



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK

SEPTEMBER 2023

EVALUATION OF SUPPORT TO GENDER EQUALITY IN DANISH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION 2014-2021





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The translation of the key messages on the t-Shirt is;
“I will prevent early pregnancies , so that I continue
with my studies”

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Responsibility for content and presentations of findings and recommendations
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The following annexes and case studies to the Evaluation Report can be downloaded as separate PDF files from evaluation.um.dk.

Annexes:

Annex a: Terms of Reference
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Annex d: Survey Results
Annex e: Case Study Sampling

Case studies:

Kenya, Burkina Faso, Mali
Green Climate Fund
MSI Reproductive Choices
United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations Population Fund

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Disclaimer

The opinions and interpretations presented in this report are those of the evaluation team and do not necessarily represent the views of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT!	Act Change Transform
AFAWA	Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMG	Aid Management Guidelines
BF	Burkina Faso
CCEB/BF	Cadre de Concertation des ONG et Associations actives en Education de Base au Burkina Faso
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CP	Country Programme
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDD	Doing Development Differently
DED	Development Engagement Document
DFPA	Danish Family Planning Association
DKK	Danish Kroner
EAC	East African Community
ELK	Evaluation, Learning and Quality Department
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FACEJ	Fonds d'Appui à la Création d'Entreprises par les Jeunes
FCG	Fonds Commun Genre
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers
FLOW	Funding Leadership Opportunities for Women
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund

GDK	Green Diplomacy and Climate Department
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GNI	Gross National Income
GRES	Gender Results Effectiveness Scale
GVRC	Gender Violence and Recovery Centre
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
HQ	Headquarter
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IP	Indigenous People
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Plus
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
MNS	Migration, Stabilization and Fragility
MSI	MSI Reproductive Choices (prior known as Marie Stopes International)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMI	Project Management Interface
PROMACO	Programme de Marketing Social et de Communication pour la Santé
QA	Quality Assurance
SADD	Sex- and Age-Disaggregated Data
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEFA	Sustainable Energy Fund For Africa
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SPA	Strategic Partnership Agreement

SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SSC	Strategic Sector Cooperation
SSP	Strategic Sector Programme
TMEA	Trade Mark East Africa
TOR	Terms of Reference
TWENDE	Towards Ending Drought Emergencies
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Background

The evaluation of Danish support to gender equality in Danish development cooperation (2014-2021) was commissioned by the Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA) and was conducted from April 2022 to August 2023. It was framed by 12 evaluation questions under three areas of inquiry (politics of prioritisation, evidence of results, and gaps and opportunities) and three thematic focus areas: governance, climate, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The overall purpose of the evaluation was to learn from implementation of previous programmes and projects in terms of addressing gender issues, with a view to strengthen Denmark's integration of gender equality, girls' and women's rights in Danish development cooperation.

The evaluation had a strong forward-looking perspective, setting out to provide strategic and operational guidance strengthening Denmark's engagement in realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) via the implementation of *The World We Share* (2021). To carry this out, it reviewed the effectiveness, relevance, coherence, impact and sustainability of selected engagements in order to gather evidence on what works for promoting gender equality, as well as reviewing the institutional dimensions of support to gender mainstreaming and gender targeted programming. Bringing these streams of analysis together, it drew out learnings about how institutional features do or do not support results in gender equality sought by programmes.

The evaluation is expected to be used by key stakeholders within MFA in Denmark as well as at the country level for decision making in designing country programmes in embassies. It is also expected to be relevant for a wider group of bilateral and other agencies in development cooperation, contributing learning on how to further progress global commitments to gender equality.

Evaluation processes included a literature review and consultations with the MFA, Danish representatives and implementing partners (IPs) from international and multilateral sample organisations – the Green

Climate Fund (GCF), MSI Reproductive Choices (MSI)¹, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) – in three sample countries (Burkina Faso, Kenya and Mali). Fieldwork was completed as planned in Kenya. In Burkina Faso and Mali the planned fieldwork was not possible, and reliance was put on intensive consultation with partners, using remote communication.

Danish support to gender equality in Danish development cooperation

Denmark has supported gender-relevant initiatives in developing countries since Danida was established in 1962. Efforts intensified in the 1980s and have evolved over time from focusing on women-in-development to a broad commitment to gender equality and diversity across rights-based poverty alleviation.

This evaluation extracts lessons learned on gender equality as a guiding star during a decade when security, migration and planetary crises compete for the MFA's attention. Gender equality features as a strong normative priority for Denmark, and consideration of gender aspects is mandatory in MFA grant documents and is integrated into MFA strategic partnership with civil society partners.

B. Evaluation findings

Findings on politics of prioritisation

Budgetary trends for targeted gender equality support have been established by combining allocations for selected Danish core partners, and by analysing the information on the Danish gender spend as documented based on the OECD-DAC gender mechanism. Regarding the allocations for selected core partners, evidence shows “significant levels of long-term and predictable funding” – not least for SRHR. The evaluation finds considerable levels of support for United Nations (UN) partners and Danish civil society organisations (CSOs). Danish funding for the UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), MSI¹, the Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA), Women Deliver and AmplifyChange amounted to DKK 1.4 billion in 2021 (when official development assistance (ODA) totalled DKK 18 billion). This represents a significant increase from a total level for these eight partners of under DKK 800 million in 2015 and 2016. These high levels of support are found to be justified by gender inequality and by coordinated and mounting pressure on gender norms and SRHR across the world.

¹ Prior to 2020 known as 'Marie Stopes International'.

However, the full picture of combined allocations for targeted and mainstreamed support is not captured accurately, caused by the way how budgetary trends for the overall gender spending are established. The method applied is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Gender Marker, and mandatory rating is done at the opening of new bilateral and earmarked multilateral grants. Despite reliability concerns, reports on gender spending below the average of OECD-DAC member states clash with an image of “Danish international leadership on rights”, to quote the headline of the section of current development policy outlining ambitions on gender equality. Denmark is at number 20, with gender spending at 43% of ODA, while Canada, Iceland and Sweden are at the top, with registrations of between 84% and 92%.

Interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with MFA staff dedicated to the experience in using the gender marker indicate that MFA attention to gender marking is minimal and its output poorly understood. The gender marker is applied at bilateral grant level, but core multilateral support is unlikely to be captured, as multilaterals leave 80% of ODA unregistered, according to the OECD. In summary, gender marker data is found to be highly variable and open to interpretation. At the same time, interest around comparisons is so strong that it would merit more attention around the marking process itself and how data are used.

Analysis of this evaluation shows a significant increase in Danish earmarking of multilateral support for the UNFPA and UNICEF. In the case of the UNFPA, the biggest recipient of SRHR support is found by this evaluation to have shifted significantly since 2014, when only 11% was earmarked. In 2021, 60% of the Danish funds was registered as earmarked.

Factors behind the identified funding trends and priorities have been explored, combining analysis of financial data, a staff survey and key informant interviews with MFA staff, leading to the identification of five principal factors:

- a. Gender budget allocations *change with the tide* as funding levels can be seen to increase and decrease with the levels of total Danish ODA. This is evidenced by the reductions in overall development funding from 2014 to 2016.
- b. More specifically, funding levels are driven by *high strategic priority* to gender equality, found to be consistent throughout the evaluation period, with policy ambitions on global leadership with a degree of obligation to deliver on funding and results.
- c. In a context of limited formal requirements, the evaluation also points to a risk of thematic fatigue, with gender-results

driven by *committed individuals* relying on previous experience and senior management support.

- d. A degree of *continuity* of prioritisation of gender equality is suggested by high levels of long-term and predictable contributions to key partners. This is mirrored at country level, where the evaluation finds local partner appreciation of predictable Danish funding.
- e. Strength of *political and senior management commitment* to gender equality in practice stands as a striking outcome from evaluation interviews and staff survey enquiries into how a leading role may be achieved in a politically driven organisation such as the MFA.

Findings on relevance of gender equality support

The evaluation finds evidence of highly relevant gender support in the case country contexts, where targeted support and gender mainstreaming in bilateral programmes respond to country contexts of well-documented gender inequity and inequality. Relevance was also evident as shared objectives and mutual trust in the case studies of the UNFPA, UNICEF and MSI, where Danish support was found to be justified by increasing global pushback on SRHR. However, mainstreaming results were found to be negligible in the case of the GCF, noted by the evaluation as a missed opportunity for mitigation efforts and for mainstreaming gender in climate action measures. More broadly, green transition and climate are found by the evaluation to be high-profile engagement areas with potential for future gender programming.

Findings on outcome and effectiveness of global dialogue instruments

Evaluation findings demonstrate Danish support to policy dialogue events. Results are most evident in targeted support at micro level, and challenges remain with regard to the critical priority of mainstreaming of gender equality – not least in climate mitigation, where not only political attention but also programming potential is seen as considerable and on an upward trend.

In the case of the UNFPA, policy alignment is found to have been particularly close, with evidence of alliances on sensitive elements of SRHR such as abortion, comprehensive sexuality education and sexual minority rights, and collaboration on major advocacy events, culminating with the co-hosting in 2019 of the UNFPA's flagship event ICPD+25 by the governments of Kenya and Denmark. The evaluation finds this event to illustrate the potential of applying the coherence principles of Doing Development Differently and joining up decades of developmental

engagement with Kenya and the UNFPA in a way that was found, during data collection in October 2022, to continue to provide a credible advocacy platform for Danish dialogue on SRHR commitments with Kenya and countries of the region on a development policy priority.

Although general assets and impediments of earmarked funding for the multilateral system and INGOs are recognised, this evaluation finds elements of earmarked funding of Danish priorities, such as contributing to the overall effectiveness of an organisation (e.g. humanitarian focus at the UNFPA) or ensuring support to priorities, e.g. embedding Leave No One Behind (LNOB) into MSI.

Findings on effectiveness in the thematic areas of SRHR, governance and climate

The best-documented results have been found in governance and SRHR, where more than half of the project results assessed fall into the category of 'gender responsive'. The experience of gender integration is more comprehensive than in the case of green transition and climate. At the same time, the potential for large-scale impact and transformational change was found to be at least as strong in green transition and climate. Gender mainstreaming has contributed positively to the achievement of wider programmatic objectives, as evidenced by project cases in Kenya and Mali. Gender analysis by the project Fonds d'Appui à la Création d'Entreprises par les Jeunes (FACEJ) led to a broader definition of what constitutes the private sector, and targets of 40% of credit to female entrepreneurs have produced transformative results in a challenging security context in Mali. Engaging with civil society, boasting a significant track record and continuity of engagement were found by the evaluation to be particularly important in fragile and conflict-affected countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso.

Green transition and climate change is the area where the evaluation has found the greatest potential for improvement. Especially in the case of the GCF, this area has high relevance but a largely untapped potential when it comes to gender mainstreaming in policy dialogue and programming. Another programming area with untapped potential to explore is Strategic Sector Cooperation: the evaluation finds case examples of a gender-unaware point of departure in programme design yet significant results on the ground. The economic empowerment produced by access to credit exemplifies how participants can transform as agents of change in their own lives – a new role with its own new challenges, as demonstrated by the case of female cross-border traders supported by Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA) who sometimes struggle to hold onto their self-made profits and rights to decision making at household level.

Challenges in governance and SRHR programming are often noted when it comes to scaling up results achieved at micro level. Cases in point are campaigns against female genital mutilation (FGM) and service provision for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), where resources are often limited to challenge and change the deep-rooted roles and norms, and where the risk of urban bias and limited outreach to vulnerable populations in remote areas are difficult to mitigate for IPs.

Findings on impact and sustainability of outcomes

Local ownership was identified as the key driver for impact and sustainability, especially when civil society has a role in decision making. Good practice examples for investing in civil society include the Gender Violence and Recovery Centre (GVRC) and Act Change Transform (ACT!) advocating for gender balance in countering violent extremism in Kenya; the Common Gender Fund in Burkina Faso, strengthening gender mainstreaming through better coordination by bilateral and multilateral partners; and the PATRIP Foundation in Mali, working with local sub-partners, trusted even in areas under the influence of radical groups.

The evaluation finds that projects that apply the gender transformative approach of engaging men in gender initiatives appear better positioned to lead to gender transformative results, as shown in cases of FGM and undesired pregnancies at schools in Burkina Faso and of women joining community peace structures in Kenya or gaining support from husbands to engage in potentially transformative female entrepreneurship in Mali.

Findings on gaps and opportunities

MFA management of gender equality knowledge has seen significant changes over the evaluation period (2014-2021), in line with the way in which aid delivery has evolved. In 2014 the MFA had a department for Technical Advisory Services, comprising teams of experts who were instrumental in managing roughly equal shares of multilateral grants, often provided as core support, and a dozen bilateral priority countries, with a handful of Danish sector programmes. Today some bilateral programming remains in place but there is a much stronger emphasis on multilateral engagement and policy dialogue. This changing context has implications for the expertise required at the MFA (e.g. the Team Equal Opportunities) and the type of leadership Denmark can realistically aspire to take.

In self-assessments of knowledge levels, the consensus view by survey respondents is that gender equality expertise is relevant for most MFA staff and that knowledge levels are sufficient to support objectives in their current job function.

Gender Focal Point expertise was found to have evolved from being a network across the MFA and embassies in 2014 to a situation, in 2021, of improvement at embassies but marked by weak momentum. However, a best practice example with potential was found in the appointment of a Focal Point at the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate for gender and climate as well as indigenous peoples' rights, and a Focal Point for civil society, youth and human rights. In addition, at the embassy in Bamako the Focal Point role was shared by a posted staff member and a local staff member, which the evaluation found to be a model of successfully marrying local expertise with Danish understanding in an organic and synergetic way.

The staff survey, along with interviews and FGDs, showed considerable experience and strong commitment to gender programming.

C. Recommendations

While acknowledging Denmark's gender equality efforts and progress made throughout the evaluation period, the evaluation team proposes recommendations for improvement. Overarching recommendations are that Denmark's development cooperation focus first and foremost on undertaking current activities in a more strategic manner towards mainstreaming gender equality in policy dialogues, programming and reporting.

The evaluation team is sympathetic to the fact that managers and advisors have large portfolios and multiple demands in terms of the results they are asked to deliver. However, the evaluation team believes that the evidence points to multiple areas in which gender mainstreaming is necessary to ensure the delivery of gender equality results. Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation team has identified four more specific recommendations.

Each of the four recommendations aims to address different levels of engagement, with more detailed suggestions for possible measures. Recommendation 1 aims to recommend measures to better position Denmark with its gender equality expertise in the global arena and suggests taking on a leading role in mainstreaming gender in climate programming. Recommendation 2 speaks to the gender marker reporting on Denmark's development activities within the target of gender equality as a policy objective. Recommendation 3 suggests measures to ensure a consistent gender focus within the crucial humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP) approach. These measures can build on milestones already achieved, with emphasis on improvement and for the importance of working in partnership to successfully achieve sustainable results. Recommendation 4 is more inward-looking and addresses internal changes in the MFA. Together with Recommendation 1, Recommendation 4 aims

to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout ordinary systems, processes and responsibility structures, cross-cutting and bottom up.

Recommendation 1:

It is recommended to clarify statutes and to update and integrate gender equality as a cross-cutting area in all areas of guiding documents, frameworks, policy dialogue and programming, with special attention to integration of gender in green and climate-related support.

Rationale: The evaluation noted that the Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation (2014) was found useful but was marred by references to an outdated policy context and unclear status, and embassies were interested in updated guidance on current priorities, including green and climate-related priorities. The evaluation also found that there was a sense that gender equality is being put under pressure from green transition and climate action. The case of the GCF shows that mainstreaming gender into climate action is a missed opportunity and that it is crucial to work with and within priorities.

Decades of experience in gender equality and SRHR, combined with high levels of staff commitment and a strong reputation in green transition, provide Denmark with an opportunity to gain a leading role in gendering climate action. Backed by necessary financial and human resources, Denmark has the potential to team up with long-standing partners to recognise the nexus between climate and gender equality and spearhead a more gender transformative approach to climate action.

Examples of case studies in this evaluation also show that incorporating gender analysis in programmes does influence planning and programming in the best sustainable way and that a good analysis leads to a good indicator.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- The *Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation* (2014) should be declared obsolete; its definitions and human rights principles can be integrated in a newly developed Gender Transformative Approach Note. This Approach Note can guide MFA staff in implementing *The World We Share* (2021) and inform gender equality mainstreaming and climate action priorities of the development policy strategy to be initiated in 2024. It should be kept in mind that this Approach Note should include recommendations for evidence-based approaches to ensure

transformative results, especially within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

- The MFA (namely The Team Equal Opportunities together with the Focal Point for gender, climate and Indigenous Peoples' (IPs) rights at the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate should conduct a learning exercise (e.g. in the form of a baseline study) with relevant multilateral partnership focal points to learn from their experience. Multilateral role models in that regard, that recognise Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (as well as climate action) as cross-cutting areas throughout their strategic documents, are for instance UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the World Food Programme (WFP). Results of this exercise can then inform the development of the new Approach Note and the revision of policies and guiding documents, which may i.e. be used to inform Denmark's engagement with multilateral partners in trust fund boards and similar governing bodies.
- Danish Aid Management Guidelines (AMG) should be revised to require that new grants include a minimum of one gender indicator at outcome levels in the results framework.
- In regard to planning and programming, a consistent use of gender analysis should be promoted.

Recommendation 2:

It is recommended that the OECD Gender Marker be applied in a coherent manner and its data used to inform future decision making and programming to promote gender equality and to mitigate the challenges of inaccuracy and low awareness, caused by the way how budgetary trends are established within the OECD-DAC system.

Rationale: While reports on gender spending place Denmark below the average of OECD-DAC member states – Denmark is at number 20, while Canada, Iceland and Sweden are at the top – the evaluation finds that the full picture of combined allocations for targeted and mainstreamed support is not accurately captured. The method applied is the OECD Gender Marker, and mandatory rating is supposed to be done at the opening of new bilateral and earmarked multilateral grants, but interviews with MFA staff and with embassy representatives dedicated to the experience in using the gender marker indicate that MFA attention to gender marking is minimal and its output poorly understood.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- The template for presentation of new grants and organisation strategies to the Programme Committee of bilateral programmes and projects should be revised to include, on the cover page, OECD Gender Marker information on the degree of gender integration.
- The Team Equal Opportunities should organise an annual stocktaking of gender spending as measured by the OECD Gender Marker, complemented by quality assurance (QA) of three registrations of targeted and three of significant gender integration, and the results should be communicated to MFA departments, embassies, and representations.

Recommendation 3:

It is recommended that Denmark sustain current gender engagements a) with emphasis on (a) strengthening both local ownership and capacity by reinforcing support for local civil society with a commitment to gender equality with funding and technical support, and (b) supporting a continued focus on gender equality in the donor community by systematically putting gender equality on the table in the meetings with other donors.

Rationale: The analysis of the three country case studies (two, Burkina Faso and Mali, are fragile and conflict-affected states) provides evidence in all three thematic areas for local ownership being a key driver for impact and sustainability, especially when civil society has a role in decision making regarding decisions that affect the lives of local people and environments and hold governments and policymakers publicly accountable. The case studies show how Danish support to CSOs can contribute to a global policy dialogue on gender equality issues including SRHR and influence national laws and policies, and that working with local partners means addressing intersectionality and working where others cannot.

Examples in case studies also show that working with partners and supporting networks, rather than working solo and creating silos, not only reinforces local ownership but also brings together diverse perspectives, resources and expertise and offers forums for inter-state cooperation through arrangements and more formal and binding agreements that lead a transformative change.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- Support for local ownership should be reinforced by engaging and partnering with local project partners and civil society, with a commitment to gender equality through funding and technical support. This area of work can be informed and safeguarded by the consistent use of gender analysis (included in programming).
- The MFA should engage with (donor) networks and systematically put gender equality on the table in the meetings with other donors.
- It should be ensured that SRHR remains a strategic priority and that significant levels of long-term predictable funding are sustained for partners in the strategic priority area of SRHR.

Recommendation 4:

It is recommended that the job description for Gender Focal Points be upgraded to ensure gender mainstreaming by advocating, advising and supporting MFA staff and partners in developing evidence based and transformative programmes and monitoring and reporting on progress.

Rationale: The Gender Focal Point expertise has evolved from being a network across the MFA and embassies in 2014 to a situation of improvement at embassies in 2021 but marked by a weak momentum. However, best practice examples were found in the appointment of a Focal Point at the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate for gender and climate as well as IP rights and a Focal Point for civil society, youth and human rights; and at the embassy in Bamako, the Focal Point role was shared by a posted staff member and a local staff member. The latter was found to be a success model for merging local expertise with Danish understanding in an organic and synergetic way.

The evaluation also found that MFA management systems do not currently include dedicated attention to gender equality in standardised performance assessment. Unless gender programming is an explicit part of a person's job description (for the members of Team Equal Opportunities at the MFA or Gender Focal Points), gender performance is not a mandatory part of staff assessment.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- A clear mandate for the Gender Focal Point position should be defined and the job description and reporting lines should be clear and included in the performance assessment. Additionally,

the Gender Focal Point should report to, and should receive support from, senior management.

- The requirements from one to two individuals per unit should be expanded: (a) in the case of MFA departments, to include a head or deputy head of department and a staff member; and (b) in the case of embassies, to include a posted and a locally recruited staff member.
- MFA staff (at all levels) should receive gender training that is integrated, mainstreamed and included in all types of training courses throughout (e.g. HR training courses including diplomatic courses, AMG training course).

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this evaluation is to learn from the implementation of programmes and projects from 2014 to 2021, with a view to strengthening Denmark's integration of gender equality in future development cooperation. The objectives of the evaluation are stipulated by the Terms of Reference (TOR) to be fourfold:

1. Analyse Danish gender budgetary allocations and analyse the trends and gaps;
2. analyse key gender achievements in selected bilateral and multilateral programmes;
3. analyse organisational gaps within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA); and
4. propose recommendations for improved impact of future Danish support.

Denmark has supported gender-relevant initiatives since Danida was established in 1962. Efforts intensified in the 1980s and have evolved over time from focusing on women-in-development to a commitment to gender equality and diversity across rights-based poverty alleviation. This evaluation extracts lessons learned on gender equality as a guiding star during a decade when security, migration and planetary crises compete for the MFA's attention. In this context, the status of older cross-cutting concerns such as gender equality is not always straightforward.

Gender equality features as a normative priority by Danish negotiators on a variety of international platforms. Gender aspects are mandatory in new MFA grant documents and are integrated into MFA strategic partnerships with civil society partners. School attendance by Afghan girls was used to justify the multi-annual Danish engagement in what was the largest Danish country engagement during this evaluation period, and a ministerial country visit often includes a local gender programme partner.

The TOR for this evaluation go beyond the purpose of accountability requirements of assessing the results of programmatic support. A unique feature has been the MFA's own institutional capacity and an expressed desire to explore considerations Denmark might address to "gain a leading role in supporting gender equality". This ambitious

utilisation focus has permeated the evaluation approach. It has been a particular priority for the evaluation to involve practitioners in exploring ways in which organisational gaps can be closed and Denmark can play a stronger role. The report targets development practitioners and decision makers as it summarises the findings of an evaluation conducted between April 2022 and August 2023, essentially comprising:

- a. Analysis of financial support trends and drivers of gender budgetary allocations;
- b. assessment of programming results and challenges, focusing on seven case studies; and
- c. exploration of institutional gaps and opportunities in knowledge and guidance.

Findings of these lines of enquiry are introduced by an outline of the methods applied and the context of support to gender equality in Danish development cooperation. Annexes to the report comprise further details on the three country and four organisational case studies, and a more elaborate outline of the MFA staff survey conducted in November 2022.

The TOR for this evaluation stipulate a dual purpose of learning lessons from programme implementation from 2014 to 2021 and strengthening the future integration of gender equality in Danish development cooperation. Gender equality is recognised by the TOR to have such a broad scope and cross-cutting nature that case sampling for in-depth analysis is essential.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Overall approach

Starting from the TOR, a methodology was designed during the inception phase that is theory-based and that seeks evidence on causal pathways through which institutional processes (on the one hand) and programming practices in the wider context of country programmes and strategic partnerships (on the other hand) have contributed to the advancement of gender equality. The methods selected assess accountability of funding by applying established Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact.

The approach focuses on utilisation for stakeholders involved in the evaluation process. Methods to build ownership by the intended users include key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) and, where feasible, interviews and discussions with groups of intended beneficiaries, ranging from survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in Kenya to recipients of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) innovation grants. A point has been made of assessing gender-targeted interventions as well as mainstreaming efforts.

Given the contemporary understanding of gender equality as an intersectional concern of broad relevance across the wide variety of development engagements, prioritisation is essential to avoid spreading resources too thinly in chasing evidence in every corner where gender equality has relevance.

A pre-study commissioned by the MFA in 2021 made a total of five references to the positioning of Denmark well below the average reported gender spend of OECD-DAC member states² and argued that programming results rely to some extent on institutional gender integration. Consequently, evaluation questions (EQs) of the TOR start the evaluation line of inquiry at budgetary allocations and go well beyond the standard enquiry into programmatic results in

2 Critical Rights & Gender Consult: Gender equality, girls' and women's rights in Danish development cooperation – preparatory evaluation study report (July 2021), pp. 2, 3, 4, 7 and 9.

developing countries, venturing into the territory of MFA capacity in terms of gender equality knowledge, perceptions and staff guidance.

The TOR (see Annex A) pose 12 EQs in three main themes:

a. The politics of prioritisation

EQs 1-2: *Trends of gender budget allocations and drivers of these priorities?*

b. Evidence of gender equality results

EQs 3-8: *Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of support?*

c. Institutional gaps and opportunities

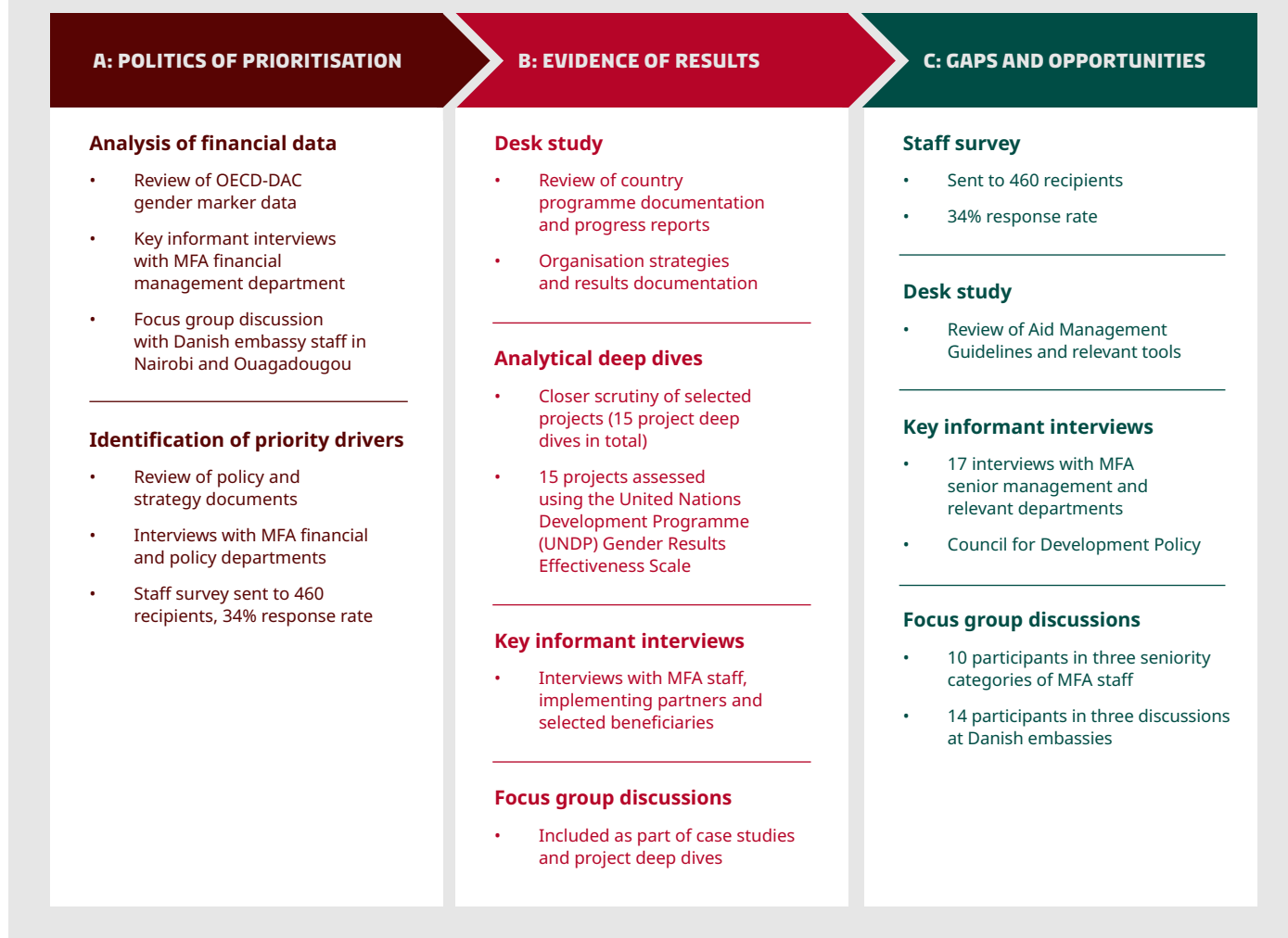
EQs 9-12: *Knowledge, perception and guidance of staff across MFA and embassies?*

Based on analysis of findings, EQ 8 and EQ 12 look explicitly to the future in asking: 'What strategic and practical considerations might Denmark engage in and what institutional barriers might Denmark address to gain a leading role in supporting gender equality?'

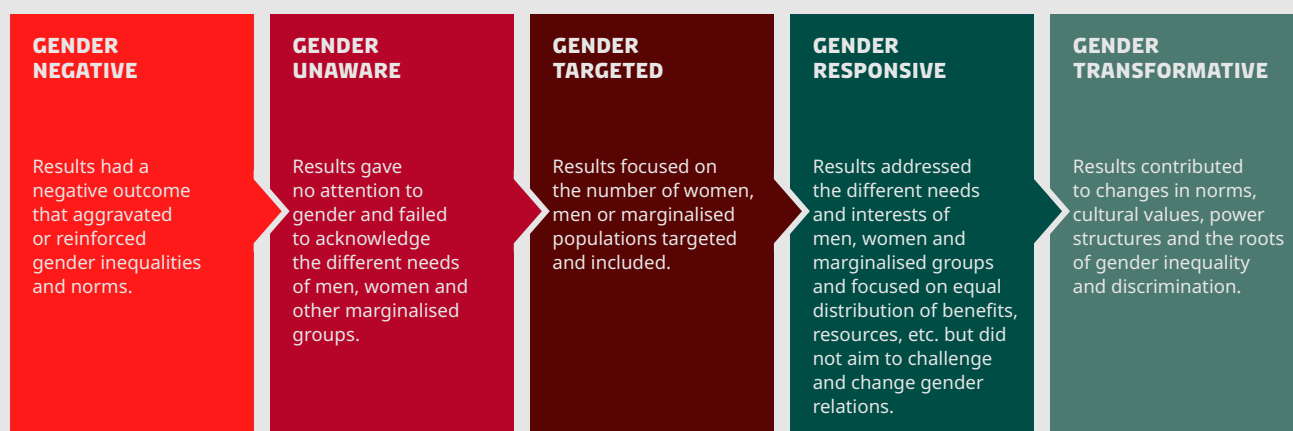
Ideas for a leading role are unfolded as part of the recommendations in Chapter 7. The outcome of a brief landscape scan of experience by donor peers can be found in boxes throughout the report.

2.2 Evaluation instruments

Inception phase consultations led to the identification of instruments for each of the three themes. Figure 1 shows how the evaluation integrates findings from (i) analysis of financial and narrative reporting, (ii) country case studies in Kenya, Burkina Faso and Mali, (iii) institutional case studies of the UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), MSI Reproductive Choices (MSI) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), (iv) deep dives into 15 selected projects, (v) a survey of staff at the MFA and Danish embassies engaged in development programming, and (vi) extensive interviews and FGDs.

FIGURE 1. METHODOLOGY INSTRUMENTS IN THE THREE THEMATIC AREAS OF EVALUATION

EQ 5 of the TOR specifies an assessment of results against the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES) criteria as 'gender sensitive', 'gender responsive' and 'gender transformative'. During inception, the five-point scale developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was adapted by the evaluation, using the definitions as specified in Figure 2. This distinguishes in a helpful way between approaches that aggravate gender inequalities, those that fail to acknowledge the different needs, those that focus on equal numbers of men and women project participants, those that address the different needs and focus on equal distribution, and finally those who contribute to changing gender norms and addressing the root causes of inequality and discrimination. The scale was applied to each project selected for case study 'deep dives'. Selected results are summarised in Chapter 5, and a more detailed assessment can be found in the seven case study reports annexed to the evaluation.

FIGURE 2. ADAPTED GENDER RESULTS EFFECTIVENESS SCALE

Source: Adapted from the Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, UNDP (2015).

Case country selection includes a spectrum from relatively stable Kenya to fragile and conflict-affected Mali and Burkina Faso. Institutional case studies include recipients of two large Danish grants for targeted gender equality support, the UNFPA and UNICEF, as well as a large grant for the GCF with climate as the primary objective and, ideally, gender-mainstreamed. MSI represents a relatively small engagement of targeted gender equality support. In combination, the seven studies offer insight into gender integration in the TOR priority areas of: (i) governance; (ii) sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)/GBV; (iii) green transition and climate.

Country case studies combine a broad overview of programmes with deep dives into two to four selected projects. Sampling was purposive and sought to cover the following TOR requirements:

- The three thematic areas of the TOR: governance, SRHR, green transition/climate;
- gender-targeted and gender-mainstreamed funding approaches;
- the full period of the evaluation from 2014 to 2021;
- different funding modalities: bilateral, multi-bi, core and earmarked multilateral;
- different types of partners and stakeholders;

- a range of fund envelope sizes: small/medium/large; and
- combination of projects reported as good or interesting practice in terms of gender transformation and projects reported as challenging or integrating gender weakly.

Annex E of this report presents the project deep dives of each of the seven case studies. Separate case study reports are also available with details of the GRES assessments of results.

2.3 Limitations

There are five key limitations to the evaluation:

1. The focus of the evaluation was on gender barriers and achievements, not on the underlying programmes and projects. However, to make informed judgements, the evaluation had to assess performance in the contexts of country programmes, institutions and project deep dives within the case studies, focusing on climate change, SRHR and governance. Inevitably, it has not been possible to cover all cases of this mixed bag in equal depth.
2. The scope of the evaluation was very broad, in that in principle it involved a gender analysis of the entirety of Danish development cooperation from 2014 to 2021 in its different modalities – notwithstanding the thematic focus limited to three broad areas. Every effort has been made to sufficiently focus the inquiry so that in these specific focal areas, sufficient depth was achieved to inform substantive findings and so that sufficient triangulation was available within focus areas to generate sufficiently robust results. Nevertheless, it is important to note the following: (1) a few areas of development cooperation have not been covered, such as funding to refugees; (2) Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPAs) were not considered as part of the evaluation scope; (3) the evaluation did not take stock of the enabling environment of each of the international and multilateral partners. This has to some extent limited the relevance of findings and conclusions – these are likely to be most closely relevant where there are clear links to partnerships and themes covered by case studies.
3. Specific limitations relate to the security situation affecting the two visits to West Africa. Planned in-country consultations in Burkina Faso and Mali had to be replaced by remote meetings; and in the case of the security situation in Ouagadougou,

embassy staff had to cancel most of the planned virtual meetings with the evaluation team, leading to a data imbalance among the case studies.

4. Data imbalance among the case studies, caused by the limitations of country visits, availability of key informants (e.g. UN Women in Mali was not responsive to interview requests and only five key informants were interviewed for the GCF case study) and country presence of selected case study organisations (e.g. there is no GCF country presence in selected case study countries and only one interview with a GCF project organisation was conducted in Kenya) affected the confidence of the evidence used for triangulation, specifically regarding multilateral programmes in EQ5, EQ6 and EQ7 in Chapter 5 in this report (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability in programming). To expand and deepen the multilateral picture within EQ5, EQ6 and EQ7 an additional independent post-evaluation exercise might be useful.
5. Changes to the core team of evaluators were carried out in November 2022.³ Reconfiguration of the team led to an extension of the process, yet inevitably affected the continuity of investigations and the depth of some evaluation findings.

2.4 Quality assurance

The evaluation has taken these limitations into account in the analysis of findings and has made a point of triangulating findings to gain confidence in the reasonable validity of its main findings.

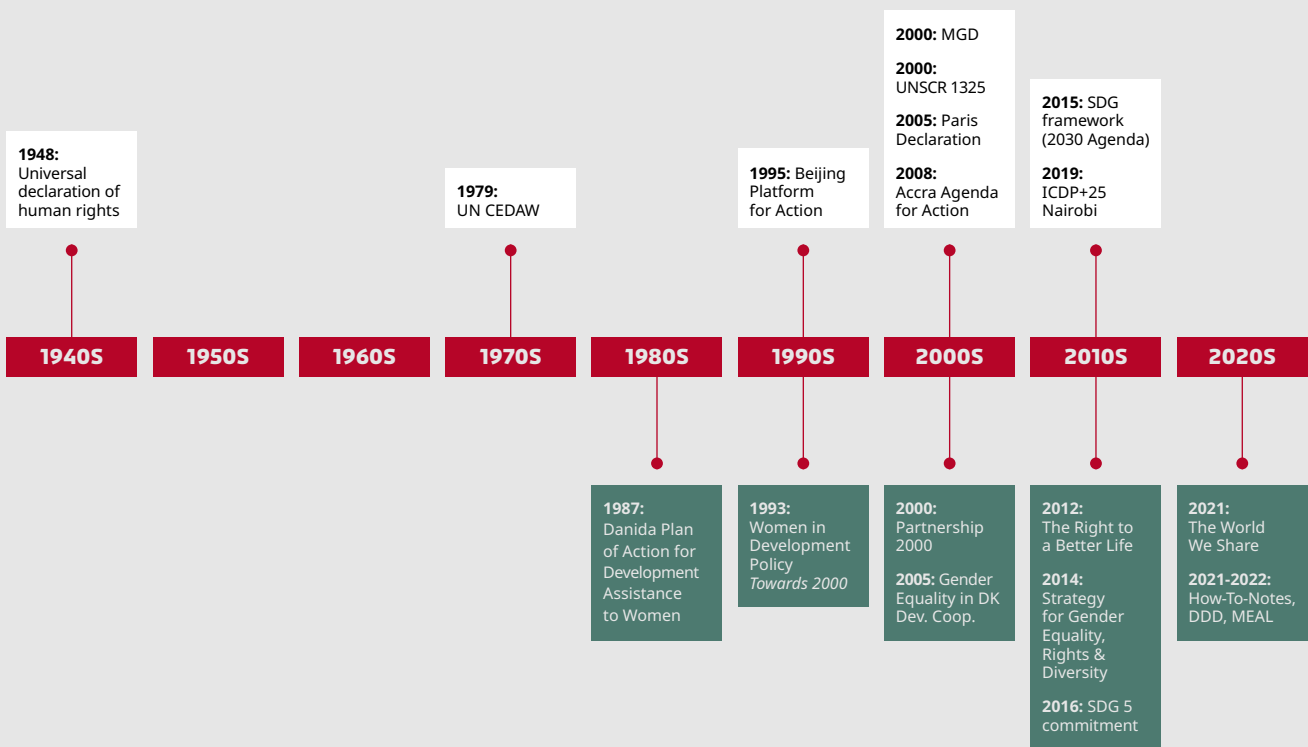
The report has been subjected to internal quality assurance (QA). External review has been undertaken by the MFA. An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), chaired by the Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK) and comprising relevant MFA departments, embassies and experts from civil society and academia, provided inputs and comments during four meetings in May, September and December 2022 and March 2023.

3 Core team members were Verner Kristiansen (from April 2022 to end of March 2023), Mireia Cano (from April 2022 to end of February 2023), Kirsty Milward (from April to end of October 2022), Christian Krone (from April 2022 to end of October 2022) and Silke Hofer (from November 2022 until finalisation).

3. CONTEXT OF SUPPORT TO GENDER EQUALITY

Denmark has supported gender equality in developing countries for decades. Efforts intensified in the 1980s and have evolved over time. As illustrated by Figure 3 (with international commitments marked in white and Danish initiatives in green), the focus initially emphasised development assistance to women, such as female-led cooperatives and CSOs and strengthening of government departments for women’s affairs and GBV. A mainstreaming approach was introduced in the 2000s and was seen as a key instrument to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, and the focus was expanded to include involvement of men.

FIGURE 3. TIMELINE OF INTERNATIONAL AND DANISH GENDER COMMITMENTS



3.1 Danish policy priorities

Support to gender equality features prominently in policies throughout the evaluation period. Although the point of departure at the outset of the evaluation period was an overall development policy, *The Right to a Better Life* (2012), supported by a dedicated Strategic Framework, policy priorities of *The World We Share* (2021) are not underpinned by a dedicated gender strategy or Guidance Note but by how-to-notes, where gender equality is one element out of several cross-cutting concerns.

The 2014 *Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation* was developed as guidance in implementation of *The Right to a Better Life* (2012) and remains available as part of the Danish Aid Management Guidelines (AMG). Key gender equality definitions and the programming approach of the Strategic Framework are shown in boxes in this chapter.

The World We Share presents gender equality ambitions under a headline of ‘Danish international leadership on rights’.⁴ Referring to a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to development cooperation, three categories of priority rights are highlighted:

- Democracy, human rights and free civil societies in the era of digitalisation, including support to various types of human rights defenders;
- rights and dignity of marginalised groups, including Indigenous people, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender plus (LGBT+) persons and vulnerable groups; and
- gender equality and girls’ and women’s rights, including economic and political empowerment contributing to economic growth and equal and democratic societies.

A series of 12 *how-to-notes* is intended to guide staff in the implementation of the policy priorities of *The World We Share*. In terms of gender equality, a decision was made not to devote a separate how-to-note on gender equality but rather to integrate this concern into two other notes:⁵ the *How-to-note on human rights and democracy*⁶ and the *How-to-note*

4 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark: *The World We Share – Denmark’s strategy for international development cooperation* (2021), p. 14.

5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark: ‘How-to-note for udmøntning af Fælles om Verden: Sociale sektorer, sociale sikkerhedsnet og fødevarerikkerhed’ (presented to the Council for Development Policy) (2022) & ‘How-to-note for udmøntning af Fælles om Verden: Menneskerettigheder og demokrati’ (draft of 5 May 2022).

6 <https://amg.um.dk/policies-and-strategies/how-to-notes-for-implementation-of-the-danish-strategy-for-development-cooperation>

on social sectors, social safety nets and food security⁷. In the first, the three categories of priorities are unfolded in more detail, with case examples of local-level prevention of child marriage in Burkina Faso, global support for equal access to education, and support through UNICEF for transformative gender equality in Somalia. The second note includes equal access to health services and long-term support for SRHR as part of bilateral programmes in Uganda, Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Kenya, including support for vulnerable groups such as LGBT+ in country programmes and normative tracks.

Defining the goal – equality or equity?

Terminology on gender carries important distinctions that have implications for how programming is approached. Gender equality focuses on the provision of equal opportunities for women and men (such as making it legal for women to own land); gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men according to their respective needs. In this perspective, fairness requires strategies and measures to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field.

In this light, the 2014 *Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation* refers to the term of gender equality but comes closer to equity in its definition in three dimensions: (i) equal representation; (ii) recognition of barriers faced by women, men, girls and boys; and (iii) the redistribution of power and control over political and economic resources. It also recognises that categories of women, men, girls and boys are made up of complexities of power related to class, age, religion, ethnicity, caste, gender identity, ability and sexual orientation.

3.2 Approaches to gender programming

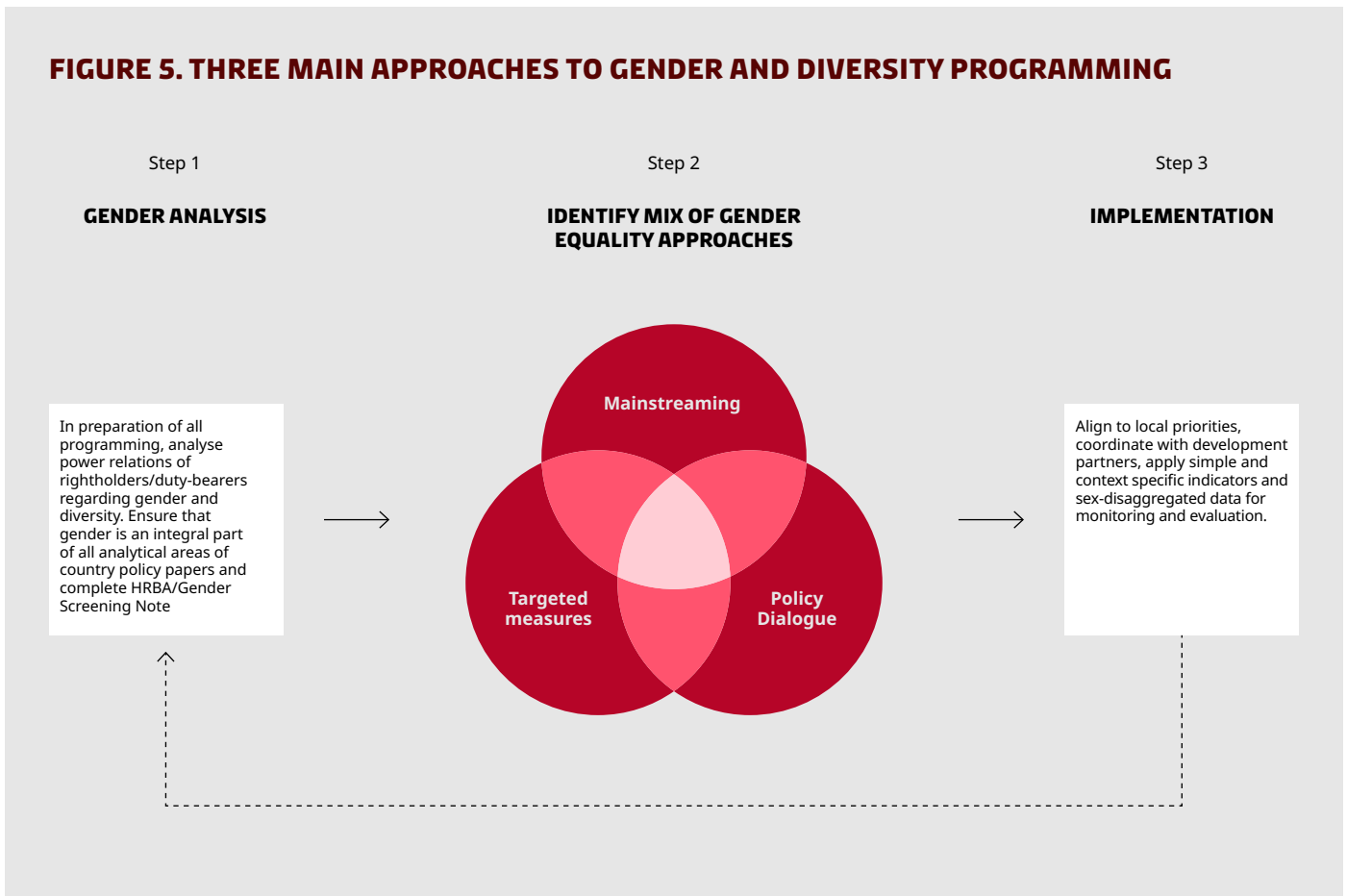
Key modalities for Danish support to gender equality include targeted measures, mainstreaming and policy dialogue, as shown in Figure 4 with examples of key modalities and evaluation cases.

⁷ Ibid.

FIGURE 4. OVERVIEW OF MODALITIES AND EVALUATION CASES

Approach and definition	OECD-DAC gender marker	Gender equality key modalities	Examples of evaluation cases
<p>Targeted measures Activities with gender equality as the main objective and fundamental to the design and expected results (sometimes referred to as 'Special Interventions')</p>	<p>'Principal' = 100% weight</p>	<p>Multilateral & international partners, e.g. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), AmplifyChange, Danish SPA and bilateral country engagements</p>	<p>UNFPA, MSI, UNICEF, Gender Violence & Recovery Centre (Kenya), Women in peace building (Mali), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (Burkina Faso)</p>
<p>Mainstreaming Activities with gender equality as an important and deliberate objective but not the principal reason for undertaking the activity</p>	<p>'Significant' = 50% weight</p>	<p>Multilateral partners (e.g. World Bank, European Union, UNDP), Danish and international CSOs, Danish bilateral country programmes</p>	<p>GCF, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Burkina Faso), Fonds d'Appui à la Création d'Entreprises par les Jeunes (FACEJ) entrepreneurship (Mali) and strategic sector cooperation (SSC) (Kenya)</p>
<p>Policy dialogue Wide range of technical and political discussions and exchanges with partners</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>United Nations (UN) and CSO platforms, OECD-DAC, (e.g. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Women Deliver)</p>	<p>Country programmes in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Mali – International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)</p>

Support is envisaged by the *Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation (2014)* to follow an ideal process whereby gender analysis defines the mix of approaches for implementation, as captured by this illustration from the framework (Figure 5).



It is no coincidence that Figure 5 shows mainstreaming as the largest of the three circles. Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy, involving the integration of a gender equality perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes (i.e. promote equal access to SRHR). Targeted measures, meanwhile, are specific measures aimed at reducing or eliminating gender discrimination (i.e. providing hygiene products to girls in school). However, reviews of mainstreaming and targeted interventions in 2006 and 2007, matched by a study of 'Lessons learned on gender equality' synthesising 104 MFA evaluations between 2004 and 2013, pointed to persisting challenges of mainstreaming in practice. Challenges included whether simple benefits for or participation of women in a programme made it 'mainstreamed' or whether this required transformational change to peoples' lives.

This criticism was broadly in line with the findings from a range of studies, for example the evaluation study *Mainstreaming Gender Equality: A Road to Results or a Road to Nowhere?*, commissioned by the African Development Bank (AfDB)⁸ in 2012. This evaluation study, which synthesised 26 thematic and country evaluations undertaken between 1990 and 2010 and which now seems to be outdated and no longer useful or relevant, concluded that integration of gender equality often ends up as women-centred approaches, indicating that in practice the relational nature of gender inequalities is not taken fully into account.

Other evaluations⁹ also pointed to the need for practitioner tools and for each country programme to include mainstreaming and at least one 'targeted' intervention to keep gender equality on the radar. A focus on diversity and an intersectional approach gained ground, along with engagements seen to have a transformative potential. A twin-track 'gender mainstreaming' and 'gender-targeted' approach evolved, complemented by a normative track of policy dialogue.

3.3 Funding modalities

Denmark provided \$2.66 billion in official development assistance (ODA) in 2020 through bilateral programmes and contributions to multilateral institutions, including UN agencies, the European Commission and the World Bank. Funding to multilateral organisations remains a central modality, both as core and earmarked funding. In bilateral programming, funding is channelled through different types of funding relationships and partner institutions, with potentially different implications for how effectively gender equality objectives are addressed.

Looking at the balance between bilateral and multilateral aid in 2020 shown in Figure 6, OECD reported that core contributions to multilateral organisations account for 35% and bilateral aid for 65%. However, 27% of what is categorised as bilateral aid is delivered via multilateral organisations as project-financed aid ('earmarked')¹⁰ and 38% of the bilateral aid is delivered via 'other institutions'. ODA delivered through multilateral institutions via these two routes amounted to 62% of total ODA in 2020.

8 African Development Bank Group: *Mainstreaming Gender Equality: A Road to Results or a Road to Nowhere? An Evaluation Synthesis*, OPEV (AfDB: 2012).

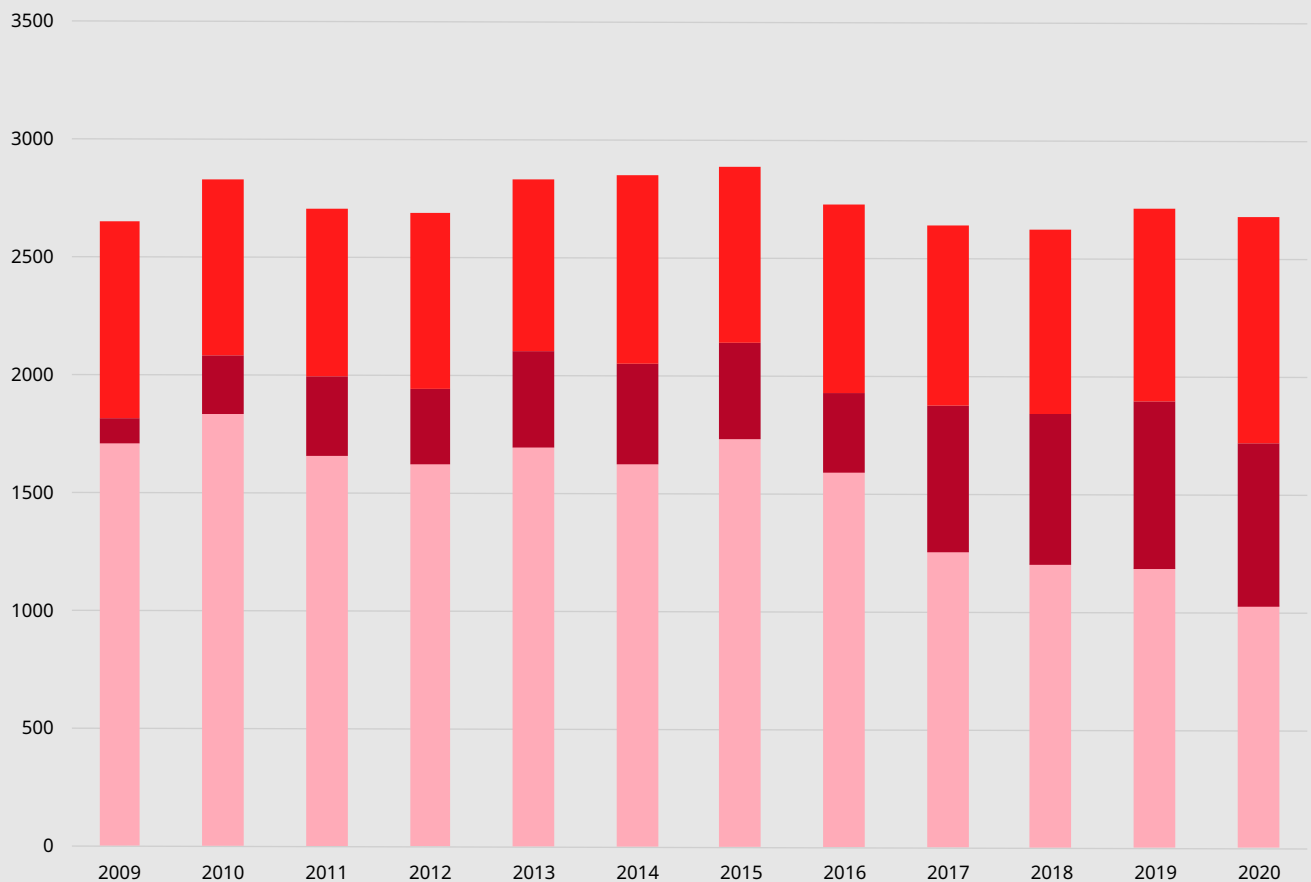
9 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark: *Lessons learned on gender equality 2004-2013 – Evaluation Study 2013:8*.

10 Please note that the OECD terminology for 'earmarking' is used throughout this report. Earmarked support to multilateral organisations is per definition counted as bilateral aid by the OECD.

**FIGURE 6. BUDGET TRENDS TO BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL PARTNERS
FROM 2009 TO 2020**

Denmark – bilateral and multilateral ODA allocations
Gross disbursements, \$ million, 2020 constant prices

■ Bilateral ■ Earmarked multilateral ■ Core multilateral



Source: OECD (2022).

Bilateral aid delivered through 'other institutions' also includes a growing share of funding through CSOs. An evaluation published by the MFA in 2022 found the share of CSO funding to be showing an upward trend – from 17.9% in 2017 to 19.3% in 2019 – and this was estimated to be closer to 25% if funding from other programmes, such as the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme, is included.¹¹ Just over a third of this (DKK 1.2 billion) was channelled through 16 organisations with an SPA with the MFA. SPA partners include CSOs with a targeted gender equality mandate, such as the

11 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Evaluation of the Danish Support to Civil Society – Synthesis Report (2022), p. 7.

Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA), and all SPA applications were scrutinised for gender inclusion across programmes.

Figure 6 shows how multilateral aid earmarked for a particular country, region or theme has increased while overall core multilateral funding has remained almost constant. Bilateral disbursements have shown a downward trend over the period, both overall and in relation to the multilateral modalities. MFA staff in KIIs suggest that in a context of stretched resources, there is a preference for multilateral grants which require fewer resources to administer.

Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) was launched as a new modality in 2015 with ODA funding for partnerships between Danish authorities and their counterparts in developing countries and growth economies. Engagements in technical areas such as food security or environment typically do not involve a lot of funding, and this is why grant documents, during the period assessed by the evaluation, have not been submitted to the Council for Development Policy or other parts of the aid machinery for QA and scrutiny against cross-cutting concerns such as gender equality. However, it should be mentioned that at the time of finalising this evaluation report, Framework Programmes on SSC are being prepared and these are going to be presented to the Programme Committee and the Council for Development Policy, and appraisals of these framework documents are part of the QA process.

4. FINDINGS THEME A: POLITICS OF PRIORITISATION

Findings are presented in this chapter on trends of gender budget allocations and their drivers, Theme A of the TOR. The EQs responded to under this theme are presented at the start of each section.

4.1 Budget allocation trends

EQ 1. What have been the development and key trends of gender budgetary allocations in bilateral and multilateral programmes over the period 2014 to 2021? What has been the proportion of gender allocation against the overall development and humanitarian aid yearly portfolio?

Summary of key findings:

Reports on gender spending by Denmark below the average of OECD-DAC member states¹² feature prominently in the preparatory study and TOR of this evaluation.¹³ Reliable or not, the ranking of Denmark as number 20 among DAC members, with gender spending at 43% of ODA – with countries such as Canada, Iceland and Sweden at 84% to 92% – clashes with an image of “Danish international leadership on rights”, to quote the headline of the policy document outlining gender equality ambitions.¹⁴

The evaluation establishes budgetary trends for targeted gender equality support by adding allocations for selected core partners and finds significant and increasing levels, culminating at DKK 1.4 billion in 2021. However, to draw the full picture of combined allocations for targeted and mainstreamed support is challenging. The way how budgetary trends are established does not allow to capture it accurately as the method applied is the OECD Gender Marker, and mandatory rating is done at the opening of new bilateral and earmarked multilateral grants.

Interviews with Team Equal Opportunities, MFA financial specialists and an FGD with embassy representatives dedicated to the experience in using the gender marker indicate that MFA attention to gender marking is minimal and its output is poorly understood.

12 OECD-DAC: Share of ODA (%) for gender equality by DAC member – Average per year 2018-19.

13 Critical Rights & Gender Consult: Gender equality, girls’ and women’s rights in Danish development cooperation – preparatory evaluation study report (July 2021) – gender marker references on pp. 2, 3, 4, 7 and 9.

14 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The World We Share – Denmark’s strategy for development cooperation (2021), p. 14.

Denmark registers bilateral aid at overall grant level and only at the opening of a grant. OECD's gender marker is the only method applied, and core multilateral support is unlikely to be registered as gender spending as core support is not marked by the donor but by the multilateral organisation. Bilateral aid at country level represents a shrinking share of Danish ODA, and support to multilateral partners is found to represent a growing share of Danish gender spend, adding to the flawed picture caused by the "lack of accuracy" in establishing the budgetary trends within the OECD-DAC system.

In contrast, clear evidence is found of what is reported to this evaluation as significant levels of long-term and predictable funding, not least for SRHR. This is evidenced by considerable grants for the UNFPA, Danish CSOs with strategic partnership arrangements with MFA such as the DFPA and AmplifyChange, and a global SRHR fund for grass-roots CSOs established at the onset of the evaluation period in 2014.

Also, unambiguous evidence is found on the trend towards increasing levels of multilateral earmarking by Denmark, in line with the pattern seen for other like-minded partners. As exemplified in one of the case studies for this evaluation, levels of earmarking for the UNFPA have seen a significant increase – from 11% of total contributions in 2014 to 60% in 2021.

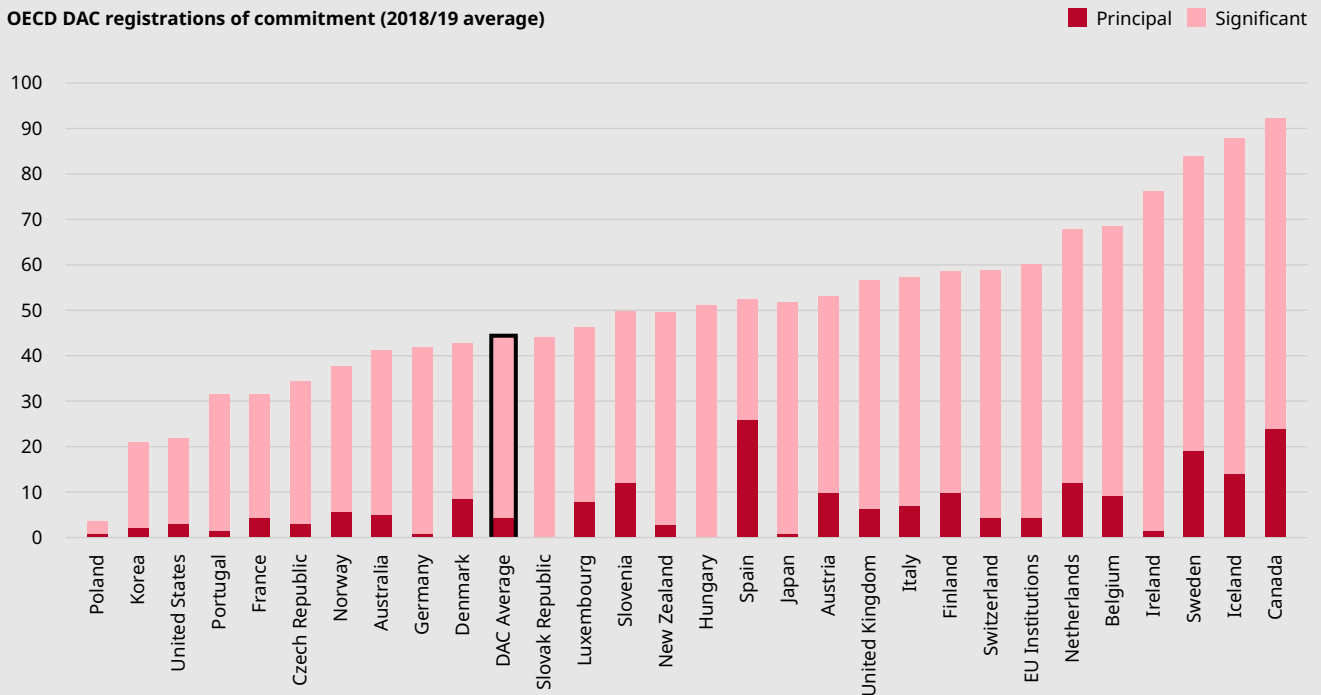
Finding 1: Denmark faces challenging comparison of registered gender spending

As seen in Figure 7, the OECD has compared 2018/19 data on gender equality allocations in OECD-DAC countries¹⁵. The findings show that Denmark registered 43% of its ODA commitment for gender equality for the period 2018/19, just below the OECD-DAC average of 44% of bilateral ODA and much lower than traditional like-minded and comparable countries of Denmark in this context.

Canada, Iceland and Sweden constitute the top three, with commitment registrations of between 84% and 92% of their ODA for gender equality, more than double the share of Denmark. Figure 7 shows OECD data for principal (roughly translating into targeted gender programmes, marked in red) and significant (roughly translating into mainstreaming, marked in light red) registrations. This ranks Denmark as number 20 among DAC members, with a share of targeted commitments slightly above average, yet well below Belgium, Italy and Hungary, and with only half of the share of combined significant and principal gender equality registrations compared to countries such as Canada, Iceland and Sweden.

15 <https://www.oecd.org/development/gender-development/aid-in-support-of-gender-equality-2021.pdf>

FIGURE 7. SHARE OF ODA COMMITMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY DAC MEMBER (PERCENTAGE)



The notable difference between Denmark and OECD peers is open to at least two interpretations:

- a. The low share of Denmark could be interpreted as a wake-up call and a sobering reflection that gender equality has lost ground as an actual programming priority;¹⁶
- b. reporting culture between member states could vary, with users in some countries interpreting gender marking as aspirational and others erring on the side of caution.

As an example of interpretation (b), analysis shows that Canadian funding to Bangladesh and Syria is marked as 100% gender equality-focused, and all the funding is registered as either significant or principal. In comparison, Danish funding to Bangladesh was marked as 54% gender equality-focused, and for Syria it was marked as 0%. In

16 Registrations vary significantly from year to year. The TOR of this evaluation indicate Danish commitments from 2008 to 2012 of more than 60% of bilateral aid. OECD reports an average of 50% for the same period: <https://www.oecd.org/development/gender-development/aid-in-support-of-gender-equality-2021.pdf>

summary, gender marker data is found to be highly variable and open to interpretation. At the same time, interest around comparisons is so strong that it would merit more attention around the marking process itself and how data are used.

Finding 2: The data on the total gender spend in Danish ODA is incomplete

MFA documents its overall gender spend by using the OECD-DAC gender marker mechanism:

- Score 0: **Not targeted** – The programme has been screened against the marker but *has not been found to target* gender equality (0%).
- Score 1: **Significant** – Gender equality is an *important* and *deliberate* objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the programme (50%).
- Score 2: **Principal** – Gender equality is the *main* objective of the programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The programme would not have been undertaken without this gender equality objective (100%).¹⁷

This registration is mandatory for new grants, yet staff knowledge of MFA gender spending and the process of registration was found in interviews with MFA financial specialists, and in an FGD in June 2022 dedicated to gender marking practice of the evaluation, to be minimal. Registration is carried out once for the full grant period by programme officers using the Project Management Interface (PMI) system. Once the gender equality score is defined for each programme and commitments with the recipients are agreed, grants are formally approved in PMI. Each score represents a ‘financial weight’ out of the total commitment: ‘Principal’ means that 100% of the commitment is included in the OECD-DAC reporting, ‘significant’ means 50%, and ‘not targeted’ means that 0% of the commitment is included. Disbursements are registered using the marking established at grant stage and the same calculation. A challenge of validity noted by the evaluation is that the data is never reviewed at a later stage after the grant opening.

Figure 8 shows how the Danish bilateral disbursement registrations have been allocated in the three categories, with the addition of a category showing funds not subjected to screening. Figure 9 shows that ‘significant’ registrations have decreased over the period, with lows in 2016 and 2017. On average these represent 38% of bilateral ODA gender registrations.

¹⁷ Handbook on the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker, OECD-DAC GENDERNET (December 2016).

The amount screened by Denmark but not targeted averages 50% of Danish bilateral ODA registrations for the period. Principal contributions have gradually increased, but with significant drops in 2016 and 2020. Overall, the 'principal' gender spend is relatively low, at an average of 6% of registrations for the period. The amount not screened has gradually fallen, and averages 6% of Danish registrations. However, these figures exclude core funding to multilaterals – 35% of Danish ODA. Multilateral partners are expected to register, but – as reported by OECD and as outlined below – 80% of core funding through multilaterals is never examined for gender equality relevance.

FIGURE 8. DISBURSEMENT REGISTRATIONS SPLIT BETWEEN SCORING CATEGORIES FROM 2014 TO 2020

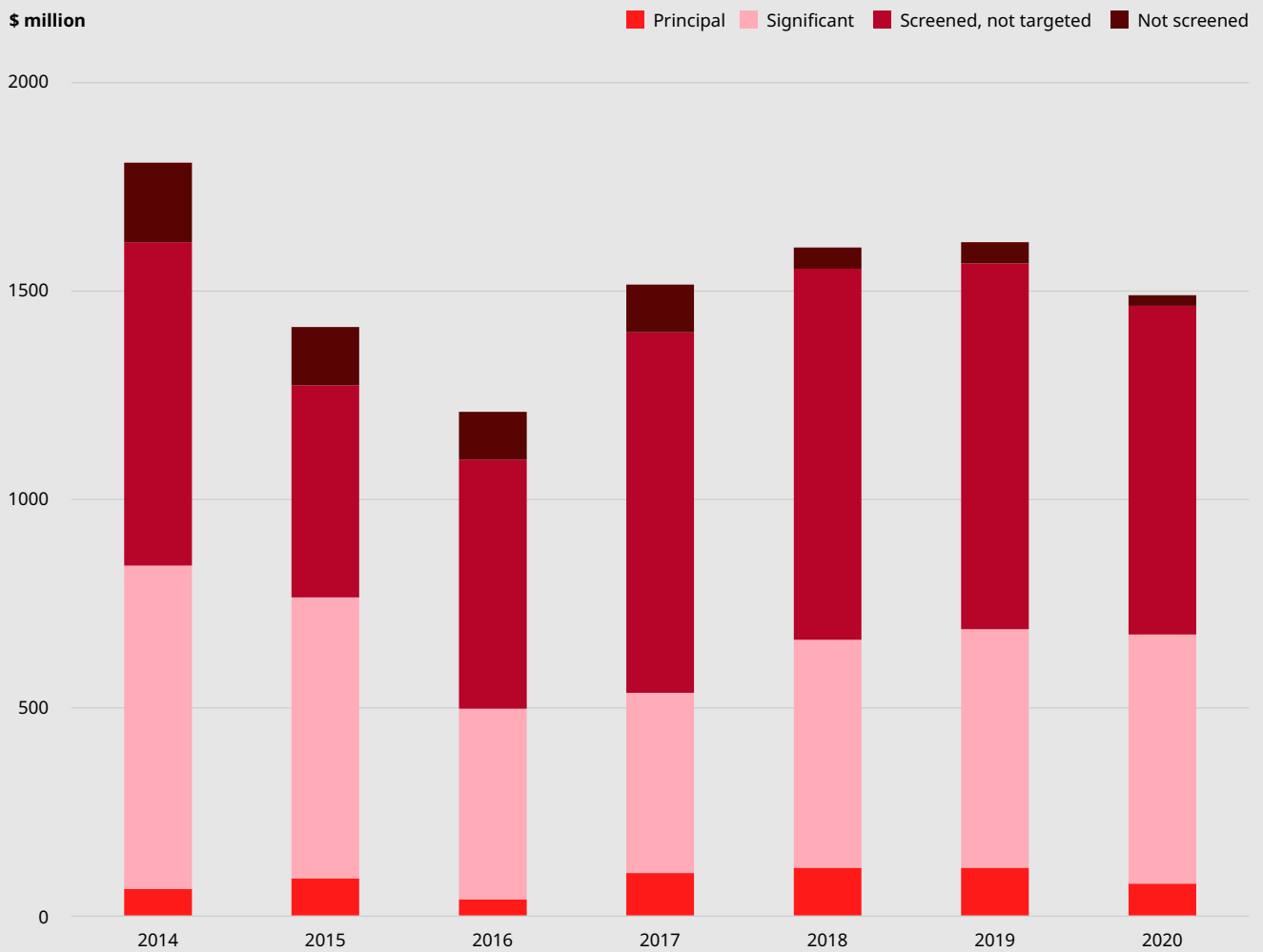
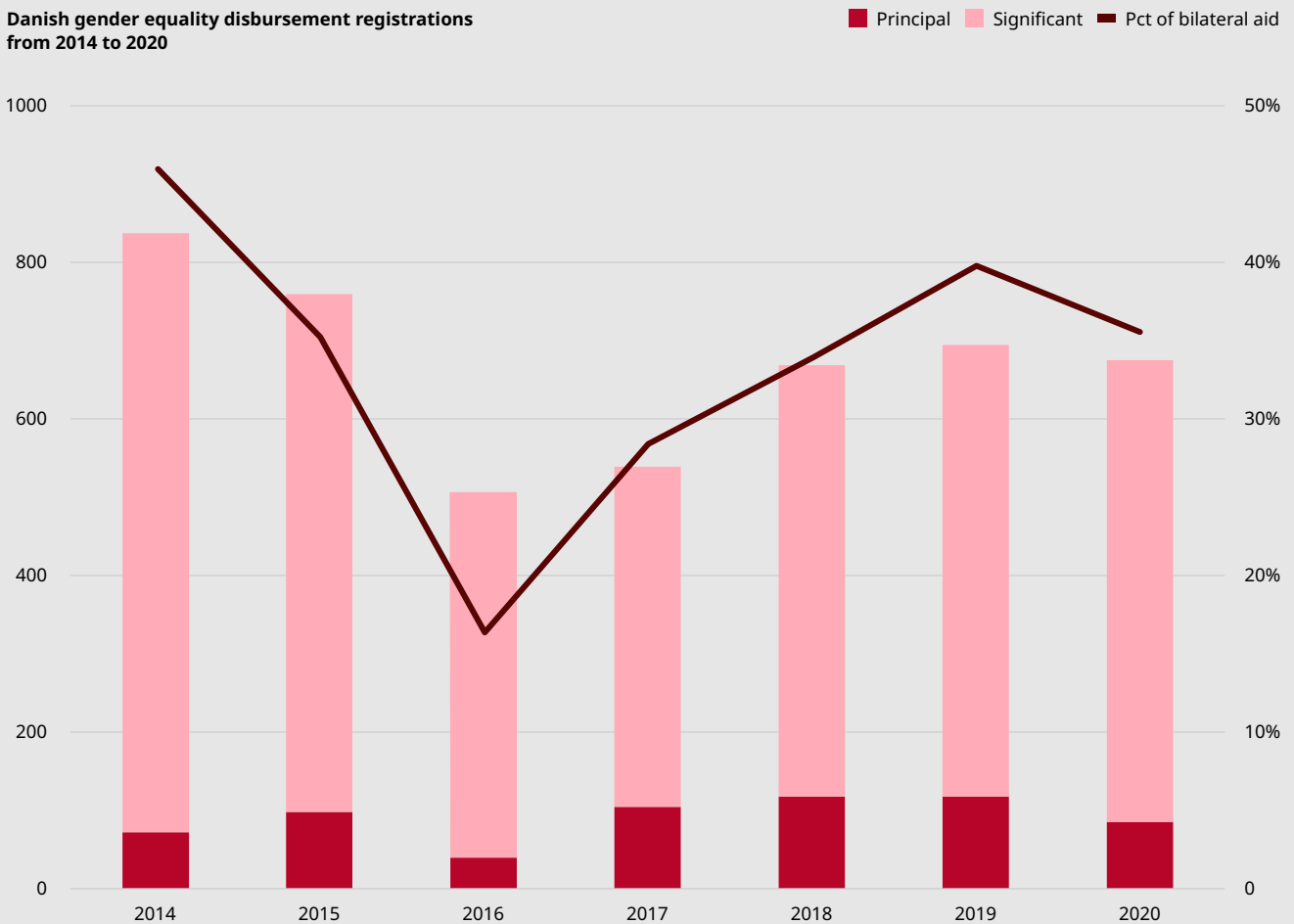
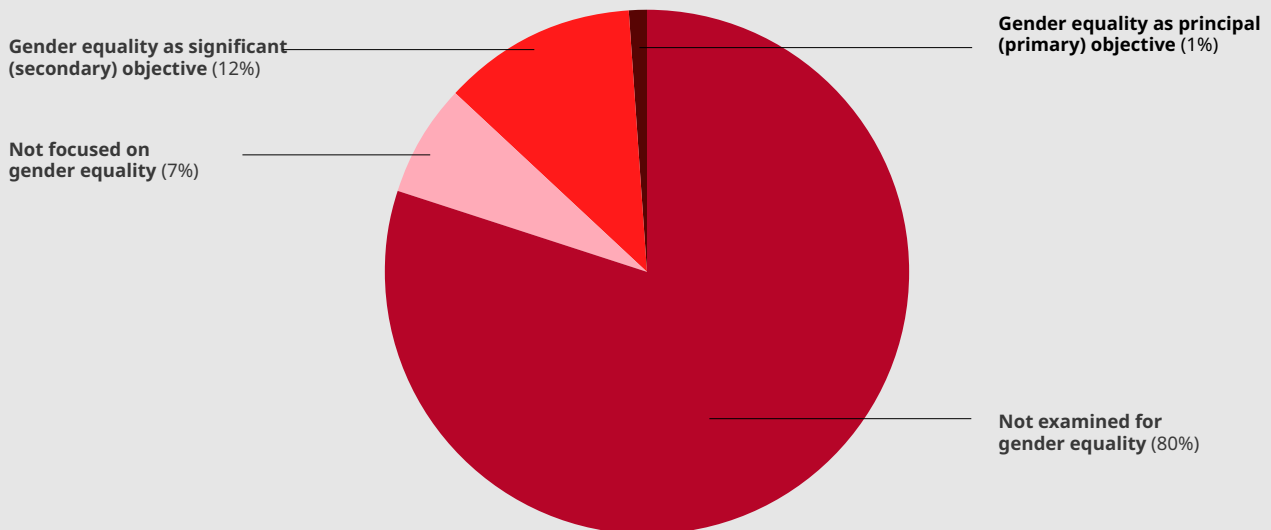


FIGURE 9. DISBURSEMENT REGISTRATIONS (TOTAL AMOUNTS AND SHARE OF BILATERAL AID)

Analysis of gender budgetary allocations, as indicated in the most recent figures of the OECD database, shows a mixed picture with considerable variations over time as regards both the absolute amounts and the relative share, as shown in Figure 9.¹⁸ Gender equality registrations on Danish bilateral disbursements range from \$502 million in 2016 to \$840 million in 2014. For the period 2014 to 2020, an average of \$669 million per year has been registered. There was a significant drop in 2016 due to the reduction overall of Danish ODA. The relative share of ODA registered as contributing to gender equality followed a similar trend to absolute amounts, albeit with a disproportionately large fall in 2016.

18 Note that differences in in-year commitments and disbursements are explained by commitments being registered in 'year one' and subsequent disbursements being spent over several years.

FIGURE 10. TOTAL ODA BY MULTILATERAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTING TO THE OECD, AVERAGE 2019 AND 2020



An important reason for caution to be advised in using gender marker data as a reflection of gender spend is the documented weakness of multilateral registrations. DAC members can register gender equality only for bilateral and earmarked multilateral aid. Multilateral core aid is to be done by the multilateral organisations.

For example, Figure 10 shows that there is significant room for improvement in this regard. Only 1% of multilateral core funding is registered as principal, 12% is registered as significant, 7% is registered as 'not focused on gender equality' and 80% is not examined for gender equality.

Essentially, the implication is that a significant share of the Danish support for gender equality partners such as the UNFPA and UNICEF is unlikely to be registered by the OECD-DAC. Furthermore, since the evaluation finds that such multilateral channels play an increasingly important role in implementing policy ambitions, OECD-DAC gender marker data will distort the picture by reflecting only the bilateral engagement found to be losing ground over time, as reflected below.

Interviews with MFA informants have suggested that in a context of stretched resources, there is a preference for multilateral grants because they require fewer resources to administer. As shown in Figure 7, analysis by the OECD in 2022 demonstrates that the share

of multilateral aid earmarked for a particular country, region, theme or purpose has been increasing over the period of evaluation, but that core multilateral funding has been more or less constant.¹⁹

Regardless of the reason, findings confirm multilateral support as a key modality for the MFA during the period under evaluation, both as core funding and earmarked funding via bilateral country programmes. As evidenced by a recent MFA evaluation, multi-bi allocations have grown significantly in absolute terms and as a share of Danish ODA. As a share of ODA commitments, multi-bi more than doubled, from 14% of ODA in 2011 to 33% of ODA in 2019. Compared to the DAC average, Denmark is found to use the multi-bi instrument more.²⁰ This evaluation underpins these findings and identifies a substantial share of multi-bi allocations for gender equality, notably in relation to SRHR and humanitarian action.

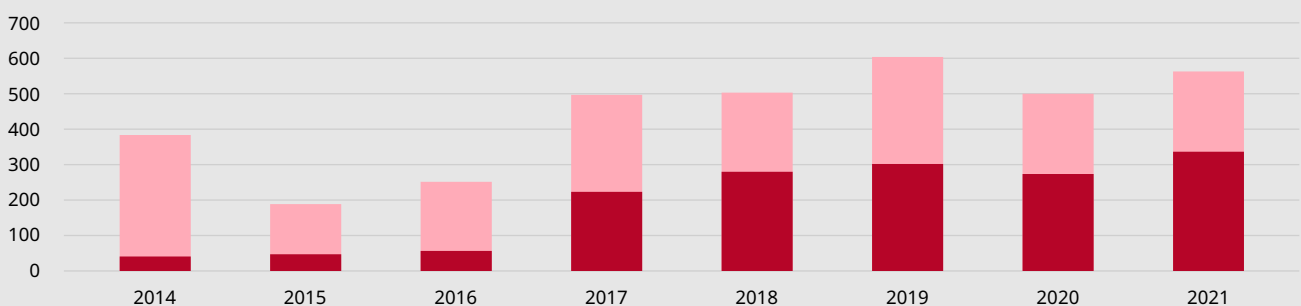
Finding 3: There is a significant increase in earmarking of multilateral funding

The OECD reports on an overall picture of increasing levels of earmarked funding and a roughly constant level of core funding for multilateral agencies in general, and this evaluation includes cases of pure core funding for the GCF and MSI. However, findings of this evaluation also show a significant increase in Danish earmarking, accompanied by a reduction in levels of core funding for the UNFPA and UNICEF during the evaluation period from 2014 to 2021.

FIGURE 11. CORE AND EARMARKED DANISH SUPPORT FOR THE UNFPA

Danish disbursements to the UNFPA from 2014 to 2021
DKK million

UNFPA Core UNFPA earmarked



19 <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9b77239a-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/9b77239a-en>

20 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark: Evaluation of Danida Multi-Bilateral Interventions – Mokoro, December 2022 (draft), p. 22.

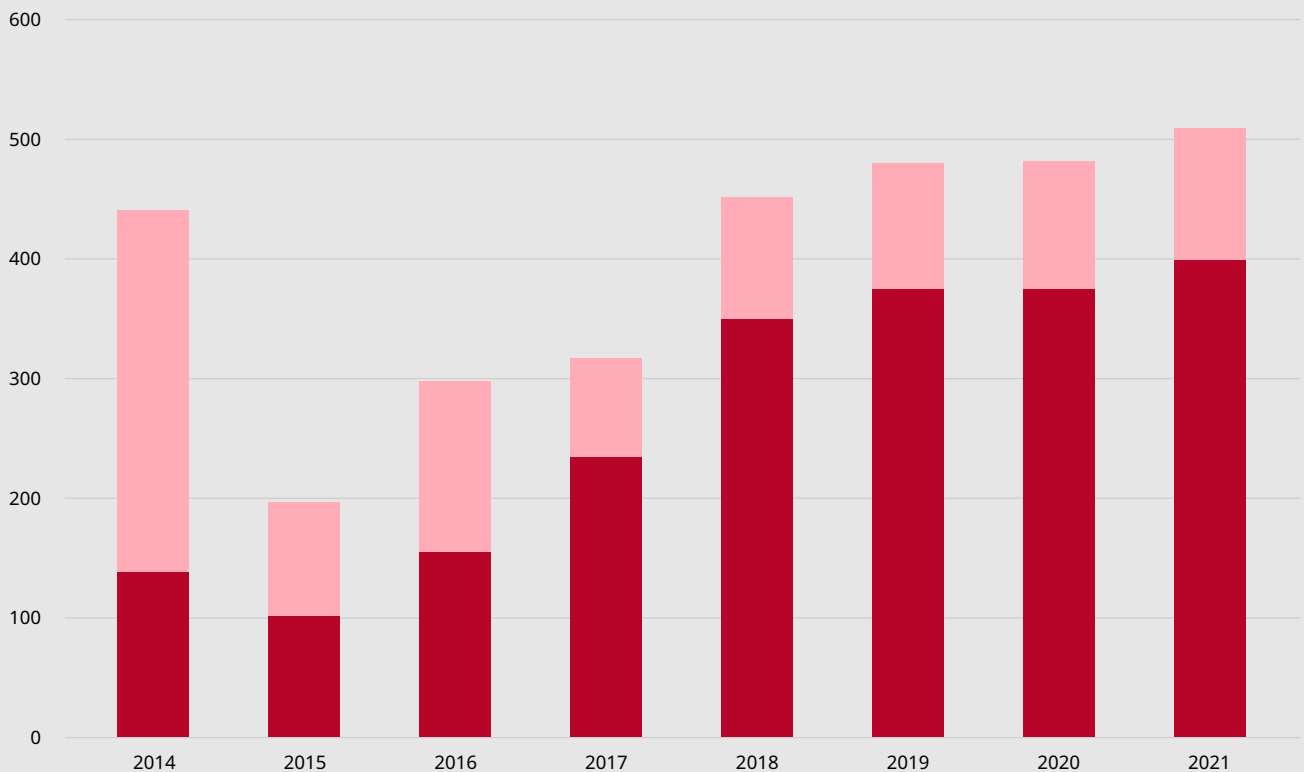
As shown above for the case of the UNFPA, the biggest recipient of SRHR support analysed by this evaluation, funding patterns have shifted significantly since 2014, when only 11% was earmarked. In 2021 60% of the Danish funds was registered as earmarked.

A similar shift towards a much larger share of earmarked contributions is notable in the case of UNICEF (see Figure 12), where core contributions are reduced to an even smaller share than in the case of the UNFPA.

FIGURE 12. CORE AND EARMARKED DANISH SUPPORT FOR UNICEF

Danish disbursements to UNICEF from 2014 to 2021
DKK million

UNICEF Core UNICEF earmarked



Increased earmarking of Danish support for the UNFPA comprises significant amounts of funding for humanitarian engagements, including SPA to the scope of DKK 195 million from 2014 to 2021 – labelled, at the request of the MFA, 'Transformative Humanitarian Response'. UNFPA engagement in humanitarian contexts represents a priority driven by several factors, including (but not restricted to) Danish policy dialogue and earmarked funding that have intensified during the period of evaluation.

Conflict levels and the rise in internally displaced populations have caused the UNFPA to reorient from primary focus on long-term development to a stronger humanitarian role. Denmark is seen by the UNFPA as a constructive partner in this transition. The UNFPA sees Denmark as one of the six or seven key political players on humanitarian engagements and emphasises that Danish engagement has been a consistent push for decades.

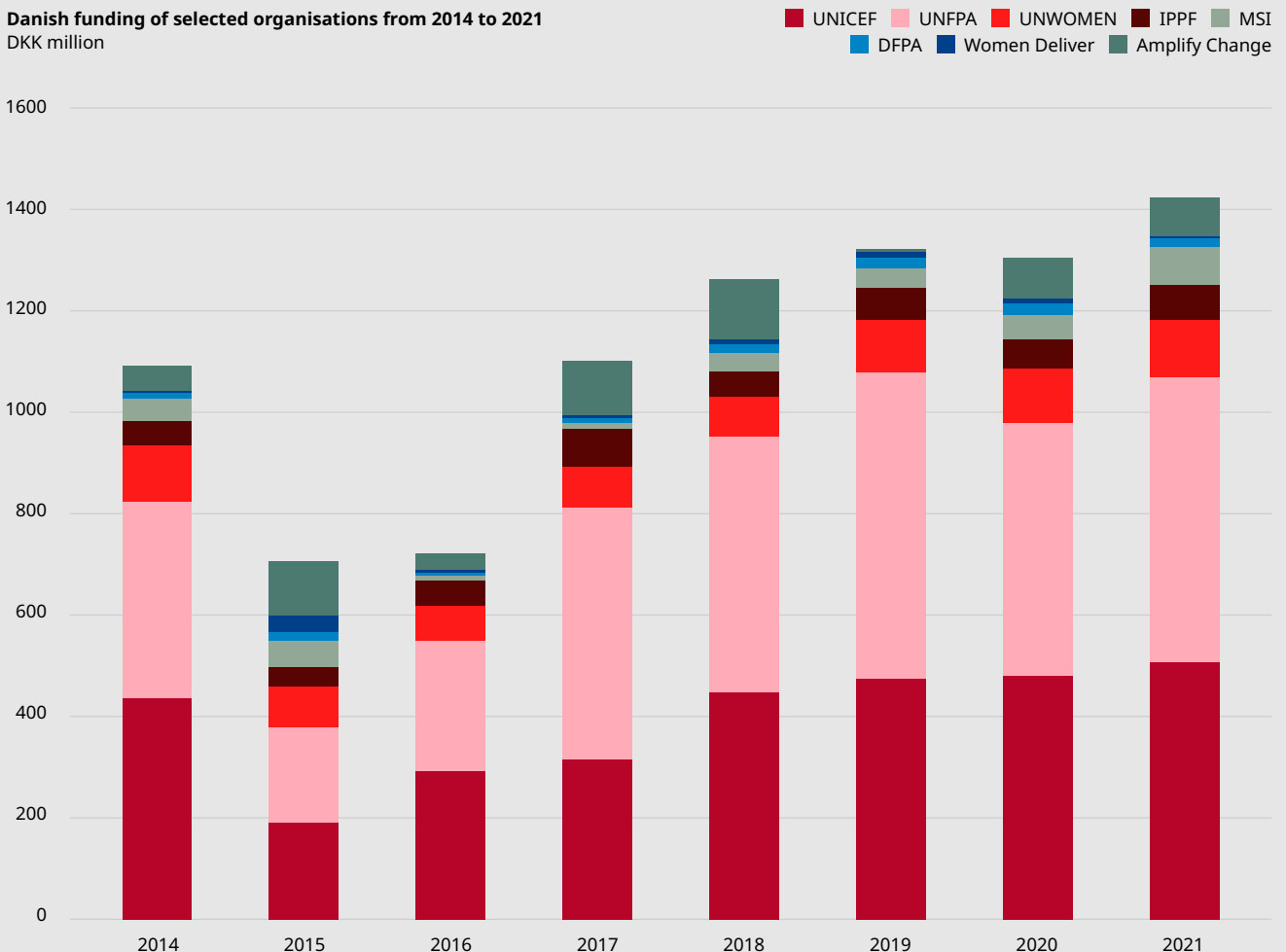
When the UNFPA established a humanitarian fund, Denmark was one of the first donors, engaging with earmarked funding and a strong technical role on governance. Denmark was seen by the UNFPA as a pioneer, both on advocacy and on early funding of the UNFPA's humanitarian engagement. In turn, Denmark saw the UNFPA as a partner for SRHR and systemic change in the humanitarian sector.

A similar – if not quite as dramatic – shift was noted in analysis of Danish funding for UNICEF. Figure 12 shows how disbursements to both organisations dropped in 2015 but there were significantly increased levels of funding in the following years. For UNICEF, core funding was reduced from DKK 280 million in 2014 to DKK 80 million in 2015. In comparison, levels of core funding for UNICEF have fallen to a significantly lower level than the UNFPA receives. Since 2017, UNICEF has received DKK 43 million in annual core funding, with earmarked funding increasing from DKK 116 million in 2015 to DKK 467 million in 2021.

Finding 4: There are significant levels of predictable funding to gender equality, notably in SRHR

The incomplete evidence base provided by the gender marker makes it difficult to assess scope and trends of mainstreaming – captured in OECD-DAC terminology under the gender marker 'significant'. However, when it comes to 'primary' gender support – sometimes referred to as 'targeted measures' – the full picture may remain somewhat elusive, but a reliable picture can be put together of the scope of support to some of the larger Danish partners receiving funding for gender equality and SRHR activities.

According to an interview with an MFA key informant (KI), budget allocations at the time of evaluation are established at DKK 800 million per year for gender equality, including SRHR, and are assessed as a substantial contribution for a country of Denmark's magnitude. The overview of support for selected partners (see below) includes UNICEF as a case study of the evaluation and reaches a significantly higher amount of just above DKK 1.4 billion in 2021, in turn confirming the point that quantification is elusive and gender budget data depends on definitions and what is included in the calculations.

FIGURE 13. FUNDING TRENDS FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND SRHR PARTNERS

The clear finding coming out of Figure 13 is a trend of significantly high levels of long-term and predictable funding. Looking at selected organisations and funding allocated to these, it is worth noticing a drastic fall from 2014 to 2015 followed by a trend of steady increased funding in the period 2015-2021. By far the largest recipients throughout the period are UNICEF²¹ and the UNFPA, with smaller, if stable, allocations to other organisations such as UN Women, the IPPF, MSI, the DFPA, Women Deliver and AmplifyChange. The documented trend of long-term sustainable funding is a defining feature highlighted and praised by recipients of Danish funding across the three country and four institutional case study interviews of this evaluation.

21 It should be noted that gender equality was not the sole objective for the partnership between UNICEF and Denmark throughout this period.

4.2 Drivers behind gender equality priorities

The second EQ probes into the complex territory of drivers behind the trends of gender budgetary allocations presented in the previous section, and reads as follows:

**EQ 2: What have been the main drivers behind these priorities?
What are the main factors behind the shift in integrating gender equality in Danish development cooperation?**

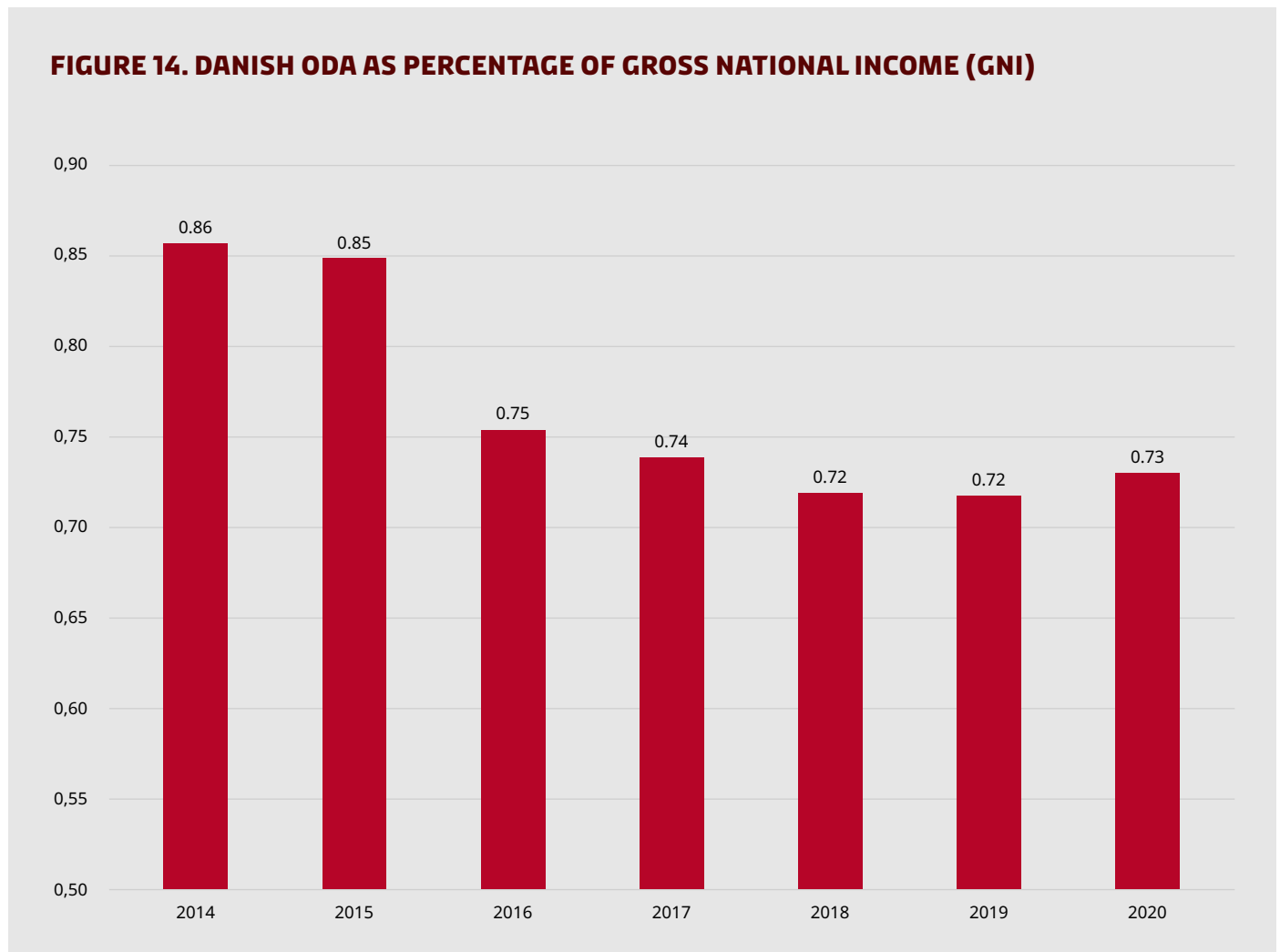
Summary of key findings:

Drivers behind identified funding trends and priorities have been explored, combining analysis of financial data and interviews at MFA financial, policy and technical departments and embassies, leading to the identification of five principal factors:

- a. Gender budget allocations change with the tide as funding levels increase and decrease with the levels of total Danish ODA. This is evidenced by the reductions in overall development funding, showing lower levels of Danish gender registrations and support to core partners from 2014 to 2016.
- b. Funding levels are driven by high strategic priority to gender equality, found to be consistent throughout the evaluation period, with policy ambitions on global leadership that come with a degree of obligation to deliver on funding and results.
- c. In a context of limited formal requirements, the evaluation also points to a risk of thematic fatigue. Some gender-results seem to be driven by committed individuals relying on previous experience and senior management support.
- d. A degree of continuity of prioritisation of gender equality is suggested by high levels of long-term and predictable contributions to key partners. This is mirrored at country level, where the evaluation notes partner appreciation of predictable funding.
- e. Strength of political and senior management commitment to gender equality in practice stands as a striking outcome from both KIIs and staff survey enquiries into how a leading role may be achieved.

Finding 5: Gender budget allocations change with the tide of overall ODA levels

Figure 14 shows the trend of Danish ODA as a percentage of gross national income (GNI), with a drop from 2014 to 2016 that can be found mirrored in Figures 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13, showing lower levels of Danish gender equality registrations and support to core partners from 2014 to 2016.



However, while the drop in overall ODA – from 1% in 2010 to 0.86% in 2014 and 0.75% in 2016 – seems to have caused a considerable reduction in gender spending occurring around 2015/16, budget allocations for gender equality were quick to not only recover but increase. Danish ODA remained at levels of 0.72% to 0.75% of GNI, but gender spending bounced back. For example, funding for gender equality and SRHR partners is shown in Figure 9 to have doubled, from a level of DKK 700 million in 2015 to over DKK 1,400 million just six years later in 2021.

In summary, even if higher spending can be explained by the growth of Danish ODA allowing for increasing budget allocations for gender equality and other priorities in absolute terms, this pattern would seem to suggest that while ODA cuts at the beginning of the evaluation period did cause a drastic cut in the short term, this evaluation suggests that other factors allowed gender spending to recover swiftly and bounce to significant levels of predictable funding for selected core partners.

Finding 6: There are strong policy commitments behind gender spending levels while gender programming is often driven by engaged individuals

Two development policy frameworks have been in place during the evaluation period, both strong on gender equality but with slightly evolving themes and adequacy for implementation modalities:

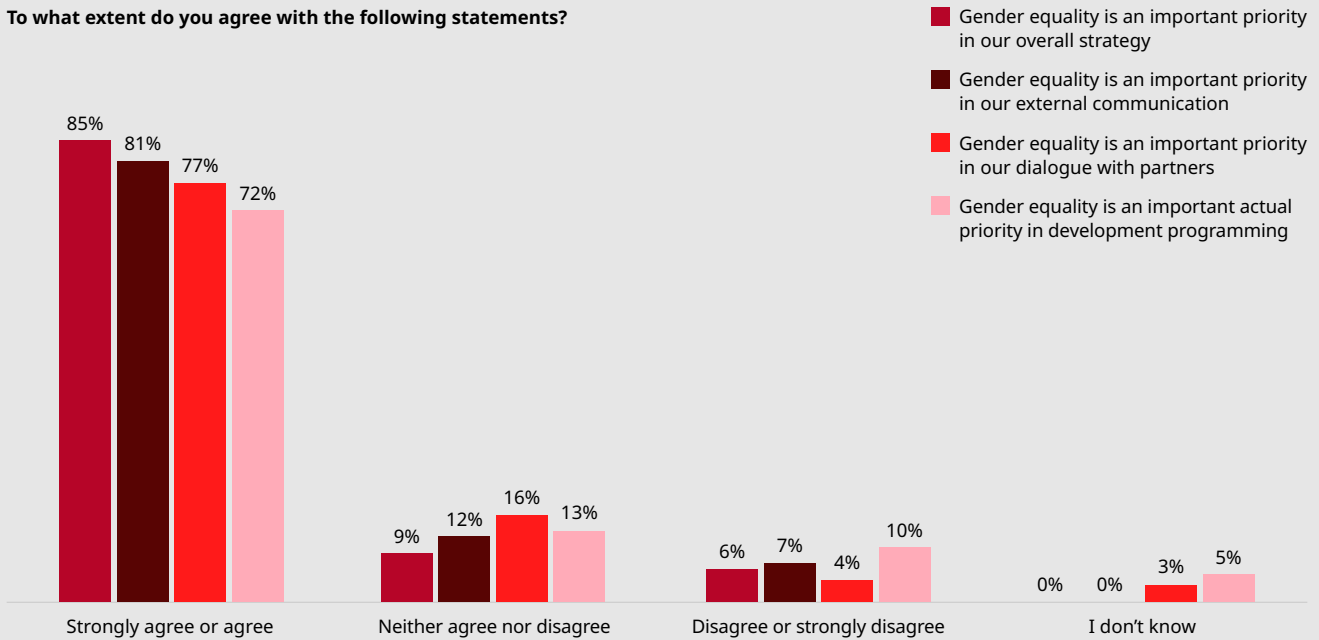
- *The Right to a Better Life* (2012) places gender equality firmly in the HRBA and applies principles of non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability in four priority areas: (a) human rights and democracy; (b) social progress; (c) inclusive green growth; and (d) stability and protection. Implementation was envisaged to be supported by organisational tools, suitable for a variety of modalities but with a slight leaning towards the context of bilateral programming.
- *The World We Share* (2021) was introduced at the end of this evaluation period and maintains human rights as fundamental. Emphasis on bilateral programming in sectors is replaced by principles equally suited for multilateral grants, evidenced in the previous section of this report. A shift is noted towards stronger Danish claims for leadership on gender equality and human rights and dignity of marginalised groups, all set in a poly-crises context of political pressure, migration, and climate change.

The perception that Danish policy commitment is strong was confirmed in a survey conducted as part of the data collection for this evaluation. 85% of respondents agreed with the statement that gender equality is an important priority in the overall *strategy*, and 72% agreed or strongly agreed with a statement on importance as an actual priority in *programming*.

Therefore, while there is a tendency for survey respondents to see gender equality as a somewhat stronger feature of policy than as a programming priority, it seems fair to say that the strong policy is also seen to drive programming and budget allocations to a significant extent.

FIGURE 15. PERCEPTION OF DANISH POLICY COMMITMENT

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



The perception that gender equality is a stronger priority at policy level than in implementation is also reflected in the finding of this evaluation that committed individuals get to play a stronger role as mandatory aid management requirements and effective mechanisms of gender mainstreaming have weakened.

Engaged individuals as drivers of gender mainstreaming are highlighted in interviews and FGDs and are found to be an important factor in a situation where requirements to apply HRBA screening notes and compulsory training serve as less of a reminder than used to be the case a decade ago. Interviews with KIs also highlighted the risk of gender equality facing thematic fatigue, which is mitigated by knowledgeable and experienced staff enjoying management backing to drive results, and which is particularly the case in priority engagements with strong lobbying partners as enablers, such as partners working on SRHR.

Finding 7: Denmark’s partnerships are fuelled by long-term predictable funding

Budget allocations for gender equality initiatives are justified by policy priorities and, once established, are found by this evaluation to follow a certain logic that can be summarised as path dependency. In other words, once a funding partnership is established, assuming it remains

strategically relevant and delivers against agreed outputs and outcomes, partners of Denmark are likely to remain at the receiving end of funding arrangements over longer periods of time. Analysis of the significant levels of core contributions to partners (shown in Figure 9) shows considerable continuity.

This feature of Danish funding allocations is recognised by funding recipients across the country and institutional case studies of this evaluation. Partners from large-scale multilateral agencies such as UNICEF and the UNFPA, but also international partners at MSI and local partners at more modest levels of funding – such as the Gender Violence and Recovery Centre (GVRC) and Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA) in Kenya – praise the partnership with Denmark for the pattern of long-term and predictable funding, which is found by partners to allow for strategic planning and open dialogue as experience accumulates and knowledge of each other deepens.

Finding 8: Political and senior management commitment drives gender equality engagement

Exploration of factors behind gender spending also brought up consistent evidence of the notion that in a politically driven organisation, actual commitment from ministers and senior management plays a key role. In the words of a posted staff member at a Danish embassy:

“On a busy day with many items on my to-do-list, I am having to prioritise my time and ask myself: will key people at the MFA in Copenhagen note my results in gender programming as much as they will reward me for my results in climate adaptation or green diplomacy?”

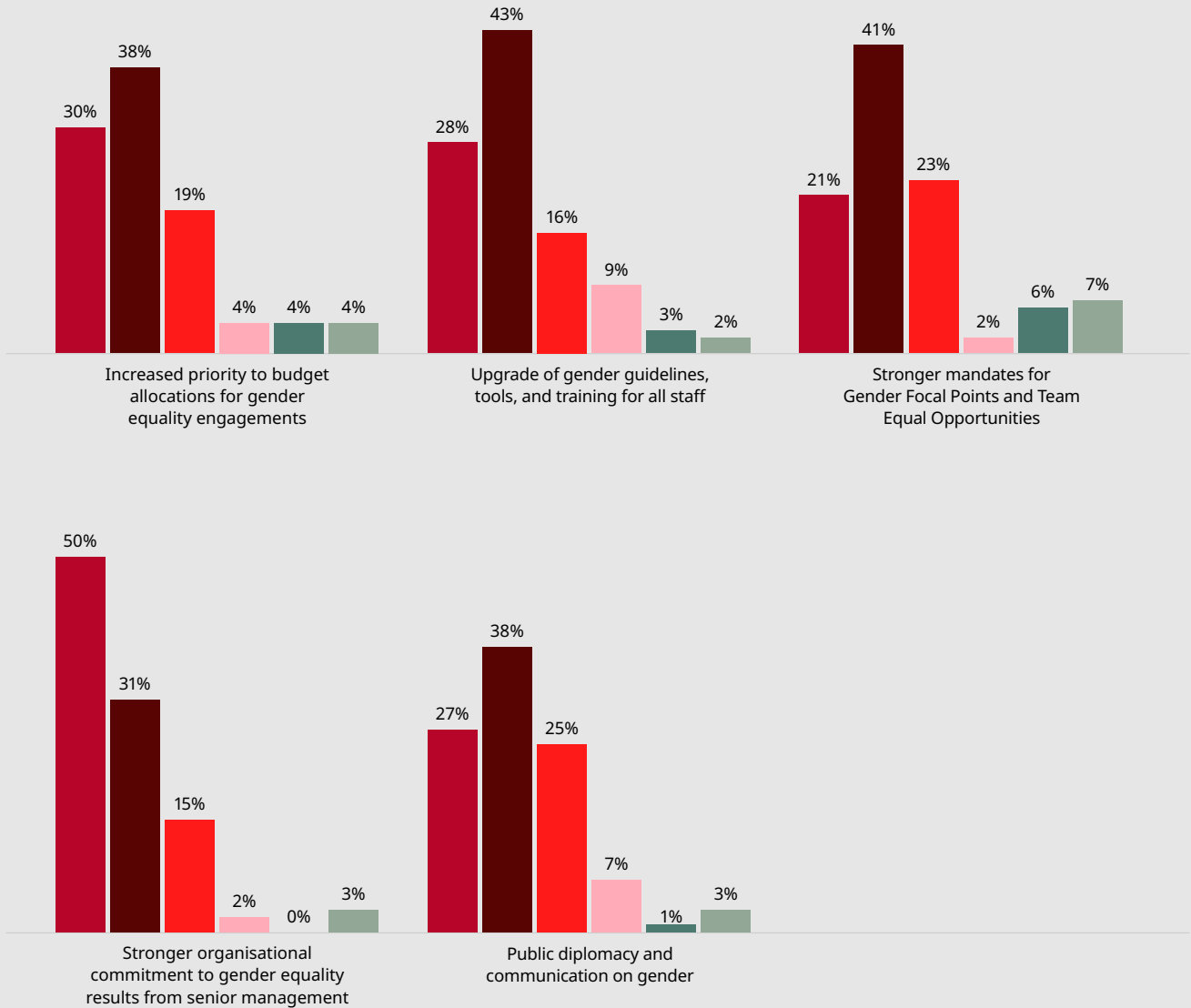
KIs and participants in FGDs refer to ministerial engagement in SRHR, and high-level involvement can trigger the commitment and focus of senior management, which is bound to play a key role in an organisational hierarchy.

Further evidence is delivered by the results of the staff survey carried out in November 2022, in which half of the respondents claimed that having a stronger organisational commitment to gender equality results from senior management is important to enable Denmark to play a leading role in promoting gender equality.

FIGURE 16. WHAT WOULD ENABLE DENMARK TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE?

From your point of view, what would enable Denmark to play a leading role in gender equality?

Very important Quite important Neutral
 Somewhat important Not at all important Don't know



5. FINDINGS THEME B: EVIDENCE OF RESULTS

This chapter presents evaluation findings on a wide variety of results of programmatic support and dialogue instruments. Evidence is contextualised where relevant to capture aspects of coherence between the variety of gender equality support instruments, and draws primarily on assessments of results in three country and four institutional case studies. Cases have been selected on targeted support to gender equality and SRHR as well as on evidence of mainstreaming in engagements with another primary goal, such as core support to the GCF and a deep dive into the gender relevance of SSC on environment and waste management in Kenya.

Results presented respond to Theme B of the TOR and aim to capture policy dialogue instruments within the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability in the bilateral and multi-lateral context, and the related issues such as approaches and strategies. Specific emphasis is placed on the three themes of governance, SRHR and climate, as results of support are assessed using the UNDP GRES, adapted for this evaluation as per Section 2.2: Evaluation instruments.

5.1 Relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in programming

This section serves to respond to two EQs. To avoid repetition, the issue of effectiveness and results from EQ 6 is presented together with EQ 5.

EQ 6 of the TOR was revised during the inception phase to capture bilateral and multilateral gender programming as it asks about relevance, effectiveness and efficiency:

EQ 6A: What has been the relevance/effectiveness/efficiency of gender programming in bilateral country programmes?

EQ 6B: What is the added value of partnerships with multilateral and international organisations with regard to advancing gender equality?

EQ 5 refers specifically to results of gender sensitive, gender responsive and gender transformative support:

EQ 5: To what extent are gender-related results in bilateral programming qualifying as 'gender sensitive', 'gender responsive' and 'gender transformative', and why?

What kinds of interventions, approaches or strategies in bilateral and multilateral programmes have been well suited to supporting transformational gender changes, and what lessons can be drawn?

Summary of key findings:

The evaluation finds that although gender equality – both, targeted and mainstreamed – is highly relevant in the country programme contexts and important results are documented, gender mainstreaming has not been explored to the full as regards implementation in all areas of relevance.

Gender inequality, conflict and fragility are evident in the case studies as key challenges to sustainable development, and they are inextricably linked. Gender inequality is often aggravated by conflict, and unequal gender relations can drive conflict and violence, but women's active participation in conflict resolution contributes to peace and resilience.²² However, programming in high-risk and unstable contexts, such as in Mali and Burkina Faso, is a balancing act for embassy staff between pragmatism and realism with regard to gender mainstreaming into programmes in a conflict setting.

The evaluation finds that shared principles and mutual trust are distinctive features of Danish partnerships, adding value for multilaterals and international organisations, with a strong focus on shared priorities such as SRHR as core elements for strong partnership.

Regarding effectiveness and types of results, the evaluation finds strong evidence in each of the thematic areas of the evaluation – governance, SRHR and climate – of gender sensitive, gender responsive and gender transformative results at macro, meso and micro level, but with more than half of the project results assessed falling in the category of 'gender responsive'.

Overall, governance and SRHR/GBV themes demonstrated more transformative results than climate did. The evaluation team believes this is because for projects under these themes to achieve their objectives, for example reducing the cases of GBV, beneficiaries need to understand and seek to influence prevailing gender norms, attitudes, and the root causes of inequality.

22 OECD: Gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected situations. A review of donor support. OECD Development Policy Papers No. 8, October 2017.

However, the entrepreneurship engagement with FACEJ in Mali shows that gender mainstreaming is also critical to economic empowerment and effective implementation of climate change adaptation. Focusing on green businesses and targeting at least 40% of credit to female entrepreneurs, the project showed indications of transformative results by contributing to female agency to change norms, cultural values and root causes of gender inequality.

The evaluation also finds that long-term partnerships with strong capacity and mutual understanding contribute to gender-related results of country programmes.

Finding 9: Gender equality interventions are highly relevant in the case country contexts

Gender equality interventions are highly relevant in the case country contexts and feature prominently in bilateral programme documentation, with a few exceptions of gender-unaware but highly relevant engagements.

In **Kenya**, three country programmes have been in place during the period of evaluation, and gender analyses during the formulation phase have informed all three. The Kenya Country Programme 2010-2015 was coming to an end at the outset of the evaluation; the 2016-2020²³ country programme was being implemented throughout. The present country programme (2021-2025) started only at the end of the evaluation period. However, due to the formative nature of this evaluation, looking to draw on lessons learned to inform future efforts, references are made to the current Kenya Country Programme (2021-2025) in this section. This pull effect towards the present is reinforced by the fact that data forming the basis of this evaluation was collected from informants engaged in current programming and future perspectives.

The Kenya Country Programme Document (2016-2020) notes:

“Discrimination continues, not least regarding women and minority groups, including sexual minorities. New constitutionally based independent commissions have been established to provide checks and balances, with mixed results. (...) Gender inequality persists although the new Constitution has far-reaching provisions to address issues such as affirmative action to raise women’s representation in public offices and elimination of gender discrimination in law, customs and practices related to land.”²⁴

23 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Kenya Country Programme 2016-2020 – Danish embassy Nairobi (October 2015).

24 Ibid.

Programme and engagement documentation reviewed all sought to address gender inequalities and marginalisation to some extent. For example, one of the criteria for selection of successful applications of sub-grantees is inclusivity, i.e. the extent to which proposed interventions substantively include marginalised and/or socially excluded groups such as youth, women, minorities, and people living with disabilities.

In an exception to this, the country case study deep dive into SSC on environment found no references to gender relevance as part of socio-economic analysis but saw its engagement as purely technical. Field visits, however, to SSC sub-partners, such as waste management facilities in Kenya, demonstrated gender relevance and commitment to this aspect of environmental regulation; yet, due to lack of inclusion in programme design, none of the SSC reported results speaks to gender equality.²⁵

Over the period of evaluation, in **Burkina Faso**, Denmark has implemented a transitional Human Rights and Democracy Country Programme from 2014 to 2016, followed by two full country programmes from 2016 to 2020²⁶ and from 2021 to 2025. Thematic priorities reflect a degree of continuity by the country programmes over the evaluation period:

- 2014-2016: Human Rights, Security and Social Cohesion, Democracy and Civic Promotion;
- 2016-2020: Human Rights and Stability, Water and Sanitation, Economic Growth in the Agricultural Sector, General Budget Support and Public Financial Management Support; and
- 2021-2025: Security, Rule of Law, Human Rights, Resilience, Adaptation to Climate Change.

A clear continuity in the strengthening of the themes addressed by the country programmes facilitates the progressive and transversal integration of gender equality in a permanent learning dynamic. The mainstreaming of gender equality in the thematic areas of the country programmes is supported by a Gender Focal Point at the embassy and informed by various gender analyses during the design and development stages of the respective programmes.

25 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Partner Document for Strategic Sector Cooperation in Environment between Denmark and Kenya Phase 2, 2021-2024.

26 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Burkina Faso Country Programme 2016-2020. Final Version, October 2015.

In **Mali**, two bilateral development cooperation programmes (Transitional Programme 2015-2016²⁷ and Country Programme 2017-2022) covering the period of this evaluation were operating in a high-risk and unstable context. Both programmes took their point of departure in the context of continued political, socioeconomic and security-related fragility, and were designed to be robust in this context. The Country Policy Paper 2016-2021²⁸ was already designed such that the Country Programme could be flexible, aiming at responding to both positive and negative developments in the overall situation of the country while preserving a focus on results.

With the goal to achieve sustainable peace and development based on inclusive and legitimate governance and respect for human rights for the Malian people, the Country Programme (2017-2022) is implemented through three thematic programmes:

1. Promoting private sector employment, launched in 2019 with the aim of strengthening inclusive growth stimulated by the private sector to increase income and create jobs/self-employment;
2. general decentralisation support, aimed at strengthening citizen participation and improving the delivery of public services at local level; and
3. good governance (democracy, peace and reconciliation), to promote a more peaceful and resilient Malian society respecting human rights.

Various analyses carried out in the preparation for the Country Programme, including the embassy-financed 'Drivers of Change Study' (2014) that provided input to programming, pointed out the inadequate inclusion and civic engagement and how it results in marginalisation, apathy and local conflicts.²⁹ A dual Gender Focal Point position at the embassy, one local and one international staff member, also aims to ensure the gender mainstreaming throughout the three thematic programmes.

Responding to both positive and negative developments in the overall situation of the country while preserving a focus on results has required embassy staff to balance pragmatism and realism with the integration of gender equity and equality priorities and other needs

27 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Denmark's Transition Programme for Mali, 2015-2016, Transition Programme Document.

28 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Denmark – Mali, Country Policy Paper 2016-2021.

29 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Mali Country Programme Document 2017-2022 – Danish embassy Bamako (February 2017).

in a conflict setting. However, the ongoing crisis in Mali has led to levels of socioeconomic disruption and displacement at an unprecedented scale, with women and girls being most vulnerable and therefore highly relevant to focus on.

Finding 10: Coherent objectives and mutual trust are distinctive features for a strong partnership with multilateral and international partners to advance gender equality

Shared principles, coherent objectives and mutual trust are found to be distinctive features that are relevant for strong Danish partnerships with multilateral and international partners on shared thematic priorities such as gender equality and SRHR. However, while gender equality was found to be documented as relevant in the large-scale Danish partnership with the GCF, mainstreaming efforts in that case study were found to be negligible.

Danish support for the **UNFPA** is substantial in absolute terms, and Denmark has ranked consistently among the top five contributors of core funding to the agency throughout the evaluation period, and is also an important advocacy partner. The UNFPA sees Denmark as a close ally on SRHR and, more recently, also a trusted humanitarian partner, as support from Denmark has been earmarked but provided to enable the UNFPA to operate efficiently. The approach to exercising influence by Denmark is described by UNFPA KIs:

“Other donors willing to support regional advisers on gender-based violence will specify in which countries. Denmark will say: ‘we will fund two advisers, but you tell us where they are required’. This is in essence how our partnership with Denmark is distinct. We are presented with thematic priorities but left with flexibility to decide how we go about implementation”.

High degrees of flexibility by Denmark are seen to allow the UNFPA to respond quickly and independently. Flexibility also means that the UNFPA can reallocate between supplies and training or deployment. Denmark is highlighted as an open-minded partner, willing to take calculated risks and test out new ideas before going to scale. Cash vouchers used to be a small programme piloted without mitigative measures, but now the UNFPA sees itself as leading on cash assistance, and this is found to be attributed, in part, to the inherent trust and flexibility found to characterise the UNFPA’s humanitarian partnership with Denmark.

When a dedicated humanitarian fund was established by the UNFPA, Denmark was one of the first donors engaging with funding but also had a strong technical role on governance. Denmark was seen by

the UNFPA as a pioneer on advocacy and early funding of the UNFPA's humanitarian engagement. Denmark saw the UNFPA as a partner for SRHR and systemic change in the humanitarian sector.

Also, a case study deep dive into earmarked support to promote innovation provided evidence of efficiency gains in SRHR service delivery. Some activities supported by the UNFPA Innovation Fund,³⁰ established with support from Finland and Denmark in 2014, aimed to promote a culture of innovation and have involved partners and stakeholders in youth-led 'hackathons', where ideas are developed and prototypes are tested. Other activity grants have funded the design and testing of new approaches to service delivery. Technology is a strong feature of many supported projects, as evidenced by the numerous case examples of apps to empower youths with information on SRHR, build capacity of health workers on appropriate drugs for family planning, and provide comprehensive sexuality education for youth in remote areas.³¹

The case study of **UNICEF** documents a close partnership with the Danish MFA, both at global level – with Denmark being a vocal actor on the promotion of gender equality in UNICEF's Executive Board meetings in New York – and in the evaluation's case study countries. There, the relationship between the Danish embassy and the UNICEF country office is considered as a blueprint for other country offices, according to KIs for this evaluation.

Findings of this evaluation point to high levels of appreciation of the partnership by both sides, who perceive the relationship to be characterised by mutual trust and shared principles. UNICEF acknowledges Denmark's flexibility in funding for the type of programming required in humanitarian settings, where things are constantly evolving and where certain crises are emerging in different areas. The flexible funding allows for quickly pivoting and targeting those emerging areas.

In terms of establishing the contribution of this funding towards gender equality results, there is an assumption that UNICEF integrates gender equality as a cross-cutting issue by default. Gender equality is clearly stated as a principle and shared value in the Danish organisation strategy for UNICEF. There is no explicit earmarking for the Gender Team, apart from a secondment providing strategic advice and technical support for evidence-based and cross-sectoral programming on leadership and empowerment of adolescent girls.

30 Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2021) Review of earmarked support to UNFPA Innovation Fund 2014-2021.

31 UNFPA: 'Formative evaluation of the UNFPA Innovation Initiative' – Volume 1, June 2017, p. 21.

UNICEF's Gender Action Plan 2022-2025³² states that gender equality is a priority in every sector, including the desired change to track investment. For the MFA, the Gender Equality Global Annual Results Report³³ produced by UNICEF's Gender Team is the main source of information in writing, although the information the MFA hears from partners and colleagues at country level is also valuable. The MFA maintains a contact group for the majority of multilateral funds and programmes (including UNICEF) to increase information exchange between embassies and colleagues at capital and in multilateral representations, and gender equality is seen by the MFA as integrated and monitored through these mechanisms.

MSI and Denmark share a strong focus on adolescent girls' and women's right to reproductive choices;³⁴ this shared focus led to mutual appreciation in the partnership, especially because of their joint advocacy work on SRHR. MSI's growing focus on protecting and promoting SRHR in fragile and humanitarian settings aligns well with Danish priorities. MSI's core mandate and activities are in full convergence with the Danish priorities, especially strategic aim 4, and will contribute directly to Denmark achieving its objectives.

Alignment on policy focus and relevance is also noted for the **GCF** but remains to be rolled out and made operational.

Finding 11: Results in bilateral programming are 'gender responsive' when different needs within the country context are addressed

Gender equality-related results in bilateral programming tend to qualify mostly as 'gender responsive' when addressing the different needs of women, men and marginalised groups within their individual country context, but they often stop short of challenging the root causes of inequality.

When assessed based on the case projects selected for the evaluation, the picture that emerges is that more than half of the projects are gender responsive. In **Kenya**, three of the four projects are gender responsive.³⁵ It emerged that while none of the four case projects supported under the Country Programme has gender equality as a stand-alone objective in its interventions, in all except the SSC it was a requirement from Danida while developing their Development

32 UNICEF (2022) Gender Action Plan 2022-2025.

33 UNICEF (2022) Global Annual Results Report 2021: Gender equality.

34 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and Marie Stopes International (2016) Empowering women to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights through Marie Stopes International's 'Power of Ten' strategy. Final Report, January-December 2015.

35 See Kenya Case Study Document: Gender Violence and Recovery Centre (GVRC), Act, Change, Transform (ACT!) and Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA).

Engagement Documents (DEDs). As such, three of the four projects have also mainstreamed gender equality in implementation modalities.³⁶

In **Burkina Faso** two of the four case projects are gender responsive.³⁷ It should be noted that one had the risk of conflicted messaging on choice of contraceptives by youth, which could cause harm, and one was partially gender-targeted, with interesting, unexpected outcomes, but also missed opportunities in terms of gender transformation (e.g. governance, access to land, women's economic empowerment).³⁸

In **Mali** two of the four case projects are gender responsive.³⁹ Key impacts of the projects have been in influencing practice and attitude change by interacting with communities. Given the prevailing situation regarding gender relations in Mali as well as in Burkina Faso, the assessed project engagements were also found to be highly relevant in addressing discriminatory practices and unequal power relations.

Finding 12: Gender transformative results dominate in the thematic areas of SRHR and governance in the case study countries

Case study deep dives in **Kenya** covered all three thematic areas of the evaluation and found more gender transformative results in governance and SRHR than under the climate theme. Engagement with the GVRC is assessed to be the most gender-targeted, with transformative results, albeit at micro level for a small group of beneficiaries compared to the scale of GBV. All but the SSC on environment work on elements that make their impact gender responsive and gender transformative. SSC has the potential to be more targeted and transformative, as shown by the engagement with the private waste sorting company Taka Taka, which does not involve funding but KIs report that the company does provide women with employment benefits.

In the case projects in **Burkina Faso**, the themes of SRHR and combating harmful practices such as FGM and early marriage showed indications of more gender transformative results than agriculture/climate change/green growth and humanitarian assistance. This is due to the strong understanding and buy-in of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) stakeholders such as MSI, particularly the participatory engagement of male community leaders.

36 Ibid.

37 See Burkina Faso Case Study Document: WASH IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) and Cadre de concertation de base des ONG (CCEB).

38 Ibid: CCEB.

39 See Mali Case Study Document: FACEJ and UN Women.

MSI's expertise, knowledge of the field and experience in conducting advocacy^{40 41} were also found to be valuable assets. On the humanitarian level, however, the emergency and ad hoc nature of humanitarian assistance did not allow for work to be done to bring about lasting changes, apart from the support on access to WASH provided to those women who were IDPs.⁴² Support for the recovery of livelihoods and the balance of social relations in a more secure context in the medium and long term remains a challenge to be met. In a shea nut project⁴³ there was found to be a missed opportunity for change in terms of economic empowerment and access to land ownership for women; the transformative effects expected from the training and support have not been fully realised.

In the case projects for the **Mali** programme the theme of Private Sector Development, with a focus on green business, showed indications of gender transformative results by contributing to changes in norms, cultural values and the roots of gender inequality and discrimination. In particular FACEJ, a private sector development programme that aims to incorporate a climate-sensitive approach and targets a female entrepreneur credit rate of at least 40%, states in its annual report for 2021⁴⁴ that it has reached its gender target and that young female entrepreneurs have reached a certain level of independence and a change of status in the community and have become providers for a wider family system.

Finding 13: Long-term partnerships in bilateral settings are instrumental for gender transformational results

A long-term partnership and partners with high capacity and expertise of their areas of engagement are instrumental to achieve gender transformational results.

In all four projects in **Kenya**, partnering with partners that hold high capacity and understanding of their areas of engagement has been significant to the kinds of gender-related results achieved by the Country Programme. The four partners have a long-running engagement with the embassy, meaning that they understand Danish positions on gender equality. Partners demonstrated a deep understanding of the context

40 Marie Stopes International (2022) MSI Burkina Faso November Advocacy Results.

41 Marie Stopes International (2021) Rapport atelier de formation des acteurs judiciaires sur la clarification des valeurs et la transformation des attitudes en matière de santé sexuelle et reproductive, Koudougou, 15-19 November 2021.

42 UNICEF Burkina Faso (2020) WASH interventions in support of IDPs and host communities in Centre Nord and Est regions in Burkina Faso 2019-2020. Progress and utilization report 1 to the Government of Denmark.

43 Shea butter project agreement 104/BKF/43116 between Embassy of Denmark and CNRST.

44 FACEJ (2022) Rapport Annuel 2021.

and prevailing gender issues, challenges and emerging opportunities for engagement to advance the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda.

An additional contributing factor is that Danish funding to organisations is provided over a long period – at least five years in the projects assessed. This gives the partners ample time to engage deeply with some issues around attitude and behaviour change – elements that take a long time to shift. Additionally, partners have been funded continuously, with breaks during programme design. This means that they can build on the dividends of previous years of engagement.

In **Burkina Faso**, Danish support to short-term projects (two to three years) through the Common Gender Fund⁴⁵ show positive results but limitations in terms of reach and sustainability. Common Gender Fund support for local gender equality organisations was found to strengthen the programming of key stakeholders, who will be around to continue to do the work when international organisations are gone or cannot access areas due to insecurity. For MSI, the long-term funding approach through the core fund is well appreciated for its flexibility. The organisations that benefit from the core fund are institutionally more efficient and well experienced and have expertise in gender equality.

Achieving gender equality results is found by the embassy informants to be linked to the development and monitoring frameworks that integrate gender equality objectives and indicators to enable performance measurement. This monitoring allows for dialogue, detection and even action to overcome areas of weakness to ensure that gender equality goals are achieved.

In **Mali**, the facilitation of gender studies within a project duration helped to identify and address changes in the landscape and to adjust operational plans and programmes to better contribute to transformative gender changes, notably in the case of Private Sector Development.⁴⁶

The potential to transform gender norms and power structures is also realised when it is part of a robust partnership, built on mutual trust and ongoing support for all parties involved. Such trust allows for gender analysis findings to translate into a redesign of programming, as evidenced by the evaluation case study of FACEJ.

45 Common Fund Gender, Narrative and financial reports from 2017 to 2019.

46 FACEJ (2022) Rapport Annuel 2021.

5.2 Outcome and effectiveness of global dialogue instruments

A dedicated question of the TOR refers specifically to results of global dialogue instruments:

EQ 4: What has been the outcome and effectiveness of Danish engagement in global dialogue on support to gender equality?

Summary of key findings:

The evaluation finds evidence of regular and comprehensive engagement by Denmark on gender equality aspects, particularly in relation to SRHR, where the evaluation notes strong relevance due to the increasingly global pushback by the anti-gender movement and a high profile by Denmark with core partners such as the UNFPA and UNICEF. Outcomes identified include gender equality being integrated more strongly into the current overall strategy of UNICEF and a much stronger humanitarian engagement by the UNFPA during the period of evaluation.

In the case of the UNFPA, the evaluation also notes a mutually recognised role as a normative ally on sensitive policy issues such as abortion, comprehensive sexuality education and sexual minority rights. Earmarked support from Denmark is found to have had effects on the UNFPA's approach to innovation, exemplified by the testing and scaling up of cost-efficient SRHR communication for youth.

However, the profile and outcome of Denmark in dialogue on gender equality with the case study partner the GCF was found to be minimal. Considering the relevance of gender equity and equality for climate action and the levels of Danish support, the evaluation finds this to be a missed opportunity for exploration.

Finding 14: Denmark regularly engages in global dialogue on gender equality issues with partners, enhancing organisational effectiveness

Denmark regularly engages in global dialogue on gender equality issues with partners by actively engaging on normative aspects of SRHR, bridging humanitarian and development assistance, and enhancing organisational effectiveness.

Throughout the evaluation period, Danish engagement with the **UNFPA** and **UNICEF** has unfolded in a context of high levels of overall alignment combined with strategic priorities, where Denmark has used policy

dialogue mechanisms and earmarked funding to influence the two multilateral partners. In the case of the **UNFPA**, Danish priorities have been captured by two strategies⁴⁷ for engagement for the UNFPA, representing considerable continuity over time. These priorities were:

- a. Advance SRHR in the context of global controversy;
- b. engage actively in humanitarian emergencies and take leadership in leaving no one behind; and
- c. enhance organisational effectiveness and contribute to UN reform, leveraging innovation.

Denmark has been represented at the Executive Board of the UNFPA from 2015 to 2017 and 2020 to 2021, and records of policy dialogue with the UNFPA at Board level and high-level consultations show evidence of an active role by the MFA in pursuing the stated priorities of the two organisation strategies of the evaluation period, not least when it comes to some of the disputed aspects of SRHR where pushback is strong. This is confirmed by evaluation consultations across the various MFA stakeholders engaged in UNFPA support. A MFA contact group is in place to coordinate Danish positions led by the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations in New York and comprising embassies and MFA departments Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement and Migration, Stabilisation and Fragility (Team Equal Opportunities).

Danish priorities for **UNICEF** were captured by two strategies⁴⁸ during the evaluation period. In the 2014-2018 Organisation Strategy, five Danish priority areas for cooperation spanning both earmarked and core contributions were identified:

1. Promoting quality education for all children.
2. Bridging humanitarian action and development assistance.
3. Advancing effective child protection.
4. Enhancing organisational efficiency and effectiveness.
5. Fighting corruption and managing risks.

47 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark: Strategy for Denmark's Engagement with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2014-2018 & 2018-2022.

48 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Strategy for Denmark's Engagement with UNICEF 2014-2018 & 2018-2022.

In the 2018-2022 Organisation Strategy three priority areas were identified:

1. Child-centric health and education delivery and system strengthening in development and humanitarian settings.
2. Child protection in development and humanitarian settings.
3. Organisational effectiveness contributing to UN reform, curbing corruption and leveraging innovation.

Denmark has regularly been represented at UNICEF's Executive Boards, and records of policy dialogue with UNICEF at Board level and high-level consultations show an active role by the MFA in pursuing the identified priorities of these two organisation strategies. Various consultations with MFA and UNICEF staff reveal that Denmark is perceived as playing an important and vocal role in the Board on championing gender equality. For instance, Denmark advocated successfully for integrating SRHR in UNICEF's Gender Policy 2021-2030.

Danish footprints on UNICEF's Strategic Plan (2022-2025)⁴⁹ include a stronger focus on SRHR and gender equality but also on climate and the humanitarian-development nexus. The respective Strategic Plan was developed alongside the gender policy and the Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2022-2025.⁵⁰ A secondment from Denmark allowed for strategic advice and technical support for evidence-based and cross-sectoral programming on adolescent girls' empowerment and leadership.

UNICEF's GAP specifies how UNICEF will promote gender equality across all the organisation's work at global, regional and country levels, and elaborates the gender equality dimensions of the programmatic results and the relevant indicators for measuring success. Interviews with MFA staff disclose that the annual reporting on the plan – Global Annual Results Report: Gender Equality – is an appreciated source of information for the MFA and is used especially by the MFA's contact group for funds and programmes to increase levels of information between embassies, Copenhagen, and the Danish Mission to the UN in New York.

MSI, the third case study partner of this evaluation, is a relatively small recipient organisation in comparison to the UNFPA and UNICEF, is a leading SRHR organisation and is supported by Denmark within the Danish portfolio of SRHR. This is echoed in the Organisational Strategy

49 UNICEF (2021) UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

50 UNICEF (2021) UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2022-2025.

2018-2022⁵¹ (the first strategy since Denmark started providing support to MSI in 2010) within its two priority areas:

1. Scale and Impact: Doubling the health impact through contraception and safe abortions service delivery at scale.
2. Sustainability: Using our expertise as a social business to build sustainable private sector models that go beyond donor support.

Encouraged by Denmark's strong focus on humanitarian work and its priority 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB) – the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – and MSI's presence in fragile and conflict-affected countries, MSI started to focus more on marginalised women and girls. MSI's growing focus on protecting and promoting SRHR in fragile and humanitarian settings aligns with Danish priorities, especially in strategic aim 4, and will contribute directly to Denmark achieving its objectives.

The **GCF** is the fourth case study partner. Judging from documentation and records of meetings, gender equality seems to be a priority for Denmark but is not reflected in guiding principles of the organisation. The evaluation therefore finds a missed opportunity to integrate gender equality in a top-priority context of climate programming.

Although the GCF is a key partner and Denmark is a Governing Board member at the GCF, the evaluation found no records of active policy dialogue on gender equality with the GCF, either at Board level or in other high-level consultations. Although both Organisational Strategies (2016-2021 and 2021-2023) list gender mainstreaming as a priority for Denmark, multiple studies and evaluations⁵² in recent years found that the GCF's standards show gaps on human rights, as well as gender equality and equity concerns, and that its gender policy does not adhere to international standards.⁵³ Even an evaluation by the GCF's Independent Evaluation Unit,⁵⁴ published in 2020, recommended clear guidance on gender sensitive development, and stated:

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- 51 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Strategy for Denmark's Support to Marie Stopes International 2018-2022.
- 52 Climate Finance Fundamentals 11 (2020) The Green Climate Fund, Washington, DC.
- 53 Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), (2021), Pulling Together - The Multilateral Response to Climate Change, Lessons in Multilateral Effectiveness, Paris.
- 54 Annandale Darko, David Annandale, Daniela Rey Christen, María García Espinosa, John Horberry, Joseph Mavindu Mutunga, Peter Mwandri, Jyotsna (Jo) Puri, Giang Pham, and Andreas Reumann (2020). Independent evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Environmental and Social Safeguards and the Environmental and Social Management System. Evaluation Report No. 5, February 2020. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund. Songdo, South Korea.

“GCF’s current environmental and social management system and safeguards are not customized or relevant to the GCF’s overall mandate. The GCF needs to urgently develop and adopt a new set of policies that reflect positive environmental, social and climate value in its actions and investments. Specifically, it needs to address gaps found in the interim standards related to climate value, human rights, gender equity and consent, among others.”

Unlike the other organisations within this evaluation (MSI, UNICEF and the UNFPA), that of the GCF is the only one with climate and greening as its primary purpose. Unlike the other case studies, where the organisations receive funding from Denmark that is earmarked as well (UNICEF and the UNFPA), the evaluation found that the GCF is the only case study where the organisation receives a contribution from Denmark only to its core funding but no earmarked funding, with increasing engagement over recent years.

Finding 15: Danish contribution has influenced changes to organisational policies and programmes relevant to gender equality

For the **UNFPA**, Danish support used to consist almost exclusively of core grants; and although the expectation is a continuation of relatively large grants of core support, a substantial and growing share is provided as earmarked support, seen as an effective instrument in influencing organisational priorities. The UNFPA’s increasing role as a humanitarian actor bears evidence of Danish contributions to this outcome, and funding priority for UNFPA Supplies is also highlighted as an instrument to ensure that service delivery elements such as contraception are kept high on the agenda for family planning, maternal health, and safe abortion in programming.

The UNFPA praises Denmark for high levels of predictable funding, for a pragmatic approach of refraining from administrative micro-management, and for focusing Board interventions and informal dialogue on the normative issues on SRHR, comprehensive sexuality education and sexual minority rights; observations are also shared on how Denmark stands out from other Nordic countries. According to KIs Denmark, in comparison to Norway and Sweden, provides less technical expertise and direct bilateral engagement but focuses more on a normative role, especially on SRHR and issues such as comprehensive sexuality education.

At **UNICEF**, where Denmark has regularly been represented at its Executive Board and is perceived as being vocal on championing gender equality, Denmark advocated for the integration of SRHR in UNICEF’s Gender

Policy 2021-2030,⁵⁵ which articulates UNICEF's commitments on gender equality. As UNICEF's current Strategic Plan (2022-2025) was developed along the respective policy, the Strategic Plan now has a stronger focus on SRHR and gender equality and on climate and the humanitarian-development nexus (see also Finding 1).

MSI and Denmark became mutually appreciated partners, especially in advocacy, which some MSI interviewees remember as being "transformational for the organisation". A grant provided by Denmark in 2014 enabled MSI to scale up, leading to a higher recognition of the role that MSI plays in the ecosystem – the advocacy work on removing restrictions on SRHR became a priority in MSI's strategy 'MSI 2030: Your Body, Your Choice, Your Future'.⁵⁶

This coherent pathway of change and MSI's ambition to engage in advocacy and LNOB, with a focus on reaching adolescent girls and vulnerable and marginalised women in partnership with other organisations, was also acknowledged as evident in the MFA's mid-term review of MSI⁵⁷ in 2021. The respective mid-term review suggests that the ongoing strategic dialogue between the MFA and MSI could be further developed and utilised, with a focus on topics of mutual strategic interest.

No gender-relevant outcomes are noted in the case of the partnership with the **GCF**.

Finding 16: Gender equality results of joint advocacy work are reflected in global agreements and national laws and policies

Gender equality results of joint advocacy work are identifiable in global agreements and national laws and policies, with clear examples of contributions by Denmark.

Joint advocacy is praised in unison as an example of a significant outcome with mutual benefits. Looking at the evaluation period from 2014 to 2021, examples of advocacy initiatives and events are in plentiful supply and have been a high-profile aspect of the Danish partnership, especially with the **UNFPA** and **MSI**, involving goodwill ambassadors, ministers for development cooperation, Members of Parliament, civil servants and civil society.

55 UNICEF (2021) UNICEF Gender Policy 2021-2030.

56 Marie Stopes International (2020) MSI 2030. Your Body, Your Choice, Your Future. 2021-2030 Strategy.

57 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Mid-Term Review of MSI Reproductive Choices (2021).

HRH Crown Princess Mary of Denmark has been the **UNFPA's** patron since 2010, and this has involved advocacy and public diplomacy engagements, often accompanied by the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation. Advocacy does not have to involve ministers or Crown Princesses, but the UNFPA's experience in engaging with politically led entities such as the MFA is that high-level involvement tends to mobilise organisations more broadly, open doors and enable public profiling of SRHR and other priority issues. Patron engagements with the UNFPA have included:

- SRHR events at the MFA, Danish Parliament, and UN City in Copenhagen;
- multiple field visits with media coverage, including Burkina Faso and Kenya; and
- participation at UN conferences, CSW, the UN General Assembly and side events.

Towards the end of the evaluation period, in 2019 Denmark cooperated with the UNFPA and the Government of Kenya to prepare and co-host the Nairobi Summit to mark the 25th Anniversary of the ICPD, a central normative framework that drives the work of the UNFPA. The Nairobi Summit brought together thousands of stakeholders in Nairobi to “accelerate the promise” and was found to have revitalised the ICPD agenda and ensured Kenyan buy-in as well as high-level global leadership. In conjunction with the meeting, the ICPD+25 High-Level Commission was established to ensure follow up to the more than 1300 commitments made by the governments and CSOs at the Nairobi Summit.

The outcome can be challenging to quantify, but evaluation interlocutors in Kenya highlighted ICPD+25 commitment by the Government of Kenya as a lever for keeping up momentum on the SRHR agenda in Danish policy dialogue with Kenya and the wider region of East Africa. Following this high-level event, the current UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025⁵⁸ presents itself as a call to action, building on the momentum of ICPD+25 in 2019,⁵⁹ to achieve the transformative results of ending (a) the unmet need for family planning, (b) preventable maternal deaths, and (c) GBV and all harmful practices, including FGM and child, early and forced marriage; thus the example of ICPD+25 demonstrates the potential of bringing funding and advocacy instruments into play, with the UNFPA and Kenya as long-term strategic partners.

58 UNFPA (2021) UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

59 <https://www.nairobisummiticpd.org>

With **MSI**, public engagements by the Danish Crown Princess and the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation took place in Burkina Faso. A visit, covered by the media, enabled the delegation to observe how Denmark works in the field with partners and allowed MSI to showcase their contribution to the joint advocacy work and to highlight the appointments. MSI reports that in 2019, with Denmark's support, it was able to contribute to 13 policy changes, including:⁶⁰

- Kenya: new post-abortion care guidelines secured; increased resource allocation for family planning secured in Mombasa County and Nakuru County;
- Mongolia: revised national safe abortion care guidelines approved (eligible private providers can now provide medical abortion up to nine weeks);
- Niger: presidential decree secured to implement Reproductive Health Law, ensuring that this is now binding law, and to enhance community-based distribution of family planning services; and
- Nigeria: inclusion of misoprostol and mifepristone on the Essential Drug List in Nigeria.

In the case of the **GCF**, no joint advocacy work on gender equality became evident in this evaluation. Considering the relevance of gender equality for climate action and/or mitigation efforts, and the levels of Danish support, the evaluation finds this to be a missed opportunity for exploration, especially regarding land rights and climate justice.

In **Kenya**, the GVRC seeks to influence and change existing norms and values, especially as these relate to power of men and women in society. The GVRC has proven to be successful in various levels of policy work throughout the following:⁶¹

- The GVRC is a member of the National Gender-Based Violence Technical Working Group, which is made up of state and non-state actors; they made key inputs into the National GBV Manual that is now used by the national health facilities;
- the GVRC supported the development of the National Guidelines on Management of Survivors of GBV, including pushing for and succeeding in ensuring

60 MSI, Annual Report 2019 PowerPoint Presentation.

61 Enhancing Services and Advocacy on Gender-Based Violence in Kenya. Project Completion Report (2017-2020). GVRC.

that these Guidelines included a forensic module to help access to justice efforts of GBV survivors; and

- at the time of the evaluation, the GVRC was involved in providing inputs to revisions of the Sexual Offences Act of 2006 as well as the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act of 2015, both of which were under review.

Also in Kenya, Act Change Transform (ACT!) funds mechanisms to support countering violent extremism. ACT! engaged with the county governments in advocating for the allocation of funds to peace work by encouraging more women and youth to engage in peace efforts.^{62 63} ACT! has also influenced and advocated for key policies, legislation and plans that have a gender lens or perspective. For example, in the development of the Kenya National Action Plan II, ACT! made inputs into the development process around Resolution 1325 and the participation of women in peacebuilding processes in Kenya.⁶⁴ They have also been active in development processes at county level to ensure the inclusion of gender equality pillars.

TMEA, which advocates for gender sensitive trade policymaking at regional level and supports the role of women in cross-border trade, aims to improve gender sensitivity in customs and border management, for example through its efforts to push for the implementation of the East African Community (EAC) gender and trade policy.⁶⁵

5.3 Impact and sustainability of outcomes

A dedicated TOR question refers specifically to the impact and sustainability of outcomes:

EQ 7: What have been the key impacts and sustainability of gender equality outcomes achieved within (i) Climate Change/Green Transition and Inclusive Growth; (ii) SRHR/GBV; (iii) Governance?

62 ACT! (2017) Peace, Security and Stability. FY 2017 (January-December 2017), Annual Progress Report.

63 ACT! (2019) Peace, Security and Stability, (January-December 2019) Annual Progress Report.

64 Peace, Security and Stability, FY 2019 (January to December 2019) Annual Progress Report, ACT!

65 TMEA Gender Strategy II 2020-2024 Doing Gender Differently.

Summary of key findings:

The analysis of the three country case studies provides evidence in all three thematic areas for local ownership being a key driver for impact and sustainability, especially when civil society has a role in decision making. Good practice examples for investing in civil society are the Common Gender Fund in Burkina Faso, which aims to strengthen gender mainstreaming through a better coordination among a group of bilateral and multilateral partners, and the PATRIP Foundation in Mali, which works with local sub-partners that are trusted even in areas under the influence of radical groups.

The evaluation finds that the gender transformative approach of engagement of men alongside women has been fundamental to promoting gender equality and achieving impact and sustainability, as evidenced by a reduction in the number of cases of FGM and undesired pregnancies at schools in Burkina Faso, women joining community peace structures in Kenya, and women gaining support from husbands for female entrepreneurship in Mali.

Finding 17: Local ownership is a key driver for impact and sustainability

In **Burkina Faso** a group of development partners⁶⁶ has set up a basket fund, Fonds Commun Genre (FCG),⁶⁷ to harmonise support for gender initiatives, with the aim of strengthening gender mainstreaming through better coordination. With Denmark as the largest donor,⁶⁸ support from FCG was provided to national actors in the 2019 formulation of the new National Gender Strategy (2020-2024), the adoption of the Gender-Based Violence Act and the 2019 National Assembly Law, establishing quotas for women in political candidates lists. It has been assessed that FCG's actions contribute to the reduction of GBV, improved women's access to land, greater participation of men in domestic tasks, and greater participation of women in local decision making. It also focused on gender responsive budgeting and children's rights, which has led to the adoption of a budgetary circular by the State instituting it and to the establishment of a permanent committee to evaluate the planning and performance of sectoral ministries from the perspective of gender responsive budgeting and children's rights. This budgeting is currently applied in 25 ministries.

66 The group comprises Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UEMOA and Austria.

67 <https://fondscommungenre.org/>

68 Joint financing protocol of the Technical and Financial Partners members of the common gender fund for the implementation of the strategic plan 2019-2023.

In **Kenya** the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)⁶⁹ is an example of Denmark's engagement in women's political participation and its long-standing support for development partners, increasingly being complemented by policy initiatives that are not directly linked to development funding but, arguably, are made possible by the knowledge and credibility provided by long-term engagement with local partners. The non-profit organisation, which offers free legal aid to women and their children, supports the implementation of the two-thirds gender rule of the Kenyan Constitution, which states that "not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender".⁷⁰ This was also presented as an example of gender change results in a previous MFA Evaluation Study.⁷¹ FIDA remains a key implementing partner for Denmark under the governance programme.

Other elements around sustainability and local ownership in Kenya relate, for example, to GVRC's work, where its activities are embedded within national health facilities in GVRC centres at county level. The Centre has undertaken, and continues to undertake, capacity development of national health staff to handle GBV cases, and this not only improves but also enhances services for survivors. Engagement with duty bearers such as teachers and police also has the potential to be sustainable, especially where this results in behaviour change.

For TMEA, areas that promise sustainability are its efforts to build the capacity of women-owned and women-led businesses to strengthen the capacity of women traders. For example, in the seven counties where it is operating, TMEA has enhanced the participation of women in the agricultural sector in Kenya by supporting the formation of groups of women aggregators who can trade agricultural produce themselves, cutting out the middleman. It has also carried out training of border officials to be more gender responsive, as well as building the capacity of women on their rights and the applicable trade regulations that they should be aware of. One challenge highlighted by TMEA is the continued inequality evident in the East Africa region with regard to women, a geographical inequality whereby women in urban areas are better able to access and make use of new developments and changes. For example, they indicated that one of their activities that sought to reach women's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) was challenged by the fact that women in rural areas were not as easy to reach, meaning that the communication and outreach modalities needed to take this into consideration.

69 <https://www.fida-kenya.org>

70 Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 27 (8).

71 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark: 'Evaluation Study - Lessons learned from promoting gender equality in Danish development cooperation' (2016), pp. 20-27.

In **Mali**, Denmark partners with the PATRIP Foundation on climate change adaptation and stability in fragile border areas to Burkina Faso and Niger. It was challenging for the evaluation to provide an overall assessment as to how sustainable PATRIP's contribution is, because of a certain level of communication resistance from PATRIP,⁷² but documentation⁷³ and interviews with implementing sub-partners⁷⁴ gave evidence of clear gender equality efforts, including efforts involving extremely vulnerable women and girls and describing activities to transform and impact the dynamics of gender equality relations and strategies, including involving men.⁷⁵

However, the example of Help, a PATRIP sub-partner, points to the importance of participants and local civil society needing to have a real stake in their community's own development. Help works in Northern Mali and is one of the few projects still accepted in the area under the influence of radical groups. Despite the obstacles of insecurity, social, religious and cultural constraints, they support 250 women with income-generating activities and can already see improvement in women's income levels and the living conditions of households in general.

Finding 18: Projects that engage men in gender equality initiatives lead more likely to sustainable outcomes

In **Burkina Faso**, a project with the partner Programme de Marketing Social et de Communication pour la Santé (PROMACO) meets its objective of eliminating FGM in vulnerable areas of intervention, in alignment with the national legislation and using a community-based approach. According to a desk review and KIIs within this evaluation, the project gained the understanding of parents on the grave consequences of FGM on girls and also gained the support of religious and community leaders (mostly men) who impact girls' and women's lives; this understanding and support led to sustainable outcomes, eliminating harmful practices.

In **Kenya**, while the embassy's partner, TMEA, works mostly with female cross-border traders, the husbands or male relatives still hold sway regarding how the money earned by these women is disposed of. TMEA therefore engaged with men to raise awareness around the importance of empowering women or supporting their wives or female family members in this regard and around how this can be beneficial for their households. Also at TMEA, the involvement of women in previously

72 This was also pointed out in MFA Denmark. Appraisal Report DTPM, p. 16.

73 PATRIP. Rapport annuel 2021.

74 Creditor Reporting System, Help, Mercy Corps and Search for Common Ground.

75 PATRIP Foundation, Mercy Corps (2022). Rapport De L'étude De Base Du Programme De Résilience Climatique Et Stabilité (ReClis) Mali/Burkina Faso.

male-controlled domains – such as middlemen in fish trading, or even boat ownership – is transforming avenues available to women in trade. Another important result highlighted by TMEA KIs was their work in progress around empowering female cross-border traders and raising awareness with male border staff to engage in a manner that upholds the dignity of women. Instead of being perceived as smugglers, they are increasingly treated as legitimate traders.

In **Mali**, the private sector development programme FACEJ addresses female participants' husbands by explaining the benefits of entrepreneurship and how it can support the family as a whole. Also, by nominating 'essential ambassadors', especially in rural regions in Mali, FACEJ works with former project participants who now own successful businesses. The experienced female entrepreneurs meet once a month with FACEJ participants in the region to discuss challenges and find ways how to support each other, e.g. with childcare. Starting in 2024, FACEJ plans to bring the husbands to that table as well.

Also in Mali, the embassy's partner UNICEF organised focus groups to reach out to men regarding SRH and to sensitise communities on WASH and elements of SRHR.

Therefore, although gender mainstreaming and targeted actions have traditionally focused on women, these examples point to the positive effect of the gender transformative approach – engaging men in promoting gender equality and eliminating discriminatory practices. The UNFPA's advocacy brief on engaging men to change gender norms⁷⁶ states that this engagement should include channels of accountability to women and must be complementary to work with women and girls.

5.4 Challenges and barriers

A dedicated question of the TOR refers specifically to challenges and barriers:

EQ 3: What are the key challenges and barriers for promoting gender equality at the bilateral and multilateral level?

⁷⁶ UNFPA, n.d. MenEngage – UNFPA Advocacy Brief. Engaging Men, Changing Gender Norms: Directions for Gender-Transformative Actions.

Summary of key findings:

The evaluation finds that there are some common areas that present challenges and barriers for programming and that constrain progress to gender equality and women's empowerment. These encompass the importance of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in fragile and conflict-affected states such as Burkina Faso and Mali and the need for strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks to fully implement existing commitments and obligations for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Legislation falls short of protecting women from various kinds of violence in all three case study countries. Patriarchal norms and practices and a lack of clarity on legal provisions hinder women's and girls' full and equal enjoyment of human rights. In Kenya GBV is sanctioned in the Kenyan Constitution but is not directly addressed in the Penal Code, while in Burkina Faso FGM is prohibited by law but continues to be an extended practice, with the belief that it is dictated by tradition.

Evidence from the three case study countries points at the rural-urban divide and indicates that the remoteness of rural areas and the security challenges make access to women and men very difficult, which has a negative impact on both reach and quality of programming. This again highlights the importance of empowering communities and mobilising civil society because of their viability in rural areas.

These challenges and barriers call for strengthening, collection, analysis and dissemination of data to inform better programming.

Finding 19: Programming faces challenges in sociocultural norms and practices and poor political representation

Across the country case studies and thematic areas within this evaluation, the following common challenges and barriers, which constrain progress to gender equality and women's empowerment, were observed throughout the evaluation and also appeared in a gender and power analysis at the design phase of a project, with an explanation on how the project plans to overcome those. The lessons learned thus also serve as a reminder that gender analysis continues to be the cornerstone of good gender equality programming. These challenges and barriers are the following:

- **Sociocultural norms and practices.** In patriarchal societies, the needs and priorities of women and girls are often subordinated to those of men.⁷⁷ In Kenya, for example, interviewees reported that "practices such as wife beating, early marriage for girls,

77 Embassy of Denmark Nairobi: Development Engagement Document: Enhancing Services and Advocacy on Gender-Based Violence in Kenya-GVRC.

lack of or limited voice in social circles are considered as par for the course". In relation to GBV against men and boys, the belief that men should be 'strong' and never show weakness means that for male survivors, these same norms inhibit their ability or willingness to seek help.⁷⁸

- **Legal limitations.** Legislation on GBV operates in a context where attitudes continue to be determined by traditional and patriarchal norms. Further, a lack of clarity on legal provisions challenges practice. For example, although GBV is sanctioned in the Kenyan Constitution, it is not directly addressed in the Penal Code.⁷⁹ In Burkina Faso FGM is prohibited by law but continues to be an extended practice in many parts of the country, and cases of GBV increase in the difficult context of the security and humanitarian crisis. Women survivors are marginalised and struggle to be heard by a judicial system characterised by male domination.
- **Security limitations.** In Kenya, tribal conflict and election violence are occasions when service providers such as the GVRC note a rise in GBV cases at their facilities. Also, attitudes of security sector actors towards GBV survivors constrain efforts at adjudicating cases.⁸⁰ Police training, for example, does not always tackle the issue of GBV. In Burkina and Mali, volatile security makes the WPS agenda even more relevant.
- **Poor political representation.** Despite clauses in constitutions or current legislations promoting female representation, women and youth remain poorly represented in politics. In Kenya, apart from the sociocultural context, political violence against women is a significant challenge affecting how many women are able to safely contest elections. This is coupled with limited support from their parties and lower access to campaign funds compared to male contestants.⁸¹

78 Kenya Gender-Based Violence Service Gap Analysis at the County Level. Fernandes, Patricia Maria; Phipps-Ebeler, Verena; Schmidt, Anna Lisa (April 2020).

79 Situational Analysis and the Legal Framework on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Kenya: Challenges and Opportunities. Dr Ruth Aura, N.D.

80 Mothers, Sisters, Wives: Kenyan Women Lead Fight Against Police Violence. Neha Wadekar (September 2020).

81 Gender Agenda: The Big Conundrum in the General Elections in Kenya and Senegal. Dr. Saliou Ngom, Dr. Selly Ba, Caroline Kioko and Nicola Egelhof (July 2022).

- **Poor access to financial services by women and youth.** According to a TMEA report,⁸² 48% of small-scale business owners in sub-Saharan Africa are women, but only 7% of them can access financial credit. The financial sector is slow to design products or solutions targeting women, especially in informal trade. This means that women and youth are constrained in their ability to grow their business, assets and value chains. Separately from business, women earn less than their male counterparts, and – especially in rural areas – have less control over assets. These elements combine to produce economic disempowerment.⁸³ Women’s dependence on their husbands or male guardians, for example, influences their willingness to report abuse lest they lose their financial assistance from the perpetrator for themselves and their children.⁸⁴
- **Remoteness of rural areas.** Women in urban areas are better able to access and make use of new developments, technology and communication. For example, a TMEA informant indicated that one of their activities that sought to reach women-led SMEs was challenged by the fact that women in rural areas were not easy to reach. In both Mali and Burkina Faso, remoteness and security challenges make access to women and men in rural areas very difficult, which has an impact on both reach and quality of programming.
- **This rural-urban divide is also part of a wider intersectionality.** Beyond the binary categories of women and men, people with a different sexual orientation or gender identity, persons with disabilities, and structurally marginalised and excluded groups were scarcely referred to in project documents and in interviews with partners. For example, a leader of an association involved in the early pregnancy project in Burkina Faso recognised that the project was not sufficiently inclusive: “We should have also included people with disabilities in the sensitisation and girls from very poor families. In the end, we understood that they also needed information on SRH, but it was late.”

82 Access and Opportunity: Gender and Trade in East Africa: Faces of Women in Trade. Trade Mark East Africa (March 2015).

83 Women informal Entrepreneurs in Kenya: A Feminist Analysis of Economic Empowerment Challenges and Opportunities. Rebecca Calder, Emily Boost, Federica Busiello, and Louise Fox (October 2021).

84 Kenya Gender-Based Violence Service Gap Analysis at the County Level. Fernandes, Patricia Maria; Phipps-Ebeler, Verena; Schmidt, Anna Lisa (April 2020).

- **Thematic variations.** The best-documented results have been found in governance and SRHR, where the experience of gender integration is more comprehensive than in the cases of security and green transition. At the same time, the potential for large-scale impact and transformational change was found to be strong in security (as shown by the case of gender mainstreaming in security by ACT! in Kenya) as well as green transition, where the empowerment sparked by access to credit, entrepreneurship training or a formal job in waste management with maternity leave and health benefits is found to give beneficiaries a new role as agents of change – as well as new challenges, as demonstrated by the case of female cross-border traders supported by TMEA who sometimes struggle to hold on to their profits and rights to decision making at household level.
- **Macro versus micro.** Challenges in governance and SRHR programming are often noted when it comes to scaling up results achieved at micro level. Cases in point are campaigns against FGM and service provision for survivors of GBV, where resources are often limited to challenge and change the deep-rooted roles and norms, and where the risks of urban bias and limited outreach to vulnerable populations in remote areas are difficult to mitigate for IPs.
- **Development and humanitarian policy:** While multilateral and international organisations have made policy commitments to promote gender equality and empower women and girls, the evaluation team observes a potential lack of gender mainstreaming and gender equality objectives in national plans. This lack of gender mainstreaming does not allow for gender considerations to be routinely included in the assessment policy issues, options and impacts, along with other considerations such as socioeconomic dimensions.

6. FINDINGS THEME C: GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Findings are presented in this chapter on gender gaps and opportunities across the MFA and embassies, representing Theme C of the TOR. MFA staff knowledge, expertise and perceptions have been identified by drawing on (a) a desk review, (b) staff surveys, (c) interviews with HR, policy and technical departments and (d) FGDs with staff at Headquarters (HQ) and Danish embassies in Nairobi, Ouagadougou and Bamako.

6.1 Gender equality knowledge and experience

EQ 9: What is the level of gender knowledge and expertise across MFA and how is gender perceived across staff and management at HQ and across the embassies?

Summary of key findings:

In self-assessments of knowledge levels, the consensus view is that gender equality expertise is relevant for most MFA staff and is sufficient for their current job function, even if 21% find they need more than they have. The benefits of gender inclusion in programming were recognised and well understood, particularly by informants at embassies. 63% of survey respondents saw gender equality as key to their work but not necessarily on a daily basis. Half had received gender equality training and 26% reported on-the-job training by colleagues. Most respondents found that more gender equality training could be beneficial.

Findings of FGDs confirmed confidence on levels of knowledge but recognised that expertise is developed 'on demand': "We apply a gender lens when we [are] required to and [are] measured up against performance in this regard". Gender equality competence was found to evolve over time, and postings accentuate expertise on AMG requirements and political positioning. A perception noted at embassies was that gender equality "used to be a higher priority [but has] since [been] outperformed by green transition and climate".

MFA informants praised the technical competency level of Team Equal Opportunities. In the context of its broad mandate, the team was found to have a strong focus on internal MFA functions, notably on SRHR, and limited engagement with embassies, broader departmental profiling or public diplomacy campaigning on gender equality.

Gender Focal Point expertise has evolved from being a network across the MFA and embassies to a situation with weakened momentum, towards the end of the evaluation period in 2021, of existing only at embassies. Good practice evidence – of the Focal Point role being shared by posted and local staff – was found at the embassy in Bamako.

Finding 20: The level of gender equality expertise is perceived to be adequate for current job functions

As part of data collection to establish levels of knowledge and how gender equality is perceived, a survey link was sent to 460 professional staff engaged in development programming at the MFA and across Danish embassies in developing countries and relevant multilateral representations. Annex D presents survey results, including visualisation of findings.

Relevance of gender equality knowledge was recognised by most of the 158 staff responding to the survey in November 2022, representing a response rate of 34%. Most respondents (63%) claimed that ‘gender equality is central to parts of their work, if not necessarily on a daily basis’, while 24% claimed that gender equality is not as an element in their current role. Only 11% stated that gender equality is a daily responsibility, e.g. as a Gender Focal Point.

When asked how respondents would assess their level of gender equality professional experience, almost a third (31%) claim that they need gender equality experience in their current job function and feel that they have sufficient experience. This picture is confirmed by the summary of a researcher: “When I have interviewed MFA staff for research purposes, I have only met positive reactions to gender equality inclusion. It is perceived to be relevant and high priority, but in-depth knowledge is limited”.

To get a sense of the extent to which gender mainstreaming is an issue staff have actual experience engaging actively with, the survey also queried whether respondents had raised gender-related issues in relation to actual programming. Such gender equality interaction was reported to play a significant role.

Half of the respondents stated that they asked questions about gender equality or made suggestions for gender-relevant changes to programming during the last year. Invited to add examples, one respondent commented: “I have consulted our development engagement and implementing partners”. Another added: “I have raised the topic in the Programme Committee”. A modest respondent admitted: “There is some potential

for including gender considerations in my current portfolio, but I have not had the bandwidth to explore or identify relevant colleagues”.

The survey went on to probe into consequences of the questions asked. As a result of the suggestions made, 46% of respondents stated that programming was affected, 33% did not know if programming was affected after their suggestions, and 21% claimed that there was no change in programming.

Some of the respondents gave examples of how programming was affected, mentioning new indicators being developed and a stronger focus on gender analysis incorporated into programmes. One respondent commented that “a vague formulation about considerations on gender was turned into a specific commitment”. A concerned respondent added as a comment: “My worry is that changes will only be on paper”. Another respondent gave an example from multilateral policy engagement of “gender being added as a cross-cutting priority in a new organisation strategy for UNICEF”.

Survey respondents were also asked if they had received gender equality training as a MFA staff member. Two fifths (41%) claimed that they had not received any gender equality training, while more than one in four (26%) said that they had been guided by colleagues as on-the-job gender equality training. Moreover, 23% of respondents stated that they received introductory gender equality training during MFA onboarding, and 15% said that they also attended a technical gender equality course or workshop.

Fewer than half of the respondents had received gender equality training, but 26% received on-the-job training by colleagues. One respondent commented: “At a previous posting we received a visit by the Crown Princess in her capacity as protector for UNFPA, and that was a crash course in gender sensitivity”. Almost three quarters of respondents think that more gender equality training would be useful.

When asked about training, 41% found that optional and needs-based training would be the most valuable, and 33% said that it should be compulsory; only 6% claimed that gender equality training would not be useful. Participants in focus groups praised recent MFA staff induction sessions at the UN City, where UN agencies had assisted with some of the gender policy presentations.

As an example, a leading role by Denmark in gendering climate action was seen by experienced staff to potentially require mandatory gender-disaggregated monitoring and capacity building in the form of adequate human resources and tailor-made training sessions.

Finding 21: Knowledge and expertise on gender equality are developed 'on demand'

Three MFA FGDs were conducted in October 2022 with the purpose of adding qualitative dimensions to findings of the staff survey. Groups were composed to capture generational variations of (i) a group of 'new recruits' with up to five years of MFA experience, (ii) a medium-level group with between six and ten years, and (iii) an experienced group with ten or more years.

Confidence levels by staff were found to be highest among the new recruits, and all levels of experience found competence levels adequate for current job functions but recognised that expertise of MFA staff is developed on demand and could also be upgraded on demand.

The group of new recruits saw gender equality as a relevant concern that came up frequently in their day-to-day work and that was found to be "taken seriously". In terms of knowledge, they felt confident of having the necessary expertise for the policy-oriented outputs required of them. Where new recruits do not have sufficient knowledge, the preferred option is to consult Team Equal Opportunities rather than check AMG or other guidance in writing: "Team Equal Opportunities are competent enough for what we need and always helpful, even if they are under pressure of work – by direct contact we also cover our back by keeping them informed". In a final quote expressing how new recruits perceive MFA capacity, thematic focus on SRHR is also captured:

"You can tell how mainstreamed gender equality is if you compare the ease with which we on the development side carry it forward politically in relation to gender-based violence and SRHR with the sometimes more uphill efforts to push the UNSCR 1325 [on WPS] in broader foreign and security policy".

Medium-experienced staff substantiated the point that staff acquire knowledge when they really need it. For instance, AMG can seem like a mystery to newcomers, but "new colleagues will get to know the basics once they are posted to a developing country. Our training is on AMG overall, not specifically on gender, which tends to attract relatively less attention".

Adding lessons learned from postings to Uganda, Palestine and Bangladesh to their discussion, one participant highlighted country programming in Uganda as a welcome "forced reminder" of gender equality inclusion:

“We are required to include elements of gender and we always scan our country strategies for references. This is when staff really learn to navigate the various requirements of the Aid Management Guidelines. What is required in the various stages of programming? And how do we fill out Appendix 1?”

Gender equality was also referenced by one participant as relevant in response to questions raised by Danish parliamentarians: “When I was in Uganda, we had frequent questions in relation to the human rights situation of LGBT minorities. This was a reminder for all of us that MFA is a political organisation needing to balance political positioning and human rights defence with requirements of development programming”.

The focus group comprising experienced staff shared the perception that gender equality is high on the policy agenda but de facto a lower priority in programming as formal requirements lost ground:

“My clear sense is gender has been somewhat of a falling star in recent years; we used to talk much more about it and make stronger efforts. Indicators are essential because what does not get measured does not get managed. Gender and HRBA screening notes did keep cross-cutting concerns on the agenda. However, before we start insisting on reinstating too much from the past, let me add that my strong sense is the era of compulsory screening notes and comprehensive training modules has been and gone”.

Participants shared the perception by younger colleagues that the MFA generally has an adequate level of gender equality knowledge for its current working tasks, but also added that perhaps the level of expertise would not suffice if the role on gender equality were to be expanded.

FGDs with embassy staff in Nairobi, Ouagadougou and Bamako gave evidence of hands-on experience with gender programming and a sound grasp of opportunities and limitations in areas such as economic development and green transition, where intensified efforts were found to be relevant and feasible in the local context. Embassy participants requested strategic guidance from the MFA on the status of gender equality requirements.

MFA expectations of embassies were not found to be clear, and communication from Team Equal Opportunities was found to be lacking. Issues requiring clarity ranged from the status of the network of Gender Focal Points, which was seen to have been more vibrant in the past, to the validity of the Strategic Framework. A recurrent perception was that a stronger priority of gender equality a decade ago had been under pressure from green transition and climate.

Finding 22: There have been significant changes over time to the way MFA internally manages gender equality knowledge

During the period under evaluation, significant changes are noted in the way gender equality knowledge is managed internally by the MFA. In 2014 a MFA department for Technical Advisory Services had a considerable contingent of experts engaged in technical policy functions as well as the full programming cycle in areas such as environment, health, education and gender equality.

KIIs and FDGs state that, when the concept of in-house experts was diminished, levels of technical expertise and, to some extent, visibility of Denmark's role on international gender equality platforms were somewhat reduced. This change was in line with a gradual shift in the approach to programming, whereby hands-on bilateral sector programmes gave way to more delegation of implementation roles to multilateral and civil society partners, with a more policy dialogue-oriented role for the MFA.

Close collaboration also evolved with knowledge partners such as the UNFPA and UN Women but also with the DFPA. Shared advocacy asks with the DFPA are formalised in an SPA, involving the funding of development engagements typical of such agreements as well as a normative track for advocacy events and input to Danish positions on international platforms.

Internal technical expertise on gender equality is part of the mandate of Team Equal Opportunities, currently part of the large MFA Department for Migration, Stabilization and Fragility (MNS). The team grew gradually out of the position of gender coordinator, since merged with functions related to HRBA and with a track record of coordinating a high-profile campaign with strong ministerial engagement in the '2015 Call to Action', aiming to rally global commitment for gender equality ambitions of the MDGs.

In the current set-up, eight staff and a Team Leader address gender equality as part of a broad portfolio of engagements. The impression of policy primacy is confirmed, as SRHR is mentioned at the top of an overview list of team responsibilities shared with the evaluation.⁸⁵ However, in the daily reality of departmental priorities, proactive roles of policy development, results monitoring and coordination across MFA and embassies compete for urgency. Evaluation focus group participants found the team to be used primarily by colleagues at the MFA in Copenhagen. This was confirmed by interviews and the three FDGs at embassies.

85 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark: Team Lige Sagsfordeling (internal document) (October 2022).

The evaluation notes the technical expertise of Team Equal Opportunities in a challenging context of multidimensional roles combined with a broad thematic mandate and significant scope of large grants to be managed. Political organisations with multiple roles in one unit tend to favour reactive functions such as departmental hearings, grant management and speechwriting, unless human and financial resources are dedicated to more proactive and outward-looking roles.

Finding 23: The Gender Focal Point expertise has evolved from being a network across the MFA and embassies to a situation with weakened momentum

At the start of the evaluation period, the aid architecture to support implementation of the *Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity* (2014) included a network of Gender Focal Points.

The network comprised one person from relevant MFA departments, one person from the embassies, and multilateral representations with a significant development engagement.

Activities were the responsibility of a dedicated MFA Gender Team and included an annual seminar at which MFA and embassy staff gathered in Copenhagen for updates on policy developments and progress and challenges of implementation. Continuity was typical of embassy members, but turnover of MFA members was high. Another issue of concern was the absence of focal points with supervisory roles and an ensuing perception that gender equality was de facto a low priority.

Reduced levels of ODA spending in 2015/16 translated into budget cuts and discontinuation of the practice of seminars for Gender Focal Points. A gradual demise ensued whereby appointment of focal points at MFA lost momentum, but the function was maintained at most embassies, as a gender equality function was required in preparation of country programmes, reviews and evaluations. Also, some contact was maintained by HQ, over time increasingly using virtual meeting formats.

In an update of the brief job description for Gender Focal Points from 2019, the role is defined as staying updated and sharing knowledge on policy, advising management and colleagues on gender mainstreaming, and ensuring LGBT+ issues are addressed. The job description refers to the 2014 strategy framework as a core guidance document.⁸⁶

In 2021 the network of Gender Focal Points was principally a dialogue forum for Team Equal Opportunities and Gender Focal Points at the embassies. Activity levels were modest, but a revitalisation drive with appointments of MFA departmental focal points and dialogue with

⁸⁶ MFA: Job Descriptions for Gender Focal Points at Danish Representations and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019), p. 1.

embassies was noted by mid-2022. Focal Points encountered by the evaluation were committed to their embassy roles but missed HQ communication and a sense of belonging to a global team.

In November 2022, when MFA and embassy staff were asked in a survey by the evaluation, a third of respondents stated that they did not know if there was a Gender Focal Point where they work, and 54% of MFA Copenhagen respondents claimed they did not know if there was one.

Survey respondents were also asked about the relevance of the Gender Focal Point mechanism. 67% of staff said that the Gender Focal Point is highly relevant or relevant in some instances for their job. Just under a third (32%) claimed that a Gender Focal Point is not relevant for their job.

Overall, findings confirmed the mechanism to be stronger at embassy than at HQ level. A third of all respondents said that they did know the Gender Focal Point; as many as 52% of embassies and representation respondents said that they knew their Gender Focal Point. Another 11% of the survey respondents stated that they themselves were the Gender Focal Point.

During data collection for Mali, the evaluation noted a special approach to the mechanism of Gender Focal Points at the embassy in Bamako. Sparked by the frequent turnover of posted staff, a dual system had been introduced of sharing the function between a local and a posted staff member. The reported benefits of sharing the function included more transparency and dialogue. Most importantly, the in-country Focal Point was seen to ensure local knowledge and continuity of contacts with local stakeholders, and the posted staff member was found to ensure stronger links to policy developments and contacts with decision makers and gender equality stakeholders at MFA.

The evaluation found evidence of relevance for consideration on possible future roles for Denmark: the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (GDK) had designated a junior staff member in the role of Focal Point for the “civil society track of climate efforts”, including aspects such as human rights, gender equality and rights of Indigenous people. This Gender Focal Point role is a natural part of the task of being responsible for gender equality and human rights aspects related to climate in GDK. And linking climate action with women and girls, human rights and Indigenous people is an integral part of *The World We Share*.

6.2 Aid management guidance and tools

The second EQ on the theme of institutional gaps and opportunities requests an assessment of gender integration in guidance, tools and approaches in asking:

EQ 10: What are the gender-related gaps and opportunities in the current AMG and tools? To what extent has gender been integrated in new approaches such as Doing Development Differently (DDD) and monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL), and what are the opportunities?

Guidelines and tools have been subjected to desk study and KIIs and were also covered to some extent by the staff survey and FGDs.

Summary of key findings:

Assessment of AMG and tools presents a mixed picture. On the one hand, gender equality is a priority; policy documents refer to Danish leadership in the pursuit of it. Guidelines require gender analysis at the design phase of organisation strategy and country programme, and also require considerations of gender equality in presentations to the Programme Committee. On the other hand, findings of this evaluation confirm known challenges in updating tools, in momentum and in the systematic documentation of results in gender programming.

In 2014 the MFA launched the *Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation*. Queries on validity were noted, and its status is unclear. The framework remains part of AMG. Several tools intended to guide implementation have fallen out of use.

With its emphasis on agility and coherence, DDD offers opportunities for gender programming, even if references to the concept are rare and results rely on committed individuals. ICPD+25 is found to be a successful case of exploring synergies of long-term engagement with Kenya and partnership with the UNFPA.

Gender inclusion in MEAL units was found to be feasible in theory, but there are nuances in the documentation of gender-related results in practice. Stronger integration was found to require gender-related indicators, as “what gets measured gets managed”.

MFA informants praised the technical competency level of Team Equal Opportunities. In the context of its broad mandate, the team was found to have a strong focus on internal MFA functions, notably on SRHR, and limited engagement with embassies, broader departmental profiling or public diplomacy campaigning on gender equality.

Finding 24: Denmark's strong policy priority is not fully reflected in its AMG and tools and is in need of clarity

In 2014, at the start of the evaluation period, the MFA launched the *Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation*. Queries on validity were noted by the evaluation, and the status of the framework is not clear. References are infrequent, but the framework is available as part of AMG, referenced in the TOR for Gender Focal Points, and found to justify engagement in the Danish Organisation Strategy for the UNFPA.⁸⁷

Informants to this evaluation recognise the framework for its technical approach and solid emphasis on equal representation and its recognition of gender-specific barriers faced by women, men, girls and boys.⁸⁸

Structure and content of the Strategic Framework reflect the purpose in 2014 of guiding practitioners in four priority areas of the Danish development and humanitarian strategy *The Right to a Better Life* (2012), later replaced by *The World We Share* (2021): (a) human rights and democracy; (b) social progress; (c) inclusive green growth; (d) stability and protection. Implementation was envisaged to be supported by three principal organisational tools:

- A gender toolbox (guidance on country and sector gender analysis and programming);
- an e-learning course (online training module for onboarding, designed for flexible use); and
- a gender equality screening note (accountability measure for programmes/grants).

These tools have gradually fallen out of use. The toolbox was not updated; the e-learning course was made optional, and user numbers dwindled. In an update of guidance notes, a dedicated gender note was merged with the HRBA note and was subsequently archived. Gender analysis remains a compulsory focus of the country strategy process and, starting in 2021, part of the how-to-notes guiding implementation of *The World We Share*.

87 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark: Strategy for Denmark's Engagement with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2018-2022, p. 8.

88 Aid Management Guidelines: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark: Strategic Framework for Gender Equality, Rights and Diversity (2014), p. 13.

The persistent challenges that have marred the use of these tools of implementation were explained to the evaluation, with references to staff cuts and to a certain fatigue around procedures perceived as box-ticking exercises, often awarded a low priority. Participants in FGDs referred to the visible quality of the gender toolbox and how it was still valued at some embassies.

Attention to advocacy, not least in relation to SRHR, was found by other informants to have taken centre stage, with strong involvement at ministerial level, but was seen by some as not always having filtered down in the organisation.

Programmatic results were evaluated in 2016 when lessons learned from eight cases of gender justice results were assessed in the three categories of representation, recognition and redistribution. Dissemination of the findings included short film clips from Kenya and Burkina Faso, with 'Voices from the field' presented at the *Women Deliver* conference in 2016. The study concluded that redistribution was the most challenging category and that dedicated efforts are required to move beyond formal rights and take transformative results from the micro to the macro level.⁸⁹

In 2021 a new overall strategy for Danish development cooperation, *The World We Share*, was launched, highlighting gender equality as an important policy priority and referring in several sections to the promotion of girls' and women's rights and SRHR. While these priorities are in line with the *Strategic Framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation* (2014), the current status of the framework remains unclear.⁹⁰

Actual use of AMG and related tools was the subject of part of the staff survey conducted in November 2022. When asked if policies, guidelines or tools for gender equality guidance were consulted during the past year, 32% of respondents answered that they did not consult any resources, 17% of respondents skipped the question, and 52% of respondents said that they had consulted resources on gender equality in the past year. The top three resources consulted were 38% for *The World We Share* gender equality priorities, 25% for the how-to-notes on 'Human rights and democracy' or 'Social sectors', and 25% for gender equality resources outside the MFA.

89 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Lessons learned from promoting gender equality in Danish development cooperation. Evaluation Study 2016, p. 39.

90 Vastapuu, Leena: Gender Equality in Finnish Foreign Affairs from 2019 to 2022 – an independent study commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (November 2022).

High ambitions and investments to match – perspectives from Sweden and Canada

There is no agreed definition of or blueprint for a feminist foreign policy, and, despite the new and opposite signals from Sweden in 2022, the number of countries embracing this banner keeps growing. Key factors driving Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy adopted in 2014 and Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy from 2017 were guidance and support. France, Spain, Mexico, Chile and Germany and others have since followed suit.⁹¹ This emerged from a landscape scan of lessons learned by like-minded countries carried out during the inception phase.

Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy Handbook⁹² highlights that integration into ordinary systems, processes and responsibility structures is essential to avoid marginalisation. Guidance for successful integration of the gender perspective includes the following:

- an action plan included in the Swedish Foreign Service's operational plan;
- all line managers have a responsibility for adequate resource allocation;
- operational planning processes ensure inclusion in the regular annual dialogues;
- best practice resources on website:⁹³ factsheets, speeches, articles, PowerPoints;
- staff e-learning available in Swedish and English;
- gender-coach programme for staff; and
- a certification programme for security companies on gendering personal safety.

91 UN Women: Feminist Foreign Policies: An introduction (2022).

92 https://www.swedenabroad.se/globalassets/ambassader/zimbabwe-harare/documents/handbook_swedens-feminist-foreign-policy.pdf

93 <https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/methods-materials/gender-toolbox>

A gender toolbox by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)⁹⁴ recognises the importance of staff guidance and includes the following tools: (a) gender equality policy framework and key concepts; (b) engaging partners and dialogue on gender equality; (c) gender equality expertise and project team responsibilities; (d) gender-based analysis; (e) gender equality outcomes; (f) sex/age-disaggregated indicators; (g) gender equality risks; (h) budget to achieve gender equality outcomes; (i) gender equality coding; (j) gender equality project implementation plan and monitoring; (k) project steering committee; (l) monitoring performance on gender equality; (m) reporting and documenting outcome and evaluation on gender project performance.

94 https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/funding-financement/gender_equality_toolkit-trousse_outils_egalite_genres.aspx?lang=eng

Finding 25: Denmark's AMG offer opportunities without guarantees

Assessment of AMG and tools presents a mixed picture. On the one hand, gender equality is a key priority that is integrated into programme cycle requirements such as appraisals and evaluations, which have gender mainstreaming on their standard lists of requirements to assess. Policy documents refer to Danish leadership in pursuit of gender equality. On the other hand, findings of this evaluation confirm known challenges and deficiencies in updating tools and enforcing and documenting the results of these priorities in practice.⁹⁵

In line with the *Strategic Framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation* (2014), AMG currently stipulate three principal requirements with relevance for gender equality integration:⁹⁶

- A. **Country strategic frameworks** – require context analysis at the design phase to include assessment of 'Human rights, gender, youth and applying a human right-based approach' (Chapter 4 stipulates a long list of fairly detailed requirements and refers to the how-to-notes presented above for analytical guidance).

95 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Lessons learned from promoting gender equality in Danish development cooperation – Evaluation Study (2016) – referred to in Terms of Reference for this evaluation, pp. 3-4.

96 <https://amg.um.dk/bilateral-cooperation/guidelines-for-country-strategic-frameworks-programmes-and-projects>

- B. Programme Committee** – presentations are required to consider gender integration as part of ‘poverty orientation and target group considerations (Gender, Age and Disability – targeted or mainstreaming)’. Following committee review, appraisal of larger grants will assess new initiatives for the adequacy of gender integration – along with other concerns.
- C. Council for Development Policy** – submissions to this external advisory body to the minister are required to consider gender integration of new grants. Council member assessments of this accountability are presented in Section 5.3.

Staff survey respondents were also asked if AMG gave them the guidance needed to integrate gender equality in their current job role; almost a third of respondents said that AMG were good enough for their job function, 19% said that AMG were not good enough for their role, and a large share (51%) decided to skip the question.

Some respondents gave more information, saying that AMG were “good enough for their job function but not good enough for other colleagues responsible for preparation of new programmers” and that AMG are generic and there is the need to take more tangible steps in specific fields.

In a focus group with medium-experienced staff, one participant summarised the perceived demise of gender equality attention as follows: “In fact, today gender is mainly in focus when drafting the strategic frame. This is when embassies are really required to analyse and find gender programming opportunities”.

The TOR for this evaluation refer specifically to DDD as being relevant to explore for gaps and opportunities in the landscape of guidelines and tools. However, DDD was not found to feature prominently in MFA documentation reviewed, and it came up in interviews and discussions only when brought up by the evaluators. DDD is occasionally labelled ‘adaptive programming’ and has implications for gender equality, as it represents a rethink of the approach to policy – one overall strategy rather than a plethora of strategies – and an adaptive approach with flexibility to respond to contextual opportunities.⁹⁷

97 Council for Development Policy: Minutes of meeting on 19 Nov 2019 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019).

DDD is presented in an MFA Guidance Note as a service check responding to the complexity, uncertainty and risks associated with development.⁹⁸ Sometimes summarised as “less pretention, more realism”,⁹⁹ DDD in the current MFA interpretation is associated with two key objectives:

- Ensuring coherence and synergies between various Danish development aid instruments to reinforce a more holistic approach, including stronger linkages between embassies and HQ; and
- applying an adaptive approach focusing on results, continuous learning and decision making, and local ownership in development cooperation.

In this sense, DDD marks a shift from standardised aid management requirements and processes to a much stronger emphasis on the full country-level context and the need to be able to adapt to unforeseeable developments. The Guidance Note does not mention the words ‘gender’ or ‘girls’ but has one reference to ‘women’ in a section where SRHR is mentioned as an example of DDD involving clear overall objectives matched by flexibility when it comes to adapting specific targets over time. This illustrates the evaluation finding that DDD allows for, but does not guarantee, inclusion of gender equality.

MFA documentation of DDD refers to Kenya as a test case for an all-inclusive country strategy process. Kenya is a country case study of this evaluation and findings include evidence, in the case of ICPD+25, of exploring the synergies associated with DDD, even if this term was never used in conversations with the evaluation and should rather be seen as a result in line with its principles than as an outcome of DDD as a deliberate approach.

The Nairobi Summit (ICPD+25) was a large population and development event; Denmark cooperated with the UNFPA and the Government of Kenya to prepare and co-host it. This was reported to the evaluation to have been enabled by the long-term Danish engagement with Kenya and close partnership with the UNFPA. It also represented a concerted advocacy initiative, profiling Denmark on a priority policy theme that the Embassy of Denmark in Nairobi has since been able to use in its policy dialogue on SRHR with the Government of Kenya and other stakeholders.

98 Aid Management Guidelines: Guidance Note Adaptive Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (November 2020).

99 IOB, 2019: Less Pretention, More Realism - An evaluation of the Reconstruction Programme (2012-2015); IOB Evaluation no. 428, The Hague - in Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Guidance Note: Adaptive Management (2020).

Finding 26: Gender mainstreaming into MEAL is feasible in theory, but there are nuances in the documentation of gender-related results on the ground

Gender mainstreaming into MEAL was found to be feasible in theory, but there are nuances in the documentation of gender-related results on the ground.

In practice, when looking at the project case studies, although some do not report on gender equality results, the majority do, but they lack reporting on gender-disaggregated data or do not use gender data that provides meaningful insight into differences in well-being across women and men and girls and boys, or actionable information for policy to address disparities. For instance, UN Women's project in Mali, which falls under the governance theme focus of this evaluation, suggests in its annual report for 2019¹⁰⁰ to be achieving transformative results by strengthening women's leadership and capacity to participate in the peacebuilding, reconciliation and recovery process. However, the accurate number of women reached through the project is not clear, and the actual value obtained was not provided by UN Women. It is unclear from the data what the transformative impact is for these women. When looking at Kenya, the project partner TMEA reports on women but not on age, and although the Strategic Sector Programme (SSP) does not have a gender-related report, it does address the needs of women. Also in Kenya, the project ACT! does collect gender-disaggregated data, but this is not being found in reports, although they do mention the engagement of men and women. In Burkina Faso, all project cases are said to have monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks that systematically include sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD).

In more detail, stronger gender mainstreaming was found in the country studies to require gender-related indicators in grants, as underpinned by the examples of economic empowerment of female cross-border traders in East Africa and entrepreneurs in Mali, suggesting that "what gets measured gets managed".

MEAL is integrated into the 'Guidelines for country strategic frameworks, programmes and projects'. The new emphasis on MEAL is summarised as comprising:¹⁰¹

- Monitoring (by MFA and multilateral/local partner)
 - providing input for learning;

100 UN Women. Rapport annuel 2019.

101 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Guidelines for Country Strategic Frameworks, Programmes and Projects 2022, p. 42.

- reporting (MFA/partner) – narrative/financial requirements of annual reports;
- dialogue – high-level consultations with partners at regular intervals; and
- accountability – external accountability to Parliament and public.

In principle the stronger focus on MEAL, including establishment of dedicated organisational units to measure progress and challenges of programmatic implementation, offers opportunities for gender-related results to be documented. However, attention to cross-cutting concerns in practice is clearly helped by inclusion of gender-relevant indicators, as shown in case study deep dives of this evaluation into empowerment of female cross-border traders in East Africa and targets for inclusion of female entrepreneurs in Mali.¹⁰² MEAL units tend to focus on one overriding issue for each engagement. Unless gender equality is built into the objectives for the engagement, it tends not to get measured.

Case studies of this evaluation confirm the evidence from reviews and evaluations that what does not get measured tends not to get done. Project deep dives found examples of targeted gender interventions in political participation and economic empowerment of cross-border traders in East Africa where data is gender-disaggregated. Where gender-specific indicators have been developed, knowledge levels and managerial attention increase.¹⁰³

On the other hand, the evaluation also notes the risk around the perception of formal requirements; e.g. the gender screening note, which was mandatory during the first years of the evaluation period, was perceived to be a box-ticking exercise and was archived.

In Mali, project deep dives into an entrepreneurship initiative found that joint gender analysis during the design phase of the Danish engagement with the IP FACEJ led to questions being asked about female entrepreneurs. The requirement to include women gave rise to a redefinition of what constitutes the private sector, to include small traders in catering and service providers such as hairdressers. Inclusion of a quota of 40% of credit dedicated to female entrepreneurs was accompanied by gender-disaggregated indicators in the results framework, allowing for documentation of transformative results of the gender equality component of FACEJ.

102 Cf. case study report Kenya for details on Trade Mark East Africa and the case study report for Mali on FACEJ.

103 Embassy of Denmark Nairobi: Thematic Programme Results Trackers – Green Growth and economic Empowerment & Governance Thematic Programmes (2016-2020).

6.3 Gender equality performance and accountability mechanisms

The third EQ, on institutional gaps and opportunities, explores the links between the role of Denmark in gender programming and institutional performance and accountability mechanisms:

EQ 11: To what extent is gender included in staff performance assessments and management accountability systems, and what are the opportunities?

Staff performance systems have been explored through desk study, in the staff survey and in dialogue with the HR Department of the MFA in May 2022, although the harassment question was omitted. Programmatic accountability has been discussed with the Chair of the internal Programme Committee and members of the external Council for Development Policy.

Summary of key findings:

Management systems of the MFA do not currently include dedicated attention to gender equality in standard performance assessment. Interview and survey findings show a degree of appetite for such reforms to staff assessment, mixed with some concerns.

Survey findings also show a mixed picture in terms of equal opportunities. While some survey respondents find that the MFA offers equal opportunities for men and women, others believe that although progress has been made, opportunities are still far from equal in practice.

In the MFA aid architecture, submissions to the internal Programme Committee are required to account for gender considerations, and discussions with the Chair and FGDs indicate that this occurs systematically. Interviews with the external Council for Development Policy confirm a responsive accountability role, as illustrated in recent discussions on challenges of gender inclusion and socioeconomic analysis more broadly in SSC.

Finding 27: There appears to be an appetite for gender inclusion in staff performance assessments

The staff survey conducted as part of this evaluation probed into staff attitudes on gender mainstreaming as a parameter in staff performance assessments. Some respondents commented that the concept of gender performance was challenging to grasp and that a lot of questions would arise if such mechanisms were to be introduced. However, among those who did comment, two fifths of respondents (40%) think that it is very important or quite important for motivation to have staff assessment with an emphasis on gender performance.

MFA management systems do not currently include dedicated attention to gender equality in standardised performance assessment. Unless gender programming is an explicit part of a person's job description (for the members of Team Equal Opportunities at MFA or Gender Focal Points), gender performance is not a mandatory part of staff assessment.

When the MFA decided, in 2020, to embark on a Gender Equality Action Plan, KIs report that 'opportunities for staff performance assessment' was indicated as a priority to investigate as part of the workplan for 2023, but it has not been possible for the evaluation to collect data on this aspect of the TOR.

The survey also asked respondents if the MFA offers equal opportunities for men and women; 38% agreed that it does. Agreement with the statement is strongest at embassies. Overall, 25% of respondents think that some progress has been made but that the MFA is still far from offering equal opportunities in practice, and 12% think that in practice opportunities at the MFA are not equal.

Finding 28: Primary accountability for gender inclusion in programming appears to be envisaged by AMG to be provided by an internal Programme Committee and an external Council for Development Policy

At the design stage, new strategies for country programmes, organisational partnerships and large support grants are submitted to the Programme Committee prior to appraisal and subsequent discussion in the external Council for Development Policy, which has an advisory role to the Minister for Development Cooperation.

All submissions to the Programme Committee are required to account for how gender equality has been considered in the strategy or grant proposed, as per the format outlined in Section 5.2. The Programme Committee comprises heads of the relevant MFA departments and

may include desk officers at the responsible units, representations and embassies. Meetings are chaired by the Under-Secretary of State for Development Policy, who characterises the accountability provided for gender equality inclusion as “far from flawless” but sees “gender equality very much in the DNA of MFA staff” and “quality assurance happening to a large extent” as new initiatives are scrutinised by the committee.

While this element of QA is echoed across interviews and FGDs with MFA staff, meeting minutes also reflect the discussions of gender in the Programme Committee. For instance, minutes from a meeting in 2021 note, regarding the GCF, that “human rights and gender sensitive approach was critical for the work of the Fund and that the specific role that women and girls could play in climate programmes should be emphasized in the strategy along with a more differentiated description of vulnerable groups.”¹⁰⁴ In another meeting, the Council questioned, how components of the Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA) address gender equality with the involvement of civil society, while some Council members also recognised the quantitative focus on gender equality in SEFA’s results framework and the African Development Bank’s (AfDB) mainstreaming of gender issues.¹⁰⁵

Following appraisal where assessment comprises gender equality among a series of cross-cutting concerns, large grants are submitted for scrutiny by the Council for Development Policy, consisting of 11 experts appointed by the Minister for Development Cooperation in a technical advisory role prior to final approval.

The Chair and two members of the Council interviewed for this evaluation recall that gender integration has been raised at some point during all meetings of the past three years. In the words of one member: “Capacity and commitment at the MFA are generally commendable but shortcomings have also been brought up fairly frequently. When I look at the Council minutes, particularly results frameworks have been found lacking when it comes to tangible gender inclusion”.

The experience of members is that technical guidance from the Council is generally recognised by MFA staff to be relevant to accountability. The sense is that gender inclusion is relevant and important, even if the level of detail is sometimes limited. When details are asked for by members, the impression is that typically it is there to be dug out.

104 Council for Development Policy: Minutes of meeting on 11 February 2021 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2021).

105 Council for Development Policy: Minutes of meeting on 29 October 2019 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019).

A notable exception has been recent Council deliberations on SSC, seen by members as an example of gender-unaware programming – or rather, as absence of socioeconomic analysis and integration of cross-cutting concerns more broadly. This is in line with evidence from the case study of the SSC on environment in Kenya, in which this evaluation found a complete absence of gender inclusion in programme design and execution. At the same time, the evaluation found clear and positive potential impact of waste regulation for women, who were offered protection and employee benefits that can only be described as transformative for beneficiaries.

From an accountability point of view, it is referred to by members as an unusual process over three meetings. During the first meeting, the Council requested socioeconomic analysis of the programmatic context, including gender mainstreaming. When revised documents were presented, the Council found that justification was still lacking. At a third meeting a larger batch of SSPs was presented, and documentation included reference to a process around socioeconomic concerns, but the outcome was still not quite clear to Council members. In the conclusion of one member: “The Council had made its point on the need for Strategic Sector Programmes to improve socioeconomic analysis on gender and related issues, but essentially, we submit comments and are often not made aware what happens afterwards. Our role is essentially responsive rather than proactive”.

The MFA also sees gender inclusion of SSC as an interesting accountability case to learn from. The MFA expects a lot of SSC and was pleased to note how the OECD-DAC, in its recent peer review of Denmark, pointed to the originality and potential of the approach.¹⁰⁶ However, as SSC engagements typically do not involve a lot of funding, grant documents had not so far been submitted to the Council for Development Policy or other parts of the aid machinery. When funding required the programme to be submitted in early 2022, the lens of AMG was applied, and new questions were asked on socioeconomic aspects such as gender integration. This seems to have required a bit of habituation for departments and partners. The need to catch up with training and tools is acknowledged.

106 www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-denmark-2021-6e9b77e5-en.htm

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The three themes of the TOR also structure the summary of the conclusions: (a) politics of prioritisation; (b) evidence of results; and (c) gaps and opportunities: knowledge, perceptions and aid architecture across the MFA and embassies. As part of the three thematic presentations, the section presents four overarching recommendations in response to the final, overall EQ:

EQ 12: What strategic and practical considerations might Denmark engage in and what institutional barriers might Denmark address to gain a leading role in supporting gender equality? Politics of prioritisation – what are the key gender trends and drivers?

At the outset of the evaluation period, the MFA launched the *Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation* (2014). The evaluation noted that the framework was found useful but was marred by references to an outdated policy context and unclear status. Informants, notably at embassies, were interested in updated guidance on current priorities. These findings justify declaring the 2014 framework obsolete once its definitions and human rights principles are incorporated into an Approach Note to be disseminated as guidance for staff in the implementation of *The World We Share* (2021) and to inform gender equality priorities of the development policy strategy to be initiated in 2024.

A perception noted in interviews and findings of the staff survey is that gender equality “used to be a higher priority, now outperformed by green transition and climate”. At the same time, senior management attention is found to be the strongest factor in galvanising action behind gender equality.

Decades of experience in gender equality and SRHR, combined with high levels of staff commitment and a strong reputation in green transition, provide Denmark with an opportunity to gain a leading role in gendering climate action. Climate is already high on the development policy agenda, and climate action involves areas such as food security, clean water and

health and sanitation and agriculture, where gender equality and an HRBA has proven not only relevant but also instrumental in producing lasting results.

If backed with the necessary financial and human resources, Denmark has the potential to team up with long-standing partners to spearhead a more gender transformative approach to climate action while holding on to its predefined priority on SRHR and gender justice¹⁰⁷. This is crucial in today's polarised world where gender equality, human rights and diversity are under continuous attack.

The evaluation finds considerable levels of support for core UN partners and Danish CSOs. These high levels of support are found to be justified by gender inequality, and coordinated and mounting pressure on gender norms and SRHR across the world.

However, the full picture of combined allocations for targeted and mainstreamed support is not captured accurately. The method applied is the OECD Gender Marker, and mandatory rating is done at the opening of new bilateral and earmarked multilateral grants. Despite reliability concerns, reports on gender spending below the average of OECD-DAC member states – Denmark is at number 20, with gender spending at 43% of ODA, while Canada, Iceland and Sweden are at the top, with registrations between 84% and 92% – clash with an image of “Danish international leadership on rights”, to quote the headline of the section of current development policy outlining ambitions on gender equality.

Interviews with Team Equal Opportunities and MFA financial specialists and an FGD with embassy representatives dedicated to the experience in using the gender marker indicate that MFA attention to gender marking is minimal and its output poorly understood. The gender marker is applied at bilateral grant level, but core multilateral support is unlikely to be captured, as multilaterals leave 80% of ODA unregistered, according to OECD.

Inclusion of gender marker information in the mandatory templates for presentation of new grants and organisation strategies to the Programme Committee combined with an annual stocktaking on gender spending to form the basis for decentralised gender audits, and evidence-based discussions of gaps and opportunities for gender programming are proposed by the evaluation as options for mitigating the challenges of inaccuracy and low awareness.

107 Examples of feminist foreign policies: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Brief-Feminist-foreign-policies-en.pdf>

An inspiration for how awareness could be increased by including an indication in the standard cover page for presentation of new grants of the degree of gender integration is shown in Figure 17.

FIGURE 17. OPTION OF MANDATORY GENDER EQUALITY MARKER REGISTRATION FIELD

Danish Organisation Strategy for UNRWA 2023-2027

Introduction: UNRWA has a unique mandate by the UN General Assembly to protect and provide direct services for a young and growing population of currently 5.7m refugees, pending a solution to the protracted political conflict in Israel-Palestine.

Key results

- Stabilising effect in the region by providing health, education and social services to vulnerable refugees, including women and girls, in their region of origin.
- Migration incentives reduced by ensuring refugees protection under International Humanitarian Law.
- Reform and innovation of UNRWA's delivery model aligning expenditure to income.

Justification for support: As a humanitarian actor, UNRWA is not positioned to prevent or solve conflict. However, in the protracted absence of a political solution, UNRWA is a key actor for the well-being and protection of Palestinian refugees in the region. UNRWA plays a stabilising role, mitigating risks of migration and...

File No.	2021-39842					
Responsible	Danish Representative Office in Ramallah					
Partner	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)					
DKK million/year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Commitment	105	105	105	105	105	525
Projected disb.	105	105	105	105	105	525
Duration	January 2023 — December 2027 (five years)					
Previous grants	2019 grant of DKK 70m raised to 105m in 2020					
Finance Act	§ 06.39.01.11					
Gender marker	<input type="checkbox"/> Not target		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant		<input type="checkbox"/> Principal	
Head of unit	Ketil Karlsen					
Desk officer	Khaled Mansour / Kristina Kinch					
Financial officer	Mads Kofoed-Didrichsen					
Relevant SDGs (marked in grey)						

The evaluation also finds evidence of increasing levels of multilateral earmarking. As exemplified in one of the institutional case studies, levels of earmarking for the UNFPA have seen a significant increase – from 11% of Danish contributions in 2014 to 60% in 2021.

Drivers behind the identified funding trends and priorities have been explored, combining analysis of financial data, a staff survey and KIIs at embassies and the MFA financial, policy and technical departments, leading to the identification of five principal factors:

1. Gender budget allocations *change with the tide* as funding levels can be seen to increase and decrease with the levels of total Danish ODA.
2. More specifically, funding levels are driven by *high strategic priority* to gender equality, found to be consistent throughout the evaluation period, with policy ambitions on global leadership with a degree of obligation to deliver on funding and results.
3. In a context of limited formal requirements, the evaluation also points to a risk of thematic fatigue, with results driven by *committed individuals* relying on previous experience and senior management support.
4. A degree of *continuity* of prioritisation of gender equality is suggested by high levels of long-term and predictable contributions to key partners. This is mirrored at country level, where the evaluation finds evidence of local partner appreciation of predictable Danish funding.
5. Strength of *political and senior management commitment* to gender equality in practice stands as a striking outcome from evaluation interviews and staff survey enquiries into how a leading role may be achieved in a politically driven organisation such as the MFA.

The evaluation finds evidence of highly relevant gender equality support in the case country contexts where targeted support and gender mainstreaming in bilateral programmes respond to country contexts of well-documented gender inequity and inequality. Relevance was also evident as shared objectives and mutual trust in the case studies of the UNFPA, UNICEF and MSI, where Danish support was found to be justified by increasing global pushback on SRHR. However, mainstreaming results were found to be negligible in the case of the GCF, noted by the evaluation as a missed opportunity for mitigation efforts and for mainstreaming gender in climate action measures. More broadly, green transition and climate are found by the evaluation to be high-profile engagement areas with potential for future gender programming and campaigning.

Evaluation findings demonstrate Danish support to policy dialogue events, funding streams to bilateral engagements, which were found to be losing ground over the evaluation period, and funding streams to multilateral partners, which were found to see rising funding levels.

Results are most evident in targeted support at micro level, and challenges remain on the critical priority of mainstreaming of gender equality – not least in climate action, where both political attention and programming potential are seen as considerable and on an upward trend.

In the case of the UNFPA, policy alignment is found to have been particularly close, with evidence of alliances on sensitive elements of SRHR such as abortion, comprehensive sexuality education and sexual minority rights, and collaboration on major advocacy events, culminating with the co-hosting in 2019 of the UNFPA's flagship event ICPD+25 by the governments of Kenya and Denmark. The evaluation finds this event to illustrate the potential of applying the coherence principles of DDD and joining up decades of development engagement with Kenya and the UNFPA in a way that was found, during data collection in October 2022, to continue to provide a credible advocacy platform for Danish dialogue on SRHR commitments with Kenya and countries of the region on a development policy priority.

Although general assets and impediments of earmarked funding for the multilateral system are recognised,¹⁰⁸ this evaluation finds elements of earmarked funding of Danish priorities, such as contributing to the overall effectiveness of an organisation (e.g. humanitarian focus at the UNFPA) or ensuring support to priorities (e.g. embedding LNOB into MSI).

The best-documented results have been found in governance and SRHR, where more than half of the project results assessed fall into the category of 'gender responsive' and the experience of gender integration is more comprehensive than in the case of green transition and climate. At the same time, the potential for large-scale impact and transformational change was found to be at least as strong in green transition and climate. Gender mainstreaming has contributed positively to the achievement of wider programmatic objectives, as evidenced by the case of transformative results of waste management regulation in Kenya and programme redesign with a local partner, FACEJ, in Mali. Gender analysis by FACEJ led to a broader definition of what constitutes the private sector, and targets of 40% of credit to female entrepreneurs have produced transformative results in a challenging security context in Mali. Engaging with civil society, boasting a significant track record and continuity of engagement were found by the evaluation to be particularly important in fragile and conflict-affected countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso.

108 Weinlich, S., Baumann, M.-O., Lunsgaarde, E., and Wolff, P. (2020) Earmarking in the Multilateral Development System: Many Shades of Grey, German Development Institute Studies.

Green transition and climate change is the area where the evaluation has found the greatest potential for improvement. This is found to justify a revision of AMG to require that each new grant considers gender mainstreaming and inclusion of a minimum of one gender-relevant indicator to measure progress against set objectives. Such requirements could benefit bilateral adaptation measures as well as policy dialogue with the GCF, found by the evaluation to have high relevance but a largely untapped potential when it comes to gender mainstreaming. Another programming area with untapped potential to explore is SSC, where the evaluation finds case examples of a gender-unaware point of departure in programme design yet significant results on the ground. The economic empowerment produced by access to credit (TMEA in Kenya) exemplifies how participants can transform as agents of change in their own lives – a new role with its own new challenges, as demonstrated by the case of female cross-border traders supported by TMEA who sometimes struggle to hold onto their self-made profits and rights to decision making at household level.

Challenges in governance and SRHR programming are often noted when it comes to scaling up results achieved at micro level. Cases in point are campaigns against FGM and service provision for survivors of GBV, where resources are often limited to challenge and change the deep-rooted roles and norms, and where the risks of urban bias and limited outreach to vulnerable populations in remote areas are difficult to mitigate for IPs.

Local ownership was identified as the key driver for impact and sustainability, especially when civil society has a role in decision making. Good practice examples for investing in civil society include: the GVRC and ACT! advocating for gender balance in countering violent extremism in Kenya; the Common Gender Fund in Burkina Faso, strengthening gender mainstreaming through better coordination by bilateral and multilateral partners; and the PATRIP Foundation in Mali, working with local sub-partners, trusted even in areas under the influence of radical groups.

The evaluation finds that projects engaging men in gender initiatives appear better positioned to lead to gender transformative results, as shown in a reduction in the number of FGM and undesired pregnancies at schools in Burkina Faso and of women joining community peace structures in Kenya or gaining support from husbands to engage in potentially transformative female entrepreneurship in Mali.

MFA management of gender equality knowledge has seen significant changes over the evaluation period, in line with the way in which aid delivery has evolved. In 2014 the MFA had a department for Technical Advisory Services, comprising teams of experts who were instrumental in managing roughly equal shares of multilateral grants, often provided as core support, and a dozen bilateral priority countries, with a handful

of Danish sector programmes. Today some bilateral programming remains in place but there is a much stronger emphasis on multilateral engagement and policy dialogue. This changing context has implications for the expertise required at the MFA (e.g. the Team Equal Opportunities) and the type of leadership Denmark can realistically aspire to take.

In self-assessments of knowledge levels, the consensus view by survey respondents is that gender equality expertise is relevant for most MFA staff and that knowledge levels are sufficient to support objectives in their current job function. FGDs confirm that expertise is developed 'on demand', which points to the potential for a stronger role by firming up formal requirements on gender integration in programming.

Gender inclusion in MEAL was found to be feasible in theory, but documentation of gender-related results shows different nuances in practice. Evidence from Mali shows how gender analysis changed programme design of support through the local partner FACEJ to include targets matched by indicators for female entrepreneurs. Such evidence from this evaluation justifies the recommendation to make measurable indicators a stronger requirement of AMG, as "what gets measured gets managed".

Stronger gender mainstreaming and a leading role in gender programming require more systematic management attention at the level of implementation. Thorough analysis and identification are required of a minimum of one gender-disaggregated indicator in each development engagement intended to produce gender-relevant results.

Gender Focal Point expertise was found to have evolved from being a network across the MFA and embassies in 2014 to a situation, in 2021, of improvement at embassies but marked by weak momentum. However, a best practice example with potential was found in the appointment of a Focal Point at the Department for GDK for gender and climate as well as IP rights and a Focal Point for civil society, youth and human rights.

In addition, at the embassy in Bamako the Focal Point role was shared by a posted staff member and a local staff member. These findings have inspired evaluation recommendations to revitalise the network by expanding it to two Focal Point appointments per unit: a junior and management-level Focal Point at MFA departments, and a local and posted staff member at embassies.

The staff survey along with interviews and focus groups showed considerable experience and strong commitment to gender programming but also a sense that, even with the best will in the world, there was a risk of fatigue and 'dropping the ball' in a multi-annual programme or strategic partnership. This gave rise to the idea that Gender Focal Points could organise an annual stocktaking of spending trends, lessons learned and scrutiny of engagements for missed opportunities and untapped potential.

Recommendations

While acknowledging Denmark's gender equality efforts and progress made throughout the evaluation period, the evaluation team proposes recommendations for improvement. Overarching recommendations are that Denmark's development cooperation focus first and foremost on undertaking current activities in a more strategic manner towards mainstreaming gender equality in policy dialogues, programming and reporting.

The evaluation team is sympathetic to the fact that managers and advisors have large portfolios and multiple demands in terms of the results they are asked to deliver. However, the evaluation team believes that the evidence points to multiple areas in which gender mainstreaming is necessary to ensure the delivery of gender equality results. Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation team has identified four more specific recommendations.

Each of the four recommendations aims to address different levels of engagement, with more detailed suggestions for possible measures. Recommendation 1 aims to recommend measures to better position Denmark with its gender equality expertise in the global arena, and suggests taking on a leading role in mainstreaming gender in climate programming. Recommendation 2 speaks to the gender marker reporting on Denmark's development activities within the target of gender equality as a policy objective. Recommendation 3 suggests measures to ensure a consistent gender focus within the crucial humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP) approach. These measures can build on milestones already achieved, with emphasis on improvement and for the importance of working in partnership to successfully achieve sustainable results. Recommendation 4 is more inward-looking and addresses internal changes in the MFA. Together with Recommendation 1, Recommendation 4 aims to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout ordinary systems, processes and responsibility structures, cross-cutting and bottom up.

Recommendation 1:

It is recommended to clarify statutes and to update and integrate gender equality as a cross-cutting area in all areas of guiding documents, frameworks, policy dialogue and programming, with special attention to integration of gender in green and climate-related support.

Rationale: The evaluation noted that the Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation (2014) was found useful but was marred by references to an outdated policy context and unclear status, and embassies were interested in updated guidance on current priorities, including green and climate-related priorities. The evaluation also found that there was a sense that gender equality is being put under pressure

from green transition and climate action. The case of the GCF shows that mainstreaming gender into climate action is a missed opportunity and that it is crucial to work with and within priorities.

Decades of experience in gender equality and SRHR, combined with high levels of staff commitment and a strong reputation in green transition, provide Denmark with an opportunity to gain a leading role in gendering climate action. Backed by necessary financial and human resources, Denmark has the potential to team up with long-standing partners to recognise the nexus between climate and gender equality and spearhead a more gender transformative approach to climate action.

Examples of case studies in this evaluation also show that incorporating gender analysis in programmes does influence planning and programming in the best sustainable way and that a good analysis leads to a good indicator.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- The *Strategic framework on gender equality, rights and diversity in Danish development cooperation* (2014) should be declared obsolete; its definitions and human rights principles can be integrated in a newly developed Gender Transformative Approach Note. This Approach Note can guide MFA staff in implementing *The World We Share* (2021) and inform gender equality mainstreaming and climate action priorities of the development policy strategy to be initiated in 2024. It should be kept in mind that this Approach Note should include recommendations for evidence-based approaches to ensure transformative results, especially within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.
- The MFA (namely The Team Equal Opportunities together with the Focal Point for gender, climate and Indigenous Peoples' rights at the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate) should conduct a learning exercise (e.g. in the form of a baseline study) with relevant multilateral partnership focal points to learn from their experience. Multilateral role models in that regard, that recognise Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (as well as climate action) as cross-cutting areas throughout their strategic documents, are for instance UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the World Food Programme (WFP). Results of this exercise can then inform the development of the new Approach Note and the revision of policies and guiding documents, which may i.e. be used to inform Denmark's engagement with multilateral partners in trust fund boards and similar governing bodies.

- Danish Aid Management Guidelines (AMG) should be revised to require that new grants include a minimum of one gender indicator at outcome levels in the results framework.
- In regard to planning and programming, a consistent use of gender analysis should be promoted.

Recommendation 2:

It is recommended that the OECD Gender Marker be applied in a coherent manner and its data used to inform future decision making and programming to promote gender equality and to mitigate the challenges of inaccuracy and low awareness, caused by the way how budgetary trends are established within the OECD-DAC system.

Rationale: While reports on gender spending place Denmark below the average of OECD-DAC member states – Denmark is at number 20, while Canada, Iceland and Sweden are at the top – the evaluation finds that the full picture of combined allocations for targeted and mainstreamed support is not accurately captured. The method applied is the OECD Gender Marker, and mandatory rating is supposed to be done at the opening of new bilateral and earmarked multilateral grants, but interviews with MFA staff and with embassy representatives dedicated to the experience in using the gender marker indicate that MFA attention to gender marking is minimal and its output poorly understood.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- The template for presentation of new grants and organisation strategies to the Programme Committee of bilateral programmes and projects should be revised to include, on the cover page, OECD Gender Marker information on the degree of gender integration.
- The Team Equal Opportunities should organise an annual stocktaking of gender spending as measured by the OECD Gender Marker, complemented by quality assurance (QA) of three registrations of targeted and three of significant gender integration, and the results should be communicated to MFA departments, embassies, and representations.

Recommendation 3:

It is recommended that Denmark sustain current gender engagements a) with emphasis on (a) strengthening both local ownership and capacity by reinforcing support for local civil society with a commitment to gender equality with funding and technical support, and (b) supporting a continued focus on gender equality in the donor community by systematically putting gender equality on the table in the meetings with other donors.

Rationale: The analysis of the three country case studies (two, Burkina Faso and Mali are fragile and conflict-affected states) provides evidence in all three thematic areas for local ownership being a key driver for impact and sustainability, especially when civil society has a role in decision making regarding decisions that affect the lives of local people and environments and hold governments and policymakers publicly accountable. The case studies show how Danish support to CSOs can contribute to a global policy dialogue on gender equality issues including SRHR and influence national laws and policies, and that working with local partners means addressing intersectionality and working where others cannot.

Examples in case studies also show that working with partners and supporting networks, rather than working solo and creating silos, not only reinforces local ownership but also brings together diverse perspectives, resources and expertise and offers forums for inter-state cooperation through arrangements and more formal and binding agreements that lead a transformative change.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- Support for local ownership should be reinforced by engaging and partnering with local project partners and civil society, with a commitment to gender equality through funding and technical support. This area of work can be informed and safeguarded by the consistent use of gender analysis (included in programming).
- The MFA should engage with (donor) networks and systematically put gender equality on the table in the meetings with other donors.
- It should be ensured that SRHR remains a strategic priority and that significant levels of long-term predictable funding are sustained for partners in the strategic priority area of SRHR.

Recommendation 4:

It is recommended that the job description for Gender Focal Points be upgraded to ensure gender mainstreaming by advocating, advising and supporting MFA staff and partners in developing evidence based and transformative programmes and monitoring and reporting on progress.

Rationale: The Gender Focal Point expertise has evolved from being a network across the MFA and embassies in 2014 to a situation of improvement at embassies in 2021 but marked by a weak momentum. However, best practice examples were found in the appointment of a Focal Point at the Department for Green Diplomacy and Climate (GDK) for gender and climate as well as IP rights and a Focal Point for civil society, youth and human rights; and at the embassy in Bamako, the Focal Point role was shared by a posted staff member and a local staff member. The latter was found to be a success model for merging local expertise with Danish understanding in an organic and synergetic way.

The evaluation also found that MFA management systems do not currently include dedicated attention to gender equality in standardised performance assessment. Unless gender programming is an explicit part of a person's job description (for the members of Team Equal Opportunities at the MFA or Gender Focal Points), gender performance is not a mandatory part of staff assessment.

This recommendation can be implemented by the following measures:

- A clear mandate for the Gender Focal Point position should be defined and the job description and reporting lines should be clear and included in the performance assessment. Additionally, the Gender Focal Point should report to, and should receive support from, senior management.
- The requirements from one to two individuals per unit should be expanded: (a) in the case of MFA departments, to include a head or deputy head of department and a staff member; and (b) in the case of embassies, to include a posted and a locally recruited staff member.
- MFA staff (at all levels) should receive gender training that is integrated, mainstreamed and included in all types of training courses throughout (e.g. HR training courses including diplomatic courses, AMG training course).

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