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# **2020 GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT POLICY**

**USAID**

**2020 GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT POLICY**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our vision is of a prosperous and peaceful world in which women, girls, men, and boys enjoy equal economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights and are equally empowered to secure better lives for themselves, their families, their communities, and their countries.

At USAID, we are committed to empowering women and girls across the globe to advance communities in our partner countries on the Journey to Self-Reliance because we know no country can succeed if it excludes the talents and voices of half its population. Ensuring women and girls can reach their full potential in society is critical not only to attain gender equality and women's empowerment, but also to meet sustainable development outcomes.

Under this Policy, USAID investments in supporting gender equality and women's empowerment aim to achieve the following five strategic objectives, which reflect the spectrum of activities USAID undertakes across all sectors and fields to advance this Policy's vision and increase self-reliance:

- Reduce disparities between women and men in access to, control over, and benefit from economic, social, political, educational and cultural resources, wealth, opportunities, and services;
- Strive to eliminate gender-based violence, which affects women's ability to thrive and succeed, and mitigate its harmful effects on individuals and communities, so all people can live healthy and productive lives;
- Increase the capability of women and girls to exercise their basic and legal rights fully, help determine their life outcomes, assume leadership roles, and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies;
- Support strategies and activities that secure private property rights and land tenure for women; and
- Improve the access of women and girls to education, including higher-education opportunities.

Eight principles underpin our commitment to promoting and advancing equality between women and men and the empowerment, protection, and participation of all women, girls, men, and boys in their societies:

- Integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into all of USAID's work
- Engage men and boys
- Address the unique challenges that exist in environments affected by crisis and conflict
- Build partnerships across a wide range of stakeholders

## DRAFT

- Drive decision-making and investments by using evidence and data
- Hold ourselves accountable
- Do no harm
- Pursue an inclusive approach

The goal of this Policy is to improve the lives of citizens around the world by advancing gender equality, and empowering women and girls to participate fully in and equally benefit from the development of their societies.

This Policy supersedes and replaces the 2012 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy in its entirety.

## I INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) believes that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental for the realization of unalienable human rights and key to effective and sustainable development outcomes. For societies to thrive, women, and girls must have equitable and safe access to resources, such as education, health care, capital, technology, land, markets, and justice. They also must have equal rights and opportunities as business owners, peacebuilders, and leaders. Equality between women, girls, men, and boys improves the overall quality of life for all people, across their lifespan.

**Investing in gender equality and women's empowerment can unlock human potential on a transformational scale.** Research demonstrates that societies with greater equality between women and men experience faster economic growth, increased agricultural productivity, and improved food security. Empowering women to participate in and lead public and private institutions makes these institutions more representative and effective. Increasing women's and girls' education and access to resources improves the health and education of the next generation. And, women play critical roles as effective advocates for peace, community leaders, and champions of civil and human rights. We know that nations, communities, and families are more secure and prosperous when women can participate equally in all aspects of life. Similarly, USAID has also shown the importance of engaging men and boys for their own well-being, to become better family and community members, and to improve development outcomes.

**Gender equality and women's empowerment are foundational drivers of development and self-reliance.** USAID is committed to supporting our partner countries along their Journey to Self-Reliance, with the engagement of governments, civil society, faith-based organizations, and the private sector. Self-reliance is a country's capacity to plan, finance, and implement solutions to its own development challenges, and includes a commitment to see these solutions through effectively, inclusively, and with accountability. To be effective, individuals within societies must have equal access to opportunities, resources, benefits, and legal protections. This, in turn, empowers and enables them to help shape their lives and contribute positively to their families, communities, and countries. Simply put, countries that demonstrate a commitment to enabling, empowering, and taking advantage of the full participation and skills of women are more likely to achieve self-reliance by strengthening local institutions; improving human and institutional capacity; fostering sustainable economic growth; and moving toward inclusive, citizen-responsive, democratic governance.

For example, when women meaningfully participate at the negotiating table, peace agreements are more inclusive and durable. Further, women-led businesses may significantly outperform their peers, with female entrepreneurs in some studies growing revenues 1.5 times faster and creating jobs twice as fast

as male entrepreneurs.<sup>1</sup>

## **[CALL OUT BOX]: COUNTRY ROADMAPS AND SELF-RELIANCE INDICATORS**

The **Country Roadmap** is the analytic tool developed by USAID to visualize where each country is in its Journey to Self-Reliance, both as an individual country and relative to the rest of the world. The Roadmap uses 17 publicly-available, third-party indicators that measure a country in terms of its commitment and capacity. "Commitment" is the degree to which a country's laws, policies, actions, and informal governance mechanisms - such as culture and norms - support progress towards self-reliance. "Capacity" measures how far a country has come in its journey across the dimensions of political, social, and economic development, including the ability to work across these sectors. The indicators include the **Economic Gender Gap Index**, which is one of two metrics used to measure a country's commitment to inclusive development. The Index includes five components:

- (1) Wage equality between women and men for similar work;
- (2) The ratio of estimated female-to-male earned income;
- (3) The difference between female and male rates of participation in the labor force;
- (4) The ratio of women to men among legislators, senior officials, and managers; and,
- (5) The ratio of women to men among professional and technical workers.

To complement the 17 primary self-reliance indicators, the Agency curated a compendium of roughly 300 secondary metrics that include a range of gender-specific indicators of self-reliance. Prioritizing gender-specific metrics helps USAID better assess how the efforts of governments, civil society, and the private sector are supporting our partner countries' progress toward self-reliance.

The Roadmaps inform the development of USAID's country strategies and budgetary allocations, our engagement in dialogues on development policy, and our decisions concerning when to consider countries for possible strategic transition.

**Women's empowerment supports American values and foreign-policy priorities.** The President's 2017 [\*National Security Strategy \(NSS\)\*](#)<sup>2</sup> states, "The United States will support efforts to advance women's equality, protect the rights of women and girls, and promote women and youth empowerment programs." The NSS clearly identifies women's equality and empowerment worldwide as both American values and foreign-policy priorities, by noting that "governments that fail to treat women equally do not allow their societies to reach their potential."<sup>3</sup> Further, the [\*Joint Strategic Plan \(JSP\)\*](#) of

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<sup>1</sup>USAID (2019). Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in The Journey to Self-Reliance. Retrieved from: [https://programnet.usaid.gov/system/files/download-count/library/The\\_Journey\\_to\\_Self\\_Reliance\\_and\\_Gender\\_Perspective\\_Paper\\_April\\_2019.pdf](https://programnet.usaid.gov/system/files/download-count/library/The_Journey_to_Self_Reliance_and_Gender_Perspective_Paper_April_2019.pdf);

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Government (December 2017). The National Security Strategy of the United States of America. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and the U.S. Agency for International Development for Fiscal Years (FY) 2018-2022<sup>4</sup> recognizes, “societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful.” The JSP also endorses the transformative effects of women’s economic empowerment for families and communities and commits to supporting women’s economic empowerment as a driver of development, including by championing girls’ education and striving to eliminate gender-based violence, which affects women’s ability to thrive and succeed. Through this Policy, USAID supports the JSP, which directs USAID and the DOS to strengthen democratic, transparent, representative, and citizen-responsive governance, and to include women in political and economic processes.

### **[CALL OUT BOX]: KEY POLICY AND STRATEGY PRIORITIES**

Recent U.S. Government policies and initiatives address aspects of gender equality and women’s empowerment that reinforce the foreign-policy priorities articulated in the *National Security Strategy* and *Joint Strategic Plan*, including the following:

- The [Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act \(WEEE Act\) of 2018](#), promotes women’s entrepreneurship and economic empowerment in developing countries; and calls for the integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment throughout USAID’s Program Cycle.
- The [U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security \(WPS\) of 2019](#), is the U.S. Government’s approach to promote women’s meaningful participation in: preventing and resolving conflict; countering violent extremism and terrorism and building post-conflict peace and stability; increasing women’s physical safety and access to humanitarian assistance in areas experiencing conflict or disaster; and, working with partner governments to adopt policies and capacity that support these objectives.
- The [Women’s Global Development and Prosperity \(W-GDP\) Initiative](#), established by National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM) 16, is the first whole-of-Government effort to advance global women’s economic empowerment. The NSPM-16 also established the W-GDP Fund, managed by USAID, and is geared toward partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as faith-based and local groups, to advance the three pillars of W-GDP: women prospering in the workforce, women succeeding as entrepreneurs, and women enabled in the economy.

In December 2019, a new Presidential Memorandum on W-GDP’s Pillar 3, directed Departments and Agencies to prioritize action to address the legal and societal barriers to women’s economic empowerment. These barriers include women’s ability to access institutions, travel freely, own and manage property, build credit, and work in the same jobs

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of State and USAID (February 2018). Joint Strategic Plan FY 2018-2022. Retrieved from: [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/JSP\\_FY\\_2018\\_-\\_2022\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/JSP_FY_2018_-_2022_FINAL.pdf)

and sectors as men. The W-GDP Index, a new report by the White House Council of Economic Advisors, estimates that addressing these five foundational legal barriers could increase annual global GDP by \$7.7 trillion.

**USAID is building on its considerable experience advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment.** This Policy underscores USAID’s continued commitment to supporting women and girls. It builds on decades of foundational work, field experience, and global research, and recognizes key legislative and policy advancements. Thus, this Policy reflects best-in-class approaches and the most recent and relevant evidence and will direct USAID’s priorities and work in advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment across our Missions and Operating Units.

USAID works to improve the lives of citizens around the world by addressing the distinct needs of women, girls, men, and boys in our development and humanitarian work. We also recognize the large body of evidence that reveals persistent disparities between men and women across sectors and the resulting high costs of inequality between women and men for families, communities, and societies. USAID-funded programs aim to ensure that individuals, communities, institutions, and governments recognize and support the unique expertise, initiatives, leadership, and contributions of women and girls, and contribute to their economic, social, and political empowerment. This Policy requires that USAID programming take into account the unique needs and priorities of women and girls, and establishes metrics that measure effective programmatic impact.

This Policy supersedes and replaces the 2012 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy in its entirety.

## 2 VISION, OBJECTIVES, AND DEFINITIONS

### VISION

USAID's vision is of a prosperous and peaceful world in which women, girls, men, and boys enjoy equal economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights and are equally empowered to secure better lives for themselves, their families, their communities, and their countries. USAID achieves greater and more sustainable development outcomes by integrating gender equality and women's empowerment throughout our work.

### OBJECTIVES

While USAID works to reach all people within our partner countries, women and girls are often the most vulnerable, marginalized, and/or excluded from society.<sup>5</sup> Our investments in supporting gender equality and women's empowerment aim to achieve the following five strategic objectives, which reflect the spectrum of activities USAID undertakes across all sectors and fields to advance this Policy's vision and increase self-reliance:

- *Reduce disparities between women and men in access to, control over, and benefit from economic, social, political, educational and cultural resources, wealth, opportunities, and services;*
- *Strive to eliminate gender-based violence, which affects women's ability to thrive and succeed, and mitigate its harmful effects on individuals and communities, so all people can live healthy and productive lives;*
- *Increase the capability of women and girls to exercise their basic and legal rights fully, help determine their life outcomes, assume leadership roles, and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies;*
- *Support strategies and activities that secure private property rights and land tenure for women; and*
- *Improve the access of women and girls to education, including higher-education opportunities.*

USAID deliberately sets these objectives at a general level to allow for adaptation in varying country contexts. During strategic planning and the design of projects and activities at the country or

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<sup>5</sup> USAID (July 2018). Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations: Additional Help for ADS 201. Retrieved from: [https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/additional\\_help\\_for\\_ads\\_201\\_inclusive\\_development\\_180726\\_final\\_r.pdf](https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/additional_help_for_ads_201_inclusive_development_180726_final_r.pdf)

subnational level, USAID's Operating Units should adapt and associate them with targets and indicators for tracking and measuring progress toward programmatic goals. In fulfilling the above five objectives, USAID should engage men and boys as well to achieve this Policy's vision.

## **DEFINITIONS**

To achieve USAID's vision and objectives, this Policy uses the following definitions:

"Gender Analysis": (1) Means a socio-economic analysis of available or gathered quantitative and qualitative information to identify, understand, and explain gaps between women and men, which typically involves examining—(A) differences in the status of women and men and their differential access to and control over assets, resources, education, opportunities, and services; (B) the influence of gender roles, structural barriers, and norms on the division of time between paid employment, unpaid work (including subsistence production and care for family members), and volunteer activities; (C) the influence of gender roles, structural barriers, and norms on leadership roles and decision-making; constraints, opportunities, and entry points for narrowing gender gaps and empowering women; and, (D) potential differential impacts of development policies and programs on men and women, including unintended or negative consequences; and, (2) includes conclusions and recommendations to enable development policies and programs to narrow gender gaps and improve the lives of women and girls.<sup>6</sup>

"Gender Equality": The state in which women, girls, men, and boys have equal access to opportunities, resources, benefits, and legal protections and which recognizes their equal inherent human dignity, worth, and unalienable rights.

"Women's Empowerment": This is achieved when women have the ability to act freely in society, exercise their legal rights equally to that of men, and fulfill their potential as equal members of society, such as to help determine their life outcomes; assume leadership roles; and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies.

"Gender Integration/Mainstreaming": Means identifying, and then addressing, inequalities between women and men during the creation of USAID's strategies; the design of all our projects and activities; and their implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Government (January 2019). Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3247>

### 3 OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Eight principles underpin our commitment to equality between men and women and the empowerment, protection, and participation of all women, girls, men, and boys in their societies:

- Integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment into all of USAID’s work
- Engage men and boys
- Address the unique challenges that exist in environments affected by crisis and conflict
- Build partnerships across a wide range of stakeholders
- Drive decision-making and investments using evidence and data
- Hold ourselves accountable
- Do no harm
- Pursue an inclusive approach

***Integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment into all of USAID’s work.*** Achieving the goals of this Policy requires integrated approaches and intentional actions to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment throughout USAID’s Program Cycle, and across sectors. This includes the development of Agency policies and strategies; the creation and revision of *Regional and Country Development Cooperation Strategies* (CDCS); the design and implementation of projects and activities; and in monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

New Agency or Bureau-level initiatives developed outside of the Program Cycle should also include strategies designed to address the specific needs of women and girls and/or to close targeted gaps. Since the roles and power relations between women and men can affect the design, management, implementation, and evaluation of projects and activities, it is essential that project managers address these issues continuously and iteratively and make improvements through collaboration with beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Integrating gender equality and women’s empowerment into USAID’s strategic planning and design processes for projects and activities can help improve sustainable development outcomes. However, integration alone does not ensure that Agency activities are addressing the most critical gender disparities or directing resources where they are most needed to empower women. Therefore, as needed, Operating Units (OU’s) should develop specific Development Objectives (DOs) on gender equality and women’s empowerment. In addition, all USAID’s Operating Units (OUs) may invest in stand-alone projects and/or activities identified as strategically important to strengthening local institutions; building national commitment and capacity; and assisting governments, the private sector, civil society, and faith-based organizations.

***Engage men and boys.*** Transforming the ways in which we engage men and boys in gender equality and women’s empowerment efforts is essential to achieving development objectives and long-lasting

social change. All men play a critical role in challenging inequitable norms and power dynamics, given their positions in households, communities, institutions, and in their relationships with peers and others. Men and boys benefit from positive models that emphasize their important roles and responsibilities in helping to strengthen their families and communities.

Men and boys face different challenges and vulnerabilities imposed on them by negative definitions of masculinity and societal expectations that limit male roles. For example, society has defined expected roles or negative stereotypes for women and men, which can restrict how each earns income and cares for family members. In addition, men and boys often are not taught the importance of shared responsibility in the home, or the productive value of domestic work. As a result, they may not value such work, and it can fall disproportionately on women and girls. Furthermore, societal expectations that men and boys should engage in risk-taking behavior as a way of demonstrating their masculinity can inhibit men from seeking health or other care in a timely manner and can lead them to participate in harmful practices that do harm to themselves and their families.

USAID supports efforts to engage men and boys as agents of change within their communities, and as champions for equality and empowerment for women and girls throughout their lives. Our programs aim to enlist their support for the empowerment of women and girls across their lifespan, and also encourage them to challenge the negative cultural and social definitions that can limit their ability to achieve their full potential. All societies benefit from the elimination of inequality and harmful gender norms.

***Address the unique challenges that exist in environments affected by crisis and conflict.***

Women and girls are uniquely positioned in their families and communities to play powerful, effective roles as peacemakers in societies that are conflict-affected or transitioning out of crisis, and in fragile states. Increasing the legal capacity and social ability of women to participate meaningfully in peace and political processes often results in more effective and enduring outcomes. Further, by facilitating women's participation in decision-making; promoting women's roles in the prevention of, and recovery from, conflict; and strengthening efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, we can help ensure that investments in relief and recovery are effective and responsive to the different needs and priorities of women and men, and also support safe and equitable access to assistance for women and girls.

Consistent with the [Women, Peace, and Security \(WPS\) Act of 2017](#) and the [U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security](#), the USAID WPS Implementation Plan outlines specific actions the Agency is taking to advance women's meaningful participation in preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism and terrorism, and building post-conflict peace and stability.

***Build partnerships across a wide range of stakeholders.*** USAID is committed to fostering more flexible, adaptive, and creative approaches to engaging new and potential partners, because we recognize

that no one organization or sector alone can solve gender inequalities. To discover new and sustained approaches in achieving the vision of this Policy, USAID will continue its efforts to work with a diverse array of individuals and organizations around the world, including the following:

- *Educational Institutions:* USAID will look for ways to more greatly harness the creativity and pioneering work of U.S. and international universities to contribute toward improving gender equality and empowering women across all the sectors where we work.
- *Local, Faith-Based, and Transformative Partnerships:* Working with local individuals and organizations, including faith-based, civil society, and women's organizations, USAID is building long-term capacity on the ground in our partner countries. This includes engaging with our partners and beneficiaries much earlier in our planning process as co-designers, co-implementers, and co-owners of their own development objectives. The [New Partnerships Initiative \(NPI\)](#) will allow USAID to work with a more diverse range of partners and provide entry points for organizations to work with us. The principles behind NPI appear in the Agency's [Acquisition and Assistance \(A&A\) Strategy](#). By engaging local champions and organizations, we can capitalize on, and leverage, their passion, experience, and achievements, while building their capacity as advocates, leaders, and voices for change. In particular, USAID is committed to identifying and removing barriers to including community and faith-based organizations in its programming and partnerships.
- *Multilateral Institutions, Donors, and International Organizations:* Fundamental to USAID's value proposition is its ability to convene and leverage assets, resources, and relationships. Solving complex challenges to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is a joint, ongoing, and collaborative effort that involves members of the wider development community, including non-governmental organizations.
- *Private Sector:* USAID works with private-sector partners to address challenges that require resources and innovation beyond governments. Involvement of the private sector is fundamental to ending the need for foreign assistance, and plays a critical role both in solving global development problems and in creating sustainable solutions. Our efforts focus on tapping into opportunities to identify and work with private-sector actors to deploy innovative solutions, as outlined in the [USAID Private-Sector Engagement Policy](#). Private enterprise is one of the most-powerful forces for lifting lives, strengthening communities, and helping advance our partner countries on their *Journey to Self-Reliance*.
- *U.S. Government and Partner Governments:* USAID aims to increase collaboration and coordination with other U.S. Government Departments and Agencies by aligning and combining defense, diplomatic, and development investments and efforts. Our ongoing collaborations with partner governments also foster and sustain progress made in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

***Drive decision-making and investments by using evidence and data.*** USAID is committed to a data-driven and evidence-based approach to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment in our programming. Data plays a critical role in our ability to understand development impact, adapt strategies, and communicate results. As technical experts and thought leaders, we work to ensure our investments build on evidence, data, and continuous learning across the Agency.

USAID continues to learn and lead actively from successes and challenges, as we distill, showcase, and circulate the broader development research, data, and best practices on gender integration and gender equality and women’s empowerment throughout the Agency. Learning and leading involves using standard Foreign Assistance indicators to report whether USAID’s programming has achieved the intended results. Along the way, we also implement rigorous monitoring and evaluation, and adapt evidence-based approaches to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in different contexts.

***Hold ourselves accountable.*** Promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment is a shared Agency responsibility and depends on the contributions and collective commitment of all of our staff. Gender Advisors and designated Points of Contacts (PoCs) work throughout the Agency to champion and advance gender equality and women’s empowerment programming in our Bureaus, Missions, and OUs. Senior officials, Mission Directors, Bureau leaders, and others are accountable for implementing this Policy across their portfolios, as well as for defining specific goals within the Agency’s strategies and programming that align with the objectives of this Policy. The roles and responsibilities for USAID’s Bureaus and OUs in implementing this Policy appear in [Chapter 205 of USAID’s Automated Directives System \(ADS\)](#).

***Do no harm.*** [USAID’s Policy Framework](#) emphasizes the principle, “Do no harm,” which means the Agency strives to mitigate any potential unintended consequences of our assistance that could inadvertently harm the people and communities we seek to support and empower. Closing gender gaps and supporting women’s empowerment involves challenging entrenched roles, norms, and practices. When confronted with changes to the *status quo*, some can react in unexpectedly harmful ways. USAID works to consult key stakeholders on the potential for harm, and engages with communities as we design projects and activities to reinforce the value of gender equality and women’s empowerment, and we monitor for unintended consequences throughout our development and humanitarian-assistance interventions.

As outlined in the [USAID Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(PSEA\) Policy](#), the Agency works to ensure people have safe access to USAID-funded services and activities. USAID has a zero-tolerance stance on the sexual exploitation or abuse of beneficiaries, as sexual misconduct of any kind strikes at the very heart and credibility of development and humanitarian assistance. We must respect and observe due process in evaluating any allegation of sexual misconduct, exploitation, or abuse

by beneficiaries.

***Pursue an inclusive approach.*** USAID promotes a nondiscriminatory, inclusive, and integrated development approach that ensures that all people, including those who face discrimination and thus may have limited access to a country's benefits, legal protections, or social participation, are fully included and can actively participate in and benefit from development processes and activities.<sup>7</sup> Consistent with this approach, USAID advances gender equality and women's empowerment to appropriately and effectively address different sets of development challenges at the country, project, or activity level in the program design process.

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<sup>7</sup> USAID (July 2018). Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations: Additional Help for ADS 201. Retrieved from: [https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/additional\\_help\\_for\\_ads\\_201\\_inclusive\\_development\\_180726\\_final\\_r.pdf](https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/additional_help_for_ads_201_inclusive_development_180726_final_r.pdf)

## 4 GLOBAL SNAPSHOTS BY SECTOR

On the path to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls globally, every sector has a key role to play. While many countries have made progress in reducing gender disparities and advancing the status of women and girls, significant gaps remain. For example, women might not be able to access capital and resources, receive quality health care, control their own economic assets, and enjoy their unalienable rights. Women may also be disproportionately expected to carry out often undervalued caretaking responsibilities, which may further limit their ability to thrive.

Ensuring women and girls can reach their full potential in society is critical not only to attain gender equality and women's empowerment, but also to meet a wide range of development goals. With technology, innovation, and close collaboration among diverse partners, the world is poised now more than ever to work across multiple sectors and turn commitments to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment into action. The following illustrative global snapshots examine gaps and opportunities across 13 sectors:

- Agriculture and Food Security
- Conflict and Insecurity
- Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
- Economic Growth
- Education
- Energy and Infrastructure
- Gender-Based Violence
- Global Health
- Humanitarian Assistance
- Land and Property Rights
- Nature Resource Management
- Technology
- Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

### **Agriculture and Food Security**

When women are empowered in the agriculture sector, their success leads to more-inclusive growth, better nutrition and health, and less hunger – all of which build resilience and self-reliance. Despite their role as the backbone of food production in many countries, women remain limited in their access to critical resources and services, which can result in a “gender gap” in agricultural productivity. For example, while lack of access to credit is one of the most pressing constraints for both women and men in agriculture, women are more negatively affected.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it is essential that agricultural

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<sup>8</sup> International Food Policy Research Institute (2013). Measuring Progress Toward Empowerment: Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index: Baseline Report. Retrieved from: <http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15738coll2/id/128190>  
Version: External Review 8.19.2020

programming engages women in their multiple roles as farmers, paid or unpaid agricultural laborers, agricultural and food processors, traders, livestock keepers, entrepreneurs, and employees.

As women's incomes rise and as women have greater control over expenditures, child nutrition improves through improved diets and health care<sup>9</sup> and stunting is reduced. In addition, engaging men — who often decide on or influence family food consumption — in child care and healthcare decisions may improve the well-being and nutrition of both women and children.<sup>10</sup> Finally, interventions in agriculture are more likely to improve nutrition when they target women and promote women's empowerment, for example, through increasing control over income or improving women's knowledge and skills.<sup>11</sup>

USAID has a 65 year-long leadership history in providing emergency food assistance and setting priorities for livelihood programs. The Agency is a key contributor to Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's initiative to combat global hunger, poverty, and malnutrition. Feed the Future's work to empower women in the food and agriculture sector supports the goal of the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) initiative to advance global women's economic empowerment.

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## Conflict and Insecurity

Around the world, conflict and disasters adversely and disproportionately affect women and girls, yet women remain under-represented in efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, and in post-conflict peacebuilding or recovery efforts, as highlighted in [U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security](#) (WPS). The following themes highlight how gender inequality affects security for women:

- ***State Insecurity.*** The security and empowerment of women is closely linked to the security of states, including their ability to prevent and recover from conflict and to build resilience to threats of terrorism and violent extremism.<sup>12</sup> Higher levels of gender equality are also associated with a lower risk of conflict between and within states, and women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution improves outcomes for peace and security.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> USAID (2014). Understanding the Women's Empowerment Pathway: Brief #4, Improving Nutrition through Agriculture Technical Series. Retrieved from:

<https://www.spring-nutrition.org/publications/briefs/understanding-womens-empowerment-pathway>

<sup>10</sup> USAID (May 2018). The Father Factor: How Community Video Encourages Male Involvement for Better Nutrition and Hygiene Behaviors in Niger. Retrieved from:

[https://www.spring-nutrition.org/sites/default/files/publications/reports/spring\\_niger\\_father\\_factor.pdf](https://www.spring-nutrition.org/sites/default/files/publications/reports/spring_niger_father_factor.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Ruel, Marie and Alderman, Harold (2013). Nutrition-sensitive Interventions and Programmes: How Can They Help to Accelerate Progress in Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition? for The Lancet Journal, Vol. 382, No. 9891. Retrieved from: [http://thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(13\)60843-0/fulltext](http://thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(13)60843-0/fulltext)

<sup>12</sup> Arriaga, Alexandra (May 2017). Linking Security of Women & Security of States: Policymaker Blueprint for Futures Without Violence and Open Square. Available at: [LINKING WOMEN & STATES](#)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; Hudson, Valerie M.; Caprioli, Mary; Ballif-Spanvill, Bonnie; McDermott, Rose; Emmett, Chad F. (2008/2009). The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States for International Security Journal. Retrieved from:

<https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/heart-matter-security-women-and-security-states>

- *Peacebuilders.* Women remain significantly under-represented in decisions related to peace and security, despite evidence of women's critical contributions to stability. Since 1992, women have made up only 13 percent of negotiators, 4 percent of signatories, and 3 percent of mediators in major peace processes.<sup>14</sup> Excluding women from conflict prevention, resolution, and recovery efforts results in overlooking differences in the ways that conflict and violence affect women and men. However, when women participate in peace processes, the resulting agreements are 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years<sup>15</sup> because women's participation helps broaden the range of conflict drivers and potential solutions under discussion.
- *Countering Violent Extremism.* Terrorism and violent extremism contribute to insecurity and conflict in many regions of the world, with women and men often impacted in different ways. Gender-based violence is frequently used by violent extremist organizations (VEOs) to terrorize and control populations, and exploit gender roles and stereotypes to recruit and radicalize individuals.<sup>16</sup> The systematic rape, enslavement, and trafficking of women and girls is entrenched in the ideology and practices of certain VEOs, while men and boys are often subjected to forced recruitment and compelled to commit violent acts aimed at severing ties to their families and communities.<sup>17</sup> Though under-recognized, women play many different, active roles related to violent extremism. Some women are leaders, informants, recruiters, or enforcers in VEOs, while other women work effectively to counter the ideology and actions of these groups.<sup>18</sup> Increasingly, recognizing the diverse roles and contributions of women and men to countering violent extremism is critical for designing effective interventions.

USAID is committed to full implementation of the WPS Strategy because we know that investing in women's leadership and empowerment can help break cycles of conflict and violence that threaten global security and undermine development progress. USAID continues to support countries on a path to self-reliance through a focus on WPS in our development and disaster assistance efforts.

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<sup>14</sup> UN Women and the Council on Foreign Relations (January 2018). Women's Participation in Peace Processes. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/womens-participation-in-peace-processes>

<sup>15</sup> International Peace Institute (June 2015). Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes. Retrieved from: <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of State and USAID (October 2018). U.S. Strategy to Support Women and Girls at Risk from Violent Extremism and Conflict. Retrieved from:

<https://www.state.gov/u-s-strategy-to-support-women-and-girls-at-risk-from-violent-extremism-and-conflict/>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.; Hudson, Valerie M.; Caprioli, Mary; Ballif-Spanvill, Bonnie; McDermott, Rose; Emmett, Chad F. (2008/2009). The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States for International Security Journal. Retrieved from: <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/heart-matter-security-women-and-security-states>

<sup>18</sup> Arriaga, Alexandra (May 2017). Linking Security of Women & Security of States: Policymaker Blueprint for Futures Without Violence and Open Square. Available at:

[https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/FWV\\_blueprint\\_Final\\_web.pdf](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/FWV_blueprint_Final_web.pdf)

## **[CALL OUT BOX]: U.S. STRATEGY ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY**

Recognizing that countries are more peaceful and prosperous when women have full and equal rights and opportunity, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 called for the first-ever [\*U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security\*](#). Investing in women's empowerment and leadership helps break cycles of conflict and instability that threaten global security and undermine countries' ability to move beyond assistance. USAID implements the WPS Strategy's objectives by:

- Funding efforts to advance women's empowerment, participation, and leadership in all aspects of conflict-prevention, humanitarian response, peace-building, and post-conflict recovery;
- Prioritizing gender-based violence prevention and care in humanitarian assistance and development programming;
- Strictly prohibiting sexual misconduct, including harassment, exploitation, or abuse of any kind, on the part of our staff, international organizations, implementing partners, or program beneficiaries;
- Enhancing justice, accountability, and the elimination of impunity for gender-based violence, trafficking, and other abuses through rule of law and human-rights programming; and
- Investing in the education and political and economic empowerment of women and girls to support a country's security, prosperity, and self-reliance.

Since 2017, USAID's WPS activities have funded and supported the participation of more than 70,000 women in peace-building processes and provided access to health care, as well as critical psychosocial, legal, and economic services to more than 6 million survivors of gender-based violence.

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## **Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance**

Over the last 20 years, women have made significant strides in political representation and leadership, but much remains to be done to achieve parity in power and representation. Today, women hold 25.2 percent of parliamentary seats and 21.2 percent of ministerial positions. Yet at this rate, it will take another 95 years to close the gender gap in political representation<sup>19</sup>, and because some of the representation is symbolic rather than substantive, even longer to achieve parity in power. Women's lack of equitable representation in local and national politics constrains progress toward parity in other sectors - educational attainment, health, economic participation and opportunity - at great cost not only

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<sup>19</sup> World Economic Forum (2019). Global Gender Gap Report 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality>  
Version: External Review 8.19.2020

to individual women, but to the welfare of their societies. However, evidence demonstrates that early intervention can reduce societal constraints on women's political participation and encourage more women to enter the political sphere.

The following two themes examine how various factors have improved women's civic and political participation but access to decision-making roles is still a work in progress:

- *Political Leadership.* To redress gender imbalances in politics, 130 countries currently have provisions to promote women's representation in legislatures at the national or subnational level, requiring parity, or promoting increased women's representation in cabinets. These special measures, when effectively implemented and combined with professional development opportunities, create a pipeline of women leaders, helping to increase the number of, and society's receptivity to, women in public life.
- Symbolic representation cannot fully address disparities in power if women are not meaningfully engaged or have the same levels of agency that male representatives might have. Women must also be empowered to shape policy agendas and oversee their implementation and enforcement once in office, and to achieve this, ingrained social and cultural barriers must be overcome. Women are rising to political leadership positions within some key institutions; they now comprise 19.7 percent of parliamentary speakers, chair key committees in many legislatures, and lead core ministries beyond the realm of women's or social affairs. Yet, more must be done to address their underrepresentation in other roles in key sectors of government, including as mayors, high court justices, prosecutors, and members of the police and security forces.
- *Political Participation.* Today, women have the right to vote in all countries where men do. Nevertheless, women continue to face significant legal, social, cultural, and economic barriers to their civic and political participation at all levels — as voters, civic and political leaders, candidates, and elected officials. Discriminatory laws and negative cultural practices, including unequal property and inheritance rights, family laws, and forced and early marriage, inhibit women's ability to participate in public life. Gender-based violence, and specifically violence against women in elections and politics, deters women's civic and political participation and inhibits their access to decision making roles. Furthermore, women's lower levels of education, lack of access to information, lack of political experience or female role models, and unavailability of financial resources or mentoring also often limit their ability to fully engage in political processes in countries throughout the world. By identifying the key constraints to participation in a given country, we can apply evidence-based and context appropriate approaches to facilitate women's civic and political engagement .

USAID works to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in politics and governance through addressing fundamental legal, social, and economic constraints, and has emphasized the

importance of removing these barriers through its W-GDP Pillar 3 focus, to grow women’s leadership and political empowerment worldwide.

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## Economic Growth

Women’s economic empowerment is fundamental to partner countries’ success in achieving the *Journey to Self Reliance*. When women are economically empowered, they re-invest in their families and communities, producing a multiplier effect that spurs economic growth and contributes to global peace and stability.

Economic gender gaps reduce the benefits that women bring to the economy. Although these gaps have been narrowing over the past decade, women continue to face greater constraints to economic activity than men. Overall, they often are marginalized into less productive sectors, disproportionately expected to carry out often undervalued caretaking responsibilities, own less property, have higher rates of informal employment, experience greater harassment in the workplace, run smaller companies, face greater legal restrictions on their work, and have less access to marketplaces and commercial finance than men.

### **[CALL OUT BOX]: DID YOU KNOW?**

- Fully closing gender gaps in work could add up to \$28 trillion in global annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2025.<sup>20</sup>
- Women entrepreneurs own a third of the world’s formal businesses, yet estimates note that, globally, more than 70 percent of these women-owners report that they are unserved or underserved by financial systems.<sup>21</sup>
- [Research](#) indicates that fully removing the legal barriers to women’s economic activity could increase annual global gross domestic product (GDP) by \$7.7 trillion, or 8.3 percent.
- Even as women have entered the paid labor force, they remain largely responsible for care and housework — a pattern that is accentuated after marriage and childbearing. This can result in lower economic growth both at the national and business level.

The U.S. Government recognizes the critical role of women’s economic empowerment in achieving prosperity and peace, as the *National Security Strategy* makes clear: “Societies that empower women

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<sup>20</sup> Woetzel, Jonathan, et al. (September 2015). The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women’s Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth. McKinsey Global Institute. Retrieved from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth>

<sup>21</sup> Alliance for Financial Inclusion (2016). Policy Frameworks to Support Women’s Financial Inclusion. Retrieved from: [https://www.afi-global.org/sites/default/files/publications/2016-08/2016-02-womenfi.1\\_0.pdf](https://www.afi-global.org/sites/default/files/publications/2016-08/2016-02-womenfi.1_0.pdf)

to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful.” At USAID, we believe investing in women’s economic empowerment can help eradicate extreme poverty, build vibrant economies, and unlock human potential on a transformational scale. To do this effectively requires deliberate and thoughtful reduction of barriers to women’s economic activity across the full range of the USAID portfolio: agriculture, health, education, democracy, human rights, and governance — not just economic growth programming. To accelerate women’s empowerment across sectors, USAID works with the private sector to attract, retain, and promote women throughout the corporate hierarchy and open markets for women-owned businesses, while working with government to reduce legal and regulatory barriers, and to repair weaknesses in systems that limit women’s access to finance, property, and economic opportunity.

## **[CALL OUT BOX]: WOMEN’S GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY INITIATIVE**

The Women’s Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative is the first-ever, whole-of-Government approach to global women’s economic empowerment. The W-GDP Initiative seeks to economically empower 50 million women by 2025 through programs and partnerships. Established by President Donald J. Trump on February 7, 2019, through National Security Presidential Memorandum-16, W-GDP focuses on three pillars for increasing women’s full and free participation in the economy:

1. **Women Prospering in the Workforce:** Increase women’s global labor force participation and advancement in the workplace by providing women with quality education, training, and support, so they can secure and thrive in well-paying jobs in their local economies.
2. **Women Succeeding as Entrepreneurs:** Increase the access of women entrepreneurs and business owners to financing, market opportunities, and training to establish and grow their businesses.
3. **Women Enabled in the Economy:** Promote an enabling environment that increases women’s economic empowerment by reducing barriers and enhancing protections in policies, laws, regulations and practices (public and private) to facilitate women’s participation in the economy.

The Initiative promotes integration of women’s economic empowerment programming across development portfolios of the participating agencies and departments, allowing for a wide range of interlinked and targeted interventions.

The NSPM-16 also established the W-GDP Fund, managed by USAID, and is geared toward partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as faith-based and local groups, to advance the three pillars of the W-GDP.

In December 2019, a new Presidential Memorandum on W-GDP’s Pillar 3, directed Departments and Agencies to prioritize action to address the legal and societal barriers to women’s economic

empowerment. These barriers include women’s ability to access institutions, travel freely, own and manage property, build credit, and work in the same jobs and sectors as men. The W-GDP Index, a new report by the White House Council of Economic Advisors, estimates that addressing these five foundational legal barriers could increase annual global GDP by \$7.7 trillion.

In its first year, W-GDP has reached 12 million women, nearly nine million of those women were direct beneficiaries of USAID’s programming and partnerships. For more results, see the first year’s results in the [2019-2020 W-GDP Annual Report](#).

## Education

The positive effects of education for both girls and boys are far-reaching. Over the past 25 years, sustained efforts to improve girls’ education, in particular, have resulted in substantial progress toward achieving gender parity across the globe. Yet, despite this overall global progress, in some regions (particularly the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa) girls of every age group are more likely to be excluded from education than boys.

### **[CALL OUT BOX]: DID YOU KNOW?**

- When girls have equal access to education, the positive impact on their lives as well as their families and communities is far reaching: each extra year of secondary schooling can increase a girl’s future earnings by 10 to 20 percent.
- Women with post-primary education are five times more likely than illiterate women to be educated on the topic of HIV and AIDS, and their children are more likely to be educated and resilient toward adversity.
- Each year of secondary education also reduces the likelihood of marrying as a child by five percentage points or more.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, school-related violence negatively affects educational outcomes for all children – boys are more likely to be absent from school as a result of bullying and girls are more likely to be absent from school as a result of sexual violence.<sup>23</sup> School-related violence toward boys and girls can be associated with the loss of one primary grade of schooling, which translates to a total yearly cost of around \$17

<sup>22</sup>Global Partnership for Education (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/results/education-data-highlights>;  
World Bank (2017). Educating Girls, Ending Child Marriage. Retrieved from:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2017/08/22/educating-girls-ending-child-marriage>

<sup>23</sup> Fry, Deborah and Fang, Xiangming, et al (2018). Child Abuse & Neglect. The Relationships Between Violence in Childhood and Educational Outcomes: A Global Systematic Review and Meta-analysis for Science Direct Journal. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213417302491>

billion to low- and middle-income countries.<sup>24</sup>

Gender equality and women’s empowerment issues become especially salient during puberty, when negative norms, culture, and safety issues cause girls’ lives and opportunities to narrow, while those of boys keep widening. Negative gender norms and expectations around young women’s societal roles and inadequate or inaccessible infrastructure—including poor water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities—combined with social pressures to drop out of school, often prevent girls from continuing their education and limit their access to training and employment.<sup>25</sup>

USAID recognizes that understanding the constraints that prevent access of girls and boys to quality education is critical. Therefore, as outlined in the 2018 [USAID Education Policy](#), the Agency works with partner countries to develop and enforce laws, policies, and procedures that promote equitable access and equality between boys and girls at the primary, secondary, and higher education level.

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## Energy and Infrastructure

Lack of access to energy can lock women and girls into poverty and affect all areas of their lives. The following two themes demonstrate how energy and gender equality and women’s empowerment are closely intertwined:

- ***Wellbeing and Safety.*** Electricity access leads to improved income, health, and education outcomes, and can reduce poverty. It also improves safety for women and girls when their homes and public spaces are well lit, and they have access to clean cooking solutions. Women and girls can spend hours per day collecting firewood for cooking and lighting needs and to earn extra income for the family. During these trips, they are vulnerable to gender-based violence. Also, household air pollution from inefficient cooking and lighting causes premature death in over four million people per year and because women and girls are primarily responsible for cooking in the home, it has a disproportionate impact on their health.<sup>26</sup>
- ***Workforce.*** Women are transforming the energy sector in their roles as energy entrepreneurs, innovators, and decision makers. Numerous institutions now recognize the value of integrating women into the formal energy workforce. Yet, despite this recognition, women still make up only a small percentage of the workforce - women

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<sup>24</sup> USAID (2015). Factsheet: What is the Cost of School-Related GenderBased Violence? Retrieved from: [http://www.ungei.org/Cost\\_Associated\\_with\\_School\\_Violence\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/Cost_Associated_with_School_Violence_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> USAID (2018). USAID Education Policy.

[https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/2018\\_Education\\_Policy\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/2018_Education_Policy_FINAL_WEB.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Clean Cookstove Research. Retrieved from:

<https://www.epa.gov/air-research/clean-cookstove-research>

represent only 32 percent of the renewable energy sector’s workforce, and only 22 percent of job-holders in the energy sector overall.<sup>27</sup>

Across energy and infrastructure sectors, USAID is using targeted approaches that focus on increasing gender equality throughout the employee lifecycle, from recruiting and retaining female employees to addressing systematic barriers — such as unconscious bias and sexual harassment — that prevent women from fully contributing to the sectors. These efforts are demonstrating concrete results toward increasing gender equality, women’s economic empowerment, energy access, and business benefits.<sup>28</sup> All USAID energy programs should integrate and consider these approaches not only to increase impacts for women and girls, but to increase overall effectiveness.

### **[CALL OUT BOX]: ENGENDERING UTILITIES: ADVANCING WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP]**

The Engendering Utilities program strengthens the energy sector by implementing gender equality best practices, fostering enterprise-driven innovation and inclusive economic growth. The program helps utilities meet their core business goals of attracting and retaining more women leaders while providing women tangible opportunities for economic empowerment and leadership.

Engendering Utilities worked with EKEDC in the Federal Republic of Nigeria to develop an action plan for its technical training to explore female-only courses through a pilot training program; the company experienced a 557% increase in women’s participation in training programs; and, in 2018, hired the first female line workers in its history.

With support from the W-GDP Fund, USAID has expanded and scaled the Engendering Utilities approach through continued coaching for the original seven utilities, added up to ten new utilities, and applied the approach to other male-dominated sectors. The program directly contributes to all three pillars of the W-GDP.

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## **Gender-Based Violence**

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive violation of unalienable human rights and a barrier to civic, social, political, and economic participation. It undermines not only the safety, dignity, overall health, and

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<sup>27</sup> International Renewable Energy Agency. (2019). Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective. Retrieved from: <https://www.irena.org/publications/2019/Jan/Renewable-Energy-A-Gender-Perspective>

<sup>28</sup> International Union for Conservation of Nature and USAID (2018). Advancing Gender in the Environment: Gender-responsive Geothermal Generation - Powering energy and social benefits in El Salvador. Retrieved from: <https://genderandenvironment.org/resource/powering-energy-and-social-benefits-in-el-salvador/>;

USAID (2018). Engendering Utilities Results: Improving Gender Equality in the Global Energy Sector. Retrieved from: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/Engendering-Utilities-Results.pdf>

agency of the millions of individuals who experience it, but also the public health, economic stability, and security of nations.

The scale and scope of GBV are staggering. An estimated one in three women worldwide has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Multiple protection challenges are unique to girls, including child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM). They are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, abuse, and intimate partner violence. More than one in ten girls under age 20, or approximately 120 million worldwide, have experienced forced intercourse, or other forced sexual acts, at some point in their lives.<sup>29</sup> When children witness or experience violence, they are more likely to repeat it, which thus reinforces the harmful cycle of gender-based violence. Global data shows boys are also at risk for sexual violence, and are at higher risk for physical violence, including fights and peer bullying. Engaging men and boys is critical to achieve transformational change.<sup>30</sup>

The consequences for individuals, families, communities, and countries are devastating and evident in different spheres:

- *GBV in the Family.* Children who witness or experience GBV are at a significantly increased risk for health problems, anxiety disorders, poor school performance and violent behavior, and are at heightened risk for later victimization and/or perpetration of interpersonal and self-directed violence.<sup>31</sup> The single strongest factor across countries of men's use of intimate partner violence (IPV) was having witnessed violence during childhood against their mother. Negative gender norms can contribute to intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation and human trafficking, violence against children, and homicide.

Girls and boys can experience violence differently, face different vulnerabilities to varying degrees, and have different needs that arise from abuse because of negative gender and cultural norms and expectations at the household and community levels.<sup>32</sup> Programs to prevent and respond to violence that address both boys and girls, and focus on breaking the cycle of violence, can effectively reduce future sexual violence. Holistic programming and sound laws to provide legal protection can promote dignity and equality, protect girls and boys, and help them reach their full potential.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> UNICEF (2014). Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence against Children. Retrieved from: [https://www.unicef.org/publications/index\\_74865.html](https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_74865.html)

<sup>30</sup> USAID (2019). Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity: A U.S. Government Strategy for International Assistance (2019-2023). Available at:

<https://www.childreninadversity.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/apcca-strategy-final-web.pdf?sfvrsn=4>

<sup>31</sup> Overseas Development Institute (2017). Literature review of male perpetrators of intimate partner violence in South Asia. Retrieved from: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11491.pdf>;

<sup>32</sup> USAID (2019). Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity: A U.S. Government Strategy for International Assistance (2019-2023). Available at:

<https://www.childreninadversity.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/apcca-strategy-final-web.pdf?sfvrsn=4>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

- *GBV Survivor Support.* Accessible survivor-centered legal, health, psychosocial, financial, and other specialized care for GBV survivors, continues to lag. Such resources help create secure and protected areas for GBV survivors.
- *Economic Impact of GBV.* Research indicates that the cost of violence against women could amount to around 2 per cent of the global gross domestic product (GDP). The economic effects on women include increased absenteeism; decreased labor market participation; reduced productivity; lower earnings, investment, and savings; and lower intergenerational productivity.<sup>34</sup> Studies at the individual company level suggest that violence outside the workplace can reduce firm revenues by as much as four percent due to the reduced productivity of both the victims and the perpetrators.<sup>35</sup>
- *GBV and Legal Reform.* In recent years, 47 countries introduced laws addressing domestic violence.<sup>36</sup> Thirty-five countries across the globe made reforms to protect women against sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>37</sup> Another form of GBV, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), has also seen government reforms in those countries where it is practiced. Overall, the chance that a girl will be cut today is about one third lower than it was around three decades ago.<sup>38</sup>
- However, although numerous countries have publicly declared their commitment to end GBV, implementation of laws and policies have been lagging. In addition, private sector companies, including multinational corporations, have struggled with proactively addressing issues related to sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

For more than two decades, USAID has worked with a wide array of partners to increase awareness of the scope of GBV and its impact, improve support to GBV survivors, and strengthen prevention efforts.

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<sup>34</sup> Morrison, Andrew and Orlando, Maria Beatriz (November 2004). The Costs and Impacts of Gender-based Violence in Developing Countries: Methodological Considerations and New Evidence for World Bank. Retrieved from: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/442281468339624395/The-cost-and-impacts-of-gender-based-violence-in-developing-countries-methodological-considerations-and-new-evidence>

<sup>35</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) (2014). Violence against Women and its Financial Consequences for Businesses in Peru. Retrieved from: <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2014-0251en-violence-women-financial-consequences-peru.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> The World Bank (2019). Women, Business, and the Law 2019. Retrieved from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31327/WBL2019.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> UNICEF. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: What might the future hold?. Retrieved from: [https://www.unicef.org/media/files/FGM-C\\_Report\\_7\\_15\\_Final\\_LR.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/files/FGM-C_Report_7_15_Final_LR.pdf)

## **[CALL OUT BOX]: A GLOBAL ISSUE: CHILD, EARLY, AND FORCED MARRIAGE**

Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) is a form of gender-based violence perpetuated by negative gender norms, poverty, and lack of access to free and equitable education. CEFM is a human rights violation that undermines efforts to address maternal health, education, food security, poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS, and gender inequality between women and men, and girls and boys.

- Over the last ten years, CEFM has decreased by 15 percent<sup>39</sup>. Although the rate of CEFM is declining, the number of girl brides remains shocking. Every year, 1 in 5 girls are married before the age of 18 equalling nearly 12 million girls worldwide.
- Family and social structures can be particularly vulnerable during mass migration and resettlement. In times of political and social uncertainty, as well as humanitarian disasters, family, social, and legal networks tend to break down. Without reliable income-generation opportunities, educational opportunities, access to land, or support systems, families may feel added financial pressures to marry their children to merge family assets and provide greater security for their children.

## **Global Health**

Although the health of women and girls has improved globally, gender inequality continues to have a serious negative impact on many health outcomes for women and girls. Over recent decades, significant strides have been made to improve health and wellbeing for women and girls, particularly in life expectancy, overall health, and mortality. However, key challenges persist that negatively affect the health and well-being of women, men, children, and families. The following examples demonstrate the strong links between gender equality and women's empowerment and health outcomes:

- *HIV*. Negative gender norms and inequalities increase women's and girls' risk for HIV acquisition and increase its impact. Based on the U.S. Government supported [Violence Against Children Surveys](#) in sub-Saharan Africa, girls are up to 14 times more likely to be infected with HIV than boys their same age;<sup>40</sup> and they account for two-thirds of new infections among young people in sub-Saharan Africa. Preventing violence against children can exponentially improve the lives of girls and contribute to ending AIDS. Women's limited ability to negotiate the timing and circumstances of sex, including condom use, transactional sex, and curtailed ability to undergo

<sup>39</sup> UNICEF (2018). 25 Million Child Marriages Prevented in Last Decade Due to Accelerated Progress. Retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/25-million-child-marriages-prevented-last-decade-due-accelerated-progress-according>

<sup>40</sup> USAID (2019). Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity: A U.S. Government Strategy for International Assistance (2019-2023). Available at:

<https://www.childreninadversity.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/apcca-strategy-final-web.pdf?sfvrsn=4>

testing and access treatment, increase their risk for HIV acquisition as well as undiagnosed and untreated HIV. Negative gender norms may also encourage risk-taking behaviors for men and boys, and inhibit their demand for, and use of, HIV prevention, care, and treatment service. Moreover, health providers may embrace harmful gender-related beliefs and biases that can ultimately affect health outcomes.

- *Infectious Diseases.* There are important differences between men's and women's vulnerability to infectious diseases. Biological factors such as pregnancy present a greater risk for morbidity and mortality for malaria and Zika virus infections. Twenty-five million pregnant women are currently at risk for malaria, and malaria accounts for over 10,000 maternal and 200,000 neonatal deaths per year.<sup>41</sup> Cultural practices, norms and roles, including burial preparation and associated practices, may increase women's risk for Ebola infection.<sup>42</sup> Cultural and societal roles surrounding workplace exposure and caregiving roles have a differential impact on the transmission of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) to humans.<sup>43</sup> The impact of stigma-related barriers associated with tuberculosis (TB) diagnosis also differs between men and women, insofar as such barriers relate to health seeking and treatment retention behavior and outcomes. Men are more likely to experience stigma in the workplace and community after a TB diagnosis, while women experience more social isolation and stigma from family<sup>44</sup>.
- *Maternal and Child Health, and Family Planning.* Gender inequality contributes to increased levels of female morbidity and mortality across much of the lifespan: before birth (including prenatal sex selection); at the time of birth, during infancy, early childhood, and adolescence; throughout the reproductive years and beyond. In some countries, the risk of dying before age five for girls is significantly higher than what might be expected based on epidemiology. Adolescent pregnancy is associated with significant risks for both mother and child. Women who experience intimate partner violence in pregnancy are 16 percent more likely to suffer a miscarriage, and 41 percent more likely to have a pre-term birth<sup>45</sup>; and they are more likely to experience depression, anxiety disorders, and suicide attempts compared to women who have not experienced this type of violence.

Communication between spouses regarding fertility, finances, and household issues has been positively associated with the use of family planning. Conversely, negative gender norms, violence, and abuse, can limit couples' communication related to, and their voluntary use of,

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<sup>41</sup> Schantz-Dunn, J., and Nour, N. M. (2009). Malaria and Pregnancy: A Global Health Perspective. *Reviews in Obstetrics & Gynecology*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2760896/>

<sup>42</sup> Diggins, J. and Mills, E. (2015). The Pathology of Inequality: Gender and Ebola in West Africa, *IDS Practice Paper in Brief 23*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ids.ac.uk/publications/the-pathology-of-inequality-gender-and-ebola-in-west-africa/>

<sup>43</sup> Rilko, H; Tukahebwa, EM; Fleming, FM; Leslie, J; Cole, D. (2013). Exploring Gender Dimensions of Treatment Programmes for Neglected Tropical Diseases in Uganda. Retrieved from: [https://www.who.int/tdr/about/Gender\\_NTDs\\_Uganda.pdf](https://www.who.int/tdr/about/Gender_NTDs_Uganda.pdf); Hartmann et al (2012).

<sup>44</sup> Krishnan, L (2014). Gender-related Barriers and Delays in Accessing TB Diagnostic and Treatment Services for TB Research and Treatment: A Systematic Review of Qualitative Studies. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4020203>

<sup>45</sup> WHO (2017). Fact sheet: Violence Against Women. Retrieved from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en>

family planning. Fertility awareness can help reduce adverse health outcomes, in part due to improving healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies so that women and their babies have opportunities to thrive. Addressing the root causes for early marriage and early sexual debut should be considered to achieve equality and empowerment for women and girls, and to help promote safe, nurturing, and stable marriages, families, and communities.

- *Nutrition.* Nutrition and food security needs of women and children are often neglected at the household level due to social, cultural, and economic inequalities between men and women. In communities where gender inequality is pervasive, women and girls tend to eat smaller quantities and a more limited variety of foods that are generally less nutritious than the food eaten by their male counterparts. Twice as many women suffer from malnutrition as men, and girls are twice as likely to die from malnutrition as boys.

Half a century of experience has shown that health programs which address sociodemographic and other factors as well as barriers to access and utilization of care, and which engage men, can help improve health development outcomes. For example, when women are educated, household income rises, maternal and infant mortality declines, child health and nutrition improve, economies expand, and poverty rates decline. Increasing women's participation and decision-making, while ensuring that men are not left out, are critical to improving maternal, newborn and child health, nutrition, infectious disease and HIV-related outcomes and will enhance the effectiveness of policies and programming.

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## Humanitarian Assistance

Crisis and natural disasters affect women, girls, men, and boys of various ages and backgrounds differently. When women and girls are empowered, they have the ability to contribute greatly to humanitarian efforts and in rebuilding their communities. The following two themes take a closer look at the importance of prioritizing gender equality between men and women and women's empowerment in humanitarian interventions:

- *Crises and Conflict.* More than 130 million people worldwide are in need of humanitarian assistance for their survival, security, and protection.<sup>46</sup> Global forced displacement has nearly doubled in the last two decades, topping 70 million as of June 2019, and roughly half of those displaced are women and girls.<sup>47</sup> Societal and cultural norms, and other factors — such as age and disability status — have a significant impact on what women and men experience during a crisis, because they shape the roles they play in their communities, their access to resources, and the coping strategies they have available. When crises occur, pre-existing inequalities are often

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<sup>46</sup> OCHA (2018). Global Humanitarian Overview: A Consolidated Appeal to Support People Affected by Disaster and Conflict. Retrieved from: <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHO2018.PDF>

<sup>47</sup> UNHCR (2019). GlobalTrends Forced Displacement in 2018 Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>

exacerbated and can result in increased levels of gender-based violence, especially against women and girls; exclusion from life-saving care; and under-representation in decision-making processes related to relief and recovery. Negative gender norms adversely affect men and boys as well; for example, in crises, men and boys are frequently vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups and to trafficking for the purposes of labor exploitation.

- *Women and Emergencies.* Natural disasters, on average, kill more women than men, or kill women at an earlier age than men.<sup>48</sup> In some countries, women and girls are disproportionately affected by flooding, as many cannot swim or are unable to leave their homes due to cultural barriers. Meanwhile, a majority of preventable maternal mortality deaths occur in situations of conflict, displacement, or natural disasters. And in emergency settings, women and girls are more likely to suffer from food insecurity.

USAID recognizes the critical role that women play in responding to humanitarian crises. Despite their heightened vulnerability in crisis, women often serve as first responders and play a central role in the survival and resilience of their communities. It is therefore critical that, in addition to addressing their needs, humanitarian actors should meaningfully engage women and girls. Community-engagement mechanisms must meet the needs and concerns of women and girls in keeping with girls current and developing capacities and their parents/family engagement. USAID invests in tools that capture women's and girls' voices and improve their access to humanitarian services. This support amplifies women's strategies to protect themselves from violence and fosters their communication with response leadership, enabling the aid system to support what they identify as necessary and effective. Only through this meaningful dialogue will responders be able to proactively mitigate and respond to the unique protection risks that women and girls face during emergencies.

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## Land and Property Rights

Globally, women are often the primary laborers and users of land, yet their rights to land and resources are rarely formally recognized. Women's land rights translate into higher economic gains, increased empowerment to make household decisions, more efficient land use, increased agricultural investment and production, and improved food security.<sup>49</sup> The W-GDP Pillar 3 (Women Enabled in the Economy) recognizes the lack of women's ability to own and manage property as a key barrier to women's economic empowerment. The following two themes explore the importance of land and property rights:

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<sup>48</sup> Neumayer, Eric and Plümper, Thomas (2007). The gendered nature of natural disasters: the impact of catastrophic events on the gender gap in life expectancy, 1981–2002. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Retrieved from: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/3040/>; UN (2014).

<sup>49</sup> USAID (2019). Fact Sheet: Land Tenure and Women's Empowerment. Retrieved from : <https://www.land-links.org/issue-brief/fact-sheet-land-tenure-womens-empowerment>

- *Women in Agriculture.* Despite the positive effects, women are significantly less likely than men to own or control land. In sub-Saharan Africa, women comprise nearly 50 percent of agricultural labor but account for 15 percent of landholders; in Asia, women comprise 42 percent of agricultural labor and 11 percent of land holders; and across the Middle East and North Africa, women comprise 40 percent of agricultural labor, but five percent of landowners.<sup>50</sup>
- *Women and Land Rights.* Women's secure rights to land is essential for food production and sustainable, more stable livelihoods. However, globally, land rights are often dependent on natal and marital affiliations. The resulting insecurity undermines economic and social benefits, as land rights provide economic access to key markets and social access to non-market institutions, such as household and community level governance. Secure land and housing rights can also help address gender-based violence, including as it relates to contracting HIV/AIDS. Land rights can support women's economic independence and bargaining power, reducing vulnerabilities to harmful behaviors, such as transactional sex.<sup>51</sup>

USAID is playing an active role in empowering women by helping them to secure their land rights, a key necessity to fully integrate women into a nation's economy. The Agency also supports coordinated policies and programs that clarify and strengthen women's land rights.

**CALL OUT BOX: USAID's Mobile Applications to Secure Tenure (MAST) Approach**

USAID's MAST trains women and men to understand their rights and formal titling, and engages women and men as community surveyors and land committee leaders.

Using locally adapted technology tools, users are able to efficiently and affordably map and document land and resource rights. This approach has been effective in empowering women by strengthening their ability to secure land tenure, leading to greater economic stability and decision-making power among women. Prior to MAST, data from Tanzania indicated that only 27 percent of landowners were women. Using MAST has achieved 45 percent in target villages.

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## Management of Natural Resources

Significant changes in ecosystems affect women and men in different ways. Women are regularly excluded from decision-making processes related to natural resources, despite being responsible for

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<sup>50</sup> USAID (2013). Land Tenure, Property Rights, and Gender: Challenges and Approaches for Strengthening Women's Land Tenure and Property Rights. Retrieved from: <https://www.land-links.org/issue-brief/land-tenure-property-rights-and-gender/>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.; IUCN and USAID (February 2020). Gender-based Violence and Environment Linkages: The Violence of Inequality. Retrieved from: <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-002-En.pdf>

critical areas of daily natural-resource management, such as securing household water and fuel. The following two natural-resource themes highlight how women's engagement and leadership can both empower women and deliver sustainable results:

- *Fisheries.* The fisheries sector plays a key role in food security, as an estimated one billion people depend on seafood as their primary source of protein. The sector employs 40 million people,<sup>52</sup> and women are 90 percent of the fisheries-processing workforce and 15 percent of those employed in fisheries harvesting.<sup>53</sup> When women are engaged as stewards of key fish resources, projects have seen improved enforcement of regulations, and women's access to processing technology has resulted in reduced loss and increased value of products, and stronger women's livelihoods without over-fishing.<sup>54</sup>
- *Forestry.* In forestry and natural-resource supply-chains, women smallholders typically focus more on the quality of their crops than their male counterparts. Exclusionary practices in natural-resource value-chains can lower productivity and have a negative impact on the health and well-being of all community members.<sup>55</sup>

USAID recognizes that women's engagement and leadership can play a significant role in delivering sustainable results across natural-resource sectors, including increased food security, improved health, and better economic security. The Agency works with communities in our partner countries in these and other sectors to ensure the active engagement of women.

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## Technology

Digital technology is transforming how people worldwide gain access to information, goods, services, and opportunity and has the power to accelerate the Journey to Self-Reliance in developing countries rapidly. However, those transformative opportunities are not equally available to men and women. The International Telecommunication Union's 2019 report concludes that the digital divide has continued to widen from 2013 to 2019 in developing, and, particularly, in least-developed, countries. Men are adopting digital technologies at a faster rate than women, and the problem is only worsening. When women and girls are excluded from the benefits of digital technology access and use, they are further marginalized, and equitable development is impossible to achieve. As the world becomes increasingly

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<sup>52</sup>FAO (2018). The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture: Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved from: <http://www.fao.org/3/I9540EN/i9540en.pdf>

<sup>53</sup>IUCN and USAID (2019). Advancing Gender in the Environment: Gender in Fisheries - A Sea of Opportunities. Retrieved from:

<https://genderandenvironment.org/resource/advancing-gender-in-the-environment-gender-in-fisheries-a-sea-of-opportunities>

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> IUCN (2017). Cultivating a More Equitable and Inclusive. Tropical Forest Alliance 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.tfa2020.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/TFA2020-Gender-Inclusion-Resource-Guide-File-2.pdf>

more digital, USAID's interventions should align with the [USAID Digital Strategy](#) in closing the persistent gender digital divide.

### **[CALL OUT BOX]: THE NEXUS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**

Launched in 2018 by Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump and USAID Administrator Mark Green, the [W-GDP WomenConnect Challenge](#) (WCC) is a global call for solutions to improve women's participation in everyday life by meaningfully changing the ways women and girls gain access to and use technology.

WCC is currently working in 14 countries to address the social and cultural norms that keep women offline and under-empowered. WCC awardees work with individuals in positions of power and influence to promote women's technology use, build women's confidence to use technologies, and develop innovative technologies that help low-literacy users.

Through WCC, women also address societal concerns with technology to help spur economic growth, promote the dissemination of correct information, and identify and discourage harmful behaviors like gender-based violence. While USAID continues to address the gender digital divide actively through these efforts, we must do more. USAID's projects should directly confront the gender digital divide, especially in those that seek to use digital tools.

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## **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)**

Inadequate water supply and sanitation continue to be a problem for a significant number of people, and disproportionately burden women and girls. At least 844 million people still lack access to a basic drinking water source, and 2.3 billion people still lack basic access to sanitation.<sup>56</sup> In many countries, women and girls spend up to an hour each day fetching water. Improved delivery of clean water and sanitation is a key factor in reducing the mortality of girls and women in infancy, early childhood, and reproductive years. The following two themes take a closer look at the significant role WASH plays in achieving women's empowerment:

- *Women's Leadership.* Including women in decision-making roles has the potential to help address governments' underinvestment in WASH. Emerging evidence shows that women leaders in local government are more likely to invest in drinking water and sanitation than their male counterparts, and the presence of women leaders increases the willingness of women and men to

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<sup>56</sup> WHO and UNICEF (2017). Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: Joint Monitoring Programme Update and SDG Baselines. Retrieved from: [https://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/publications/jmp-2017/en/](https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-2017/en/)

contribute money towards public goods.<sup>57</sup> Involving women in all stages of the community planning process enhances the sustainability of interventions in both water supply and sanitation.

### **[CALL OUT BOX]: MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT**

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is a critical aspect of addressing women's and girls' empowerment by alleviating a major constraint to their participation in education and public life. USAID's work in this area includes developing design standards for public facilities, creating educational resources, ensuring MHM-related supplies are available, and de-stigmatizing menstrual hygiene.

In addition to increasing access for women, girls, and other vulnerable communities, USAID's sanitation activities promote equality between men and women by increasing women's participation in leadership, consultation, and training in technical skills. The provision of adequate and safe sanitation can serve as the means of promoting equality and opportunity, which, in turn, contributes to women's empowerment and the erosion of long-standing discrimination and negative societal norms.

- *Economic Opportunities.* Expanding access to water supports the improvement of economic outcomes for women as they rely on water for productive activities such as agricultural cultivation, livestock raising, and small-scale enterprises. Access to, and the control of, water resources, are equally important in relation to non-WASH activities. For example, while women play an important role in agricultural productivity, the design and implementation of small-scale irrigation systems does not reflect this reality.<sup>58</sup> Women are equally important in the management of natural resources, such as watersheds. As the primary collectors of water and firewood, environmental degradation disproportionately affects women and girls, who are nonetheless often not involved in the community response.

As a result of USAID's programs, women and girls around the world are benefiting from access to improved water and sanitation and the promotion of key hygiene behaviors. USAID works to empower women and girls to champion their perspectives and priorities effectively, and to ensure that they are able to engage fully as managers, partners, and entrepreneurs in water-related activities and enterprises.

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<sup>57</sup> Beaman, L., Duflo, E., Pande, R., and Petia Topalova. (2010). Political Reservation and Substantive Representation: Evidence from Indian Village Councils. Retrieved from: <https://gap.hks.harvard.edu/political-reservation-and-substantive-representation-evidence-indian-village-councils>; Chattopadhyay, Raghavendra, and Esther Duflo (2004). Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment. Retrieved from: [https://www.jstor.org/stable/3598894?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3598894?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents)

<sup>58</sup> International Food Policy Research Institute (2016). Investigating Gender Dynamics in Irrigation. Retrieved from: <https://www.ifpri.org/blog/investigating-gender-dynamics-irrigation>

## 5 AGENCY REQUIREMENTS

This Policy applies to all USAID's Operating Units (OUs-- Missions, Bureaus, Independent Offices) and covers policy and programming in Washington and the field. Successful implementation of this Policy will continue to require changes to the Agency's culture and practices. This section outlines key requirements for fulfilling both the letter and spirit of this Policy.

For a more detailed and complete description of the organizational roles and responsibilities required of various Bureaus, OUs, and Offices related to implementation of the Policy, see [Chapter 205 of USAID's Automated Directives System \(ADS\)](#).

### Basic Requirements:

- Mission Order on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:* Missions, Regional Missions, and Country Offices must adopt or revise, and periodically update, a Mission Order (MO) on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. This MO should describe how a Mission will implement this Policy, including by: ensuring gender integration/mainstreaming is applied throughout the USAID program cycle; outlining the intended contributions to the Policy objectives; affirming the budget attributions in Operating Plans (OPs) reflect the suite of Gender Key Issues; reporting the appropriate indicators for gender equality and women's empowerment in Performance Plans and Reports (PPRs); assigning specific and detailed roles and responsibilities related to gender equality and women's empowerment to Mission staff; and ensuring all staff who are required to do so<sup>59</sup> receive training on gender equality and women's empowerment. A template for this required Mission Order is available on ProgramNet.
- Gender Advisors - Missions, Regional Missions, and Country Offices:* Will appoint or hire a Mission Gender Advisor, who has (or will have the opportunity) to develop fully the technical skills, competencies and experience necessary to provide appropriate, in-depth guidance to technical and program staff to ensure the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in meaningful ways across USAID's Program Cycle, and especially in project/activity design. In all cases, Gender Advisors will have responsibilities explicitly included in their job descriptions, including an allocation of time sufficient to carry out the work. Missions will determine the appropriate personnel category (e.g., Foreign Service Officer, Foreign Service National, Personal Service Contractor) for the Gender Advisor position and to whom the incumbent will report. Small Missions and those in the process of closing are exempt from the requirement to have a Gender Advisor, but nonetheless must appoint a staff member to serve as a Point of Contact (PoC) on issues related to this Policy.

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<sup>59</sup> Introductory training on gender equality and women's empowerment is required for (a) all Agency staff who design, evaluate, or manage strategies and projects; (b) Agency staff (including Mission and OU Directors and Deputy Directors) who directly or indirectly supervise staff who design, evaluate, or manage strategies and projects; (c) all COs and AOs; and, (d) Program Officers

- *Gender Advisors - Washington Pillar and Regional Bureaus:* Will appoint or hire a Gender Advisor. Regional Bureaus will have at least one Gender Advisor with regional expertise and appropriate technical and programmatic competency to provide guidance for successful policy implementation. All Pillar Bureaus must have at least one Gender Advisor with appropriate sector expertise and technical and programmatic competency to provide guidance for the successful implementation of this Policy. Individual offices within Bureaus might also name additional Gender Advisors or PoCs as appropriate.

### Requirements Related to USAID's Program Cycle:

Chapter 205 of USAID's Automated Directives System, *Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle*, serves as an in-depth guide to the operationalization of this Policy, with an emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of our OUs and gender integration across the Program Cycle. The Agency will revise this Chapter periodically to ensure harmonization with related ADS Chapters (such as ADS Chapter 201) as well as other changes in USAID operations or applicable U.S. Government laws. Among the key requirements relating to gender integration in the Program Cycle are the following:

- As part of the design of strategies, projects, and standalone activities, USAID's Bureaus, Missions, and Independent Offices must conduct a gender analysis. Technical teams and program offices must reflect the findings of these analyses in Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs), Project Appraisal Documents (PADs, or their successors), Action Memoranda, and solicitations.<sup>60</sup>
- Design teams must reflect the findings of the gender analysis in the different components of a solicitation and must include a statement that clearly indicates how it incorporates the results of the gender analysis or gives a rationale for why gender inequality is not an issue for the particular activity the requested procurement action would implement. If neither of these is in the procurement request, the cognizant Contracting Officer (CO)/Agreement Officer (AO) must notify the project team that she or he is unable to take further action until she or he receives the required documentation.

### Reporting:

- *Planned funding:* All OUs must attribute funding in each Fiscal Year to one or more of the four Gender-Linked Key Issues to track planning and progress against U.S. Government priorities and Congressional directives: (GE/WE-Primary, GE/WE-Secondary, GBV, and GBV-Child Early or Forced Marriage), the two data-only Sub-Key Issues designed to gather attributions to women's economic empowerment, and/or the Women, Peace, and Security Independent Key Issue, as applicable.

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<sup>60</sup> U.S. Government (January 2019). Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3247>

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- *Internal reporting of results:* In Annual Performance Plans and Reports (PPRs), OUs must report on results realized during the reporting Fiscal Year, including by using the Standard Indicators maintained by the Office of Foreign Assistance (F) at the U.S. Department of State, which are required as applicable. The Master Indicator List (MIL) includes cross-cutting indicators that cover gender equality, women's empowerment, GBV, and WPS. All USAID OUs should work with implementing partners to collect data and report on one or more of the gender standard indicators if the OU's programming produces data that contributes to the measurement of these indicators. In addition, USAID's implementers must disaggregate by sex any people-level standard and custom performance indicators reported on in the PPR.
- *External reporting of results:* USAID will report on the results of the Agency's efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through a range of required and *ad hoc* reporting processes, including, but not limited to, Congressional, interagency, and donor reporting requirements and requests. Data and information collected through the OPs and PPR will also inform USAID's external engagement, communications, and learning efforts.

### Training:

- Introductory training on gender equality and women's empowerment is required for (a) all Agency staff who design, evaluate, or manage strategies and projects; (b) Agency staff (including Mission and OU Directors and Deputy Directors) who directly or indirectly supervise staff who design, evaluate, or manage strategies and projects; (c) all COs and AOs; and, (d) Program Officers. The Agency's goal is for all new staff to receive basic training within two years of their start date and for all other staff captured in categories (a)-(d) who have not had gender training, to receive it within two years.
- Similar to training for other competencies, USAID should continue to develop and offer advanced training that meets the needs of Gender Advisors and PoC's. Bureaus, Missions, or IOs also might wish to establish advanced gender training for other relevant positions or technical backstops. OUs should also incorporate specific content on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment into broader technical or sectoral training they manage.

### Assessment of Policy Implementation:

- Following the requirements of ADS Chapter 200, USAID will assess the implementation of this Policy periodically, approximately once every five years, by using appropriate performance benchmarks such as our staff's knowledge of, and experience with, the Agency's gender requirements; gender integration in CDCSs, PADS, activities, and solicitations; budget attributions to the gender Key Issues

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in OPs; and the use of the gender standard indicators in PPRs.

## 6 Conclusion

Equality between men and women and women's empowerment are vital to achieving USAID's development goals and successfully providing humanitarian assistance. This Policy underscores USAID's dedication to improving the status of women and girls worldwide, and to upholding our commitment to protect the dignity of all people. Wherever USAID works, we are committed to empowering women and girls to realize their full potential and become capable leaders for future generations. Societies that prioritize, elevate, and empower women and girls create strong communities and long-lasting, positive change. And we know investing in women and girls is essential to strengthening self-reliance in our partner countries. This Policy provides the foundation and guidance for USAID's investments in gender equality and women's empowerment across all sectors.

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