



# Changing Attitudes on Gender Equality & Development Co-operation

Insights from the  
OECD Development Communication Network

2 March 2026



# Feminism used to be everywhere



# Feminist foreign policies: France, Spain, Canada and Germany



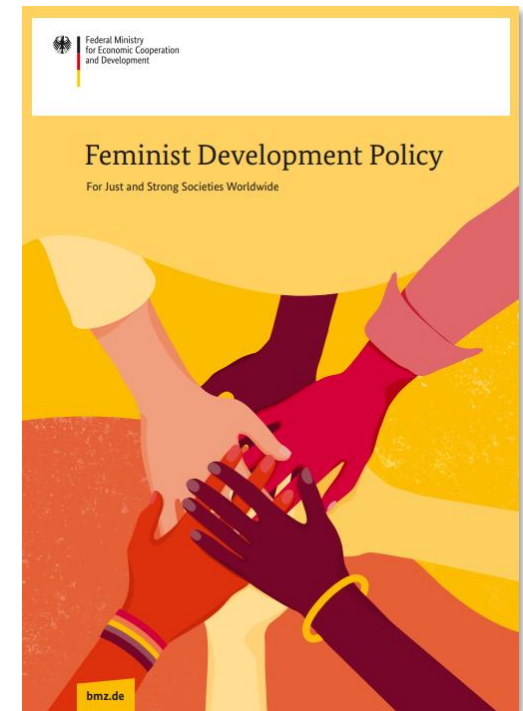
**Source:** [France's International Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy \(2025-2030\)](#)



**Source:** [Spain's Feminist Foreign Policy, 2021](#)



**Source:** [Global Affairs Canada, September 2017](#)



**Source:** [Germany's Feminist Development Policy, 2023](#)

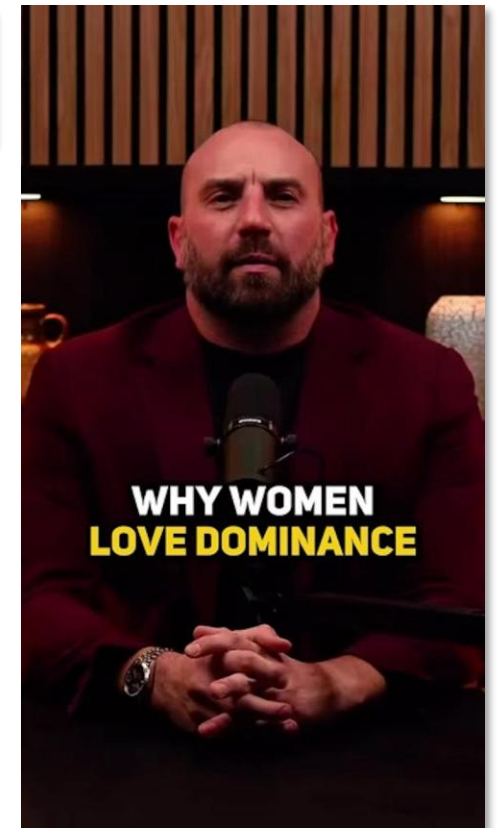
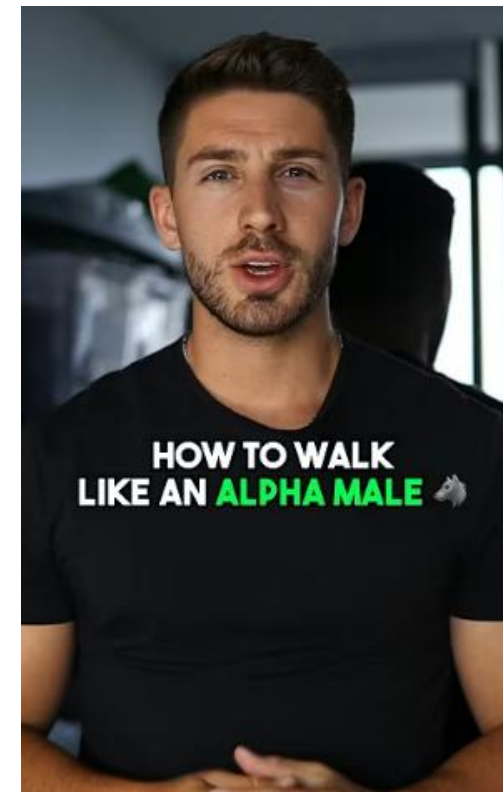
# A global backlash against gender equality?

## Global anti-feminist backlash gains ground after decades of equality gains

Back to the Kitchen? The Tradwife Movement and the Backlash against Feminism

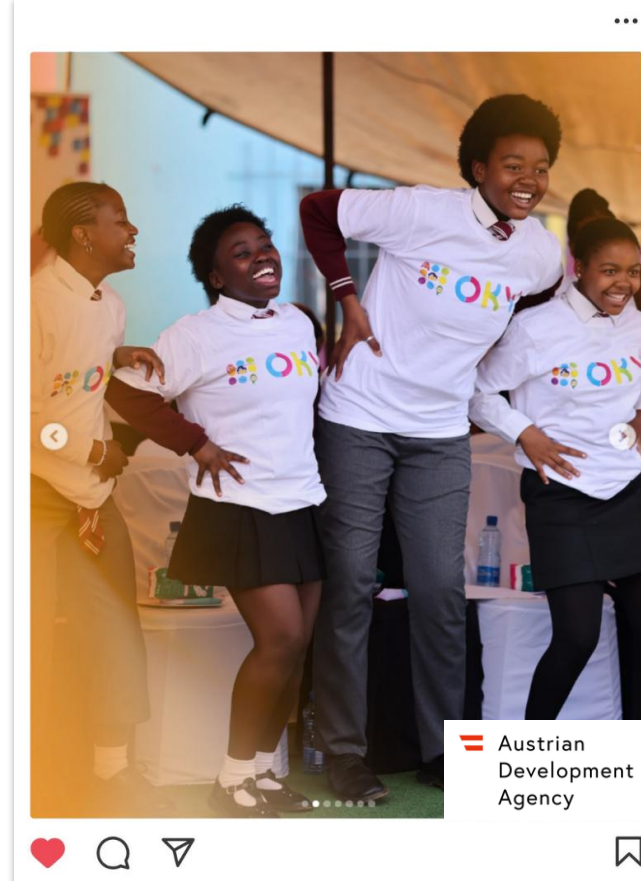
Meet the trad wives: the anti-feminist influencers calling for traditional values

“Gender fatigue” or the backlash against feminist activism



# Different approaches to communicate on gender in 2026

**Many countries** avoid using the word “feminism” in their communication, using more neutral language such as “gender equality”. A lot of output focusses on girls’ education, women’s health and against violence.

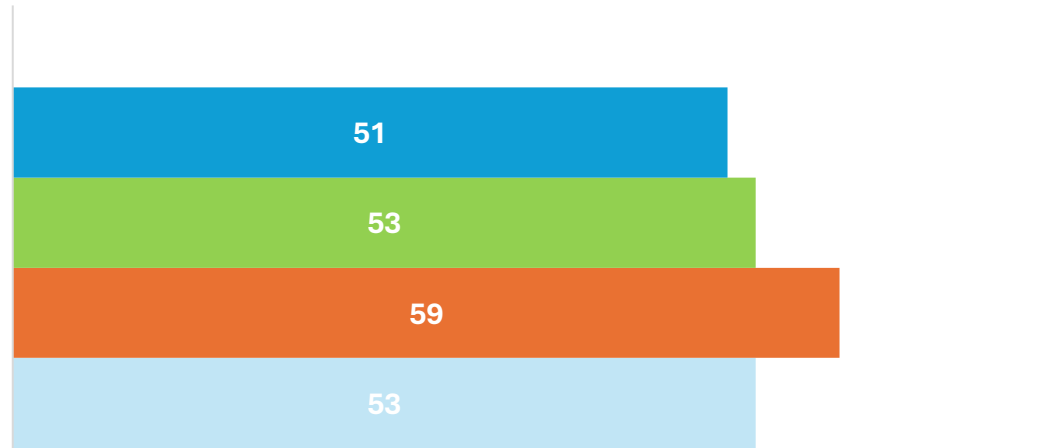


**But some countries** are still using feminist terminology, such as Spain or Germany.

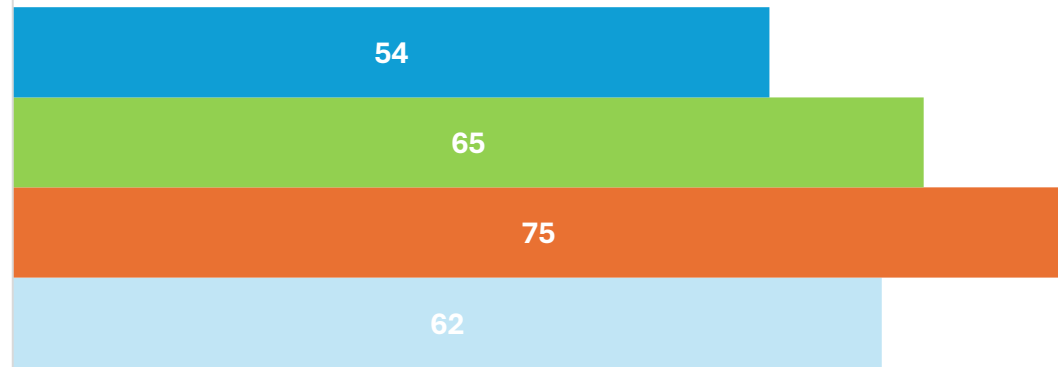


# Public support for tackling gender equality

Ending discrimination against women and girls is necessary to ending poverty



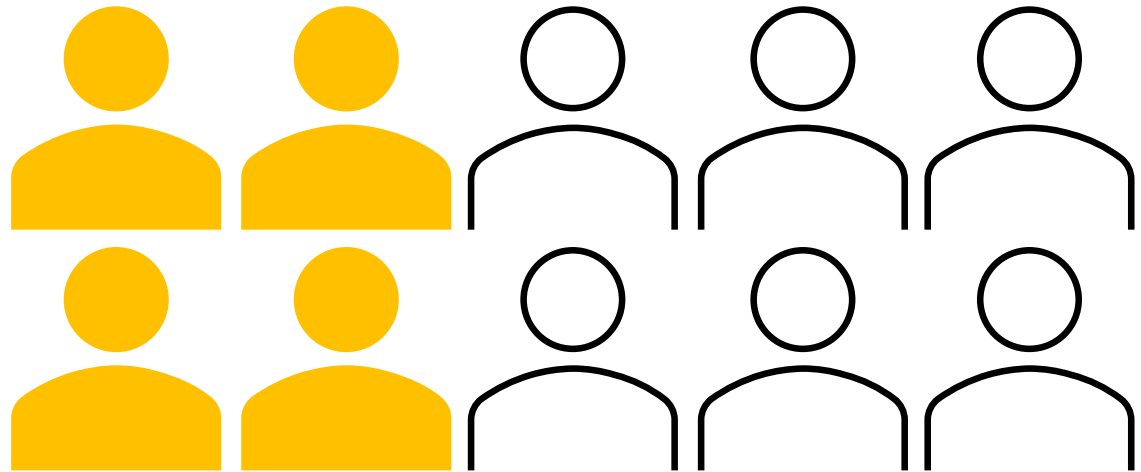
Tackling gender equality is morally the right thing to do



■ US ■ UK ■ FR ■ GER

# Support for government action needs to be stronger

Around **4 in 10 people** want their **government to do more** to address gender equality worldwide.



# Language and messaging matters

- Audiences in **Germany**, the **UK** and the **US** dislike terms such as “**feminist development policy**” and “**gender-inclusive development policy**”
- But “**gender equality**” as a policy priority for development co-operation **is fine**
- Hearing about **other countries’ spending changes people’s minds**: When they hear that other countries increase their aid on gender equality, it makes them want to **increase the amount** of their country’s aid as well



# Six DevCom recommendations to promote gender equality



# 1. Keep it simple when explaining gender equality

MINISTÈRE DE L'EUROPE ET DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES  
Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité

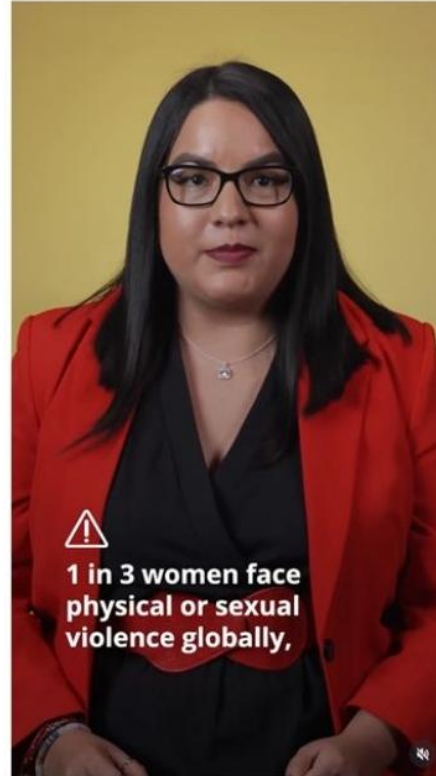


francediplo France will host the 4th Ministerial Conference of Feminist Diplomacy tomorrow. What the hell is this? We explain it to you!

#FFPConference  
#Diplomatiefeministe

Source: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
[Instagram reel](#)

THE WORLD BANK



World Bank's economist and gender specialist [share facts](#) about the state of gender equality around the world.

IFAD  
Investing in rural people



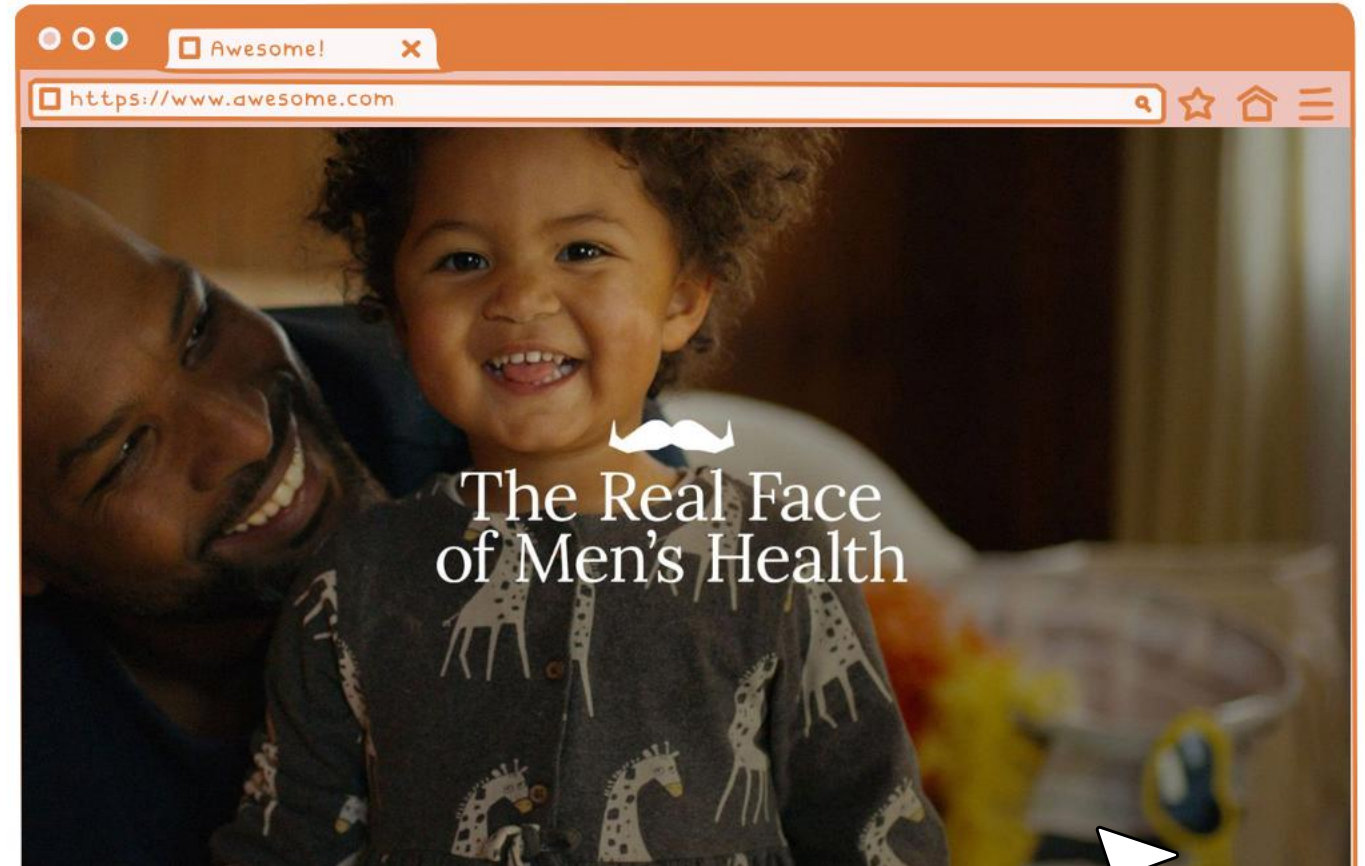
Sabrina Elba, IFAD Goodwill ambassador reveals what [feeling safe as a woman means to her](#).

## 2. Include men in your campaigns



What do these well-known TV and radio personalities — and the future World Cup participants — have in common? They all stand with us and say NO to violence against women. 🙌 Join in. Raise your voice. Violence against women is never acceptable.

**Source:** [Austria Development Agency Instagram post](#), November 2025



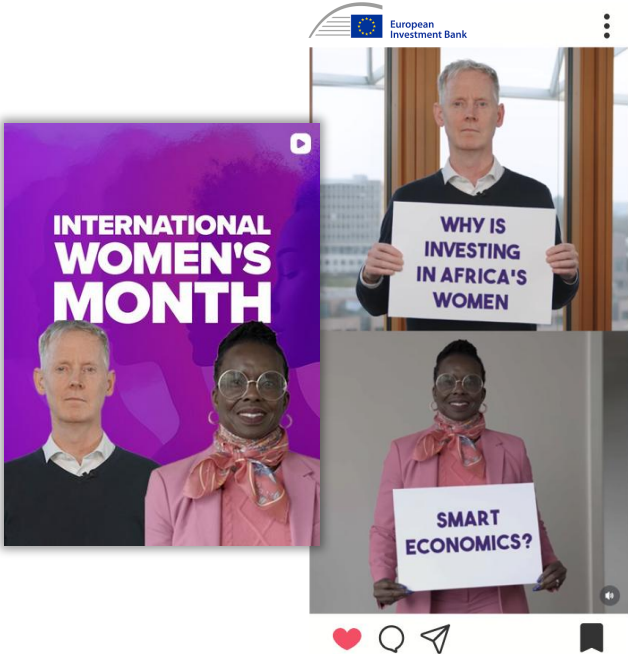
**UN Women** [HeforShe initiative](#) partnered with [Movember Foundation](#).

This collaboration promotes healthy masculinities to advance gender equality.

# 3. Make the business case for gender equality



**Enabel** organised a [high-level dialogue](#) with the private sector, the Minister of Development Cooperation and civil society on gender equality. One of the topics was “From Care to Capital: Bridging Gender, Health, and Economic Empowerment”.

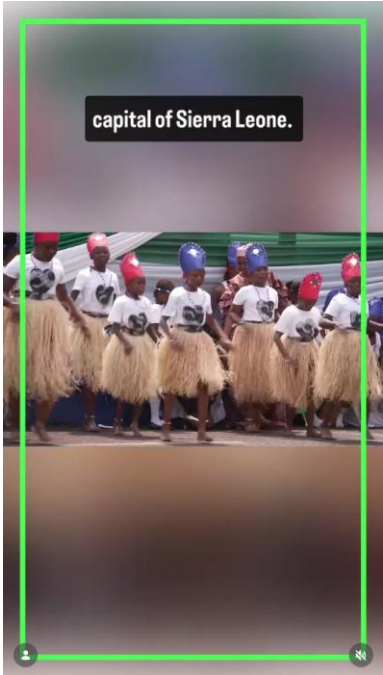


**EIB** explains in this [reel](#) how empowered women can boost GDP, and the private sector’s key role.



**Global Affairs Canada** connects investing in women led businesses with stronger economies in this [X post](#).

# 4. Reach your audiences offline



Sierra Leone



Egypt



Tanzania

On St Brigid's Day, **Irish aid**, embassies and consulates organise events abroad celebrating the achievements of women.



**EIB** was at the 2025 Luxembourg Pride Run, and asked participants what pride meant for them



**DFAT Australia's** teaching resources on gender equality in the context of development cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.



## 5. Use human and relatable stories



[My Better World series](#), produced by NGO Impact(Ed), used relatable female characters to promote girls' empowerment. 95% of viewers said it made them much more likely to support girls' education in their communities.



**SIDA's** development programme manager shares the [positive results](#) of their maternal and children care program in Zambia.

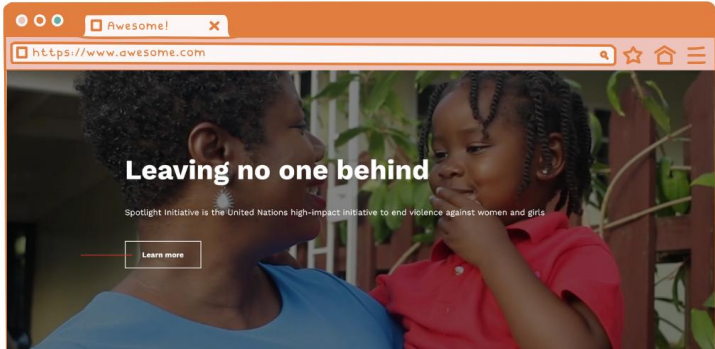
# 6. Tap into emotions by conveying hope and solidarity



Norway and Angola's female handball team are supporting young women in the fight for equality, health and freedom.



In this [FCDO reel](#), UK policing lead Helen Millichap tells activist Jess Davies there's hope in fighting Violence against Women and girls; as she introduces her to FCDO's work with police forces from the UK, Nigeria, Mongolia and Turkmenistan on combatting VAWG.



The [EU-UN Spotlight Initiative](#) motto '*Leaving no behind*' conveys togetherness and solidarity.



# Key resources on making the case on gender equality



## To make the business case for gender equality, time for a fresh framing

Opinion: Changing global realities requires fresh thinking on development finance for gender equality. Updated strategies and coalitions can support new investments.

By *Beth Woroniuk* // 04 February 2026

- [Why is the manosphere on the rise? UN Women sounds the alarm over online misogyny](#), UN News, 2025
- [Can feminist foreign policy go the distance? Overdue reflections following the fourth ministerial conference.](#) ODI Global, December 2025
- [To make the business case for gender equality, time for a fresh framing](#), Devex, 2026
- [Understanding British & cross-national attitudes toward feminist foreign policy & gender equality](#), The Development Engagement Lab, 2023
- [There's not enough money – so why spend it on gender equality and justice?](#) ODI Global, 2025
- [A guide for communicating about gender equality](#), Plan International, Gender Compass, 2025 (pdf)
- [Seven Principles in Communicating for Gender Equality](#), The SDG Communicator, 2020
- [\(En\)countering resistance, Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives](#), Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2018 (pdf)

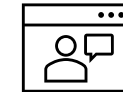
# Thanks! Want to learn more?



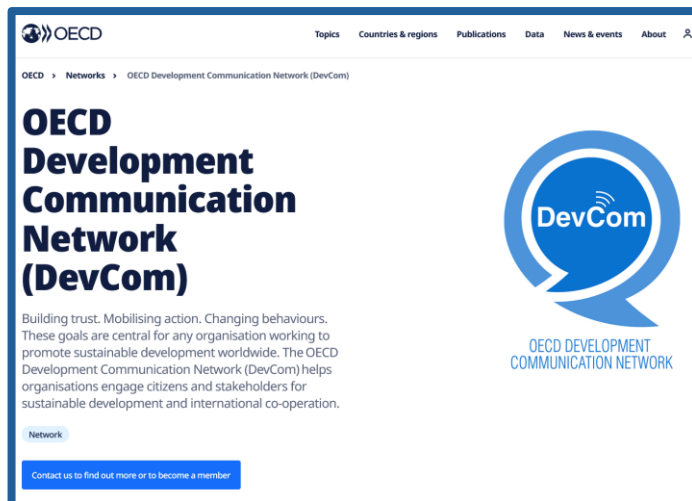
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