Strengthening women’s empowerment and gender equality in fragile contexts towards peaceful and inclusive societies
A systematic review

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Women’s empowerment in FCAS matters!

- World population living in FCAS: 23%
- Women in FCAS living in extreme poverty: 75%
- Proportion of bilateral aid to women’s empowerment and gender equality in FCAS as principal objective: 6%

Top 5 aid recipients for women’s empowerment and gender equality:
- Bangladesh
- Afghanistan
- Myanmar
- Uganda
- Ethiopia
Our focus: gender specific/transformative interventions in FCAS

- **Population**: All genders of all ages at individual and community levels living in FCAS
- **Interventions/Comparison**: Gender specific or gender transformative interventions compared to status quo
- **Outcomes**: Outcomes based on the 3 dimensions of women’s empowerment: resources, agency and achievements
- **Study types**: Rigorous impact evaluation methods
Overview of the Gender SR

- Linked papers: 36
- Programmes: 55
- Interventions: 14
- Fragile countries /contexts: 29
- Linked Qualitative papers: 90
- Studies: 104
Most studies are in Africa and South East Asia
We analysed 14 types of interventions
Interventions have positive effects overall, but effects can be enhanced

**Positive Effect**
Most interventions have significant positive effects on outcomes closely related to the purpose of intervention

**Limitations**
Most interventions do not achieve positive and significant effects for downstream behavioural outcomes (e.g. IPV)

**Multidimensional Effect**
Some interventions have positive effects across the three dimensions of empowerment: Cash transfers, self-help groups, and TVET

**Social Norms**
Norms and restrictive social contexts are barriers to empowerment

**Targeting and design**
Targeting the right level of vulnerability is a key driver of success
Implications for project design and implementation

1. Adjust for restrictive contexts.
2. Target the “right” beneficiaries.
3. Work with local powers and institutions.
4. Promote social capital and exchange.
5. Design for empowerment.
Implications for research

We need standardised, gender-related indices

Encourage and fund more rigorous impact evaluations

Use qualitative data

Look at the long-term

Regions (e.g. MENA) and interventions with evidence gaps need more research

Encourage more mixed-methods IEs

Longer follow-up periods are needed to assess long term benefits