

Financing the unfinished business of gender equality and women's rights: priorities for the post-2015 framework — TECHNICAL BRIEF

March 2014

This technical paper analyses investments by OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors in six policy areas that are priorities for the post-2015 development agenda because of their catalytic impact on achieving gender equality and women's rights: girls' education; sexual and reproductive health and rights; women's economic empowerment; women, peace and security; women's participation and leadership; and, violence against women and girls. It is intended for representatives from donor agencies, partner governments and civil society.¹

KEY MESSAGES

- **MDG 3 has proved catalytic in galvanising new resources for gender equality and women's rights.** Retaining a **strong standalone goal on gender equality** in the post-2015 framework alongside gender-specific targets and indicators across all goals will be critical for mobilising the political will and investment needed to address the “unfinished business” of the MDGs.
- Despite the upward trend in aid focused on gender equality since the MDGs, significant funding gaps remain in priority areas for the post-2015 framework - women's economic empowerment, family planning, women, peace and security, and women's participation and leadership. It is time to **close these gaps**.
- DAC members' aid flows in support of gender equality and women's empowerment have tripled since the MDGs from **USD 8 billion** in 2002 to **USD 24 billion** in 2012. This represented an annual average growth rate of **12%** for the years 2002-12, while all sector specific aid grew at **6%** over the same period. Most of this aid went to **education and health**.
- There has been an overall **upward trend** in the amounts of aid focused on gender equality in **education** which increased from **USD 1.2 billion** in 2002 to **USD 4.4 billion** in 2012. This aid has had a **consistent focus on gender equality** since the MDGs.
- While overall DAC members' aid to population policies/programmes and reproductive health reached **USD 7 billion** in 2012, **donor funding to family planning** remained quite low at **USD 700 million** on average per year in 2011 and 2012. This is a **significant gap** given that 222 million women around the world were left without modern contraception in 2012.

1. This brief has been written by Teresita Kelly Lopez Treussart, OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET), and Cécilia Piemonte, OECD DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT). It was prepared as a contribution to the joint workshop with the UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (6-7 November 2013) and the fifty-eighth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (10-21 March 2014).

- Similarly, while **USD 1.3 billion** went to **reproductive health** in 2011 and 2012, these financial commitments have been insufficient to arrest the unacceptably high rates of maternal mortality. Accelerating progress beyond 2015 will require **renewed commitment to investing in women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights**, with a focus on universal access to quality, integrated sexual and reproductive health information, education and services throughout the life cycle.
- Despite political statements about the importance of women’s economic empowerment, donor **investments in women’s economic empowerment** have remained **flat and unchanged** since 2007. Out of a total of USD 5.5 billion on average per year to women’s economic empowerment in 2011 and 2012, **only USD 469 million** targeted gender equality as a **principal** objective. This represented a low **2%** of the bilateral aid going to women’s economic empowerment. There is a **gap** between what donors say they do and what they are actually doing.
- Despite numerous UN Security Council Resolutions calling for a strengthened focus on women in fragile and conflict situations, the amounts of aid targeting gender equality in **peace and security** were **low – USD 459 million** on average per year since 2002.
- DAC members’ aid to participation and leadership has had a strong focus on gender equality in 2011 and 2012 (67%). However, the overall **amounts of aid in support of women’s participation and leadership remained low** – just over **USD 1.2 billion** on average per year for the years 2002-12.
- Violence against women and girls is a global threat to development progress and one of the most widespread abuses of human rights worldwide. DAC members described an element focused on **addressing violence against women in 776 of their aid activities on average per year in 2011 and 2012**. Further efforts are needed to develop a specific purpose code to track DAC members’ aid flows for tackling violence against women and girls.
- **Germany, the EU institutions, Japan, France and Australia** reported just over a half of the total gender equality focused aid in 2011 and 2012.²

2. For technical reasons, all charts and figures in this study exclude the United States. The United States has implemented an improved data collection methodology for the gender equality marker; data will be available in the coming months.

Introduction

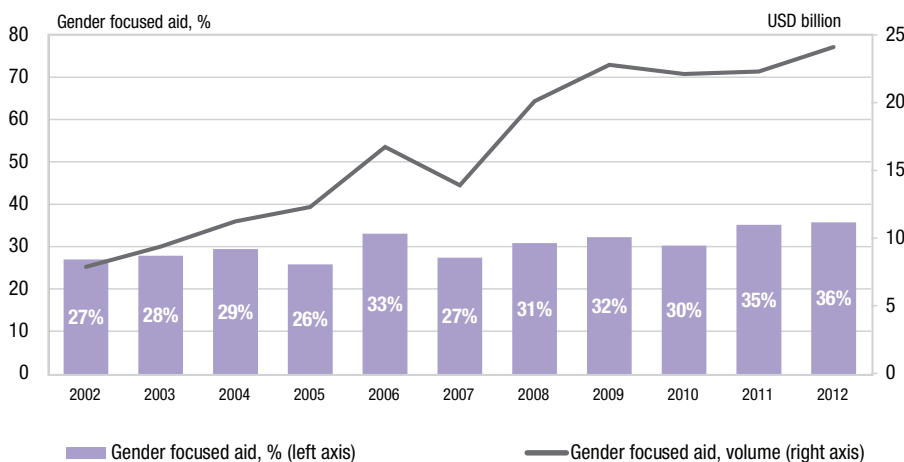
Investing in women and girls is the surest way to address poverty, reduce inequalities and achieve lasting development results. For over twenty years, the OECD has tracked and collected data on the gender equality focus of DAC members' aid using the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) and the *gender equality policy marker* – a statistical tool to measure aid that is principally or significantly focused on achieving gender equality.³ The data generated can be a powerful tool for guiding policy decisions and investments in support of gender equality and women's rights. This data points towards priority areas for the post-2015 development agenda.

This brief examines the extent to which DAC members' aid to education, health, economic empowerment, peace and security, violence against women and girls, and participation and leadership has addressed gender equality, using data collected through the policy marker. It identifies significant gaps in donor spending commitments in areas such as women's economic empowerment, peace and security, and family planning as well as opportunities for improving data availability, quality and coverage on key issues such as violence against women and girls and women's participation and leadership.

Overview of donor funding, 2002-12

MDG 3 has led to a strong global focus on investing in women and girls as the *breakthrough strategy*⁴ for achieving the MDGs. A clear indication of increased DAC donor support for gender equality and women's rights since the MDGs is provided in the chart below.

Chart 1. Aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment
2002-12, annual commitments, USD billion, constant 2011 prices



The total volume of DAC members' aid commitments targeting gender equality and women's empowerment has tripled from **USD 8 billion** in 2002 to **USD 24 billion** in 2012 (see right axis). Donor funding for gender equality has also increased annually as a share of total bilateral sector allocable aid screened against the gender equality policy marker (see left axis). The largest shares of this aid were allocated to the **education** and **health** sectors. To put this into a larger context, it is useful to look at the rate of

change over time between the total bilateral aid allocated by sector and the proportion of this aid going specifically to gender equality and women's rights. While all sector allocable aid has increased at an annual average rate of 6% for the years 2002-12, the share of total gender equality focused aid has grown by **12%** on average per year over the same period.

Gender equality focused aid by sector, 2011-12

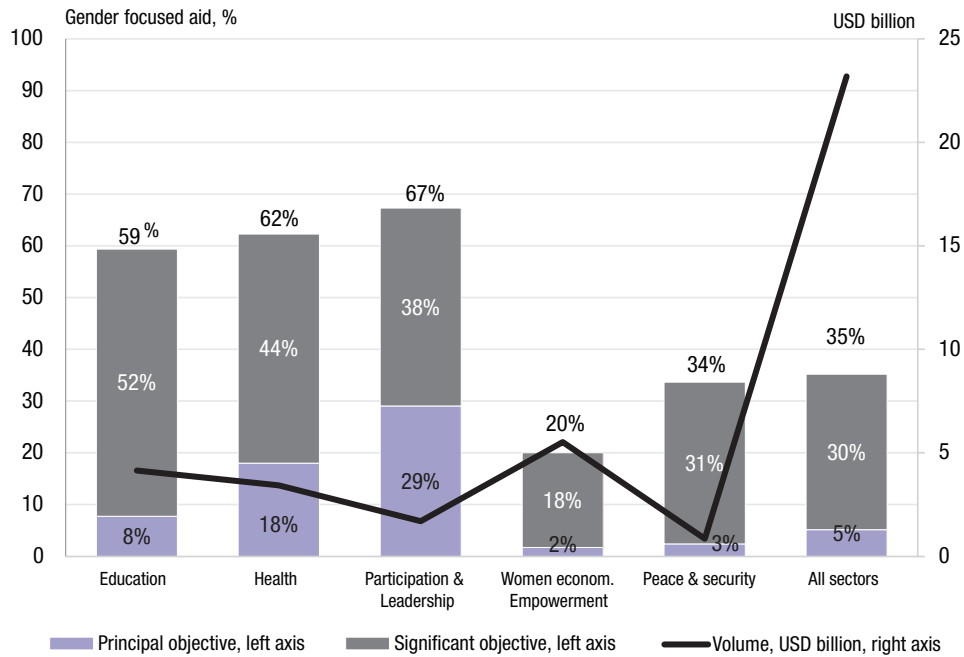
DAC members' aid flows in support of gender equality and women's empowerment amounted to USD 23.2 billion on average per year in 2011 and 2012. This represented **35%** of total bilateral aid allocated by sector. The shares of bilateral aid that targeted gender equality and women's empowerment in the social sectors of education (59%), health (62%) and participation/leadership (67%) were quite high. A much smaller proportion of this aid targeted gender equality in the economic and productive sectors (20%) than in all sectors combined (35%). The proportion of aid targeting gender equality in the peace and security sector (34%) is close to the average for all sectors combined (35%).

3. A complete definition of the gender equality marker including eligibility criteria is provided at www.oecd.org/dac/stats/gender.

4. OECD (2010). *Investing in Women and Girls. The Breakthrough Strategy for Achieving all the MDGs*.

Chart 2. Gender equality focused aid by sector

2011-12, annual average commitments, USD billion, constant 2011 prices



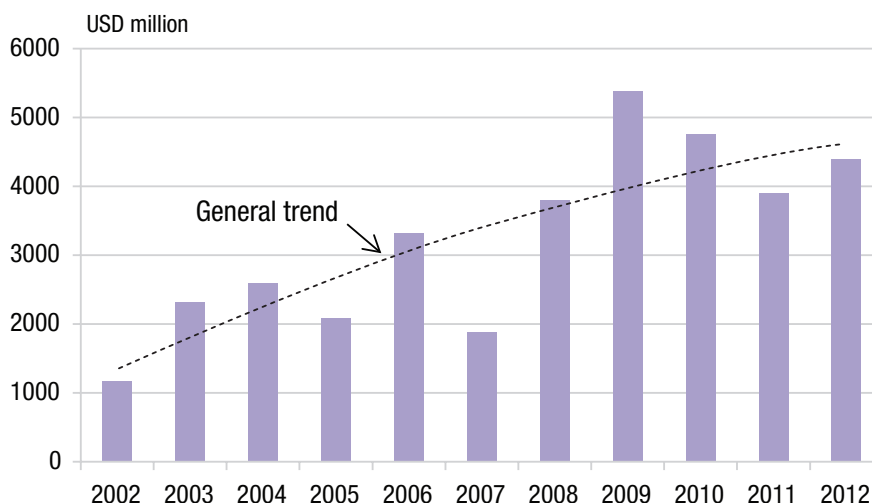
1. Gender equality focused aid to education

In the education sector, DAC members committed **USD 4.1 billion** on average per year to gender equality and women's empowerment in 2011 and 2012. This represented **59%** of total bilateral aid committed to the education sector and screened against the gender equality policy marker (Chart 2). Most of this aid (52%) targeted gender equality and women's empowerment as a significant rather than a principal objective. DAC members' aid had a strong focus on gender equality in primary education and a weaker focus in secondary and tertiary education. In 2011 and 2012, **70%** of aid to **basic** (primary) education was gender equality focused, compared to **51%** of aid to **secondary** education and **58%** of aid to **post-secondary** education.

There has been an overall upward trend in the amounts of aid focused on gender equality in the education sector since the MDGs (Chart 3). DAC donor investments in gender equality in the education sector have grown at a constant and impressive annual average rate of **14%** for the years 2002-12, increasing from **USD 1.2 billion** in 2002 to **USD 4.4 billion** in 2012.

Chart 3. Trend of aid to gender equality in the education sector, 2002-12

Commitments, 2002-12, constant 2011 prices



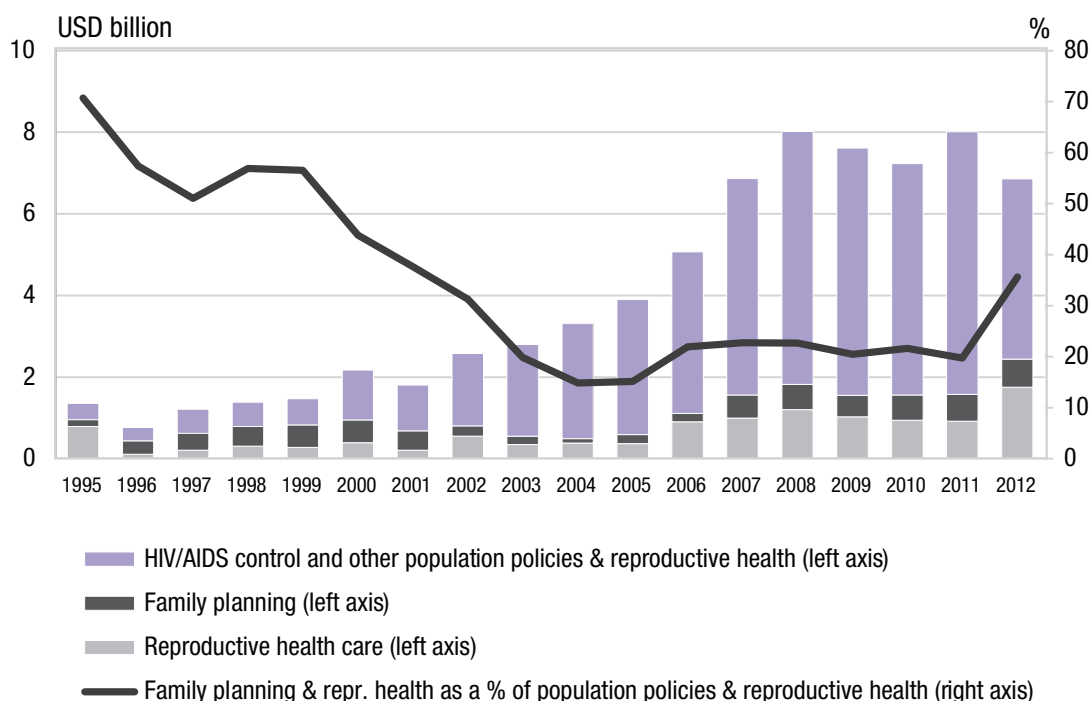
2. Gender equality focused aid to health

In the health sector, DAC members allocated **USD 3.4 billion** on average per year to gender equality in 2011 and 2012.⁵ This represented **62%** of total bilateral aid to health (Chart 2). More than **USD 990 million** or **18%** of this aid was marked with gender equality as a **principal** objective (Chart 2).

Aid to population policies and programmes and reproductive health⁶

Overall DAC members' aid to population policies/programmes and reproductive health has risen from **USD 1.4 billion** in 1995 and **USD 2.6 billion** in 2002 to **USD 6.9 billion** in 2012 (left axis, Chart 4). This includes support for reproductive health care, family planning, combatting HIV/AIDS, population policy, and training for health staff.⁷

Chart 4. Bilateral ODA outflows to population policies/programmes and reproductive health, 1995-2012
Commitments, USD billion, constant 2011 prices



Most of the increase in aid was funding to **combat HIV/AIDS** which represented **USD 5.1 billion** on average per year of the total aid to population policies and programmes in 2011 and 2012. Despite the significant volume of resources being directed towards HIV/AIDS, there is a need for more sophisticated strategies targeting women, which make the link between the epidemic and violence against women, poverty, and women's limited control over sexual and reproductive decisions. In 2011, women still made up more than **60%** of the 820 000 people aged 15-24 who were newly infected with HIV in low and middle-income countries.⁸

5. This includes aid to health (General, Basic, and Population Policies/Programmes and Reproductive Health) which has been screened against the gender equality policy marker and found to target gender equality as a principal or significant objective.

6. This includes all aid activities reported under CRS purpose code 130.

7. The OECD DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics has adopted a new scoring system to track aid for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health (RMNCH), as recommended by the UN Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health. This statistical marker is expected to be applied starting in 2014 for 2013 flows.

8. United Nations (2013). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*.

DAC members' funding to **family planning** – i.e. to counselling, information and education activities, and provision of contraceptives – has declined as a share of total aid to population policies and programmes from **71%** in 1995 to plateau at around **20%** between 2007 and 2011 (right axis, Chart 4). It is interesting to note the sharp rise in percentage to 36% in 2012 but it is too early to tell whether this is the start of a newly upward trend. Overall bilateral aid flows to family planning remained quite low at **USD 678 million** on average per year in 2011 and 2012, particularly in light of the global unmet need for family planning services. Increased donor investments will be needed to expand the reach of family planning programmes, which are essential to empowering women to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. In 2012, 222 million women of reproductive age were left without modern contraception in developing countries.⁹ By 2015, total demand for family planning amongst married women is expected to grow to more than 900 million women, mostly as a result of population growth.¹⁰

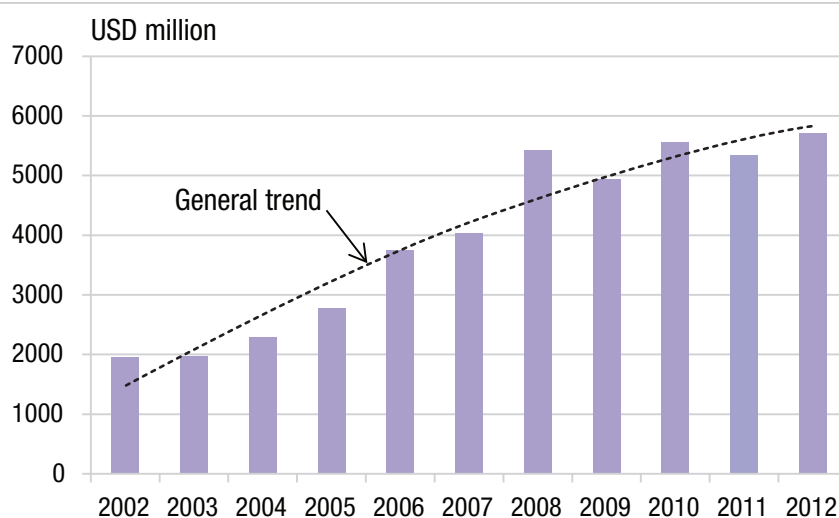
MDG 5 – *improving maternal health* – recognised women's reproductive and maternal health as critical to development. This has led to an increase in bilateral aid flows to **reproductive health care** – including pre and postnatal care, safe motherhood activities and promotion of reproductive health – which reached a total of **USD 1.3 billion** on average per year in 2011 and 2012. Yet, these financial commitments have been insufficient to arrest the world's unacceptably high rates of maternal mortality. About 800 women die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, and MDG 5 remained the most off-track MDG in 2013.

3. Aid to women's economic empowerment

DAC members' aid to women's economic empowerment amounted to **USD 5.5 billion** on average per year in 2011 and 2012 (Chart 2). This comprises all aid targeting gender equality in a selection of 11 economic and productive sectors including trade, public finance management, employment policy, transport, communications, energy, agriculture and rural development, industry, mining, banking and business, and urban development.¹¹ Chart 2 indicates that lower priority was given to gender equality in these economic and productive sectors (**20%**) than in all sectors combined (**35%**). A small share of this aid (**2%** or **USD 469 million**) addressed gender equality as a **principal** objective.

There has been an overall **upward trend in the amounts** of aid focused on achieving gender equality in the economic and productive sectors since 2002 (Chart 5). In absolute terms, bilateral donor investments in women's economic empowerment have risen from **USD 1.9 billion** in 2002 to **USD 5.7 billion** in 2012. However, when looking at the shares as a percentage of total bilateral aid committed to the economic and productive sectors, it is clear that commitments to women's economic empowerment have remained **flat and unchanged on average since 2007-08** (Chart 6). Aid in support of women's economic empowerment has had a **very low principal focus** on gender equality since 2002 (Chart 6).

Chart 5. Trend of gender equality focused aid to women's economic empowerment, 2002-12
Commitments, 2002-12, constant 2011 prices

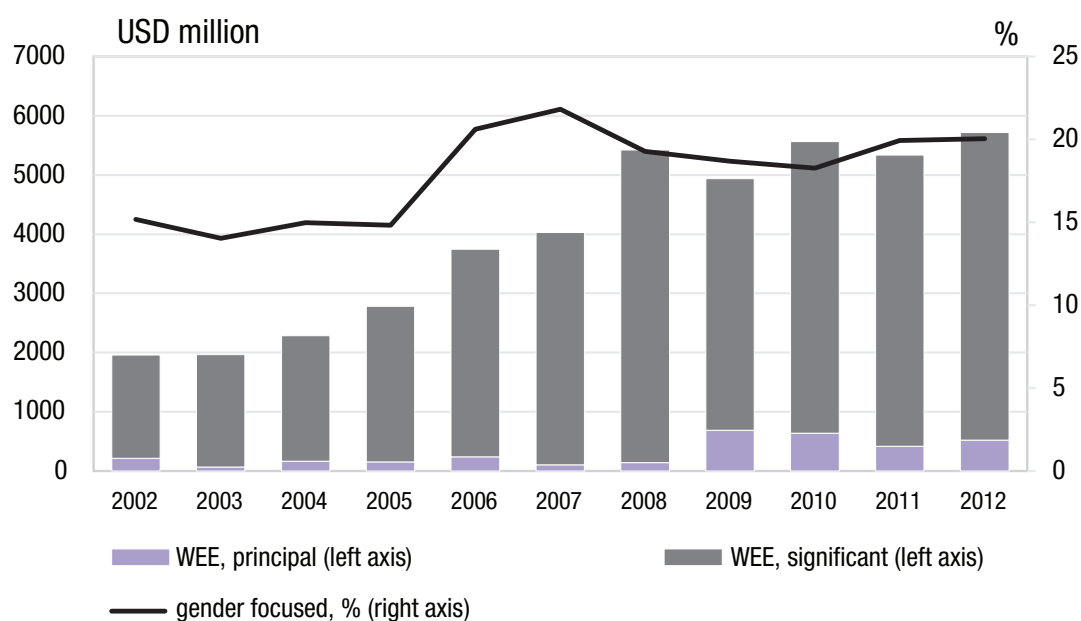


9. Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA (2012). *Adding It Up: Costs and Benefits of Contraceptive Services - Estimates for 2012*.

10. United Nations (2013). *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*.

11. For a complete methodological explanation on this selection, please refer to OECD (2011) "Aid in Support of Women's Economic Empowerment – Chapter 2."

Chart 6. Gender equality focused aid to women's economic empowerment, 2002-12
Commitments, 2002-12, constant 2011 prices



Over the course of the MDGs, there has been increasing global recognition that investing in women is not only the right thing to do but is also “*smart economics*.” The World Development Report 2012 showed that greater gender equality between women and men leads to higher economic efficiency and improved development outcomes for all.¹² Yet, between 2002 and 2012, DAC members’ aid in support of women’s economic empowerment grew at almost the same annual average rate (**11%**) as the total gender equality focused aid rate of growth (**12%**). This indicates that **no more effort has been made to prioritise gender equality in the economic and productive sectors than in all other sectors combined**. This is a puzzling finding given the overt political support for increasing women’s economic empowerment expressed by a majority of DAC donors – 16 out of 29 DAC institutions identified women’s economic empowerment as a top gender equality priority.¹³ There is scope for increasing donor financial investments particularly in the sectors of transport, energy, banking and business, trade, and industry which had a low focus on gender equality in 2011 and 2012.

4. Gender equality focused aid to peace and security

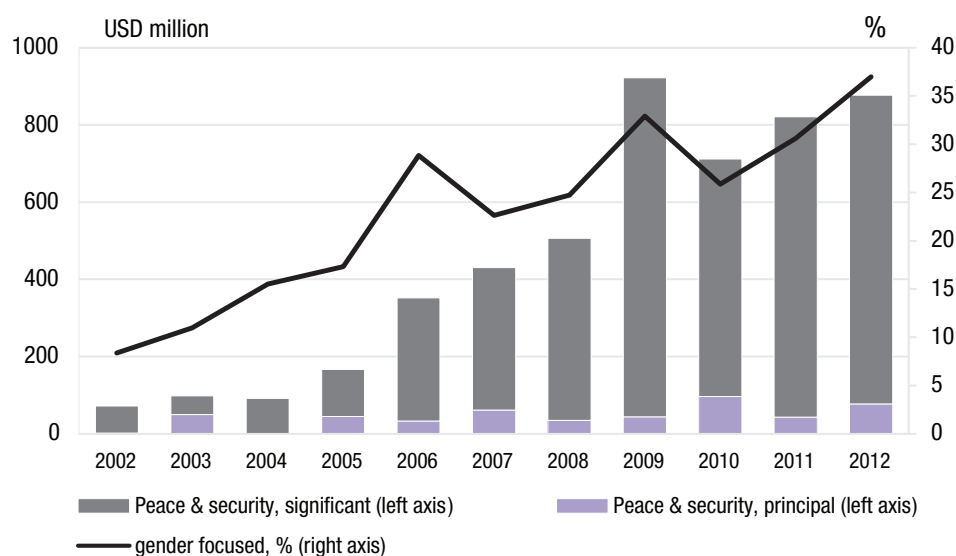
Despite UN Security Council Resolutions (1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960 and 2106) calling for a strengthened focus on women in fragile and conflict situations, the amounts of gender equality focused aid to peace and security over time have remained **low** at only **USD 459 million** on average per year for the entire 2002-12 period (Chart 7). Since 2002, a very **small proportion** of this money has had gender equality as a **principal objective** (Chart 7).

In 2011 and 2012, DAC members committed **USD 849 million** on average per year to gender equality and women’s empowerment in the peace and security sector (Chart 2). This represented a third (**34%**) of total bilateral aid to the peace and security sector, screened against the gender equality policy marker. Only **USD 60 million (3%)** of this aid targeted gender equality and women’s empowerment as a **principal objective** (Chart 2).

12. World Bank (2011). *World Development Report 2012 - Gender Equality and Development*.

13. Based on the responses to a survey for the GENDERNET’s forthcoming study on DAC donor approaches to gender equality, women’s empowerment and women’s rights.

Chart 7. Gender equality focused aid to peace and security, 2002-12
Commitments, 2002-12, constant 2011 prices



5. Aid to women's participation and leadership

Women's participation and leadership is currently not recorded or measured as an independent statistical code or category of the DAC Creditor Reporting System. For this study, three specific purpose codes have been selected and combined as a proxy to assess DAC members' aid in support of women's participation and leadership. These codes belong to the CRS overall sector category of *Government and Civil Society* and have been chosen because of their direct relevance to women's participation and leadership.

Democratic Participation and Civil Society (code 15150) - This CRS purpose code covers support to the exercise of democracy and diverse forms of citizen participation beyond elections; direct democracy mechanisms such as referenda and citizens' initiatives; support to organisations to represent and advocate for their members, hold governments to account, and to help citizens learn to act in the public sphere.

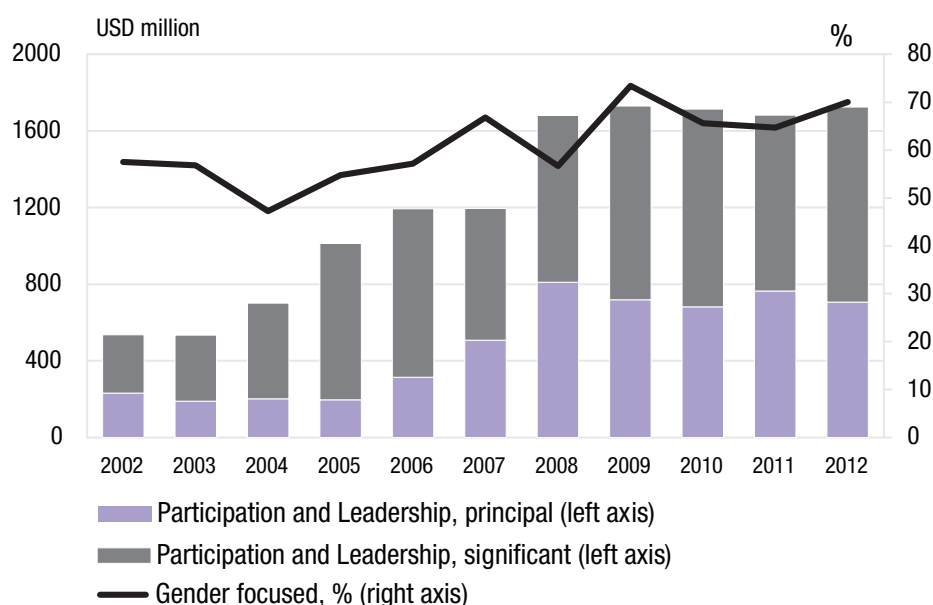
Elections (code 15151) - This purpose code includes electoral management bodies and processes, election observation, and voters' education.

Women's Equality Organisations and Institutions (code 15170) - This statistical code encompasses support for institutions and organisations (governmental and non-governmental) working for gender equality and women's empowerment. This purpose code is very specific and helps to identify trends in donors' support to women's civil society organisations and to women's ministries.

These statistical codes hold great potential and provide a strategic opportunity to capture support for essential dimensions of women's participation and leadership, which is an area for which little data is available. Enhancing the participation of women in democracy and in the public sphere is key to ensuring the effectiveness, legitimacy and responsiveness of state institutions to all of their citizens' demands and needs. Voters' education can help empower women to engage in electoral processes either as voters or political actors themselves which is critical to increasing their access and rights to political knowledge and power. Supporting women's organisations to improve their capacity to play an active role in monitoring investments is a particularly effective strategy for ensuring accountability for gender equality commitments.

Based on the three purpose codes described above, DAC members committed **USD 1.7 billion** on average per year to women's participation and leadership in 2011 and 2012. This represented **67%** of total bilateral aid screened against the gender equality policy marker under the three purpose codes (Chart 2). Although the proportion is high, it is important to emphasise that the overall amounts of aid committed to women's participation and leadership remained low - **just over USD 1.2 billion for the years 2002-12** (Chart 8).

Chart 8. Gender equality focused aid to women's leadership, 2002-12
Commitments, 2002-12, constant 2011 prices



DAC members' spending on women's participation and leadership has increased since the MDGs (Chart 9). Total bilateral aid focused on achieving gender equality in democratic participation, elections, and women's organisations and institutions has tripled from **USD 536 million** in 2002 to **USD 1.7 billion** in 2012. The overall share of this aid has also grown at an annual average rate of **12%** over the same period. This is in line with the responses to a recent survey in which 15 DAC institutions identified women's political empowerment and leadership as policy priorities.¹⁴

6. Aid to end violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls is a global threat to development progress and one of the most widespread abuses of human rights worldwide. To date the DAC Creditor Reporting System does not include a statistical code or category to assess aid in support of ending violence against women and girls. Yet, DAC members attach increasing importance to their work in this policy area – almost half of DAC institutions identified violence against women and girls as an explicit

14. This survey was carried out in early 2013 to inform the GENDERNET's forthcoming study on DAC donor approaches to gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights.

priority in early 2013.¹⁵ A stronger effort is needed to develop a specific purpose code to track DAC members' aid flows for tackling violence against women. Without this, it will not be possible to capture donors' commitments to ending violence against women in an accurate and systematic manner.¹⁶

An analysis of CRS records shows that there are around 776 DAC members' aid activities on average per year in 2011 and 2012 that mentioned the following phrases in the project descriptive data: "violence against women", "VAW", "gender-based violence", "gender violence", "GBV", and "violence contre les femmes". This represents the total number of aid activities that included an *element* focused on addressing violence against women in all sectors and all purpose codes combined. In 2012, most of these activities were concentrated in the sectors of *Other Social Infrastructure and Services* (302), *Government and Civil Society* (283), and *Population Policies/Programmes and Reproductive Health* (53).

The box below illustrates four concrete examples from donor aid activities in 2012 that targeted gender equality as a principal objective and included an element on addressing violence against women and girls in the project description.

The **United States** committed USD 10 million to South Sudan to "assist special populations which may be vulnerable or at risk in a temporary or chronic basis whose needs are not addressed under emergency humanitarian assistance. This includes victims of gender-based violence ... among others" (reported under purpose code 16010 - *Social welfare and services*).

Sweden committed USD 7.3 million to "improve women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health by reducing the incidence of maternal mortality and morbidity, HIV and Gender Based Violence (GBV)" in Zimbabwe (reported under purpose code 13020 - *Reproductive health care*).

Finland committed USD 6.2 million to "support prevention of violence in Central America as part of the Central American Security Strategy (ESCA)" (reported under purpose code 15170 - *Women's equality organisations and institutions*).

The **United Kingdom** committed USD 2.5 million to Malawi to "provide financial support to formal and informal justice sector players aimed at strengthening police, legal, judicial and social responses to physical and sexual violence against women and children and improving coordination among services" (reported under purpose code 15130 - *Legal and judicial development*).

15. Based on DAC members' responses to a survey aiming to inform the GENDERNET's forthcoming study on DAC donor approaches to gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights.

16. The amounts resulting from a text search for the words "violence against women", "VAW", "gender-based violence", "gender violence", "violence contre les femmes" and "GBV" in the entire CRS database were too disparate and inconclusive to be statistically meaningful. This text search was carried out by the Secretariats of the DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT) and the DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) in February 2014.

Conclusions

MDG 3 has proved catalytic in galvanising new resources for gender equality and women’s rights, contributing to a three-fold increase in DAC members’ aid in support of gender equality since the MDGs. Retaining a **strong standalone goal on gender equality** in the post-2015 framework alongside **gender-specific targets and indicators across all goals** will be critical for mobilising the political will and investment needed to address the “unfinished business” of the MDGs.

Despite the upward trend in aid focused on gender equality since the MDGs, significant funding gaps remain in priority areas for the post-2015 framework – women’s economic empowerment, family planning, women, peace and security, and women’s participation and leadership. It is time to **close these gaps**.

