

The British Council supports the Sustainable Development Goals



A cultural relations approach to gender equality



THE BRITISH COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY

OUR APPROACH TO SDG 5

The British Council supports the achievement of **gender equality** and the **empowerment of women and girls** by supporting the creation of inclusive, open and prosperous societies. We take a holistic approach – individually, institutionally and systemically – to addressing gender inequality by making it a top priority both internally and in our external programmes, to ensure that we make a lasting impact in communities around the world. Our Women and Girls Portfolio comprises both programmes that focus specifically on issues affecting women and girls, as well as programmes in Education, English, Arts and Society which are **gender sensitive and include gender equality outcomes**.



As well as being an objective in its own right, the British Council views the promotion of SDG5 as underpinning progress on all other SDGs. We aim to make a difference in these thematic areas:

Participation and leadership: We create opportunities for women's leadership in key sectors, as well as strengthening women's voice and influence, by working with women's organisations, professional bodies, arts and cultural organisations, and other civil society organisations. Women's participation in peace-building is also relevant, especially in fragile and conflict affected areas.

Gender and education: We address gender barriers to accessing education, gender equality in leadership and teaching practice; we promote women and girls' participation in under-represented subjects.

Women's economic empowerment: We create opportunities for women's participation and leadership in the economy, by developing skills for employment and enterprise, reducing barriers to participation, particularly in social and creative enterprise, and promoting women's participation in under-represented sectors.

Addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG): We work to change attitudes and behaviours among girls, boys, men and women in order to prevent VAWG, both in communities and within institutions. We also work to improve access to services for survivors of violence.

THE ADDED VALUE OF CULTURAL RELATIONS

Our cultural relations approach aims at **enhancing intercultural dialogue** and bring about mutual benefits connected to prosperity, security and stability. The overall outcomes of cultural relations are greater connectivity, better mutual understanding, more and deeper relationships, mutually beneficial transactions and enhanced sustainable dialogue between people and cultures, shaped through engagement and attraction rather than coercion.

The British Council's cultural relations approach is a powerful vehicle for promoting gender equality. While the themes of gender inequality are universal, understandings of how these are lived-out locally are **deeply contextual and multi-layered**, and impactful responses call **on effective collaborations built on trust**. We draw on a wealth of experience and resources in creative ways to promote an agenda of change, building partnerships and networks based on in-depth knowledge of the countries in which we operate and supporting locally led initiatives. This includes work in the **arts that challenges gender stereotypes** and imagines what is possible, in **education that strengthens capacity for reflection and critical thinking**, in networks across civil society that stimulate debate and learning, and in influencing the **development of policies** that create a conducive environment for positive change in national strategies.

Embodying the British Council's five core values (valuing people, integrity, mutuality, creativity, professionalism) we build sustainable relations with partners and stakeholders around the world.

SOME EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

Safe Universities – Violence Against Women Free Campuses

EU funded, 421,000 € (Egypt)

Also contributes to SDG 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17

The project contributes to reducing and preventing sexual harassment and violence against women and girls (VAWG) through strengthening the capacity of Cairo University's Anti-Harassment and VAW unit to report and address incidents of sexual harassment and by increasing confidence of staff and students to take action to prevent and respond to VAWG.

- 67 members of staff involved
- 200 student volunteers
- 50 security guards receiving training
- Impact on 280,000 students and 12,000 staff members, and 112,000 families



Support to Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption in Nigeria (ROLAC)

EU funded, 23,300,000 € (Nigeria)

Also contributes to SDG 10, 16

The project aims to enhance good governance in Nigeria by contributing to strengthening of the rule of law, curbing corruption and reducing impunity, particularly through actions that promote values of equality in the society, while de-emphasising practices that discriminate against women, and persons with disabilities.

- 29,754 beneficiaries, including 5278 individuals assisted across 15 Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC)
- 26 capacity building/training events
- 47 grants provided to journalists to undertake investigative projects

- Passage into law of 2 Administration of Criminal Justice, Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law and Domestic Violence Laws
- Partnership with several federal and state ministries (Justice, Woman Affairs, Health) and federal anti-corruption, legal and anti-trafficking agencies

English and Digital for Girls' Education – EDGE

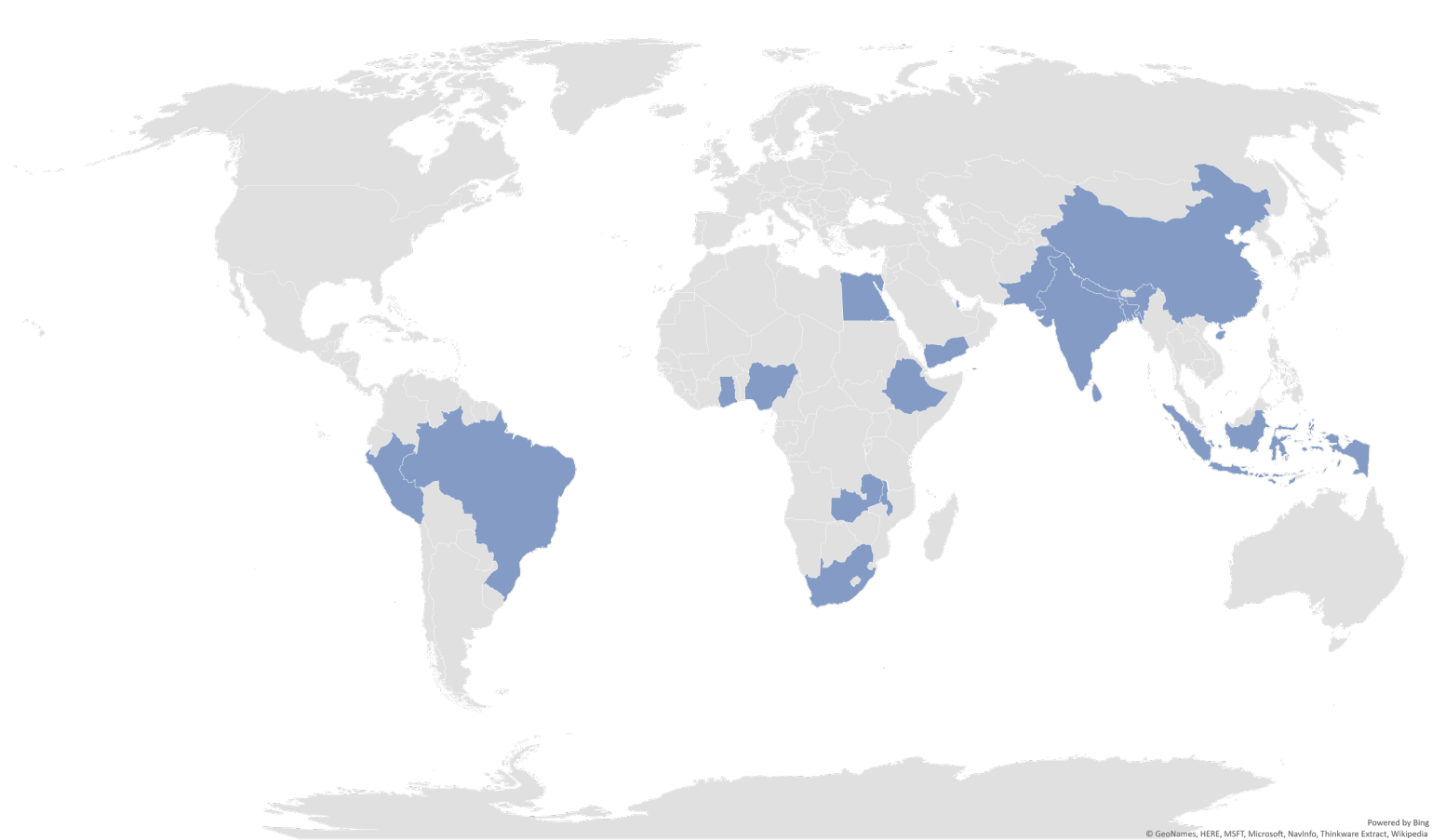
British Council and DfID funded, 670,250 € (Bangladesh, India, Nepal)

Also contributes to SDG 4, 8, 11, 17

EDGE aims to improve the life prospect of adolescent girls in socio-economically marginalised communities in South Asia, enhancing their English proficiency, digital and 21st century skills and awareness of social issues.

- 18,663 adolescent girls involved
- 1,599 Peer Group Leaders
- Measurable increases in English and ICT skills, and increase in girls using these outside the project clubs





Map of project activities having SDG 5 as main focus

WHO WE ARE

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. Established in 1934 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1940, the British Council enjoys a presence in over 100 countries around the world.

Through our work we build long term relationships that create knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We change lives by supporting country priorities for cultural, educational, social and economic development; creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about our work and to read a selection of our case studies visit:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/society/womens-and-girls-empowerment>



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