Contract for Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) System for External Aid Interventions: "Lot 1 - ROM for Asia and Pacific, Latin America, Caribbean, and Centrally Managed Thematic Interventions" with identification number EuropeAid/139798/DH/SER/Multi

Public report

Ad hoc report on gender-transformative approaches and intersectionality

Date: 11 July 2023

DISCLAIMER

The contents of this report and its annexes do not necessarily reflect the opinion or the position of the European Commission.

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Description
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
CLIP	Country Level Implementation Plan
CSO	Civil society organization
C&V	Communications and visibility
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
GAP III	Gender Action Plan III
GBV	Gender-based violence
GTA	Gender-transformative approaches
HRD	Human rights defender
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
INGO	International non-government organization
IP	Implementing partner
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer
MS	Member States
NGO	Non-government organization
ROM	Results-Oriented Monitoring
UN	United Nations
WHRD	Women human rights defender

1. Introduction: GTAs and intersectionality in GAP III

In recent years, gender transformative approaches (GTAs) and intersectionality have gained increasing influence in the field of international cooperation given their potential to provide analytical frameworks and tools that can effectively contribute to gender equality.

The European Union's Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025 (GAP III) seeks to promote gender equality as one of the central political objectives of the EU's external action by going beyond gender mainstreaming to embrace GTAs and intersectionality as key pathways for bringing about change. This involves understanding and addressing the underlying structural and sociocultural factors that account for existing gender inequalities (including power dynamics) and ensuring that all interventions contribute to transforming the social norms and systems that sustain them. Complex challenges addressed by the EU's external action (such as climate change, good governance or migration) require responses that consider multiple factors and how they intersect. For these responses to contribute to gender equality, it is crucial to ensure that they are grounded in the specific needs and priorities of women and their lived experiences, since apart from creating both barriers and opportunities, these intersections frame gender power relations among population groups, also including individuals who identify as LGBTIQ.

GTAs focus on ensuring women and girls' agency and on giving voice to women's rights organisations. These approaches apply a range of participatory tools to address deeper issues sustaining gender inequality and respond not only to women's tactical/practical needs and priorities (such as access to reproductive health, entrepreneurship skills or microcredit) but also to more strategic aspects (such as political participation and decision-making power). For change to be gender transformative, it must act upon the formal/visible and informal/invisible spheres of society (including on the one hand, existing rules, policies and resources, and on the other hand, consciousness, capabilities, social norms and deep structure) at both the individual and collective (systemic) levels. This also requires promoting spaces of reflection on the nature of gender relations and power dynamics in each context and sector to ensure that interventions effectively contribute to gender equality.

Intersectionality is relevant to the quest for gender equality because it recognises the heterogeneity of women's life experiences[1] versus prevailing normative assumptions about how women are expected to live and behave in different contexts (including notions of sexuality). It seeks to understand the complexity underlying gender-based inequalities by focusing on how these inequalities are intersected by compounding inequalities based on factors such as ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, and sociocultural aspects that ultimately shape how individuals live and exercise their rights. Hence, the application of GTAs must also incorporate an intersectionality lens under the umbrella of a human rights-based approach.

As stated in GAP III, for an approach to be gender-transformative it must aim to change power relations and bring about a paradigmatic shift that can end the multi-faceted discrimination and inequalities that affect women and hinder their development and well-being. This type of transformative change can only be achieved if intersectionality principles are applied by acknowledging the multiple characteristics and identities of individuals, and analysing how gender and sex intersect with other relevant features and affect gender equality. This approach also requires focusing on the most disadvantaged women (including refugees, women living with disabilities, indigenous peoples, ethnic/religious minorities, elderly women and girls), as well as LGBTIQ persons facing specific gender-related challenges that must also be tackled to achieve gender equality in alignment with the EU's LGBTIQ Equality Strategy (2020-2025).

# 2. Objective, scope and methodology

This study seeks to understand the contribution of a sample of EU-funded interventions to gender equality by analysing if and how gender transformative and intersectional approaches have been applied in their implementation. The scope of the study is a total of 25 interventions that were implemented by a wide range of partners (including CSOs, INGOs, UN agencies, private sector actors, academia and bilateral development

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[1] See "*2023 Report on Gender Equality in the EU*".

agencies), covering the following countries: Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Costa-Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uganda and Yemen. The interventions correspond to 8 DAC sectors: (i) Education policy and administrative management (11110); (ii) Democratic participation and society (15150); (iii) Human Rights (15160); (iv) Early childhood education (11240); (v) Women's rights organisations and movements, and government institutions (15170); (vi) Environmental research (41082); (vii) Food assistance (52010); and (viii) STD control and HIV and AIDS (13040).

In terms of methodology, this study is mainly based on secondary data taken from the 25 monitoring reports that were produced following Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) review missions to the EU-funded interventions in the sample. ROM reviews are external assessments of ongoing interventions that take stock of main achievements and challenges, identify possible lessons learned and provide recommendations to enhance performance. The data from the 25 ROM reports was complemented by 15 key informant interviews (KII) including operational managers in EUDs, gender experts, HQ programme managers and gender focal points in EUDs.

In order to explore gender-transformative approaches (GTAs) in the interventions, the Gender at Work Analytical Framework was used to consider the four types of contributions to change that interventions can bring about. These four types of contributions are represented in the four segments of the figure below.
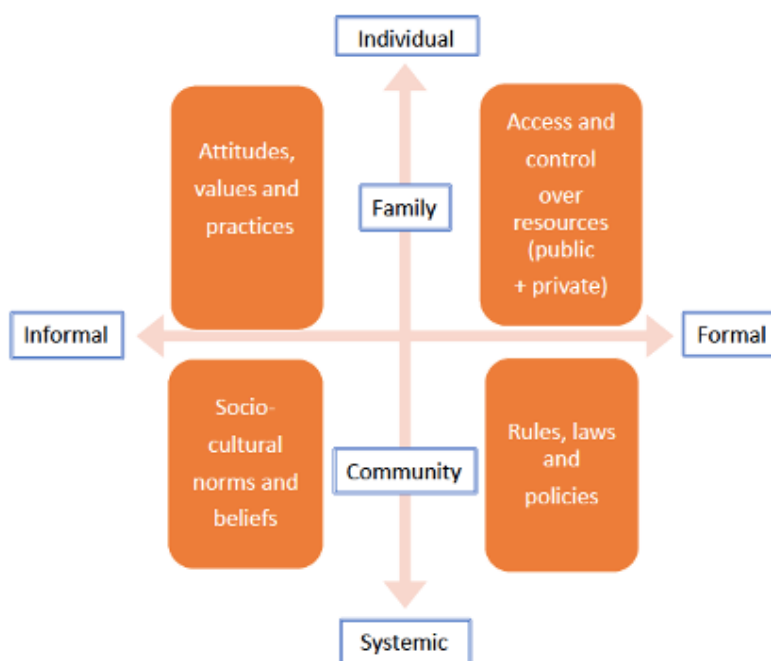
(adapted from "Gender at Work", Rao et al, 2016)

It can be argued that GTAs are being comprehensively applied in interventions that effectively contribute to changes in all four dimensions: i.e. interventions that contribute to improving access and control over resources (including new skills, knowledge, credit, etc) and have effects on attitudes, values and practices (self-esteem, empowerment, confidence, etc.) at the individual level, while also contributing to influencing/changing policy (rules, laws, programmes, etc.) and social norms (beliefs, values and practices) at the collective/community level. Reflecting on these four dimensions helps to understand the different domains in which gender power structures operate and how they interact.

It is important to acknowledge two methodological limitations encountered in this study: i) the nature of ROM reviews (methodology and limited timeframe) does not provide comprehensive evidence for a profound analysis of relevant aspects of a GTA and intersectionality; ii) most interventions face monitoring challenges that particularly affect measuring contributions to informal/intangible changes related to the more

informal/invisibles contributions to change (i.e. concerning individual attitudes, values and practices, and collective sociocultural norms and beliefs affecting gender relations). In fact, in most interventions, monitoring tools (including data collection systems and logframe indicators) are designed to focus on the formal elements (the two segments on the right side) without covering the more complex and harder to measure realms of cultural norms and practices and/or changes in attitudes. As a result, relevant evidence on GTAs and intersectionality has not been reported.

3. Key findings

Gender-transformative interventions seek to "transform gender relations to achieve objectives and challenge inequitable gender norms and relations to promote equality, aiming for a structural and lasting change in how different genders are valued"[2], while intersectional approaches consider women as non-homogeneous categories and tailor actions to specific needs, priorities and interests determined by intersecting factors affecting gender inequalities (such as ethnicity, age, religion, migrant status or disability). In the following sections of the study, these dimensions are considered in the context of the interventions at key stages of the project cycle: identification and formulation, implementation and monitoring and reporting. A final section discusses other relevant issues analysed during ROM reviews that are also relevant to the objective of the study (namely cross-cutting issues and communications and visibility).

Identification and formulation

> **Key finding 1:** Conducting an adequate gender analysis that identifies women's specific needs, interests and priorities is crucial for ensuring that the intervention constitutes an adequate response to the issues to be addressed.

Most implementing partners have resorted to conducting various forms of gender analysis through a wide range of tools and processes, including needs assessments that consider gender specific priorities (Pakistan), surveys to identify gender-related needs (Iraq), academic studies that provide relevant sector evidence on food security, nutrition and agriculture (Ecuador and Malawi), detailed baselines that provide specific insights on gender-related dynamics (Brazil) and participatory diagnostic workshops involving indigenous women and women with disabilities (Honduras), as well as collective processes of identification involving CSOs supporting the LGBTIQ community (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua). However, several IPs have not conducted a gender analysis to guide the design and implementation of their interventions, despite their gender focus.

> **Key finding 2:** Engaging key actors of relevance to gender equality (especially women's organisations and movements) during the initial phase of identification and formulation is central for ensuring that relevant stakeholders voice their needs and are ready to participate and contribute to the intervention during implementation with the levels of ownership and commitment required for positive results. It is also important for ensuring that gender-transformative and intersectional approaches can be adopted.

Several instances of IPs effectively applying principles of intersectionality have emerged. For example, the socio-cultural determinants of gender-based violence (GBV) among indigenous (Ixil) women were considered in the intervention implemented in Guatemala, while interventions in Honduras and Kenya/Uganda addressed multiple needs of women with disabilities (from accessing job opportunities and providing healthcare to reducing stigma). Furthermore, the intervention in Colombia paid special attention to the needs of transgender women within the wider target group of women facing commercial sexual exploitation, while aspects of GBV that affect migrant women in particular were considered in Bangladesh. However, it was noted that the intervention implemented in Brazil failed to include key aspects of intersectionality (such as the specific needs of LGBTIQ and women with disabilities) in activity design. Beyond the sample of interventions, interesting experiences emerged from discussions with EUD colleagues in countries like Malawi

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[2] See B. Álvarez, B. Sanz Corell and E. Le Roux. "Working better with CSOs to address gender inequality and champion women's and girls' voices and agency", December 2022.

and Nepal, where interventions in other sectors (such as social protection, energy and infrastructure) were embracing gender-transformative elements in their design and implementation.

Potentially gender-transformative elements are being applied by various IPs. For example, the intervention in Mozambique addressed social norms by raising awareness on GBV across stakeholders (including duty bearers), apart from lending psychological support to victims; while the intervention in Kenya worked closely with government authorities to address structural and cultural barriers that limit women's access to land, beyond training women about their land rights.

Hence, findings suggest that the relevance of gender-focused interventions largely depends on the extent to which a gender analysis and key stakeholder engagement were considered during the identification and formulation phases.

Implementation

> **Key finding 3:** Not all implementing partners include the necessary gender expertise in their teams nor secure budgets for gender-specific activities.

The institutional, human and financial capacities of IPs and key stakeholders in relation to gender is uneven. Interventions in Kenya and Guatemala involved women's organisations (as IPs or target groups) with strong gender expertise and secured adequate budgets for gender-specific activities. Interventions involving stakeholders with weaker gender-related capacities have contributed to strengthening national institutions such as the National Commission for the Status of Women (NCSW) in Pakistan and judicial authorities in Bangladesh. Findings suggest that other interventions have more limited resources available to support gender objectives due to factors such as conflicting funding priorities, inadequate capacity assessment and limited understanding of the importance of securing dedicated resources.
Interventions in Argentina, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan and Timor-Leste included women CSOs in their operational structures. The intervention in Argentina constitutes a particularly positive example, since indigenous women not only actively participated in operational structures but also co-created contents of modules and projects to be executed by their women's associations.

> **Key finding 4:** Targeted women (including those in the most vulnerable situations such as women with disabilities (WWD), victims of GBV and migrants) are having equal access to goods, services and opportunities offered by all the interventions, through a range of approaches that included aspects related to intersectionality as well as potentially gender-transformative components.

Overall results reflect the diverse capacities and dynamism of CSOs in the different regions and political contexts, with findings from Latin America and the Caribbean reflecting the existence of more vibrant feminist and women's rights movements.

Africa: 1) in Mozambique, girls' and women's rights were enhanced by conducting awareness raising actions that address themes such as women's protection, conscientious parenthood, shared management of family resources and domestic chores, and women's financial empowerment; 2) in Uganda, the intervention made a significant contribution to advance gender equality and women's empowerment (particularly women with disabilities) by ensuring that women benefit from activities such as business skills training and savings and loans groups; 3) in Kenya, the intervention strengthened women HRDs, raising awareness of women's land rights among land rights defenders and duty bearers; 4) in Burundi, the intervention aimed to improve the protection of women and girls in prison through initiatives to protect and assist them, make them aware of their rights, and empower them to facilitate their reintegration into society; 5) in Congo, the intervention facilitated the participation of women by disseminating Congolese laws on fundamental rights, with particular emphasis on those concerning GBV.

Asia Pacific: 1) in Pakistan, the intervention made a significant contribution to gender equality by supporting women in one of the most vulnerable situations (victims of acid attacks) and facilitating their access to justice;

2) in Bangladesh, the intervention focused on supporting migrant women and facilitating their access to justice; 3) in Timor-Leste, positive results were reported, even if meaningful inclusion of LGBTIQ and people with disabilities was identified as a challenge; 4) in Iraq, the intervention contributed to gender equality by making gender studies more accessible to the wider population and women in particular; 5) in Yemen, gender was mainstreamed into capacity building activities involving criminal justice staff to ensure gender sensitive protection to women in vulnerable situations; 6) in India/Nepal/Pakistan, the intervention empowered homeworkers (predominantly women) to access their rights and entitlements; 7) in Malaysia, women community leaders received support to enhance their role and more effectively fight discrimination; 8) in Myanmar, the specific impact of extractive industries on women was assessed and their leadership role was promoted; 9) in Cambodia, gender training in schools and for parents was conducted, coupled with activities to economically empower women in vulnerable situations; 10) in Kazakhstan/Afghanistan, the intervention facilitated women's access to education and enhanced their employability prospects.

Latin America and the Caribbean: 1) in Guatemala, the intervention applied an explicitly feminist approach that built on a solid analysis of women's needs and priorities that has resulted in an improved economic situation for many women; 2) in Honduras, the intervention facilitated the participation of women in key decision-making spaces and promoting small businesses; 3) in Colombia, the intervention had important effects on women's self-esteem and also supported men through various activities on the theme of new masculinities; 4) in Dominican Republic, women and girls defended their sexual and reproductive rights with the support of the IPs; 5) in Brazil, women HRDs strengthened their skills and capacities through the intervention; 6) in the five countries covered by the regional intervention managed from Costa Rica, the intervention generated key information and knowledge products to support advocacy work, providing training and legal support for LGBTIQ and small grants to support their actions; 7) in Dominican Republic, the intervention supported the integration of women leaders in CSOs from a feminist socio-economic perspective; 8) in Argentina, the intervention contributed to improving the lives of indigenous women by addressing barriers in three areas: food security, education and participation in policy design.

CMTI: in Iran, the intervention convened national authorities to synergize various vulnerability assessment processes for programmatic targeting with emphasis on women and girls; while the intervention on GTAs contributed key knowledge products to the realm of gender equality and promoted collaboration on GTAs to advance gender objectives in both programming and policy work at the country level (Ecuador and Malawi).

These results cover the four categories of the Gender at Work analytical framework as follows:

1. Access to control over resources: The most significant contributions to gender equality are reported under the individual/formal/tangible/visible quadrant (which corresponds to individual changes related to access and control over resources). All interventions deliver results at this level through the provision of a wide range of resources. The most frequent type of resource provided is new skills and knowledge through awareness raising and training activities on issues of relevance to gender equality; followed by different forms of technical/professional support (legal, psychosocial, medical); income generation resources (entrepreneurial support, business plans); various material resources to address specific needs and priorities (crèches, community schools, credit); and the facilitation of access to land, credit, government schemes, etc.

In several interventions, the intersectionality principle is applied, since efforts are made to ensure that the implementation approach is tailored to the specific factors affecting women (disability, ethnic group, age, sexual orientation, etc.) with a view to addressing the causes of discrimination and inequality. It is important to note that beyond recognising compounded factors of inequality, applying an intersectional lens must also ensure that the implementation approach is tailored to these specific needs and contributes to changing the structural factors that sustain existing gender inequalities. This is potentially the case of several interventions that have adapted their approach to the needs of indigenous women, women with disabilities, LGBTIQ, migrant women, homeworkers, women deprived of liberty or victims of GBV or sexual exploitation, albeit to different degrees. Although the extent to which intersectionality is being applied is difficult to determine, several examples have been identified (see Annex 1).

2. <u>Attitudes, values and practices</u>: Many interventions are also contributing to what can be described as informal/intangible changes at the individual level. There are several indications of good results in this realm, since the provision of the above-mentioned resources has brought positive changes for women in areas such as self-esteem, empowerment, well-being and in their attitudes and practices. Even if limited information on changes at this level is available in ROM reports for the two above-mentioned reasons, Annex 1 includes details of the reported contributions to gender-transformative change in the 25 interventions.

3. <u>Rules, laws and policies</u>: The interventions have made significant contributions to changes at the collective/formal level related to laws, programmes and policies by advocating and campaigning on a wide range of issues (such as GBV, acid attacks, girls' education, migrant rights), by lending technical support (drafting legislation, participating in expert groups) and by developing the technical and organisational capacity-building of relevant stakeholders (including government actors and CSOs), among other actions (see Annex 1).

4. <u>Sociocultural norms and beliefs</u>: Changes at the informal/collective level are usually the result of long-term processes that exceed the duration of interventions. Furthermore, indications of advances are often difficult to capture and measure. Nonetheless, several positive results have been reported that suggest that certain interventions are succeeding in contributing to changes in social norms and beliefs that sustain gender inequalities. These results cover important aspects, such as violence against women, positive masculinities, youth engagement and community leadership (see Annex 1).

> **Key finding 5:** Interventions influence policies and programmes, which constitutes an important dimension of GTAs, since transforming the formal collective aspects that frame social relations is crucial for bringing about gender-transformative change

Positive examples of policy-influencing include interventions in Pakistan, where significant contributions to policy (especially in the form of technical inputs into relevant legislation on women's protection) were reported, as well as in the Costa Rican regional intervention, where the IPs helped to generate concrete instruments that contributed to improving the existing legal and policy frameworks on issues of relevance to the LGBTIQ community in the 5 target countries. Most interventions were also aligned with partner policies and strategies of relevance to gender equality according to their sector (e.g. women's land rights (Kenya), GBV (Congo, Pakistan, Timor-Leste), women migrants (Bangladesh), labour codes (India, Nepal and Pakistan).

> **Key finding 6:** Most interventions have successfully built synergies with a wide range of organisations and/or interventions that are also addressing gender issues, thereby maximising available resources. However, not all identified opportunities were seized by implementing partners and few instances of interventions promoting learning and sharing among peers have been reported.

Examples of identified synergies include collaboration with women's rights networks (Pakistan), feminist associations (Brazil), CSOs working on gender issues (Guatemala), INGOs (Timor-Leste) and international organisations (Ecuador/Malawi, Pakistan and Iraq). However, ROM missions have also identified opportunities to strengthen collaboration on gender issues with women's organisations that have not been seized to date (in Congo, for example).

> **Key finding 7:** In terms of the wider context of EU operations and bilateral interventions implemented by EU Member States, findings suggest that there is special EU added value in relation to issues of relevance to gender equality in several countries.

In Pakistan, the EU is one of the few donors supporting interventions addressing GBV; in Timor-Leste, the EU partners with Sweden on various gender interventions; in Iraq and India, the EU is supporting CSOs addressing gender issues in a shrinking civic space; in Nepal, the EU is partnering with Finland on gender issues; and in Congo, the EU works with AFD on GBV. Finally, the intervention in Kazakhstan/Afghanistan has special added value in a State affected by multi-dimensional fragility (Afghanistan), since it contributes to gender equality by facilitating access to education through regional cooperation in Central Asia.

Monitoring and reporting

> **Key finding 8:** Interventions face significant challenges related to measuring contributions to changes in the realm of gender equality, and existing tools to support these efforts are not being systematically applied by implementing partners[3]. Furthermore, potential alignment with GAP III indicators has not been considered by most implementing partners when revising their logframes and monitoring frameworks.

The main identified flaws include: 1) absence of disaggregation of indicators/target values by sex and other relevant factors (e.g. in Timor-Leste and Uganda); 2) limited use of gender-sensitive indicators (e.g. in Malaysia); 3) failure to adequately capture complex aspects of gender-related issues with available indicators (e.g. women's enhanced community leadership in India, Nepal and Pakistan); 4) absence of alignment with GAP III indicators[4].

Identified limitations related to measuring contributions to gender equality are also closely linked to issues affecting monitoring systems. In the absence of adequate indicators, it is difficult for monitoring systems to serve their purpose and provide a comprehensive account of results in the realm of gender equality. Despite indications of positive contributions and relevant achievements, existing monitoring frameworks are failing to adequately capture them. Hence, it is often less a question of interventions failing to contribute to gender objectives, than of results going unreported as a consequence of the dearth of monitoring tools and limited IP capacity to accurately monitor progress towards set goals. Hence, the results summarised in this report cannot be considered exhaustive.

Sustainability

> **Key finding 9:** Sustainability prospects are considered positive, since most interventions are contributing to reinforcing the capacities of both duty bearers and rights holders in ways that will have positive effects on gender equality, while the benefits generated will be accessible, affordable and acceptable for women in the long-term.

In Mozambique, the intervention promoted the empowerment of beneficiaries through skills training in GBV prevention that raised awareness on the rights and obligations of women's CSOs and State bodies. It is foreseeable that the capacities acquired will multiply after the end of the intervention. A similar finding emerged in Malaysia, where women leaders were likely to maintain the knowledge and skills developed throughout the intervention and will be able to continue to practise leveraged leadership in their communities. In Uganda, the "group approach" promoted the creation of village-level women's groups that are formally registered with the government (as service delivery structures) and bring together women with disabilities who receive training and support to facilitate their financial inclusion through savings, loans and entrepreneurial development. These groups will continue to operate beyond the duration of the intervention. In Kenya, the training and support received by women HRDs and volunteer groups in relation to land rights and Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) will continue to be affordable in the future, thereby providing an alternative to the judiciary court system that is inaccessible to poor rural women.

However, in interventions implemented in Congo and Malaysia, it was noted that given CSO dependence on external funding for certain trainings, it seemed unlikely that the same type of service would continue beyond the life of the interventions unless additional funding was secured.

> **Key finding 10:** All interventions contributed to improving socio-economic conditions of women and building their resilience (especially in relation to those in the most vulnerable situations, such as women with disabilities and victims of GBV).

The extensive range of contributions illustrates different dimensions of intersectionality and aspects of gender-transformative approaches. These contributions are grouped geographically in the section below to facilitate regional cross-referencing, learning and sharing.

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[3] Relevant tools that might be applied have been included in the document "Thinking out of the box to be gender transformative in our work", INTPA G1, June 2023.

[4] Even if GAP III was introduced after the calls for proposals for the interventions in the sample were launched, indicators could have been adapted after the introduction of GAP III to streamline measurement and support reporting on GAP III implementation.

Africa: 1) in Mozambique, beneficiaries included female-headed households receiving support in both business development and responsible parenting issues (especially schooling), while support to male-headed households involved greater participation of men in domestic activities, leaving women more free time to run their small businesses; 2) in Uganda, the action increased resilience to shocks and pressure for women with disabilities by promoting awareness, inclusion, participation, representation and adopting advocacy and lobbying for recognition and support, as well as by linking women with disabilities with available services and facilities (including government social protection programs and business opportunities to improve livelihoods); 3) in Kenya, the intervention increased the resilience of women in vulnerable situations by creating awareness of their legitimate right to access and own land; 4) in Burundi, the intervention increased the resilience to shocks and pressures of minors and women in detention by acting on the different factors that determine their fragility (including awareness-raising and information on their rights, legal and psychological support, material resources to ensure dignity during detention, support to gain financial independence after detention); 5) in Congo, the intervention contributed to the resilience of women faced with various forms of gender-based discrimination and violence, including rape and beatings, customary levirate or loss of inheritance and eviction.

Asia-Pacific: 1) in Pakistan, the intervention addressed the root causes of GBV by empowering beneficiaries and target groups to claim assistance, while supporting structural changes at the national policy and community levels through advocacy and capacity building of government entities; 2) in Bangladesh, the intervention reduced women's fragility during the migration process by contributing to changes in power dynamics and sociocultural factors related to class and caste that affect women in particular; 3) in Timor-Leste, the intervention strengthened systems supporting women during the COVID-19 pandemic, a time marked by increased violence against women and girls; 4) in Iraq, the intervention improved socioeconomic conditions and addressed GBV by raising awareness while also influencing policy; 5) in Yemen, special attention was paid to the specific dimensions of fragility affecting the reintegration of ex-offenders by supporting their family income; 6) in India, the intervention improved the resilience of homeworkers (primarily women and one of the most disadvantaged social groups) by engaging brands and other supply chain contractors to give homeworkers regular work and pay them the deserved wages in a timely fashion, as well as lending additional livelihood support during the pandemic to diversify their abilities; 7) in Malaysia, the intervention provided women with the tools to address issues related to gender discrimination and build their confidence and resources to exercise leadership effectively; 8) in Myanmar, it is noted that beyond the impact of extractive industries on communities, it was the humanitarian situation of internally displaced people (especially women) that was at the heart of the community work that contributed to collective resilience; 9) in Cambodia, although as a result of COVID-19 related delays few results have been reported, it is expected that the intervention will contribute to the resilience of women and children in the future; 10) in Kazakhstan/Afghanistan, opportunities to study and network with student communities overseas and to collaborate with CSOs and entities in Afghanistan to support their return and employability, are also likely to contribute to building women's resilience.

Latin America and the Caribbean: 1) in Guatemala, the intervention had positive effects on women's resilience across several personal and social aspects (support for women facing violence, increased exercise of human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, strengthening self-esteem, overcoming fear and stigma due to sexual violence, promoting respectful relationships with partners and informed motherhood through the use of contraceptive methods, capacity for social and legal denunciation, increased negotiation skills and ability to liaise with educational and community authorities and to speak in public, etc.); 2) in Honduras, several types of contributions to the resilience of women with disabilities were noted (including increased awareness about their rights, enhanced participation in decision-making processes, strengthened self-esteem and income generation); 3) in Colombia, the intervention contributed to the resilience of girls, women and transgender through prevention and conflict resolution measures; 4) in Dominican Republic, the intervention contributed to the protection of sexual liberties and sexual and reproductive health; 5) in Brazil, support to women's HRDs and work against GBV also had positive effects on resilience; 6) in the five countries covered by the regional intervention managed from Costa Rica, the intervention strengthened the capacity of LGBTIQ defenders in ways that protect and improve the resilience of this population group; 7) in the

Dominican Republic, the intervention addressed issues related to vulnerability by promoting a resilient, dynamic and participatory economy with a focus on women.

<u>CMTI:</u> in Iran, the intervention supported women as rights holders to become more empowered, and improved the socio-economic conditions and resilience of the most socially disadvantaged and excluded groups in target areas/communities that are prone to social, economic, and disaster-related shocks; while the integration of GTAs sought to address the root causes of issues affecting women's lives in the intervention covering both Ecuador and Malawi, where the identified issues constituted specific dimensions of fragility affecting women (i.e., access to assets (including land ownership); access to economic resources (including credit and social insurance); commercialisation processes; institutional processes (participation in decision-making); access to technical knowledge and education; and access to financial services). At the global level, this intervention has also contributed to increasing resilience by addressing issues related to rights and duties of stakeholders, raising awareness on GTAs and advocating for their adoption, since improving knowledge, capacity and awareness on gender issues can support wider resilience-building efforts.

4. Recommendations

R1

linked to
Identification and formulation

Ensure that the formulation of all interventions is guided by a comprehensive gender analysis that duly considers intersectional factors affecting gender inequalities and effectively informs the design of gender-transformative interventions that question gender power dynamics and promote changes in social norms and attitudes.

R2

linked to
Identification and formulation

Secure meaningful engagement of all relevant actors (especially women's organisations but also other social actors, such as LGBTIQ activists, youth associations and social enterprises) by conducting an adequate stakeholder analysis that is context-sensitive and serves to identify all key actors and by facilitating consultative processes that strengthen relevance, promote ownership and secure commitment.

R3

linked to
Implementation

Continue to build the capacity of IPs and stakeholders (including EUD staff and government partners) to ensure that gender expertise is available to support interventions and that GTAs and intersectionality are adequately understood and applied at all levels of project cycle management.

R4

linked to
Implementation

Develop synergies, partnerships and alliances with all actors working on gender issues (especially women's organisations but also organisations working on new masculinities with men and LGBTIQ organisations) and relevant global interventions. These alliances are crucial for enhancing efforts to bridge the advocacy-policy-making gap on issues of relevance to gender equality.

R5

linked to
Implementation

Identify opportunities to share experiences, promote peer-to-peer learning on the application of GTAs and intersectionality, and develop case studies to highlight good experiences and extract lessons for future programming.

R6

linked to
Monitoring and reporting

Continue to strengthen stakeholder capacity to monitor and measure gender-transformative change by enhancing ongoing efforts to provide relevant training and sharing tools that allow interventions to accurately measure results and track unintended effects.

R7

linked to
*Monitoring and
reporting*

Encourage interventions to align their indicators with GAP III to facilitate EUD-level reporting and EUD's contribution to global reporting on GAP III implementation. Consider making the current recommendation of including GAP III indicators in the instructions for calls for proposals a formal requirement for applicants.

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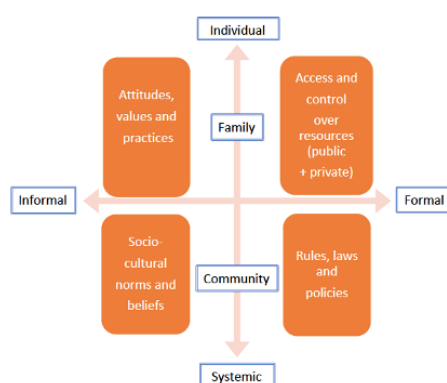# Why are GTAs and intersectionality important for the EU?

In recent years, gender transformative approaches (GTAs) and intersectionality have gained increasing influence in the field of international cooperation given their potential to provide analytical frameworks and tools that can effectively contribute to gender equality. The European Union's Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025 (GAP III) seeks to promote gender equality as one of the central political objectives of the EU's external action by going beyond gender mainstreaming to embrace GTAs and intersectionality as key pathways for bringing about change.

GTAs focus on ensuring women and girls' agency and on giving voice to women's rights organisations. These approaches apply a range of participatory tools to address deeper issues sustaining gender inequality and respond not only to women's tactical/practical needs and priorities (such as access to reproductive health, entrepreneurship skills or microcredit) but also to more strategic aspects (such as political participation and decision-making power). Intersectionality is relevant to the quest for gender equality because it recognises the heterogeneity of women's life experiences[1] versus prevailing normative assumptions about how women are expected to live and behave in different contexts. It seeks to understand the complexity underlying gender-based inequalities by focusing on how these inequalities are intersected by compounding inequalities based on factors such as ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation, and sociocultural aspects. Hence, the application of GTAs must also incorporate an intersectionality lens under the umbrella of a human rights-based approach.

This study seeks to understand the contribution of 25 EU-funded interventions to gender equality by analysing if and how gender transformative and intersectional approaches have been applied in their implementation. These 25 interventions[2] were implemented by a wide range of partners (including CSOs, INGOs, UN agencies, private sector actors, academia and bilateral development agencies), and covered 28 countries[3].

This study is based on secondary data collected during Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reviews. ROM reviews are external assessments of ongoing interventions that take stock of achievements and challenges, identify lessons learned and provide recommendations to enhance performance. It also includes data collected through 15 key informant interviews (KII).

The Gender at Work Analytical Framework was used to consider the four types of contributions to change. For change to be gender transformative, it must act upon the formal/visible (including existing rules, policies and resources) and informal/invisible spheres of society (including consciousness, capabilities and social norms) at both the individual and collective (systemic) levels. It must also promote reflection on the nature of gender power dynamics in each context and sector to ensure that interventions effectively contribute to gender equality.

(Adapted from "Gender at Work", Rao et al, 2016)

It can be argued that GTAs are being comprehensively applied in interventions that effectively contribute to changes in all four dimensions: i.e. interventions that contribute to improving access and control over resources (including new skills, knowledge, credit, etc) and have effects on attitudes, values and practices (self-esteem, empowerment,

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[1] See "*2023 Report on Gender Equality in the EU*".

[2] The interventions correspond to 8 DAC sectors: (i) Education policy and administrative management (11110); (ii) Democratic participation and society (15150); (iii) Human Rights (15160); (iv) Early childhood education (11240); (v) Women's rights organisations and movements, and government institutions (15170); (vi) Environmental research (41082); (vii) Food assistance (52010); and (viii) STD control and HIV and AIDS (13040).

[3] Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Costa-Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uganda and Yemen.

confidence, etc.) at the individual level, while also contributing to influencing/changing policy (rules, laws, programmes, etc.) and social norms (beliefs, values and practices) at the collective/community level. Reflecting on these four dimensions helps to understand the different domains in which gender power structures operate and how they interact.

What did we learn through our study?

Identification and formulation

> **Key finding 1:** Conducting an adequate gender analysis that identifies women's specific needs, interests and priorities is crucial for ensuring that the intervention constitutes an adequate response to the issues to be addressed.

> **Key finding 2:** Engaging key actors of relevance to gender equality (especially women's organisations and movements) during the initial phase of identification and formulation is central for ensuring that relevant stakeholders voice their needs and are ready to participate and contribute to the intervention during implementation with the levels of ownership and commitment required for positive results. It is also important for ensuring that gender-transformative and intersectional approaches can be adopted.

Implementation

> **Key finding 3:** Not all implementing partners include the necessary gender expertise in their teams nor secure budgets for gender-specific activities.

> **Key finding 4:** Targeted women (including those in the most vulnerable situations such as women with disabilities (WWD), victims of GBV and migrants) are having equal access to goods, services and opportunities offered by all the interventions, through a range of approaches that included aspects related to intersectionality as well as potentially gender-transformative components.

Results covered the four categories of the Gender at Work analytical framework as follows:

1. Access to control over resources: The most significant contributions to gender equality are reported under the individual/formal/tangible/visible quadrant (which corresponds to individual changes related to access and control over resources). All interventions deliver results at this level through the provision of a wide range of resources. The most frequent type of resource provided is new skills and knowledge through awareness raising and training activities on issues of relevance to gender equality; followed by different forms of technical/professional support (legal, psychosocial, medical); income generation resources (entrepreneurial support, business plans); various material resources to address specific needs and priorities (crèches, community schools, credit); and the facilitation of access to land, credit, government schemes, etc.

In several interventions, the intersectionality principle is applied, since efforts are made to ensure that the implementation approach is tailored to the specific factors affecting women (disability, ethnic group, age, sexual orientation, etc.) with a view to addressing the causes of discrimination and inequality. It is important to note that beyond recognising compounded factors of inequality, applying an intersectional lens must also ensure that the implementation approach is tailored to these specific needs and contributes to changing the structural factors that sustain existing gender inequalities. This is potentially the case of several interventions that have adapted their approach to the needs of indigenous women, women with disabilities, LGBTIQ, migrant women, homeworkers, women deprived of liberty or victims of GBV or sexual exploitation, albeit to different degrees.

2. Attitudes, values and practices: Many interventions are also contributing to what can be described as informal/intangible changes at the individual level. There are several indications of good results in this realm, since the provision of the above-mentioned resources has brought positive changes for women in areas such as self-esteem, empowerment, well-being and in their attitudes and practices.

3. Rules, laws and policies: The interventions have made significant contributions to changes at the collective/formal level related to laws, programmes and policies by advocating and campaigning on a wide range of issues (such as GBV, acid attacks, girls' education, migrant rights), by lending technical support (drafting legislation, participating in expert groups) and by developing the technical and organisational capacity-building of relevant stakeholders (including government actors and CSOs), among other actions.

4. <u>Sociocultural norms and beliefs</u>: Changes at the informal/collective level are usually the result of long-term processes that exceed the duration of interventions, and indications of advances are often difficult to capture and measure. Nonetheless, several positive results have been reported that suggest that certain interventions are succeeding in contributing to changes in social norms and beliefs that sustain gender inequalities. These results cover important aspects, such as violence against women, positive masculinities, youth engagement and community leadership.

> **Key finding 5:** Interventions influence policies and programmes, which constitutes an important dimension of GTAs, since transforming the formal collective aspects that frame social relations is crucial for bringing about gender-transformative change

> **Key finding 6:** Most interventions have successfully built synergies with a wide range of organisations and/or interventions that are also addressing gender issues, thereby maximising available resources. However, not all identified opportunities were seized by implementing partners and few instances of interventions promoting learning and sharing among peers have been reported.

> **Key finding 7:** In terms of the wider context of EU operations and bilateral interventions implemented by EU Member States, findings suggest that there is special EU added value in relation to issues of relevance to gender equality in several countries.

Monitoring and reporting

> **Key finding 8:** Interventions face significant challenges related to measuring contributions to changes in the realm of gender equality, and existing tools to support these efforts are not being systematically applied by implementing partners[4]. Furthermore, potential alignment with GAP III indicators has not been considered by most implementing partners when revising their logframes and monitoring frameworks.

Sustainability

> **Key finding 9:** Sustainability prospects are considered positive, since most interventions are contributing to reinforcing the capacities of both duty bearers and rights holders in ways that will have positive effects on gender equality, while the benefits generated will be accessible, affordable and acceptable for women in the long-term.

> **Key finding 10:** All interventions contributed to improving socio-economic conditions of women and building their resilience (especially in relation to those in the most vulnerable situations, such as women with disabilities and victims of GBV).

What should be the next steps for effective action?

R1

linked to *Identification and formulation*

Ensure that the formulation of all interventions is guided by a comprehensive gender analysis that duly considers intersectional factors affecting gender inequalities and effectively informs the design of gender-transformative interventions that question gender power dynamics and promote changes in social norms and attitudes.

R2

linked to *Identification and formulation*

Secure meaningful engagement of all relevant actors (especially women's organisations but also other social actors, such as LGBTIQ activists, youth associations and social enterprises) by conducting an adequate stakeholder analysis that is context-sensitive and serves to identify all key actors and by facilitating consultative processes that strengthen relevance, promote ownership and secure commitment.

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[4] Relevant tools that might be applied have been included in the document "Thinking out of the box to be gender transformative in our work", INTPA G1, June 2023.

R3

linked to
Implementation

Continue to build the capacity of IPs and stakeholders (including EUD staff and government partners) to ensure that gender expertise is available to support interventions and that GTAs and intersectionality are adequately understood and applied at all levels of project cycle management.

R4

linked to
Implementation

Develop synergies, partnerships and alliances with all actors working on gender issues (especially women's organisations but also organisations working on new masculinities with men and LGBTIQ organisations) and relevant global interventions. These alliances are crucial for enhancing efforts to bridge the advocacy-policy-making gap on issues of relevance to gender equality.

R5

linked to
Implementation

Identify opportunities to share experiences, promote peer-to-peer learning on the application of GTAs and intersectionality, and develop case studies to highlight good experiences and extract lessons for future programming.

R6

linked to
Monitoring and reporting

Continue to strengthen stakeholder capacity to monitor and measure gender-transformative change by enhancing ongoing efforts to provide relevant training and sharing tools that allow interventions to accurately measure results and track unintended effects.

R7

linked to
Monitoring and reporting

Encourage interventions to align their indicators with GAP III to facilitate EUD-level reporting and EUD's contribution to global reporting on GAP III implementation. Consider making the current recommendation of including GAP III indicators in the instructions for calls for proposals a formal requirement for applicants.