

## Highlights: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

At USAID, we believe that gender equality and women's empowerment isn't a part of development but at the core of development. Water, energy, agriculture, conflict and health can all affect men and women differently. These differences are not barriers but opportunities to maximize the impact of our work by delivering development in a more targeted, effective and sustainable way. That's why across our programs in more than 80 countries we are making evidence-based investments in gender equality and female empowerment. In 2012, we released the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, cementing our commitment to supporting women and girls. Building on this critical foundation and decades of experience, we're ensuring all of USAID's strategies and programs are shaped by a gender analysis, and establish metrics that measure the gender impact of our programs. And we're already seeing a difference.

### Country Snapshots:

- **Afghanistan's** Promote is the largest women's empowerment program supported by USAID anywhere in the world. The five-year program focusing on the education, promotion, and training of 75,000 Afghan women between 18 and 30 years of age will support women's efforts to enhance their contribution to Afghanistan's development by strengthening women's rights groups, boosting female participation in the economy, increasing the number of women in decision-making positions within the Afghan government, and helping women gain business and managerial skills.
- In **Ethiopia**, USAID is addressing the high-prevalence of child marriage through a number of programs that address its root causes including education, empowerment of women and girls, and health services. In one such program, USAID is training 255 members of the judiciary and law enforcement communities on child marriage issues. As a result, 475 early child marriages were annulled in the Amhara region, where this illegal activity is widely practiced.
- In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, USAID encouraged women's inclusion in leadership positions in peace committees and other community structures, such as local farmer groups and development committees, in 15 target geographic areas in North and South Kivu. Women now constitute 49 percent of the members of the 15 peace committees.
- In **El Salvador**, USAID reached 10,355 victims of domestic and sexual violence to provide improved legal services and support from justice sector institutions. By 2018, USAID will establish 15 additional centers to meet the needs of victims.
- In **Ukraine**, USAID is training new Members of Parliament and aides on gender equality issues and oversight, resulting in the drafting of an amendment to require 30 percent representation of women in political party lists for elections.

### Program Highlights:

- Early estimates show that over \$751,634 million was budgeted for programs in 2014 across the Agency to support gender equality, women, peace, and security, and to combat gender-based violence.
- Through a \$29 million partnership with the Nike Foundation and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), USAID is working to accelerate economic empowerment for girls. The SPRING Initiative helps businesses bring products to market which enable girls to learn, earn, invest and save in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda.
- USAID's Women and the Web Alliance will reduce the internet gender gap by bringing more than 600,000 young women online in Nigeria and Kenya in the next three years. Alongside partners, USAID is transforming the lives and livelihoods of girls and women in Africa through digital literacy training, relevant content, policy work, and online social networks.

### **Institutional Changes:**

- The Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy requires that all missions adopt, revise, and periodically update a **Mission Order** on gender that describes how the operating unit will implement the Policy. Over 90% of operating units globally have an approved Mission Order in place
- All operating units globally are required to appoint a gender advisor, or in some cases, a point of contact. The vast majority of operating units have met this requirement, with some operating units moving beyond the requirement to appoint several points of contact.
- In addition to Gender 101: Gender Equality at USAID, two new online courses were launched: **Gender 102: Putting ADS 205 into Action** and **Gender 103: Roles and Responsibilities of Mission Gender Advisors and POCs**. This suite of trainings provides USAID staff with the knowledge and skills needed to implement USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy. Over 4,000 staff globally have been trained through the online **Gender 101: Gender Equality at USAID** course.
- USAID released the first-ever standalone chapter on gender integration in the Automated Directive System (**ADS**), which contains USAID's organization and functions, along with the policies and procedures that guide the Agency's programs and operations. In addition, eight chapters of the ADS were updated to improve leave and benefits.
- Women@AID supports all USAID employees in achieving career success, professional development within the Agency while promoting a healthy work-life balance. In 2014, **Women@AID** became one of the Agency's most active employee resource groups and increased its membership from 350 to 500+ members. Women@AID's policy change committee made recommendations for updating two ADS chapters on parental leave policies. Women@AID also held a monthly speaker series that featured high-level USAID leaders, developed a monthly newsletter and MyUSAID page to foster communication among members and established a strong working relationship with sister organizations at the State Department and Peace Corps.

### **Looking Ahead:**

- **Let Girls Learn** is a new whole-of-government initiative that will support adolescent girls around the world. Building on USAID's initial Let Girls Learn funding and education programs, the Initiative will improve access to quality education and health care, and help address violence and other barriers to education that adolescent girls face. In collaboration with the White House, several government agencies will participate, including the Department of State and the Peace Corps.
- In 2015, USAID will conduct an assessment of the **Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy** to measure the extent to which the Agency meets the requirements outlined and identify gaps to be addressed in the future.
- Also in 2015, a three year review of the **U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally** will be completed across the U.S. government to identify best practices, gaps, and the way forward.
- 2015 also marks the first review and update to the **U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security** and presents a unique opportunity to evaluate and build on our progress in integrating women, peace, and security objectives in conflict and crisis response mechanisms across the agency.