



Official Development Assistance in the Time of Multiple Crises

ENoP
EUROPEAN NETWORK OF
POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

In the Time of Multiple Crises

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Eyachew Tefera, *In Memoriam*

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IN MEMORIAM EYACHEW TEFERA (1964–2023)

Eyachew Tefera, a pioneer of the African diaspora movement in the Balkans and the founder of the Institute of African Studies in Slovenia, passed away on 17 January 2023. He was one of the strongest voices for migrants and diaspora communities in Europe.

He was an avid debater of different revolutionary ideas and joined the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP). He was imprisoned in Bahir Dar for several months after information reached the government's forces that he had participated in the EPRP's youth movement. A passionate advocate of equality and justice – he was dedicated to the cause of marginalised communities – Eyachew took part in high-level policy dialogues and programmes meant to promote justice, human rights, and equality for all.

He was active in what he believed were causes which served African diasporas and their desire for better lives. He advocated for human rights in Europe, Africa and beyond. He truly was a compassionate and caring man, as many of his friends and colleagues can testify. Eyachew believed that his advocacy efforts also demanded that he directly engaged with marginalised groups. Thus, he leaves behind a legacy of mentoring and coaching many former refugees to better integrate into their host society.

Eyachew led a life filled with love, adventure and accomplishment from his early days in Bahir Dar to Belgrade and Ljubljana. Eyachew was a mentor to many grass-roots activists and civil society actors who are based in Slovenia, Europe, Africa and beyond.

Eyachew was a speaker at the Official Development Assistance in the Time of Multiple Crises Conference, which took place in Ljubljana on 15 December 2022 and serves as a contribution to this study. The Povod Institute organised this conference to get insights from grassroots leaders into topics connected to Official

Development Assistance and international development cooperation. It was his last public appearance.

Eyachew was – and will remain – a mentor to many of us who were present at the conference. Eyachew taught us many things during his life, including that normalising global inequalities will not serve peace, justice, or sustainable development.

Transparent communication will remain a challenge and a responsibility for all of us, but especially for civil society organisations. It needs to be ensured that the discourse of Official Development Assistance becomes a tool to bridge the gaps produced and reproduced by the continuous segregation between continents, countries, beings and people.

This paper results from informing, engaging with and listening to civil society actors who are connected to and working in international development cooperation and Official Development Assistance.

The Povod Team in Slovenia | March 2023

‘Do not talk about us without us’

— Eyachew Tefera

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About

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our world has been faced with numerous global challenges in the past few years, from climate change and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to the worsening global order and the potential fragmentation of smaller regional groupings. All of these challenges have impacted the smoothness of different global supply chains which are required for the current global system to function. Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been a mechanism for solidarity and for balancing the power dynamics of global politics through financial compensation. This paper reflects on the trends accompanied by ODA in the past few years and consists of two parts:

- A debriefing paper which consists of information on the definition of ODA, the structure of monitoring plans used by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the determination of multilateral and bilateral aid, as well as an introduction to the EU's ODA policies and an analysis of Slovenia's ODA policies. Based on this information, the debriefing paper concludes with recommendations to Slovenia's government and Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) as its ODA coordinator.
- A background paper with information on the prominent trends which accompanied the EU's ODA between 2020 and 2022 through the lens of the multiple crises of COVID-19 and the invasion of Ukraine. It is essential to highlight that many crises took place between 2020 and 2022, and that reducing global concerns to just COVID-19 and the invasion of Ukraine would be Eurocentric and a neglect of the diverse challenges that occurred at multiple levels worldwide. However, this paper begins with a focus on identifying how COVID-19 and the invasion of Ukraine impacted gender equality in multiple sectors of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The paper then highlights the financial aid and measures taken by the EU in order to support the recovery and resilience of LDCs, focusing on gender equality in multiple sectors.

From a practical perspective, this paper examines measures taken by the EU in general and examines practices implemented by Germany and Slovenia. The Povod Institute in Slovenia conducted a public conference and interactive workshop which gathered CSO representatives, media persons and policymakers on 14 and 15 December 2022 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and the information collected in the background paper was presented. The remarks, recommendations and concerns gathered during the public conference and interactive workshop are integrated into different parts of the paper and in a comprehensive summary with concrete questions, statements and recommendations from the speakers and participants of both activities. It concludes with concrete recommendations for EU member states on strengthening external financial aid and ODA as tools for resilience and recovery through gender equality in LDCs.

DEFINITION OF OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines Official Development Assistance (ODA) as government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries. The OECD adopted ODA as the ‘gold standard’ of foreign aid in 1969 and it remains the main source of financing for development aid. ODA is measured by the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) which revises the list of ODA recipient countries every three years. This list shows all the countries and territories which are eligible to receive ODA. It consists of all low- and middle-income countries based on gross national income (GNI) per capita as published by the World Bank. The exceptions to this are G8 members, EU members, and countries with a firm date for entry into the EU. The list also includes all of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), a category established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1971. In doing this, the international community provided special acknowledgement to the least developed among the developing countries based upon three criteria: income, human assets, and economic and environmental vulnerability¹.

The DAC classifies ODA recipient countries as follows²:

- LDCs which, for statistical reporting purposes in 2022 and 2023, include 45 countries, most of which are low-income and lower-middle-income countries, as well as one upper-middle-income country (Tuvalu).
- Low-income countries with a GNI per capita (calculated using the World Bank Atlas method) of USD 1 045 or lower.
- Lower-middle-income countries with a GNI per capita between USD 1 046 and USD 4 095.
- Upper-middle-income countries with a GNI per capita between USD 4 096 and USD 12 695.

1 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) <https://www.oecd.org/dac/development-assistance-committee/>

2 <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf>

For classification purposes, the World Bank³ distinguishes between countries by classifying them as:

- Low-income (L) countries with a GNI per capita (calculated using the World Bank Atlas method) of USD 1 045 or lower.
- Lower-middle-income (LM) countries with a GNI per capita between USD 1 046 and USD 4 095.
- Upper-middle-income (UM) countries with a GNI per capita between USD 4 096 and USD 12 695.
- High-income (H) countries with a GNI per capita of USD 12 696 or more.

ODA targets were set whereby developed countries should be allocating at least 0.7% of their GNI to ODA by 2030. In 2021, ODA represented the value of USD 185.9 billion⁴. In real terms (i.e. adjusted for inflation and fluctuations in exchange rates), this is 8.5% more compared to 2020. Donor countries made additional efforts to support developing countries in the global fight against COVID-19. Indeed, the vaccines provided from developed countries represented 3,4% of all ODA from OECD DAC member countries. According to the OECD data, the total value of ODA in 2021 was equivalent to 0.33% of GNI, which is far from the UN target of 0.7%. As among the EU countries, recently graduated new donors (13 new EU member states) have committed themselves to 0.33% of GNI by 2030 as an intermediate target⁵.

According to CONCORD Europe's 2022 [AidWatch report](#), there are very few EU donor countries meeting their ODA commitments. Those are Luxembourg, Sweden, Germany and Denmark, and in fact Germany and Denmark would be lagging behind the target if CSOs' ODA eligibility criteria were respected. The AidWatch report also posits that financial flows – which do not genuinely contribute to the objectives of development cooperation or do not represent a real effort on the part of donors – should be considered as inflated aid. In 2021, as analysed by CONCORD Europe's AidWatch report, inflated aid represented 0.16% of total EU aid.

3 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.GN.ZS>

4 <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/official-development-assistance.htm>

5 Development Co-operation Report <https://www.oecd.org/dac/development-cooperation-report/#profiles>

- Is it **enough**? EU countries, among many other donors, are falling short of their internationally agreed ODA spending commitments. According to the report, EU countries spent EUR 65.5 billion in 2021 which represents 0.43% of all ODA contributions reported to the OECD.
- Is it **employed correctly**? The concept of inflated aid is measuring levels of reported ODA which do not contribute to the sustainable development goals in partner countries or do not represent a real effort on the side of donors. AidWatch reported that 16% of all EU ODA in 2021 could be perceived as inflated aid.
- Is it **effective**? ODA loses clarity by being spent through three main policy initiatives – the Global Europe Instrument, the Team Europe approach and the Global Gateway. Improved coherence, coordination and visibility could improve effectiveness.
- Is it **equality-focused**? EU ODA is mainly disbursed to EU partner countries such as Turkey, Morocco, India, Syria, Indonesia, Egypt, Colombia, Ethiopia, Somalia and Afghanistan. Among these recipient countries, only Ethiopia, Somalia and Afghanistan are classified as being LDCs.

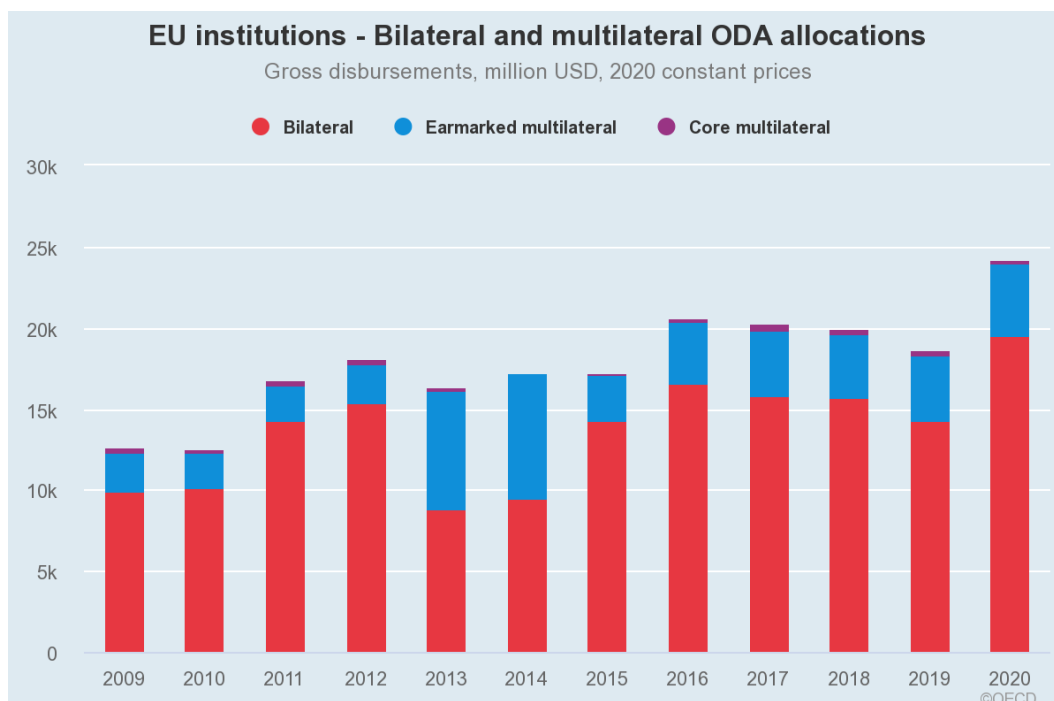
ODA is usually spent through bilateral and multilateral channels. Bilateral aid represents financial flows from official sources directly to recipient countries. Multilateral aid represents financial contributions from official (government) sources to multilateral agencies. Governed by representatives of governments, these multilateral agencies then use these financial contributions to fund their own development programmes (definition by the OECD).



Many donors are deciding how much ODA to disburse through bilateral channels and how much to disburse through multilateral channels. There is no single best donor model that could apply to all donors. This is because each donor country has its own specificities, including their different historical backgrounds and experiences, their different structures of economic cooperation with partner countries, and their different interests in multilateral organisations such as the World Bank and the different agencies of the UN. According to rough OECD data calculations, donor countries typically disburse about 30% of ODA multilaterally. This percentage depends on the maturity level of the specific donor country, its experience in building relations with partner countries, and its capacity to convince its population to support such policies.

The [Overseas Development Institute](#) (ODI) examines the evidence related to multilateral and bilateral channels which could help to prioritise the allocation of ODA. Usually, it is perceived that bilateral channels are often subjected to political pressure from donor countries. This does not mean that multilateral aid flows do not have a political agenda, it is just less evident. Some critics also believe that multilateral aid is less fragmented than bilateral aid, although aid fragmentation is not necessarily always negative. Many multilateral experts promote disbursement through multilateral channels as being better suppliers of global public goods, despite usually providing relatively weak evidence. More specifically, high administrative costs and the minimisation of overall transaction costs are mentioned, which are in fact favourable for bilateral aid. Additional arguments for bilateral aid are that public support is often strengthened upon the communication of concrete results of its public money being spent, as well as ODA strategic orientation (determined bilaterally) and its institutional compatibility between donor and partner countries, which are often countries with historic links).

According to ODI research, donors use bilateral channels to achieve goals of control, accountability and visibility of ODA, whereas they use multilateral channels when striving to pool resources and advance a common global cause. In addition, the ODI



Source: OECD, *Development Cooperation Profiles*

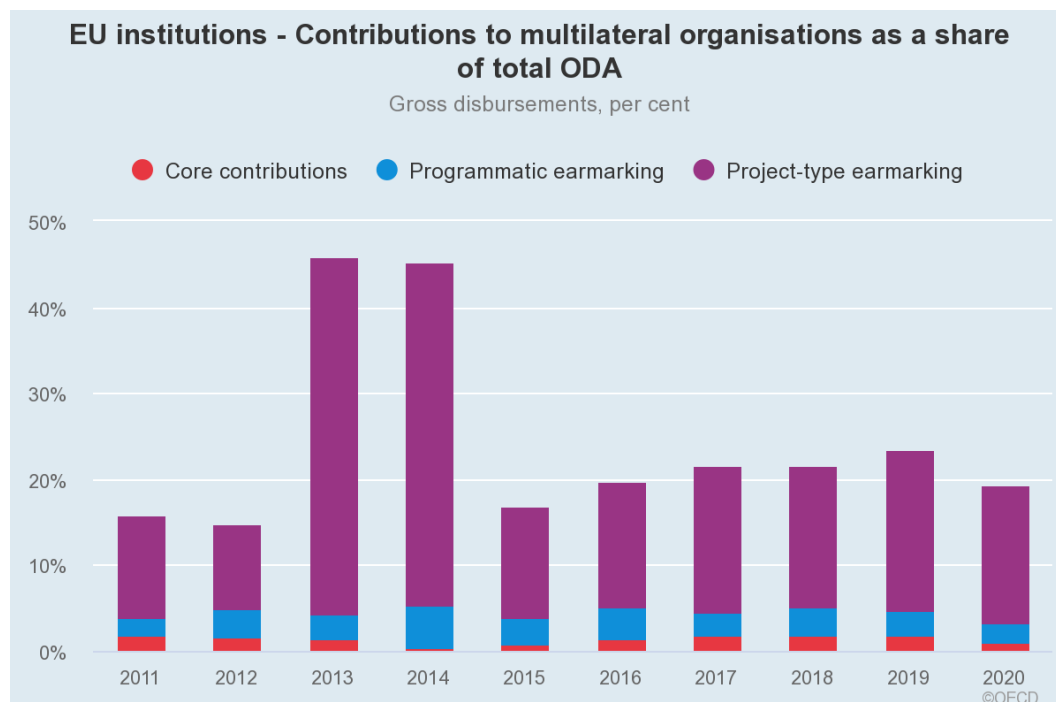
research states that ‘multi-bilateral’ aid is increasingly being used, which is aid voluntarily provided to multilateral organisations but earmarked for specific purposes.

The EU’s ODA policies

The European Union is the biggest global donor and has a development and cooperation presence in all regions and across all sectors. Among the EU institutions, the European Commission (the European External Action Service coordinates foreign policy) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) manage ODA funding.

The main policy document – the [New European Consensus on Development](#) – was adopted in 2017 and sets the basis for ODA allocations and the EU’s vision in its external relations. Additionally, the European Commission adopted the [Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-27 \(MFF\)](#) thus establishing new financial instruments, including the [Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument \(NDICI\) – Global Europe](#) instrument. In 2021, the EU adopted a [Joint Communication](#) which sets the basis for the EU’s contributions to rules-based multilateralism. EU ODA predominantly focuses on climate change, gender and poverty and also takes into account the important role of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD).

According to OECD data, the EU institutions provided USD 19 billion in ODA in 2021. The EU institutions almost exclusively provide bilateral aid, although 20% of this is earmarked support through other multilateral institutions. The EU institutions had one of the highest shares of bilateral ODA allocated to Africa (40.9%) and a high share of its ODA supports the Aid for Trade concept (44.1% in 2020), making the EU



Source: OECD, *Development Cooperation Profiles*

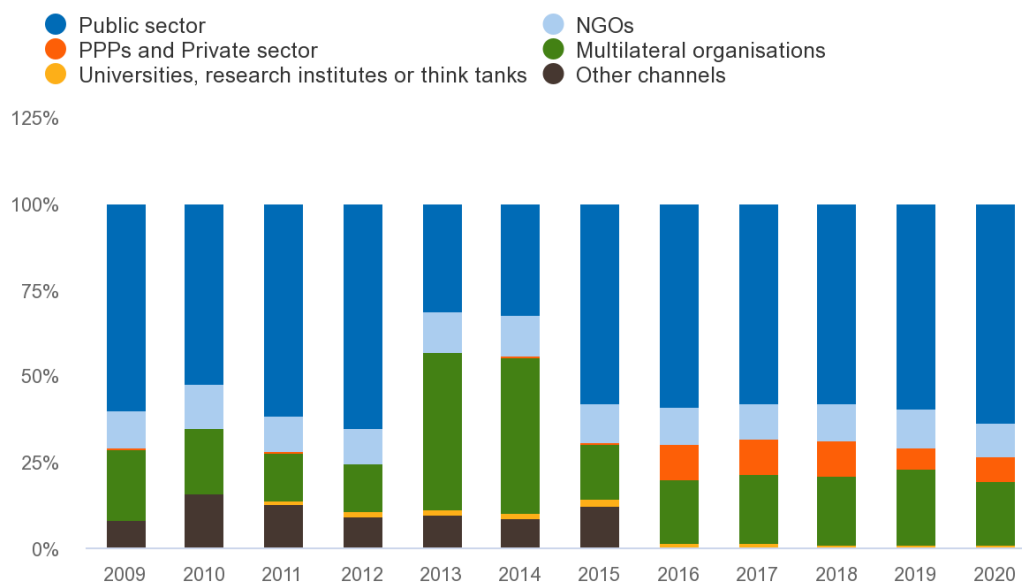
one of the largest providers in this area. The EU institutions provided most of its ODA bilaterally in 2020. In 2020, the EU institutions provided USD 4.7 billion of gross ODA to the multilateral system, an increase of 7.5% in real terms compared to 2019. The UN system received 61.5% of the EU institutions' gross ODA through the multilateral system, mainly through earmarked contributions⁶.

The EU institutions significantly increased bilateral spending in 2020 compared to 2019. This represented an increase of 30.8% in real terms compared to 2019, mainly as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic by providing vaccines to partner countries. The main providers of bilateral ODA were the public sector, multilateral institutions through earmarked funding, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and the private sector.

6 DAC List of ODA Recipients <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>

EU institutions - Bilateral ODA by channel of delivery

Gross disbursements, per cent



Source: OECD, Development Cooperation Profiles

According to OECD data, ODA provided to NGOs in 2020 was predominantly managed by donor-country-based NGOs, international CSOs and partner-country-based NGOs.

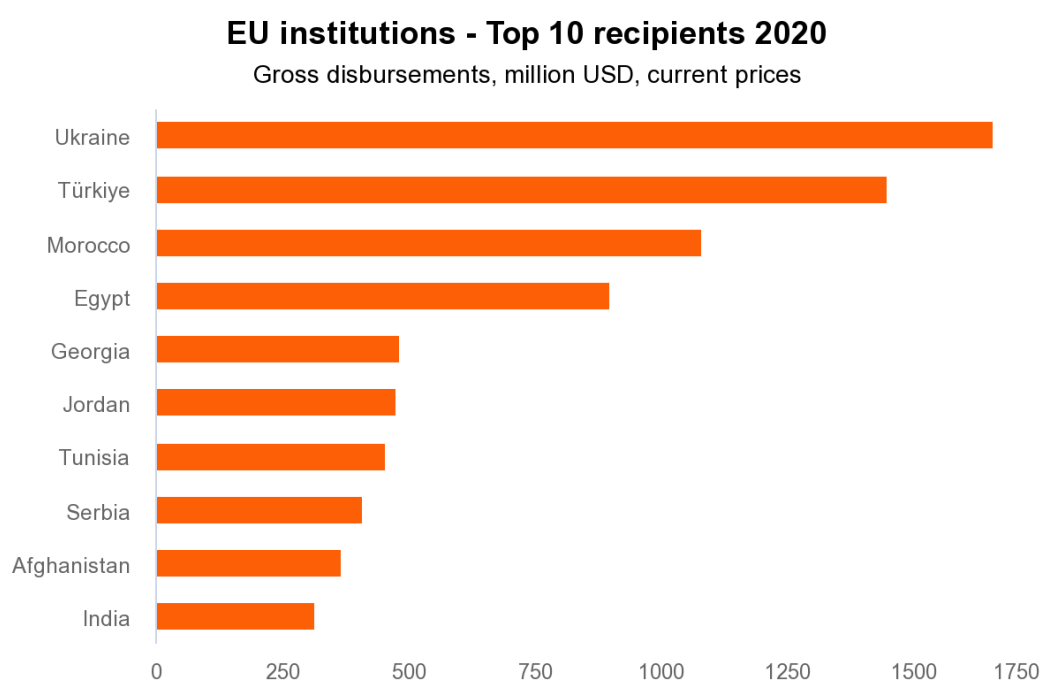
EU institutions - Bilateral ODA provided to CSOs

Gross disbursements, million USD, 2020 constant prices



Source: OECD, Development Cooperation Profiles

In 2020, the LDCs received 20.5% of the EU institutions' gross bilateral ODA. The EU institutions allocated the highest share of gross bilateral ODA (33.9%) to lower-middle-income countries in 2020 (noting that 24.8% was unallocated by income group). Among these countries, Ukraine, Turkey, Morocco and Egypt received the majority of contributions.



Source: OECD, Development Cooperation Profiles

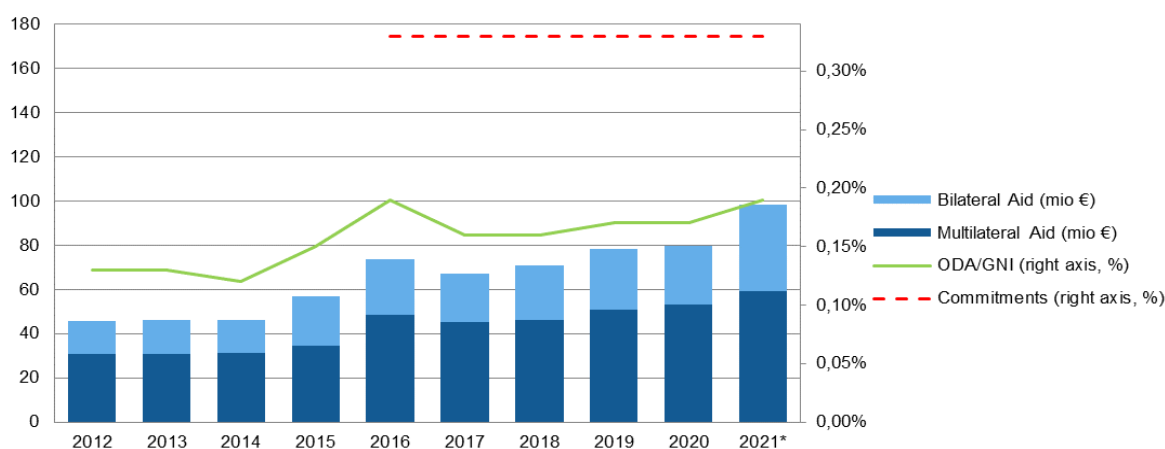
Overall, 22 Member States increased their ODA in nominal terms in 2021 compared to 2020. The strongest nominal increases came from Germany (+EUR 2 064 million), Italy (+EUR 1 360 million) and France (+EUR 668 million), with further increases coming from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

ODA of Slovenia

Slovenia became a donor country after joining the EU in 2004. Nine years later in 2013, it became a member of the OECD's DAC. In its 19 years of having donor status, in 2017 it adopted the latest version of the Resolution on development cooperation (DC) and humanitarian assistance (HA), the Act on DC and HA (latest version in 2018),

and implemented the Decree of the aforementioned Act and Strategy on DC and HA until 2030 (latest version also adopted in 2018). According to the MFEA, 'the Strategy specifies in more detail the objectives and strategic orientations of development cooperation and humanitarian aid, and defines concrete measures for coordinated and effective implementation'.

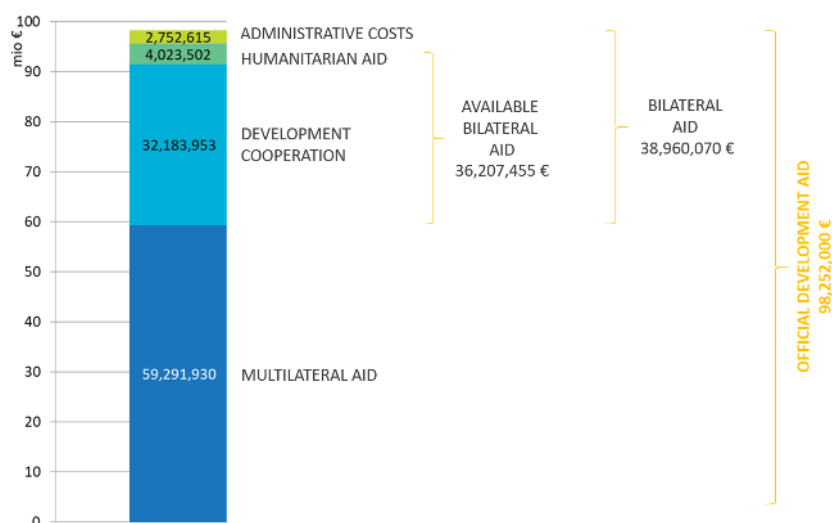
After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Slovenia committed to striving to increase their ODA/GNI to 0.33% of GNI. The graph below shows the allocation of its financial resources being reported as ODA since 2012.



Source: 2021 Slovenian MFEA report about its ODA

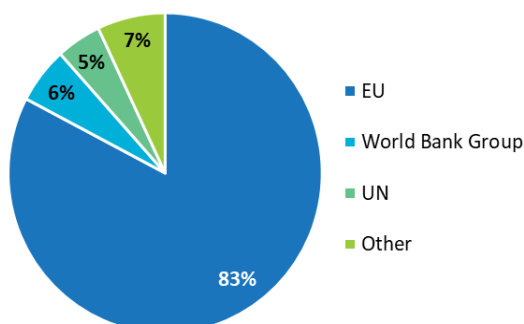
Slovenian ODA in 2021 was EUR 98.25 million (or 0.19% of GNI), which was 22% more than the year before in 2020. This ranked Slovenia in third place immediately after Malta and Hungary. Its genuine aid, estimated by NGOs in the AidWatch report, was 0.14% of GNI. The graph below shows the composition of Slovenian ODA.

Definition of Official Development Assistance



Source: 2021 Slovenian MFEA report about its ODA

Slovenian multilateral aid consists mainly of its contributions to the EU budget and some UN agencies. The graph below shows the breakdown in 2021⁷.



Source: 2021 Slovenian MFEA report about its ODA

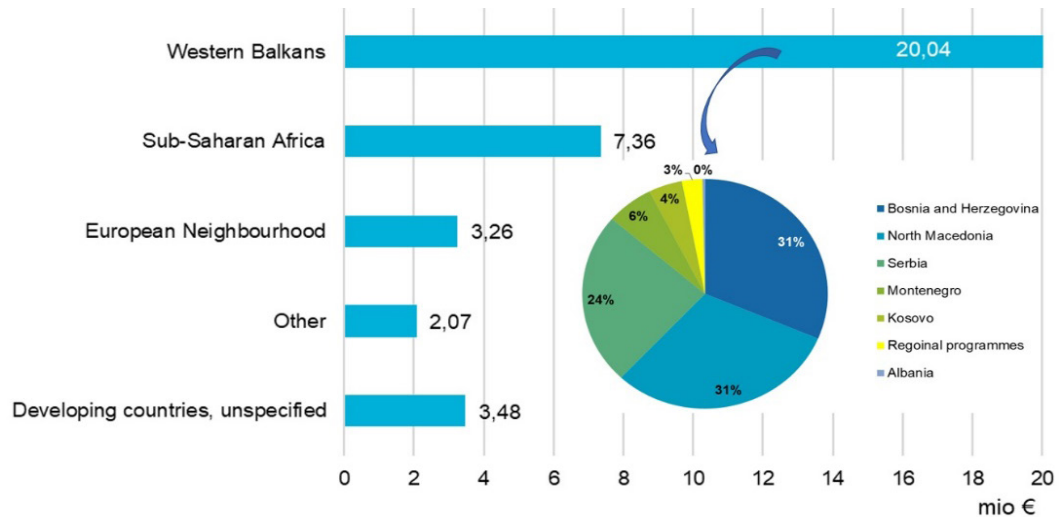
In 2021, bilateral aid increased significantly to almost 40% of total ODA, which was in line with long-standing recommendations by NGOs to increase its bilateral ODA to at least 50% despite not reaching the target yet. The graph below shows a breakdown of Slovenian bilateral ODA thematic priorities.



7 International development cooperation and humanitarian aid, Slovenia. <https://www.gov.si/podrocja/zunanje-zadeve/mednarodno-razvojno-sodelovanje-in-humanitarna-pomoc/>

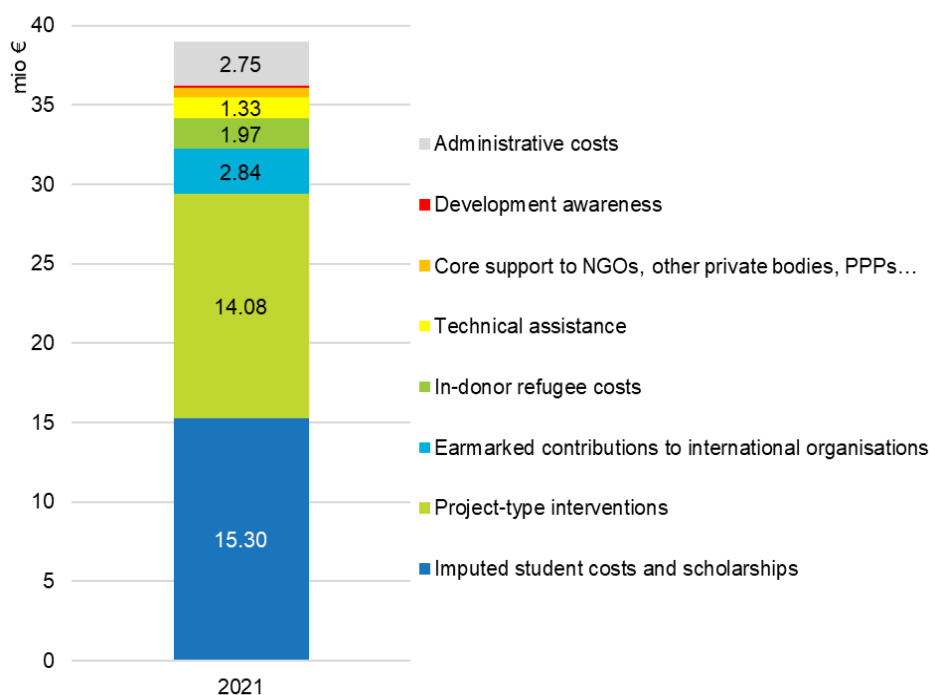
Source: 2021 Slovenian MFEA report about its ODA

The main geographic priorities for Slovenian ODA are Western Balkan countries, among which Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia receive the most aid. The graph below shows the geographical distribution of Slovenian ODA.



Source: 2021 Slovenian MFEA report about its ODA

However, the increase in both total and bilateral ODA is mainly due to the increase in bilateral grants, including vaccine donations and contributions to multilateral organisations. As shown in the graph below, imputed student costs represent an important part of Slovenian ODA.



Source: 2021 Slovenian MFEA report about its ODA

As also described in [CONCORD Europe's AidWatch report](#), in 2021 there was an increase in the humanitarian efforts of the Slovenian government. Planned new financial resources for supporting civil society development cooperation with their partner organisations have been redirected towards humanitarian donations. This caused an important shift towards addressing basic needs with a higher immediate effect but with a much weaker long-term effect on poverty alleviation, which is the overall purpose of ODA. CSOs caution that the government is lacking a long-term action plan for international development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

International development and public support in Slovenia

In the special edition of Eurobarometer (no 521) conducted between February and March 2022, Slovenian citizens were interviewed about their attitudes towards development aid. 89% of respondents answered that it is important to partner with countries outside the EU to reduce poverty in the world. The main difference with other EU member states was that respondents in Slovenia were amongst the least likely in the EU to think that the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in addressing climate change. Indeed, 26% of respondents thought this way which was a 12-point decrease compared to 2020 and was well below the EU average of 39%. According to Eurobarometer, Slovenian respondents were also amongst the least likely to think that the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in terms of tackling the COVID-19 pandemic (35% vs the EU average of 49%).

Peace and security (48%), health (37%), and water/sanitation (30%) are the most pressing challenges for partner countries. Compared to 2020, they are also more likely to mention energy (12%), but less likely to mention democracy and human rights (21%), economic growth and employment (21%), or the migration and hosting of refugees (9%). More than three quarters (78%) of respondents in Slovenia think that it is important for the EU to support partner countries in going digital, which is close to the EU average (79%). Almost nine in ten (88%) agree that promoting education for all in partner countries should be one of the EU's main priorities in partner countries, which is slightly below the EU average of 91%.

International development and the role of NGOs

NGOs have been among the most important implementers of ODA. The MFEA has been conducting a structured dialogue and supporting NGOs through two different mechanisms: a mechanism for funding NGO projects in regions of geographical priority, and a mechanism for ensuring matching funds for the co-financing of EU development projects. Unfortunately, in 2020 the government temporarily changed its position and started to limit its engagement with CSOs. In 2021, the MFEA published its annual call for the co-financing of international projects for NGOs but completely excluded the calls for global citizenship education (GCED) and advocacy/networking activities of NGOs. In January 2021, an officially announced call for advocacy, capacity-building and global education projects was never published, which directly impacted NGOs' capacities for national advocacy and awareness-raising work in the sector. Instead of fully financing the NGOs' own contributions, which is a proven method of supporting Slovenian NGOs in applying for European funds, the call was limited to financing a maximum of 90% of the NGOs' own contributions. The remaining 10% was to be funded from contributions received from private donations or market activities. Both sources are limited or even non-existent for most development NGOs, or are marked as dedicated funds in humanitarian NGOs⁸.

In May 2022, a new government was voted into office. Projections announced by the new foreign minister were made in a positive direction for development cooperation, global education and humanitarian aid when echoing some of the CSOs' requests. The minister highlighted her openness to dialogue with civil society movements and initiatives, a need to address the conditions and financing of NGOs, as well as a need to re-establish the General Directorate for Development Assistance. The minister also mentioned the possibility of establishing an agency later on to address the commitment to gradually increase funds for development and humanitarian aid, together with the need for more attention to strengthening global learning and active citizen awareness of interconnectedness and global interdependence.

8 AidWatch Report 2021, CONCORD Europe <https://aidwatch.concordeurope.org/aidwatch-reports/>

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since joining the EU and its members as a developed country in 2004, the Government of Slovenia with the MFEA as its ODA coordinator has been slowly moving in the direction of ODA commitments. Progress is rather moderate and unfortunately below the ever-growing needs, due to Slovenia's low presence in partner countries and its capacity to implement bigger projects. That being said, Slovenia has been slowly strengthening its bilateral aid share mainly through dedicated and targeted contributions through international organisations, by consolidating its positions within the latter. In line with the commitments made in the strategy papers, it is also allocating a share of ODA in the form of non-designated contributions to international organisations, which is classified as multilateral aid.

1. The Government of Slovenia and the MFEA should ensure an appropriate organisational structure of governmental bodies for quality ODA implementation, including by strengthening the MFEA's working structures to be better equipped with supporting and coordinating facilities among different global development stakeholders.

2. The MFEA should adopt the guidelines for the inclusion of gender equality and of environmental protection into the International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Act of the Republic of Slovenia. It should also develop guidelines for the private sector's engagement in international development cooperation and humanitarian aid to ensure full compliance with standards and principles. Both guidelines for institutional setup shall be supported by establishing permanent, open, inclusive and participatory policy coherence as a sustainable development assessment mechanism, which is in line with the 2030 Agenda.

Notwithstanding the above, and in line with the principle of effective multilateralism and the commitments made in the strategy papers, it also allocates a share of ODA in the form of non-designated contributions to international organisations, which is classified as multilateral aid. Slovenia's presence in these frameworks is important both in terms of the effectiveness of ODA and in terms of strengthening mutual cooperation.

3. Slovenia must continue to scale up its ODA to achieve levels already committed to, by revising and implementing a national action plan to increase ODA to the 0.33% target and the 0.2% target to LDCs, by limiting the trend of increasing inflated aid, and by extending bilateral ODA to at least half of the total ODA, thus increasing the share of priority-targeted and monitored aid.

52% of Slovenians think that the fight against poverty in partner countries should be one of the main priorities of the national government (Eurobarometer 2022). Such a result shows progressive support for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance in Slovenia in relation to 2021 (increase of 5%), but is still lower than the 67% average in other EU countries.

4. Slovenia should strengthen its financial support for NGOs, including by re-establishing its support for small programmes in the field of advocacy, capacity-building, awareness-raising and GCED. The MFEA should also consider providing core support to the Slovenian national NGO platform in accordance with the 2018 Non-Governmental Organisations Act. These actions might contribute to strengthening public support for development and humanitarian policies, which is needed for Slovenia to fulfil its ODA commitments.

THE EU'S OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN LIGHT OF MULTIPLE CRISES BETWEEN 2020-2022

Between 2020 and 2022, the COVID-19 crisis and the invasion of Ukraine have worsened the climate crisis, hindered the progress of achieving the 2030 Agenda, and impacted ODA-receiving countries and particularly the LDCs. The EU and its member states are committed to increasing their Official Development Assistance to 0.7% ODA/GNI while ensuring that 0.2% is for LDCs by 2030. This goal corresponds to the equality principle in the AidWatch quality monitoring report. One of its elements is to allocate ODA where it's most needed, therefore to LDCs. However, in 2020 the EU listed only three LDCs as receivers of the EU's ODA out of 46 existing LDCs. In 2021, Turkey – an upper-middle-income country – was the largest recipient of the EU's ODA. In 2022, the EU adopted the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022-2031 (DPoA). The DPoA's fifth key focus area is addressing climate change, environmental degradation, recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and building resilience against future shocks for risk-informed sustainable development. The DPoA is fully dedicated to the recovery and resilience of LDCs within an intersectional context of multiple crises.

Several global crises have emerged since 2020. ODA providers witnessed an increasing demand for their support due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, increased poverty, hunger, and dealing with conflict and its economic impacts. The war in Ukraine has increased inflation and severely impacted countries that are receivers of ODA, particularly LDCs. The EU's renewed partnership with Least Developed Countries (2022) takes an intersectional approach to multiple crises which tackles the climate crisis, post-COVID-19 concerns, biodiversity, environmental degradation, gender equality and global food security in connection to the 2030 Agenda. The EU follows an approach of ownership and sustainability which cherish the graduation criteria of LDCs and intersect global crises while considering the human assets and the particularities of contexts in each country.

The war in Ukraine has cost thousands of lives and has caused an estimated 8.173.211⁹ people to flee Ukraine (as of 28 March 2023, according to UNHCR data).

9 Source - UNHCR, Government: number from 28th March 2023

DAC members can count the cost of assisting refugees on their territories as ODA¹⁰, although there are five points of clarification for transparency on this matter:

- **Rationality:** counting in-donor costs as ODA, clarifying that refugee assistance could be considered humanitarian assistance.
- **Eligible categories:** as clarification of international definitions, asylum seekers and recognised refugees are covered.
- **The twelve-months rule:** after one year, in-donor costs for refugees or asylum seekers will not be counted in the statistics of international aid.
- **Eligibility of the cost for eligible items:** specific items are eligible, which cover the element of humanitarian aid and not costs for economic integration into the host country.
- **Methodology for assessing cost:** a methodology with measurements of costs and value.

According to the Statista Research Department, by 3 February 2023 around eight million Ukrainian refugees had been registered across Europe. According to the previously mentioned points, costs for the labour and social integration of refugees coming from Ukraine cannot be counted as ODA. Most of the EU's humanitarian aid goes to people in Ukraine. Through the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, since February 2022 the European Commission has allocated EUR 630 million for humanitarian aid programmes to help civilians affected by the war in Ukraine. The European Union mobilised EUR 485 million in 2022 and has mobilised EUR 145 million so far in 2023.

Slovenia's ODA in the time of multiple crises 2020-2022

Slovenia has been providing ODA as well as humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian crises and natural disasters in the least developed and developing countries, which have been hit the hardest by the food, energy and financial crises, represent an important focus for its ODA priorities. Recently in the area of humanitarian assistance, in the autumn of 2022 Slovenia joined the 'Grain From Ukraine' initiative with a contribution of EUR 1 million through the World Food Programme (WFP) to transport shipments of grain from Ukraine to the countries most affected by the famine. In

10 In-donor refugee costs in ODA, OECD <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/refugee-costs-oda.htm#:~:text=DAC members can count the clarifications to the reporting directives.>

fact, Slovenia has increased its humanitarian assistance for food security almost sixfold since 2021. Contributions are mainly channelled through the WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Contributions through international organisations were also channelled to Syria, Yemen, Central Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, The Gambia, Angola, Laos, Lesotho, Guinea-Bissau, Venezuela, Haiti, Iraq and natural disasters in Madagascar, Malawi, Tonga, Mozambique and Kiribati. According to preliminary figures, Slovenia has significantly increased its contribution to humanitarian aid compared to 2021 (current calculations show over EUR 7 million in 2022, an increase of around 75%). For emergency response through international organisations, EUR 4 520 000 of humanitarian aid was disbursed in 2022.

In terms of climate finance and environmental development assistance, Slovenia has been stepping up its assistance to LDCs and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in response to the triple global crisis. In 2021, it doubled its climate finance through multilateral channels. In 2022, in addition to the existing Global Environment Facility (GEF) funds, Slovenia focused its assistance on environmental and climate-related programmes for LDCs and SIDS. These programmes include the GEF's Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), the GEF's Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) for SIDS, as well as other environmental funds such as the Adaptation Fund, the UN-Habitat, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Regular contributions are also made to the GEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Slovenia has continued to make donations of vaccines to partner countries. In 2022, vaccine donations were made to Bhutan, Egypt, Bolivia, Chad, Guatemala, Tanzania and Mexico, with vaccine donations to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the process of being implemented. Slovenia has committed a total of EUR 12.3 million since 2020 to fighting COVID-19 in developing countries¹¹.

The impact of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine on gender equality

The economic breakdown caused by the COVID-19 crisis has had profound implications for gender equality both during the crisis and the recovery:

- The employment drop due to social distancing impacted occupations with a high share of women employees.

11 Based on the answers provided by the Ministry as part of their contribution to the conference on ODA in times of multiple crises organised by the Povod Institute.

- The closure of schools and day-care centres has increased the negative impact of gender roles and pressure on working mothers.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), reports of domestic violence against women have increased during the COVID-19 crisis, with concerns from several NGOs worldwide that many women do not report domestic violence.
- The COVID-19 crisis made gender equality worse in low-income countries.

The unemployment rate almost doubled in Africa's LDCs from 6.97% in 2019 to 11.55% in 2020. The lack of fiscal space in LDCs enlarged gender inequalities in light of COVID-19. The fiscal space refers to the financial possibilities of relocating budgets to desired purposes without impacting the country's financial stability. In the case of gender equality, LDCs' governments could not ensure financial support to the most vulnerable individuals and businesses in the informal economy in times of crisis. In contrast, more than 50% of vulnerable businesses in the informal economy are owned by women.

The invasion of Ukraine widened gender gaps in Ukraine and worldwide while increasing food insecurity, malnutrition and energy poverty. The war on Ukraine has caused a risk to the extractive sector and fossil-fuel-based energy generation due to the increasing prices of energy resources. According to the WHO, due to existing gender inequalities and gender-oppressive norms, women mostly experience premature deaths due to exposure to unhealthy and unsustainable energy resources that cause household air pollution due to cooking and heating. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa women spend hours on woodfire collection, which is a practice based on gender inequalities and puts women at risk of health complications and physical vulnerability during exposure to air-polluted households. Regardless of the diverse realities of women worldwide, a similar scenario has taken place in Ukraine during the war where many households rely on biomass fuel. Therefore, the intersectional consequences of the war in Ukraine do not only impact gender equality in Ukraine but also worldwide. Gender equality is especially impacted in LDCs, where energy poverty is higher and gendered roles put women and girls at higher risk of harmful health practices due to a lack of sustainable, clean and affordable energy.

ODA in support of gender equality

The DAC follows a policy marker system, which was created to guarantee the monitoring and comparability of measures between member states. Among these markers is the gender equality marker, which is a cross-institutional tool. DAC members – but

also non-DAC members from philanthropic foundations, multi-laterals, and governments – report annually to the DAC using its gender equality policy marker, which is statistical and uses a three-point scoring system:

Three-point scoring system of the DAC gender marker

NOT TARGETED (SCORE 0):	The project/programme has been screened against the marker but has not been found to target gender equality.
SIGNIFICANT (SCORE 1):	Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.
PRINCIPAL (SCORE 2):	Gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this gender equality objective.

Source: OECD

The marker is a qualitative and statistical tool which converts statistical data into a qualitative pattern to monitor how much aid goes towards gender equality as a policy objective. The no-harm principle is integrated into the gender policy marker. The OECD refers to this as a principle to ensure gender analysis and the contextual understanding of existing gender inequalities, rather than to reproduce or re-enforce existing inequalities during the implementation of the humanitarian response. Generally, monitoring and evaluating gender equality in official development is easier to conduct in bilateral agreements than in multilateral agreements.

The EU's ODA for gender equality 2020-2022

The EU follows the gender equality strategy 2020-2025, and the Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025 sets out the EU's political and operational roadmap towards a gender-equal world. During the public conference conducted by the Povod Institute in Slovenia and funded by the European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP) on 15 December 2022, civil society actors raised concerns that the politicisation of ODA may cause a paradoxical effect due to:

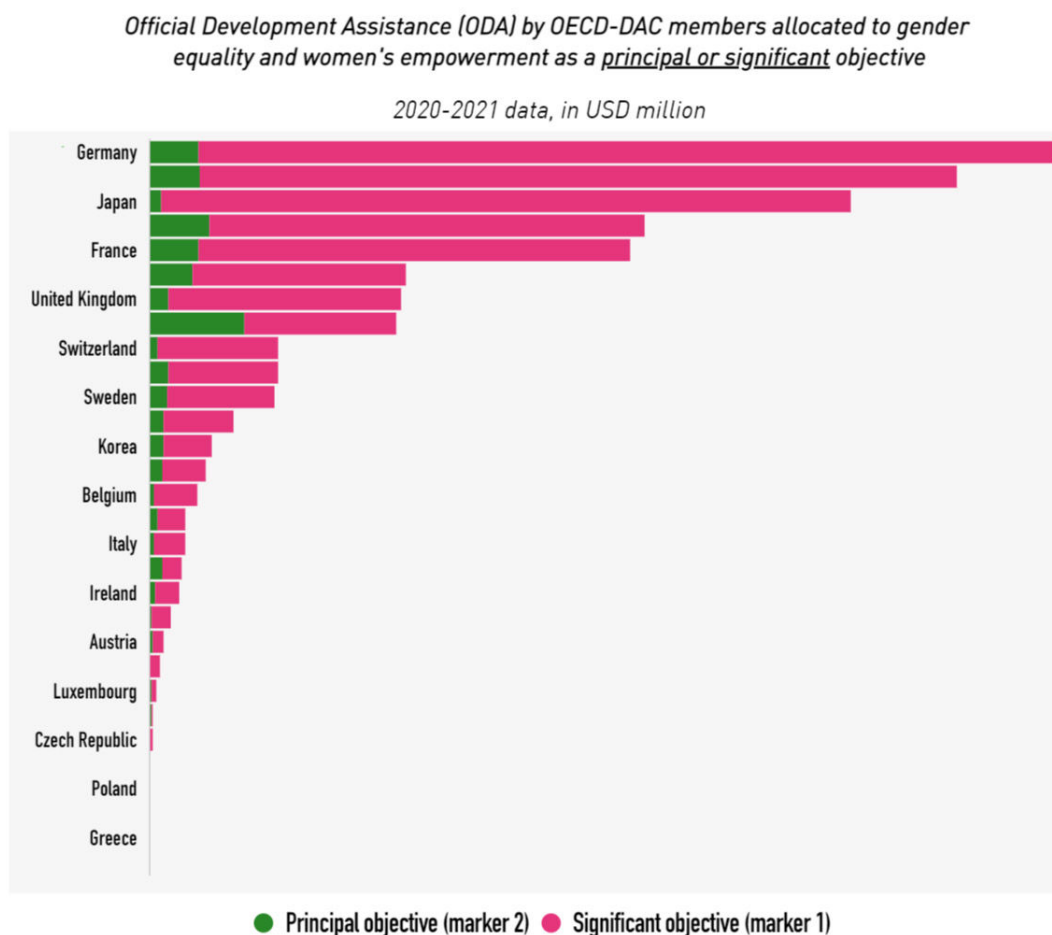
1. Donors' financial support to political agendas rather than needs in the field.
2. The dehumanisation of people's needs in the field by projecting them as external or political agendas.

Regarding the first concern, rapid gender analysis is a tool for local actors in places of conflict to conduct a needs assessment as an ongoing process before and throughout the cycle of humanitarian projects. By creating a gender in brief or a gender analysis report before conducting humanitarian responses¹², DAC member states ensure the no-harm principles where the supported programs are made for the needs of people and not as a political agenda. Regarding the second concern, according to existing gender in briefs and rapid gender analysis reports, this may be directly part of the socio-economic and gender inequalities practiced against women, gender minorities and sexual minorities as a form of otherness and exclusion from one's society.

In the EU's renewed partnership with LDCs, the Council of the European Union addressed gender equality both as a policy objective and as an accompanying tool throughout the process of design and implementation of international development cooperation with LDCs. The partnership agreed upon by the Council addresses COVID-19 and the war on Ukraine as hindering factors for environmental, economic and human development in countries that face the most vulnerability.

In 2020 and 2021, OECD DAC donor countries directed an average of 44% per year of their bilateral ODA towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. According to the DAC gender policy marker, only 4% of bilateral ODA was directed towards gender equality as a principal objective (score 2), and 40% of bilateral ODA as a significant goal (score 1). Between 2020 and 2021, Germany was at the top of the DAC countries which dedicated their foreign aid to gender equality as a principle or significant goal. UN Women address the need to increase gender budgeting for gender equality as a principal objective in development cooperation.

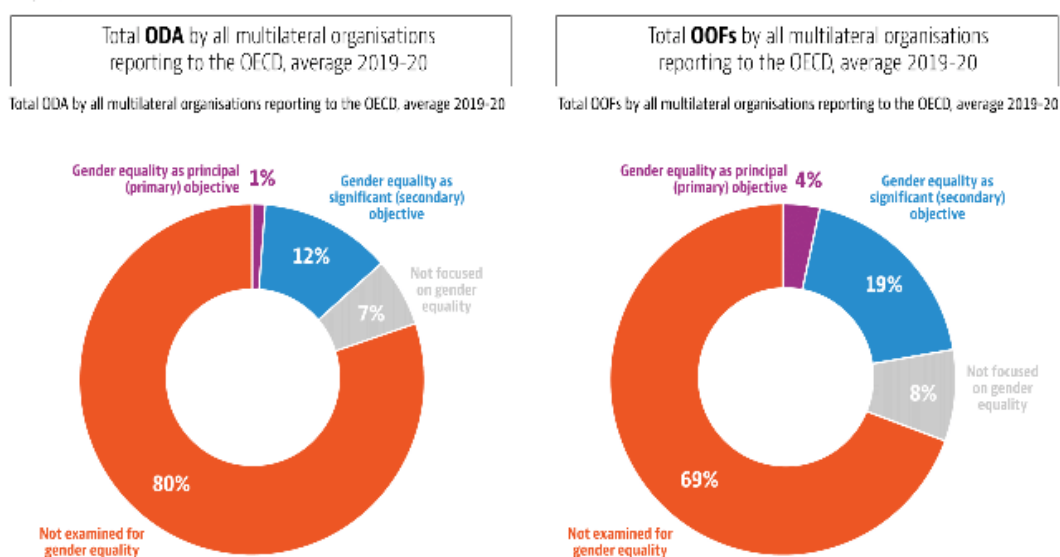
12 Rapid Gender Analysis, CARE http://gender.careinternationalwikis.org/care_rapid_gender_analysis_toolkit



Source: OECD

Between 2019 and 2020, almost 32% of DAC members' other official flows went towards gender equality¹³. Most of the official multilateral development of DAC members for gender equality is unreported. As previously illustrated, it is harder to report, monitor and evaluate multilateral agreements.

13 Development finance for gender equality and women's empowerment: A snapshot. https://www.oecd.org/dac/Gender_ODA_2022.pdf



Source: OECD

Between 2020 and 2021, Germany had the most ODA allocated for gender equality as a principle or a significant objective, followed by Japan and France. Therefore, in the following section we will explore the practices of enhancement for gender equality in international development cooperation in LDCs that comes from Germany. Additionally, we will explore the current practices of enhancement for gender equality in LDCs between 2021 and 2022 from Slovenia.

The German Federal Government's Action Plan for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda 2021 to 2024

The German Federal Government adopted its third action plan for women, peace and security as a result of close consultations between six ministries. The action plan is based on the conclusions from the implementation reports of previous action plans. It is also based on an inclusive and transparent consultation process with German civil society and civil societies in fragile states, conflict zones and post-conflict nations, as well as dialogue with various countries¹⁴. The 'effective' element in the four Es of monitoring is thus fulfilled by the interministerial cooperation for establishing the action plan, and the participatory consultation with local actors in conflict zones. A speaker from the Ministry of Social Development of Jordan, who took part in the public conference organised by the Povod Institute in Slovenia, addressed

14 The German Federal Government's Action Plan for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda 2021 to 2024 <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/610626/d7d78947490f454a5342c1dff737a474/aktionsplan1325-engl-data.pdf>

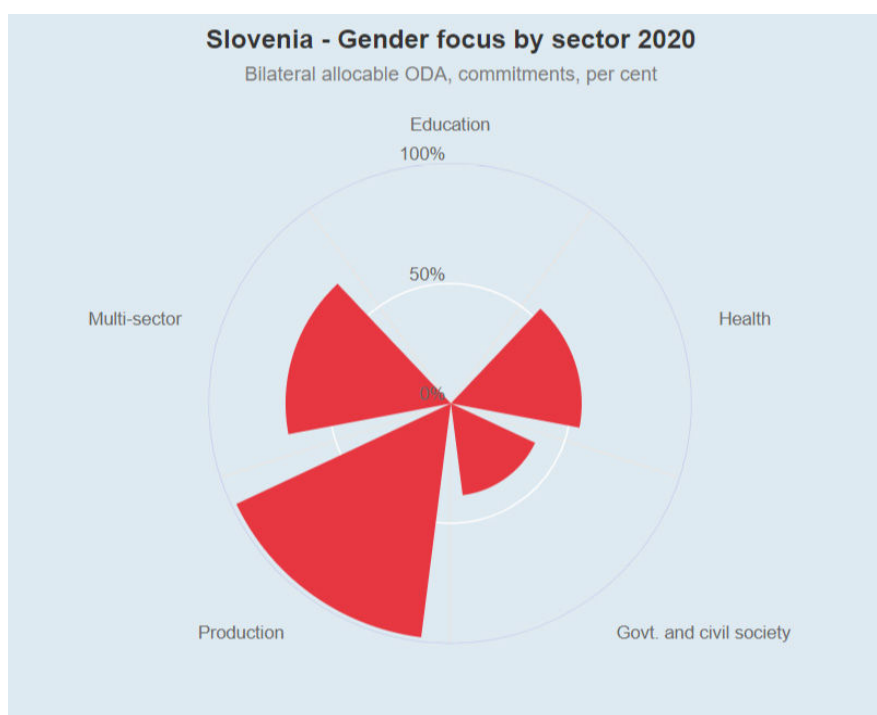
the added values of bilateral ODA as it is more effective in terms of accountable, cross-sectoral and intersectional cooperation.

Nevertheless, it is also important to ensure the diversity of stakeholders included in the consultation process, particularly related to countries with difficult political conditions where corruption, the violation of human rights and the freedom of speech are actual struggles.

‘The priorities of the South shall be determined by the South’

— Eyachew Tefera

Slovenia’s ODA for gender equality as a principle or significant goal from 2020 to 2022



In 2020, Slovenia committed 37.2% of its screened bilateral allocable aid to gender equality and women’s empowerment, as either a principal or significant objective (up from 35.5% in 2019). The production sector had the biggest share. Gender equality, along with environmental protection, are recognised as cross-cutting issues in Slovenia’s foreign policy for international development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Slovenia associates most of its ODA to multilateral agreements. According to CSO reports, in multilateral agreements it is more difficult to track, monitor and evaluate. Furthermore, during the Povod Institute’s conference in Ljubljana on ODA in the time

of multiple crises, Ms Hadil Ali Al Shawaheen, the representative of the Ministry of Social Development in Jordan, confirmed that in the case of implementing international development cooperation there is more ownership and flexibility in bilateral funds compared to multilateral funds¹⁵.

Summary of the Official Development Assistance in the Time of Multiple Crises Conference and Workshop on 14 and 15 December 2022 in Ljubljana, Slovenia

The Povod Institute held the Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the Time of Multiple Crises Conference and Workshop on 14 and 15 December 2022 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

An interactive workshop on Slovenia's Official Development Assistance, 14 December 2022

The workshop on 14 December 2022 gathered 15 representatives of CSOs primarily based in Slovenia and governmental staff working at the Ministry of Public Administration of Slovenia.

The workshop started with a presentation of ODA in general, followed by ODA trends and the most recent updates on multilateral and bilateral agreements which took place in response to or simultaneously in light of the multiple crises of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine. Following this was a presentation from a concrete project for gender equality through economic empowerment which is financed by the MFEA of Slovenia and is implemented by a Slovenian NGO in Montenegro.

After the presentations, an interactive discussion was facilitated to reflect on the current measurements of ODA through the module of the four Es. The four Es were included in the presentation as a tool used by AidWatch and CSOs to monitor and evaluate the measurements of ODA. The recommendations and remarks on how to strengthen the external policies of Slovenia's ODA varied as follows:

- Organisational costs of bilateral visits shall not be considered as ODA (e.g. salaries of staff at the Ministry who manage programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina). Staff members' salaries shall not be calculated as ODA to ensure efficiency and sufficiency.

15 Development finance for gender equality and women's empowerment <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/development-finance-for-gender-equality-and-women-s-empowerment.htm>

- Scholarships to foreign students shall not be considered as ODA because there are no reliable criteria to monitor whether it is equality-focused, efficient, correctly employed or enough.
- Strengthen the intersectional measures taken by Slovenia's MFEA to support the cooperation and coordination between several policy streams to create a holistic ODA measure. This measure could resemble the German Federal Government's Action Plan for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda 2021 to 2024.

The Official Development Assistance in the Time of Multiple Crises Conference on 15 December 2022 in Ljubljana, Slovenia

The focus of the conference was on the quantity and quality of national and EU bilateral and multilateral ODA. There was also a focus on reaching ODA commitments for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The speakers analysed EU and ODA efficiency trends within bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The participants and speakers shared their practical experiences, views, and knowledge of national, EU and global *policies*.

The profiles of the speakers are as follows:

- Dr Robert Kokalj, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Sector for Policies of International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid. The speaker could not make it in person but emailed the contribution from the Ministry afterwards.
- Eyachew Tefera, Director of the Institute for African Studies
- Salvatore Nocerino, Policy and Advocacy Advisor at CONCORD Europe
- Ingo Ritz, Director of Global Call to Action Against Poverty
- Hadil Ali Al Shawaheen, a Senior Officer at the Department of International Cooperation at the Ministry of Social Development in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Seku Conde, a Foreign Policy Journalist for Slovenian national TV

Summary of discussions and recommendations shared during the conference

The role of CSOs in monitoring the quantitative and qualitative data of ODA

Salvatore Nocerino addressed the role of CSOs which is vital in monitoring ODA on a national and EU level in terms of quantity and quality. CONCORD Europe – the European confederation of NGOs – shared insights regarding quantity as follows:

- There is a slight increase in ODA. The progress of increasing ODA is very slow, and the reallocation of budgets should be replaced by increasing the budget instead.
- Regardless of the slight increase in ODA, this increase is insufficient as the recent context is so demanding.
- It is important to combine qualitative indicators with quantitative ones, as quantity does not mean that ODA is efficient.

Regarding the qualitative aspects of ODA, there are different costs which CSOs are trying to extract from the ODA eligibility criteria. For example, there have been many demands over the years to stop considering the costs of supporting refugees and asylum seekers as part of ODA because it does not contribute to the development of the country in need.

Transparency, ownership, and real and equal relationships between countries

‘The south shall determine the priorities of the south.’ Eyachew Tefera addressed the importance of recipient countries setting priorities themselves and giving full ownership to countries who are recipients of ODA to decide their own priorities. ‘We shall analyse the cash flow for transparency.’ Eyachew Tefera also addressed the importance of transparency when it comes to ODA, not only to policymakers but also to the public. This transparent communication ensures the exposure of any misuse of financial resources, considering that money sent to African countries is coming back as double cash to donors where the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Eyachew Tefera addressed the capital flow that comes from African countries to countries who provide ODA.

Multilateral versus bilateral ODA through the lens of practicality and ownership

Ms Hadil Ali Al Shawaheen addressed the advantages of bilateral ODA in two ways. Firstly, from her experience the ownership and flexibility of ODA from one country to another opens the space for more flexibility in deciding activities and priorities.

Secondly, regarding the bureaucracy of reporting, Ms Hadil explained that multilateral ODA has more complications in reporting, which consequently consumes a lot of effort.

In times of crisis, inequalities increase and social services are the most affected in the most fragile countries

Ingo Ritz mentioned the hostility of donor countries in addressing social services during crises such as COVID-19 and how this approach should be challenged and changed as social programmes and services are vital in times of crisis. It is important to direct ODA to the social protection of all, especially in the most fragile countries in times of crises, which have to cut their funds for social services such as education or even health.

The ODA discourse should step out from the paradox of the garden and the jungle. 'We are either all the garden or the jungle.' – Eyachew Tefera

ODA needs to follow the no-harm principle in not reproducing or regenerating racism. Eyachew Tefera addressed the importance of ensuring that ODA language and structure do not regenerate racism. He gave concrete examples from Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and how enforcing changes in the targets of ODA recipient countries in Africa hinder their development. Eyachew also explained how transparency in ODA can combat regenerating racism in the North against the South. This is because transparency in ODA communication can ensure the debunking of prejudices and stereotypes against the southern countries as a failure.

COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine affected the modality of cooperation. 'Decolonising knowledge' is the main element of ensuring equality in ODA

Eyachew Tefera established that the COVID-19 crisis has impacted the modality of cooperation between countries, where poor countries are getting poorer despite receiving ODA. He explained how structural inequalities (e.g. financial obstacles and a lack of financial support) hinder an African entrepreneur in starting their own investment in green energy, compared to a peer coming from the North. Eyachew emphasised that donation is not what is needed but rather the facilitation of a just and equal space.

Freeing health from the commodity approach, where the south shall either suffer or die

Eyachew Tefera referred to the privatisation of the medical and health sectors and how this impacts the widening of inequalities.

There should be a monitoring system on where ODA goes and how it is spent

Seku Conde stated that the responsibility has to come from both sides of donor and recipient countries, while highlighting oppressive political systems where corruption, child labour and other human rights violations take place. Seku Conde affirmed that the monitoring process of ODA is easier when it comes to bilateral agreements in this case. Seku Conde also emphasised the importance of monitoring how ODA impacts ordinary people's lives, especially in countries with difficult political systems.

The Slovenian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs' views and measures on ODA in the time of multiple crises

The increase in bilateral ODA

The Slovenian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs is strengthening the share of bilateral aid through dedicated and directed contributions through international organisations, thereby consolidating the Ministry's position within the framework of the latter. Regardless of the aforementioned, in accordance with the principle of effective multilateralism and the commitments arising from strategic documents, the government allocates a share of ODA also in the form of non-targeted contributions to international organisations, which is classified as multilateral aid. The presence of Slovenia in these frameworks is important both from the point of view of the effectiveness of ODA as well as the strengthening of mutual cooperation.

The distribution of ODA in light of the war in Ukraine

Slovenia provided quick and effective humanitarian aid to Ukraine and neighbouring countries facing a large number of refugees. This was done through international organisations, bilateral projects, the ITF project, the Slovenian Caritas, and in the form of material aid. As well as the urgent aid to Ukraine, Slovenia also took into account other humanitarian crises and natural disasters in the least developed and developing countries, which were the most affected by the food, energy and financial crises. Finally, with a contribution of EUR 1 million through the World Food Program (WFP), Slovenia joined the "Grain from Ukraine" initiative to transport grain shipments

from Ukraine to the countries most affected by hunger. Contributions through international organisations were also directed to Syria, Yemen, Central Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, The Gambia, Angola, Laos, Lesotho, Guinea-Bissau, Venezuela, Haiti, Iraq and natural disasters in Madagascar, Malawi, Tonga, Mozambique and Kiribati.

According to preliminary figures, Slovenia has significantly increased its contribution to humanitarian aid compared to 2021 (according to current calculations, it allocated over EUR 7 million in 2022, which represents an increase of around 75%). For the purpose of emergency response through international organizations, EUR 4 520 000 of humanitarian aid was paid out or was in the process of being paid out in 2022.

Food crisis

Since 2021, the Republic of Slovenia has increased its humanitarian aid for food security almost sixfold, most recently with a contribution of EUR 1 million through the World Food Program (WFP) as part of the “Grain from Ukraine” initiative for the transport of grain shipments from Ukraine to countries in development. Contributions are mainly allocated through the WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In 2022, contributions totalling EUR 1 520 000 were made as follows:

- EUR 1 million to the ‘Grain from Ukraine’ initiative
- EUR 50 000 to the Horn of Africa
- EUR 40 000 to Yemen
- EUR 50 000 to Central Sahel
- EUR 100 000 to Ukraine
- EUR 30 000 to the Central African Republic
- EUR 50 000 to Haiti
- EUR 50 000 to South Sudan
- EUR 30 000 to The Gambia
- EUR 30 000 to Angola
- EUR 30 000 to Laos
- EUR 30 000 to Lesotho
- EUR 30 000 to Guinea-Bissau

In terms of climate finance and environmental development assistance, Slovenia has strengthened its assistance to LDCs and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in response to the triple global crisis. In 2021, it doubled its climate finance through multi-lateral channels. In 2022, in addition to the existing Global Environment Facility (GEF) funds, Slovenia directed its aid to environmental and climate-related programmes for LDCs and SIDS. These programmes include the GEF's Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), the GEF's Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) for SIDS, as well as other environmental funds such as the Adaptation Fund, the UN-Habitat, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Regular contributions are also made to the GEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Slovenia has continued to make donations of vaccines to partner countries. In 2022, vaccine donations were made to Bhutan, Egypt, Bolivia, Chad, Guatemala, Tanzania and Mexico, with vaccine donations to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the process of being implemented. Slovenia has committed a total of EUR 12.3 million since 2020 to fighting COVID-19 in developing countries. With a total of over 2.2 million units of COVID-19 vaccine donations made so far (bilaterally or through the COVAX mechanism), Slovenia ranks highly according to the per capita indicator.

Allocation of ODA in support of refugees in light of the war in Ukraine

Helping people in humanitarian crises – including providing aid to refugees and internally displaced populations – represents a moral commitment of donors in accordance with the humanitarian principle of humanity. Costs for refugees, which in accordance with OECD DAC guidelines are counted as official development aid, represent a smaller share in the structure of Slovenian development aid. In the future, the government of Slovenia will also strive to increase funds for international development cooperation and humanitarian aid, which will be directed towards implementing bilateral projects, including non-governmental organisations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The multiple crises that appeared between 2020 and 2022 – in light of the COVID-19 crisis and the war in Ukraine amongst other crises – have impacted the qualitative aspects of ODA. Financial support during humanitarian crises is essential, yet CSOs have raised concerns about whether these expenses should be considered as ODA. For example, support to refugees and asylum seekers is an important factor, although it should not be considered as ODA because it does not contribute to the wellbeing of the recipient country in crisis. LDCs remain the most fragile countries during crises with indicators of increased inequalities.

The division between donors and recipients, as well as the lack of transparent ODA-related communication with the public regenerate racism where recipient countries are falsely perceived as failures. Therefore, transparent ODA-related communication with the public is a must in order to ensure efficiency and to uphold the no-harm principle in ODA functionality. Additionally, the lack of long-term and transparent monitoring of ODA lessen its efficiency as there is no sufficient tracking system of how much ODA returns from recipient countries as capital flight. ODA recipient countries are still not equally included in the decision-making process of ODA, which creates further inequalities. Furthermore, CSOs and grassroots groups which represent civil society in ODA recipient countries may be excluded due to troubled political systems where democracy and human rights are violated due to corruption or neo-colonial influences.

Gender inequality in LDCs is strongly impacted due to budget limitations during crises. These budget limitations lead to the reallocation of financial resources from gender equality or social services to emergency funds. Gender equality is not fully monitored and measured in international funds. It is mostly measured in bilateral agreements. The DAC's three-point system of gender markers is a prominent tool to monitor how gender equality is included as either a principal, significant, or absent factor in ODA implementation. Including gender equality as a principle is essential not only in achieving gender equality through ODA but also to ensure that ODA is enough, correctly employed, efficient and equal. Gender equality should therefore be included as a tool and not only as a goal. Policy measures such as the ones taken by the German Federal Government's Action Plan for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda 2021 to 2024 are important for policy coherence and for creating a road for equal partnerships in the ODA decision-making and implementation process.

1. Establish a long-term monitoring system of ODA which is transparent and accessible to the public. This monitoring system shall include practical evidence which ensures that there is no 'capital flight' in ODA recipient countries.
2. Bring various stakeholders from ODA recipient countries into the decision-making process regarding ODA-related quantitative and qualitative decisions.
3. Include intersectional feminist grassroots groups in ODA recipient countries in direct consultations during the process of decision-making regarding ODA.
4. Strengthen the intersectional measures taken by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs to support the cooperation and coordination between several policy streams to create a holistic ODA measure. This measure could resemble the German Federal Government's Action Plan for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda 2021 to 2024, while ensuring inclusivity and equal partnership between all involved stakeholders.

ABOUT

THE AUTHORS

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THE ORGANISATIONS

Povod

Povod, Institute for Culture and Development of international relations in Culture, is a Non-Governmental Organisation predominantly working for international development cooperation. Its activities and achievements include monitoring the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mediation, advocacy research of development policies, and life-long education and improvement of experiential and intercultural learning capacities for civil society.

ENoP

The European Network of Political Foundations - ENoP serves as an umbrella network and information hub for political foundations on topics related to democracy and development cooperation. ENoP brings together 53 political foundations from 23 European countries, active in Europe and with over 130 local offices in partner countries. Although independent in nature, ENoP is a cross-party network, and its broad spectrum of affiliation corresponds to the political representation in the European Parliament. As such, the Network reflects the political diversity of the European democratic landscape and gives ENoP a unique approach.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the time of multiple crises is a background research paper consisting of a debriefing part which collects policy facts and measures taken by the EU and Slovenia in regards to ODA, followed by an in-depth participatory and qualitative research which analysis the EU's ODA in times of multiple crises between 2020-2022 including a reflection on the ODA policies of member states such as Germany and Slovenia while delivering concrete challenges, opportunities and recommendations from CSOs based in Slovenia and who worked in international development cooperation under the umbrella of ODA.



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