POLICY BRIEF

GENDER ACTION PLAN (GAP) IV: OXFAM'S KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

01 **Set an ambitious, accountable framework and build capacity**	02 **Fund feminist civil society and protect civic space from anti-rights movements**
03 **Make humanitarian aid gender-responsive and lifesaving**	04 **Recognise and invest in care to build a fair social organisation of care**
05 **Deliver on Women, Peace and Security**	06 **Protect LGBTQIA+ rights and ensure intersectionality**

01 SET AN AMBITIOUS, ACCOUNTABLE FRAMEWORK AND BUILD CAPACITY

> **KEY FACT:** *In 2020, three EU member states (Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria) blocked the Council from adopting official conclusions on the EU's Gender Action Plan III by refusing to endorse the term "gender equality" (Oxfam 2024).*

- **Spending targets:** Maintain the 85% target for new external actions to contribute to gender equality.
- **Accountability for non-compliance:** Make GAP IV a binding framework for the Commission with public reporting and independent monitoring to track compliance.
- **Gender Focal Points:** Strengthen the capacity of EU Delegations and relevant headquarters departments, including geographic units and Gender Focal Points, so they can effectively conduct intersectional impact assessments and support conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts that are contextually relevant, locally driven, and genuinely transformative in terms of gender equality.
- **Gender justice:** Ensure GAP IV is explicitly gender-transformative, intersectional and human rights-based in both language and practice.

02 FUND FEMINIST CIVIL SOCIETY AND PROTECT CIVIC SPACE FROM ANTI-RIGHTS MOVEMENTS

KEY FACT: *Between 2021-2022, just three anti-LGBTQIA+ organisations received more funding than all 8000+ LGBTQIA+ organisations worldwide (Oxfam 2025).*

- **Civic space as standalone priority:** Make protecting the recovering civic space a stand-alone, resourced GAP IV priority, instead of only a cross-cutting theme.
- **Funding Women's Rights Organisations (WROs):** In cooperation with EU Member States, the EU must move beyond short-term projects by committing sustained, core and flexible funding that enables Global South WROs, grassroots feminist movements and LGBTQIA+ -led groups to thrive.
- **Anti-rights movements:** Demand specific funding through Global Europe and the next MFF to support reversing the negative impacts of the anti-gender and anti-rights movements.
- **Human rights defenders (HRDs):** Fund comprehensive protection of HRDs facing criminalisation and/or online attacks, including legal defence and reparations, psychosocial support and digital security.

03 MAKE HUMANITARIAN AID GENDER-RESPONSIVE AND LIFESAVING

KEY FACT: *Research shows that on average, 40% of women are not using the latrines provided by humanitarian actors due to inadequate needs assessments and poor design (Oxfam 2025).*

- **GBV & SRHR:** Include prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV), and rights-based comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programming to increase bodily autonomy, as life-saving humanitarian interventions and anchor essential SRHR services and materials in humanitarian responses through the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP).
- **Disaggregated data & inclusive rapid gender analysis:** Require an inclusive rapid gender analysis and disaggregated data by sex, age and disability in every EU-funded humanitarian operations from day one, ensuring that the analysis explicitly considers the rights, needs and protection risks of people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), in line with the principles of safety, confidentiality and do-no-harm.
- **Climate crisis:** Ensure EU climate action tackles the gendered, global impacts of the climate crisis, (such as disproportionate risks during displacement, gender-based violence and diminished access to SRHR during climate shocks), protects environmental defenders and promotes meaningful climate action leadership of women in all their diversity.
- **Locally led feminist humanitarian action:** Require EU humanitarian funding to provide direct, accessible, flexible and sustained funding – including overheads and duty-of-care support – to local and national women's rights, women-led and LGBTQIA+-led organisations. Implementation of GAP

IV and the WPS agenda must strengthen, rather than instrumentalise or securitise, humanitarian action and must safeguard the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

04 RECOGNISE AND INVEST IN CARE TO BUILD A FAIR SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF CARE

> **KEY FACT:** *Women carry out 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work every day. When valued at minimum wage this would represent a contribution to the global economy of at least $10.8 trillion a year, more than three times the size of the global tech industry. Yet this work remains largely invisible and undervalued in economic policy debates (Oxfam 2026).*

- **EU-LAC Bi-Regional Pact:** Ensure effective follow-up, implementation, and dedicated funding for the commitments under the EU-LAC Bi-regional Pact on Care, including through EU external financing instruments and regular public reporting on progress within the GAP IV monitoring framework.
- **Care as a public and social good:** Advocate, including in the UN and the multilateral fora, for the recognition of care (including right to receive care, the right to provide care under dignified conditions, and the right to self-care), as a public and social good. Through EU external action, redistribute care responsibilities towards state, private sector, men, households and communities, value the contribution of unpaid, under-paid and informal care to the economy and ensure quality care along the entire life cycle, without discrimination.
- **Dignified human mobility:** Endorse the European Parliament's 2026 INI report and its finding that many care and domestic workers in Europe are migrant women, who face highly precarious situation and experience intersectional discrimination. Advocate for equal labour rights and working conditions, measures for preventing violence, and ensure access to dignified retirement, in line with international labour standards, for all carers.
- **Time-use data:** Support regular and disaggregated (by gender, class, race and migration status) time-use surveys and other care-related data collection in EU partner countries, to make unpaid care and domestic work visible for policy and budgeting.

05 DELIVER ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

> **KEY FACT:** *9 out of 10 peace negotiations at national level are dominated by men as the decision-makers, while research shows that peace agreements are 64% less likely to fail when women participate (Oxfam 2025).*

- **Women as change agents:** Maintain the WPS agenda as a priority in GAP IV, and act on the WPS agenda's foundational principles, not merely to mitigate gendered harms in conflict but to prevent conflict, address its root causes and ensure women in all their diversity and their organizations shape peace, security, stability, humanitarian action, recovery and reconstruction decisions.

- **WPS across EU's external action:** Integrate and commit to the WPS-agenda, across EU external action, including peace mediation, security and defence, humanitarian response, disaster risk reduction, enlargement, neighborhood policy, and migration governance, with explicit responsibilities assigned to relevant EU institutions and delegations.
- **National Action Plans:** Support countries in developing, updating and implementing their National Action Plans (NAP) on WPS by providing dedicated technical and financial assistance and funding local women's organisations to drive the process from within.
- **New WPS Action Plan:** Align GAP IV with the upcoming EU Action Plan on WPS.

06 PROTECT LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS AND ENSURE INTERSECTIONALITY

> **KEY FACT:** *While same-sex sexual acts were legal in 133 out of 202 countries surveyed by 2020, it was not until January 2025 that the International Criminal Court prosecutor explicitly identified LGBTQIA+ people as victims of alleged gender persecution for the first time (Oxfam 2025).*

- **Legal protection:** Prioritise support for decriminalisation and legal protections for LGBTQIA+ people in partner-country engagement and strengthen international legal and monitoring frameworks by promoting recognition of LGBTQIA+ individuals' persecution under international law and integrating this into EU peacebuilding, peacekeeping and transitional justice efforts.
- **Intersectionality:** Apply intersectionality in practice, moving beyond rhetorical commitments to ensure race, class, migration status, disability, sexuality and gender are central to programme design, implementation and evaluation.
- **Creative advocacy:** Support creative and low-visibility advocacy work to mitigate risks, including through storytelling, art and safe narrative framing, and stimulate access to safe community spaces both online and offline, including libraries, helpdesks and community infrastructure for people of diverse SOGIESC.