Paper Available at <http://www.ilo.org/ipcinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=10952>





01

The State of Girls worldwide

Girls have, legally and in theory, the same rights as boys. These rights are enshrined in a number of international laws and agreements, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), a comprehensive instrument promoting the rights of the child since its adoption by the UN General Assembly in 1989. Article 2 of the CRC ensures that all children should enjoy all rights without any form of sexual discrimination. Discrimination against girls is also prohibited by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), by the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and forms one of the core values of the European Union.



75
million

75 million girls
are out
of school

It is universally accepted that improving equality between the sexes is key to achieving international development objectives, including those of the MDGs. The empowerment of girls and women will not only help achieve gender equality but also enhance overall economic and social development, including the reduction of poverty. In recognition of the important role girls and women play in improving all aspects of development, the aim of MDG 3 is to 'promote gender equality and empower women.' However, as gender equality is a cross-cutting issue, its achievement will require a gender-focused component when addressing any of the MDGs.

Poverty and Gender

70% of world's poor are women and girls

Despite substantial progress towards MDG 1 'eradicating extreme poverty', it is estimated that the majority of those living in extreme poverty worldwide are women and girls. The financial and economic crisis can further reduce women's and girls' ability to improve their economic and financial situation, and a 2009 World Bank study identified a decrease in women's income as a result of job losses in export-oriented industries. The study further envisages a total of 1.4 million to 2.8 million more infant deaths due to job losses as well as increasing drop-out rates for girls in poor countries where school enrolment of girls is already low.¹¹

Despite efforts made to reach the MDG 1 target to 'achieve full productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people', women have considerably fewer opportunities in the labour and financial markets, which in many instances can be explained by their lower level of education as a result of - and in addition to - cultural and specific gender-based discrimination and preconceptions.

¹¹ "The Impact of the Financial Crisis on Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in Human Development". World Bank Internal Policy Note, 2009. Available at <http://www.worldbank.org/financialcrisis/pdf/Women-Children-Vulnerability-March09.pdf>

Gender equality in education

Education is extremely important for helping to lift girls out of their second-class social status and bridge the gender gap. Girls who stay in school for seven or more years tend to marry four years later and have fewer children, while one extra year in secondary school already makes a 15 to 25% positive difference in a girl's future wages.¹²

There has been significant progress towards MDG 2 in achieving gender parity in primary education in most of the developing world, although certain geographic areas lag behind. Since 2000, many more children, including girls, enrolled in primary education. The gender parity index grew from 0.91 in 1999 to 0.97 in 2010 for the developing world as a whole and the female share of out of school children in the developing world has dropped from 58% to 53% be-

tween 1999 and 2010.¹³ In the areas where gender disparity in primary education is still unacceptably high (areas with 55-79% of girls out of school), such as Southern Asia, Western Asia and Northern Africa, poverty remains a determining factor.

Literacy rates are generally improving among both girls and boys, reaching 90% in 2010. The gap between boys and girls is also narrowing with 95 literate young women for every 100 young men in 2010, which is an improvement from only 90 literate young women in 1990.

Progress reports towards MDG 3, aiming to promote gender equality and empower women, nevertheless reveal that girls have more difficulties in early-secondary age or later, with 1 in 3 girls being denied a secondary education globally.¹⁵ Gender gaps appear from the first day at school, when more boys enrol than girls, and then widen with time. Girls of enrolment age are subjected to gender-based discriminatory practices both within society and their very immediate environment, particularly in poor families. Secondary education is generally more costly than primary education, which often forces parents to choose and prioritise between their children. As educating boys often appears to be a wiser choice with more potential to generate a return, girls are missing out. In addition, girls often have to look after their families from an early age and carry out a significant number of domestic chores, which forces them to drop out of school.¹⁶

¹² Plan International (2012) *Girls facts: sources*. Available at <http://plan-international.org/girls/girl-facts-sources.php?lang=en#12>

¹³ United Nations (2012) *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*. New York: United Nations

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ The number of girls currently in secondary education, divided by the number of girls of secondary education age. (66%) (Source UNESCO 2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report)

¹⁶ United Nations (2012) *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*. New York: United Nations.

The burden of child labour on girls

Among adolescents aged 15-17, girls in the developing world spend on average 8.1 hours per week more on domestic chores than their male counterparts.¹⁷ As briefly introduced earlier, this can impose a significant difficulty for them to benefit from education and training, limiting their future potential to secure reasonable employment. In addition, the burden of domestic chores also prevents girls already out-of-school from engaging in paid employment. The gap in paid employment, dominated by boys, increases from 6.2% between the ages of 5 and 14 to 15.1% for the age group between 15 and 17. In most cases this can be attributed to the increased involvement of girls in unpaid and informal work, as well as early marriage and pregnancy.

Yet girls not only spend more hours at home, but also at work. According to ILO estimates, more than 100 million girls between 5 and 17 years old were involved in child labour in 2004. In addition, conditions in the workplace are often hazardous, with nearly 20 million girls between the ages of 5 and 11 engaged

10 million

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into marriages



in work that may pose dangers to their health and well-being.¹⁸

17 ILO (2009) *Assessing the Gender Gap: Evidence from SIMPOC Surveys*. Working Paper Available at <http://www.ilo.org/lipocinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=10952>

18 Ibid.

Sexual and reproductive health

Improving maternal health and protecting mothers during pregnancy, delivery, and after childbirth (target MDG 5a) are crucial interventions for preserving the health and life of young girls. The leading cause for the death of girls aged 15–19 in the developing world is pregnancy¹⁹ with one thousand girls dying every day in childbirth, predominantly in the developing world.²⁰ In fact, the younger the mother is, the more severe the risks appear to be. Worldwide, around 14 million girls between 15 and 19 give birth each year. They are twice as likely to die at childbirth as women in their twenties.²¹

In addition, promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) including family planning is extremely important in bringing about progress in girls' empowerment by giving them control over their own health and body. MDG reviews reveal increased need for the promotion of such SRHR services, indicating that progress made between 1990 and 2000 in reducing adolescent pregnancies has slowed and in some cases even reversed. The seriousness of the issue is also shown by the UN Secretary General's recommendation to improve

progress towards the MDG 5b target of 'achieving universal access to reproductive health by 2015'.

Yet, in spite of all efforts and girls' desire to delay and control conception, actual prevalence rates of contraceptive use are alarmingly low among young people, especially in the least developed countries.²²

Early childbirth is closely linked to marrying at a young age, and is clearly more prevalent in countries where such practice is common. Marrying too early and against one's own will is a severe challenge that affects the lives of many girls worldwide. Every year, 10 million girls under the age of 18 are forced or coerced into marriages, many to a man twice their age or older.²³ This equates to more than 25,000 girls every day. One in three girls in the developing world is married by the age of 18,²⁴ while one in seven marry before reaching the age of 15.²⁵

In addition, girls who are married before the age of 18 have an increased risk of contracting HIV, the reduction of which is targeted by MDG 6. The elevated risk is attributed to the greater probability of having unprotected sex, often with an older partner, who has a higher chance of being HIV-positive just by virtue of his age.²⁶ An estimated 7.3 million young women live with the disease, compared to 4.5 million young men.²⁷ In the nine sub-Saharan African countries most affected by HIV, 75% of 15–24 year-olds living with HIV are girls and young women, most of whom do not know their status.²⁸ Young girls are also less aware about the risk of HIV and have a higher risk

of contracting it, which is often intensified by their lack of choice and control over sex.

19 World Health Organization WHO, (n.a.) *Women and Health*, Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs334/en/index.html>

20 Ashton, C. (2012) *Every day should be the Day of the Girl*. Girls' Rights Gazette, October 2012. Plan International.

21 United Nations (2012) *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012*. New York: United Nations

22 UNFEM, UNDP (2009) *Making the MDGs work better for Women – Implementing Gender-Responsive National Development Plans and Programmes*. New York: Unifem

23 Bruce, J. and S. Clark (2004), *"The Implications of Early Marriage for HIV/AIDS Policy"*, Brief based on background paper prepared for the WHO/UNFPA/Population Council Technical Consultation on Married Adolescents New York available at: <http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/CM.pdf>

24 UNICEF (2011), *The State of the World's Children 2011, Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity*, New York: UNICEF Population Council.

25 The Elders (2010) *Child Marriage*. Available at <http://www.theelders.org/womens-initiatives/child-marriage>

26 Ibid.

27 Plan International (2007) *Because I am a Girl – The State of the World's Girls 2007*. Available at <http://plan-international.org/files/global/publications/campaigns/becauseiamagirl.pdf>

28 UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, ILO, WHO & the World Bank (2011) *Opportunity in crisis: Preventing HIV from early adolescence to young adulthood*.

Gender-based violence

Girls are at particular risk of becoming a victim of physical and/or sexual violence. Globally, 150 million girls under the age of 18 have experienced rape or other forms of sexual violence in their lifetime.²⁹ Violence against girls poses a direct threat to girls' lives and health, while also reinforcing girls' inferior status in society. Girls can experience forms of physical and sexual violence even in their own homes, by strangers and sometimes within the formal education system.³⁰ Girls are also more vulnerable to insti-

tutionalised forms of sexual exploitation and child trafficking for sexual purposes, such as sex-tourism, child prostitution and child pornography.³¹

Finally, children and women are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects and consequences of state fragility and failure, armed conflicts and natural disasters. Such events notably increase the spread of illnesses and malnourishment, which due to the preference for boys in parts of the developing world, disproportionately impact on girls. Such contexts also make girls easy targets for exploitation, whether economic or sexual.

The practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) reflects a deep-seated inequality between the sexes, and has severe short and long-term health consequences. These include difficulties with urination, infections, cysts, infertility and horrific complications during childbirth such as fistula and extreme bleeding, which put both the mother and the new-born in severe danger. FGM, which is mostly carried out on minors during childhood, is an extreme form of discrimination against girls which violates not only their rights to health, but also to security and physical integrity.³² Although there is an international consensus on the extreme inhumanity and cruelty of such practice, two million girls worldwide undergo FGM every year, a huge number and an unacceptable reality.³³

29 According to the World Health Organization based on estimates by Andrews, G., et al. 2004. *"Child Sexual Abuse"*, Chapter 23 in Ezzati, M., et al. 2004. *Comparative Quantification of Health Risks: Global and Regional Burden of Disease Attributable to Selected Major Risk Factors*. Vol. 2. WHO, Geneva: 1851–1940 and data of the Population Division of the UN

Department of Economic and Social Affairs for population under 18 years. See WHO. 2006. Global Estimates of Health Consequences due to Violence against Children. Background paper for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. WHO, Geneva, cited in General Assembly. 2006. Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children.

- 30 Massart, G. (2007) *Violence against Girls: their experience and protection in West Africa*. Plan International. Available at https://plan-international.org/files/Africa/WARO/publications/violence_against_girls.pdf
- 31 UNGA (2000) *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*. Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution A/RES/54/263 of 25 May 2000. Entered into force on 18 January 2002
- 32 WHO (2002) *Fact sheet: Female Genital Mutilation*. Fact sheet N°241, February, 2012.
- 33 Machel, G. (2007) Foreword by Graca Machel, President of the Foundation for Community Development and Chair of the GAVI Fund Board. *Because I am a Girl – The State of the World's Girls 2007*. Available at <http://plan-international.org/files/global/publications/campaigns/becauseiamagirl.pdf>

Investing in girls, investing in development

Investing in girls is crucial. They are at risk of a number of human rights violations due to both their age and their gender, combining the vulnerability and dependence of a child with the exposure to gender-based discrimination. Yet, improving the lives of girls is not only in their sole interest. There are nearly 600 million girls living and growing up in developing countries, and girls who grow up in security, provided with good education and a sense of social responsibility will become adults who can make a real contribution to society, both socially and economically.

Girl children and young women are real agents of development. An increase of only 1% in girls' secondary education attendance adds 0.3% to a country's GDP.³⁴ At the same time, failing to address girls' specific socio-economic situation and its inherent challenges entails a considerable cost for developing countries. Plan International estimates that the economic cost to 65 low and middle income and transitional countries of failing to educate girls to the same standard amounts to USD 92 billion each year. This extremely high amount falls just behind the USD103 billion of annual development aid budgets to the developing world.

There is a growing consensus from the public and private sectors that acknowledges the value of educating girls. An influential global constituency, ranging from thought leaders at the World Economic Forum and in Financial Institutions such as the World Bank, to many of the world's most profitable companies, is coalescing around the idea that delivering on the universal right to education, with a particular emphasis on girls' education, is one of the most effective ways to generate a significant social and economic return on investment.

According to the World Bank, women's income rises by 10 to 20% for each additional year of schooling. For agrarian communities, four years of schooling may increase farmers' annual productivity by 9%.³⁵ In the short term, a girl receiving education is developing both her professional and her social skills. In the long run, girls are also one of the world's greatest assets in fighting for food security.³⁶

In Africa, young women work 50 percent more than young men and their work is mostly related to household production systems.³⁷ They hold a very prominent role in agriculture, particularly in processing food crops and in providing water and firewood. However, due to customary and legal restrictions they also have less access to productive assets, such as land rights and complementary factors (fertilizers, credit and education). Female farmers receive only 1% of total credit to agriculture and are far less likely to control the products of their labour, which decreases their incentives and opportunities to pursue productive income earning activities.

The World Bank also reports that if women were given equal access to education and production factors, growth rates could be up to 0.8% higher.³⁸ If Zambian women enjoyed the same level of capital investment in agricultural inputs, including land, as males, output could increase by 15%.³⁹ Therefore, gender equality can be a potent force for accelerated poverty reduction. In fact, research indicates that investing in girls

50% In Africa, young women work 50 percent more than African men and their work is mostly related to household production systems.

and young women can be even more effective in ending poverty than programs targeting children in general.⁴⁰

According to a recent study by the World Bank on "the Girl Effect Dividend," if young women in Brazil were employed at the same level as men, the country's annual GDP would increase by USD 23 billion. Using the same method to calculate the lifetime income, India would add USD 400 billion to its annual GDP.⁴¹ However, in all developing countries girls have higher economic inactivity rates than boys and older women. If young women had economic activity rates similar to those of young men, annual GDP growth rates would be up to 4.4% higher. Annual GDP growth rates in India, Nigeria, and Paraguay would be 4.4, 3.5, and 3.3% higher respectively if girls were as economically active as boys.⁴²

Despite a decrease in average fertility rates, an estimated 14 to 16 million children are born to adolescent mothers aged 15 to 19 each year, amounting to 11% of total births worldwide.⁴³ The Centre for Global development stated in a report that "adolescent pregnancy results in nearly USD100 billion of lost potential income."⁴⁴ Due to the fact that teenage mothers are more likely to suffer from nutritional deficiencies than older mothers, their children could be vulnerable to lifelong health-related disadvantages, especially if their poor health affects their educational attainment or productive work capacity. Through such avenues, adolescent fertility contributes to the reproduction of poverty from one generation to the next.⁴⁵

A reduction in gender inequalities raises women's relative wages and increases the cost of raising children, which has a negative effect on fertility. This leads to a slower growth in population and higher levels of capital per worker.⁴⁶ Investing in girls' reproductive health and rights by fulfilling the global demand for family planning significantly contribute to reducing the cost of achieving UN targets on maternal health and education. In Kenya, providing universal access to contraception could generate USD200 million net savings for the social sector and help meeting the MDGs.⁴⁷

- 34 Plan International (2008) *Paying the price, the economic cost of failing to educate girls*.
- 35 World Bank, (1993) World Development Report.
- 36 Bertini, C., (2011), *Girls Grow: A Vital Force in Rural Economies*, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- 37 World Bank, (2000) *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?*
- 38 World Bank, (2001). *Gender and Growth: African's Missed Potential*. World Bank
- 39 Saito, K. (1992) *Raising the Productivity of Women Farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa: Overview Report*.
- 40 Zimmerman J. Tosh N. And Holmes J. (2012). *Investing in Girls: Opportunities for Innovation in Girl-Centred Cash Transfers*. [Policy Paper] New American Foundation.
- 41 Jad Chaaban and Wendy Cunningham (2011). *Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls: The Girl Effect Dividend*, Policy Research Working Paper 5753, World Bank.
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02

Mapping of European Commission ODA policies, strategies and funding targeting Girls

The EU has made numerous commitments in the areas of gender, children's rights, health and basic education, all of which are crucial in improving the state of girls worldwide. The promotion of gender equality, along with the values of fundamental rights, anti-discrimination and social justice, are enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,⁴⁸ while article 3 of the Lisbon Treaty references children's rights as a specific priority that is at the centre of all EU external actions.⁴⁹ In addition, the EU Consensus recognises gender equality as a cross-cutting issue and fundamental right which is the precondition for sustainable peace and development.⁵⁰

48 European Communities (2000). Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, [C 364/5]. Official Journal of the European Communities.

49 European Union (2007). Treaty of Lisbon [ISSN 1725-2423]. The official Journal of the European Union.

50 European Union (2006). The European Consensus' (OJ 2006/C 46/01). The official Journal of the European Union.

2015

The Action Plan sets out specific objectives to implement in order to improve the EU's response on Gender Equality and Women's empowerment

Policies and commitments for girls

The EU has made numerous commitments in the areas of gender, children's rights, health and basic education, all of which are crucial in improving the state of girls worldwide. The promotion of gender equality, along with the values of fundamental rights, anti-discrimination and social justice, are enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, while article 3 of the Lisbon Treaty references children's rights as a specific priority that is at the centre of all EU external actions. In addition, the EU Consensus recognises gender equality as a cross-cutting issue and fundamental right which is the precondition for sustainable peace and development.

The EU and its member states are also signatories to international agreements and declarations promoting fundamental human rights, and the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sex. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), The Cairo Programme of Action (1994), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Declaration of the Millennium Development Goals (2000). In addition, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) ensures that all children should enjoy all rights without any form of sexual discrimination.

While gender equality is recognised as key in achieving the EU's overall development objectives, it is also a cross-cutting issue which requires a mainstreaming

approach for generating progress. Working towards equality between the sexes was identified as one of the six priorities in external and development cooperation by the EU Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men. In accordance with the Roadmap, the 2007 EC Communication on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation and the related Council conclusions provide a comprehensive EU approach on how to achieve progress towards gender equality, including equal political, civil, economic, employment, social and cultural rights for women and men, boys and girls. The Communication outlines an 'EU twin-track' approach which provides an overall approach to mainstreaming gender equality into all EU actions, while it also identifies five areas where specific action is needed. According to the document, mainstreaming should take place through political dialogue, development cooperation as well as institutional capacity building, while it also describes how gender needs to be incorporated into new forms of aid that are slowly replacing the individually funded project approach, including budget support and sector-based aid. It calls for targeted action in the areas of governance, employment and economic activities, education, health and gender-based violence.

The Communication along with the Council Conclusions were complemented by the 2010 Commission Staff Working Document: the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development, which is an operational document that also looks into ways to accelerate progress



towards the MDGs and other international development goals. In 2010, on the basis of this Staff Working document, the EU Council adopted an Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) in Development as part of its Conclusions on the MDGs.

The Action Plan sets out specific objectives to implement in order to improve the EU's response on Gender Equality and Women's empowerment, while it also sets deadlines and indicators for achieving its specific objective by 2015.

The EU also developed Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls and Combating All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which states that the EU will give priority to combating violence against women and girls in its multilateral and bilateral cooperation to defend human rights. The emphasis will be on cooperation taking place within the framework of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, which aims to support civil society programmes.

Alongside gender policies, children's rights policies also deal with the specific situation of girls. The EU's children's rights strategy is contained in the policy papers: *"A Special Place for Children in EU External Action"* and *"Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child"*. The European Commission takes notice of the disproportionately low representation of girls in education systems as well as the consequences of the absence of sexual and reproductive health

and rights for adolescent girls, such as forced sexual relations, forced marriages, unwanted pregnancies and the prevalence of HIV. It also notes the increased vulnerability of girls to domestic and sexual violence in conflict areas.

Besides what was mentioned above, the Communication Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child deals with the issue of forced marriage and FGM. The document highlights the importance of the rights of the child with a special attention to girls and those belonging to minorities. The Commission calls on Member States and the European institutions to take an active part in developing a strategy and contributing to its successful implementation. The communication finally calls for yearly monitoring to measure progress.

Financial resources and programmes targeting girls

General Overview of Funding Instruments and Implementation

Achieving gender equality, especially for those in a highly vulnerable age group such as girls between 10 and 19, requires not only political commitment and policies, but sound measures and specific interventions at a technical level. However, identifying and tracking down the exact amount that is allocated to girls at the EU level through ODA action is an impossible exercise. The main problem lies in the fact that the target group of this project, namely adolescent girls



between the ages of 10 and 19, is not a specific target group of any EC instruments so special monitoring on progress in this area does not take place. This is not to say that the EC does not support programmes that target the specific issues affecting girls or that there is no funding allocated to improve the lives of this specific group, but **to date there is no comprehensive approach developed to focus on the needs of girls.**

Girls' programmes are channelled through two main areas of intervention: children's rights and gender empowerment. In addition, programmes targeting education and basic health are also of key importance when discussing girls' empowerment. The EU's development action in both the areas of 'gender equality and women's empowerment' and 'children and youth' is financed through the following instruments for the period 2007-2013:

- The geographic instruments which support imple-

mentation at national and regional levels are the European Development Fund (EDF) in the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) in Latin America, Asia and South Africa and the European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI) in the neighbouring regions.

- The thematic/horizontal instruments with a gender or children and youth focus are the Investing in People (IiP) programme established under the DCI (renamed Global Public Goods and Challenges in the 2014-2020 Multi-annual Financial Framework) and the Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The Investing in People programme is coordinated at headquarters level, while allocation to children and gender programmes through the EIDHR are coordinated at delegation level based on the Country Based Support Schemes (CBSS), which aim to avoid overlaps and create a coordinated approach.

TABLE 1. Overview of the EU financial Instruments for projects targeting girls

	Coordinated at local level	Coordinated at headquarters level
Geographical Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Development Fund (EDF) • Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) • European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Development Fund (EDF) • Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) • European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI)
Horizontal/Thematic Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in People programme

Source: EEPA, October 2012

TABLE 2. Overview of the financial instruments targeting girls

	Funding 2007-2013	Funding 2014-2020 (as proposed by the EC)
Geographic instruments		
European Development Fund (EDF) [outside of EU budget]	€ 22.7 bn	€ 34.3 bn
European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)	€ 12 bn	€ 18.2 bn
Instrument with both geographic and thematic component		
Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI)	€ 16.9 bn	€ 23.3 bn
Thematic instruments		
European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)	€ 1.1 bn	€ 1.6 bn

Source: EEPA, October 2012

Geographic programmes

The EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) calls for ensuring adequate and predictable funding for women's and girl's rights as well as gender equality, in order to ensure consistent mainstreaming of gender throughout all EU actions, which include all geographical instruments. Concerning programming for girls' rights, the instruments in question are the European Development Fund (EDF) in the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) in Latin America, Asia and South Africa and the European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument in the neighbouring regions.

In addition to the mainstreaming approach set out in the EU Action Plan, Article 3 of the DCI prescribes that *"all geographic and thematic programmes under this instrument shall mainstream the following cross-cutting issues: the promotion of human rights, democracy, good governance, gender equality, the rights of the child and indigenous people's rights, environmental sustainability and combating HIV/AIDS."*

The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which covers assistance to the neighbouring countries in Article 2, prescribes that the instrument will promote core labour standards, including on child labour, gender equality, access to services and education for good health, including reproductive and maternal health for girls and women as well as fundamental freedoms including women's and children's rights.

Concerning the ACP countries and the EDF, the underlining policy framework is provided by the 2000 Cotonou Agreement, which includes a strong provision on gender equality. The treaty stipulates that cooperation should create an adequate framework to integrate a gender-sensitive approach at every level of development cooperation, including macro-economic policies, strategies and operations as well as taking specific measures in favour of women in a number of key areas.



However, aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment allocated by EU Institutions geographically in 2010 only concerns 14% of all aid activities, which is even 2% less than in 2009 (16%). While the figure appears extremely low just by measuring it against the commitment, putting it into the context of the percentage of programmes with gender equality focus which are implemented by EU member states makes the number even more daunting. Aid programmes with a gender focus in the UK in 2010 were 39% (47% in 2009), in Sweden 86% (80% in 2009), in Germany 45% (57% in 2009), and in France 30% (39% in 2009). While a drop in the figure is not exclusive to the EU institutions, the overall performance is still significantly behind key EU member-state ODA donors.

The result can be attributed to many factors, one of which is that gender mainstreaming simply needs to be upscaled. This is already a key objective of the EU Gender Action Plan. The shockingly low figure can also be attributed to the lack of proper monitoring of gender markers in project implementation, due to a lack of training and the high-turnover of Commission staff in delegations, which also results in an untrained workforce.

The Investing in People thematic programme under the DCI

Promoting gender equality is the smallest thematic budget of the Investing in People (IIP) programme (5% between 2007-2010 and 7.5% between 2011-2013) and it is mostly targeted at ENPI countries. The 2014-2020 exercise, as proposed by the EC, does not even include gender as a priority for budget allocation. This reality is due to the mainstreaming approach emphasised in the Investing in People strategy and the acknowledgement that gender is a cross-cutting issue. Consequently all areas of the thematic work under the Investing in People programme should have a gender focus built in.

According to the mid-term review, gender was mainstreamed:

- Under the health budget, the programme supported delivery of technical assistance to national governments to ensure that gender equality priorities are identified and included in the budget of national HIV and AIDS strategies.
- Within the education budget, special emphasis is paid to gender equity in accessing basic education.
- In the area of employment, the programme supported adding a gender equality focus to improve governments' capacity to monitor progress towards decent work.
- In addition, support was allocated to cultural programmes targeted against all forms of discrimination, including gender.

The Investing in People thematic programme under the DCI

Period 2007-2010

€ 541 million

- Good health for all: €300 million (55% of the total)
- Education and skills: €65 million (12% of the total)
- Gender equality: €29 million (5% of the total)
- Other aspects of human and social development: €113 million (21% of the total)

Period 2011-2013

€ 502 million

- Good health for all: €280 million (56% of the total)
- Education and skills: €72 million (14.5% of the total)
- Gender equality: €37 million (7.5% of the total)
- Other aspects of human and social development: €113 million (22% of the total)

Period 2014-2020 – renamed Global Public Good and Challenges (As proposed by the EC)

€ 6 303.2 million

- Environment and climate change: 31.8%
- Sustainable Energy: 12.7%
- Human development: 20.0%
- Food security and sustainable agriculture: 28.4%
- Migration and asylum 7.1%

M€11.1

The total budget devoted by the Action Plan to the abolition of child labour is €11.1 million.

However, neither the gender specific budget nor the mainstreaming element differentiates between girl children, adolescent girls and adult women adding to the difficulty of tracking down what is spent on issues of girls between the ages of 10 and 19.

Children's rights are included under the heading 'Other aspects of social development,' which accounts for 21%-22% of the total IiP budget. A key issue that was promoted is the fight against child labour, including the worst forms of child labour, such as trafficking, armed conflict, slavery, sexual exploitation and hazardous work. As discussed earlier, girls have an increased level of vulnerability in some of these situations such as trafficking and sexual exploitation, which the Action Plan takes into account. The total budget devoted to the abolition of child labour is €11.1 million. In accordance with the objectives, based on all programmes adopted in 2011, projects funded under this subject targeted the areas where girls are especially vulnerable, such as domestic and sexual exploitation, child labour in the informal economy, or child trafficking. Projects that use the term 'boys and girls' instead of children are suggestive of having a special gender-sensitive element, but no projects are only focused on the situation of girls and their specific vulnerabilities.

Concerning the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF), the Investing in People programme will be renamed as Global Public Goods and Challenges and will now include the thematic areas of environment and climate change, sustainable energy, human development, food security and sustainable agriculture and migration and asylum. While the proposed budget for the DCI is considerably bigger than in the 2007-2013 period, the original Commission proposal did not include children and youth under this thematic budget. This omission was also of concern for the European Parliament, which reinstated this element.

Besides children and youth, other elements of the proposal are similarly beneficial for the support for sound policies and strategies for girls: vocational training, the fight against child labour, empowerment of the rights of specific groups, such as youth, equal opportunities in education, the promotion of maternal health, sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and empowerment.

The EIDHR

The EIDHR is the EU's horizontal instrument that aims to address human rights issues around the world. It has a specific focus on gender and women's rights as well as the rights of the child. Calls for proposals for these two focus areas take place at delegation level. Between 2007 and 2010, there have been nearly 170 gender-specific projects, accounting for a total value of €28 million. The EIDHR also has a gender mainstreaming approach, as a result of which gender sensitive programmes are also included under other thematic areas. On this basis, and according to self-monitoring estimates, in 2007-2010 about 20% (240 projects) of the EIDHR projects had women's or girls' rights built in either as a primary or secondary priority, accounting for €40 million in funding.

However, these numbers reflect gender and women's empowerment as a whole, without a specific focus on adolescent girls. In order to find how many of these projects concerned the focus age group of this report, all projects were examined searching for the key words 'girls' and 'young women.' In addition, projects that mainly concern these groups, such as ones tackling FGM, were also added. A total of 38 projects were found. Some were mainstreamed under other thematic groups, such as children's rights, while others were introduced under the thematic programme for gender and women's rights. The majority of projects focused on violence against women including FGM and sexual and domestic

violence. Other programmes targeted rehabilitation and awareness raising activities around the inclusion of young women into society.

It must be noted that while all of these projects included girls either in the title, description or beneficiary, none of them exclusively focused on adolescent girls under the gender thematic area. There is therefore no evidence that the amount quoted above was spent on adolescent girls, but probably rather only a fraction of it. Although the inclusion of girls and young women in these programmes is crucial, failing to fund projects that address their particular situation can undermine the overall impact.





03

Distribution of strategic programming competences

The post-Lisbon treaty policy framework for EU development cooperation is complex regarding the distribution of strategic programming competences, with two new main actors: the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Directorate General for Development and Cooperation (EuropeAid/DG DEVCO).



The European External Action Service (EEAS) is a newly established body given a mandate by the Treaty of Lisbon, and is a sui generis service which assists the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the main body responsible for all EU external actions, while the Directorate General for Development Cooperation

(DG DEVCO) is a result of the merger of former DG DEV and the EuropAid Cooperation Office (AIDCO), mainly active at Headquarters (HQ) level. The key difficulty arises from the fact that the main instruments that allocate funding for girls are under shared competence between the EEAS and DG DEVCO.

According to the new programming divisions, the EEAS will lead the preparation in decisions on country allocations, country and regional strategy papers and national and regional indicative programmes, while DG Devco is responsible for annual action programmes and implementing decisions, governed by a set of working arrangements.

As outlined above, managing the EU’s instruments is a complex procedure, which requires close cooperation between the EEAS and the Commission DGs. So far, since the first outline of shared competences in 2011, much of the time has been characterised by a struggle between the two institutions. In 2012, they implemented more detailed working arrangements based on the first operational year of the EEAS. However, there also needs to be a strong will on both sides to effectively manage such cross cutting issues as gender equality and children’s rights, as well as the complex social and economic status that characterise adolescent girls between the ages of 10 and 19.

The geographic instruments, namely the DCI, EDF and ENPI, which are the biggest external instruments of the EU, are under the shared competence between the EEAS and the Commission DGs. The programming procedure has a 5-step approach which includes country/regional allocations, country/regional strategy papers, national/regional indicative programmes and Annual Action Programmes.⁶⁸

Humanitarian assistance as well as the thematic budget of the DCI are managed exclusively by Commission DGs and are coordinated at HQ level and carried out by partner organisations. Concerning the EIDHR, the management structure is more complex. The EEAS and its in-country delegations are in charge of strategic documents, while DG Devco is responsible for allocating the funds.

TABLE 3. Programming competences on the main Instruments funding girls’ projects

Service Responsible → Political responsibility ↓	Commission DGs	Shared programming between the Commission DGs and the EEAS	EEAS
Commission DGs	DCI thematic Humanitarian assistance (IHA)	DCI Geographic, EDF, ENPI	EIDHR
EEAS		DCI Geographic, EDF, ENPI	

Source: EEPA, October 2012, based on similar table by Stross, S.⁶⁷

67 Stross, S. (2012) *Programming financial instruments post-Lisbon: The European External Action Service and the new institutional architecture of EU External Action*. Charles University Prague, paper presented at the Conference ‘The European Union in International Affairs III’, 3-5 May 2012, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

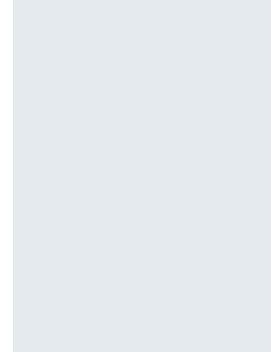
68 Ibid.



04

Country Strategy Papers: case studies

When trying to find out if the EU institutions are turning a blind eye to the situation of girls in the developing world it can also be useful to look more closely at some of the European Commission Country Strategic Papers for 2007-2013 and their mid-term reviews. Due to their characteristics as big recipients of EU ODA and countries where girls face high levels of hardship, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Bangladesh provide good examples for this purpose.



Afghanistan

In its publication Mid-term Review of the Country Strategy Paper for Afghanistan (2007-13) and Multiannual Indicative Programme 2011-13⁷⁴ the EC states that human rights violations remain a serious problem particularly for women and girls in Afghanistan. Women continue to face discriminatory practices and legislation enforced by the followers of the Shia jurisprudence. Women and girls fall victim to various forms of violence such as rape, 'honour killings', forced marriage and sexual abuse, particularly when in detention. The justice system enforces this violence by criminalising the female victims instead of persecuting the perpetrators.

The persisting gender gaps in education, labour force participation and decision making at the household level obstruct any progress towards gender equity within Afghan society. The literacy rate among 15 year olds is 28.7%, with a huge imbalance in access to education between boys and girls.⁷⁵ Likewise women have reduced roles outside the private domain, including limited access to health and social services.

In light of this reality, the EC has proposed a number of measures to promote women and girls' rights:

- Contributions to national priority programmes ensure continued support to community development programmes which foster the participation of women in economic activities and local decision-making in rural areas (e.g. Community Development Councils).⁷⁶
- Addressing gender issues through all rural development programmes funded from the EU Budget, including the issue of female employment.⁷⁷
- Support for the reform and strengthening of the national justice system is a priority. Human rights and gender concerns will be mainstreamed in the justice sector as well as other public administration programmes.⁷⁸
- Promoting the participation and training of women.⁷⁹

Although these measures focus mainly on adult women, girls should benefit from them as well, particularly since the EC document states that stakeholders have agreed that gender balancing needs enhanced support and, more importantly, that *"child protection and participation need to be addressed more explicitly in the future programme"*.

⁷⁴ http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/afghanistan/documents/content/multiannual_indicative_programme_2011_13_en.pdf

⁷⁵ Country Strategy Papers Islamic Republic of Afghanistan 2007-2013, http://eeas.europa.eu/afghanistan/csp/07_13_en.pdf

⁷⁶ Conclusions of the Mid-Term Review of the Country Strategy Paper for Afghanistan 2007-2013 and Multiannual Indicative Programme 2011-13, page 20

⁷⁷ Ibid. Page 20

⁷⁸ Ibid. Page 23

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Ibid, page 40

Bangladesh

In the CSP 2007-2013 for Bangladesh⁸¹ the EC states that almost 50% of the population can be considered as ultra poor, affecting mainly the female part of the population. Malnutrition is higher among young women and girls (i.e. over 50% of the female population) due to problems of access and affordability for the poor.⁸² Girls suffer from discrimination from birth, resulting in higher levels of malnutrition and higher girl child mortality.⁸³ In Bangladesh health is a gender issue, with the government incapable of providing women and girls with equal access to healthcare, lowering maternal mortality and creating equal chances for girls to survive childhood and to reach primary school enrolment age in good health.

Although primary school enrolment rates were increasing from 1990 (71%) to 1998 (94%) they slid backwards in the following years (83% in 2001). At the secondary level access is seriously hampered by the cost of tuition fees and costs for school materials and transport, which indisproportionately affects girls. This situation is finally revealed in the fact that technical and vocational training is mainly reserved for boys.

In 2003 nearly 3.2 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 were engaged in child labour, sometimes in dangerous conditions. Girls and women succumb easily to forced labour or prostitution after being trafficked.



Ethiopia

In light of the above the EC proposed to include human rights, gender and children's rights as cross cutting issues in its support to Bangladesh. In 2006 it had already developed projects on empowering adolescent girls and combating the trafficking of children and adolescents, to be implemented in the following years. The EC delegation committed itself to ensuring gender equality as an integral component of the education, health, justice reform and local governance projects in order to contribute to the achievement of women's and girls' rights.

As part of its 2011 mid-term review, the EC reported that a number of EU policies had been adopted or updated, but, more interestingly, they mentioned the adoption of the Human Rights Guidelines on children (2007) and Human Rights Guidelines on women (2008). In addition to the EC Strategy on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation, adopted in 2007, this should have resulted in a stronger gender focus, and in greater benefits for girls in the age group of 10-19. However, no report on the achievement of these objectives has been found so far.

In its document Country Strategy Paper and national Indicative Programme for the period 2008-2013⁶⁹ the European Commission states that gender equality has so far not been reached in Ethiopia, with girls' primary school completion rates far lower than those for boys and girls and young women being subjected to harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation.⁷⁰ In rural areas women are subjected to a low social status within their community.

Trafficking constitutes another form of gender discrimination, with young women being trafficked to Djibouti and the Middle East to perform forced domestic labour. Girls are lured from rural areas to Addis Ababa and other urban centres and often end up in forced labour situations as domestic servants, prostitutes or street vendors. Girls and young women are also prone to being abducted as a form of forced marriage in certain areas of Ethiopia, such as the Oromia and Amhara regions.⁷¹ While the Ethiopian government is trying to eliminate trafficking limited resources and restricted jurisdiction are hampering effective interventions.

In its indicative programme the European Commission identifies strengthening demographic governance as a focal sector and the promotion of gender equality as one of its objectives. € 10 million were set aside for this purpose,⁷² funding a range of activities which could be beneficial for girls between 10 and 19, such as:

- Support for putting into operation the National Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2006-2010.
- Support for institutional capacity-building of Ministry of Women's Affairs and Bureaus of Women Affairs, as well as Women's Affairs Departments in sector Ministries.
- Support for improved enforcement of legislation on women rights, such as the Family Code, minimum marriage age, legislation against trafficking of women and children, through support to relevant initiatives by State and Non-State Actors (NSAs).
- Support for Government institutions and NSAs for the empowerment of women to regulate their fertility and to facilitate women's access to methods and facilities to do so.

The European Commission meanwhile points out that the Ethiopian government should also take action by taking active measures to ensure the promotion of women's rights such as defining and implementing the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE-2006-2010), prioritising necessary actions and allocating the necessary budget.

The EC document shows that that there has been progress in Ethiopia for the ratio of girls to boys in primary education, which rose from 80 girls to every 100 boys in 2004/2005, to 84 in 2005/2006 (with a target of 97 in 2009/2010). However, secondary education showed a drop to 52 in 2004/2005 without any figures for the following years.⁷³

69 http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/scanned_et_csp10_en.pdf

70 Ibid, page 18

71 Ibid, pages 5 & 6

72 Ibid Annex 1A, Part 2, page 13

73 Ibid, Annex I.B, page 1

81 http://eeas.europa.eu/bangladesh/csp/csp_07_13_en.pdf

82 Ibid, Page 6

83 Ibid Page 6

84 Ibid page 8

85 Ibid page 4

86 Ibid page 33

87 Ibid Page 33

88 http://eeas.europa.eu/bangladesh/csp/11_13_mtr_en.pdf

89 Ibid Page 7



05

Conclusions and Recommendations

Gender equality should already exist when children are born. Yet girls and boys are treated differently in most of the developing world, with girls too often suffering from a lack of access to nutrition, basic healthcare and education. Addressing the issue is a moral duty, while failing to do so is economically, politically and socially unsustainable.



Conclusions

Girls are a particularly vulnerable group. They are at risk of a number of human rights' violations due both to their age and gender: a situation that combines the vulnerability and dependence of being a child with the heightened danger of being exposed to gender-based discrimination. They have to face the extremely harmful and inhuman practice of FGM, and when they reach adolescence they may be forced to marry, which in turn gives rise to the risk of unwanted pregnancies and other severe health risks, such as HIV. In addition, they are more vulnerable to facing physical and sexual forms of violence and engaging in unpaid and hazardous labour practices.

Without gender equality, none of the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved. Girl children and young women are real agents of development. There are nearly 600 million girls living and growing up in developing countries, and girls who grow up in security, who are provided with good education and who are given a sense of social responsibility will become adults who can make a real contribution to society, both socially and economically. An increase of only 1% in girls' secondary education attendance will add 0.3% to a country's GDP.⁹⁰

Coordinated and targeted action is thus urgently required. There are a number of international instruments in place, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

(CEDAW). In addition, the European Union has its own arsenal of commitments to protect the rights of girls worldwide, incorporated in its gender equality policies and those targeting children. Both children's rights and gender equality are considered cross-cutting issues, which must be mainstreamed across all the EU's external actions.

Indicators show a lack of effective mainstreaming of gender equality issues across all geographic programmes, but the overview of the projects financed through the thematic instruments as well as a review of country strategy papers where girls are vulnerable do show positive signs. For they show that girls around the world have benefited from programmes targeting the empowerment of women and girls, as well as those aimed at improving health and education. Meanwhile, more attention needs to be given to girls' specific needs on vocational training, social security and employment regulations. However, as precise data on girls aged 10-19 is still missing, it is impossible to know to what extent girls at this particularly vulnerable age between childhood and adulthood will benefit from EU development aid.

Recommendations

In order to secure progress on protecting girls' rights and empowering them, the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development has the following recommendations for their ODA interventions by European Union Institutions, at both the headquarters and delegation levels and when negotiating programmes with partner countries:

- Develop indicators for the number of girls in situations of poverty and exclusion, such as out-of-school, forced into wedlock or engaged in child labour, as a means to develop girl-friendly measures while promoting gender equality in all EU actions.
- Ensure that there are adequate financial and human resources to support gender equality and girls' empowerment programmes in development cooperation instruments, including the participation girl children, adolescent girls and young women.
- Ensure that special attention is given to improving access for young and adolescent girls to secondary schools and technical and vocational training when designing, negotiating and implementing education programmes and projects with aid recipients.
- Contribute to the setting up of national social security systems which include a child benefit scheme enabling parents to enrol their children, and girls in particular, into secondary education or technical and vocational training.
- Stress the need for adequate legislation, police services, and judicial mechanisms in place to guarantee that young and adolescent girls are protected from trafficking and all forms of exploitation as these girls are most susceptible to fall victim to these criminal activities.
- Stress the need for the protection of young and adolescent girls from harmful activities such as female genital mutilation and child marriage.
- Support sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including family planning, as a means to empower young women, particularly those in recipient countries that show no progress in reducing maternal mortality and improving contraceptive prevalence rate among young people.

To address the socioeconomic situation of adolescent girls effectively targeted actions must be taken that will complement pre-existing gender mainstreaming activities. These activities must specifically focus on adolescent girls rather than reduce them to a sub-category under the headings of gender equality or children's rights.

The European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development is calling on the European Commission to develop a comprehensive EU Action Plan for Girls as a strong vehicle to promote the improvement of the social and economic status of young and adolescent girls and ensure them a better, healthier and more fulfilling life within society.

⁹⁰ Plan International (2008) *Paying the price, the economic cost of failing to educate girls*. (Plan International, 2008). <http://plan-international.org/about-plan/>

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List of Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
AIDCO	EuropeAid Cooperation Office
CBSS	Country Based Support Schemes
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DG	Directorate-General
DG DEV	Directorate-General Development
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation (EuropeAid)
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EC	European Commission
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GAP	Gender Action plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HQ	Head-Quarters
HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice- President of the European Commission
IIP	Investing in People
ILO	International Labour Office
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
NSAs	Non-State Actors
ODA	Official Development Assistance
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

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This report is published as part of the European Alliance on Vulnerable Girls initiative. While women and children are recognised as specific categories in Official Development Assistance policies, the particular needs and rights of girls are often ignored. This publication provides evidence as to why they need to receive more attention and focus in the strategy and planning of the institutions of the European Union.

In recent years the situation of girls has become increasingly recognised in the discourse on global development policy. This is a very welcome change, because special approaches are needed to address the specific situation of girls, their needs and their vulnerability, and also to support and harness their potential.

This study examines the European Union's commitments to girls aged 10-19 in developing countries, and the role played by the advancement of girls in the EU's strategies at bilateral and multilateral levels. The report closes with recommendations as to how the EU can strengthen its commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of girls.



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