



European Year for Development in 2015

2015 is a landmark year for international aid and development as the Millennium Development Goals come to their conclusion. Based on these, the world will come together to agree on a new course of action and post-2015 development agenda. Each month, the EYD2015 will focus on a different development theme, to raise awareness of the benefits of the EU's development cooperation in that field, and encourage direct involvement, critical thinking and active interest of EU citizens.

MARCH, THE MONTH OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

It is widely acknowledged that gender equality is not only crucial in itself but is a fundamental human right and a question of social justice. Furthermore, gender equality is essential for growth and poverty reduction, and it is key to reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

Women are at the centre of sustainable social and economic development, poverty reduction and environmental protection. It is estimated that empowering women would, among other things, increase global GDP by nearly 12% by 2030 (an increase of \$8.2 trillion USD).

When women and girls have equal access to education, and go on to participate fully in business and economic decision-making, they are a key driving force against poverty. Women with equal rights are better educated, healthier, and have greater access to land, jobs and financial resources. Their increased earning power in turn raises household incomes. By enhancing women's control over decision-making in the household, gender equality also translates into better prospects and greater well-being of children, reducing poverty of future generations.

Almost all Europeans (94%) agree that equality between men and women is a fundamental right. A large majority of EU citizens (76%) believe that tackling inequality between women and men should be a priority for the EU.



Annalechchamy, a trade union leader, supported by an EU funded programme to improve the lives of women tea plantation workers in Sri Lanka.

The EU through its international development cooperation works collaboratively to:

- Include gender equality in planning, budgeting, and policy-making processes in a meaningful way;
- Promote women's and girls' economic rights and opportunities;
- Address the gender dimensions of HIV and AIDS;
- Strengthen the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data;
- Ensure that essential public services like health and education benefit women, men, girls and boys equitably.

FACTS & FIGURES

Thanks to European Union support:

- The enrolment in primary education rose from 80% to 90%; equivalent to 13.7 million new pupils, half of them girls between 1990 and 2011;
- 300,000 new female students enrolled in secondary education between 2004 and 2012;
- 12,994 female students enrolled in Erasmus Mundus and other student mobility schemes since 2004;
- 736 Civil Society Organisations working on gender equality were supported since 2004.

As an example of the EU's direct assistance women were helped in 60 rural villages by addressing the basic food needs and the negative effects of volatile food prices, across four districts in the Shinyanga region of Tanzania through the Food Facility. Support was given to help at least 10,000 smallholder women farmers.

EU and Women and Girls

Recognising that empowering women can significantly reduce poverty through increased production, rising household incomes, and improved child health and education levels, the EU firmly supports gender equality and empowerment of women worldwide.

The EU formally committed to promote these values in 2000 when it joined 189 world leaders in a pledge to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015 at the United Nations Millennium Summit. The third Millennium Development Goal is: **Promote gender equality and empower women.**

Various projects and programmes supported by the European Commission and the EU Member States have contributed to supporting greater gender equality.

The EU is striving to meet its gender equality targets by 2015 but, in recognition that further advances still need to be made, the EU is currently involved in global discussions on a new development agenda.

The new sustainable development goals to be agreed at the United Nations must include strong commitments on gender equality. The EU will keep on working hard to have gender equality both as a stand-alone goal and as a key element for the achievement of all the other goals. In practical terms, this means ensuring that girls and women have full and equal access to education, health-care, sanitation and employment possibilities and do not suffer from discrimination, whether it be institutionalised or derived from the traditional role of women in their cultures and societies.

THEMATIC MONTHS

Each month, the EYD2015 will focus on a different development theme:

- January:* **EUROPE IN THE WORLD**
- February:* **EDUCATION**
- March:* **WOMEN AND GIRLS**
- April:* **HEALTH**
- May:* **PEACE AND SECURITY**
- June:* **SUSTAINABLE GREEN GROWTH, DECENT JOBS, BUSINESSES**
- July:* **CHILDREN AND YOUTH**
- August:* **HUMANITARIAN AID**
- September:* **DEMOGRAPHY AND MIGRATION**
- October:* **FOOD SECURITY**
- November:* **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION**
- December:* **HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE**



SPREAD THE WORD!

Join the EYD2015 campaign online!

Join the EYD2015 campaign online! Stay up to date with information and news on the official campaign website, join the conversation on Twitter (#EYD2015) and have your say on Facebook.

Infographics, online banners, campaign trailers and more materials can be downloaded from the EYD2015 website. You can also join the group "European Year for Development 2015" on capacity4dev.eu to join the debate and get the latest news.

To get more involved, you can join us at events across the EU, as well as spreading the impact of the campaign by co-branding with the EYD2015.

europa.eu/eyd2015

facebook.com/EuropeanYearForDevelopment2015

@EYD2015, #EYD2015

EYD2015 and women and girls

Visit the official EYD2015 website europa.eu/eyd2015 and find out more about events, initiatives and activities organized by EYD partners!



Ana Isabel Pilla after leaving school early returns to school as a result of the EU's support to the education sector in Ecuador.