

Breaking the Barriers - Women and the Elimination of World Poverty, 1999, 24 p.

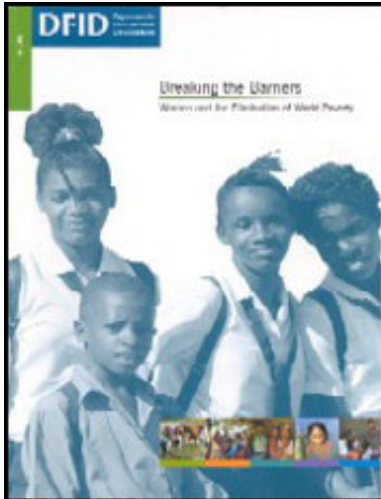


Table of Contents

Issues

DFID - Department for International Development

Table of Contents

Women's inequality and world poverty

- Our Policy
- Partnerships

Poverty and sustainable livelihoods

- Women and Agriculture
- Managing Forests
- Urban Poverty
- Credit and Financial Services

More power for women

Government

Civil Society

Violence and Conflict

Education and health

EDUCATION

Schooling

Literacy and Non-Formal Education

HEALTH

Children by Choice

Maternal Mortality

Sexual Health...

...Including for Young People

Involving Women Female Genital Mutilation

Women-friendly infrastructure

Travel and Transport
Water and Sanitation
Improving Basic Services
Easing Women's Workload

Working with international partners

In the EU
At the UN
World Bank
OECD
The Commonwealth

Building capacity and measuring progress

The future

Home"" """"> [ar](#).[cn](#).[de](#).[en](#).[es](#).[fr](#).[id](#).[it](#).[ph](#).[po](#).[ru](#).[sw](#)



Women's inequality and world poverty

[Our Policy](#)
[Partnerships](#)

United Nations estimates suggest: that up to 70% of the world's poor are female.

Gender discrimination is the world 's most widespread form of social exclusion.

Women's inequality is a key-obstacle to development and a major cause of social injustice.

Women in the developing world play a vital role. They manage community resources, help protect the environment, maintain peace and keep societies together. They make up most of the labour force. They are responsible for bringing up children and passing on knowledge to the next generation. But most women's work is unpaid and unacknowledged.

Women are poorly represented in positions of power. Their opportunities to act on their own behalf are often severely limited. Where they do try to assert their rights, they are often met with strong opposition and sometimes intimidation and violence.

Calls for change in the social, economic, and political relations between the sexes and an end to gender discrimination are being voiced increasingly strongly. These

calls have been echoed in international meetings and agreements, most notably the Global Platform for Action agreed at the 1995 World Conference on Women at Beijing. They are also reflected in the International Development Targets for the 21st Century.

The Department for International Development (DFID) is committed to women's equality. World poverty cannot be eliminated without it. This booklet describes our policy and gives examples of how we put this into practice. We are making good progress, but there is still a long way to go and many lessons to be learned.

Our Policy

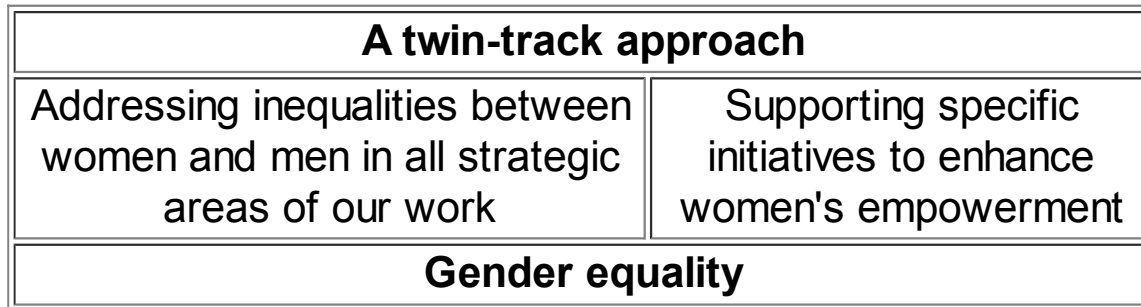
The UK Government's 1997 White Paper on International Development says that a commitment to equality between women and men "is an integral and essential part of our approach to development", that it is "...based on principles of

human rights and social justice", and that poverty cannot be eliminated "...until men and women have equal access to the resources and services necessary to achieve their individual potential and fulfil their obligations to household, community and, more broadly, society".

The UK's policy directly supports the Global Platform for Action agreed at the 1995 World Conference on Women at Beijing. It recognises that women and men, boys and girls, often have different needs, and that all have the right to share in the benefits of development.

We address gender inequalities across the whole range of our programme, in all sectors and at all levels. Although we support specific initiatives exclusively aimed at meeting women's needs, our "twin-track" approach means we promote gender equality in as many of our mainstream activities as we can. This ensures that a concern for women is at the heart, rather than in the margins, of our programme.

Our spending on women's equality is rising year by year.



Partnerships

We are building effective partnerships for gender equality with the international community, other donors, partner governments, civil society organisations, and the private sector. We also recognise that local communities must take a lead.

The Global Platform for Action

Before the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, most efforts focused on addressing women's practical needs, and reducing the heavy burden placed on them by poverty and their multiple roles in the economy, the community, and at home.

After Beijing a more strategic approach has emerged which promotes full equality between women and men in all spheres of life, addressing the causes as well as the consequences of inequality and aiming to bring about fundamental changes in gender relations.



Home > [ar.cn.de.en.es.fr.id.it.ph.po.ru.sw](#)



Poverty and sustainable livelihoods

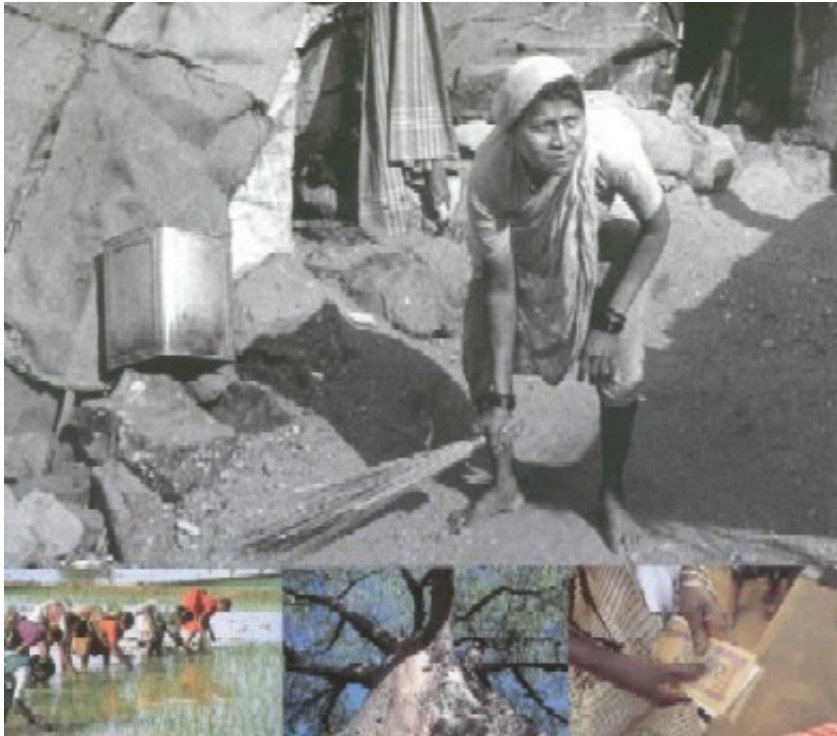
Women and Agriculture

Managing Forests

Urban Poverty

Credit and Financial Services





Women make up more of the world's poor than men. Often, their work is unrecognised and unpaid. They rarely have control over assets, such as land. This

means they cannot become economically independent, and makes them particularly vulnerable in widowhood and old age.

Women need more resources and opportunities for sustainable economic and human development. We want to help improve their access to markets and jobs, make credit more readily available, and ensure that infrastructure improvements benefit women as well as men. We encourage our partners in developing countries to make sure that economic management and investment programmes take account of gender issues and urge the private sector to be more socially responsible.

We are supporting research into the effects on women of globalisation and the liberalisation of world trade. This should give us a better understanding of how women can benefit from these global developments. We are also developing a programme to support initiatives on ethical trade, socially

responsible business and the promotion of core labour standards to protect women and other workers from exploitation. Child labour and the sexual exploitation of children are also growing areas of concern.

These studies are called Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA). UK expertise helped develop PPAs in conjunction with the World Bank. They are an invaluable tool for highlighting the economic and social problems which women, as well as men, face.

Finding the causes of poverty

A poor woman in a Nairobi slum was asked what event she would change in her life if she could: she replied: "I would be born a man".

We work directly with poor people to discover the underlying

causes of poverty and its consequences in people's daily lives. This enables us to develop practical ways to help and to become more responsive to poor people's needs.

Women and Agriculture



Women provide most of the agricultural labour in developing countries. Our support for both research and action to help improve rural livelihoods and the sustainable use of natural resources is increasingly focusing on the different needs of women and men.

A new project in Mozambique, for example, aims to increase household food security for poor people in Zambezia Province. Women are involved in farmer research groups, as community workers, and in a village banking scheme. Tools to ease the burden of labour-intensive farm work and reduce associated health risks to women are also being developed.

The Western and Eastern India Rainfed Farming Projects support women's practical needs, with tools, income generation, credit and savings schemes. The strategic role of women in village institutions and the management of farming systems is increasingly being promoted.

We have also supported land reform initiatives, for example in Tanzania and Zimbabwe, which seek to secure women's rights to land ownership and inheritance.

Managing Forests



We are working with our partners to develop new

approaches to sustainable forest management which both conserve vital natural resources and at the same time meet the needs of the poor.

Knowledge drawn from applied research is helping us understand the benefits to women and men of the sustainable use of forest products and the advantages of including people in forest management We are learning important lessons from projects in West Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

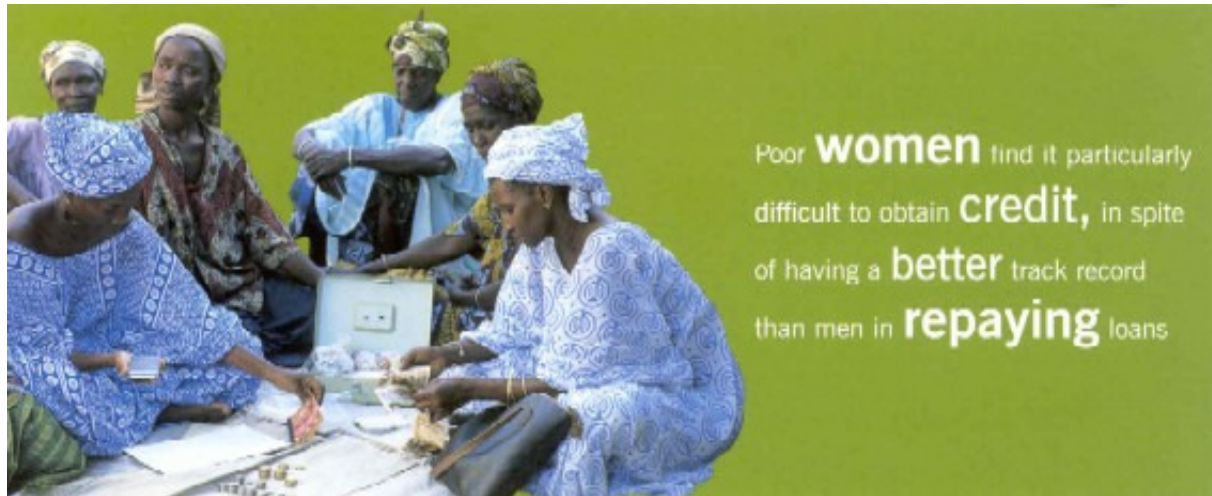
Urban Poverty

We are strengthening our support to women in poor urban areas, through our many projects in India and Africa.

In Zambia for example, a new project aims to tackle poverty in low-income urban settlements around Lusaka Work is to be done through area-based community organisations and savings and loan schemes, with equal representation and

benefits for women New urban poverty programmes in Kenya and Tanzania will promote an active role for women in decision making, improving basic services, and creating opportunities for economic, social, and human development.

Credit and Financial Services



Poor women find it particularly difficult to obtain credit, in

spite of having a better track record than men in repaying loans Credit programmes specifically for women have recently been developed in Bangladesh, India, Kenya and Swaziland We are supporting a group of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who are working with the Vietnamese government to reduce poverty in the Ha Tinh province The programme includes a scheme for increasing women's access to credit.

In East Africa, we support organisations providing credit and other services to poor women The Kenya Women's Finance Trust is making financial services available to thousands of poor rural women in Western Kenya In Uganda, where the rural poor find it difficult to benefit from conventional banking services, a village banking project allows both women and men to save and obtain credit We are also providing technical assistance to a Tanzanian self-help company which enables poor women to lease essential equipment to start up small enterprises such as dress making and tailoring, office

services, and retail food businesses.

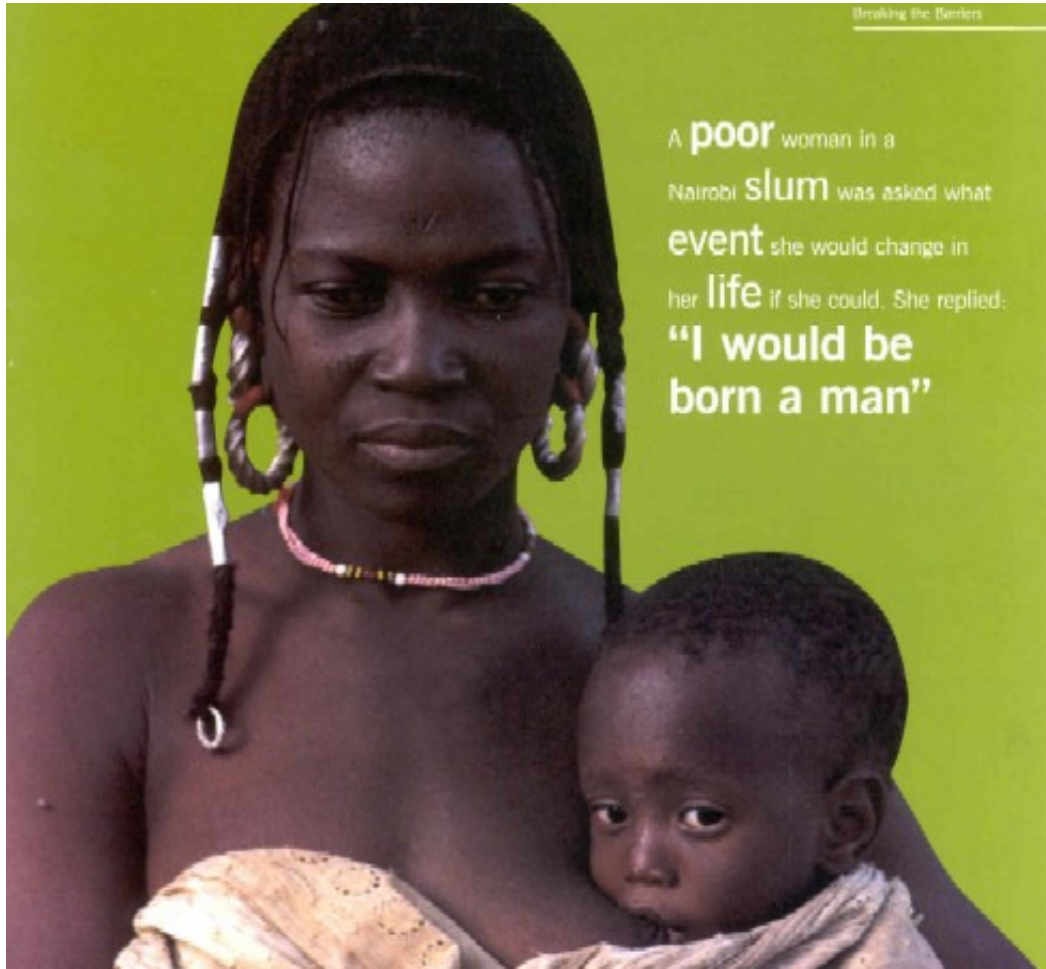


Home > [ar](#).[cn](#).[de](#).[en](#).[es](#).[fr](#).[id](#).[it](#).[ph](#).[po](#).[ru](#).[sw](#)



More power for women

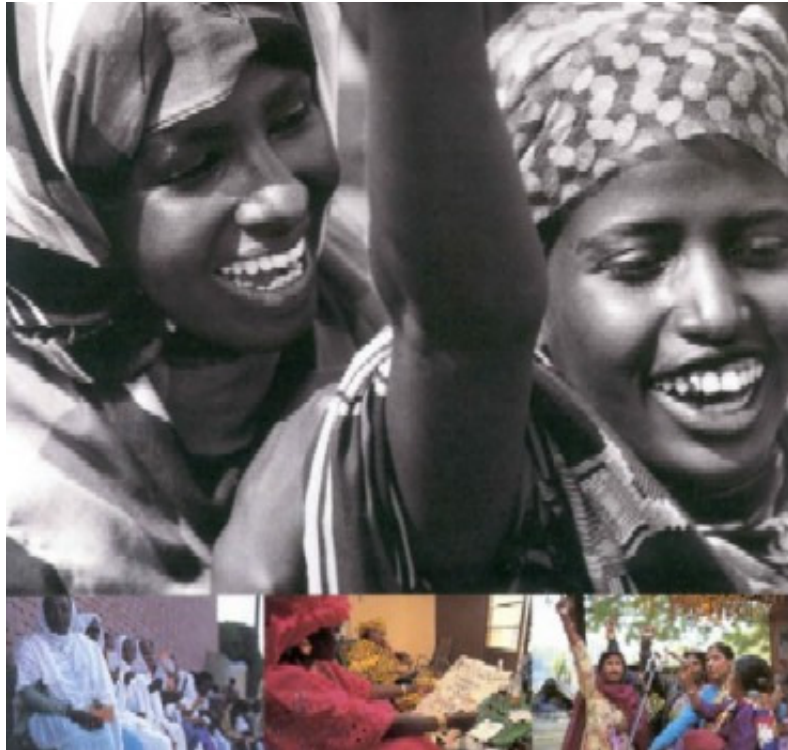
Government
Civil Society
Violence and Conflict





Work on gender equality is increasingly focused on issues of women's empowerment and social protection.





Women need more power in government and civil society if they are to claim their rights and protect themselves from violence

Government

- In Ghana, we are supporting an innovative project to strengthen the role of women in public life. The results of research work are being used in practical training programmes, including for women elected to local councils, and in national advocacy and information programmes.
- We are funding gender awareness training for the judiciary in India, and supporting stronger links between the police and schools in Uganda to tackle sexual harassment of girl students and women teachers.
- In Zimbabwe, we are discussing with the Government support for a training programme for the judiciary and civil society organisations to take advantage of a new act which gives widows the

right to inherit land

- We are working with partner governments and other donors to promote gender-aware policy development and improvements in public spending in developing countries.

Gender Equality in Pakistan

A major women and law project is being developed which will address violence against women, including examining ways better to serve the needs of women and children seeking to escape violence and other forms of abuse. We are also funding a police training project which is integrating gender and human rights issues into the curriculum and improving the training of women police officers.

Civil Society



We are expanding our work with civil society organisations around the world and increasing our assistance to

organisations which promote women's rights. This includes support for a law project in Palestine to promote gender equality, and a UN prize-winning human rights and law project in the Pacific region. In Kenya, an umbrella programme supporting initiatives, mostly in civil society, aimed at implementing the

Beijing Platform for Action is entering a second phase. Similar work is underway in Tanzania and Uganda

We also support initiatives which use radio and television, for example, to inform women about their rights and the practical steps they can take to improve their quality of life. Drama programmes and discussions between broadcasters and listeners' groups are some of the innovative projects we support in Africa.

Violence and Conflict

We are increasing our support for actions which prevent conflict and tackle violence against women.

In Jamaica, for example, violence against women has been identified as a priority concern in our urban poverty reduction programme, and our humanitarian assistance in Bosnia includes support for traumatised women.

We have been providing gender training to the government in Rwanda where, following the genocide, 65% of the population are women and 28% of households are headed by a woman.

We are also developing a gender focus in our wider approach to conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance, which is seeking to mitigate the costs to women as well as men of natural disasters and the human tragedy of conflict. More importantly we are looking for longer-term solutions which will help prevent these events occurring in the first place.



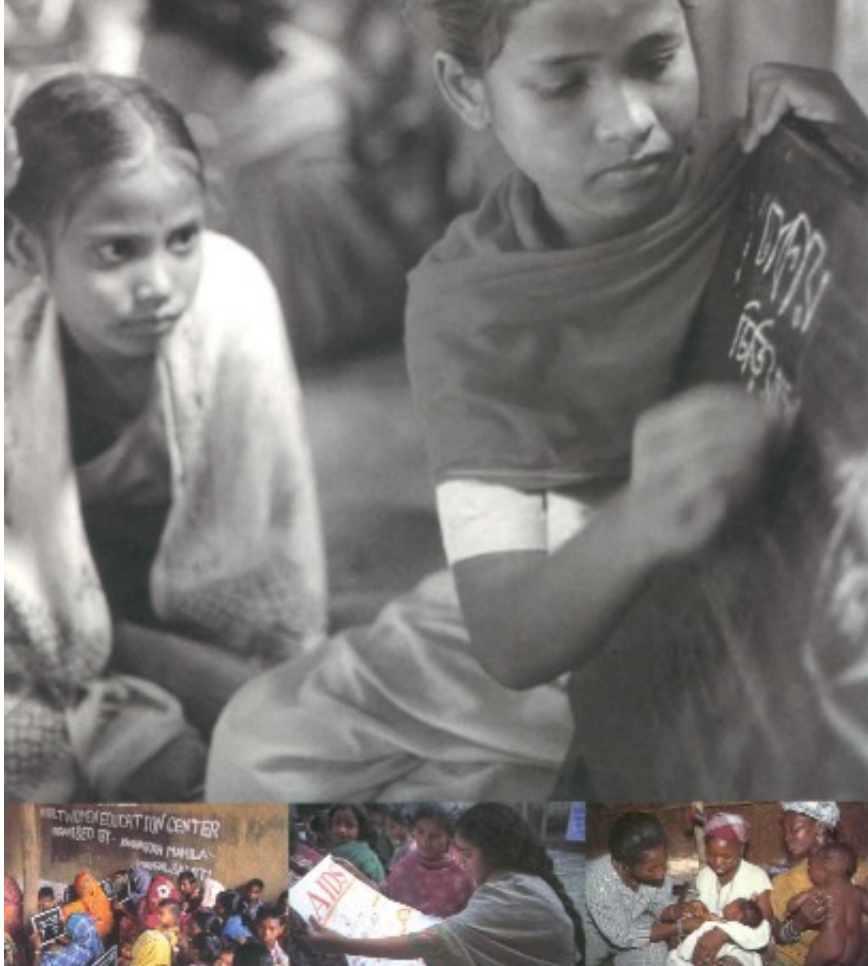
Home "" """"> [ar.cn.de.en.es.fr.id.it.ph.po.ru.sw](#)



Education and health

EDUCATION
HEALTH





Almost two out of every three illiterate people are women. The world's poor women are more than 100 times more likely to die of causes related to pregnancy and childbirth than women in Europe.

Our commitment to improving education and health services for women was demonstrated by the Prime Minister's pledge at the 1997 Denver Summit to double our expenditure in health, education, and clean water in Africa by the year 2000.

Gender and Human Development

We are *clear* about some basic principles:

- girls and women should have opportunities for personal growth, security, realisation of rights, control of fertility and health, literacy and

opportunities to participate in political and economic systems...

- human development means confronting poverty, ensuring that all men and women have the basic requirements for life-education, basic health care, and clean water
- sustainable human development means enabling people to have opportunities to secure their economic needs through access to assets, markets, and economic institutions which are efficient and properly regulated so that the poor can work and prosper

Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development. Speech at the UK launch of the UNDP Human Development Report, June 1997.

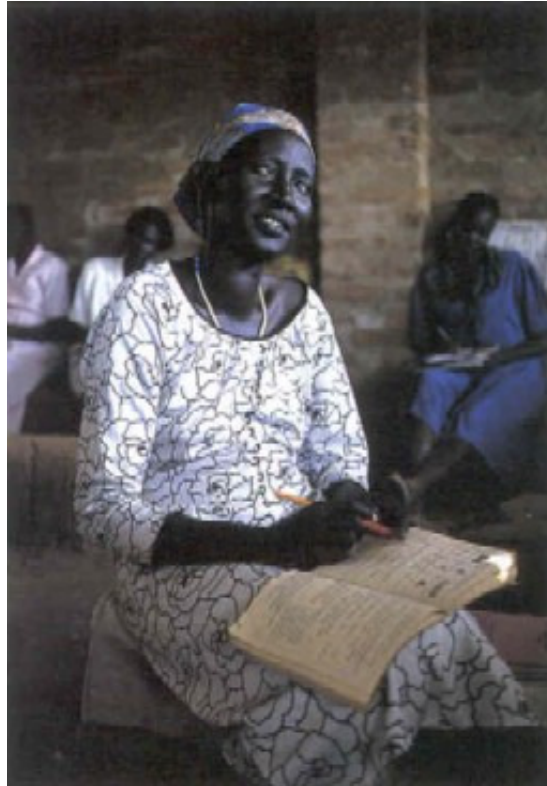
EDUCATION

Schooling Literacy and Non-Formal Education

Recent research shows that investment in education for girls is the single most effective way to reduce poverty. Even a few years of basic education empowers women to have smaller and healthier families and enjoy a higher standard of living. Educated mothers are also more likely to send their children to school, creating a virtuous cycle of education and poverty reduction.

International progress in reducing gender disparities in education has been encouraging, but there is still a long way to go.

Schooling



We have helped develop new plans for education in Tanzania and Uganda. These include specific targets for the greater involvement of female students and teachers. Improving the participation of the wider community, particularly women, in the management of schools and the schooling process are also priorities.

Social analysis undertaken in the design phase of a new education project in Guyana showed the inextricable links for women between poverty, social exclusion, and lack of education. This project now has a strong gender focus.

In Kenya, the DFID-funded Support to Primary Education (SPRED) project includes a comprehensive gender strategy. Research funded through the project has identified barriers to girls' attendance and performance at school. Gender-aware approaches have been developed to in-service teacher training and class and school management techniques. A voluntary code of conduct has been agreed with local

publishers and authors to eliminate gender stereotyping from reading materials.

Gender and Social Exclusion in Guyana

Marlene is an 18-year-old mother of three, now pregnant with her fourth child. She lives with her partner and children in a small one-room wood and zinc building with a sand floor. Their home is not serviced by water or electricity and has no sanitation...

Marlene dropped out of high school when she became pregnant in the third year. Her eldest daughter is in the first year of nursery school. Her partner works mining for gold in the interior, which takes him away for periods of up to six weeks. Marlene is left to care for the children and has little support beyond that provided by neighbours...

Jean is in her thirties. She has one child by her present partner and two other children from a previous relationship. Like Marlene, she and her family live in a one-room shack, with no utilities. Her partner also works in the bush and is away for long periods. When she is alone she often feels insecure, as people often bang on the windows at night. There is a high incidence of rape in the area, particularly when girls go to fetch water from the standpipe by the main road. Some days she and her children go without meals...

Jean's daughter is now of nursery school age but is not attending because she cannot afford the uniform, shoes or snacks.

***Social Appraisal, Guyana Education Access Project,
April 1998***

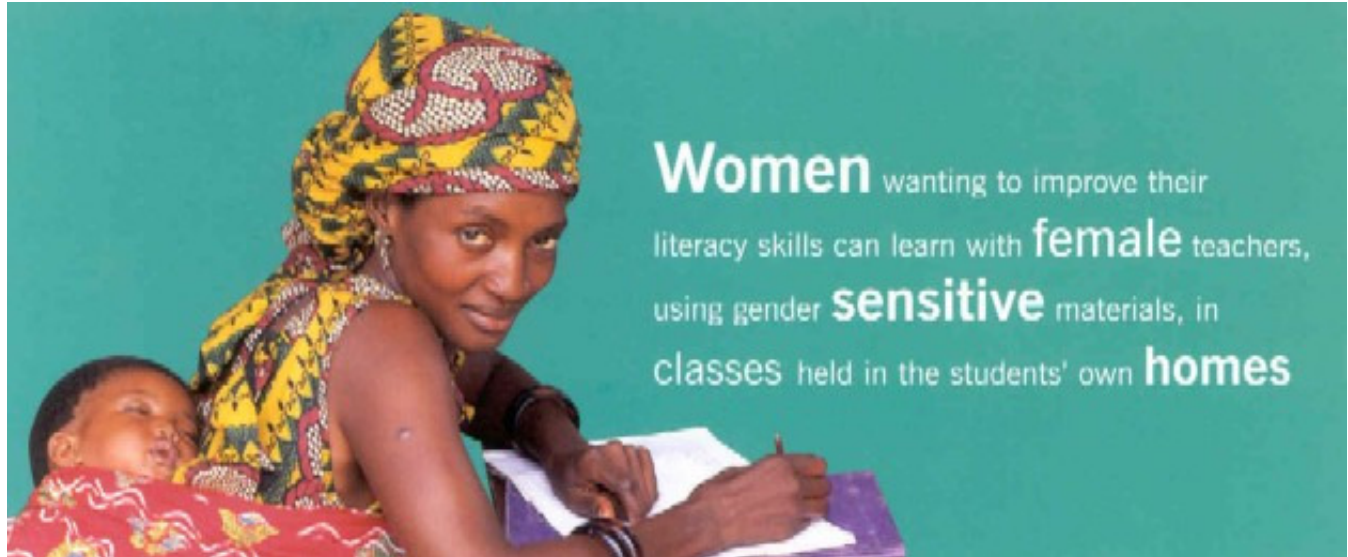
In Malawi, we are working with the government on a Primary

Community Schools Project which is helping more than 100 communities to build, manage, and maintain their own primary schools. Targets have been agreed to ensure women's involvement in all school committees. Efforts are being made to attract more women into the teaching profession and appoint more female head teachers. A programme in Zambia aims to and improve reading levels in primary schools It supports the new Zambian government policy of teaching reading in vernacular languages as well as in English Research has shown that girls are more disadvantaged than boys when literacy is only taught in a second or third language

In India, DFID is supporting the District Primary Education Programme in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal This is part of a nationwide programme to improve quality, access, enrolment and retention in primary education, particularly for girls, especially those from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, religious

minorities, working children, and migrants

Literacy and Non-Formal Education



As well as supporting improvements in schools, we are also addressing the special learning needs of women and girls who have never been to school or dropped out at an early

age. In Egypt, for example, we are helping to improve the skills of rural literacy teachers who are working with women of all ages who have never been to school. Women wanting to improve their literacy skills can learn with female teachers, using gender sensitive materials, in classes held in the students' own homes. The project has also supported national television programmes which emphasise women's role in development.

We are part of a multi-donor consortium supporting the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), which has developed an education programme with significant benefits for young girls. The project supports 34,000 low-cost single classroom schools. Each class enrolls 33 children, 70% of whom are girls, and provides a three-year programme after which the children transfer to the formal system to complete their primary schooling.

Gender and Education

The Government's White Paper, Eliminating World Poverty:

A Challenge for the 21st Century states that we will focus our support on the fundamental elements of an effective education system: access, quality, retention and equity:

- Access - for girls as well as boys, rich or poor, rural or urban, and those in socially or ethnically disadvantaged communities
- Quality - to prepare children for the life ahead
- Retention - to enable pupils to benefit from the full cycle of education
- Equity - to remove all barriers to opportunity and achievement.

HEALTH

Children by Choice
Maternal Mortality
Sexual Health...
...Including for Young People
Involving Women
Female Genital Mutilation



DFID is one of the world's leading donors in the health sector. Our spending on health has more than doubled in the 1990s.

Our priorities include promoting children by choice and improving sexual and reproductive health. We are also addressing maternal mortality and other health risks

associated with pregnancy and childbirth.

The 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development recognised the direct link between health and women's empowerment, and we seek to carry this forward in our work.

Children by Choice

We have made an important contribution to slowing the rate of world population growth and creating opportunities for women to choose when to have children and the family size they want.

Improving the availability of contraceptives is essential to this work. We work with governments, NGOs and other organisations, and support the subsidised social marketing of condoms and other contraceptives, in Cambodia, India, Latvia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Zambia and

Zimbabwe.

Maternal Mortality

A key target for the 21st century is to reduce maternal mortality rates by three-quarters. This is a huge challenge. DFID's four-point plan for safer motherhood ensures that:

- women have sufficient information to make sound decisions about their health before and during pregnancy;
- good quality services are provided and accessible at all times;
- women in need and their carers can call for help and access services when necessary;
- the safety of motherhood is properly monitored

and appropriate action taken as a result of the information obtained.

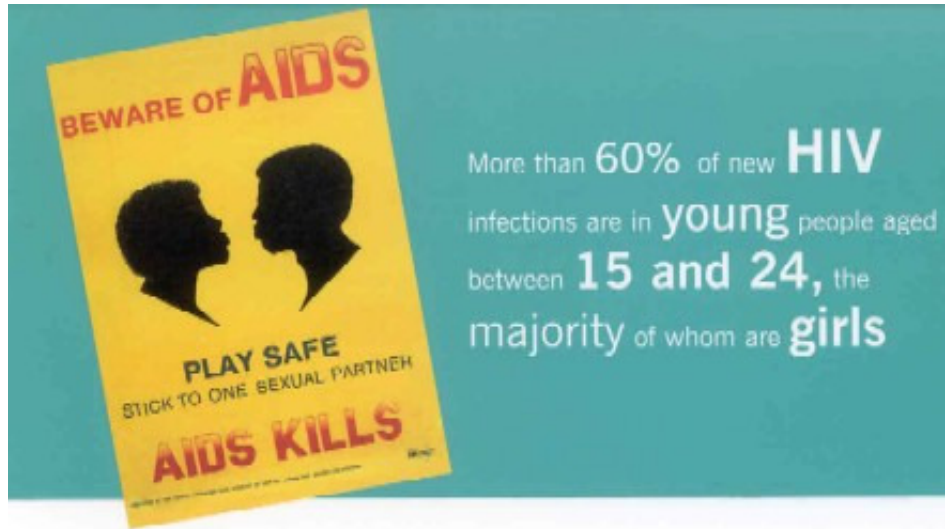
We are supporting work to implement this plan, with new initiatives now underway in Kenya, Malawi, and Nepal.

Women and health

Nowhere are the obstacles faced by women to health - and the inequalities faced by poor women - revealed more starkly than in the figures for maternal mortality. The tragedy and indecency is that we know the major causes of maternal mortality, and the kind of care that pregnant women need when things go wrong. Without better access to improved basic obstetric care for those who need it, women will continue to die in pregnancy and childbirth. We must do better. These are not principally matters of science. They are matter of political and moral choice and will

Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development. Speech on World Population Day, 1997.

Sexual Health...



Better sexual health is a priority Women are especially vulnerable to infection which often goes unnoticed until

serious damage has been done HIV/AIDS is a particular concern, both because of the devastating effects it has on individuals and communities and because of the disproportionate burden of care which falls on women We support programmes which improve access to quality basic services, and community-based campaigns to promote safer sex to help empower women and girls to reject unwanted sexual attention

Ground breaking DFID-funded research in East Africa has shown that early and thorough treatment of sexually transmitted infections can reduce the incidence of HIV infection by as much as 40%.

...Including for Young People

In many parts of the world, young people are denied access to sexual health services, despite the fact that every year one in 20 young people world-wide contracts a sexually

transmitted infection More than 60% of new HIV infections are in young people aged between 15 and 24, the majority of whom are girls

DFID's strategy is to support initiatives to

- improve young people's access to information about sex and sexuality,
- help develop social skills and gender awareness (particularly among young men) to enable them to be more responsible in sexual relationships and develop confidence, self-respect, and respect for others; and
- improve access to gender sensitive, and youth friendly services, including making condoms and other contraceptives more readily available to young people when they do commence sexual relations

We aim to provide information to young people in a language and style they can easily understand.

Involving Women



Making health services more responsive to women's needs is one of our key aims. In East Africa and Latin America, guidelines have been developed for involving women in assessing the quality of reproductive health services and using the findings to make improvements.

Female Genital Mutilation

A health promotion pilot project in The Gambia is just one example of our work to help end the practice of female genital mutilation. We are also supporting the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its efforts to develop policy and coordinate a better international response to the problem.







Home "" """"> [ar.cn.de.en.es.fr.id.it.ph.po.ru.sw](#)



Women-friendly infrastructure

Travel and Transport
Water and Sanitation
Improving Basic Services
Easing Women's Workload





Reductions in the daily workload, better economic opportunities, more free time to improve the quality of life are just a few of the benefits which improvements in basic services, transport, clinics, schools and other facilities can bring to women.

Travel and Transport

Poor women in Africa typically spend more than five hours a day travelling, mostly on foot, to meet the basic needs of their families We are currently contributing to village travel and transport work in Tanzania, and feeder road programmes in Uganda and Mozambique Similar programmes are under development in Nepal and Ghana We are helping women in Africa and Asia to examine their own transport needs and identify solutions, and working with the World Bank and national governments on a rural travel and transport programme in Africa

Water and Sanitation



The development of water supplies and improved sanitation for poor people is an expanding area of our work and one where we are increasingly focusing on gender issues This includes strengthening our support for domestic services, and gender sensitive approaches to the design and management

of irrigation systems.

We recognise the key role women can play in the development and management of new facilities and the promotion of better health, and seek to ensure that they obtain the full benefits from the programmes we support

Improving Basic Services

Upgrading clinics, schools, and other essential facilities contributes to improvements in basic services DFID involves communities, including women, in design improvements which impact on the quality of services Improving the layout of clinics, for example, ensures that confidentiality is maintained and people can easily move from one service to another during the same visit. Innovative work is being done in Africa and Asia which makes services more responsive to people's needs, and empowers women and men in key decisions affecting their lives.

Easing Women's Workload

Women in developing countries work long hours, often performing arduous tasks necessary to meet basic needs. Drudgery and hard labour take a toll of women's health and limit their freedom to engage in more rewarding activities. We support participatory research and action aimed at developing labour and energy saving technologies to ease the burden on women and help them improve their health and well-being.

Men and boys





Gender equality should recognise both women's and

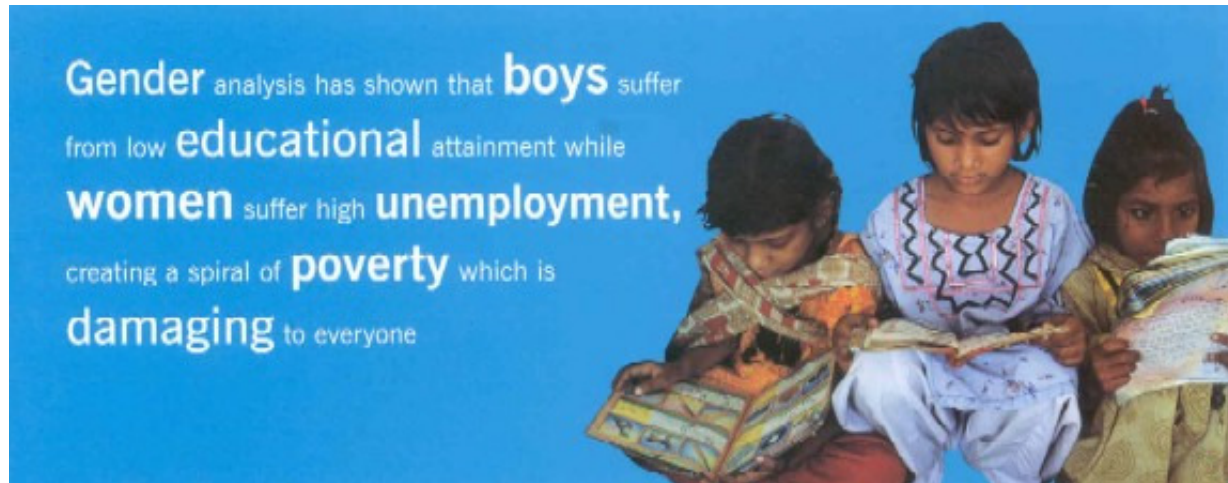
men's needs and, most importantly, how these interact. Our policy recognises that unlike biological roles, which are determined by sex, gender roles are determined by society and can be changed.

This policy enables us to work towards identifying the underlying causes of gender inequality, and thus develop a more strategic approach.

We hope it will also help us, and our development partners, to persuade men that gender equality is in their interests as much as it is in women's.



Usually women are at a disadvantage, but sometimes a special focus is needed on men and boys. This may be because they are specifically disadvantaged, or because they suffer different disadvantages to women and girls which, in combination, create problems for everyone.



Looking at men's as well as women's needs is revealing In the Caribbean, for example, gender analysis has shown that

boys suffer from low educational attainment while women suffer high unemployment, creating a spiral of poverty which is damaging to everyone. In Pakistan, we have learned that effective family planning programmes must actively seek to bring men into dialogue with women so that joint decisions on child spacing and family size can be made. In Tanzania, health research showed that men and women suffer different health problems, at different stages of their lives.

Gender inequality is preventing us from eliminating poverty. It is in all our interests to remove it. The empowerment of women does not need to be at a cost to men, but creates a benefits for society as a whole.



Home > [ar](#).[cn](#).[de](#).[en](#).[es](#).[fr](#).[id](#).[it](#).[ph](#).[po](#).[ru](#).[sw](#)



Working with international partners

In the EU

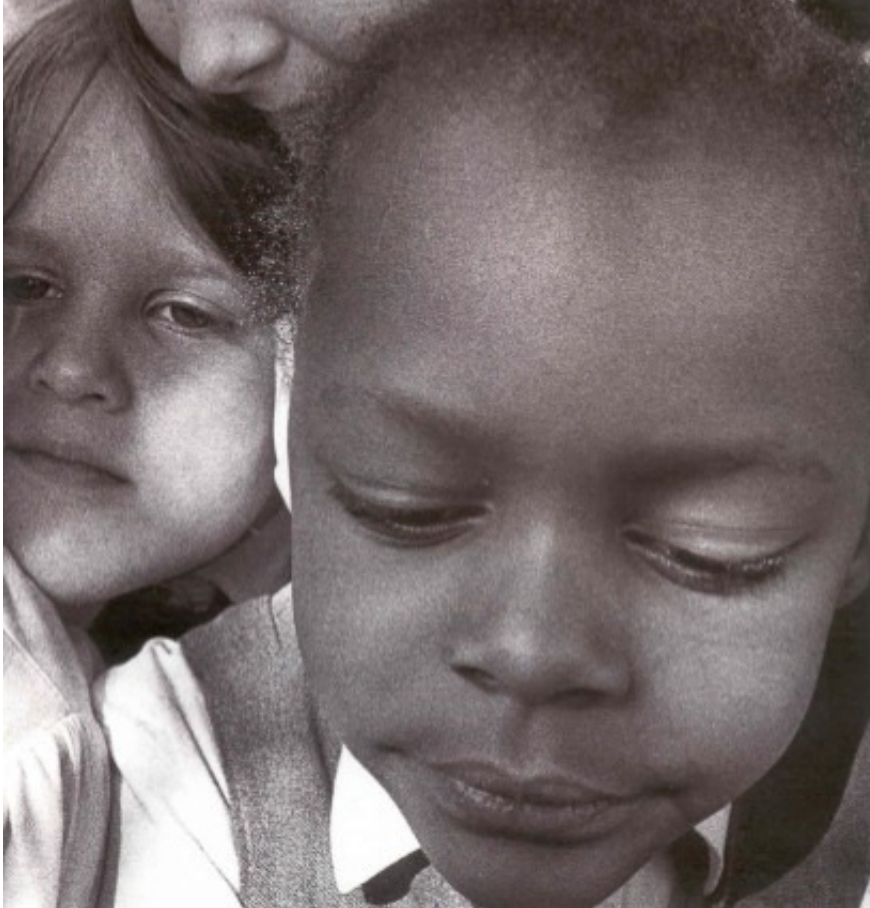
At the UN

World Bank

OECD

The Commonwealth





More than half the UK's budget for development assistance is spent through the European Union, the United Nations and other multilateral partners. We encourage our international partners to include gender concerns in all their work.

In the EU

Strengthening the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action was a priority for the UK Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 1998

- An updated spending regulation has been approved for incorporating gender issues in European Commission development programmes
- The EU Development Council has renewed its commitment to gender equality and is strengthening efforts to implement the 1995 Gender Resolution

- We helped negotiate the mandate for the next round of the Lomé Convention, which places much stronger emphasis than in the past on gender and poverty, and identifies the pursuit of gender equality as one of its guiding principles

At the UN

We have increased financial support to the UN Development Fund for Women - UNIFEM.

- We are supporting the International Labour Organisation's programme "More and Better Jobs for Women" and funding the preparatory phase of an ILO project for eliminating trafficking in children in Asia.
- We are helping the World Health Organisation (WHO) to develop policy, guidelines, and training

programmes for health workers to tackle practices prejudicial to the health of young girls, including female genital mutilation

- We work closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in many developing countries to promote women's equality and human and social development
- The UK plays an active role in key UN negotiations on gender equality, in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Commission, and in following up on the resolutions of global conferences The Commission on the Status of Women is a particularly important forum
- We liaise closely with other UN agencies, including UNDP, UNICEF, and United Nations Fund for

Population Activities (UNFPA), and have provided team members for UN field missions

- A senior DFID adviser with gender expertise has been posted to the UK Mission to the UN at New York

World Bank

Social and gender issues have been high on the agenda in our dialogue with the World Bank for many years and we are developing a similar relationship with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

- We have contributed to the continuing work in the Poverty and Social Policy Group of the Special Programme of Assistance to Africa and made a substantial contribution to the 1998 Poverty Status Report for Africa, on the theme of Gender and

Poverty

OECD

- The UK plays a full role in the work of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which is one of the main forums for donor coordination We have made a major contribution to the development of new guidelines for donors on gender equality and women's empowerment

The Commonwealth

- We are strengthening our links with the Commonwealth Secretariat, which is doing innovative work to develop women's budgets and gender management systems to improve public

services



Home"" """"> [ar.cn.de.en.es.fr.id.it.ph.po.ru.sw](#)



Building capacity and measuring progress



Training is given to DFID staff to improve awareness of gender issues and develop gender planning skills. We are increasingly incorporating gender concerns into our operational guidance and routine training programmes.

We are also helping partners in developing countries, both in government and civil society, to develop their own skills for

gender analysis We have stepped up our efforts in this area, working directly with local gender experts and encouraging our partners to do the same.

We are improving our information systems so that we can measure progress towards the achievement of gender equality goals. Our evaluation studies in all sectors routinely consider the gender impact of our projects and programmes

Our commitment to the International Development Targets for the 21st Century provides us with an additional tool to assess progress on a global level, and a framework for judging the value of our own contribution to the international partnership for eliminating poverty The targets provide an important focal point for our development programme as a whole, as well as for the delivery of our gender equality policy



Home > [ar](#) [.cn](#) [.de](#) [.en](#) [.es](#) [.fr](#) [.id](#) [.it](#) [.ph](#) [.po](#) [.ru](#) [.sw](#)



The future

DFID has put a great deal of work into strengthening its support for gender equality, and significant progress has been made. We recognise, however, that more remains to be done. Gender equality will remain at the heart of our policy and implementation work, and provide a focal point in our dialogue with our partners.

In the next few years, we will focus our efforts on strengthening operational effectiveness, extending and

developing partnerships, and improving our knowledge. We expect our investment in gender equality to continue to rise as we further build our support for the attainment of gender equality as a major goal for the 21st Century.

The Department for International Development (DFID) is the British government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. The government elected in May 1997 increased its commitment to development by strengthening the department and increasing its budget.

The policy of the government was set out in the White Paper on International Development, published in November 1997. The central focus of the policy is a commitment to the internationally agreed target to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, together with the associated targets including basic health care provision and universal access to primary education by the same date.

DFID seeks to work in partnership with governments which are committed to the international targets, and also seeks to work with business, civil society and the research community to encourage progress which will help reduce poverty. We also work with multilateral institutions including the World Bank, United Nations agencies and the European Commission. The bulk of our assistance is concentrated on the poorest countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

We are also contributing to poverty elimination and sustainable development in middle income countries, and helping the transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe to try to ensure that the widest number of people benefit from the process of change.

As well as its headquarters in London and East Kilbride, DFID has offices in New Delhi, Bangkok, Nairobi, Harare, Pretoria, Dhaka, Kathmandu, Suva and Bridgetown. In other parts of the world, DFID works through staff based in British

Embassies and High Commissions.

DFID

94 Victoria Street
London SW1E 5JL
UK

DFID

Abercrombie House
Eaglesham Road
East Kilbride
Glasgow G75 8EA
UK

Switchboard: 0171 917 7000
Fax: 0171 917 0019
Website: www.dfid.gov.uk
email: enquiry@dfid.gov.uk
Public enquiry point: 0845 3004100

From overseas: +44 1355 84 3132

Designed by Redhouse Lane for DFID *information*
Department 7/99 I/5k. All photography courtesy of Panes
picture library, Tropics picture library and DFID.



[Home](#) > [ar](#) [cn](#) [de](#) [en](#) [es](#) [fr](#) [id](#) [it](#) [ph](#) [po](#) [ru](#) [sw](#)

Breaking the Barriers - Women and the Elimination of World Poverty, 1999, 24 p.

Women's inequality and world poverty

[Our Policy](#)
[Partnerships](#)

Poverty and sustainable livelihoods

Women and Agriculture

Managing Forests

Urban Poverty

Credit and Financial Services

More power for women

Government

Civil Society

Violence and Conflict

Education and health

EDUCATION

Schooling

Literacy and Non-Formal Education

HEALTH

Children by Choice

Maternal Mortality

Sexual Health...

...Including for Young People

Involving Women

Female Genital Mutilation

Women-friendly infrastructure

Travel and Transport

Water and Sanitation

Improving Basic Services

Easing Women's Workload

Working with international partners

In the EU

At the UN
World Bank
OECD

The Commonwealth

Building capacity and measuring progress

The future