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DAC Network on Gender Equality

Addressing inequalities that intersect with gender in development co-operation

Guidance on Gender Equality Series

This is an advance copy of the forthcoming thematic paper on “Addressing inequalities that intersect with gender in development co-operation”. The forthcoming paper is an agreed output of the 2023-24 Programme of Work and Budget of the Development Assistance Committee [\[DCD/DAC\(2022\)23/REV2\]](#): Output 4.1, deliverable ii. “*Communications and implementation strategy to support deployment and uptake of the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Guidance for Development Partners (and potential instrument) with two working papers on ‘how to’ be more effective (e.g., on transformational change/intersectionality).*”

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Abstract

A companion piece to the DAC Guidance on *Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls*, this working paper focuses on gender inequalities and the inequalities that intersect with gender. It explains the concept of intersectionality and its implications for development co-operation, and suggests some initial policy options for development co-operation providers. It also documents the policy commitments some DAC members have made in this area, highlighting both good practice and challenges.

Foreword

The paper complements the DAC Guidance on *Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls* by providing a thematic focus on gender and the inequalities that intersect with gender, and considerations for development co-operation (OECD, 2023^[1]). It follows a similar paper on *Analysis of Development Assistance Committee members' policies in support of women's economic empowerment* It is intended for practitioners in development co-operation institutions aiming to take an intersectional approach to their support for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (OECD, 2022^[2]).

This paper sets out the approaches by some DAC members who have made policy commitment in this area, highlighting both selected good practice examples and challenges faced. Sections one and two present the concept of “intersectionality” and its background, as well as how it links to development co-operation practice. Section three focuses on good practice approaches and learning relating to development co-operation providers' policy frameworks. Section four addresses design and planning, and section five implementation of development programmes for gender equality with an intersectional lens. Section six looks at monitoring and evaluation, and section seven at internal approaches within development institutions, including human resource management. The paper also suggests some initial policy options for development co-operation providers. The stated focus on intersectionality in DAC members' policies however remains relatively recent and efforts to identify further good practice and policy options can helpfully be pursued.

This paper was developed based on desk research including a review of DAC members' development policies, as well as inductive interviews with DAC members (Annex A), and presentations and discussions in dedicated sessions at the 2022 and 2023 meetings of the DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) and a workshop of the Network held in June 2023 together with the DAC Community of Practice on Poverty and Inequalities.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AICS	Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (Italian Agency for Development Co-operation)
ADS	Automated Directives System (USAID)
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil society organisation
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRS	Creditor Reporting System (OECD)
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (USAID)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DfID	Department for International Development (The United Kingdom)
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (The United Kingdom)
FDFA	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FIAP	Feminist International Assistance Policy (Canada) International Feminist Policy IFP (tbc)
FDP	Feminist Development Policy (Germany)
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GADN	Gender and Development Network
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBA	Plus Gender based Analysis Plus (Government of Canada)
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEB	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch (Australia)
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (Australia)
GEM	Gender Equality and Empowerment Measurement tool (Global Affairs)

GENDERNET	Network on Gender Equality (OECD-DAC)
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (Germany)
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
HRNS	Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung foundation)
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IDA	International Development Association (World Bank Group)
ILO	International Labour Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual, plus other self-identifying members of the community
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
ODA	Official development assistance
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Executive summary

Realising gender equality will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is also a development goal in its own right. Gender inequalities are systemic and widespread across the globe. Reducing them is a key starting point and pathway to reach those furthest behind and promote diversity and inclusion. In addition to gender inequalities however, many women and girls face compounding dimensions of vulnerability and discrimination. These can be related for example to race, ethnicity and national origin, minority or indigenous status, faith/religion, socioeconomic status, education level, class, caste, geographic location, age, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics, or migration status. All of these aspects of discrimination intersect with gender inequalities, leaving the women and girls who also face them the furthest behind. Development co-operation providers need to address these intersecting inequalities in a holistic manner.

Intersectionality is a multifaceted conceptual framework that acknowledges the intertwined and interconnected nature of various forms of discrimination and inequality experienced by individuals. It seeks to understand and address the complex layers of discrimination that shape individuals' experiences. It rejects the tendency to view different forms of discrimination as independent and instead emphasizes the interplay between various factors, power structures, and processes that contribute to the perpetuation of inequality. An approach to development co-operation that takes into account gender and intersecting inequalities can help development co-operation providers more effectively address inequalities and leave no one behind.

This paper finds that half of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members refer explicitly to taking an intersectional approach, either in their strategy or policy frameworks or in some type of practical tool or guidance. All link intersectionality explicitly to gender equality. Others take an intersectional approach in practice, but do not spell this out in their policy frameworks. These members rather refer to, for example, "supporting women and girls in all their diversity" or "addressing compound and complex vulnerabilities", or simply focus on "leaving no one behind". Development co-operation providers should consider what policy/strategic framing might work best within their own system and context.

The paper addresses in more detail the two themes by far most frequently identified in DAC members' policies at the intersection with gender, as identified through a review of members' policy frameworks: disability and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual individuals, and more (LGBTQIA+). This should be understood as a reflexion of DAC members' current policy and not as any one dimension of discrimination being more important than another.

As set out in the DAC Recommendation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance and the DAC Guidance, development co-operation providers should ideally always consider gender inequality, either as a dedicated, explicit policy objective or one that is integrated into other sectors or themes, and they need to at the very least carefully consider the harm that can be caused when certain individuals are neglected. All development interventions have some type of impact on gender inequality and inequalities intersecting with gender whether intended or not. Programmes need be based on a thorough analysis of these inequalities as a starting point. When undertaking such an analysis, development co-operation providers should allocate

sufficient expertise and time to understand intersecting systemic discrimination in addition to gender inequalities, to identify the different experiences of all individuals.

When putting an intersectional approach into practice, the quality of implementation will depend, to a large extent, on the availability and capacity of “implementing partners”: DAC government’s line ministries or other public agencies, developing countries’ governments and public bodies, civil-society organisations, multilateral organisations, and other actors involved in implementing aid programmes. All implementing partners should focus on increasing capacities to address gender inequalities and inequalities intersecting with gender, in order to effectively work towards sustainable development. It was highlighted during the interviews undertaken for this paper that organisations working on, for example, disability inclusion and gender equality do not necessarily exist in each country or context. Some members have purposefully aimed to strengthen the capacity of their implementing partners with a particular focus on addressing intersecting inequalities, including so that they can then be representatives and transmit knowledge, through allocating dedicated resources and capacity.

Financial resources are a necessary foundation for all work on gender inequality and the inequalities that intersect with gender. DAC members’ official development assistance (ODA) is an important external financing resource for especially low-income and fragile contexts. Because intersectional approaches to addressing gender inequalities are complex, there is a strong case for providing core and flexible funding to implementing partners, which covers basic organisational and administrative costs that can support long-term interventions. DAC members and other development co-operation providers can also leverage their funding to mobilise other types of development and commercial finance that integrate gender equality objectives (OECD, 2020^[3])

The eradication of systemic inequalities and discrimination is complex and non-linear. Changes that seem positive may erode, and a hard-won victory may provoke backlash. It is important to be able to track progress and achievements including capturing negative reactions and impacts for effective monitoring and evaluation of programmes that address gender and intersectional inequalities. Collecting intersectional data requires being cautious about safety and security issues that may arise from collecting personal data. Maximising the availability of disaggregated data should not put anyone at risk of identification, discrimination, or any further related dangers. When it comes to evaluation, it is good practice for development co-operation providers to apply evaluation approaches which explore power relations and focus on the systemic or structural causes of inequalities that may be present in the context of a programme or policy.

Through the interviews with DAC members undertaken for this paper, members stressed that an intersectional approach to development cannot be applied without relevant expertise and human resources. Many acknowledged that intersectionality covers historically different portfolios of development institutions’ work, such as work on disability inclusion, on poverty reduction, and/or on human rights. One effective way of tackling this has involved appropriate mergers of and within teams, and linking up staff through formal structures. This practice enables institutions to pursue different intersectional topics, while benefitting from diverse expertise and making sure programming is appropriate.

Development co-operation providers need to also understand and address gender and intersecting inequalities within their own organisation and structure, to be able to work effectively on these issues externally. Intersectional approaches to diversity and inclusion within an institution demands consideration of each individual’s multiple identity characteristics and ensuring an inclusive work environment. It is important to proactively explore and research potential institutional forms of discrimination within the system to gain insights on different forms of discrimination taking place. Staff might not spontaneously report, or reporting systems may turn out to be ineffective. Promoting inclusion also improves workplace productivity, job satisfaction, personal and social well-being, and staff morale.

1 Addressing inequalities that intersect with gender

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind (OECD, 2023^[4]; UNSDG, 2017^[5]). It also recognises that realising gender equality will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sets out gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a goal in its own right (SDG5). Given that gender inequalities are systemic and widespread across the globe, reducing them is a key starting point, and pathway, to reach those furthest behind and promote diversity and inclusion. Women enjoy fewer than two-thirds of the rights enjoyed by men, and only a third of the needed legal protections against domestic violence, sexual harassment, child marriage and femicide (World Bank, 2024^[6]).

Gender inequality will be more effectively addressed by also taking into account other forms of discrimination and inequality. In addition to gender inequalities, many women and girls face compounding dimensions of vulnerability and discrimination. These can be related to race, ethnicity and national origin, minority or indigenous status, faith/religion, socioeconomic status, education level, class, caste, geographic location, age, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics, or migration status. All of these intersect with and compound gender inequalities.

Compounding inequalities that intersect with gender position the women who also face these forms of discrimination as the most disadvantaged in their society across the globe (OECD, 2023^[7]). For example, the status of women and girls with disabilities is not only worse than that of their male peers, but also worse than that of women without disabilities (European Commission, 2021^[8]). Women with disabilities are at least two to three times more likely than other women to experience violence, including by family, intimate partners, caregivers, and institutional facilities (UN General Assembly, 2012^[9]). Due to spatial and geographical inequalities, women in rural and remote areas are less likely to be wage earners, and when they are, they earn less than men (ILO, 2018^[10]). Employment rates of women with disabilities are lowest compared to men with disabilities and nondisabled men and women (ILO, 2024^[11]). As gender intensifies the disadvantages associated with income inequality and social identity, within most socio-economic groups, women and girls are positioned as subordinate to men (World Social Science Report 2016, UNESCO and the ISSC, 2016^[12]). For example, in 2022 in the United States, black women earned 70% as much as white men and hispanic women only 65% as much as white men (PRC, 2022^[13]). In the United Kingdom, women of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and mixed white and black Caribbean heritage see the largest ethnicity pay gaps of 14.7%, 11.8% and 10.6% respectively, compared to white British women. Compared to white British men, these pay gaps rise even further to 28.4%, 25.9%, and 25.0%, respectively (Fawcett, 2024^[14]). Gender inequality affects women in ethnic minority groups differently than women who are part of the majority ethnicity group, including in the areas of education, training, employment, income, health care and reproductive health. Persistent inequalities in maternity care experience and outcomes exist

globally for ethnic minority women (Asim, 2023^[15]; UN Women Viet Nam, 2015^[16]) Maternal mortality¹ for black women is overall higher than for white women: in the United Kingdom, it is currently almost four times higher (House of Commons 2023, 2023^[17]) and in the United States 2.6 times higher (NCHS Health E-Stats, 2023^[18]). LGBTQIA+ women and girls face additional discrimination risks than their male peers such as being disproportionately affected by forced marriage², women’s (lack of) property and inheritance right, their freedom of movement, right to asylum and access to justice (Human Rights Watch, 2023^[19]). Older women are more likely than older men to be widowed, less likely to remarry and more likely to live alone – features that can worsen economic insecurity in old age (UN Women, 2023^[20]). Data shows that across European OECD countries, pension payments to women aged 65 and over were 25% lower, on average, than for men (OECD, 2020^[21]). These are only some of the discriminations faced and not a complete stock-take.

Intersectionality is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression (Taylor, 2019^[22]). Compared to a historically “traditional” approach to supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in development co-operation, an intersectional approach is a way of thinking that places a stronger focus on compounding factors of discrimination, intersecting with gender inequality.

Intersectionality is a multifaceted conceptual framework that acknowledges the intertwined and interconnected nature of various forms of discrimination and inequality experienced by individuals (UN Women, 2021^[23]). It seeks to understand and address the complex layers of discrimination that shape individuals’ experiences. It rejects the tendency to view different forms of discrimination as independent (UNHCR, 2021^[24]), and instead emphasizes the interplay between various factors, power structures, and processes that contribute to the perpetuation of inequality (Sosa, 2017^[25]). Taking an approach to gender that acknowledges intersecting inequalities is about understanding and recognising the lived experiences of people with intersecting identities, and increasing their participation, representation, and rights. The objective is to transform situations and relations so that the human rights of all people are realised, and to avoid producing or reinforcing inequalities. Such an approach not only builds coalitions among diverse groups, but also actively challenges existing power imbalances and societal norms to foster social justice (Hankivsky, 2014^[26])

By highlighting the unique challenges faced by individuals who encounter discrimination based on multiple identity characteristics, intersectionality underscores the need and is part of the foundation for a transformative approach to gender equality. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls: DAC Guidance for development partners (OECD, 2023^[11]) (hereafter DAC Guidance) notes that:

“It is good practice for DAC members to take intersectional inequalities into account. DAC members can ensure that resources and opportunities are provided and barriers are removed, so as to enable the equality, empowerment and human rights of all individuals.”

The 2023 OECD Statement of the Ministerial Council Level Meeting noted that:

We encourage the OECD to continue to mainstream gender equality and inclusivity at the core of its analysis and to apply an intersectional approach to policy, data collection, and analysis disaggregated by sex, age, disability and region. We welcome the OECD’s Contribution to Promoting Gender Equality, the proposed Flagship Report on Gender Equality, the OECD Dashboard on Gender Gaps, and the new Gender Data

¹ A maternal death is defined by the World Health Organization as “the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and the site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes” (WHO, n.d.^[122])

² Child and forced marriage (CFM) is a human rights violation and a harmful practice that disproportionately affects women and girls globally, preventing them from living their lives free from all forms of violence. (UNHCR, n.d.^[124]) Forced marriage is one of ten key areas of human rights abuses most affecting LBQ+ women’s lives. (Human Rights Watch, 2023^[19])

Initiative. We look forward to the development of gender policy reviews and the establishment of a Gender Equality Forum to embed best practice (OECD, 2023^[27]).

Intersectional approaches are particularly important at this point in time, as campaigns against gender equality go hand in hand with and are a symptom of the trends of autocratisation and the shrinking space for civil society. For example, a growing number of regimes around the world have engaged in the persecution of women and ethnic minorities (Freedom House, 2023^[28]). Increasingly, democratically backsliding countries openly embrace calls for heteronormative and patriarchal family models and nationalism at the expense of women, LGBTQIA+ individuals and ethnic minority groups (Denkovski et al., 2021^[29]). Without an intersectional approach to rights and equality, and without putting women and girls front and centre of an inclusive development policy framework, the global pledge to leave no one behind will remain aspirational.

In this paper, as in the DAC Guidance (OECD, 2023^[1]), equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is largely discussed in relation to unequal power dynamics and the resulting inequalities between women and men. It recognises, however, that the concept of gender is a social construct and that not all individuals identify with the sex they were assigned at birth or with a binary concept of being a “woman” or a “man” (UNHCR, 2015^[30]; WHO, 2023^[31])

2 Understanding intersectionality: From theory to development co- operation practice

In the 1980s, black feminist and legal scholar Kimberlé W. Crenshaw first coined the term “intersectionality” to describe the double bind of simultaneous racial and gender prejudice facing black women. It was intended to highlight, based on the specific lived experiences of Black women, the ways in which the intersection of race and gender yields a different form of discrimination and oppression (Crenshaw, 1989^[32]). Crenshaw notes that intersectionality is a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power, (Crenshaw, 2015^[33])

“Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It’s not simply that there’s a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LBGTQ problem there.” Kimberle W. Crenshaw

The idea has its origins in the work of racial and social justice advocates involved in the civil rights movement of the 1950s-60s and beyond, including Black feminist activists and scholars such as Angela Davis, Patricia Hill Collins and bell hooks (Biana, 2020^[34]). Tensions amongst different feminist perspectives regarding diversity within the category of “women”, which have been voiced by Black women and women belonging to minority groups, have been critical to the development of intersectionality (Sosa, 2017^[25]).

Box 2.1. The specific case of Black lesbians as “the ultimate Other”

Collins (2000) provides an insight into a specific side of intersectionality, namely that of Black lesbian relationships. Intersectional experiences are greater than the sum of gender prejudices, racism and sexism (Crenshaw, 1989^[32]). Black lesbians are characterised as “the ultimate Other” by Collins – an expression which seeks to capture the multifaceted ways that Black lesbians are marginalised based on their gender, their sexuality, and their racialised identities as Black.

The case of Black lesbians provides an insight into the ways that intersecting inequalities create complex patterns of stratification. Black lesbians, in Collins (2000) view, are antithetical to both heteronormativity and whiteness, and this posits Black lesbians at a particularly vulnerable space at the margins of societies. Simultaneously, Black lesbians may also be perceived as a threat to Black heterosexual women. Because a society may be premised on heteronormative ideas, the fear of Black lesbians is an expression of homophobia where Black lesbians are viewed as sexually deviant. These ideas may also present themselves amongst an in-group presumably bounded by a shared experience of oppression, for example being Black.

Intersectionality imparts that it is essential to understand the complex ways that intersecting inequalities may constitute and reproduce pre-existing power dynamics. Black lesbians as the

‘ultimate Other’ thus provides a small insight into the ways that systems of oppression are reproduced. The case puts emphasis on the importance of incorporating an intersectional lens to analysis. For instance, without an intersectional approach, one would not be able to understand the ways that for example homophobia and anti-Black racism is reproduced even within groups with presumed shared characteristics.

Sourc (Collins, 2000^[35]) e: Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. 2nd edition. Routledge. New York: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203900055>

At the same time, these insights have informed an understanding of exclusion in additional areas such as the interface and interaction between age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and migrant, minority or indigenous status. Since the late 1980s, an increasing number of scholars have advanced the study of discrimination by viewing it through the prism of intersectionality and expanding its application to a wide range of areas, including (but not limited to) public services, employment, housing, education, healthcare, access to justice – and development co-operation.

The United Nations treaty bodies have identified and emphasized numerous grounds of discrimination, (UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 2022^[36]). The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) was the first human rights treaty to recognise multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and defined this further in General Comment No. 6 on Equality and Non-Discrimination (UN DESA, 2006^[37]; UN DESA, 2018^[38]); Increasingly, other non-binding instruments and recommendations are also referring to multiple forms of discrimination (UN Women, 2021^[23]). The Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) also recognised the multiple forms of discrimination faced by women and girls (UN Women, n.d.^[39]).

Approach in this paper

This paper, developed to support implementation of [Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls: DAC Guidance for Development partners](#), takes gender equality as its starting point to look at intersecting forms of discrimination which together result in an individual’s constellation of identities and lived experience. Gender equality should always be considered in all development interventions – either as the fundamental and dedicated focus with intersectionality as an important principle, or as one of the intersecting inequalities being considered and addressed as needed by the development intervention. An intersectional approach to development co-operation for gender equality recognises the complexity of inequalities that intersect with gender and underscores the importance of addressing multiple facets concurrently. It implies maintaining a focus on interlinked discrimination and marginalisation including but beyond gender.

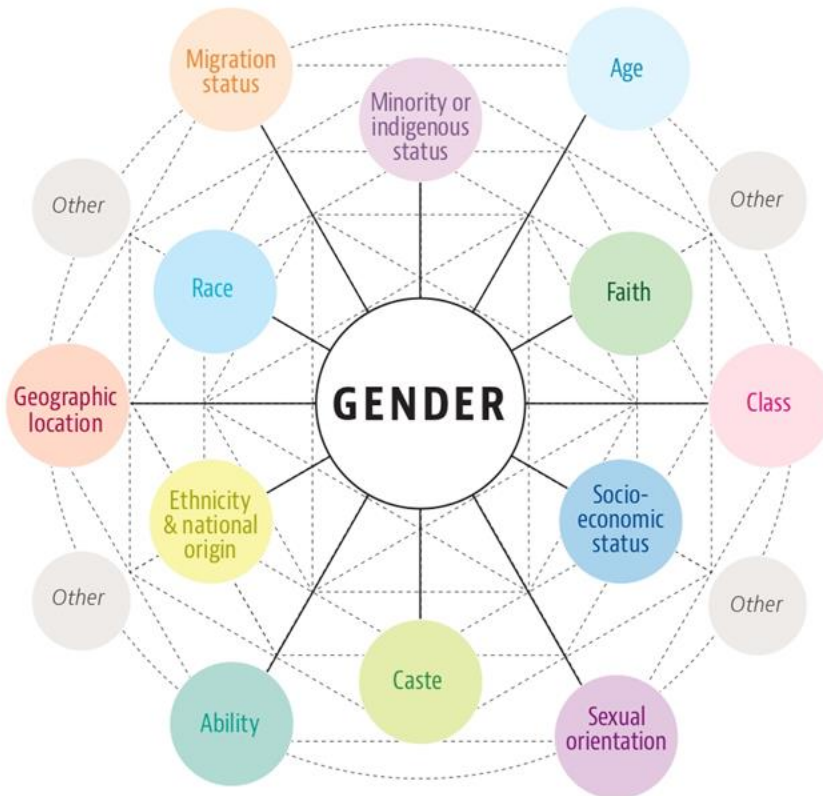
Most of the examples highlighted in this paper are drawn from DAC members’ gender equality policy and programming. While there are other examples of taking gender equality as the theoretical starting point for an intersectional approach³ the most common theoretical framework for intersectionality places all identity factor at the same level. The most relevant starting point for a development intervention will always depend on the given context.

One possible way of capturing the idea of inequalities that intersect with gender is by locating gender at the core of a “universe” of interconnected factors of discrimination. The metaphorical structure conveys the systemic nature of oppression, demonstrating that gender inequality is not isolated but entangled with

³ See for example (OECD, 2023^[125]) “Gender budgeting and intersectionality” <https://doi.org/10.1787/16812336>

and compounded by other forms of bias/discrimination. It also demonstrates individuals' constellation of identities (Figure 2.1).

Infographic 2.1. The universe of compounding inequalities that intersect with gender



3 Intersectional development policy frameworks

3.1. Framing the concept in development policy

In all development initiatives dedicated to gender equality, an intersectional approach should be taken that considers each individual's status as influenced by multiple factors beyond gender. In addition, gender equality should always be considered as one amongst other intersecting inequalities in all development interventions. As set out in the 2024 DAC Recommendation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance, DAC members should develop policy frameworks and consider legal frameworks intended to achieve gender equality and leave no-one behind, and that address different types of systemic discrimination and inequalities (OECD, 2024^[40]).

Half of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members refer explicitly to an intersectional approach either in their strategy/policy frameworks or in some type of practical tool or guidance. All those members link intersectionality explicitly to gender equality or take gender equality as the starting point for an intersectional approach. Some, but not all of the members who refer explicitly to intersectionality, have also identified a specific definition of the concept (Box 3.1).

Of the DAC members that do not explicitly refer to the term intersectionality, some adopt the approach in practice but use alternative framings. These members instead refer to, for example, “supporting women and girls in all their diversity”, addressing “multidimensional discrimination” or “compound and complex vulnerabilities”, or simply refer to “leaving no one behind” (LNOB) or to a human rights-based approach. This can be helpful in some contexts as alternative framings may be more easily comprehensible, and/or more easily acceptable. In addition, in some languages the exact term of “intersectionality” may not be commonly used. Many DAC members also have a stated focus on transformative change and on addressing the root causes of inequalities.

All the DAC members interviewed for this paper have overall development policy frameworks that either refer explicitly to addressing intersectional inequalities or aim to be inclusive, address the root causes of inequality, and/or reduce poverty and inequalities for those furthest behind. DAC members interviewed noted the importance of explaining intersectionality in a clear manner, in order for the approach to be a helpful organising principle of the development policy framework. Some members noted challenges with ensuring a holistic approach to intersectional inequalities, and a tendency to instead identify different “categories” to address, which risk overwhelming staff. Capacity development for staff is important (See Section 7), as is clearly framing the policy objectives. Theory should be kept short, and easy to understand and apply. Development co-operation providers should consider the most helpful entry point for framing their intersectional policy frameworks and priorities, given their own specific context and language, which remains clear and achievable for staff.

Box 3.1. Some definitions of intersectionality used by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members

This box provides some examples, though not an exhaustive list, of the definitions and approaches that DAC members use for “intersectionality”.

The European Union’s Gender Action Plan (GAP) III states that “*An approach is intersectional when it is based on an acknowledgement of the multiple characteristics and identities of an individual, to analyse and respond to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics*”.

Source: (European Commission, 2020^[41]), EU Gender Action Plan (Gap) III – An Ambitious Agenda For Gender Equality And Women’s Empowerment in EU External Action, eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020JC0017&from=EN.

Germany’s Feminist Development Policy understands intersectionality as part of mainstreaming and aims to “eliminate the structural and systemic causes of inequality and consider the intersections between diverse forms of discrimination – thus enabling equal and self-determined participation by all people in social, political and economic life. To that end, society must challenge existing inequalities and address stereotypes.” The policy also notes that an intersectional approach “puts the perspective of the marginalised person or group front and centre and takes into account the interaction of diverse inequalities resulting from different power systems (e.g. racism, classism). Intersectionality is thus a helpful tool in gaining a holistic overview of social inequalities and assists in addressing them”.

Source: (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2023^[42]) Feminist Development Policy For Just and Strong Societies Worldwide, <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/153806/bmz-strategy-feminist-development-policy.pdf>.

USAID’s Operational Policy sets out that “All individuals have multiple social identities shaping their lived experiences, including but not limited to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, class, race, age, disability, nationality, etc. These identities determine one’s place in their society, privileges and protections from human rights violations, and the impact of complex forms of discrimination. Intersectionality also serves as an analytical lens that considers and addresses how a person’s overlapping identities contribute to unique experiences of oppression, privilege, and access (including access to development programming).”

Source: (USAID, 2023^[43]) Operational Policy (ADS) Chapter 205: Integrating Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in USAID’s Programme Cycle: <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-200/205>

Australia’s Good practice note on gender equality, disability and social inclusion analysis explains that ‘Intersectionality’ is a concept which recognises that an individual’s identity has many layers, and each layer may confer either negative or positive status and may either close or open access to resources and power. Intersectionality does not sideline gender (or disability or LGBTQIA+ persons), but moves away from focussing on single or isolated causes in analysing and explaining the dynamics of power and inequality.

Source: (Austalian Government DFAT, 2023^[44]) Gender equality, disability and social inclusion analysis – Good practice note <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/gender-equality-disability-and-social-inclusion-analysis-good-practice-note>

The Netherlands’ Policy Framework for Strengthening Civil Society, Power of Women grant instrument document, understands intersectionality as: “*an individual’s identity is made up of multiple elements, e.g. female and disabled, or member of an indigenous people and gay/lesbian. For this reason, gender equality and inclusion are clearly related to intersectionality. This term assumes that individuals who are members of interest groups, movements and organisations often face several problems and*

challenges. Their position in society is not one-dimensional. A focus on a single factor may work restrictively and prevent the intervention from being effective. Intersectionality also has implications for convergences between organisations and/or movements which share the same goals but whose primary thematic aims differ.” This definition shows that gender equality and inclusion (with attention to intersectionality) are integral components of this policy framework and as such should be addressed in the application. This means applicants need to flesh out how they put these principles into practice, and how the applicant or consortium guarantees and accounts for results on gender equality and inclusion.

Source: (Government of Netherlands, 2022^[45]), Policy Framework Strengthening Civil Society, <https://www.government.nl/documents/policy-notes/2019/11/28/policy-framework-strengthening-civil-society>.

New Zealand uses a working definition and considers that inclusive development must tackle all forms of discrimination and oppression and is progressively embracing intersectional approaches and fostering diversity and inclusion through their policies, investments and development aid. New Zealand concept of intersectionality as an analytical lens to acknowledge, understand and respond to the ways that gender intersects with characteristics such as race, age, ability, and socio-economic class, among other dimensions, and how this compounds experiences of oppression and privilege. New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) recognises that many people and groups are subject to different forms of gender discrimination, and that a person's experience of intersecting discrimination or oppression is unique, and not the sum of different discriminations.

Source: Internal document of New Zealand (unpublished).

Italy's “Guidelines on the gender equality and the empowerment of women, girls and children in international co-operation (2020/2024)” note that the intersectional approach “assesses the multiple discrimination experienced by some women and girls (such as those with disabilities or displaced persons)”.

Source: (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, 2020^[46]) Guidelines on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (2020-2024) [Gender Equality - aics](#)

Some of the DAC members interviewed have opted to identify the specific inequalities that intersect with gender that they aim to address as priority areas. These members, however, pointed out that these lists were in reality not comprehensive. Other members have identified one focus area in addition to gender, such as disability, and consistently address the two in tandem in both policy dialogue and development programming. Such an approach can be effective in that it creates a clear “niche” for the development co-operation provider and plays to its strengths, even though all development co-operation needs to prioritise country demand and needs, in line with the effectiveness principles of country ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnerships and transparency and mutual accountability (GPEDC, 2011^[47]). It is, however, essential to consider and adapt policy priorities to the specific context of any development intervention and take into consideration other intersecting forms of inequalities that may exist within the focus area itself (See Section 4)

3.2. Spotlight on members’ intersectional policy priorities

While the different identity characteristics that intersect with gender are equally important, this section addresses in some more detail the two themes by far most frequently identified in DAC members’ policies at the intersection with gender, as evidenced through the review undertaken for this paper: disability and LGBTQIA+ rights. This text should be understood as a reflection of current policy and not as a prioritisation exercise.

While all women and girls face some type of inequality, women and girls with disabilities often face additional, severe disadvantage due to physical barriers and discriminatory social norms and perceptions of their value and capacity. Women with disabilities account for almost one fifth of the world's female population (UNICEF, 2022^[48]). Girls and young women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence than either their male peers with disabilities or girls and young women without disabilities (UN General Assembly, 2017^[49]). Women and girls with disabilities face numerous barriers to accessing information and services, including in exercising and accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights, including stigma and stereotypes, restrictive legislation and a lack of child- and disability-appropriate information and services (UNFPA, 2018^[50]). The intersection of gender and disability is a common policy focus for DAC members.

Women with disabilities are underrepresented in national co-ordination mechanisms on disability matters. Across 17 countries and territories from the Asia and the Pacific region in 2017, organisations of persons with disabilities included nearly twice as many men as women (UN DESA, 2018^[38]). Women with disabilities are *also* underrepresented in gender equality institutions: In 7 of those same 17 countries, national machineries⁴, for gender equality included no women with disabilities among their membership, and in the remaining five countries, only 9 per cent of members were women with disabilities (UN DESA, 2018^[38]).

Targeted efforts are required to identify and address barriers experienced by diverse people with disabilities of all genders, including ensuring accessibility (e.g. accessible meeting venues and documents in accessible formats) and reasonable accommodations : the tailored provision of support, modifications and/or adjustments that meet the needs of individuals with disabilities to ensure they enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis to others (Austalian Government DFAT, 2023^[44]). It is good practice for DAC members to use participatory methods that improve and facilitate the inclusion of voices from concerned communities, in all stages of policy and programme cycles (OECD, 2023^[11]). Unless development co-operation providers focus specifically on people living with disabilities as part of an intersectional approach, these individuals will by default be excluded due to access issues and risk being excluded from processes that involve people living with disabilities.

⁴ The national machinery is a comprehensive structure which consists of structures in the executive, legislative, independent bodies set up by statutory law, non-governmental organizations (UN Women, 2012^[123]).

Box 3.2. A policy focus on disability inclusion and gender equality

Finland takes a human-rights based approach to development co-operation, as part of its foreign and security policy. As part of its work to promote the rights of women and girls – which is one of five development policy priorities - Finland explicitly supports the right of persons with disabilities to live without discrimination and violence. Conversely, the crosscutting objectives include gender equality and non-discrimination with an emphasis on disability inclusion, increasing opportunities for intersectional approach.

Source: (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland, 2024^[51])Goals and principles of Finland's development policy: <https://um.fi/goals-and-principles-of-finland-s-development-policy> and (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland, 2023^[52])Guideline for the Cross-Cutting Objectives in the Finnish Development Policy and Co-operation: [e9e8a940-a382-c3d5-3c5f-dc8e7455576b \(um.fi\)](https://um.fi/e9e8a940-a382-c3d5-3c5f-dc8e7455576b)

United Kingdom's Disability Strategy 2022-2030 Women and girls with disabilities: "This strategy is fully aligned with the FCDO's priority to unlock the potential, agency and freedoms of women and girls in all their diversity. We continue to work to 'Leave no girl or woman behind' and focus where progress is slowest because of intersecting discrimination or disadvantage, including for women and girls with disabilities.

Source: (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, 2022^[53])Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy 2022-2030[Disability-Inclusion-and-Rights-Strategy-2022.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111111/Disability-Inclusion-and-Rights-Strategy-2022.pdf)

Another common policy focus for DAC members is the intersection of gender equality and the protection and rights of individuals discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics. This implies extending the same rights to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and gender-diverse (LGBTQIA+⁵) persons as those set out in international human rights standards (OECD, 2020^[54]). In many countries however, discriminatory laws criminalise private, consensual same-sex intimacy, exposing millions to the risk of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment, or even the death penalty. Criminal laws also discriminate explicitly or implicitly based on gender identity or expression: for example, in some countries transgender people are criminalized, using so-called "cross-dressing", "impersonation" and "disguise" laws. LGBTQIA+ persons also face discriminations including by health providers and systems, lack of appropriate and non-discriminatory health information and education, increased exposure to sexual and gender-based violence, and denial of legal recognition of gender identity and of gender-affirming health care (UN Human Rights Council, 2022^[55])

Work on LGBTQIA+ rights specifically, however, does not automatically address the lack of rights experienced by many women. On the contrary, the conceptualisation of LGBTQIA+ rights has traditionally not effectively incorporated fundamental areas of women's rights, such as forced marriage, women's (lack of) property and inheritance rights or their freedom of movement (Human Rights Watch, 2023^[19]). Conversely, women's rights are often not conceptualised as including LGBTQIA+ rights, for instance by excluding forced marriage of lesbian women as part of a broader narrative on forced marriage. It is also important to recognise that there is no monolithic "LGBTQIA+ community" and that discrimination and

⁵ The acronym that is used to discuss the rights of individuals who are not heterosexual or cisgender (a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person has or was identified as having at birth (Human Rights Campaign, 2023^[121]) varies between institutions). While many members still use "LGBT", in a move towards inclusivity, some institutions have expanded upon this acronym, adding variations such as LGBTQIA or LGBTQ+ (the "+" is utilised in an effort to indicate the inclusion of a spectrum of sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions).

violence affect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people differently (Outright Action International, 2021^[56]).

The human rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals are, in tandem with women's rights, often the target of populist and nationalist organisations and movements that frame gender equality as a threat to society. Such “anti-gender” campaigns are flourishing (Corredor, 2019^[57]). Increasing autocratisation in countries often goes hand in hand with governments that openly embrace calls for heteronormative and patriarchal family models at the expense of women and LGBTQIA+ communities (Denkovski et al., 2021^[29]).

This highly political context incurs a host of ethical challenges for development co-operation providers. Some DAC members make the choice not to have an explicit strategy on LGBTQIA+ due to the political, cultural, and social challenges they might face and additional pushback that this might provoke. This does not necessarily mean they are not supporting these communities through different channels.

In some contexts, gender equality advocates have made the choice of delinking women's rights from issues around gender identity and the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ communities. However, many LGBTQIA+ and women's rights organisations work across movements to combat threats to their rights, creating opportunities to build solidarity and coalitions (Madrigal-Borloz, 2021^[58]; Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, 2019^[59]) LGBTQIA+ inclusion should be seen as part of advancing gender equality, and can be conducive to the emergence of less restrictive gender norms and help accelerate gender equality (OECD, 2020^[54]). DAC members need to carefully consider the opportunities for supporting all individuals' human rights, as well as the harm that may be caused if this is neglected, including when engaging with partner governments.

Policy options for development co-operation providers

- Development co-operation providers should consider the most helpful entry point for framing their intersectional policy frameworks and priorities, which remains clear and achievable for staff. This can be done by explicitly referring to inequalities that intersect with gender or for example make it part of a “leave no-one behind approach”.
- Development co-operation providers should always make gender inequality an integral part of all of their activities, either as a dedicated or mainstreamed policy objective. They need to ensure support for all individuals' rights, including when engaging with partner country governments, and consider the harm that can be caused when certain individuals are neglected. It is crucial to recognise the overlapping forms of inequalities that intersect with gender and may result in compounding forms of discrimination.

4 Analysis and design of development programmes

4.1. Gender-based analysis and design that take into account the inequalities that intersect with gender

All development interventions will have some type of impact on gender inequality and inequalities intersecting with gender (OECD, 2023^[11]) – whether intended or not – and should be based on thorough analysis of these inequalities as a starting point (CBM, 2019^[60]). The analysis and design phases of any development intervention need to respond to the context and circumstances of the planned activity (OECD, 2023^[11]). Assessments of the local situation and gender-based analysis that takes into account intersecting inequalities should identify how social norms, relations and power dynamics are experienced by people as a result of their different and intersecting identities. A gender-based analysis that takes into account the inequalities that intersect with gender recognises that the interaction of impairments (physical, sensory, psychosocial, cognitive) and barriers (physical, social, communication and institutional) has a wide range of effects and explores how these elements intersect to create diverse experiences of exclusion and marginalisation (Austalian Government DFAT, 2023^[44]). It also highlights that identity characteristics and experiences do not fit into neat categories. For example, countries that seem to be doing well according to an aggregate assessment of indicators may have pockets of left-behind groups or individuals. At the same time, relatively poor areas still have a small percentage of very wealthy people.

An intersectional approach to gender-based analysis is the foundation for ensuring development programmes are more effective in reaching their target audience, by preventing unintended harm, exclusion, and further marginalisation, and by promoting their rights, equitable opportunities, and benefits.

There are some important principles to consider in the process of a gender analysis with intersectionality as a fundamental principle. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Being self-reflective:** No one is free from their unconscious or conscious biases. Development and gender equality practitioners need to examine their own beliefs, judgements and practices, as well as those of the organisation or agency they work in (Hankivsky et al., 2014^[61]). Self-awareness and reflection requires considering each own's social positions, access to power, identities and relationships and how these might intertwine in shaping each owns perspectives and outcomes of the analysis - where one is located in relation to their multiple identity characteristics, also referred to as "positionality" (Alcoff, 1988^[62]). Questions to ask in the self-reflective phase may include, but are not limited to:
 - How does my background, nationality, social and religious identity, and network create my own biases, attitudes and beliefs?
 - Do I critically reflect on my own privilege, which may disadvantage others?
 - What can I do to address this?

- **“Do nothing about them without them”:** It is important to aim to gain understanding by asking the right questions to the right people (Gender & Development Network, 2017^[63]). Practitioners should prioritise learning from those traditionally excluded from the decision processes while at the same time keeping in mind the potential burdens placed on marginalised individuals by asking them to come up with the answers. In a 2022 review of racism in the aid sector, the UK’s International Development Committee concluded that Government staff in high income countries tended to assume knowing what is best for development implementing partners (House of Commons: International Development Committee, 2022^[64]). This is partly a historical precedent of colonial attitudes, whereby the development co-operation provider takes the shape of the paternalistic, colonial power, and simultaneously risks making development ineffective. By not incorporating the experiences and valuing the knowledge of local expertise, programme implementation risks becoming unsuccessful.
- **Do no harm:** The concept of ‘do no harm’ carries with it the potential to drive positive action. It also means that doing nothing when people are in need is clearly to do harm (Wallace, 2014^[65]). Humanitarian, development and peace actors need to minimise even the slightest possibility to do harm inadvertently by their assistance and/or presence (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2016^[66]; Principle to Practice, 2014^[67]).

Box 4.1. Global Affairs Canada’s approach to analysis addressing systemic barriers to gender inequality.

Intersectionality is a core principle of Canada’s [Feminist International Assistance Policy \(FIAP\)](#). The FIAP seeks to bring about transformative change for gender equality, human rights and poverty reduction by addressing fundamental structural barriers, systemic inequalities and discrimination, driven by leaving no one behind.

Distinct but complementary analyses, compliant with the Government of Canada-wide [Gender-based Analysis Plus](#) (GBA Plus) – an analytical process which provides a method for the assessment of systemic inequalities, as well a means to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender diverse people may experience policies, programmes and initiatives.

International assistance efforts are based on evidence and contribute to addressing the root causes of poverty, eliminating systemic discrimination and transforming unequal systems of power. It requires that all GAC international assistance projects, programmes and policies to be informed by Human Rights Analysis and Gender Equality Analysis/Assessment. As the FIAP systematically takes gender into consideration among intersecting dimensions to advance gender equality and inclusion, gender equality analysis:

- Is mandatory for all international assistance project proposals and required to inform other policy, programming and advocacy initiatives.
- Assesses gender norms, roles, barriers and power dynamics.
- Must inform the project design and theory of change by identifying gender inequalities and their root causes relevant to the development challenge.
- Must be contextual and intersectional to take into account how gender inequalities are influenced and differ along intersecting inequalities.

The gender equality analysis is complemented by the human rights analysis. The Human Rights Analysis identifies the core problem and interventions from a human rights perspective while emphasizing the participation and empowerment of rights holders throughout the process, in order to rebalance unequal power relations. Both analyses require evidence of an inclusive and participatory

approach applied throughout the project's life cycle, with special attention given to including the poorest, most marginalized and most vulnerable.

Source: (Government of Canada, 2023^[68])Feminist approach - Innovation and effectiveness guidance note https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/fiap_ie-paif_ie.aspx?lang=eng; (Government of Canada, 2023^[69])Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/policy-politique.aspx?lang=eng, (Government of Canada, 2023^[70])Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-analysis-plus.html>

- **Managing risks:** Identifying, acknowledging and managing risks ensure development programmes do no harm and are sustainable in the long-term. Failing to analyse potential perils can unintentionally perpetuate or reinforce inequalities in the context of the intervention (OECD, 2016^[71]). For instance, there is evidence that the economic empowerment of women can be linked to an increased prevalence of domestic violence (Désilets, 2019^[72]). In addition, the risk of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment during the implementation of programmes, also needs to be scrutinized, especially where reliance on aid is high (UK Aid, 2023^[73]). Development co-operation providers also need to be conscious of the potential risks faced by local organisations working for women's rights, LGBTQIA+ communities and other vulnerable/marginalised groups, especially in contexts of democratic backsliding or rise of authoritarian regimes (USAID, 2017^[74]). Effectively managing risks doesn't imply inaction when facing potential issues. Instead, it involves recognizing risks and implementing specific actions to successfully mitigate risks and adopt adequate actions.
- **Combine quantitative and qualitative methods** Intersectional analysis should be based on two types of data: 1) quantitative gender-disaggregated data, so gathering numerical data where safe and appropriate; and 2) qualitative analytical information. Qualitative research methods are useful for assessing community needs, planning and evaluating interventions, and engaging community actors via participatory research (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2023^[75]). Qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, observations or focus groups, allow for exploring socially constructed categories like race and gender and examine relationships of inequality between social groups (Jane Bailey, n.d.^[76]). Such methods can also help answer some underlying questions of why and which factors are contributing to a different lived experience. Both quantitative and qualitative methods make experiences visible in complex ways (Alexander-Floyd, 2012^[77]) and should be used in combination. It is important to keep in mind that gender disaggregated data collection can raise concerns about privacy, identity, self-determination, and security. The appropriateness of collecting such data therefore depends on the context. For example, the decision to collect gender- disaggregated data in countries where same-sex sexual conduct is criminalized or where laws and policies discriminate against LGBTQIA+ persons should be based on an assessment of threats and risks to the safety and rights of those involved in the activity. (Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023^[78])
- **Contextualisation:** Makes visible the inequalities and identifies opportunities to transform power imbalances (Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023^[78]) . Intersectional analysis implies understanding the interlinkages of discrimination in their wider social, political, economic, and legal environment. This also means recognizing that identities and experiences can change over time.
- **Power analysis:** Individual people can experience both privilege and oppression at the same time and in different ways (Collins, 2000^[35]). Intersectionality-based analysis should be focused on the intersecting processes by which power and inequity are produced, reproduced, and actively resisted (Dhamoon, 2010^[79]), including each individual's constellation of identities which shape their personal privilege and/or oppression.

Box.4.2. Australia's Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) analysis

The Australian Government is committed to advancing gender equality, disability equity, and social inclusion through the development programme. Its International Development Policy identifies gender equality, disability equity and climate change as core issues for action. To achieve effective development outcomes, development and humanitarian investments valued at \$ 3 AUD million and above must be informed by gender analysis and have a gender equality objective. DFAT's [Good Practice Note on Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion Analysis](#) recommends that this analysis is intersectional.

Intersectional analysis recognises and identifies how social norms, relations and power dynamics are experienced by people as a result of their identities, including gender, age, disability, income, education, faith, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and migration status. It recognises that the interaction of impairments (physical, sensory, psychosocial, cognitive) and barriers (physical, social, communication and institutional) has a wide range of effects and explores how these elements intersect to create diverse experiences of exclusion and marginalisation.

DFAT uses the 'Gender at Work Framework' to make visible the interlinked dimensions of gender equality, accompanied by a commitment to a rights-based approach to disability inclusion and equity. Quality GEDSI analysis must actively include people with disabilities in each step.

DFAT's recommended methodology:

- Recognises and provides accessibility and reasonable accommodations
- Makes visible the inequities and identifies opportunities to transform power imbalances
- Takes a do no harm approach, recognising the risks to safety of LGBTQIA+ individuals in countries where they may face discrimination and or lack protection
- Goes beyond women, men, boys and girls and includes gender diverse people
- Combines quantitative and qualitative methods
- Uses participatory approaches
- Disaggregates data by sex, age and disability, and where safe and appropriate gender identity.

Australia's development program is delivered through country and regional planning, informed by locally-led priorities, which is articulated in Development Partnership Plans (DPPs). DPPs are based on strong partnerships, support existing bilateral and regional architecture, and are informed by gender equality, disability and social inclusion analysis.

Sources: (Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023^[78]) "Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion analysis - Good practice note", DFAT's International Development Programming Guide; Australia's International Development Policy <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/gender-equality-disability-and-social-inclusion-analysis-good-practice-noteand-exchanges-with-dfat> (2024)

Box.4.3. How Germany is addressing power relations in their Feminist Development Policy

German development policy operates within a system in which the **distribution of social, economic and political power within societies, between countries and, not least, between the Global North and the Global South is highly unequal**. The power gap between countries of the Global North and the Global South has its origins in colonialism and has evolved over the course of centuries. Power inequalities within societies are grounded in deep-rooted structural and often interlinked systems such as patriarchy, racism, sexism, ableism, and classism. These systems perpetuate violent and unequal power structures. In the countries of the Global South, they are also associated with European colonialism and a colonial mindset which continue to have effects today.

The Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development's feminist development policy aspires to pursue a post-colonial and anti-racist approach. This (learning) process, which involves critical reflection on issues of power, starts with the recognition that colonial continuities and racist thinking are still present in German development co-operation today.

A post-colonial development policy involves continuous reflection on our own role and position in the power structure and critically analyses our own understanding of what "good development" means.

Source: (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2023^[42]) *Feminist Development Policy: For Just and Strong Societies Worldwide*. <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/153806/bmz-strategy-feminist-development-policy.pdf>

4.2. Applying an intersectional lens to gender data

Applying an approach to gender data that takes into account inequalities that intersect with gender means disaggregating data by different factors of inequalities within and between groups which shape a person's identity (Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 2021^[80]). It also most likely implies using both quantitative and qualitative data. It is important that data gathered for analyses do not treat individuals as monolithic categories but reflect the intersection of sex and gender identity with other characteristics. The SDGs include the target of increasing "significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts" (UNCTAD, n.d.^[81]). DAC members should consider establishing intersectional requirements for gathering data, starting at the analysis level. For instance, per USAID's Automated Directives System 205 Chapter, *Integrating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle* which contains the organisation and functions of USAID, along with the policies and procedures that guide the Agency's programs and operations, data for a gender analysis should reflect the intersection of sex and gender identity with other characteristics (e.g., age, marital status, income, ethnicity, race, disability status, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender expression, or other socially relevant category) including in education, health, political participation, economic activity and earnings, time use, and ending gender based violence (USAID, 2021^[82]).

It is important that appropriate indicators for inequalities which intersect with gender are identified at the design phase of a programme and monitored throughout the programme cycle (section 6). This requires identifying the identity markers and other characteristics that may be source of disadvantage, discrimination and/or oppression (OXFAM, 2020^[83]).

Box 4.4. Sample indicators to measure intersecting inequalities

Some examples of indicators which can be considered to measure inequalities that intersect with gender include:

- Prevalence of violence against women who indicate that they are non-citizens or have health problems.
- A target percentage of Indigenous Women who will participate in the project.
- Proportion of females who are HIV positive disaggregated by income, age, education.
- Percentage of women who decide how their own income will be used disaggregated by income, age, education

The European Institute for Gender Equality has included intersecting inequalities in its Gender Equality Index¹. Indicators to measure inequalities that intersect with gender might include, for example:

- Age and gender; Gender and country of birth; Gender and dis/ability; Gender and educational level; Gender and family type; Gender and sexual orientation and gender expression, Migrant background, ethnicity and religion. (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019^[84])

1. The Gender Equality Index gives the EU and the Member States a score from 1 to 100. A score of 100 would mean that a country had reached full equality between women and men. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023>

Sources: (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2022^[85]) Practical guide for the incorporation of the intersectionality approach in sustainable rural development programmes and projects. FAO <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2823en/cc2823en.pdf> ; (World Health Organisation, 2020^[86]) <https://tdr.who.int/publications/i/item/2020-09-23-incorporating-intersectional-gender-analysis-into-research-on-infectious-diseases-of-poverty-a-toolkit-for-health-researchers>; (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019^[84]) Intersecting inequalities Gender Equality Index https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/mh0218295enn_002.pdf

Applying a “policy marker” in the design phase to track funding

OECD DAC policy markers are used to determine the focus, and monitor and track funding for a given policy objective. The policy markers provide an analytical framework and accountability tool that should be applied in the planning and design stage of development interventions. They are an integral part of the OECD Creditor Reporting System and used by DAC members and other development co-operation providers as they report their development financing to the OECD (See Section 5). They are not intended to measure outcomes.

Data collection on policy objectives using the marker system is based on three values:

- 0 – The development intervention does not focus on the given policy objective,
- 1 – The development intervention integrates the policy objective as one significant objective amongst others,
- 2 – The development intervention is dedicated to the policy objective as the principal objective.

The gender equality policy marker is mandatory for DAC members and has been used to track funding for gender equality for more than two decades. Almost all development financing is examined against the marker, allowing for robust data on funding for gender equality (OECD, 2016^[71]). Programmes scoring 1 or 2 against the DAC gender equality policy marker can have an intersectional lens. Programmes scoring 1 might focus on “other” inequalities to the same extent that they focus on gender inequality. Programmes scoring 2 would be expected to have gender equality as the main focus but can have “other” intersecting inequalities as secondary focus areas.

The DAC policy marker on the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities is relatively new, with data available as of 2018, and its use by DAC members is limited. Only about 40% of official development assistance (ODA) is currently examined against the disability marker, meaning that the statistical foundation is weak for drawing conclusions around funding for the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities. DAC members should make efforts to increase their reporting against the DAC disability marker, in order to gain a better picture of funding available for disability inclusion and its intersection with gender equality.

Beyond the gender and disability DAC policy markers, some individual development co-operation providers are using similar policy markers for areas of relevance for an approach that takes into account inequalities that intersect with gender. The European Commission uses an inequality marker to monitor funding for interventions that focus on the bottom (poorest) 40% or socio-economically disadvantaged individuals, households or groups Box 4.5. The European Commission inequality marker (The I-Marker). The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation adopted a disability policy marker already in 2014, with an assigned score from zero to four which are then reclassified into the three scores of the DAC marker when reporting to the OECD.

While there is no policy marker in place for the funding of LGBTQIA+ rights, the Global Philanthropy Project is regularly collecting financial data and presenting these in an anonymised and safe manner to avoid putting organisations and individuals at risk (Global Philanthropy Project, 2022^[87]).

Box 4.5. The European Commission inequality marker (The I-Marker)

The I-Marker assesses whether, and to what extent, inequality reduction is an objective of a donor's intervention and, therefore, how likely it will have an impact on reducing within country inequalities. This is customarily the case of those interventions (of any modality) designed to benefit, to a larger extent, the bottom (poorest) 40 per cent or other socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals, households, or groups, therefore fostering their opportunities to increase their income, wealth, or socio-economic position.

The Scoring System Of The Inequality Marker:

Similar to the DAC policy markers, the I-Marker assesses whether, and to what extent, inequality reduction is an objective of development interventions. For this purpose, a set of criteria has been developed to establish if:

- I-0: Inequality reduction is not targeted
- I-1: Inequality reduction is a significant objective
- I-2: Inequality reduction is the principal objective

While an intervention might effectively target the bottom (poorest) 40 per cent of the population, and not, for instance, women, it could potentially increase gender inequalities. Vice versa, a programme or project might focus on improving girls' and women's access to opportunities, but not necessarily for those who are the poorest. It is therefore essential to use the different array of tools available concomitantly to ensure interventions do not miss their intended targets.

Source: (European Commission, 2023^[88]) Directorate-General for International Partnerships, *The European Commission inequality marker : guidelines for the application and scoring of interventions*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2841/051011>

Challenges of applying an intersectional approach to gender-based analysis and design

It is important to consider and withstand some of the challenges which may come with an approach to gender-based analysis and design that takes into account inequalities that intersect with gender. During the interviews, DAC members reflected on the following challenges:

- *Capacity shortcomings:* Intersectional analysis requires a greater effort of analytical commitment over time, including human resources and consultation processes. This requires support by the management, allocation of necessary human resources, expertise and time.
- *Complexity of analysis and design:* Intersectional approaches to gender-based analysis and design identify many different layers of intersecting inequalities. However, a single development programme can rarely address all of these at the same time and choices need to be made. It may also be challenging to maintain a sufficient focus on women's rights and gender equality.
- *Data:* Insufficient intersectional data in the gender-based analysis and design stages can have serious consequences for people who are marginalised, further compounding or perpetuating disadvantages and discrimination. A key challenge relates to resources and sampling - for instance, each time another disaggregation factor is incorporated, the sample has to be larger to sufficiently account for analysis by that level of disaggregation. Thus, adequate resourcing and prioritisation is needed, alongside capacity building. Use of and valuing of qualitative approaches is also an important measure to address this quantitative analysis challenge.
- *Political contexts:* Shrinking democratic spaces, increasing repressive and conservative forces, limited funding, and rising global inequalities are just some of the current challenges that women's rights and LGBTQIA+ rights organisations face. (UN Women, 2020^[89]). In such global and national contexts of democratic backsliding agencies and field officers may be faced with challenging working conditions. This was identified as a general challenge which applies to all development programming and analysis.

Policy options for development co-operation providers

- When designing programmes, development co-operation providers should allocate dedicated expertise and capacity to assess, analyse and understand intersecting systems of discrimination in addition to gender inequalities. This includes exploring power relations and focus on the systemic or structural causes of inequalities that may be present in the context. Using innovative methods and approaches to the collection of qualitative and quantitative data is also crucial.
- When conducting intersectional gender-based analysis, development co-operation providers should reflect on their own social position and context. To reach all individuals, the analysis should be undertaken jointly, and answers identified jointly, with local stakeholders and voices.
- DAC members should make efforts to increase reporting to the OECD against the DAC policy marker on disability inclusion, to ensure availability of robust development finance data at the intersection of gender equality and disability inclusion.

5 Implementing an approach to gender that takes into account intersecting inequalities

5.1. Partnering to put plans into practice: The role of implementing partners

Once the analysis and design phases are over (See Section 4), it is time to implement development programmes. DAC members interviewed highlighted cases where an intersectional approach was quite well reflected in programme design, but challenging when it came to implementation.

When putting an intersectional approach into practice, the quality of implementation will depend, to a large extent, on the capacity and ability of the implementing partners to address gender and intersecting inequalities. Sometimes, the success of an intervention comes down to the availability of a partner that is able to work on the selected area. It was highlighted during the interviews that organisations working on for example disability exclusion do not necessarily exist in each country or context. Capacity can be inconsistent and, in some cases, may not live up to the expectations raised in proposal documentation. Some members have purposefully aimed to strengthen the capacity of their implementing partners with a particular focus on addressing intersecting inequalities, including so that they can then be representatives and transmit knowledge.

The role of DAC members' Embassies and country offices in engaging with actors present in a given context and understanding the contextual situation is essential, as is a focus on preventive and long-term work to build movements and combat stigma and discrimination (Outright Action International, 2021^[56]). Development co-operation providers need to be conscious of the risk of potential polarisation or division between minority groups and avoid skewing local systems by conducting appropriate power and political analysis. A focus on intersectionality has the potential to build powerful coalitions among those who are most excluded from progress (Banerjee and Ghosh, 2022^[90]).

Box 5.1. Addressing exclusion based on ethnicity, gender and caste in Nepal – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Ethnic and caste inequalities remain important aspects in the social, political, cultural and economic architecture in Nepal. Throughout the country's history, caste, gender and social/class structures have led to widespread social exclusion. Along with persistent poverty and limited government effectiveness, these factors have been widely recognised as a root cause of Nepal's 10-year armed conflict.

Consequently, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Nepal has adopted, systematised, and over the past decade further adapted a focus on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI). This is a concept described as recognising socially constructed differences between persons with different gender identity, ethnicity and caste affiliation. All this to contribute to peace and stability in the country. In addition to social exclusion, the GESI approach also takes into account economic deprivation as a second exclusion factor for many, and aims to address unequal power relations, rebalancing them and reducing disparities between individuals and groups. While considering these factors, all women are discriminated in the context of Nepal. This approach is in line with Switzerland's overall policy focus on gender equality and leaving no one behind.

Rather than directly implementing projects and targeting beneficiaries, today the SDC focuses more on building systems and fostering market development by enhancing service providers' capacities and providing technical assistance to concerned government authorities.

Practically, the SDC engages in 1) political dialogue on gender equality and social inclusion, and inclusive political, legislative and regulatory reforms, 2) technical support to government authorities ensuring the constitutionally mandated integration of gender equality and social inclusion on sectoral policies, strategies and plans, and 3) programme interventions based on an inclusive design and with targeted measures to support disadvantaged persons – including quotas as relevant.

In parallel, SDC applies a workforce diversity policy within its institution, and aspires to apply positive discrimination to promote under-represented groups.

Source: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation internal documentation (unpublished).

Box 5.2. Partnering with CSOs and local authorities: The example of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation in Niger

In Niger, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation supported a project taking an intersectional approach by targeting women and people with disabilities. The project aims to strengthen the resilience of local communities, with a particular focus on supporting people with disabilities and promoting women's economic empowerment. Through the implementation of income-generating activities in the agri-food sector, the project aims to empower women, especially those with disabilities, to become catalysts for change. This will not only improve their economic conditions, but also contribute to the economic advancement of the entire community.

The project's needs assessment underlined the vicious cycle between disability and poverty: people with disabilities in the region (5.3% - among the highest percentages in the country) further suffered from discrimination and social exclusion, which was particularly severe in cases of women with disabilities. Beneficiary identification and targeting activities involved 627 people and took place in 18 villages in the project area. The data collected revealed that 46% of the surveyed households included persons with disabilities, with a slightly higher proportion of women than men.

The project is set out in partnership with the Niger Federation of People with Disabilities, promoting the active role of women with disabilities. The Federation is also responsible for monitoring the inclusion and accessibility of all project activities.

Source: Communication from Italy (unpublished written material).

Working with civil society organisations and women's rights movements based in the country is particularly important in contexts where the government does not recognise all individuals' rights. When doing so, it is important to be mindful of existing power imbalances between different organisations and make efforts to avoid exacerbating these or creating further challenges.

At the same time, the dynamic of shrinking space for civil society is specifically harmful to the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ individuals as they traditionally rely disproportionately on civil society for protection (Denkovski et al., 2021^[29]). DAC members need to carefully consider the possibility for supporting *all* individuals' human rights, as well as who may be left behind and the harm that can be caused when neglected (OECD, 2023^[1]).

It is good practice to enable the implementation partner to adapt the programme in the face of changing circumstances (Schroeder and Hatton, 2012^[91]). This is particularly important when dealing with complex issues such as gender inequalities and inequalities that intersect with gender, for which the context for which may evolve rapidly.

Box 5.3. Germany's Generation Dialogue Approach

Germany's Generation Dialogue Approach is based on the recognition that age and gender function as categories of social differentiation that create very different experiences for younger and older women, and younger and older men.

The Approach is about creating a space where community members of different ages and genders can talk about their beliefs, values, and doubts – without fear of judgement and in a spirit of respect and appreciation. It has been used to address topics related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, human rights and gender equality in different regions around the world where traditional beliefs sustain harmful practices. The approach is based on the understanding “that there must be good reasons why practices with harmful effects endure – and that until these reasons and the values underpinning them are first explored and appreciated and then re-assessed by communities, they are unlikely to end”.

At the heart of the Generation Dialogue are dialogue sessions in which younger women, older women, younger men and older men meet in separate groups to discuss the key stages of their lives. Inevitably, culturally sensitive topics about local traditions, social norms and expectations, sexuality and gender relations come up, which can be safely shared within a group of people with similar experiences. In the final exercises, dialogue participants work across gender and generations to identify those traditions that they want to maintain, as well as practices which they agree should be changed or abandoned. This method recognises the dynamics of privilege and discrimination that come with age and gender by creating a space for respectful conversation across these markers.

Evaluations of the approach have found significantly better family communication and intergenerational relationships, as well as significant differences in knowledge and attitudes between community members. People in the intervention villages were for example much more willing to discuss the formerly taboo topic of female genital cutting across the sexes and the generations – and were far more aware of the harmful effects of female genital cutting. Overall, relations and communication between the generations were improved and older community members felt that there was more interest and respect for community traditions by the young people in their village.

Source: (Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2024^[92]) The Generation Dialogue Approach <https://health.bmz.de/toolkits/the-generation-dialogue-approach/>

5.2. Flexible funding is key when supporting gender and intersecting equality

Sufficient financial resources are a necessary foundation for all work on gender inequality and the inequalities that intersect with gender. DAC members' ODA is an important external financing resource, especially for low-income and fragile contexts (OECD, 2022^[93]). DAC members and other development co-operation providers can also leverage their funding to mobilise other types of development and commercial finance.

Because approaches to addressing gender inequalities that take into account intersecting inequalities are complex, there is a strong case for providing core and flexible funding to implementing partners, which covers basic organisational and administrative costs that can support long-term interventions. Box 5.1 and Box 5.2 set out examples of programmes providing flexible funding. Core support is the most development-effective type of support with advantages such as predictability, flexibility, sustainability, administrative efficiency, and ownership (OECD, 2020^[94]). Addressing intersecting inequalities also implies avoiding an

approach that looks at “cost per individual”, given that reaching those furthest behind may be more resource heavy.

Box 5.4. Netherland’s flexible approach principle to partnering with civil society organisations.

The Netherlands grant instrument “Policy Framework for Strengthening Civil Society: Power of Women” aims to strengthen civil society organisations in their role of lobby and advocacy.

In the policy framework, flexibility is set out as a major principle for partnership between the Ministry and civil society organisations. It is closely linked to working with a Theory of Change, which is a flexible planning instrument. The Theory of Change describes the outcomes of the proposed programme and the process by which they will be achieved, including the assumptions on which this process is based.

If during implementation it becomes apparent that certain assumptions are not correct, certain interventions are not leading to the envisaged results or contexts are changing radically, the interventions or strategies will need to be adapted, though continuing to be informed by the outcomes and objective set out in the Theory of Change. Flexibility also requires a reliable risk analysis which, in view of the changing context in which civil society works, will have to be reviewed on a regular basis in order to enable prompt identification and mitigation of new and changing risks. This flexible approach also applies to the relationship between the Ministry and the strategic partners including consortium and local partners.

Source: (Government of the Netherlands, 2022^[95]) Policy Framework Strengthening Civil Society <https://www.government.nl/documents/policy-notes/2019/11/28/policy-framework-strengthening-civil-society>

Box 5.5. Flexible funding mechanisms for regional actors to advance equal rights: New Zealand’s partnership with the Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network

The Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network (PSGDN) is the regional civil society organisation working on LGBTQI related rights and the wellbeing and prosperity of Pacific Islanders of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

The Network spans 14 Pacific Island countries and territories and actively engages with Pacific regional inter-governmental organisations such as the Pacific Island Forum (PIF). It is committed to enhancing Pacific people’s voices on SOGIESC-related rights internationally.

In 2018-2019, the share of global funding for LGBTQI related work was approximately 0.28% in the Pacific, among the lowest funded regions worldwide. Since 2006, PSGDN has operated with sporadic project funding from a range of development partners. Without sustainable core funding, it is challenging for the network to act on long-term objectives such as decriminalisation, legislative reforms and changing social and cultural norms. Longer-term resourcing, including core funding, enables LGBTQI+ organisations to work more strategically, address communities’ priorities, and use transformative change approaches.

New Zealand’s partnership with PSGDN provides NZD 927,000 core funding over three years (2021-2024) to support:

- Strengthened and well-resourced regional organisation capable of advancing sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC)-related rights in the Pacific;
- Implementation of programmes at both domestic and regional levels that will support meaningful progress on SOGIESC-related rights;
- Small sub-granting mechanism to support national level organisations;
- Greater Pacific participation and inclusion of voices on SOGIESC-related issues in international fora.

Funding for the establishment of a sub-granting mechanism is intended for formally establishing and resourcing national-level and emerging organisations throughout the Pacific, including PSGDN's regional members and affiliates.

Note: The 14 Pacific Island countries and territories include American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Source: Communication with New Zealand (unpublished written material)

5.3. Working politically and with governments

DAC members often link their diplomacy efforts and development co-operation for gender equality. While this is most clearly visible through feminist foreign policies, most DAC members make efforts to link up their development interventions to political dialogue (OECD, 2020^[96]). Addressing issues of gender inequality and other types of inequalities is an important political choice – just as not addressing such issues is a political choice.

Development co-operation providers should ensure that interventions or activities do not put people that face multiple discrimination at risk, for instance by directly exposing individual activists or participants in an activity or programme to hostile government officials, or by contributing to a public backlash. At the same time, aversion to risk should never be used as a justification to do nothing (Outright Action International, 2021^[56]).

It is important to consider, in all development interventions, the risks of pushback against gender equality and to approaches that take into account intersecting inequalities, and to be prepared to respond to this if and when needed. Being prepared includes bringing forward evidence of the benefits of advancing gender and intersecting equality, building relationships and trust in a given country context, engaging high-profile champions, and identifying relevant principles enshrined in national laws and global commitments such as Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

Box 5.6. Finland in Tanzania: Protecting the Rights and Choices of Women and Girls, particularly Women and Girls with Disabilities in the United Republic of Tanzania

The Chaguo Langu Haki Yangu (My Rights - My Choices) is a three-and-a-half year (2021-25) programme funded by the government of Finland and implemented in Tanzania, mainland and Zanzibar. It aims to contribute to the realisation of rights and choices of women and girls, particularly those with disabilities, to enjoy a life free from gender-based violence and harmful practices, particularly child marriage and female genital mutilation, through a multi-sectoral and multi-level prevention and response approach.

In 2022 the programme was implemented by UNFPA in collaboration with multiple partners at the national and sub-national levels. Its implementation is guided by the principles of human rights, gender equality and leaving no one behind.

The approach of the programme emphasises to the duty bearers their responsibility for an inclusive development that adheres to international frameworks that they are expected to operationalise through allocating local resources, providing human rights-based prevention and response services, strengthening community structures capacities and supporting them to function. The empowerment of direct beneficiaries is also essential, for them to know their rights, including of access to education, particularly for the out-of-school girls and women and girls with disabilities and to live prosperous lives through economic empowerment.

To realise this, the programme focused on multiple interventions aimed at strengthening a system from the national to community and to individual levels that respect and fulfil the inalienable rights that women and girls, particularly women and girls with disabilities, are entitled to. At the upstream level, the programme worked on national plans, the Law of Marriage Act and the shadow report of the CRPD to enhance the rights of women and girls, particularly those with disabilities. In its overall results reporting, the programme has gained significant momentum in terms of implementation of the planned activities as well as ownership, sustainability and scalability of the programme interventions by the Government and the community.

Source: (United Nations Populations Fund, 2020^[97]) Protecting the Rights and Choices of Women and Girls, Particularly Women and Girls with Disabilities in the United Republic of Tanzania <https://www.unfpa.org/annual-report>

Box 5.7. Gender Transformative Institutional Capacity Building Initiative in Fiji

The Fiji Gender Transformative Institutional Capacity Building Initiative (ICD) is led by the Fiji Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA) with support from the Ministry of Economy. The Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), a feminist human rights organisation, is the lead technical partner, with support from New Zealand and Canada. The initiative complements and supports the Ministry of Economy's Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) processes and supports the government of Fiji's implementation of the Fiji National Development Plan, the National Gender Policy and the Fiji National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against all Women and Girls (2023-2028). The initiative was designed to support the Government of Fiji in fulfilling its international treaty obligations, including CEDAW, and its efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Phase 1 (2020-2022) achieved significant positive progress. Gender mainstreaming Action Groups were formed across nine government ministries, and a cohort of ten gender mainstreaming Lead Facilitators were trained from the two lead ministries. This enabled the development of 18 submissions for Gender Responsive Budgeting, and resulted in budget allocation to advance gender mainstreaming in nine ministries.

The initiative also extended the evidence and knowledge base on gender equality and women's empowerment through a Fiji Country Gender Assessment (FCGA). The assessment analysed existing Government data sources across a range of agencies and sectors, including education, women's leadership and decision-making, violence against women and girls, health, the environment, and social and cultural norms. The assessment was supported by New Zealand and implemented in partnership

with civil society, regional and multilateral organisations (SPC and UN Women) and the Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The Action Groups, the gender responsive budgeting, and the baseline analysis provided in the FCGA were inclusive of women and girls in all their diversity, those living with disability, of all race and ethnicity (indigenous, i-Taukei, Indo-Fijian, etc.), age, location and socio-economic status.

Support to the establishment of cross-government partnerships, strengthened through targeted analysis and the development of evidence and tools, resulted in increased awareness of a whole-of-government approach to advancing gender equality and Fiji women's empowerment. The 2nd phase of the ICD, called Marama Ni Viti, will build on the achievements of the first phase.

Source: Communication with New Zealand (interviews)

Policy options for development co-operation providers

- Development co-operation providers should consider providing sustainable and flexible funding to implementing partners that cover basic organisational and administrative costs and can support long-term and complex interventions to help reduce gender inequalities and inequalities that intersect with gender.
- Development co-operation providers need to adjust their approaches to ensure they can appropriately respond to and advocate against pushback against working on gender inequalities and inequalities that intersect with gender, including by building relationships with local actors and identifying entry points in national laws and culture, and global commitments such as Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.
- In contexts where the host government does not recognise all individuals' human rights, it is particularly important that development co-operation providers identify suitable ways of working with other development partners including local and international organisations and women's rights movements, while being mindful of their security.

6 Monitoring and evaluation

6.1. A flexible approach is needed to monitor and evaluate programmes that take intersecting inequalities into account

The eradication of systemic inequalities and discrimination is complex and non-linear. Changes that seem positive may erode, and a hard-won victory may provoke backlash. Monitoring and evaluation of programmes that address gender and intersectional inequalities need flexibility, time and resources to track progress and achievements, and to capture negative reactions and impacts (Batliwala and Pittman, 2010^[98]). DAC members should evaluate the programme/project results and consider any adaptations/changes needed to the programme as they go along (Frank and Smith, 1999, p. 97^[99]) as this helps ensure their long-term success and sustainability. Well thought-out monitoring and evaluation (MEL) frameworks engage stakeholders throughout the process, consult them and incorporate their feedback on the ultimate utility of the data being collected and analysed. Evaluation outcomes are learning opportunities as they provide real insights to continue, stop or adjust programming. (Frank and Smith, 1999^[99]).

In international development, approaches to evaluation are too often rooted in systems that exclude key stakeholders – especially people impacted by development interventions – from owning and influencing evaluation processes. Often these processes rely on pre-determined indicators of results that may not be well suited to capturing complex social change processes in the context of intersectional exclusion, and place more emphasis on tick-box reporting or overusing credible information about results and processes to support learning and accountability. It is good practice for development co-operation providers to apply evaluation approaches which explore power relations and focus on the systemic or structural causes of inequalities that may be present in the context of a programme or policy. This is vital for programmes that aim to address gender and intersectional inequalities. (OECD, 2023^[100]). An example is the feminist evaluation approach used by Canada⁶.

Relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability are widely used evaluation criteria, particularly in international development co-operation (OECD, 2021^[101]). Based on these six criteria, there are specific questions which can help inform evaluations (OECD, 2023^[100]):

1. Is the intervention doing the right things? Does the intervention respond to the contextual rights, needs and priorities?
2. How well does the intervention fit with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution?
3. Is the intervention achieving its objectives and results, and how?
4. How well are resources being used? Was the intervention economically efficient in reaching marginalised groups?
5. Has the intervention contributed to transformative change?
6. Will the benefits last? Does the intervention build an enabling environment for human rights and gender equality?

⁶ See “Global Affairs Canada’s approach to feminist evaluation practices” (OECD, 2021^[120]).

What an evaluation seeks to answer is inextricably linked to how it is designed, conducted, and disseminated. Principles of do-no-harm, inclusion, participation and respect should guide evaluation processes. Ethical considerations must be front and centre in evaluating intersectional programmes. For example, in many contexts support for gender equality, marginalised and vulnerable communities is limited. Data security and safeguarding, paramount in every context, is especially crucial here. For instance, ensuring LGBTQIA+ people's protection, often means not publicising details of programming, or not publicly stating the LGBTQIA+ inclusivity of the project (Outright Action International, 2021^[56]). Applying an ethical code of conduct consistently throughout the evaluation, including respecting the OECD DAC guidance on the protection of people involved in evaluation (OECD, 2022^[102]) is considered good practice for development co-operation providers.

Heavy and complex monitoring and reporting requirements have long been recognised as a challenge for implementing organisations, in particular for small organisations that may lack capacity to respond to these requirements. One can however gain valuable insights via relatively simple but regular activities while making adjustments throughout the programme cycle. Development co-operation providers should aim to simplify their reporting mechanisms and assessment tools to ease the burden for implementing organisations. Development co-operation providers should co-design monitoring and evaluation frameworks with their partners, critically reflecting on how to balance accountability, learning and effectiveness.

Box .6.1. Canada's Gender Based Analysis Plus approach to monitoring and evaluation

The Government of Canada has developed internal guide which provides a practical overview of how to apply intersectional analysis to developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating initiatives so that they are responsive, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse experiences of people. Step 5 of the guide includes information and questions to consider during the Monitoring and Evaluation phase of a policy, programme or initiative.

The guidance highlights that measuring a policy, programme or initiative's effectiveness requires regular feedback from staff, community members and partners, and the collection of different types of data on the initiative, in order to assess progress and highlight unintended impacts. Collection of these data and information allows for timely adjustments to implementation. GBA Plus is critical to this process of monitoring and evaluating initiatives.

During the monitoring and evaluation stage, GBA Plus involves analysing if a policy, programme or initiative is being implemented in a way that is consistent with the intersectional nature of the issue being addressed and tracks how different groups access and experience the initiative, in order to make continuous improvements.

Key questions to consider at this stage include:

- Is the initiative being accessed as expected by the various target population groups and sub-groups?
- How might factors impact people's access to, experience of, and outcomes of this initiative?
- Did the implementation of the policy, programme or service have unintended outcomes for particular populations or sub-populations?
- Does the policy, programme or service create or perpetuate barriers for certain target population groups?
- Should other target population groups be considered for this initiative?

- Does the initiative need to be adapted to reduce barriers and/or to better serve those impacted by the issue it is addressing?
- Are there any gaps in data about the impacts of the policy, programme, or service? How can the administration of the initiative and the monitoring and evaluation strategy fill those gaps?

Evaluation is a periodic activity where a judgment is made about the extent to which intersectional factors were considered in the design, development and implementation of a policy, programme or initiative and if its objectives have been achieved given these considerations. Evaluations are designed to answer questions about the relevance, design and delivery, and effectiveness and efficiency.

During evaluations, data collected through monitoring activities are frequently combined with other sources of disaggregated data and information to support a comprehensive assessment of what the policy, programme or initiative's contribution was towards the desired objectives.

Source: Internal document of the Government of Canada (unpublished).

6.2. Use of data to monitor gender and intersecting inequalities

The way data is currently collected and used often leads to those at greatest risk of marginalisation being hidden, excluded, or discriminated against (Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 2023_[103]). More intersectional gender data are needed globally, and their absence is more acute in some sectors than others. For instance, there is not enough reliable and comparable global data on the scale of physical, sexual or emotional violence over time (UNAIDS, n.d._[104]). Existing data and evidence are often snapshots, which do not provide information over a long time periods. Repeated rounds of surveys, qualitative studies over a long time period, and following up with participants years after the end of interventions are needed to enable understanding of good practices to sustain positive change and effective approaches in programming (ALIGN, 2020_[105]).

Collection of intersectional data requires additional safety and security concerns that may arise from collecting personal data. The OECD Privacy Principles has global minimum standards for privacy and data protection (OECD, 2023_[106]), and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data has developed an Inclusive Data Charter to mobilise political commitments and meaningful actions to advance inclusive and disaggregated data (Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 2022_[107]). Principal four of the Inclusive Data Charter stipulates the need for responsible data collection and accountability. Maximising the availability of disaggregated data, should not come at the cost of confidentiality, privacy and other related risks to collection and use of personal data. Data collection should not put anyone at risk of identification, discrimination, or any further related dangers.

It is also necessary that during the design phase to set out specific indicators which are measurable, and focus on information that is meaningful and relevant to the issue at hand. This can help ensure effective monitoring and evaluation. For example, Ireland has established a specific Monitoring Framework in its Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. While the Framework does not take an intersectional approach, it provides a good example of considering specific indicators for monitoring and evaluation while at the same time taking into account the potential need for adaptation and change throughout programmes (Box 6.2). Monitoring and evaluating intersectional programmes includes tracking how norms are changing, and why and which are the barriers to change. To capture this, relevant intersectional data which measure both qualitative and quantitative indicators are needed. Intersectional data sheds light across sectors on the unique experiences and vulnerabilities of individuals across different factors and ages, races/ethnicities, geographies, and so on.

Box 6.2. Ireland's Monitoring Framework of its third National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 - Women, Peace and Security Agenda 2019 – 2024:

Ireland's third National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions includes a specific Monitoring Framework. While this Framework does not address specifically gender and intersectional inequalities, it is a good example of the establishment of clear monitoring standards and acknowledges the need for a flexible approach. These two elements: setting out clear monitoring expectations while at the same time taking into account flexible approaches to monitoring are key for gender-based, intersectional monitoring.

The Framework is the guiding vehicle through which progress of the plan is measured throughout its duration. The Framework sets out specific indicators which are measurable and focus on information that is meaningful and relevant to the issue at hand. Furthermore, it establishes baselines in order to track progress. Indicators are both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (categorical) and measure progress against both outputs (activities) and outcomes (the impact of those activities) and how these will be achieved.

The Monitoring Framework provides specific indicators whilst taking into account the need for a flexible approach. Potential risks and assumptions, fully or partially beyond Ireland's control, that may (negatively) affect the achievement of results for the plan, are continuously assessed and reflected upon throughout the duration of the NAP, particularly during the annual reporting and Mid-Term Review and Final Evaluation. The Midterm Review examined and reduced indicators to facilitate data collection and reporting, whilst still ensuring that progress is chartered and marked appropriately.

Source: (Government of Ireland, 2024^[108]) Women, Peace and Security: Ireland's Third Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/ourrolepolicies/womenpeaceandsecurity/Third-National-Action-Plan.pdf>

Box 6.3. Driving Decision-Making and Results Using Evidence and Data in USAID

USAID is committed to data-driven and evidence-based approaches to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender analyses include qualitative and quantitative data on the drivers of gender inequality and recommendations for the design of context-specific programmes to address, target, and eventually close the identified gender gaps. Data and analysis disaggregated by sex – the designation of a person as male, female, or intersex based on a cluster of anatomical and physiological traits known as sex characteristics – and/or gender identity – a person's deeply held sense of self and what they call themselves, including woman, man, or gender diverse – provide a starting point for understanding the populations in the countries in which the agency works. Additional data, such as that based on other identity factors (e.g., ethnicity; sexual orientation; caste; disability status; age; etc.), socioeconomic status, and geography, as well as data grounded in local, Indigenous, and traditional knowledge, play a critical role in designing and implementing gender-sensitive and transformative programmes.

Qualitative data, including but not limited to key informant interviews and focus groups, are also crucial to sustaining results, adapting effective approaches, and communicating the effectiveness of the work. Standard foreign assistance indicators and gender-sensitive quantitative and qualitative indicators enable the agency to implement rigorous monitoring, including performance and impact evaluations to

assess whether USAID’s programming is achieving intended results and closing gender gaps. USAID integrates ethical standards across data collection and use, particularly for those who might be targeted because of their identity.

Source: (USAID, 2023^[43]), Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-03/2023_Gender%20Policy_508.pdf.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has made it mandatory to disaggregate data on the basis of gender, as well as intersecting factors of discrimination and exclusion to measure progress in the implementation of Switzerland’s International Cooperation Strategy. So-called reference indicators for the strategy need to include disaggregation by gender and at least one other intersecting “LNOB factor”. Furthermore, specific reference indicators for gender equality and LNOB have been defined. All country offices are required to select at least 50% of these institutional reference indicators when designing country programmes, and to provide disaggregated data when submitting annual progress reports on implementing their country programmes.

Box 6.4. GIZ’s pilot measure for conducting a specialized Study on gender-based violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ persons in Ecuador

In Ecuador, important legal and institutional advances to guarantee and protect the rights of the LGBTIQ+ population have been made. However, the lack of comprehensive and up-to date data on the living situations of LGBTIQ+ individuals pose a significant challenge in understanding and addressing their specific needs and challenges. In response to the government’s desire for representative data, GIZ assisted in the implementation of a pilot study on the national living situation of LGBTIQ+ individuals.

The pilot study aimed at gathering data that accurately reflects the diverse experiences and challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals across the country. Taking an intersectional approach, multiple categories of discrimination and privilege such as sexual orientation, gender identity, geographical location, socio-demographic factors, and other context-specific aspects were taken into account. In a training for the data collection team, concepts related to gender identity, intersexuality, violence, employment status, level of education, household conditions and housing were included. Along the guiding principle “nothing about us without us”, LGBTIQ+ organisations were involved in all the activities, from the preparatory stages of the project to the data collection, training processes, pilot testing and feedback loops.

Source: Communication with GIZ (unpublished).

Challenges to evaluating programmes that aim to address inequalities that intersect with gender

Evaluating impact of programmes addressing gender and intersecting inequalities are often non-linear and may take a long time to materialise (OECD, 2023^[100]). The evaluation of results can be challenging and can fail due to lack of clarity around what success would actually look like and/or what information would be needed to evaluate the impacts. Participation of local voices can also be limited due to influence of underlying power dynamics between different local groups, between rights-holders and duty-bearers and between evaluators and evaluands (OECD, 2023^[100]). In development co-operation programming, it is common that different individuals work on different parts of the programme cycle. Some of the interviewed

DAC members mentioned that this can create inconsistency in the design and monitoring phases. It is important that development co-operation providers ensure thorough analysis and planning (see section 4) so that evaluation is consistent and relevant. Assessing the programme based on incomplete or biased information leads to lack of credible results.

Challenges to access and gather intersectional data were mentioned by all DAC members during the interviews. Data analysed rarely aimed to understand intersectionality beyond gender, age, socio-economic status and geography. Data most often provide only partial insights into intersectionality, particularly for people with disabilities and those of diverse gender identity or sexual orientation or issues of class (ALiGN, 2020^[105]).

Policy options for development co-operation providers

- Development co-operation providers should build into the programme, and apply, evaluation approaches which not only assess outcomes but explore power relations and focus on the systemic or structural causes of inequalities that may be present in the context.
- Development co-operation providers should include in their evaluations dedicated funding to facilitate the collection and use of additional gender and intersectional data, while carefully considering the safety and security aspects linked to collecting personal data.
- Development co-operation providers should use evaluations outcomes as learning opportunities to address inequalities that intersect with gender through development co-operation. It is good practice to consider issues of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of an intersectional approach to development co-operation.

7 Institutional set-up

7.1. Gender equality, diversity and inclusion in development co-operation provider institutions

“Just as societies’ progress is hindered by a lack of gender equality, progress on all fronts is further hindered by a failure to think and act intersectionally” (Harper et al., 2020_[109])

Institutions must actively address and promote an understanding of gender and intersecting inequalities within their own structures. This involves both leadership and all staff. Institutions need to recognize and account for the multiple identity characteristics of each individual through the implementation of appropriate policies for diversity and inclusion. This ensures the creation of an inclusive work environment that acknowledges and respects everyone's unique experiences and background.

Development co-operation providers need to start from their own practices and ways of working, to sustainably transform unjust systems and structures of oppression (ALiGN, 2020_[105]). Every action, recruitment process and conversation can either reinforce or challenge gender and intersecting inequalities. Institutions can be shaped by leadership and policy frameworks, including codes of conduct, that support all staff to use agency and power to make a choice to create safe and inclusive working environments for all staff. Internal efforts, coupled with increased awareness help practitioners to improve the quality of their work, both within their internal structures and with partners (CBM, 2019_[60]). Institutions need to be set up – through leadership, culture change, policies, safeguards and more – to “walk the talk” of addressing gender and intersectional inequalities.

Switzerland’s Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has adopted an “Action Plan on Equal Opportunities at the Workplace, 2022-2028” that outlines actions relating to departmental culture, gender parity, multilingualism, and management and processes. Each year, cross-directorate objectives, as well as specific objectives for each directorate, are defined with targets accompanied by monitoring and reporting. A dedicated unit under the FDFAs General Secretary is responsible for follow-up of implementation of the Action Plan. For 2024, the SDC has for example defined objectives for a more inclusive work environment, to step up efforts in the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in partner organisations, and to increase awareness of power and gender dynamics in order to address bias and inequalities in daily work. In addition, in 2024 FDFA will participate in a pilot project for posting job advertisements on the job portal for people with disability (FDFA, 2022_[110]).

Human resource strategies

Promoting inclusion improves workplace productivity, job satisfaction, personal and social well-being, and staff morale (International Labour Organization, 2022_[111]). To address gender and intersecting inequalities internally, development co-operation providers would benefit from a dedicated human resources targets, strategies and action plans that take into account diversity and inclusion. It is important to recognise the potential barriers to recruiting, promoting and retaining staff representing minorities. In 2021, the International Labour Conference adopted a Resolution concerning inequalities and the world of work that notes that discrimination, including systemic, multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination, remains

a persistent and pervasive dimension, and a root cause of inequality (International Labour Organization, 2021^[112]). For instance, LGBTQIA+ workers are often denied opportunities throughout all stages of the employment cycle (International Labour Organization, 2022^[111])

Throughout human resources processes, including recruitment, promotion, and retention efforts – it is important to ensure that diversity and a range of different experiences are seriously considered in the employee or expert pool. In addition, this effort should be coupled with specific units to manage and monitor the implementation. For example, Sida has specific anti-discrimination provisions in the recruitment process (Box 7.2), in addition to specific document for the inclusion of Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people which applies both within staffing of Sida in Sweden and to Sida's staffing of foreign offices.

7.2. Expertise and capacity for addressing gender and intersecting inequalities

An approach to development co-operation that take into account intersecting inequalities cannot be applied without relevant expertise and human resources. During the interviews with DAC members, it was acknowledged that intersectionality covers historically different areas/portfolios of development co-operation provider's work. To enable more joined up approaches, teams with expertise in different areas – such as gender equality and disability equity and rights, and LGBTQIA+ human rights – can be brought together, while dedicated expertise should be retained. This practice enables institutions to pursue different intersectional topics, while benefitting from diverse expertise and making sure programming is appropriate. For instance, advisors on gender equality and on disability work in the same team in The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The United Kingdom second expert staff across different teams within the FCDO when appropriate and beneficial to programming. Recently, The Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation has integrated its Gender and Social Equality Units together with the Governance and Peace Building Units into one section, to bring equality and interlinked dimensions together and work along interfaces. At the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch (GEB) includes dedicated teams focused on disability equity and rights and LGBTQIA+ equality, as well as gender equality.

Development co-operation providers can provide trainings and relevant resources within their own institutions. Appropriate learning objectives on the themes of gender equality and intersectionality can be integrated within trainings and gender equality should be integrated within trainings on other inequalities. During the interviews, DAC members highlighted the importance of making sure staff are familiarised with the notion of gender and intersectionality. Research shows that one-time diversity training programmes do not typically result in sustained behaviour change, but is most effective when part of a wide strategic approach which includes both awareness and skills development and is conducted over time (HBR, 2021^[113]).

Developing capacity is especially important for staff working in countries where development programmes are being implemented. Trainings which target not only official staff but also consultants, volunteers, interpreters, and other personnel employed on behalf of the institution should be provided with accessible tools as well as helpdesk functions. For example, DFAT manages technical assistance help desks delivered by external implementing partners: DID4all which provides disability specific expertise and capability development, and SURGE which provides gender equality specific expertise. These helpdesks collaborate to increase DFAT staff's access to disability and gender equality expertise to improve the quality of programming. This can help deepen an approach to development and gender programming that takes into account intersecting inequalities, while ensuring that tailored technical expertise in different thematic areas is provided to staff and partners.

By offering programmes to all individuals working on a project, development co-operation providers can ensure successful programming to tackle gender and intersecting inequalities. Conceptual trainings and

workshops, coupled with practical exercises, on the topic of intersectionality can be particularly useful in settings where prejudices and discriminatory attitudes regarding gender, sexuality, disability, age, race etc. are prevalent. In this context, it is important to acknowledge and value local knowledge, and engage with different stakeholders in a collaborative manner where actors position their own expertise in collaboration with one another.

As an essential starting point, staff should reflect on their own social position and identity characteristics. Self-awareness and reflection requires considering issues of access to power, identities and relationships. It also requires thinking about how these might intertwine in shaping one's perspectives and outcomes of the analysis - where one is located in relation to their multiple identity characteristics, also referred to as "positionality" (Queen's University, 2023^[114]).

Institutions need to also ensure that personnel are aware of potential unconscious preferences for certain modes of knowledge production grounded in specific philosophical traditions.

Box 7.1. FCDO Guidance on how to consult and engage with organisations of persons with disabilities

The FCDO has developed guidance for FCDO posts and central teams to help teams comply better with programme rules. The guide helps FCDO staff working on programme delivery, diplomacy or policy-making to engage with organisation of persons with disabilities (OPDs). The guide sheds light on the importance of taking an intersectional approach in programming with OPDs. In the guide, meaningful consultations with OPDs should consider the inclusion of a diverse range of opinions. It stipulates that:

The disability movement is not homogenous. The diversity of persons with disabilities should always be considered and the most underrepresented groups included. Some groups have traditionally been less included in participatory processes, harder to reach, or that face higher barriers to participation, such as persons who are deafblind, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities, autistic persons, deaf persons, and hard of hearing people. It can also include those who may be less engaged in decision-making, such as women, children, persons living in rural areas (in some contexts), older persons and indigenous persons, as well as people from diverse faith, ethnicity, caste, class, sexual orientation or gender identity minorities. This understanding may differ in different countries, cultures and contexts.

In practical terms, this means that FCDO staff should ensure that consultations and other forms of participation are accessible to a wide range of persons with disabilities. Umbrella organisations of persons with disabilities, the International Disability Alliance, disability focussed INGOs, international OPDs and CSOs can help to identify a broad section of OPDs if you need more assistance. Always be conscious of power dynamics and the safety of participants when bringing people together.

Source: Internal communication with the FCDO, Disability Inclusion Team, Gender & Equalities Department, United Kingdom (unpublished).

While conducting training sessions can be seen as a simple tick the box exercise, there are many studies that show workshops and trainings make a difference towards positive change. In addition, there should be follow up opportunities to embed learning into practice. For instance, Switzerland personnel conduct regular trainings sessions on project cycle management for its staff and partners across different countries they work in. This includes dedicated sessions on Gender and Social Inclusion. After the conceptual (theoretical) input, there are also practical exercises on concrete projects. In-country trainings are tailored to the specific needs of the offices and partners and build on concrete exercises with their own projects, and/or joint field visits are organised. Training needs to be underpinned by organisational policy. Only then individual staff can use both organisational resources and training and have the authorisation to report

against any potential misconduct or action which goes against the institution's diversity and inclusion principles.

Box 7.2. Sida's checklists for inclusive recruitment processes

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has identified the need for staff with different experiences and diverse backgrounds in order to foster and encourage creativity and innovation. Sida commits to offering a safe and sustainable work environment for its staff and ensure everyone equal rights and opportunities.

Through inclusive recruitment, Sida can broaden the selection of candidates and increase the chances of a diverse workplace. That is why, Sida uses checklists to ensure inclusive recruitment processes, from the beginning to the end:

Starting the recruitment process:

- **Include people with different experiences** of the post in the recruitment team. Make sure to find people who can bring perspectives, such as different minority perspectives, that you do not have yourself.
- **Make sure you have insight** into the department's diversity, equality and inclusion goals and how recruitment can contribute to them.
- **Think through your own preferences:** Take time to think through your own unconscious preferences, preconceived notions and stereotypical perceptions. What could risk influencing the wording and content of the job description as well as the assessment of candidates in the selection and interview situation?
- **Set non-discriminatory language requirements:** Requirements in Swedish must not be higher than what is relevant in relation to the work to be performed.
- **Prioritise!** A long list can exclude and scare away promising candidates. Requirements and merits must be factual, relevant and clearly formulated and not risk discriminating. Prioritise subject competencies and functional competencies. Consider complementing the team/unit. Get support in Sida's competence profile.
- **Review your language:** Use an informal address and "they" rather than "he/she". Dare to break away from established norms and stereotypical expressions in the workplace. Use language that reaches the desired target group and that the target group understands, rather than using language that is in the norm.
- **Be specific in the tasks.** Avoid generic descriptions. For example, "responsible for preparing, implementing, following up and evaluating interventions in school and child health care in the country xxxx" is clearer than "administrative tasks in the health sector in the country xxx".

During the recruitment process:

- **Interview questions:** Ensure that all questions are based on the stated requirements profile and are relevant to the position (always use Sida's interview templates). Ask the same questions to all candidates and use a questioning technique that contributes to a fair response from the candidate.
- **Ideals & prejudices:** Try to overlook behaviours, body language, dialects and dress. Make sure that any **stereotype** "ideal image" does not guide you in your decision or lead to someone being excluded or discriminated against on the basis of gender, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity, religion, other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, age.

- **Sensitive questions:** Avoid irrelevant questions such as pregnancy and ethnic identity. If answering such questions puts the applicant at a disadvantage, it constitutes discrimination and should not be asked. If you are unsure, talk to your HR strategist.
- **Interview setting & support:** Make sure the room is accessible for candidates with disabilities. Create a safe and calm situation, reduce stress so the candidate can be themselves and give as accurate picture of themselves as possible. Ensure support for people with disabilities, such as hearing aids, sign language interpreters, need for a support person.
- **Selection:** DO NOT go by "gut feeling". Do not reject applicants based on gender, age, ethnicity or other grounds of discrimination. If you see patterns in the selection that indicate that certain groups have been excluded, review the screening process again.
- **Review your language:** Use informal language and "them" rather than "he/she". Dare to break with established norms and stereotypes in the workplace. Use language that reaches the desired target group and that the target group understands, rather than language that is the norm in your company.
- **Decision:** Document conclusions on recruitment and evidence. Provide the candidate with factual arguments why he/she/they got/not got the job.

Source: Sida internal documents (unpublished).

[Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan 2022—2025](#) sets out specific targets, outcomes, and actions to ensure diversity and inclusion. Developed by its internal Human Resources Division, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the action plan is based on five areas: gender, equality, diversity, inclusion and communications & compliance. (Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland, 2022^[115]).

Box 7.3. Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA): Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (GEDI) Action Plan 2022-2025

The objective of the Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (GEDI) Action Plan is to focus on what aligns with the Department of Foreign Affairs' (DFA) values and have a meaningful impact for staff and line managers, help the Department to further develop its systems, policies and practices to embed diversity and inclusion. **The Action Plan is also integrated in the Department of Foreign Affairs' Human Resources Strategy.**

The Action Plan builds on the commitments contained in the GEDI Policy published in February 2022 and reflects extensive engagement, including through a survey by the Irish Centre for Diversity, focus groups and engagement on other critical issues, including blended working. It also builds on previous Action Plans - all of which have contributed significantly to achieving progress in this area. Targets, outcomes, and actions have been developed by Human Resources Division in consultation with key stakeholders across the Department, including the Management Board Sub-Committee on Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI Sub-Committee), Strategy Governance and Change Unit (SGCU), and members of the Management Board, as well as engagement with external organisations.

Human Resources take a leadership role in the implementation of the Action Plan, working with SGCU and the GEDI Sub-Committee, and with Corporate Services on the accessibility of their properties. All staff is invited and encouraged to participate in the implementation by joining one of the voluntary staff-led Working Groups on GEDI, contributing to each team in new and more inclusive ways

or highlighting examples of how diversity within the DFA contributes to better outcomes for citizens and government. **All Staff will be required to complete GEDI Training** - online training that covers all of the essential elements of the Department's approach to Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion which is customised to be suitable for all staff in the Department, at home and abroad.

Source: (Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs, 2022^[116]) Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan 2022—2025 Human Resources Division <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/aboutus/ourcommitments/GEDI-Action-Plan-July-2022.pdf>

To implement internal policy strategies and action plans, there need to be specific units and dedicated personnel to co-ordinate this work. The inclusion of all staff in the implementation is also needed to ensure real internal culture change. For instance, Canada has an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Anti-Racism Division which is housed in the Human Resources Branch of Global Affairs Canada and is responsible of the management and implementation of strategies. GIZ's Cultural Diversity Initiative (CDI) has an advocacy group and an informal network of staff, in which they debate the corporate policy on ethnic and cultural diversity. This enables staff to see themselves as a voice to promote dialogue on inclusion, diversity and intersectionality.

During the interviews with DAC members, some identified the appointment of equality champions in different thematic areas, such as gender equality, diversity and inclusion, as a good practice to help increase the dedication to and understanding of specific topics of all staff and management (Box 7.4). It was however also noted that champions often work in isolation from one another rather than together. While this leads to greater diversity and inclusion of underrepresented groups, such champions are not a guarantee for an intersectional approach.

Box 7.4. Champions to incentivise diversity and inclusion.

Canada's Thematic Champions and Representatives

As part of its Equity, diversity and inclusion human resources strategy, Global Affairs Canada, has initiated the appointment of departmental leaders – Champions and Representatives. **Champions and Representatives are appointed based on their voluntary commitments and efforts to thematic areas.** Thematic areas of award include, but are not limited to: **diversity and inclusion, women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, visible minorities and 2SLGBTQI+.** Champions are departmental leaders who play a prominent role in increasing the profile and visibility of their respective diversity and inclusion file within the department. They do so by inviting employees wishing to contribute to a particular diversity and inclusion file or initiative to form a network, by ensuring that their files are factored into the departmental agenda, and by networking with other key stakeholders – including champions in other departments. Network Representatives work in collaboration with their Champion in creating a united approach to activities, communications and actions as they relate to their network and respective diversity and inclusion files.

Source: Internal Global Affairs Canada documents (unpublished).

United Kingdom's Disability Inclusion Champions

The United Kingdom (UK) Government recognises that the inclusion of people with disabilities is key to leaving no-one behind, eradicating poverty, delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). The FCDO has a Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy in place that encourages spending and policy teams to work towards a core set of commitments for disability inclusive development. Thematic pillar leads are

expected to nominate a Disability Inclusion Champion and official development assistance-spending policy teams and overseas posts are encouraged to have one. The champions advocate, monitor, and lead disability inclusion across their part of the organisation, including helping to realise the deliverables underpinning the strategy commitments. Policy teams and overseas posts, especially those spending ODA money, are encouraged to appoint a Disability Champion who advocates, monitors, and leads disability inclusion across their part of the organisation. Champions play a key role in driving forward disability inclusive diplomacy and development at post and across central departments through identifying strategic priorities, entry points and opportunities to advance disability rights and social inclusion in their post, thematic area or division of work.

Source: Terms of Reference for Disability Inclusion Champions in the FCDO internal documentation (unpublished).

Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs Gender equality and diversity and inclusion champions and Gender equality champions

Ireland's Gender equality and diversity and inclusion (GEDI) champions are focused on organisational culture to promote gender equality and diversity and inclusion. The GEDI Champions group look at organisational policy and culture on Gender, LGBTI, Parents / Carers / Family, Multicultural, and Social Inclusion / Disability.

Source: (Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs, 2022^[116]) Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan 2022—2025 Human Resources Division <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/aboutus/ourcommitments/GEDI-Action-Plan-July-2022.pdf>

New Zealand's Senior Leadership Team Diversity Champion

Represented in 57 locations and employing staff from a variety of countries, backgrounds and professional skills, the New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, has developed their own Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The strategy sets objectives to grow One Ministry: a happy, healthy, and high-performing community, for all: "Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance. The Ministry has been focused on creating a diverse and inclusive organisation for a number of years and has a range of initiatives under way. These include A Senior Leadership Team Diversity Champion.

Source: (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018^[117]) Diversity and Inclusion Strategy https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/About-us-Corporate/MFAT-corporate-publications/Diversity-and-inclusion/MFAT_Diversity-and-Inclusion-Strategy-Booklet-FINAL-19Jun.pdf

Addressing the root causes of inequalities within your own institution

To address the root causes of inequalities within their own institutions, development co-operation providers need to support internal institutional change and intersectional approaches to inequalities that intersect with gender to all (internal or external) strategies and action plans. Appropriate trainings on gender equality, diversity and inclusion can be adopted. During the interviews with DAC members, all of them reported having some kind of internal gender equality, diversity and inclusion trainings within the institution, with levels of engagement varying across institutions. It is a good practice for development co-operation providers to develop and implement such trainings and require all staff (regardless of their seniority) to participate in the trainings.

It is important to proactively explore and research potential forms of discrimination that manifest or become pervasive in the institution to gain insights on different forms of discrimination taking place. Staff might not spontaneously report, or reporting systems may turn out to be ineffective. For instance, in 2022 the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a study on racism within the Ministry (Box 7.5).

Box 7.5. The Netherlands' study on racism within the Ministry

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned an external independent research agency to conduct an exploratory, qualitative study with a view to gaining insight into racism within the organisation. The study showed that bi-cultural staff and local employees of colour experienced different expressions of racism, including verbal abuse, derogatory treatment, cultural racism and all kinds of accusations and imputations. Staff also report being sometimes passed over, ignored and excluded. They experience racist jokes and low expectations. They experienced that some of their white colleagues see them as being 'the ethnic and cultural other' and do not treat them as a fully-fledged Dutch person or equal colleague. The emphasis on a person's ethnic and cultural background leads to people questioning their loyalty. Staff are also concerned about the way various ethnic groups are stigmatised in everyday conversation.

Management response includes: raise awareness and foster broad recognition of the problem; improve and simplify the options for reporting and responding to incidents, and; build an organisation in which there is no place for racism, through policies, regulations etc.

Source: (Government of Netherlands, 2022^[118]) Racism at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – an exploratory study <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2022/12/12/report-racism-at-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-an-exploratory-study>

Internal workforce assessments and reporting

A key institutional issue is the collection of personnel data. Pursuing gender equality, diversity and inclusion within institutions necessitates collection of data to accurately portray the staff demographic. To reflect on how their institution foster gender equality, diversity and inclusion in practice, development co-operation providers must place high priority on intersectional data collection in the workforce (Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, 2022^[107]). For instance, Ireland currently collects data on gender and disability and plans to have representative data monitored and tracked on more of the nine grounds of discrimination (in addition to age and gender) by 2025. This way the DFA will be able identify multiple groups that are under-represented in its workforce and in turn address barriers to their access, retention and promotion. In 2017, New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned an external organisation to conduct a review of the current state of Diversity and Inclusiveness at the Ministry with a view to assisting the development of a more comprehensive and strategic approach to the issue. Key findings from the review, along with other Ministry surveying and data, have been taken into account into their Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018^[119]). Without the collection of intersectional data, there is a clear risk of making internal disparities invisible. The collection of diversity data can be a first step to start collecting, more elaborate and detailed, intersectional gender data which showcases the real equality and inclusion within institutions.

Equity Assessments can also keep track of institutions' practices. To support the release of their updated Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan, USAID conducted two equity assessments—one looking at the Agency's workforce and another looking at USAID programmes. These helped the Agency identify Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) and gender priorities moving forward.

Policy options for development co-operation providers

- Development co-operation providers should consider trainings and workshops for staff on gender equality, diversity and inclusion undertaken over time. These can take examples and tools to help staff reflect on their own social position and identity characteristics as starting points.
- Development co-operation providers should proactively explore and research potential overlapping forms of discrimination in their own institution. This includes collecting intersectional data on staff demographics as appropriate to inform statistics and possible actions, while being mindful of privacy concerns for individuals.

8 Summary of policy options for development co-operation providers

The following policy options for development co-operation providers were identified throughout the paper:

Intersectional policy frameworks and priorities

- Development co-operation providers should consider the most helpful entry point for framing their intersectional policy frameworks and priorities, which remains clear and achievable for staff. This can be done by explicitly referring to inequalities that intersect with gender or for example make it part of a “leave no-one behind approach”.
- Development co-operation providers should always make gender inequality an integral part of all of their activities, either as a dedicated or mainstreamed policy objective. They need to ensure support for all individuals’ rights, including when engaging with partner country governments, and consider the harm that can be caused when certain individuals are neglected. It is crucial to recognise the overlapping forms of inequalities that intersect with gender and may result in compounding forms of discrimination.

Analysis and design of development programmes

- When designing programmes, development co-operation providers should allocate dedicated expertise and capacity to assess, analyse and understand intersecting systems of discrimination in addition to gender inequalities. This includes exploring power relations and focus on the systemic or structural causes of inequalities that may be present in the context. Using innovative methods and approaches to the collection of qualitative and quantitative data is also crucial.
- When conducting intersectional gender-based analysis, development co-operation providers should reflect on their own social position and context. To reach all individuals, the analysis should be undertaken jointly, and answers identified jointly, with local stakeholders and voices.
- DAC members should make efforts to increase reporting to the OECD against the DAC policy marker on disability inclusion, to ensure availability of robust development finance data at the intersection of gender equality and disability inclusion.

Implementing an intersectional approach that takes into account inequalities that intersect with gender

- Development co-operation providers should consider providing sustainable and flexible funding to implementing partners that cover basic organisational and administrative costs and can support long-term and complex interventions to help reduce gender inequalities and inequalities that intersect with gender.
- Development co-operation providers need to adjust their approaches to ensure they can appropriately respond to and advocate against pushback against working on gender inequalities

and inequalities that intersect with gender, including by building relationships with local actors and identifying entry points in national laws and culture, and global commitments such as Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

- In contexts where the host government does not recognise all individuals' human rights, it is particularly important that development co-operation providers identify suitable ways of working with other development partners including local and international organisations and women's rights movements, while being mindful of their security.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Development co-operation providers should build into the programme, and apply, evaluation approaches which not only assess outcomes but explore power relations and focus on the systemic or structural causes of inequalities that may be present in the context.
- Development co-operation providers should include in their evaluations dedicated funding to facilitate the collection and use of additional gender and intersectional data, while carefully considering the safety and security aspects linked to collecting personal data.
- Development co-operation providers should use evaluations outcomes as learning opportunities to address inequalities that intersect with gender through development co-operation. It is good practice to consider issues of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of an intersectional approach to development co-operation.

Institutional set-up

- Development co-operation providers should consider trainings and workshops for staff on gender equality, diversity and inclusion undertaken over time. These can take examples and tools to help staff reflect on their own social position and identity characteristics as starting points.
- Development co-operation providers should proactively explore and research potential overlapping forms of discrimination in their own institution. This includes collecting intersectional data on staff demographics as appropriate to inform statistics and possible actions, while being mindful of privacy concerns for individuals.

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Annex A. Methodology

This paper was developed based on desk research, a review of DAC members' development policies, presentations and discussions held in dedicated sessions at the meetings of the DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) in November 2022 and 2023, and a workshop of the Network held in June 2023 together with the DAC Community of Practice on Poverty and Inequalities, as well as research interviews with DAC members.

Interviews were undertaken between May and November 2023 based on the protocol below, with representatives from:

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia (Responses provided in writing.)
- Global Affairs Canada (GAC)
- European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA)
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland
- German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)
- Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Responses provided in writing.)

Interview protocol:

1. Please describe your approach to addressing intersecting inequalities in development programmes, and any definition that you may be using of "intersectionality". Also please identify which types of inequalities beyond gender are part of your focus areas (disability, LGBTQI+, ethnicity etc).
2. Please explain, by providing practical examples, where in the programme cycle you focus your existing work on intersecting inequalities: Where are your institution's strengths in this area, looking from policy/strategy, design, to implementation, financing, or monitoring and evaluation?
3. Please share more about your approach working with local organisations in partner countries. How are they involved (from the planning to the implementation phase) in your respective programmes addressing inequalities intersecting with gender?
4. Please reflect on any challenges you face, keeping in mind the program cycle, in your work to eradicate gender and intersectional inequalities in development programmes, and how/ if you are working to address them? (*These may include policy, strategy, design to implementation, financing, or monitoring and evaluation challenges*)

5. Please share any internal efforts to address intersecting inequalities with gender within your own institution. These may include Diversity and inclusion trainings or workshops, awareness raising campaigns etc.
6. Is there anything that we have missed during our conversation, and/or are you aware of any valuable resources on this topic that we should be looking at?