

# THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

At the core of Finland's development policy

**Gender equality is a long-standing priority for Finnish development policy.** Finland has pioneered in the promotion of the rights of all women and girls and gender equality, and the matter continues to be a significant objective of our development policy.

**Finnish development policy is guided by human rights,** which entails their systematic integration as means and objectives in development cooperation.

**Gender equality is a cross-cutting objective in Finland's development policy.** In addition to specific gender interventions, it is taken into consideration in all development policy. Finland has vast experience in mainstreaming gender in various sectors.

*Gender equality is one of our most significant advocacy objectives in bilateral and multilateral forums and organisations.*

**UN Women is one of Finland's principal strategic partners in the promotion of gender equality.** With its core funding of EUR 10 million in 2016, Finland is one of the largest contributors among UN Women member states.



Finland also gives core funding to the United Nation's Population Fund (**UNFPA**, EUR 19 million in 2016) and the UN Children's Fund (**UNICEF**, EUR 5.5 million in 2016).

Furthermore, Finland supports multilateral organisations' capacity to mainstream gender by **sponsoring 17 gender expert positions** within the UN and multilateral development banks.

## Finland's actions strive to promote that:

### Women and girls are better educated and have better skills

Women and girls have improved access to inclusive, quality and gender-sensitive primary and secondary education and to vocational and higher education.



### Women and children have better access to high-quality basic services

Women and girls have improved access to quality basic services, particularly health, education and social services.



### Women and girls are included in political decision-making and in economic activities

Women and girls have better opportunities and capacity to participate in decision-making and they increasingly participate in economic activities and also in decision-making concerning livelihoods, natural resources and the economy.



### More women and girls enjoy the right to make decisions which affect their lives - and fewer fall victims of violence and abuse

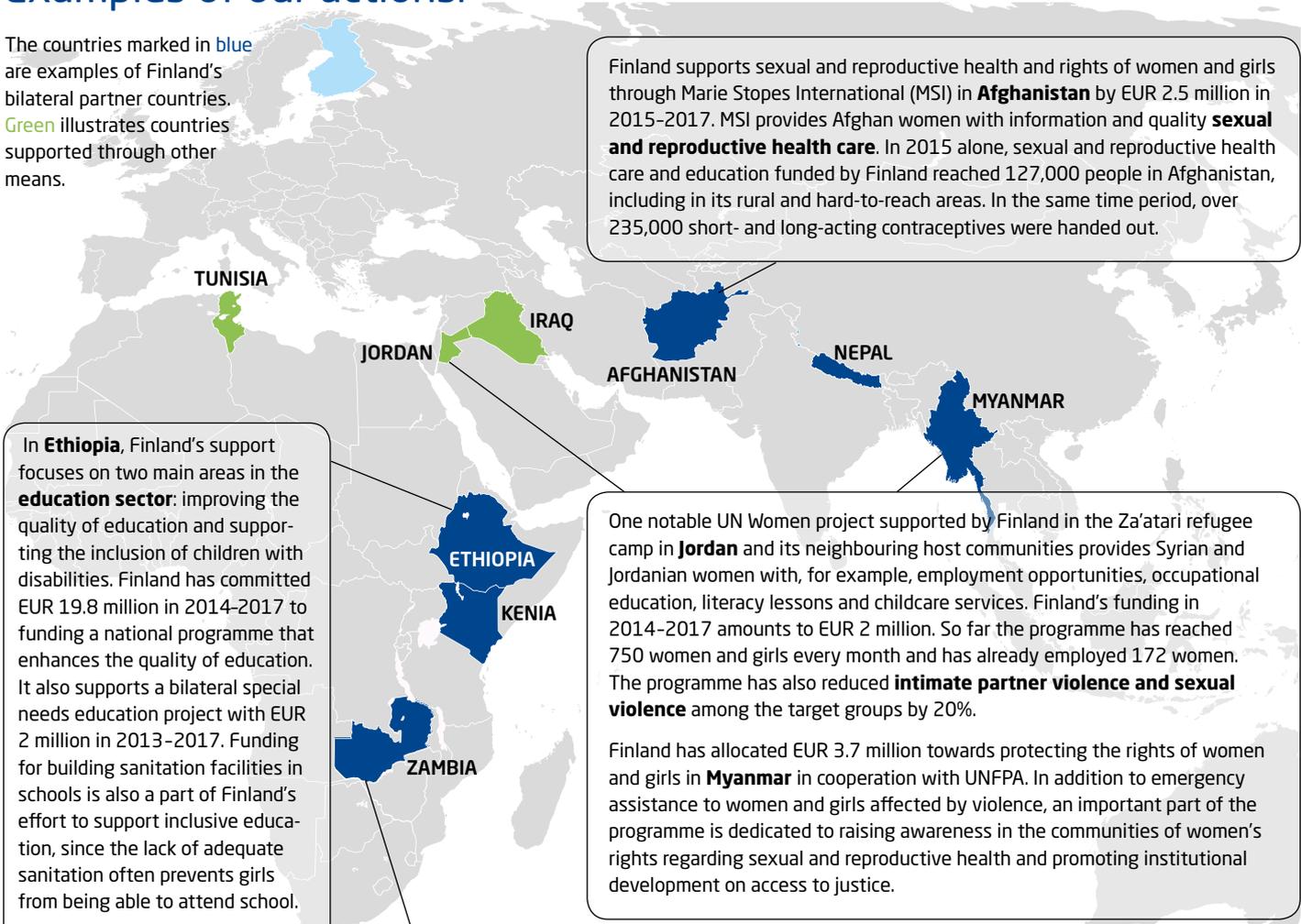
The autonomy and self-determination of women and girls is enhanced by improving their awareness and opportunities to claim their own rights and make decisions concerning them. Men and boys are more actively involved in gender equality promotion. Furthermore, improved measures and services are used to fight violence and abuse against women and girls and human trafficking.





## Examples of our actions:

The countries marked in **blue** are examples of Finland's bilateral partner countries. **Green** illustrates countries supported through other means.



Finland supports sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls through Marie Stopes International (MSI) in **Afghanistan** by EUR 2.5 million in 2015-2017. MSI provides Afghan women with information and quality **sexual and reproductive health care**. In 2015 alone, sexual and reproductive health care and education funded by Finland reached 127,000 people in Afghanistan, including in its rural and hard-to-reach areas. In the same time period, over 235,000 short- and long-acting contraceptives were handed out.

In **Ethiopia**, Finland's support focuses on two main areas in the **education sector**: improving the quality of education and supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities. Finland has committed EUR 19.8 million in 2014-2017 to funding a national programme that enhances the quality of education. It also supports a bilateral special needs education project with EUR 2 million in 2013-2017. Funding for building sanitation facilities in schools is also a part of Finland's effort to support inclusive education, since the lack of adequate sanitation often prevents girls from being able to attend school.

At primary school level, Ethiopia has reached gender parity in that as many girls as boys attend school.

One notable UN Women project supported by Finland in the Za'atari refugee camp in **Jordan** and its neighbouring host communities provides Syrian and Jordanian women with, for example, employment opportunities, occupational education, literacy lessons and childcare services. Finland's funding in 2014-2017 amounts to EUR 2 million. So far the programme has reached 750 women and girls every month and has already employed 172 women. The programme has also reduced **intimate partner violence and sexual violence** among the target groups by 20%.

Finland has allocated EUR 3.7 million towards protecting the rights of women and girls in **Myanmar** in cooperation with UNFPA. In addition to emergency assistance to women and girls affected by violence, an important part of the programme is dedicated to raising awareness in the communities of women's rights regarding sexual and reproductive health and promoting institutional development on access to justice.

Finland funds Demo Finland, an organisation of Finnish political parties that seeks to enhance democracy internationally. Demo Finland has a long history of advocating a larger **representation of women in politics** through projects ranging from facilitating interparty dialogue to holding seminars and workshops for politicians all around the world. Finland funds Demo Finland in 2016-2018 with EUR 1.7 million. For example in 2015 in **Zambia**, Demo Finland supported the training of 142 aspiring female councilors and 97 campaign managers in preparation of the 2016 general elections.

Finland is one of the major funders of Women's World Banking (WWB) that works with commercial banks to develop financial products and **access to financing for women** in developing countries with a special focus on small and medium-sized enterprises. Finland's funding to women's **economic empowerment** through WWB is EUR 3 million. To date, as a result of WWB's work, 1,312,878 clients have access to financial services.



Finland is an active supporter of the **UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security** at the national level and also in developmental cooperation. Finland has supported National Action Plans (NAP) in **Kenya, Afghanistan and Nepal**. Our main partner in the work on women, peace and security is UN Women. In Nepal, Finland's support has enhanced the localization of the NAP at district levels through local civil society organisations and the network of women in politics. Women's participation in local decision-making bodies has increased substantially in the project area and protection of women against violence has improved. In 2015 Finland allocated EUR 3.2 million to a UN Women programme supporting the national action plans of **Jordan, Tunisia and Iraq** and the capacity of the League of Arab States to contribute to the 1325 implementation.



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

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