

# Gender and ECDPM: Adding value to the debate

## The context, the issues

Gender equality and gender mainstreaming have gained growing recognition among the development community, including multilateral institutions, governments, civil society and private sector actors. They have committed to increasing resources to contribute to gender equality, which is understood as (A) an objective (following a Human Rights based approach - as illustrated in SDG 5), and/or (B) as a key means to foster development (utilitarian approach - as illustrated e.g. in the World Bank *Smart Economics*' approach).

While some progress has been achieved, gender policies and/or commitments in development policies are often conceptually ambiguous, lack implementation on the ground and are not verifiable with evidence and data, leading to questions and sometimes frustration and fatigue around gender equality and/or its mainstreaming. The implementation of such policies is challenged by:

1. The complexity and lack of knowledge on gender as a cultural/social, economic and political construct, making any normative or one-size-fits-all policy type of approach irrelevant or ineffective;
2. The lack of coherence often observed between sectoral policies and/or development projects - education, trade, peace and security, transport/energy infrastructure for example, which undermine the implementation of any gender sensitive interventions
3. The lack of required qualitative and quantitative gender disaggregated data (slowly improving), to provide evidence-based and effective policies, particularly in the informal sector.

The focus is therefore no longer on *why* gender equality matters for development, but rather on its implementation and what this policy focus means in practice.

## Supporting the development and implementation of gender policies

### Objective

By adopting incrementally a gender-sensitive approach to all our work streams, ECDPM aims to contribute to more effective policy and practice in European and African cooperation. We do this by addressing gender in policy analysis and encouraging the development of gender-sensitive policies through our role as independent knowledge broker.

### Moving from policy to practice

#### **ECDPM aims to:**

1. Generate evidence-based, context-specific and practical knowledge, by highlighting examples of policies that have integrated gender equality and gender mainstreaming in development interventions that have led to sustainable change
2. Move from what is desirable to what is feasible, by analysing gender (in development) policies from a political economy type of approach. This means analysing power relations, political and economic interests, as well as incentives that shape and influence the implementation of gender equality commitments;
3. Help key public and private actors increase their knowledge on this issue through dialogue, implementation support, smart communications and knowledge management; and act as a non-partisan broker, leveraging our expertise, knowledge and network in Europe and Africa; Lead by example and ensure that ECDPM incrementally implements gender-sensitive practices inside the organisation, and help promote - when possible and relevant - external initiatives contributing to gender equality.