



# Report on Effectiveness

Swiss international  
cooperation in the field  
of gender equality  
2007–2016



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

# Editorial

Gender equality is essential to achieving sustainable development. Despite notable progress in the past two decades in some areas, equal rights and opportunities for all women and men are still far from reality. Women continue to face violence and insecurity both in public places and at home, have less access than men to natural resources, the labour market and income, and are underrepresented in political bodies and decision-making processes. Switzerland accords the utmost importance to promoting gender equality through its foreign policy and international cooperation. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its Goal 5 on gender equality is the cornerstone of our engagement.

Our projects include both a humanitarian and a development-cooperation focus that contribute to the following three strategic areas: the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, the economic empowerment and the political participation of women. We work with a broad range of partners to respond to the specific needs of both women and men in situations of fragility and conflict, thus creating new opportunities for empowering women economically and promoting women's voices and leadership in political and economic decision-making.

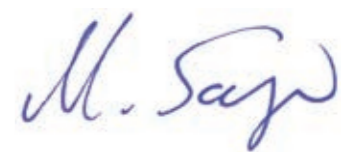
Evidence shows that women are not always victims and men are not always in positions of power. Therefore, to advance gender equality we work closely with women and men engaged in gender equality. Experience confirms that achieving gender equality is a slow and irregular process and that results are difficult to measure. Nevertheless, we want to be accountable for our commitments, monitor our results and achievements, and draw lessons from both good and ineffective practices.

The study, which was carried out by a team of external experts, comprises an assessment of three distinct project and programme portfolios during the period from 2007 to 2016 that reflect our approach to implementing the FDFA's gender equality policy. It covered projects with gender equality as the main goal, those in which gender equality was integrated as a transversal theme, as well as gender policy dialogues. This report, therefore, assesses the effectiveness of our engagement in the field of gender equality, and provides useful lessons and guidance for the further improvement of our programme portfolio.

The 2030 Agenda sets out ambitious gender equality goals. Working for gender equality is the smart and right thing to do. At times, however, it is fraught with obstacles, and progress tends to be followed by setbacks.

Living in a world where gender equality is reality, and not just a dream, conviction or ambition, requires consistent and long-term engagement. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is committed to being a part of this endeavour.

Bern, June 2018



Manuel Sager  
Ambassador  
SDC Director-General

## Technical assessment of effectiveness

Femconsult, OQ Consulting

## Concept and text

Femconsult





# Content

3	Editorial
6	SDC's gender effectiveness at a glance
9	Introduction
10	The OECD-DAC Effectiveness Score
12	The Gender Effectiveness Score
14	Gender-specific projects perform best
16	Gender mainstreaming can work
18	The importance of good project design
20	Overall development goals better achieved
22	The SDC's thematic gender equality results achieved
26	The SDC is effective in gender policy dialogues
28	The improved institutional environment for gender equality bears fruit
30	Suggestions for the way forward
31	The SDC's response to the report's findings and suggestions
32	Methodology

# SDC's gender effectiveness at a glance

GENDER EQUALITY IS ONE OF THE GREATEST POTENTIALS FOR SDC TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND POVERTY REDUCTION



SDC GENDER POLICY AND GENDER TOOLS 2003

GENDER AS 7TH GOAL IN SWITZERLAND'S INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DISPATCH 2017-2020

EFFECTIVENESS OF SDC'S GENDER APPROACH

Gender specific projects contribute best to good gender equality results: 73% were effective

Projects with gender as a transversal theme form the bulk of SDC's interventions

Projects with gender as a transversal theme can also contribute to good gender results: 31% were effective

Good project design is the key to success: based on gender analysis and including gender activities

Paying attention to gender as a transversal theme contributes to better achieving a project's overall goals

Switzerland is recognised as effective in gender policy dialogues

Improved institutional environment for gender within SDC bears fruit as the average gender effectiveness scores improved over time



LIVING LIVES FREE FROM VIOLENCE



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

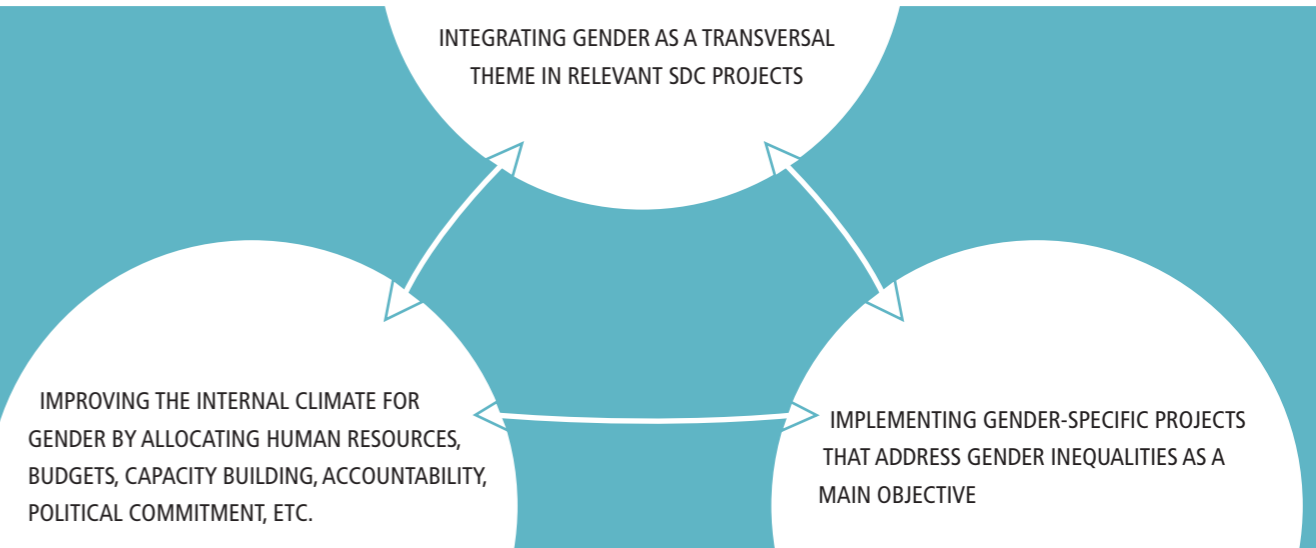
WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

# Introduction

## Gender equality

A key for poverty alleviation and sustainable development: Gender equality is the equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. The aim is not that women and men become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances become and remain equal.

(OECD-DAC definition, as used in the SDC's 2003 Policy on Gender Equality)



*The SDC's gender policy is implemented through a threefold strategy*

For the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), gender equality offers one of the greatest potentials for sustainable development, economic growth and poverty reduction. The SDC launched its Policy on Gender Equality in 2003.

The current Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017–2020 regards gender equality as a standalone strategic goal as well as a transversal theme, emphasising the importance that Switzerland attributes to improving gender equality within international cooperation.

Over the years, the SDC has built up a substantial portfolio of interventions designed to address gender equality. This report presents the findings of an assessment of the effectiveness of the SDC's interventions in relation to gender equality between 2007 and 2016. It is the result of an assessment carried out by a team of gender experts in 2017.

The two main questions addressed are as follows:

1. To what extent have SDC interventions achieved their goals in regard to gender equality, especially in terms of fighting structural inequalities and unequal power relations?
2. To what extent has the inclusion of gender equality contributed to achieving the of overall development goals of interventions?

This study focused on the three main categories of the SDC's gender-related interventions:

1. The gender-specific projects (22), which have gender equality as their main objective.
2. The transversal integration of gender equality in projects (102) on different thematic areas (known as 'gender mainstreaming').
3. Gender policy dialogues (eight selected themes), in particular in the international arena.

The ratio of the SDC's spending on gender-specific projects with respect to projects which have gender as a transversal theme was 1:12 over the period under review 2007–2016.

This report presents the main findings from the study. It compares the effectiveness of gender-specific projects and projects with gender as a transversal theme in terms of achieving gender equality results, also zooming in on the main factors that influence the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming, including policy dialogues and the institutional environment. The report also demonstrates that SDC projects have indeed contributed to achieving the three main gender results set out in the 2017–2020 Dispatch: living lives free from violence, women's economic empowerment and women's political participation.

# The OECD-DAC Effectiveness Score

	gender-specific projects	projects with gender as a transversal theme
<b>OECD-DAC Score</b>	<p>21.1 42.1 21.1</p> <p>84% successful*</p> <p>2.5 average score</p>	<p>8.7 43.5 30.4</p> <p>83% successful*</p> <p>2.8 average score</p>
projects with a valid score	19	23
projects without a valid score	3	79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>102</b>
	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>

## OECD-DAC Effectiveness Score

- 1 very good** = all planned gender results achieved, some overachieved
- 2 good** = all planned gender results achieved
- 3 satisfactory** = planned gender results partially achieved
- 4 unsatisfactory** = some planned gender results achieved; negative effects weakened positive results
- 5 inadequate** = hardly any gender results; or negative effects outweigh positive gender results
- 6 useless** = no gender results achieved or fully offset by negative results

SCORE DEFINITION EXPLANATION

\* = satisfactory or better

## High effectiveness scores for projects with available data but poor availability of gender equality data.

Previous SDC Reports on Effectiveness have used the scoring system of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) to measure effectiveness. The OECD-DAC Effectiveness Score indicates the extent to which a project's objectives have been achieved. In this study, this meant the extent to which the gender equality objectives of the projects concerned were met; it did not consider the overall objectives of projects that have gender as a transversal theme.

The OECD-DAC Effectiveness Score system was applied to 22 gender-specific projects and 102 projects with gender as a transversal theme. The team found that only 34% of all projects assessed had the minimum information required to be able to apply the OECD-DAC Effectiveness Score. Information on gender equality objectives was especially lacking for the projects that had gender as a transversal theme.

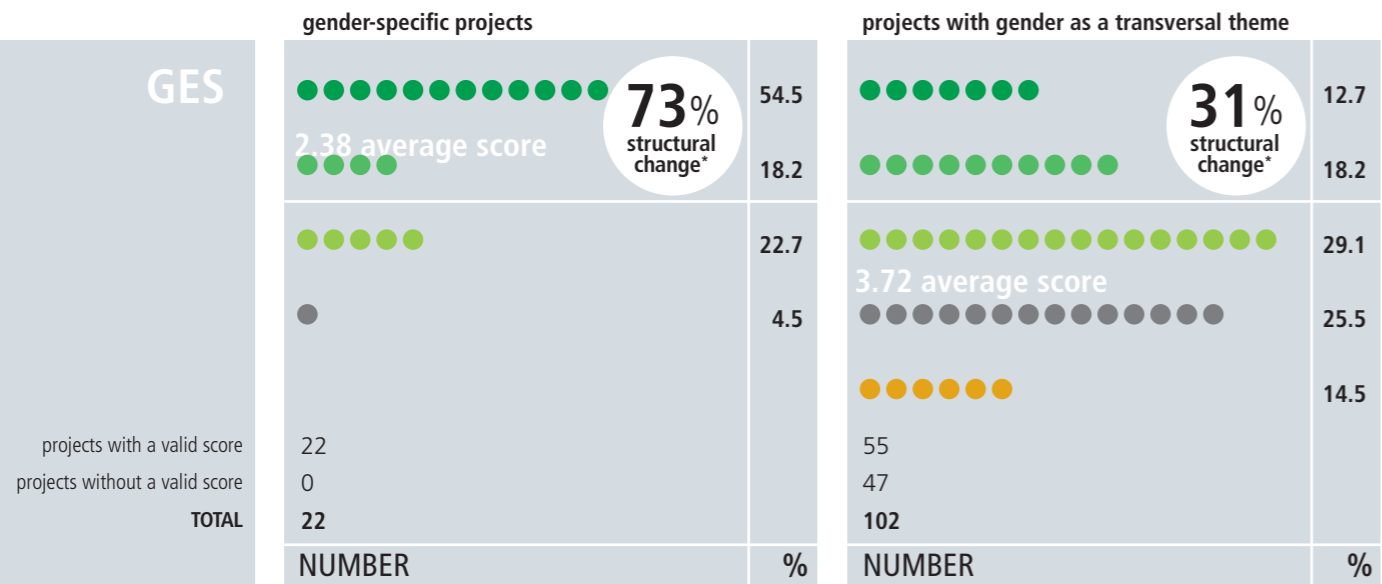
A total of 80% of the projects with sufficient information were found to be at least satisfactorily effective. This can be considered a high effectiveness score, indicating that the SDC was highly effective in terms of achieving its intended gender equality results.

The findings show little difference in effectiveness scores between the gender-specific projects and the projects with gender as a transversal theme. However, the study also found that these two categories of projects had different levels of ambition with respect to gender objectives: the gender-specific projects had more ambitious gender equality goals than those with gender as a transversal theme. Thus, although the two categories of projects have similar OECD-DAC Effectiveness Scores, gender-specific projects seem to have made a greater contribution towards gender equality.

### Characteristics of the OECD-DAC Effectiveness Score

- Measures the extent to which predefined gender equality objectives have been achieved.
- Depends on the availability of information on targets and results achieved.
- Does not reflect the quality of the achievements.
- Does not adequately reflect any unplanned gender results.

# The Gender Effectiveness Score



Gender Effectiveness Score		
1 – 2	<b>transformative</b>	= the project contributed to more equal gender norms and roles
2 – 3	<b>positive</b>	= the project contributed to more equal access to resources and/or decision-making power
3 – 4	<b>sensitive</b>	= the project included men and women in some activities and/or addressed some specific needs of women, without achieving more structural results
4 – 5	<b>neutral</b>	= the project ignored gender issues, but without worsening gender norms, roles and relations
5 – 6	<b>negative</b>	= gender inequalities reinforced by the project; gender inequality perpetuated or increased
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>

\* = positive or better

Both gender-transformative and gender-positive projects contribute to reducing structural gender inequalities.

The team found the restricted applicability of the OECD-DAC scoring system to be a limiting factor in assessing the effectiveness of gender equality objectives. Therefore, an alternative effectiveness scoring system deemed more appropriate for this study was also used: the Gender Effectiveness Score (GES). The GES measures the degree to which a project effectively contributes to reducing structural inequalities and unequal power relations. The GES is expressed on a scale that ranges from 'gender-transformative change,' for projects that address structural gender inequalities by contributing to more balanced gender norms and roles, to 'gender-negative,' for projects that reinforce gender inequalities.

Sufficient information was available to assess the gender effectiveness of all 22 gender-specific projects reviewed. A total of 73% of these projects were found to have contributed to structural gender equality results by addressing unequal gender norms and roles and/or ensuring more equal access to resources and decision-making for women.

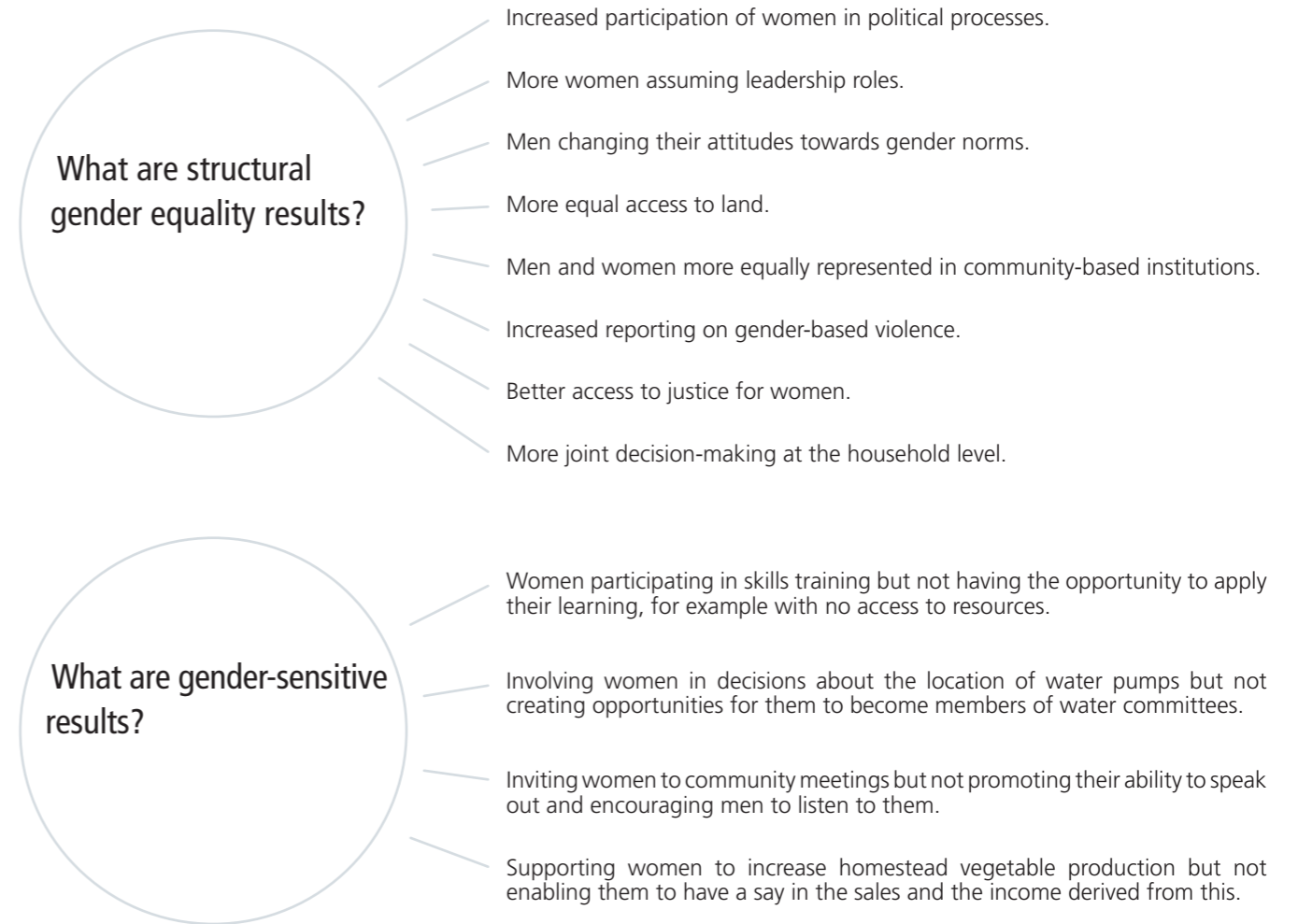
### Characteristics of the Gender Effectiveness Score

- Measures gender equality results achieved, whether planned or not.
- Considers the quality of the results.
- Is measured at five levels: context, impact, outcome, outputs and activities.
- Is based on the World Health Organization's Gender Effectiveness Score.
- Was applicable to more projects in this study than the OECD-DAC scoring system.

Of the 102 projects with gender as a transversal theme, 55 had sufficient information to establish a valid GES. A total of 31% of these projects contributed to structural gender change; 29% addressed specific needs of women, but without achieving structural results.

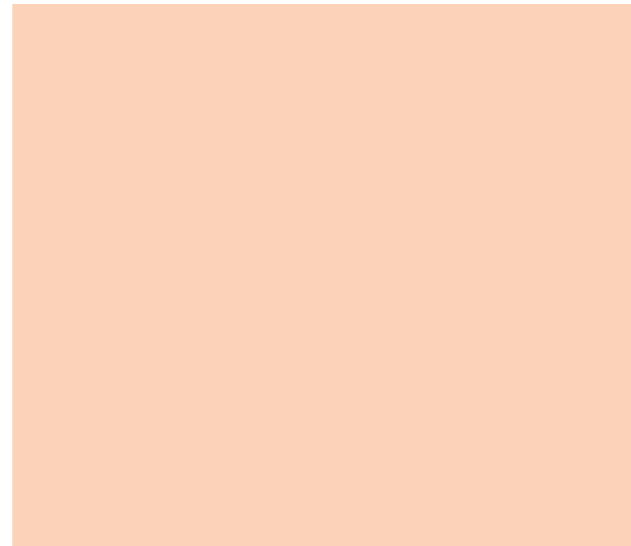
Gender-neutral scores were mainly achieved by projects with gender as a transversal theme; the gender-negative scores were achieved exclusively by such projects. The chapter on gender mainstreaming provides more information on projects that uphold or reinforce gender inequalities.

The use of GES resulted in a significantly greater difference between the average scores for the two categories of projects than for the OECD-DAC scores: 2.38 as the average GES for the gender-specific projects and 3.72 as the average score for the projects with gender as a transversal theme. This reaffirms the fact that the GES more clearly emphasises any differences in the quality of the gender results achieved.



# Gender-specific projects perform best

Structural gender equality changes have been better achieved by gender-specific projects, of which 73% achieved structural changes as compared to 31% of the projects in which gender was a transversal theme.



The application of the Gender Effectiveness Score clearly shows that gender-specific projects were more effective. The main explanation for this is that most gender-specific projects were initiated to deliberately address gender inequality. As a consequence, many gender-specific projects addressed strategic gender issues related to the causes of inequality between men and women, such as traditional norms and roles as well as differences in the access by men and women to resources and to decision-making power.

Another difference between gender-specific projects and projects with gender as a transversal theme was the availability of gender-related information in the project documentation. For all 22 gender-specific projects reviewed enough information on gender activities and gender results was available to assess the GES of the projects with gender as a transversal theme, however, only about half had enough information. This can be explained by the fact that the interventions and/or reporting of such projects tend to focus on their own technical thematic areas e.g. a project on water supply and sanitation that provided only technical information, with no reporting on any gender dimensions.



## PADEM Support to local democracy, Bolivia

PADEM works in more than 150 municipalities and has a special focus on youth and women, empowering local civil society, improving health and education services and addressing violence against women.

Concerned by the high incidence of violence against women in the locality, the municipality of Belén de Urmiri launched an initiative aimed at improving the provision of legal services and encouraging women to report situations of violence. Community mobilisation was conducted through the creation of a network to fight violence, a public outreach day on human rights and gender inequalities and the establishment of discussion groups to work on changing policies and regulations at the local level. These discussions made it apparent that there was a need also to work with men, who make up most of the representatives and decision-makers in communities and in the municipality. PADEM developed the National Meeting for Masculinities, aimed exclusively at men working in the municipal and social authorities, as local journalists and in the education and health sectors. The purpose was to ensure a better understanding of gender inequalities from men's experiences and to reflect on ideas and understandings of their masculinity.

This SDC-financed project was particularly successful in engaging men to reduce violence against women. With the involvement of local authorities and health centres, the project brought communities together to discuss the issue of violence. This resulted in a concrete municipal regulation to improve health and legal services for women. The project also contributed to structural changes at the family level, with husbands supporting their wives during pregnancy and sharing childcare and other household tasks, making pregnancy and childbirth easier and gender relations more equal.

*This afternoon in the municipality of Icla, Bolivia, pregnant women marched along with their husbands to ratify their pact against 'machismo' and maternal and child mortality. The day began with an exhibition of food prepared by the husbands. This march showed the co-responsible commitment to improve women's health, with the participation of mothers and fathers, active citizens, the media and the local authorities.*

summarised and translated from newsfeeds on PADEM's digital portal <http://doctoraedilicia.com>



# Gender mainstreaming can work

Projects addressing gender as a transversal theme show a broad range of gender equality results, from structural gender changes to the reinforcement of gender inequalities. This demonstrates that such projects have the potential to contribute to structural gender change if well designed, but they risk perpetuating inequalities if they do not give proper attention to the gender context.



Projects with gender as a transversal theme are projects in which gender is 'mainstreamed.' This means that gender perspectives have been integrated within projects that were initiated to address one of the SDC's technical thematic areas. These projects form the bulk of the SDC's spending on projects, outnumbering gender-specific projects as 12:1. The application of the Gender Effectiveness Score showed that projects with gender as a transversal theme can certainly contribute to structural gender equality results if they explicitly address gender issues in their context analysis and project design, such as in the Nepal Decentralised Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Project. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement, first to prevent projects from reinforcing existing gender inequalities, and second to ensure that such projects go beyond merely ensuring the participation of women in activities.

The SDC projects assessed for this study were taken from the following ten thematic areas or sectors:

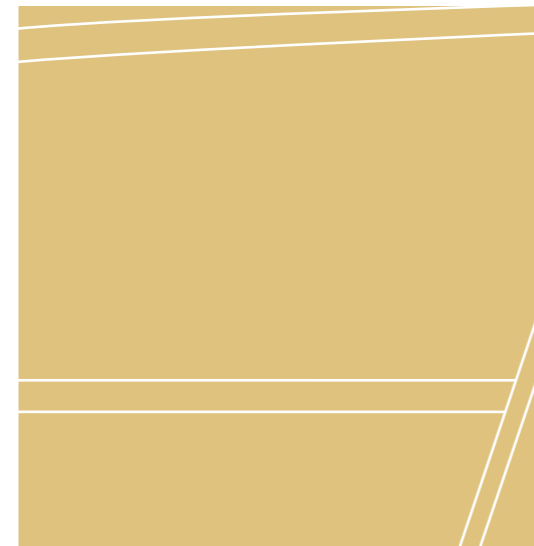
Rule of Law, Democracy & Human Rights, Health, Conflict Prevention & Transformation, Water, Economy & Employment, Environment, Migration, Education, Humanitarian Assistance, Agricultural & Food Security.

## Note: Projects reinforcing gender inequalities

Two key reasons for the 'gender-negative' score were identified:

1. The project did not consider gender issues or target women even though it was likely to have different impacts on men and women, thus risking perpetuating or increasing gender inequalities. Example: A project which facilitates land ownership titles for men only, increasing the gap in land ownership between men and women.
2. The project targeted men and women in only a traditional and gender stereotypical way, reinforcing existing gender roles and norms. Example: A project which targets women solely as mothers and housewives and men as breadwinners.

The main underlying factors here are the absence of a proper gender analysis and the lack of gender awareness among staff and partners involved in the project. It is thus possible to prevent projects being 'gender-negative' by ensuring gender is part of the context analysis prior to project design and by ensuring that the project staff – also of technical projects – have a sufficient understanding of gender equality issues and their importance, including the capacity to integrate gender concerns into their daily work.



## Decentralised Rural Infrastructure and Livelihood Project (DRILP), Nepal

Technical assistance was provided to the government of Nepal to improve rural infrastructure. This project addressed the social exclusion of disadvantaged groups, including women and Dalits, by reserving all unskilled employment opportunities for them.



This project seized all opportunities to integrate gender into its interventions. As a result, 40% of unskilled work was reserved for women, as was 40% of the membership in construction groups. The project provided skills and leadership training for women and other disadvantaged groups to enable them to participate with more confidence in community decision-making processes. It ensured equal pay for women and men for work of equal value. Women often used the money earned to start a small business, ensuring longer-term income generation. A gender office desk was established and implemented in the Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads, demonstrating the Nepalese government's commitment to gender. In this way, the intervention improved access to services and facilities for rural women and other disadvantaged groups.

The project integrated gender in a very strategic and rigorous manner in its core activities, based on a gender and social equity action plan to achieve structural impacts on women's lives.

# The importance of good project design

Statistical correlations confirmed that gender analysis and gender activities are key factors in achieving good gender equality results in SDC projects.



A positive statistical correlation between integrating gender into a project's context analysis and the achievement of gender results became evident, in particular for those SDC projects with gender as a transversal theme. This means projects that are designed based on a good gender analysis are likely to have good gender equality results, whereas projects without a gender analysis are likely to have no or poor gender equality results.

## Importance of including concrete targeted gender activities

The study also found a high statistical correlation between the inclusion of specific gender-sensitive activities as part of an SDC project and the gender results achieved. The main findings were as follows:

- Projects that do not include any gender-sensitive activities tend not to contribute to a reduction in gender inequalities.
- Activities that aim to include women only as part of the project target group may contribute to practical or temporary results for women but not necessarily to more structural gender changes.
- Projects that intentionally design and implement activities that address gender inequalities contribute best to reducing structural gender inequalities, for example activities designed to change gender norms, such as the acceptance of women's leadership.
- Activities targeting men and boys for attitudinal change contribute to good gender effectiveness scores, e.g. by working with men/fathers to promote shared parenting and responsibilities for childcare and child wellbeing.

*In a best practices workshop where local child protection committees had to analyse children's rights within education in their municipality, participants were asked to consider gender in their analysis. Most of them were not aware of the different challenges girls and boys face throughout their education. Since then, specific measures have been taken to ensure that actions are planned with a gender equality orientation.*

answer on gender mainstreaming provided by an SDC partner in the online survey



A gender assessment of the rural drinking water sector in Tajikistan, commissioned by the SDC, aimed to gain a broad understanding of gender issues in this sector. The following quotes show how lessons can be learnt to improve the gender effectiveness of projects in this sector.

## Gender analysis

### WHY?

To understand local gender dynamics, norms, problems and opportunities in order to be able to plan projects that are relevant and beneficial to both women and men.

### WHAT?

A tool for examining the differences between the roles women and men play, the different levels of power they hold, including in decision-making, their different needs, constraints and opportunities and the impact of these differences in their lives.

### WHEN?

Before developing strategies and designing projects. The findings from a gender analysis should be fed into the design of the strategy or project.

*It is difficult for well-educated Tajik men to refrain from a patronising approach when talking to less educated rural women, let alone to broach intimate aspects with respect to women's water, sanitation and hygiene practices.*

This quote reveals the importance of engaging female project staff when working towards behavioural change of rural women regarding sanitation and hygiene practices.

*We would like to have the toilets less open, less smelly and closer to the house.*

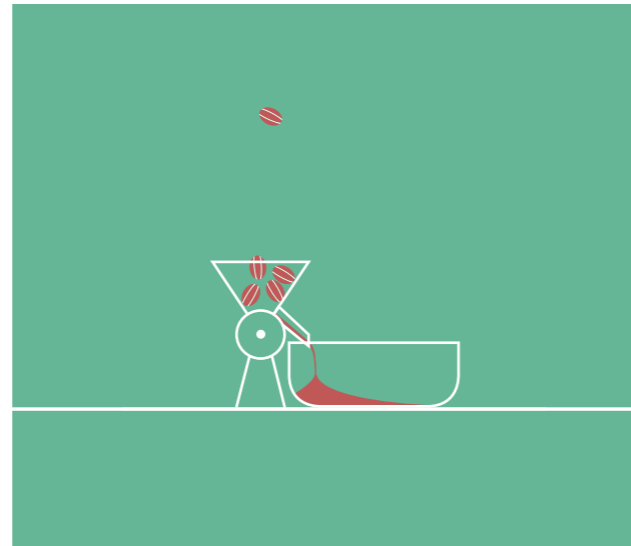
This opinion came from a group discussion with women, who are often more inconvenienced by poor sanitation than men and may have different requirements for toilet design.

*I am sorry, I could not come to the meeting as I have so much to do. I am running around to make sure my four children have something to eat today.*

This testimony demonstrates that the absence of women in meetings is not because of their lack of interest; rather, alternative methods should be found to reach such women, which could include the use of media (radio), local meetings or home visits.

# Overall development goals better achieved

92% of SDC country staff and 85% of SDC partners are convinced that addressing gender as a transversal theme in thematic projects contributes to achieving a project's overall goals.



This finding shows that gender mainstreaming is important for improving gender equality and also for improving achievement of the overall goals of a project. The staff of the SDC and the SDC's partners, who firmly believe that addressing gender leads to better overall project results, were all closely involved in project implementation or its monitoring.

### Note: Limited evidence in the documentation

Despite the perceptiveness of SDC and project staff, it was more difficult to distil this from a review of the project documentation. Evidence on how the inclusion of gender had contributed to better overall achievements was found for only 14% of the 124 projects reviewed. This suggests that more attention needs to be paid to actually measuring and reporting on this in order to better document this contribution.

How can addressing gender as a transversal theme contribute to better achieving the overall objectives of projects?

#### Food security/economic development projects:

- Farmer Field School groups with a large number of female members or headed by a female chair were more successful.
- A gender-sensitive value chain improved the overall performance of an income-generating project.

#### Health projects:

- Having women in the management team of the health insurance department made the whole project more successful.
- Employing male staff in sexual and reproductive health clinics attracted more men for HIV/AIDS checks.

#### Conflict prevention and humanitarian aid projects:

- Improving (also) the situation of women refugees in a humanitarian aid project was important for the overall success of the intervention.
- The final evaluation of the Trans-Border Dialogue for Peace project in the Great Lakes Region found that peacebuilding cannot progress without adequate gender sensitivity.



### Supporting the development of the shea nut and groundnut sectors (SODEFIKA), Chad

The project aims to increase the income of the rural population by encouraging collective sales of shea nuts and groundnuts through cooperatives at times of higher prices, instead of individual sales immediately after the harvest at lower prices. Women play an essential role in the production of shea nuts and groundnuts by sowing, weeding and harvesting. However, they were not used to joining the cooperatives, which men managed. The project promoted the active and equal participation of both men and women in the cooperatives by providing training and awareness-raising for men and women, including on the importance of women's participation in decision-making bodies. The project also provided technical support to increase the productivity of shea nuts and groundnuts.



The participation of women in the skills and awareness-raising training activities resulted in women taking on the role of secretary and treasurer in the cooperatives, positions that were previously exclusively reserved for men. Women farmers also obtained access to improved technologies and marketing. Their application of improved technologies further increased the overall production of shea nuts and groundnuts. Combined with better prices for their produce, this led to a considerable increase in local incomes in the project area for both male and female farmers.

*The participation of women in the activities of agricultural cooperatives is increasingly visible and prominent. The women, like the men, now bring in their groundnuts for collective sale, receiving equal payments as the men.*

outcome from SODEFIKA's progress report for the second year

# The SDC's thematic gender equality results achieved

The SDC's projects have contributed to structural improvements in the three main gender result areas of the 2017–2020 Dispatch: **living lives free from violence, women's economic empowerment, and women's political participation.**

## Women's political participation

**50%** of the SDC's interventions have contributed to women's participation in decision-making, such as intra-household decision-making and local leadership; one-tenth of interventions have contributed to more women's political participation at national level.

A project strengthening women's effective participation in local government councils: **'Grassroots Women's Leadership' programme, Bangladesh**

Rupantar, the SDC's partner based in Khulna, promotes grassroots women's leadership in local political decision-making processes. This is done by mobilising and training rural women in leadership and negotiation skills so they can participate in elected local government councils. To achieve more sustainable empowerment, the project conducts mixed-gender training with couples to increase the husbands' understanding and support for their wives. The project also

gives gender training to (male) representatives of local government bodies and to local government staff to ensure behavioural changes and to create a better environment for women's participation.

The participation of women in local government councils has increased and has opened up the debate on women's issues and rights. The position of many women within their families has also improved as a consequence of the project.

The gender-specific projects and projects with gender as a transversal theme that scored well in terms of structural gender changes often contributed to more than one of the three main gender result areas of the 2017–2020 Dispatch. The gender-specific projects contributed comparatively better to these results than the projects with gender as a transversal theme.

The project designed to support to UNHCR's community service programme and also the Refugee Women's Centre run by the UNHCR in Morocco explicitly addressed two of the SDC's gender result areas by providing psychosocial support to refugee women, as well as addressing their economic needs, in order to improve their living conditions and enable them to attain a level of self-sufficiency. The rationale for this was that economic empowerment would reduce the need for refugee women to resort to survival sex and decrease their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, illustrating interlinkages between these thematic areas.

## Women's economic empowerment

**30%** of the SDC's engagements have been successful in contributing to women's economic empowerment.

A project improving women's access to land: **Livelihood support for rural workers' organisations in the Sikasso region (Jèkasy programme), Mali**

This project provided support to smallholder farmers' organisations in the Sikasso region in Mali to improve their standard of living through sustainable development of their natural resources. Special attention was given to improving access by women and young people to agricultural land resources. The project aimed at enabling women to cultivate 25% of the developed plots for themselves. Gender equity in decision-making

platforms regarding land and access to natural resources was addressed, with 25% of women represented in regional consultations. The programme adopted women's access to land as a mandatory criterion.

The 25% rate was reached in most lowlands. The planting of vegetable gardens increased considerably, benefiting female farmers in particular. As a result of surplus production, the project contributed to increased income. Rural women are now well organised to form an advocacy group for women's land rights.

## Living lives free from violence

**40%** of the SDC's interventions have contributed to women living a life free from violence, by addressing sexual and gender-based violence, combating harmful practices and trafficking and focusing on safe migration.

A project on gender-based violence: **Awareness campaign by the ABAAD Resource Centre for Gender Equality, Lebanon**

This project concerned a nationwide awareness-raising campaign aimed at addressing the passive attitude within society towards violence against women. The campaign engaged and interacted with men and women directly, asking them to take action in their community. It used creative and innovative tools to raise awareness on gender equality and gender-based violence. It targeted men and boys as role models and partners in fighting violence against women, making them part of the solution and not only part of the problem.

In particular, the use of social media such as Facebook and YouTube enhanced the engagement of young people, both girls and boys.

The campaign received much attention on social media (Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) with much public interaction. This resulted in a measurable reduction in violence against women, increased public awareness about women's rights and a change in public perceptions of the causes and impacts of gender-based violence.



*In my union, because every member is aware of women's rights and our entitlements as union representatives, the chair is very supportive. Our demands are heard and we are influential in the upazila parishad [local government]. Women chair three project implementation committees and oversee the distribution of VGD cards [social benefits for vulnerable groups].*

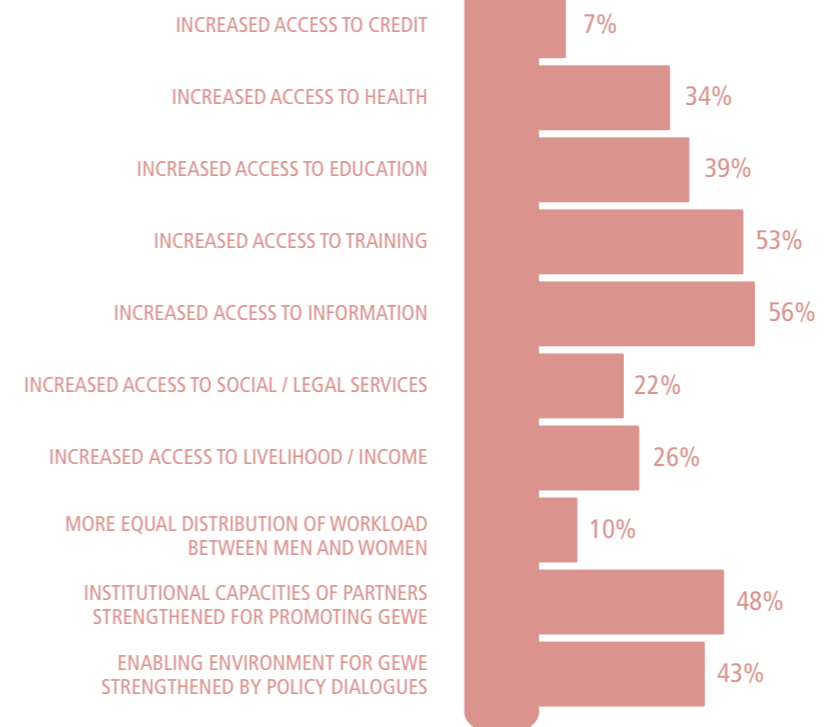
female local government representative Grassroots Women's Leadership programme, Bangladesh

*Before I was caged, now I fly free. I knew nothing, we knew nothing; we had no say in family matters, many of us married early and never finished school. We did what our husbands and mothers-in-law told us. My husband didn't want me to join a group, he tried to stop me. The couple training opened our eyes. He started to see me as a person in my own right. Now I can do what I want; we make decisions together.*

a female group member Grassroots Women's Leadership programme, Bangladesh

## Other results achieved through the SDC's projects

Apart from the SDC's three main gender results areas, many other gender-related results were also achieved by those projects with a relatively good GES score. In particular, these concern increased access for women – or more equal access for men and women – to services and resources. Results were also achieved in terms of better capacities of partners for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) and a better institutional environment on GEWE achieved through policy dialogues.



# The SDC is effective in gender policy dialogues

The SDC is widely recognised as being very effective in its international gender-related policy dialogues. Many resource persons were convinced that the SDC often played an instrumental role in gender policy achievements. Combining policy dialogues with the implementation of projects – especially at national level – enhances their effectiveness.

The team assessed the SDC’s gender-related policy dialogue engagements by reviewing engagements on eight selected themes. The review demonstrated that the SDC is highly effective in its policy dialogues, often contributing to the achievement of the maximum results. External resource persons confirmed the SDC’s effectiveness. Factors enabling successful policy dialogues clearly emerged from the review.

## Success factors

- The SDC takes a leadership role and is proactive on initiatives, including setting agendas, organising relevant side events and developing strong standpoints.
- The SDC combines advocacy with strategic research, providing arguments for policy dialogue.
- The SDC has strong negotiation capacity – especially because it is always well prepared and its negotiators speak with one voice – and credibility, which is further enhanced by Switzerland’s neutral (political) position.
- The SDC does not see the inclusion of gender equality statements in international agreements as an end goal; it also promotes their implementation through follow-up activities, for example by financing the relevant multilateral organisations and other institutions and/or providing gender expertise supporting the implementation of such agreements or resolutions.

- The SDC engages in policy dialogues at different levels: local, national, regional and international.

## Linking dialogues and projects

The effectiveness of the SDC’s work on gender equality is enhanced when gender policy dialogues is linked with implementation of projects, especially at national and local levels:

- 73% of the SDC staff surveyed stated that their country office was involved in policy dialogue with national and local governments.
- Two-thirds of the gender-specific projects assessed also contributed to an enabling environment for gender through policy dialogues and advocacy.
- The results of policy dialogues are used in projects, while the findings from projects are used as arguments in policy dialogues.

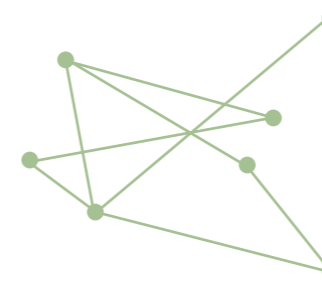
An example is the Safeguard Young People (SYP) programme on Gender-Based Violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, implemented by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and co-funded by the SDC. The programme covers eight countries in southern Africa and combines policy dialogues at regional and national level with interventions at local levels, which mutually reinforce each other.

## Examples of the effectiveness of gender in the SDC’s policy dialogue engagements



### Preventing and combating sexual and gender-based violence

The SDC makes great efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian aid through its policy dialogue work. For example, the SDC played a key role in promoting the ambitious resolution on ‘Sexual and Gender-Based Violence’ adopted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 2015.



### OECD-DAC Gendernet

The SDC is an active member and co-chair of OECD-DAC’s network on gender equality (Gendernet), which brings together the gender focal persons of donor agencies. The SDC’s role in this network is recognised as influential and effective, actively contributing to its strategic directions and consensus, for example in developing the new criteria for the Gender Equality Policy Marker.



### Unpaid care work included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The SDC’s input into the policy dialogue process on including gender in the 2030 Agenda was largely taken up when the UN General Assembly adopted this in 2015. In particular, the SDC’s preparatory work on the reduction of unpaid care work for women, by commissioning an innovative study on this topic, was instrumental in the inclusion of this specific gender theme in the 2030 Agenda.



### Gender in food security

The SDC actively contributes to the inclusion of gender equality issues in food security policy dialogues. For instance, the SDC contributed to the inclusion of a separate principle on ‘Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment’ within the Principles of Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Food Systems, adopted in 2014 by multilateral organisations such as the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN. The SDC has also been successful in adapting international agricultural research programmes to pay more attention to gender.



### Active support to enhance gender in the multilateral system

The SDC is the biggest donor to UN Women. As an active member of the agency’s Executive Board, the SDC has also contributed to UN Women’s new strategic directions, including better cooperation between UN Women and the World Bank on gender issues.

*The contribution of the SDC was pivotal in ensuring the integration of gender issues within regional and national frameworks.*

# The improved institutional environment for gender equality bears fruit

Effectiveness with regard to gender equality improved in all SDC projects that targeted gender over the 10-year review period. This suggests that the improved institutional environment within the SDC in relation to promoting gender equality has had a positive impact.

In 2003, a new SDC Gender Equality Policy was launched, recognising gender equality as key to reducing poverty, and is now mandatory guidance for the entire institution. In the same year, a gender toolkit for the SDC and its partners was published. This is still found to be useful, especially in supporting the integration of gender as a transversal theme in thematic projects.

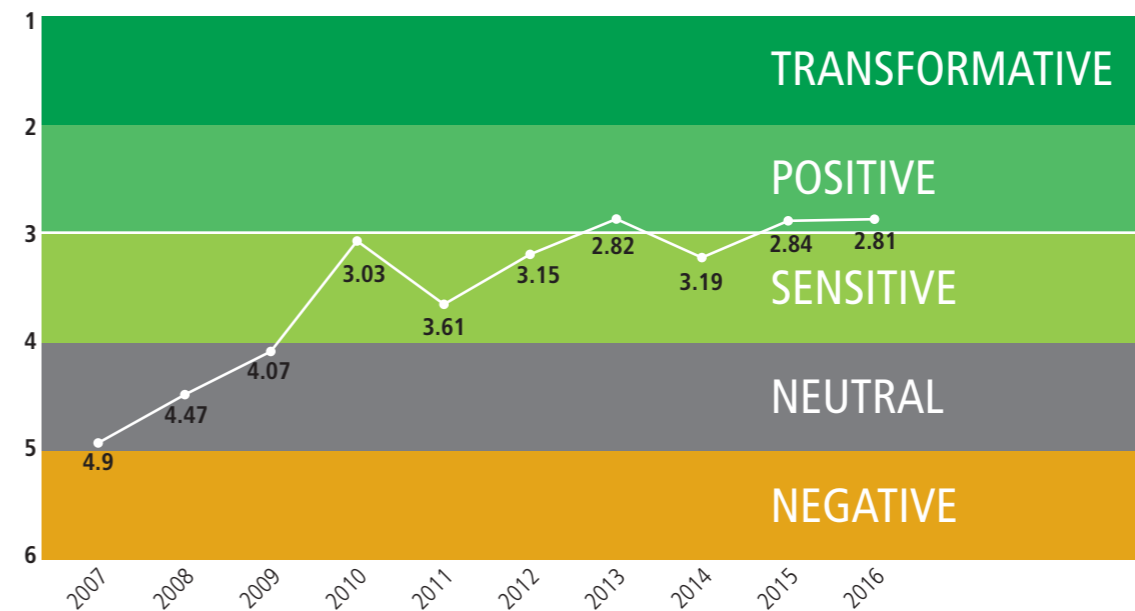
In subsequent years, further progress was made with respect to the enabling environment within the SDC for implementation of the gender policy. The combination of commitment, gender tools, gender expertise, the SDC's Gender Equality Network and gender capacity building has clearly translated into increased effectiveness of the SDC's projects in the field of gender equality. This is demonstrated by a steady increase during the review period of the average GES for both gender-specific projects and projects with gender as transversal theme.

*The SDC's Gender Network is useful because it constantly creates spaces for reflection and provides tools to integrate the gender approach in all projects. It constitutes an important space for the exchange of experiences. It allows us to capitalise on achievements and is guided by results.*

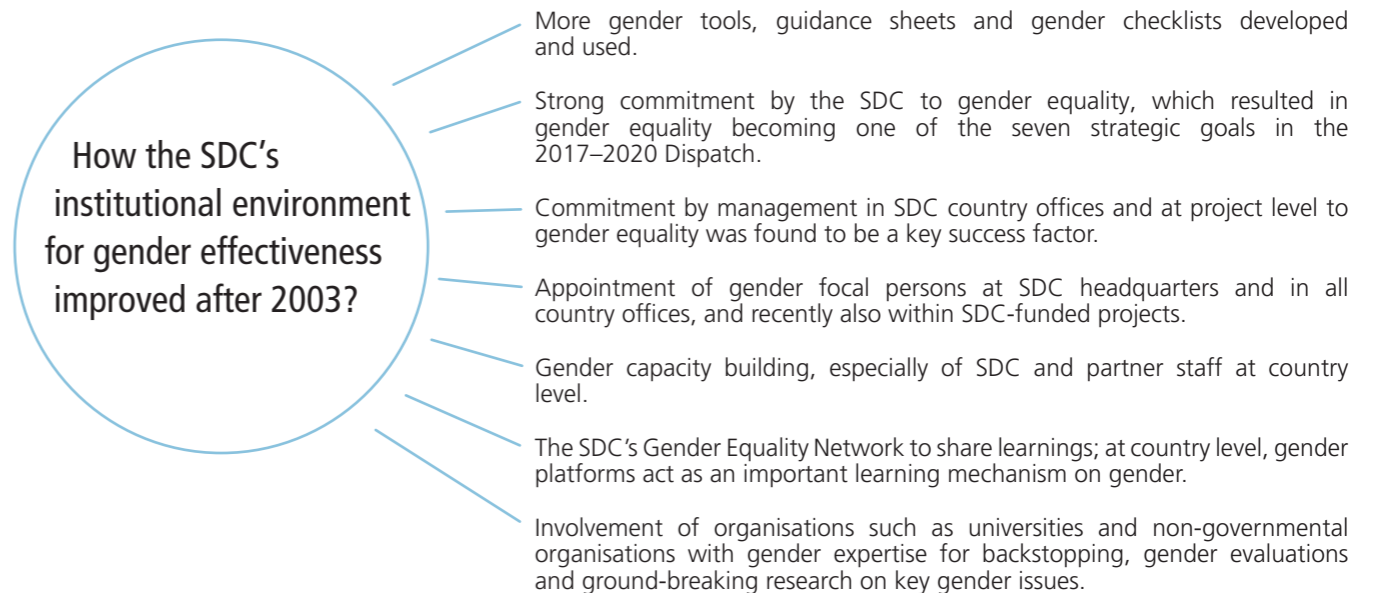
SDC partner on the SDC's Gender Network at country level

### Note

- There is still a gap between the SDC's gender commitments and the effective integration of gender in all relevant SDC projects, though this gap has been reduced over time.
- The gender expertise available in terms of human resource allocation is not sufficiently in line with the SDC's high gender ambitions.
- There is still room for improvement in relation to awareness and capacities on gender among SDC staff, including national staff, who may be influenced by a more traditional sociocultural context.



AVERAGE GES



## Suggestions for the way forward

- **To achieve its goal of gender equality, the SDC should put in place more projects that explicitly aim for structural gender changes.**

This can be achieved in two ways: first by implementing a higher proportion of gender-specific projects and second by ensuring that projects that have gender as a transversal theme contribute better to structural gender changes. This means going beyond the mere participation or inclusion of women (or men) in project activities.

- **The SDC should invest in capacity building of its own staff and its partners' staff for better gender analyses and project design.**

A proper project design should include a gender analysis, gender-sensitive activities and gender indicators to measure the gender-related effects of a project.

- **The current SDC thematic orientation should be maintained: living lives free from violence, women's economic empowerment and women's political participation.**

A broad interpretation of these themes remains important. The SDC should also allow for flexibility, leaving room to address other gender issues that emerge as barriers to gender equality in specific contexts.

- **The SDC should continue championing gender through policy dialogues,** which have been shown to be an effective complementary strategy for the integration of gender in projects. The SDC should set objectives for strategic focus areas of gender policy dialogues that have potential for high spin-off effects while leaving room for emerging opportunities.

- **The commitment of the SDC's management and a favourable institutional environment** are key success factors in the strong integration of gender in SDC projects and the achievement of gender results. It is important, therefore, that the SDC proactively sustains this through capacity building, human resource allocation and by earmarking financial resources for gender.

## The SDC's response to the report's findings and suggestions

The SDC welcomes the comprehensiveness of the report and the in-depth analysis of the different portfolios reviewed. The report provides a rich and nuanced picture of strengths and opportunities as well as gaps and weaknesses. SDC notes with interest the introduction and use of the Gender Effectiveness Score as a tool to address the methodological challenge of measuring gender equality as a transversal theme. The report's analysis, findings and resulting suggestions are useful. They will guide and reinforce existing efforts to advance towards full implementation of the SDC's gender commitments and the realisation of gender equality in the context of the 2030 Agenda, and contribute to institutional learning.

In particular,

- The SDC notes with satisfaction the report's finding that **SDC programmes contribute effectively to gender equality**, with gender-specific projects and gender-mainstreamed projects having a gender-transformative or gender-positive effect. The SDC is also aware that some projects assessed were considered gender-neutral without specific gender outcomes, and some projects even had gender-negative outcomes, reinforcing gender inequalities. The SDC will look further into these findings to ensure it learns from negative examples.

- The SDC is also pleased to note the **clear positive trend of the achieved effectiveness** identified by the report. This indicates that the adoption of the gender policy in 2003 and the measures and efforts subsequently undertaken have been bearing fruit.

- The SDC appreciates the report's attention to policy and thematic engagements in support of gender equality. The report found that the **gender results are more effective if programmatic work is combined with and complemented by a strategic policy dialogue**. This reconfirms SDC's comprehensive multi-stakeholder and multi-level approach.

- **The SDC acknowledges the challenges and weaknesses** clearly identified by the study. These are widespread under-reporting on gender, which weakens overall accountability, and a lack of clear gender objectives and indicators in SDC projects and programmes.

- **The suggestions based on these findings are well targeted** and useful for our future strategic and institutional directions. In particular, we will aim for more gender-transformative projects in our portfolio and invest in more and better gender analysis, both in projects and in country strategies. The SDC will also continue to pursue the thematic orientation and strategic policy dialogues contributing to the implementation and achievement of the 2030 Agenda.



# Methodology

The data for this study on the effectiveness of the SDC's projects and policy dialogues on gender equality was collected through a mix of complementary methods:

## 1. Assessment of projects

The study assessed 124 projects under 79 different SDC programmes. These programmes were selected through a scientific random sampling method and covered the four SDC departments and all of the SDC's thematic areas. They were balanced in terms of both geography and time over the period 2007–2016. Of the 124 projects, 22 were gender-specific projects and 102 were projects with gender as a transversal theme. These projects were assessed by reviewing key project documents and recording the findings in an assessment grid. The quantitative data was subsequently processed using SPSS software.

## 2. Assessment of gender policy dialogues

Eight thematic areas were selected, including Gender in the 2030 Agenda (the UN Sustainable Development Goals); Gender-based violence; Women, peace and security/UNSCR 1325; Care economy, unpaid care work and gender budgeting; Gender in rural economy, food security, climate change; Measuring and accountability of gender as a transversal theme; Gender in the multilateral system; and Gender in humanitarian aid. Qualitative data was collected through a review of relevant documentation and through interviews with SDC staff and with relevant external resource persons and questionnaires to selected multilateral partners.

## 3. Online surveys

Two online surveys were conducted. One survey targeted the SDC's heads of cooperation and gender focal persons at all of the SDC's country offices, with 40 respondents. The second survey targeted staff of the SDC's partner organisations, especially (Swiss) non-governmental organisations, with 88 respondents. The surveys aimed to obtain insights into how gender is integrated into the SDC's projects at country level and the perceptions of respondents on the effectiveness.

## 4. In-depth country studies

Country studies were conducted on Bangladesh, Bolivia, Chad and Tajikistan. These studies sought to complement the above data with in-depth insights into how the SDC's gender approach is applied at country level. These studies consisted of a review of relevant documents, such as country strategies, and interviews – by telephone or Skype – with heads of cooperation, gender focal persons and about three representatives of the SDC's implementing partners in the countries concerned.

## 5. Comparison with other donors

The proportion of the SDC's aid support to projects aimed at contributing to more gender equality was compared with the same information for other donors, using OECD-DAC data. In addition, the SDC's gender approach was compared with the gender approaches of other donors, by reviewing the gender evaluation reports of several other donors.

## Note

- A limiting factor to this study was the fact that the documentation of the 124 projects selected for review did not always include adequate information on gender activities and gender results. As a consequence, scores for gender effectiveness could be awarded to only 77 of the 124 projects assessed.
- The complementary data collection methods, in particular the in-depth country studies, demonstrated that some underreporting on gender results does occur, in particular for projects that have gender as a transversal theme.

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Cover: SDC database

Page 4: Swisscontact

Page 14/15: SDC-Bolivia, Desarrollo Municipal Project

Page 17: SDC database

Page 19: AKF, Integrated Health and Habitat Improvement Project

Page 20: SODEFIKA

Page 24: Rupantar, Subol Ghosh

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This results assessment was conducted by independent external consultants. Responsibility for the content and presentation of findings and recommendations rests with the evaluation team. The views and opinions expressed in the report do not necessarily correspond with those of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This publication is also available in German, French and Italian. It can be downloaded from the website: [www.sdc.admin.ch/publication](http://www.sdc.admin.ch/publication)

The technical report is available on request.

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