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# WOMEN AND GIRLS



The rule of law is based on fundamental principles of equality, equal protection and human rights. To achieve gender justice, it is crucial to fight against discrimination and violence, and empower women through the rule of law.

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The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) is working to empower women and girls and ensure gender equality through the rule of law. To achieve this aim, IDLO's Gender Strategy emphasizes the centrality of the rule of law in helping women to become equal partners in decision-making and development, and in achieving justice.

Although gender equality is increasingly a feature of national Constitutions, the law often continues to restrict women's rights and freedoms, dictates their submission to male relatives, limits what they may own, inherit or use, and turns a blind eye when women are subjected to violence.

Dismantling discriminatory laws and structures and replacing them with strong, fair and equitable legal and justice frameworks and an empowered constituency are critical to enabling women's rights and gender equality. Gender discrimination is an affront to human dignity, a challenge to the rule of law and an obstacle to development. Inequality does not only deny women their rightful place in society, it robs societies of the contribution of half of their members.

For these reasons, IDLO has made gender a cross-cutting theme in all its work, as well as the focus of distinct programming, research and advocacy.

## PROGRAMS

Keeping in perspective that strengthened integration of gender in all areas of work is necessary and essential to achieve the robust vision enumerated in its mission, strategic aim and goals, IDLO's Gender Strategy focuses on three substantive areas.

### Combating discriminatory laws and ensuring the emergence of gender-responsive legal and institutional frameworks

In [Kenya](#), IDLO is working with the government to advance implementation of gender equality principles and provisions contained in the Constitution. IDLO is supporting the State Department of Gender, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs to mainstream gender

internally and across various other ministries, including in policy development, legislation, planning and resource allocation. An IDLO-embedded gender advisor is separately assisting the Cabinet Secretary and the Gender Directorate in the Department. With IDLO's support, a Gender Mainstreaming System has been developed for all ministries, departments and agencies and a training of trainers on the Gender Mainstreaming System delivered to government gender focal points. IDLO is also helping compile a national baseline on civil servants' gender balance, as well as developing tools for monitoring gender-sensitive recruitment, promotion and dismissal trends.

IDLO, with the support of DANIDA, is also working to enhance the institutional capacity of the Family Court through technical support and training of family court judges and registry staff on new rules and regulations. IDLO has also been supporting the Kenyan Judiciary to address sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination in the workplace.

In [Liberia](#), IDLO's Promoting Increased Accountability for Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) Program funded by the United States Department of State is focused on enhancing the efficiency, transparency and accountability of Criminal Court E, the specialized court designated to deal exclusively with sexual offenses and improving access to justice and protection mechanisms for survivors of SGBV. The program will support the processing of SGBV cases, and help improve services provided by civil society organizations for survivors and witnesses suffering from SGBV.

In [Tunisia](#), IDLO with funding from the Italian Government is supporting the Tunisian Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood in implementing constitutional provisions on women's rights and the eradication of all forms of violence against women. The project is supporting the development of a legislative reform agenda on gender-based violence, and the adoption of a protocol or guidelines for women's shelters to be applied to the current shelter as well as in the establishment of new ones. IDLO is also working on enhancing the effective participation



of women justice professionals through pilot research, a regional workshop and a capacity development program for women legal professionals.

In [Mongolia](#), IDLO is working to combat domestic violence through improved mechanisms, coordination and capacities of justice sector and other relevant actors. The program, funded by the US Department of State, is bringing together representatives from justice sector institutions and service providers (police, prosecutors, judges, forensic experts, bailiffs, social workers, shelter workers, advocates and civil society organizations) in a consultative and participatory process to enhance cross-sectoral responses to domestic violence.

### Enhancing women's access to justice in formal and informal institutions

In [Afghanistan](#), through the Supporting Access to Justice in Afghanistan (SAJA) program funded by the US Department of State, IDLO is working to improve access to justice through activities targeting legal aid, prosecution of crimes of violence against women, the effectiveness of Women's Protection Centres (shelters), and public legal awareness. This program is building on achievements of the National Justice Sector Strategy (NJSS) Program.

In particular, IDLO is working to increase the effectiveness of the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) units in the Attorney General's Office. Since the establishment of the first EVAW unit in 2010, set up to prosecute violence against women cases, more units were established by the Attorney General's Office with IDLO's support. The units are critical in increasing reporting of violence cases. As of early 2014, more than 4,000 cases had been registered across the country. The EVAW units combat gender crimes and injustices including rape, forced marriage, underage marriage, domestic violence and self-immolation.

In [Honduras](#), IDLO through a program funded by the US Department of State aims to enhance access to justice for women and other survivors of domestic and intra-familial violence. The project will also improve capacity of justice providers and increase legal awareness of communities on domestic and intra-familial violence. Among the outputs of this project is the creation of a comprehensive model to help provide direct legal and support services to survivors of violence, including development of a coordination mechanism for actors to improve

survivor support, investigations and prosecutions on these cases.

### Increasing women's empowerment in sustainable development and economic opportunities

In [Uganda](#) and [Tanzania](#), IDLO, as winners of the *DREAMS Innovation Challenge*, is implementing a project aimed at strengthening the capacity of adolescent girls and young women and their communities to hold service providers accountable for the delivery of quality HIV-related services. The project focuses on the legal and social drivers affecting adolescent girls and young women and their communities' ability to keep HIV service providers accountable by using an innovative blend of legal empowerment and social accountability strategies. Project activities include establishing paralegal pools, conducting community assessments and feedback processes, capacity development on the rights of adolescent girls and young women, legal aspects of HIV service delivery and legal empowerment and social accountability strategies for health service providers, police and justice actors, and policy integration.

In [Burundi](#), IDLO, in partnership with *Stichting Zoa*, is implementing a research project to determine the impact of Land Tenure Registration on land disputes and women's land rights. The project involves two components: (i) assessing the impact of land tenure registration on land disputes and (ii) strengthening women's customary land rights. The second component of the project engages in a series of dialogue with the general populous to support the inclusion of women's customary land rights, with the underlying implication of generating consensus around the need to, and ways to, preserve women's customary land rights in the land tenure registration process, and to protect the results in subsequent community-level dispute resolution.

## RESEARCH

IDLO's study, *Accessing Justice: Models, Strategies and Best Practices on Women's Empowerment* canvasses the impact of legal empowerment interventions targeting women's access to justice in nine countries: Afghanistan, Morocco, Tanzania, Mozambique, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, India and Rwanda. The study highlights the contribution legal empowerment strategies can make to improve the effectiveness and



gender responsiveness of both formal and informal justice institutions.

IDLO's study, *Women, Food, Land: Exploring Rule of Law Linkages* provides an overview of the relationship between gender equality, food security and the rule of law. This reports lays out a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening the synergies between the rule of law and gender equality within sustainable development programs to ensure food security for everyone.

Following IDLO's pledge before the UN General Assembly to inquire into women's participation and representation in justice sector institutions, *Women's Professional Participation in Afghanistan's Justice Sector: Challenges and Opportunities* was published. Based on a unique participatory methodology and featuring an entirely Afghan-led data collection process, the report has been welcomed by justice actors as the first of its kind in Afghanistan's history and an important contribution to ongoing discussions concerning gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment.

## ADVOCACY

In 2015, IDLO joined GQUAL, a campaign that aims to encourage the appointment of qualified women in international courts and other bodies. The GQUAL campaign was launched at the United Nations on the side lines of the General Assembly in September 2015.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

IDLO supports legal and institutional reforms that promote gender equality and empower women and girls to realize their rights. In our work, we strive to:

- Promote women's effective participation in the justice sector
- Ensure gender equality is an integral part of constitutional, legal and institutional reforms
- Enhance women's access to justice and remedies, in both formal and informal settings
- Empower women to meet sustainable development challenges such as climate change, access to land and natural resources and fair economic opportunities.

