

International Gender Equality Strategy

1. What are international gender equality priorities?

Amongst a competing agenda of gender equality, the rights of women with disabilities (WwD) are often the least prioritised. The intersectionality of gender and disability historically has depended on advocacy efforts as opposed to mainstreaming accessibility and rights within varying policies. To add to the vulnerabilities, advocacy-led policy changes largely depend on the advocacy of different groups, where one group's rights are prioritized over the others. For instance, advocacy-led policy changes may be more inclusive of deaf or blind individuals but may not meet the needs of neurodivergent individuals. It is vital during strategizing that equal and authentic representation is there.

The Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) of individuals with intellectual and neurodevelopmental disabilities are often neglected and misunderstood. These inequalities have led Women with Intellectual and Neurodevelopmental disabilities to be among the most vulnerable groups. Gender equality priorities should be mindful of equally investigating the need of this group to truly be inclusive in strategizing gender equality policies.

2. What are the most effective approaches for achieving gender equality globally?

'Nothing about us, without us' has been a global anthem for PwDs, especially WwDs. Effective approaches should go beyond giving PwDs a seat at the table, to truly giving them space for participation and ownership of the agenda. Approaches of including neurodivergent voices should encompass meeting the needs of individuals at all levels of support needs. This intentional approach could involve using Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and creating focus groups that are inclusive and truly accessible for different types of disabilities. Also, an effective approach should move beyond just policy-level endorsement to a realistic implementation plan, especially guidelines on how diverse countries and cultures can truly achieve gender equality for all.

3. What should the government/DFAT consider when developing the new international gender equality strategy?

Funding has a lot of power over what happens and how. Within 'developing' countries, advocacy and development prioritise largely follow the funding agenda from large partners. Hence, to prioritize gender equality, all funds should involve enforced agenda of gender equality with accountability.