



GENDER INTERGRATION: The Key to Effective U.S. Foreign Assistance

President-elect Obama has affirmed his commitment to ensuring U.S. government policies and programs are both effective and efficient in meeting domestic and global challenges. This approach will be vital to changing the way that America engages with the world and restoring our role and image as a global leader. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is to integrate gender into all foreign assistance agencies and programs.

Other donor countries, such as Canada and Australia, have successfully used gender integration to improve the impact of their development assistance, while the U.S. approach to gender integration has been fragmented and inconsistent.

Decades of research and experience have shown women and men in the developing world have profoundly different roles, rights, resources and responsibilities. These variations present them with differing constraints and opportunities—especially in terms of their needs for, and access to, services and programs. In order for our U.S. foreign assistance framework to be effective, it must take this into account, or we risk having to make costly fixes after the fact—and sometimes doing more harm than good.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IMMEDIATELY

1. **Replace the Women in Development (WID) office at USAID with a newly created Office of Gender Integration** under the highest-ranking officer for U.S. development assistance, which would be responsible for ensuring gender is thoroughly integrated throughout the entire foreign assistance structure and in all steps of assistance including policy-setting, budget, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.
 - Regardless of how overall foreign assistance is organized or reformed—in a more consolidated or fragmented form—gender integration must happen to make global development more effective. This includes each major development assistance agency or program having a dedicated stream of funding to support gender equality strategies, to monitor expenditures, and to finance projects that include funding for local women's organizations that focus on empowering women and girls.
2. **Nominate senior development appointees—at USAID, OGAC, the MCC or a consolidated development agency—who make gender integration an explicit priority** and who are committed to championing the issue from the top down.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IN THE FIRST YEAR

Develop a U.S. national strategy for global development that:

- a. **commits the U.S. to advancing the Millennium Development Goals**, including MDG 3 to promote gender equality and empower women;
- b. **commits to gender integration as both a method and a principle** of effective development