



# IMPLEMENTING THE EU GENDER ACTION PLAN III: TURNING AMBITION INTO IMPACT?

CONCORD





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# INTRODUCTION

The EU's third Gender Action Plan (GAP III) is the European Union's (EU) framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) throughout its external action. Civil society organisations (CSOs) consider it an improvement over its predecessor (GAP II)<sup>1</sup>. GAP III aims to tackle the root causes of gender inequality, and collaborate more closely with CSOs in partner countries to make its implementation more meaningful<sup>2</sup>. It introduces three core principles to guide EU action: applying a gender-transformative, intersectional, and rights-based approach.

However, tracking the implementation and impact of GAP III, especially for external stakeholders, can be challenging, in part because the European Commission (EC) no longer publishes annual GAP implementation reports<sup>3</sup>. Instead, it commissioned an independent, evidence-based evaluation focusing on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), which was published in May 2023<sup>4</sup>. In November 2023, the EC will launch its own mid-term report. CONCORD believes the narrow thematic focus of the independent evaluation is a missed opportunity to learn from other thematic areas covered by GAP III, including the green and digital transition, gender-

based violence (GBV), or sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and especially to take stock of how GAP III is implementing an intersectional and gender-transformative approach, which are new aspects compared to GAP II.

This CONCORD report makes a holistic assessment that spans across the different elements of GAP III, in order to **investigate whether GAP III is leading to transformative change for women and girls in all their diversity, in EU partner countries at the mid-term point of its implementation**. The report builds on evidence from 78 interviews with local women's rights organisations (WROs), feminist movements and national, local and grassroots organisations working to advance gender equality<sup>5</sup>, as well as EU Delegations (EUDs), Member States' (MS) Embassies, and governments in Kenya, Morocco and the Philippines. It aims to complement the independent evaluation of GAP III, by focusing on the following two aspects:

1. To which extent, in the first half of its implementation, **GAP III operationalised the new core principles (a gender-transformative and intersectional approach)**, in close concertation with local WROs in all their diversity.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- Our research understands the gender-transformative approach as one that addresses the root causes of gender inequality by engaging different stakeholders to reshape unequal gender and power relations and structures that reinforce gendered inequalities in partner countries and transform the social norms that both directly and indirectly lead to exclusion, discrimination and human rights violations and perpetuate the oppression of women and girls in all their diversity.
- Intersectionality is a analytical tool first introduced by Black feminist and legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. It is used to study how overlapping minority identities contribute to compounding discrimination and intersecting forms of discrimination arising from class, age, disability, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation and identity, migrant status, location, language and other factors.

<sup>1</sup> More info in CONCORD's report 'Transforming lives? EU Gender Action Plan II from implementation to impact' (2018).

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2020): *European Union Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Relations 2021-2025 (GAP III)*.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (2010): *Annual implementation reports were published for GAP I and GAP II*.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships, ECDPM, ECORYS, Mancala Consultores, Partecip (2023): *Mid-Term Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan III Final report*.

<sup>5</sup> Hereafter summarised as "local women's rights organisations".

2. To which extent **key prerequisites for gender-transformative change** have been fulfilled, in the areas of funding access and meaningful engagement with local WROs, internal expertise and capacity of EU staff at country level, and gender mainstreaming across all EU external action areas.

**Based on this evaluation, the report identifies promising practices and gaps in the implementation of GAP III and provides recommendations to the EC, the EEAS and EU MS to ensure greater impact in the remaining years of GAP III implementation**, which responds better to the needs and interests of women and girls in EU partner countries, including those facing intersecting discrimination based on - but not limited to - disability, class, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, race, migrant status, religion, and geographical location<sup>6</sup>.

Whereas a comprehensive evaluation of all six thematic areas of GAP III falls outside the scope of this report, five of them are addressed throughout the case studies: the green transition (Kenya); ensuring freedom from all forms of GBV (Morocco and the Philippines); promoting SRHR (Philippines); strengthening WEE (Morocco); and integrating the WPS agenda (Kenya and the Philippines). The report also showcases examples of how the EU implements specific GAP III projects or actions in partnership with local CSOs and other GEWE actors at country level.

The recommendations of this report reflect the findings of a comprehensive desk review and interviews with key informants from (mostly, but not only) local CSOs. In some cases, the researchers found it difficult to collect information or it was simply too early to assess implementation. This report is therefore based on the views of those interviewed and publicly available documents, such as the Country-Level Implementation Plans (CLIPs) when available (more information on the methodology can be found in the Annex).

## GAP III IN A NUTSHELL

GAP III is the EU's gender equality-focused policy framework for external action, covering 2021-2025. It builds on the previous two Gender Action Plans, which covered 2016-2020 and 2011-2015, respectively. GAP III aims to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all areas of EU external action, including international cooperation, humanitarian aid, foreign and security policy. Making EU engagement on gender equality more effective as a cross-cutting priority of EU external action, the EC and the European External Action Service (EEAS) reasserted its commitment that by 2025, 85% of all new external actions will contribute to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment<sup>7</sup>. Thanks to the advocacy efforts of a broad range of CSOs, GAP III includes two new core principles: the gender-transformative approach and intersectional approach.

The EU commits to working closely with partner countries, governments, CSOs, including local WROs and feminist movements to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity worldwide. The more substantial commitment to work closely with local WROs in GAP III is the consequence of an independent evaluation of the EU's external action support for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment (2010-2018), conducted at the end of GAP II implementation. It called for "a more strategic and more comprehensive partnership on GEWE with these actors at country level, including a more substantial involvement of grass-root organisations in EU external action<sup>8</sup>."

With the adoption of GAP III, the EU has introduced two thematic areas that were not covered by GAP II: the green transition and the digital transformation. The EC reports that there has been "a swift uptake" of the new GAP III priorities on green transition and digital transformation, "while furthering support for the elimination of gender-based violence, economic and social empowerment, participation and leadership"<sup>9</sup>. In addition, it is the first time that

<sup>6</sup> Hereafter summarised as "women and girls in all their diversity".

<sup>7</sup> European Commission Press Corner (2020): *Gender Action Plan – putting women and girls' rights at the heart of the global recovery for a gender-equal world*.

<sup>8</sup> European Commission (2020): *Evaluation of the EU's external action support to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment (2010-2018)*.

<sup>9</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (2022): *2022 Annual report on the implementation of the European Union's external action instruments in 2021, Staff working document*.

the WPS agenda is integrated in the policy, requiring close collaboration between the EC and the EEAS.

## THE GOALS OF GAP III

GAP III aims to scale up the EU's contribution to reach Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5<sup>10</sup> in all its internal and external action, and safeguard the gains made on gender equality during the last 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action. This latter aspect is particularly critical at a time when the democratic space for women's and feminist movements is shrinking and we see a growing backlash against women's rights and gender equality across the world. GAP III retains the three-pronged approach used in previous GAPs: combining gender mainstreaming, targeted actions and political dialogue. Moreover, it includes a human rights-based, gender-transformative and intersectional approach as the underlying principles applying to all GAP III actions.

## GAP III provides the EU with five pillars of action<sup>11</sup>:

1. 85% of all new actions throughout external relations to contribute to GEWE by 2025;
2. shared strategic vision and close cooperation with EU MS and partners at multilateral, regional and country level;
3. accelerating progress, focusing on the six key thematic areas of engagement; namely i) ensuring freedom from all forms of GBV; ii) promoting SRHR; iii) strengthening economic and social rights and the empowerment of girls and women; iv) advancing equal participation and leadership; v) implementing the women, peace and security agenda; vi) addressing challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation;
4. leading by example;
5. measuring results.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015): *SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission Press Corner (2020): *Gender Action Plan – putting women and girls' rights at the heart of the global recovery for a gender-equal world*.

# HOW HAS GAP III BEEN IMPLEMENTED?

## COUNTRY-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

At the partner country level, GAP III is translated into CLIPs which guide the EU's programming and policy dialogue on GEWE. The CLIPs are new elements compared to GAP II, which often lacked a well-defined strategic vision grounded in clear priorities at country level<sup>12</sup>. CSOs have welcomed CLIPs as positive additions, as they are seen as essential tools to ensure and evaluate the proper implementation of GAP III at country level. CLIPs detail the country's GEWE priorities based on the Gender Country Profile (GCP), which results from a comprehensive gender analysis. The GCP identifies critical gender issues, especially in the context of the SDGs and international human rights frameworks, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Child Rights Convention (CRC), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) amongst others. It includes an analysis of the country's legal and political context related to gender equality and social norms that underpin gender inequality. The extent to which GCPs integrate an intersectional lens is a consequence of whether constituency-led<sup>13</sup> CSOs, particularly local WROs in all their diversity, have informed the consultations through a participatory approach, as is the case in the Philippines. Unfortunately, **it does not yet appear to be common practice for EUDs to develop GCPs and CLIPs engaging a diverse range of CSOs**, as shown by the Morocco case study in this report, resulting in the **absence of a clear intersectional lens in the GAP implementation in some countries**. The 2022 Annual Report on the implementation of the

European Union's External Action instruments in 2021 states that 92 EUDs have updated their GCPs, and 120 CLIPs were finalised and shared with EC Headquarters (HQ). The CLIPs indicate one gender-targeted action (G2 action) to be implemented over the 2021-2025 period<sup>14</sup> in each country, following the requirement introduced in GAP III.

## KNOWLEDGE, CAPACITY AND HUMAN RESOURCES

The implementation of GAP III is mainly done through gender mainstreaming in policy and programme areas, but **our research finds that there is a lack of human resources and substantial gaps in knowledge on GEWE at all levels of EUDs to ensure proper gender mainstreaming, indicating that this is not yet institutionalised**. Political commitment is paramount for achieving GEWE and support from those in leadership roles, such as the Head of Delegation, the Head of Cooperation and the Gender Focal Point (GFP) in the EUDs is essential in advancing GAP III. In some countries, a "Gender Group", made up of the EU GFP and those from MS Embassies, plays an important strategic role.<sup>15</sup> The GFPs interviewed expressed the need for more technical support from the EC HQ.

In terms of staffing, only 37.5 % of 141 GFPs working in EUDs in 2021, had this role included in their job descriptions<sup>16</sup>. This means that many of the GFPs are double or triple-hatted. The survey conducted as part of the independent mid-term evaluation of GAP III found that many GFPs spend 20% or less of their time on gender issues<sup>17</sup>. The EU reports that extensive training for EUDs was organised in 2021

- <sup>12</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, ECDPM, ECORYS, Fiscus, Itad, OPM, Partecip (2020): Evaluation of the EU's external action support to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment (2010-2018).
- <sup>13</sup> In a constituency-led organisation, members of the community/target group that the organisation intends to reach/work with are involved in the management and decision-making processes. For example, a WRO working on disability rights has women living with disability in decision-making processes/as part of the governance.
- <sup>14</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (2022): 2022 Annual report on the implementation of the European Union's external action instruments in 2021, Staff working document.
- <sup>15</sup> Whether or not a 'Gender Group' exists, or which types of stakeholders are part of it, varies from country to country. In Kenya for example, there is a 'Development Partners Group on Gender' which is open to civil society and involves donor countries beyond EU Member States, such as the United States of America.
- <sup>16</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (2022): 2022 Annual report on the implementation of the European Union's external action instruments in 2021, Staff working document.
- <sup>17</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships, ECDPM, ECORYS, Mancala Consultores, Partecip (2023): Mid-Term Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan III Final report.

on GAP III, including eight sessions on the gender responsive human rights-based approach. However, the independent mid-term evaluation shows that there are many barriers preventing EUD staff from following GAP III training, including time and resource constraints. This leads to **uneven awareness and expertise on GAP III (and the CLIP) across EUD sections, and knowledge gaps on fundamental GAP III concepts such as the gender-transformative approach and intersectionality.**

## FUNDING

GAP III includes two targets on gender equality: 85% of new actions implemented at country or regional level are gender responsive or targeted (G1 and G2 projects according to the gender equality policy marker of the OECD Development Assistance Committee) by 2025; and at least one new stand-alone gender-targeted action (G2) should be implemented in each partner country. This means **that the EU mostly relies on gender-mainstreamed actions to advance GEWE in partner countries, and far less resources are going to actions that have gender equality as a principal objective, while they are more likely to have a gender-transformative impact.** In addition, based on the interviews carried out with EUDs, tracking resources remains challenging due to inconsistency in applying the marker correctly. This could mean that some projects are marked as contributing to gender equality while they are in reality gender-blind or only paying attention to gender in a superficial manner.

Based on findings of the mid-term evaluation of GAP III, from 2019-2022, the proportion of funds marked as G1 exceeds 80%, and funds marked as G2 represent 7% of the total GEWE portfolio. In terms of resourcing actors engaged in GEWE, **“national governments and authorities in partner countries, the UN and development agencies are by far the primary channels for implementing EU-funded GEWE support,** accounting for 26% and 25% of the total budget, followed by European Financing Institutions (EFIs) and International Financing Institutions (IFIs)”<sup>18</sup>.



In total, the EU committed EUR 9.26 billion to actions marked G1 and G2 in 2021. Only 4% of new actions in 2021 targeted specifically GEWE (marked G2) corresponding to funding of EUR 243 million<sup>19</sup>.

EU funding to local WROs and women’s and feminist movements goes through different channels including grant contracts with civil society and projects and programmes implemented by EU MS, agencies, partner countries, foundations or multilateral organisations such as the UN. **While GAP III committed to increasing the amount of funding directed towards WROs and feminist movements, it does not specify a quantitative target.** The EU reports that their support to “feminist movements, organisations and institutions working for women’s rights (OECD-DAC sector code 15170) increased from EUR 39.37 million in 2020 to EUR 44.05 million in 2021<sup>20</sup>. This includes direct funding from the EU to WROs estimated at EUR 8.9 million in 2021, which is a 27.7 % increase compared to 2020 (EUR 6.97 million). Nevertheless, **OECD data shows that despite this increase, direct support to WROs and gender equality institutions represents less than 0.5% of EU institutions’ total Official Development Assistance (ODA) focusing on gender equality**<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Directorate-General for International Partnerships (European Commission), ECDPM, ECORYS, Mancala Consultores, Particip (2023): Mid-Term Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan III Final report.

<sup>19</sup> 2021 marked the start of a new financial programming cycle and focus was put on the preparation and gender mainstreaming of the Multiannual Indicative Programmes and developing the CLIPs. CLIPs come with a first indication of targeted actions (G2 actions) to be implemented by 2025.

<sup>20</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (2022): 2022 Annual report on the implementation of the European Union's external action instruments in 2021, Staff working document.

<sup>21</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022): Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.

The OECD-DAC sector code 15170 tracks support for feminist movements, WROs and government institutions working for women's rights. This means that it applies to funding going to WROs, as well as partner countries' national ministries and UN agencies<sup>22</sup>. By default, activities recorded under this code are labelled as targeted actions (G2). When it comes to the above estimated figure of EU resources directly allocated to WROs in 2021 (8.9 million), it is important to note that the number cannot be traced back, as the EU does not specify which type of organisations are included in this number.

## ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs

During these two years of GAP III implementation, the EU has engaged with CSOs, including local WROs, through dialogue within the broader programming consultations, developing GCPs, CLIPs and EU Roadmaps for engagement with civil society. However, **information from CONCORD members and their partners, as well as from other organisations indicates that EUDs very rarely have a structured and inclusive approach to dialogue, with ad hoc consultations on GAP III being far more common.** The Philippines stood out as a good example, because it has a CSO sounding board that meets regularly to strategise and share learnings.

Constituency-led WROs report a range of different experiences regarding engagement with EUDs. Some have not heard of GAP III or have not participated in any consultations. In Morocco, smaller constituency-led WROs mentioned the EUD's preference for engaging with more prominent, well-established organisations with regular funding, rather than smaller organisations mainly made up of volunteers with no stable financing. An organisation in the Philippines working at the intersection of women's rights and disability rights on SRHR remarked that the EUD and the EU should have a more inclusive and accessible approach to both calls for proposals and consultations with CSOs.

## CASE STUDIES

GAP III is ambitious, and its long-term goal is the transformation of harmful gender norms and stereotypes which produce unequal gender-power relations and discrimination of women and girls in all their diversity. The implementation of GAP III needs to be assessed in a broader context, particularly by studying different national political situations, in which there is a diversity of civic space and varying capacity for women's and feminist movements to influence policy and legal change.

We conducted country level studies because we consider them essential to complement the data that is collected by the EU and to observe the impact of GAP III in specific political and socio-cultural contexts, including the state of civic space and national gender equality machinery and laws. **The experiences and perspectives of CSOs, particularly constituency-led, local WROs, and those responsible for implementing GAP III, are crucial to our understanding of the challenges and opportunities.** The case studies are intended to provide insights about the common trends, challenges and enabling factors of GAP III implementation in the three focus countries.

The three country case studies have been selected to ensure a diverse geographical distribution (East Africa, the Mediterranean and South-East Asia). The strong likelihood of obtaining interviews with a diversity of local WROs and other GEWE actors and being able to carry them out in English or French, was taken into account as well. The Interviews were conducted mainly with local CSOs and EUDs, MS Embassies, governments, and the UN. The primary informants are local WROs (See Annex, box 1: List of informants).

<sup>22</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2016): *Handbook on the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker*.

# THE PHILIPPINES



## CIVIC SPACE

According to the 2023 CIVICUS monitor<sup>23</sup>, the civic space rating for the Philippines is “repressed”. It is common for journalists, human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders (WHRD) and advocates for land rights, environmental justice and campaigners against extractive industries to be “red-tagged”<sup>24</sup> by the government.

## NATIONAL GENDER EQUALITY MACHINERY, LAWS AND POLICY

The Philippines is a signatory to several international human rights instruments, including CEDAW, which have shaped its legislative framework for advancing gender equality. Philippine women’s rights advocates were at the forefront of the Beijing Platform for Action and are actively pushing forward the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) GEWE goals and commitments. The Magna Carta of Women, a women’s rights law enacted in 2009, translates CEDAW into the Philippine context, providing the overarching legal protection of women’s rights, and in particular women that experience intersecting forms of discrimination. Its implementation is coordinated by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW). The Gender and Development Ombud under the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) protects women’s rights through the investigation of violations and recommendations for reparation. The Philippine government has set up Gender and Development (GAD) programmes in government agencies and local government units with gender mainstreaming guidelines. A GAD budget policy requires government agencies and local government units to use 5% of their annual budgets on GEWE<sup>25</sup>. Unfortunately, implementation of the GAD budget at the level of local government units remains a huge challenge and gender issues at the local level (called *barangay*)<sup>26</sup>

remain largely neglected. Women and girls from low-income, rural and/or indigenous groups, as well as persons with disabilities and the LGBTIQ community continue to be severely underserved by the government.

Among some of the landmark policies adopted in the Philippines, thanks to the advocacy of women’s and feminist movements, are the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Act of 2004, the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 or the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012 (RPRHA) to provide universal access to methods of contraception, maternal care and comprehensive sexual education. However, implementing comprehensive sexual education remains one of the most significant challenges, given the influence and power of conservative movements in the Philippines. Because of the persistent legal restrictions, some women and girls in the Philippines resort to unsafe procedures that put their health and lives at risk when seeking abortions.

## EU-PHILIPPINES PARTNERSHIP

The EU’s partnership with the Philippines focuses on governance, job creation, renewable energy, and supporting disadvantaged populations, specifically in Mindanao which is the most impoverished region of the Philippines. The EU is one of the biggest cooperation partners to support the Mindanao Peace Processes, directly assisting political entities with the “Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace” and longer-term support through the Global Europe instrument/NDICI<sup>27</sup>. However, the National Rural Women Coalition (PKKK) pointed out the need for EU support to reach other conflict-affected areas besides Mindanao, where rural and indigenous women land rights defenders are being “red-tagged”. The EU and its MS, including Germany, the Netherlands,

<sup>23</sup> CIVICUS (2023): CIVICUS Monitor, Philippines.

<sup>24</sup> Human Rights Watch (2023): Philippines: Officials “Red-Tagging” Indigenous Leaders, Activists.

<sup>25</sup> Philippine Commission on Women: Gender Mainstreaming.

<sup>26</sup> A *barangay* is the smallest political unit in the Philippines, a subdivision of a city or municipality.

<sup>27</sup> European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Partnerships: EU International Partnerships page on the Philippines.

Finland and Spain, have become key partners in the Philippines. Jointly, they are the largest grant donor to the Philippines.

The COVID-19 lockdown negatively affected low-income communities and exacerbated GBV, the lack of access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, diminished social protection and increased levels of unpaid work. The EU allocated financial assistance to support the healthcare sector, promote socio-economic recovery, and address the immediate needs of disadvantaged people in the Philippines, both bilaterally and through multilateral cooperation.

### HOW IS GAP III BEING IMPLEMENTED?

The EUD in the Philippines has examples of good practices in its implementation of GAP III. According to CSOs, the EUD developed the GCP<sup>28</sup> through a participatory (hybrid) consultation process led by the University of the Philippines Center of Women's and Gender Studies. Local WROs, including constituency-led organisations working with a gender-transformative and intersectional approach, directly fed into the analysis. The explicit intersectional approach integrated in the GCP has trickled down into the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP), which explicitly considers women with intersectional identities and commits to support CSOs representing people experiencing intersectional discrimination<sup>29</sup>. The CLIP was developed with contributions from the PCW, CSOs, UN Women, and UNFPA.

One representative of a SRHR organisation based in a rural region highlighted the importance for the EU to keep reaching out to CSOs and local WROs beyond the capital, also after consultations to feed into the development of the GCP and the CLIP. She shared that

*“one of the equalising factors of the pandemic was that because of online meetings, more coalitions and other organisations outside Manila were being invited to share their views”.*

The GFP wears a double hat, also leading CSO engagement. Having spent six years in the EUD in the Philippines, with a proactive approach to the gender equality group, the handover with the next GFP will be critical for continuity of these good practices. The gender group, made up of the EU GFP and GFPs from MS Embassies, has provided substantive input into the CLIP and programmes, including strategic prioritisation, but there is no evidence on how the group engages with the EU at regional or global level to share learnings and good practices. At the time of the research, there were no signs of substantive gender equality learning activities/training for EUD personnel carried out during the past two years, apart from training on the use of the OECD Gender Marker. The GFP believes that **“gender training should be mandatory for all EUD staff, including a deep understanding of gender analysis”**. It is positive that dedicated funding has been secured for EUD-internal capacity building, which can be used to share practical tools to integrate the GAP III principles of gender-transformation and intersectionality into most EUD actions.

While targeted gender equality actions (G2) have proved to be easier to evaluate, it remains a challenge to assess how a gender perspective has been integrated into key “non-traditional gender sector” programmes, which have larger budgets and outreach. The Head of Cooperation understands the need to better resource these programmes with Gender Advisers and technical support from a Filipino consultancy, which will advance gender



**GOOD PRACTICE:** Since 2019, the EU GFP Group has coordinated efforts by the EU and MS on GAP III and policy dialogue with the Philippine government. This gender group, together with the Gender Champion – who rotates among EU MS Ambassadors – has raised the profile and influence of the EU on gender equality and women's empowerment in the Philippines. The EUD also regularly engages with civil society through a sounding board to exchange ideas, discuss context developments and strategies. The EUD senior leadership, and the EUD GFP are seen by most CSOs as committed to GEWE. A lifelong feminist leader and high-level convener of WPS is convinced that, *“the EU is really supporting WPS in Mindanao”*.

<sup>28</sup> European Union, University of the Philippines Center for Women's and Gender Studies (2021): *Gender Country Profile for the Philippines 2021*.

<sup>29</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European External Action Service (2021): *Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 Philippines*.



mainstreaming. The GFP noted that there is a need to invest in gender disaggregated data about specific sectors, yet there is no publicly available information of such an attempt.

The EUD collaborates with CSOs and local WROs who advocate, design and implement programmes, and deliver services at the intersection of poverty, sexuality, age and other social categories such as the four-year project, “Community CSOs Action for SRHR”<sup>30</sup>. The EUD, under the leadership of the Ambassador of Finland as Gender Champion in 2022, directly engaged with LGBTIQ organisations, and in 2023 the Ambassadors of Germany and the Netherlands continue to engage with them. Lesbian groups face forms of intersecting discrimination and underfunding. According to a lesbian-led organisation working in urban poor areas, “lesbians experience invisibility within the broader LGBTIQ umbrella”. She pointed to the need for a specific focus on lesbian rights and projects, as well as research to better understand the realities of trans youth, recognising that they are affected by specific challenges.

EUD support to CSO-led gender equality targeted projects amounts to a total budget of EUR 3.54 million allocated to seven projects, including funding

for advocacy and capacity-sharing activities. Smaller CSOs expressed difficulty accessing EU funding and “too many layers”. One representative of a local WRO shared that “For most of the calls for proposals that the EU puts out, they target bigger organisations. It is understandable that it is easier to manage 3 big projects than 15 small ones, but if they want to make a real impact and promote structural change, they need to localise the funding.” There is a lack of accessibility for organisations that may have challenges presenting proposals due to disability or language barriers. Whereas CSOs are contextual and intersectional experts, trusted by their communities, they often do not use EU jargon or have the capacity and human resources for proposal-writing.

“ For most of the calls for proposals that the EU puts out, they target bigger organisations. It is understandable that it is easier to manage 3 big projects than 15 small ones, but if they want to make a real impact and promote structural change, they need to localise the funding.”

– Local WRO representative

## CONCLUSION

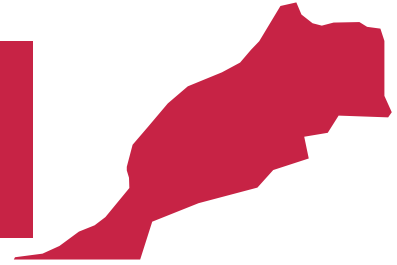
The projects and programmes funded by the EUD in the Philippines and implemented by CSOs and other actors contribute to improving the lives of women and girls in all their diversity, minority groups and their communities, including men and boys engaged as partners for gender equality. **Philippine WROs and other CSOs, including faith-based organisations**

<sup>30</sup> Community CSOs Action for SRHR (CCAS) targets girls and young women from the ages of 15-24 in poor communities, implemented by the Filipina, women-led feminist Center for Women’s Health Likhaan. The project engages a diversity of stakeholders to shift the norms that prevent girls and young women in poor communities from exercising their right to SRH information and services. The project, which is being implemented in poor barangays in different locations, engages youth through creative means like art and theatre to shift the behaviours that perpetuate gender power relations and gender norms around sexuality.

such as the **National Council of Churches in the Philippines**, increasingly work with a **gender-transformative approach**, and work to advance **LGBTIQ rights**. Local WROs are experts in working with contextual and intersectional approaches, and could share their knowledge about how to operationalise these with the EUD. **The EUD in the Philippines shows signs of good institutional buy-in of GAP III objectives: the cooperation leadership takes gender equality and women’s rights seriously, EU MS Ambassadors are Gender Champions, and the GFP is well connected and engaged with CSOs and other GEWE actors.** However, all these actors could use their influence more actively to mainstream gender in all the non-traditionally “gender equality sectors”, like the green transition, trade and digitalisation.

Overall, **the EU is an important partner in the Philippines’ efforts to promote GEWE**, and its support for initiatives on preventing and responding to GBV, promoting women’s participation in peace and security, and SRHR is making a significant contribution. Programmes tend to complement work from MS and other cooperation actors to enhance impact. However, funding access for CSOs, particularly local, constituency-led WROs remains a challenge with the current model of EU funding. This is an area of improvement to enhance accountability vis-à-vis the communities the EU works with, and particularly women and girls and other groups that experience intersecting forms of discrimination.

# MOROCCO



**This case study was developed in close collaboration with EuroMed Rights.**

*Note: This case study is based on the information gathered through seven qualitative interviews with Moroccan local WROs, international organisations receiving EU funding and the EUD. It is worth mentioning that neither the GCP nor the CLIP are publicly available. Hence, the GAP III thematic priorities for Morocco are not known and it has not been possible to assess the level of implementation towards these priorities.*

## CIVIC SPACE

According to the civic space monitor, Morocco's space is "obstructed"<sup>31</sup>. There are attempts to silence human rights defenders, including WHRDs, through arrests and imprisonment, including imprisonment for social media posts criticising the government and security services<sup>32</sup>. A respondent from a WRO expressed frustration with bureaucratic barriers such as the government approval needed for certain activities. Similarly, a young activist pointed out that the government has denied 150 CSOs the renewal of their legal status. Policy areas related to expanding democracy, freedom of speech, women's rights, LGTBIQ rights and the rights of ethnic minorities such as the Amazigh community remain sensitive issues for the government.

In recent years, the women's and feminist movements have gained momentum, with many organisations and activists working to promote gender equality and women's rights in Morocco despite the above-

mentioned challenges. Overall, feminism in Morocco is a diverse and vibrant movement that is working at the intersection of other social movements and rights, like youth rights, LGBTIQ rights, the climate movement and democracy.

## NATIONAL GENDER EQUALITY MACHINERY, LAWS AND POLICY

The Moroccan Constitution recognises equality between men and women, protects individual freedoms and condemns discrimination<sup>33</sup>. Morocco ratified CEDAW in 1993, but significant challenges remain in its implementation. The Ministry of Family, Solidarity, Equality and Social Development is the leading GEWE machinery. The EU supports the government to implement Equality Action Plans. A respondent from a long-established WRO recalls positively the support from the EU during GAP II to draft reports on the implementation of Equality Plan (Ikram) 2017–2021 to hold the government accountable.

Girls and women in all their diversity face inequality in many areas, including in law, education, employment and political representation. Women work predominantly in the informal sector and the unpaid care economy and it represents only 23.5% of the total labour force<sup>34</sup>. GBV remains a significant problem. According to a survey conducted by the Moroccan High Commission for Planning in 2019, around 54.9% of women in Morocco had experienced some form of violence during their lifetime. This includes both intimate partner violence and non-partner violence. The study also highlighted that approximately 63.6% of Moroccan women who had experienced violence did not seek any help or support<sup>35</sup>. Women often face obstacles accessing

<sup>31</sup> CIVICUS (2023): CIVICUS Monitor, Morocco.

<sup>32</sup> CIVICUS (2022): Attempts to silence HRDs through arrests and imprisonment, article.

<sup>33</sup> Under its constitution Morocco is a multi-ethnic country including, Arab, Amazigh (Berber) and Sahraoui people. Other groups in Morocco include Sub-Saharan Africans and Jews. However, ethnic minorities like the Amazigh community continue to experience discrimination and structural exclusion based on their language and culture.

<sup>34</sup> The World Bank: Labor force, female (% of total labor force) - Morocco.

<sup>35</sup> Haut-Commissariat au Plan (2019): Communiqué du Haut-Commissariat au Plan à l'occasion de la campagne nationale et internationale de mobilisation pour l'élimination de la violence à l'encontre des femmes.

justice and services, especially women who experience intersecting forms of discrimination. In some parts of the country, the lack of Amazigh language facilities – including sworn, certified interpreters – remains a barrier to equal and effective access to justice for Amazigh speakers, particularly women and girls. There is significant resistance and backlash to gender equality from influential sectors of Moroccan society, including conservative religious and cultural groups.

## EU-MOROCCO PARTNERSHIP

The European Union and Morocco have a partnership that spans shared areas of interest, including economic development, climate, security and migration. The partnership was formalised in 2000 with the signing of the EU-Morocco Association Agreement<sup>36</sup> which established a framework for cooperation between the two parties. With the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2004 and its review in 2015, Morocco became a key partner of the EU<sup>37</sup>. In March 2023, the EU announced new cooperation programmes worth EUR 624 million to support Morocco in key areas such as social protection, climate and the green transition, migration and reform of the public administration and the judiciary systems<sup>38</sup>. The “KARAMA” programme, worth EUR 130 million, will support a major social protection reform, including specific actions to ensure fair access to universal health coverage, family allocations, unemployment insurance and pensions for the Moroccan population. This presents a window of opportunity to advance measures on women’s labour rights, particularly informal and domestic workers, through the implementation of Law 19.12 on domestic workers to guarantee them access to social protection.

Among the focus areas of the EUD in Morocco are human rights and democracy, which aim to address issues such as rule of law, access to justice, gender equality and women’s empowerment. However, the EU-Morocco partnership has been controversial and criticised over human rights issues. Human rights organisations have accused the Moroccan

government of suppressing dissent and cracking down on political opposition, as well as of racism and xenophobia towards migrants and refugees<sup>39</sup>.

## HOW IS GAP III BEING IMPLEMENTED?

The EUD in Morocco has a “gender group” that coordinates efforts by the EU and MS on GAP III, and policy dialogue with the government, its leading partner on GEWE. Although the Moroccan CLIP has been highlighted as a best practice on joint programming between EU and MS in the independent evaluation of GAP III, neither the GCP nor the CLIP are publicly available. They are yet to be published, awaiting the Moroccan government’s “green light”<sup>40</sup>. This means the **CSOs who were actively involved in consultations to develop the CLIP are currently not able to assess how their recommendations were taken into account and are not able to monitor how GAP III is being implemented.** The EU’s main thematic areas of focus are WEE and ending GBV, including transforming the gender norms that perpetuate violence. Other areas include girls’ education and an overall equality of rights and opportunities. Based on the interview with the EUD GFP, the EUD’s target groups who experience intersecting inequalities include single mothers and women and girls living in rural areas.

Our interviews showed that **many local CSOs, even those based in the capital, are unfamiliar with GAP III.** This might be because the CLIP is used as an internal document, rather than an external communication tool about EU GEWE action in the country. CSOs also expressed concerns with the EUD’s approach to engage them in CLIP consultations. While the EUD held formal talks, and CSOs sent “spontaneous” written priorities and recommendations, they did not receive feedback. This opaqueness and lack of transparency is exacerbated because the CLIP is not public. It is important to note that CSOs have experienced these processes as “extractive” with a lack of accountability from the EUD about their recommendations. **Some interviewees expressed concerns about the EUD’s**

<sup>36</sup> EU (2000): *Euro Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part.*

<sup>37</sup> *European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: Morocco country profile.*

<sup>38</sup> *European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (2023): EU launches new cooperation programmes with Morocco worth €624 million green transition, migration and reforms.*

<sup>39</sup> *EuroMed Rights: Migrants and Refugees, Morocco.*

<sup>40</sup> *For this reason, the Moroccan case study is less comprehensive than the ones from Kenya and the Philippines.*

(lack of) engagement with local WROs who are not the “usual suspects”, or the long-established organisations with staff and funding. For example, CSOs working with young women and Amazigh communities are mostly volunteer-based with few resources and face many obstacles. A respondent from a local WRO indicated that they felt excluded from the EUD’s strategic consultations.

Among the priorities for local CSOs interviewed are the full implementation of CEDAW, the ratification of the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and the harmonisation of the Moroccan legal framework with international conventions and the Moroccan Constitution. A member of a local WRO pointed out the importance of reforming the *Mudawana* or Family Code which governs issues related to marriage, divorce and child custody, to ensure greater protection for women’s rights. However, this potential reform is strongly opposed by the conservative section of society, as it touches upon issues related to family, sexuality and religion. The reform of the Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedures from a rights-based approach is also important to enhance individual freedoms, including abortion and LGBTIQ rights. But, in the words of a women’s rights advocate, “*the EU focuses a lot on women’s economic empowerment as this does not bother the government [...]. The EU moves away from human and civil rights issues. There are economic interests with the government*”.

A respondent familiar with GAP II sees no change with regards to the ‘new’ principles of GAP III – the gender-transformative and intersectional approach, and indicated that “*it is very much business as usual*”. The EU funded project ‘Barak: Chabab contre les violences’ works with a gender-transformative approach showing that some targeted actions do exist.

*Implemented by La Fédération des Liges des Droits des Femmes Marrakech-Safi, l’association Gorara pour les Arts et les Cultures and Oxfam Maroc. They use a transformative approach to strengthen CSOs in the Marrakech-Safi region to better defend women’s rights and the survivors of gender-based violence, as well as raise awareness among youth, and to support CSO advocacy. The project recognises the critical role that men and boys can play as partners for gender equality alongside women and girls by promoting positive models of masculinity.*

**“ the EU focuses a lot on women’s economic empowerment as this does not bother the government [...]. The EU moves away from human and civil rights issues. There are economic interests with the government”.**

**– Women’s rights advocate**

**Some officials at the EUD struggle with these new concepts introduced by GAP III and the GFP has so far not received support or guidelines from HQ. The intersectional approach is seen as an “add-on” in GAP III implementation.** Due to lack of capacity and time, tracking GEWE resources is another challenge for the EUD, as they have a large portfolio of projects in a variety of sectors. The same applies to conducting gender analyses as the basis of projects. UN Women has supported the EUD in producing quality gender analyses, though the time it takes to conduct them presents a challenge.

## CONCLUSION

The CLIP for Morocco is awaiting final approval by the Moroccan government and therefore not yet public. There were consultations with Moroccan CSOs and local WROs to identify priorities, and organisations shared their written inputs with the EUD. As the CLIP is not public, CSOs who were involved in the consultations are kept in the dark about the follow-up process and how the EU has taken their contributions into account. In this sense, there is a lack of accountability towards organisations that invest time and resources to participate in consultations. **More meaningful engagement with CSOs can be achieved if the EUD formulates clear expectations and provides effective and transparent feedback following consultations.**

The EUD should live up to the mandate of GAP III by holding the government to account for the rights of women and girls in all their diversity and other disadvantaged groups, including on controversial issues. **Respondents encourage the EU to use its strategic leverage to broker more inclusive**

**exchanges and provide flexible funding to support intergenerational movement building, as well as the rights of the Amazigh community and of women and girls in all their diversity.** Core areas where transformative change is urgently needed include shifting the harmful social norms to prevent and respond to GBV, including online violence, and expanding civic space for WHRDs. Promoting WEE is key, as well as harmonising the cross-cutting legal framework of the country.

The EUD senior leadership and staff, including the GFP, would benefit from technical support and additional training to explore concepts and practical guidance to implement the principles of gender-transformation and intersectionality, as well as the gender marker. The official role of the GFP should be strengthened, with a clear description of their mandate and guidelines from HQ.

# KENYA



## CIVIC SPACE

Women's and feminist movements in Kenya played an essential role in the country's struggle for independence. In the 1970s and 1980s, key feminist organisations and local WROs emerged. These groups were instrumental in lobbying for the inclusion of women's rights in the 2010 Constitution. Today, civic space in Kenya is considered obstructed<sup>41</sup>, with frequent attacks against LGBTIQ activists and surging sexual and gender based violence during electoral seasons.

## NATIONAL GENDER EQUALITY MACHINERY, LAWS AND POLICY

Kenya has committed to gender equality and human rights by signing and ratifying several international human rights instruments, including the CEDAW in 1984, making it one of the early ratifiers. Kenya has a progressive Constitution and Bill of Rights, but, like other countries, it does not pay attention to intersecting forms of discrimination in law. The Constitution of Kenya includes quotas to guarantee women's representation in politics and decision-making positions, but implementation of the principle (popularly referred to as the two-thirds gender rule) has been fraught with challenges. Homosexuality is illegal in Kenya, due to laws which were introduced under British colonial rule. Recently, it seemed the legal space was changing positively for LGBTIQ communities, as the Supreme Court ruled that LGBTIQ organisations have "the right to associate", allowing them to seek official recognition as NGOs<sup>42</sup>. However, there is a long way to go as the ruling was met with public backlash and political and religious hostility. This backlash has led to the development of an anti-gay bill that is currently being drafted.

## EU-KENYA PARTNERSHIP

The Kenyan MIP 2021-2027 (amounting to 324 million EUR in the initial phase until 2024), which frames EU-Kenya Cooperation indicates the three priority areas of cooperation: the green transition, human development through digital inclusion and democratic governance, peace, and stability<sup>43</sup>. As part of its new Global Gateway Strategy, the EU announced two Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) in Kenya: one on the green transition, and the other on human-centred digitalisation. It is promising that the TEI "Digital Transformation Kenya" explicitly aims to reduce the "digital divides, between women and men, young and old, and urban and rural areas"<sup>44</sup>. The EU Roadmap of engagement with civil society 2022-2025 includes an objective to promote the participation of Kenyan civil society in policy-making at international, national and county-level, with a focus on women and youth<sup>45</sup>.

## HOW IS GAP III BEING IMPLEMENTED?

Whereas the Gender Country Profile, developed in collaboration with UN Women, pays attention to the intersections of gender inequality with other grounds of inequality, the CLIP does not explicitly mention intersectionality. The EUD in Kenya stated that they included a diverse group of local WROs, including organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), working on each GAP III thematic area in the consultation process feeding into the CLIP. By organising a hybrid consultation process, the EUD tried to ensure the participation of WROs from rural areas and other local WROs outside of Nairobi. The GFP shared that both the GCP and the CLIP were developed late into the implementation period of GAP III. As a result, they will not organise a broad consultation to discuss progress and challenges, and review the CLIP ahead of the official GAP III mid-term reporting exercise in 2023.

<sup>41</sup> CIVICUS (2022): *Country brief: Kenya. Overview of recent restrictions to civic freedoms ahead of 2022 elections.*

<sup>42</sup> BBC News (2023): *Kenya wrong to ban LGBT rights groups from registering - Supreme Court.*

<sup>43</sup> EUD Kenya (2021): *Republic of Kenya Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027.*

<sup>44</sup> TEI Tracker: *Digital Transformation in Kenya.*

<sup>45</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (2022): *Kenya - EU Roadmap for engagement with civil society 2022 - 2025.*

Beyond the consultations on the CLIP, structured engagement between the EUD and CSOs, including organisations representing people experiencing intersectional discrimination, such as LGBTIQ communities and persons with disabilities, is not yet in place. However, **the EUD is making an effort to set up such a structured dialogue with Kenyan civil society**, as this is one of the priorities outlined in the MIP and the EU Roadmap for engagement with civil society (2022-2025). As part of this structured dialogue, they will create a dedicated working group on gender. The EUD had commissioned a mapping of CSOs in the country to increase outreach to a diversity of CSOs and local WROs, but was not satisfied with the result. A recent call for proposals aims at strengthening the capacity and voice of Kenyan civil society and human rights organisations. Although the call doesn't explicitly mention a gender-transformative and intersectional approach, it seeks to support initiatives that engage Kenyan citizens and CSOs in their full diversity. All four lots in the call for proposal pay attention to categories of people experiencing intersectional discrimination, such as women and girls, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and marginalised/remotely living youth and communities<sup>46</sup>.

There is a good collaboration between the EUD and EU MS active in Kenya, who all contributed to the CLIP. The EUD chaired the "Development Partners Group on Gender"<sup>47</sup> for two years before handing over to the USA in 2023. In the EUD's opinion, this commitment amplified their gender engagements in Kenya and helped generate momentum compared to GAP II. In an effort to keep up this "EU momentum", Finland has assumed the role of vice chair of the group, after which it will be chair for two years. The EU pushed to have the group opened up to local CSOs and WROs.

In order to meet the GAP III commitment to implement at least one action with gender equality as a principal objective, the EUD is planning to launch a 4 million EUR G2 action with the United Nations Population Fund, to combat female genital mutilation, which

remains a widespread practice<sup>48</sup>. A second potential G2 action envisaged by the EUD, would be to finance a policy document to guide Kenya's action on gender equality in all areas of government.

Respondents indicated that direct, sustained EU resources for gender equality are still not accessible for a diversity of WROs at the local level. For example, the Kenya Network of Women and Girls with Disabilities told CONCORD that "out of the 18 member organisations we have in the Network, none seem to have any CSO Network benefit from EU funding". One INGO pointed out that **when local WROs do manage to access EU resources, short-term funding cycles do not enable a gender-transformative approach or long-term efforts to achieve social and behavioural change**. The EC's complicated procedures exclude many local WROs from applying. The criteria in calls for proposals are unrealistic for smaller, particularly rural, WROs and exacerbate the unequal power dynamic between national cooperation agencies, large INGOs and small CSOs. The EUD agreed that this is an area in which they can do more to support local CSOs and WROs, but said it is constrained by "the system". As a response to this criticism, the EUD introduced a new requirement in its last two calls for proposals: with the aim of making funding more accessible to smaller and local organisations, applicants must now grant a minimum of 15% financial support to third parties in the budget for their project. Whereas "rigid procedures" apparently prevent the EUD from providing flexible support to local CSOs, EU MS such as Finland and the Netherlands<sup>49</sup>, have more accessible, flexible funding mechanisms, allowing local WROs to take the lead in designing and implementing programmes.

Discrimination of LGBTIQ communities in Kenya and the protection of their rights is identified as a sensitive, highly political issue in the CLIP. The EUD aims to ensure that the voices of people with any sexual orientation or gender identity are included in their work. Nevertheless, it has been decided that the EU's active support behind the scenes is more

46 European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (2023): *Call for proposal: Strengthening the capacity and voice of Kenyan civil society organisations as independent actors of accountability, good governance and sustainable development*.

47 The group is a collective of all bilateral, multilateral donor countries, INGOs, local CSOs and private sector partners who are supporting gender priorities and commitments in Kenya. The Secretariat is chaired by the UN. Their structure comprises 5 separate working groups, namely WEE, GBV, WPS, Women's Leadership and Governance and Male Engagement.

48 UNICEF (2023): *A profile of female genital mutilation in Kenya*.

49 For example, the Netherlands provides financial support to "Leading from the South", a feminist global South-led consortium applying the principles of horizontality, trust, and delegation of decision-making power to WROs in the Global South. The Embassy of Finland in Kenya manages The Finnish Fund for Local Cooperation which is a flexible instrument providing support to local CSOs, including WROs.

strategic in the Kenyan context than taking a public stance, in order to preserve room for diplomatic manoeuvre and potentially the safety of any human rights defenders.

With respect to the WPS agenda, incorporated into the GAP for the first time, one MS Embassy indicated that when it comes to WPS financing, additional bureaucracy is involved when money is channelled through the UN system. This has knock-on effects in terms of efficiency and missed opportunities in strategic timing, for instance, when early warning systems indicate a need for prevention. Despite the above challenges, the study found an example of a good practice in implementing the WPS agenda, supporting local woman peacemakers and women-led peace committees, with Finnish support<sup>50</sup>.

*The “Rural Women Peace Link” is a grassroots, women-led organisation that mobilises, influences and promotes the participation of local women in peace building, governance and development through collaboration and networking with diverse actors. It was conceived during Kenya’s post-election violence in the Rift Valley with support from the Finnish Embassy, channelled through UN Women.*

### Gender mainstreaming in EU green transition actions in Kenya: Room for improvement

The GFP shared that whenever other sections in the EUD launch big projects, they ensure that the GFP is involved in their development. However, **according to the Kenyan CSOs and WROs working in the environmental sector interviewed for this report, the EU does not adequately mainstream the principles of GAP III in their green transition initiatives.** Civil society respondents in the clean and renewable energy sector reported no interaction with the EU on GAP III. It emerged that in renewable energy programming, the emphasis is on units of energy generated and how to achieve this output, rather than the intersectional needs of local communities.



Based on the interviews, our assessment shows that the climate and environment sector is very male-dominated, and women and girls in Kenya participating in environmental programmes are perceived by men as “victims” rather than as agents of change with lived experiences and knowledge that can contribute to climate justice in the country. Two INGOs pointed out the need to incorporate a gender-transformative and intersectional approach at the design phase of renewable energy projects, and bring in local feminist organisations from the beginning. Whereas the EU has a significant budget for the green transition and it is a key priority of the MIP, a GEWE-informed sector analysis is clearly needed.

Local human rights defenders have been raising awareness about the negative impacts of renewable energy projects on indigenous communities in Kenya<sup>51</sup>. Renewable energy projects funded by the EIB, for example investments in wind and geothermal sources, need to be designed and implemented in ways that protect and advance the human rights of indigenous peoples. In general, **all climate and green transition projects initiated by the EU should adopt a gender-transformative and intersectional approach, addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by the most marginalised groups, including women and girls, indigenous peoples, and those residing in rural and remote areas**<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> *The “Rural Women Peace Link” is a grassroots, women-led organisation that mobilises, influences and promotes the participation of local women in peace building, governance and development through collaboration and networking with diverse actors. It was conceived during Kenya’s post-election violence in the Rift Valley with support from the Finnish Embassy, channelled through UN Women.*

<sup>51</sup> IWGIA (2015) *Kenya: Renewable Energy Projects and the Rights of Marginalised/Indigenous Communities in Kenya.*

<sup>52</sup> *Read more about the importance of gender-transformative approaches to adaptation and loss and damage in the Africa-EU partnership through action on climate impacts in this briefing by Climate Action Network Europe (2022).*

The GFP shared their concern that **training on fundamental GAP III concepts, such as the OECD DAC gender markers, intersectionality and gender-transformative approaches should be mandatory for all EUD staff; they are often deprioritised due to a lack of time.** One INGO noted that lessons with regard to reporting and data gaps have not been learned from GAP I and GAP II, and asked *“Whose perspective and which impacts are not being explored?”* According to the EUD, attempts are being made to take GAP III commitments into account along the whole project cycle, including reporting, for example by collecting data disaggregated by relevant intersectional aspects, such as the way in which an action impacted people with disabilities. This would be improved if there were specific indicators for EUD staff to apply across thematic sectors. Apart from a minimum requirement to disaggregate data by sex and age, GAP III encourages EUDs to collect gender-disaggregated and intersectional data “whenever relevant and feasible”.

## CONCLUSION

This case study highlights both positive developments and areas that require further attention with regard to the implementation of GAP III in Kenya. While efforts were made to include a diverse group of local WROs in the consultation process for developing the CLIP, structured engagement between the EUD and CSOs, especially those representing marginalised groups, such as LGBTIQ communities and persons with disabilities, is not yet fully established. **The EUD’s commitment to establish a dedicated working group on gender and its efforts to include local CSOs and WROs in the Development Partners Group on Gender are positive steps toward fostering dialogue and collaboration.** Nevertheless, challenges remain with regard to access to EU resources for local WROs. The complex procedures, including auditing and reporting requirements, and unrealistic criteria in calls for proposals do not allow smaller, rural WROs to apply and take the lead in programmes. In addition, short-term funding cycles hinder long-term gender-transformative approaches. **The EUD’s introduction of a minimum financial support requirement for third parties in project budgets is a commendable response, but it is essential to continue addressing these barriers and exploring flexible funding mechanisms to support the efforts of local CSOs and WROs effectively.**

GAP III is used as a reference document guiding EU “development cooperation”, as opposed to the wider EU-Kenya partnership including trade and sectors of large investment such as renewable energy. The study specifically highlights **a lack of mainstreaming gender and GAP III principles in green transition initiatives.** To enhance the implementation of GAP III, training on fundamental concepts and gender markers should be made mandatory for EUD staff across thematic sectors.

# CONCLUSION: GAP III IMPLEMENTATION AT MID-TERM IS A MIXED BAG

In the two years since its introduction, the impact of GAP III at country level has started to take shape. At the midterm point, most of the tools and action plans needed to translate the ambitious GAP III policy into practice, such as the GCP and the CLIP, have been developed. However, **the evaluation finds that the level of ambition and impact of GAP III varies from country to country, while common challenges persist across countries, particularly in meaningful engagement and funding access for local CSOs, internal expertise and capacity in EUDs, and gender mainstreaming across all sectors.**

The projects we have chosen to highlight in this report show that there are “pockets” of positive transformative work supported by the EU in the thematic policy areas of preventing/responding to GBV and promoting SRHR. However, the study reveals gaps in gender mainstreaming across all EU external action. **Much still remains to be done to mainstream a gender perspective, let alone a gender-transformative and intersectional approach, for example, in non-traditional gender equality sectors like the green transition in Kenya.** In order to achieve this, it is crucial that local WROs, feminist movements and CSOs working to advance gender equality in partner countries are invited as stakeholders to consultations on all EU external action sectors, including renewable energy, trade and digitalisation. Whereas the EC reported that in 2021, 70% (out of the 85% target) of its new external actions were either gender responsive (G1) or targeted gender actions (G2)<sup>53</sup>, the results of these case studies raise questions about whether the gender markers are applied correctly and harmoniously by all EUD staff<sup>54,55</sup>. The impact and funding allocated to gender equality in EU external action might be overstated as a consequence.

Some respondents interviewed for this study already attribute positive transformative change to GAP III, as a consequence of the EU’s high-level leadership on GEWE and active collaboration with local women’s and feminist movements. For example, the EU’s efforts to advance the WPS agenda in Mindanao and its commitment to SRHR are recognised by feminist activists in the Philippines. Other EUDs, on the other hand, tend to focus on “non-sensitive” issues like economic empowerment, rather than holding partner countries’ accountable to their commitments on human rights.



Respondents stressed that **the EU has a responsibility to create opportunities to advance GEWE and human rights, and EUDs need to champion respect for human rights, including women’s rights, disability rights, LGBTIQ rights and sexual and reproductive rights.** Respondents called on the EU to use its strategic position and leverage in their countries to influence governments on gender equality and women’s rights, paying attention to the most marginalised communities. This requires increasing gender-targeted work across all areas of cooperation.

<sup>53</sup> European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (2022): 2022 Annual report on the implementation of the European Union's external action instruments in 2021, Staff working document. .

<sup>54</sup> More information about the possibility of “gender dilution” and “gender significance shopping” as a consequence of lack of clarity at EUD level about the gender marker system can be found in the Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the European Union Gender Action Plan III, p. 21 and p. 26

<sup>55</sup> The independent mid-term evaluation found that “When analysing gender markers in EU support to GEWE, WEE and WPS, in all cases the proportion of the volume of funds marked as G1 exceeds 80%.”

Our analysis demonstrates the critical importance of CSOs' strategic role, particularly local WROs in all their diversity, to ensure a more meaningful GAP III implementation. As GAP III does not exist in a vacuum, the state of civic space in any country must be considered when evaluating the impact of GAP III. In all three case study countries, civic space is either "repressed" (Philippines) or "obstructed" (Kenya and Morocco)<sup>56</sup>. Civic space is not gender-neutral: local WROs, women's and feminist movements, WHRDs, as well as LGBTIQ organisations are often the first to face and fight against shrinking civic space. At the same time, they are the most underfunded and are subject to frequent attacks from opposition groups worldwide<sup>57,58</sup>. As women's and feminist movements are crucial to advancing the gender-transformative agenda, **the most effective way for the EU to achieve the objectives of GAP III, is to work closely together with and directly fund local WROs in all their diversity.**

The report underscores the **varied quality and extent of engagement between EUDs and CSOs**, particularly local CSOs and WROs, with the initiative for consultations often coming from civil society. The lack of systematised and inclusive procedures and practices for engagement with CSOs exacerbates power imbalances between more established "usual suspects" and smaller, local WROs. As local WROs are contextual experts with regards to the intersectional needs of their communities, not involving them in every stage of the implementation cycle results in weaker impact of GAP III. The CSO sounding board in the Philippines is a good practice that can be replicated by other EUDs.

**Smaller organisations are systematically excluded from EU funding**, and urgent attention is required to provide direct, core, flexible, and long-term funding for CSOs, especially local WROs, OPDs, and LGBTIQ organisations. While EU funding for local WROs and movements is increasing, it still represents only a small proportion of the total EU ODA allocated to gender equality. Additionally, the lack of accurate data makes it challenging to track the exact amount of EU funding going to local WROs and feminist movements as part of the EU's overall support to GEWE.

There is uneven progress and a lack of shared understanding of the new GAP III principles across countries: **Whereas some EUDs, such as in the Philippines, have embraced the intersectional, gender-transformative approaches, in others, they are treated as an add-on.** To effectively implement GAP III, it is imperative for EUDs to possess in-house expertise on the key concepts and objectives. In all three countries, increased knowledge, capacity sharing and learning are necessary and should be prioritised as an area for improvement.

Other key prerequisites to ensure the transformative impact of GAP III at country level are **high-level political support and adequate human resources in EUDs**. When GFPs, with the support of the top management (Head of Cooperation and Head of Delegation) and 'gender groups', have strong expertise and political will, there is more and better engagement with a diversity of local WROs, as well as a more deliberate application of the intersectional and gender-transformative approaches.

Although there are initial signs of progress, much work remains to fully implement GAP III across all levels and areas of EU external action. In addition, more resources for gender-targeted (G2) actions are necessary to complement gender mainstreaming of GAP III objectives, and enable a more gender-transformative approach. **Promising practices identified in this evaluation, such as high-level political support, meaningful engagement with diverse local WROs, and the application of intersectional and gender-transformative approaches by EUDs, should be replicated and expanded upon** to unleash GAP III's potential for transformative change in the lives of women and girls, in all their diversity, in EU partner countries.

<sup>56</sup> CIVICUS (2023): CIVICUS Monitor, Kenya; CIVICUS (2023): CIVICUS Monitor, Morocco.

<sup>57</sup> CONCORD Paper (2023): Funding local women's rights organisations for transformative change.

<sup>58</sup> Kvinna Till Kvinna (2018): Suffocating the movement – Shrinking space for women's rights.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL SUPPORT, HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY IS NEEDED ACROSS THE BOARD

- **Guarantee the involvement and commitment of high-level management** at EU headquarters (in the EEAS and all relevant DGs, and not only in DG INTPA), EUDs, and MS Embassies, for example by **replicating the Gender Champion rotation practice found in the Philippines**.
- **Assign adequate financial and human resources to EUD Gender Focal Points** so that promoting gender equality in EU external action at the country level is a priority rather than an add-on. Allocation of time should be transparent and reflected in their job description, with opportunities for visibility and capacity sharing with other EUDs. Decision-making power, reporting and accountability lines need to be clear and included in their job description.
- **Increase investment in in-house expertise of all EUD staff**, particularly in building knowledge, capacity sharing, and dedication to gender equality and women's rights and GAP III objectives, including hiring, onboarding, and performance evaluation.
- Organise regular **mandatory training for EUD staff across all levels and sectors** on women's rights international frameworks, gender analysis, and the core principles of GAP III (gender-transformative, human rights-based and intersectional approach). As GAP III is mostly implemented through mainstreamed actions, training on gender mainstreaming requirements and the OECD-DAC gender markers is especially crucial.

- **Organise face to face training on themes like WPS, WEE, or SRHR** which need to be complemented by specific context training at EUD level and with an intersectional approach. Engage local CSOs and local WROs as contextual experts and facilitate mutual learning and collaboration.
- **Ensure EUDs are equipped to successfully apply the new EU Inequality marker**, in order to better target and measure the impacts of EU programmes and projects on women and girls in all their diversity across income distribution. This new marker allows for the inclusion of other socio-demographic characteristics, such as age and geographic location, making it a relevant tool to address intersectionality.



## IMPLEMENT THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF GAP III IN PRACTICE

- **Develop guidelines for EUDs on the adoption of an intersectional, gender-transformative approach**. These guidelines should lay out a step-by-step strategy to apply an intersectional approach across all stages of GAP III implementation and monitoring (organising inclusive and accessible consultations, conducting an inclusive gender analysis, drafting of calls for proposals, evaluating projects and allocating funding, political dialogue with partner countries).
- **Update the Gender Country Profiles with an inclusive analysis of structural power imbalances in partner countries**, and how these intersect with gender, to ensure a gender-transformative and intersectional approach is integrated in GAP III implementation from the outset. Meaningful consultation with relevant local WROs and other stakeholders is essential for the quality of this process.

- **Ensure that a human rights-based approach (HRBA) is properly applied throughout GAP III implementation and monitoring.** The updated EU Toolbox on HRBA<sup>59</sup> as well as the EC guidance note Leaving no one behind: Disability inclusion in EU external action<sup>60</sup> and related technical brief on disability inclusion, GEWE<sup>61</sup> provide tools and best practices. Training of these tools is required for EU staff in HQ and EUDs.

## ENSURE AMBITIOUS AND QUALITY FUNDING FOR GAP III

- **Carefully assess the quality of gender equality actions before assigning them the G1 (gender-mainstreamed project) or G2 (gender equality focused project) marker,** in order to avoid inflating the impact and funding allocated to gender equality in EU external action. All projects marked G1 and G2 should meet the OECD-DAC criteria.
- The EC and the EEAS should **commit to funding targets for gender equality: 85% of ODA going to programmes where gender equality is a significant component (G1/G2) and 20% of ODA going to programmes where gender equality is a principal component.** EU MS should endorse these additional funding targets.
- **EUDs should use the mid-term review of the MIPs (NDICI-Global Europe Instrument) to allocate more funding to gender-targeted (G2) actions.** While for now the GAP III implementation has mainly focused on mainstreaming gender equality, gender-targeted actions have the potential to bring more changes in the lives of women and girls in all their diversity, and effectively be gender-transformative.
- **Align GAP renewal and the next programming processes to ensure that a future GAP IV would be adequately resourced and implemented<sup>62</sup>.**

Extend the implementation period of GAP III and adopt GAP IV in 2027, ahead of the next programming cycle.

## INCREASE DIRECT, CORE, FLEXIBLE AND LONG-TERM FUNDING TO LOCAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS<sup>63</sup>



- **Propose new funding programmes and/or grant schemes that directly fund core activities of local WROs** and feminist movements, enabling them to assume full leadership and power, follow their own priorities, adapt to changing conditions, emerging issues and opportunities.
- The EU should learn about funding feminist activism and **“direct, core, long-term and flexible” funding mechanisms,** by building on the experience of MS such as Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland, that already use such funding modalities for local CSOs/WROs.
- Ensure that **partnerships between applicants and local WROs are part of the criteria** included in guidelines for call for proposals.
- **Propose funding mechanisms that include a proper budget for CSO’s overhead costs such as costs of support of partners and organisational capacity strengthening, including financial and programmatic reporting.** The Kenyan EUD’s introduction of a minimum financial support requirement for third parties in project budgets is a good starting point. **Keep the reporting and administrative burden to a minimum** taking into account the capacities of local WROs.
- **Avoid creating situations in which large WROs and local WROs have to compete with each other**

<sup>59</sup> EU Commission (2021): *Applying the Human Rights Based Approach to international partnerships: An updated Toolbox for placing rights-holders at the centre of EU’s Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation*, working document.

<sup>60</sup> EU Commission (2023): *EU Guidance note -Leaving no one behind -disability inclusion in EU external action.*

<sup>61</sup> EU Commission (2023): *Technical brief: Disability Inclusion, Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.*

<sup>62</sup> *The fact that GAP III was adopted before the NDICI programming process and could therefore be used as a compass for allocation of funding at country- regional and global levels is a positive practice, as it forced EUDs to include gender equality in their programming documents and ultimately in their funding. If GAP III was renewed in 2025, this would be two years before the next programming cycle, probably too early to influence funding allocation.*

<sup>63</sup> *More comprehensive recommendations on funding access for women’s rights organisations can be found in CONCORD’s paper (2023): Funding local women’s rights organisations for transformative change. A general overview of trends in the CSO funding landscape under EU international cooperation can be found in this CONCORD paper.*

**for the same funding pot.** The EU can avoid this by establishing separate funding windows or streams aimed at leadership by local WROs, feminist movements and grassroots organisations.

- **Earmark or mainstream budget allocation toward local WROs across all sectors** and grant modalities.

## **ENSURE MEANINGFUL, SAFE AND INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE WITH WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS, FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND CSOS WORKING TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY<sup>64</sup>**

- The EUDs and MS should **analyse how shrinking civic space in partner countries affects local WROs, feminist movements and women human rights defenders**, especially in rural areas around issues of land and extractive industries as well as democracy, and **explore how existing tools such as the CSO roadmaps or the human rights dialogues can contribute to strengthening an enabling environment** for vibrant feminist movements working at the intersection of inequalities.
- CLIPs are important documents, as they guide the implementation of GAP III at country level. For transparency and accountability, it is important that **access to the CLIPs as well as Gender Country Profiles is granted to all civil society stakeholders** and that consulted CSOs receive feedback and follow-up on their recommendations, in accessible ways.
- EUDs should **reach out beyond the “usual suspects”** that do not usually receive EU funding and should **engage with a wide variety of CSOs and WROs, including local CSOs, WROs and CSOs outside of capitals, organisations representing people experiencing intersectional discrimination** and organisations working on equality strands other than gender. EUDs should ensure that this engagement is safe, meaningful, accessible and inclusive, in particular for women with disabilities, girls and young women. This engagement requires a



comprehensive mapping of organisations and their gender expertise across sectors, including digitalisation, the green transition, etc., as well as proper financial resources to support the participation of a variety of civil society actors.

- **CSOs and local WROs in all their diversity should be engaged beyond CLIPs consultation throughout all stages of the GAP III implementation and monitoring cycle:** context analysis, strategic prioritisation, design of projects, project implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning. **Regular exchanges on gender equality and the implementation of GAP III to discuss progress**, as suggested by GAP III, should be organised by EUDs. The “sounding board” set up by the EUD in the Philippines is an example of a best practice to replicate in different countries.

## **TAKE GENDER MAINSTREAMING SERIOUSLY ACROSS ALL EU EXTERNAL ACTION**

- **Apply GAP III commitments across all areas of the EU’s foreign and security policy**, in line with the PCSD principles, including at country level.
- **Gender issues must be discussed in political dialogue between EUDs and governments.** Particular attention should be given to sectors, such as trade, agriculture, the green transition, digital transformation and infrastructure, peace and security, as these are often key areas of cooperation where a gender focus is the least applied by both governments and EUDs. GAP III objectives should be mainstreamed across the implementation and monitoring of all Team Europe Initiatives. In addition, **EUDs should not tackle only “non-sensitive” issues related to GEWE but they should continue to support respect of human rights, including women’s rights, LGBTIQ rights and SRHR.**
- **Targeted gender equality programming and dialogue need to be complemented by gender mainstreaming in sectors of large scale investment** and reach like digitalisation<sup>65</sup>, trade, security, the green transition, the blue economy and infrastructure.

<sup>64</sup> In line with CONCORD’s 7 practices for civil society participation in EU decision-making.

<sup>65</sup> For more details on gender mainstreaming in the digital sector, see CONCORD’s “digital gender divide” paper.

- **Adopt a gender-transformative and intersectional approach in climate and renewable energy projects**, addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by the most marginalised groups, including women and girls, indigenous peoples, and those residing in rural and remote areas.
- Local WROs, feminist movements and civil society working to advance gender equality in partner countries should not only be invited to consultations about GAP III or traditional gender equality sectors, but **should be considered as a relevant stakeholder in consultations on all EU external action sectors**, including energy, trade, digitalisation.
- Ensure that **EU Ambassadors and the Heads of EUD Political sections take full ownership of GAP III and WPS commitments** and proactively engage in discussion with WROs, feminist movements and women experts on peace and security, rule of law and human rights issues, and economic issues.



# LIST OF RESPONDENTS

	KENYA	MOROCCO	THE PHILIPPINES
EU Brussels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Gender and Non-Discrimination/Team Leader Gender in DG International Partnerships, European Commission</li> <li>• Senior Expert on Gender Equality &amp; Women, Peace, and Security, EEAS</li> <li>• Gender equality quality management officer</li> </ul>		
EU Delegation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Analyst, Counter Violence Extremism</li> <li>• EUD Gender and CSO Focal Point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EUD Gender Focal Point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EUD Programme Manager</li> <li>• EUD Gender Focal Point</li> <li>• EUD Head of Cooperation</li> </ul>
EU Member State Embassies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Officer, Netherlands</li> <li>• Programme Manager, Counter Violence Extremism, Denmark</li> <li>• Head of Cooperation/ Counsellor, Gender Equality and Governance, Finland</li> <li>• Senior Program Coordinator Energy, Infrastructure, Financial sector - KfW Development Bank</li> </ul>		
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Coordinator and Focal Point EU project, the National Gender and Equality Commission</li> <li>• Research, the National Gender and Equality Commission</li> <li>• Gender and Women Department the National Gender and Equality Commission</li> <li>• Legal Department, the National Gender and Equality Commission</li> <li>• CECM, County Government of Kajiado</li> <li>• Director of Gender, County Government of Kajiado</li> <li>• Ag. Deputy Director of Gender, County Government of Kajiado</li> <li>• Deputy Director, Climate Change, County Government of Kajiado</li> </ul>		

CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humanity and Inclusion</li> <li>• Action Aid</li> <li>• WeWorld</li> <li>• ChildFund International</li> <li>• Terres des Hommes</li> <li>• International Rescue Committee</li> <li>• Oxfam</li> <li>• Save the Children</li> <li>• Sightsavers</li> <li>• World Vision</li> <li>• Adra</li> <li>• CAFOD</li> <li>• Kenya Network of Women and Girls with Disabilities</li> <li>• Q-Initiative Eldoret - Kenya United Disabled Persons of Kenya</li> <li>• Civil Society Organizations Western Network</li> <li>• Il'laramatak Community Concerns</li> <li>• Enkakenya Sidai</li> <li>• Hope Beyond</li> <li>• Ewagan Nadede Initiative</li> <li>• The Malkia Initiative</li> <li>• Rural Women Network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voix de la Femme Amazighe</li> <li>• Jeunes Femmes pour la Démocratie</li> <li>• Association des Femmes pour la Démocratie</li> <li>• Association Tahadi pour l'Egalité et la Citoyenneté – ATEC</li> <li>• Droits et Justice</li> <li>• Oxfam Maroc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's Legal Bureau– WLB</li> <li>• Homenet</li> <li>• Likhaan Center for Women's Health</li> <li>• W-DARE: Women with Disability taking Action on Reproductive and Sexual Health</li> <li>• National Rural Women Coalition (PKKK)</li> <li>• Galang – LBT rights</li> <li>• National Council of Churches in the Philippines</li> <li>• Family Planning Organisation of the Philippines</li> <li>• Plan International</li> <li>• Roots of Health</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former Commissioner, National Gender Equality Commission, Kenya (consultant for CLIP)</li> <li>• Gender and Inclusive Development Specialist Kenya and Somalia, USAID</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WAGI – Women and Gender Institute</li> <li>• UN Women</li> </ul>
Communities / Focus Group Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse group of women and men from Kajiado Central, supported by Il'laramatak Community Concerns (ICC)</li> <li>• Diverse group of women supported by the Kajiado County Government in Kenya</li> </ul>		

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHR	Commission of Human Rights
CLIPs	Country Level Implementation Plans
CRC	Child Rights Convention
CSO	Civil society organisation
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFIs	European Financing Institutions
EU	European Union
EUDs	EU Delegations
GAD	Gender and Development
GAP III	Gender Action Plan III
GCP	Gender Country Profile
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GFP	Gender Focal Point
HQ	EC Headquarters
HRBA	Human rights based approach
IFIs	International Financing Institutions
Ikram	Implementation of Equality Plan
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer
MIP	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme
MS	Member States
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPD	Organisations of persons with disabilities
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PKKK	National Rural Women Coalition
RPRHA	Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VAWC	Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children
WEE	Women's economic empowerment
WHRD	Women human rights defenders
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security
WRO	Women's rights organisation

# METHODOLOGY

The evaluation employed a combination of research methods to assess the implementation of the EU's GAP III. A comprehensive desk review was conducted, focusing on relevant documents related to GAP III, including reports on GAP III funding and civil society engagement. Thirty-five documents published from 2020 onwards were reviewed, including the EC's "Annual Implementation Report of the EU External Action Instruments in 2021" and the 'Mid-Term Evaluation of the Implementation of the EU GAP III Final Report'.

Additionally, the research team, consisting of two gender equality consultants, conducted seventy-eight semi-structured face-to-face interviews. These interviews involved various GAP III stakeholders such as EU HQs, GFPs from EUDs, MS representatives, National Gender Equality Mechanisms, and CSOs, particularly local WROs in five different locations in three countries: The Philippines, Morocco, and Kenya. Interview guides were developed for both EUD personnel and CSOs, focusing on topics such as gender-transformation, intersectionality, funding for local WROs, gender mainstreaming, and capacity and learning at the EU HQ and EUD level.

To ensure an intersectional perspective, the study team considered the representation of groups with intersecting and overlapping social identities, who face compounding experiences of discrimination throughout the desk review, interviews, and conducted two focus group discussions with a diverse group of participants based in Kajiado County, Kenya. The collected data was analysed to identify key themes and their interrelationships, aligning with the research objectives.

There was no predetermined focus on any of the six GAP III thematic areas. The thematic areas highlighted in each case study emerged as a consequence of the priority areas as set out in the CLIPs, as well as the priorities of local WROs and feminist movements.

Preliminary findings were shared in a workshop with CONCORD members to draft the report. The report underwent a comprehensive review process, involving feedback and validation from CONCORD members and selected partner organisations.

# OUR MEMBERS

