

that foreign aid should be cut, that the U.S. Government will have to simply “do less,” or that there are geographies or programs that can be easily cut without negative impacts to the local communities or U.S. national interests. For example, “graduation” from USAID programming is not a straightforward process which can be undertaken through the creation of one-size-fits-all system. In fact, graduation that is not thoughtful and strategic may cause more long-term problems than it purportedly solves.

Where aid can be delivered more efficiently and effectively, this should be done through the use of:

- Existing best and promising practices
- High quality data (from governments, multilateral organizations, and civil society), including the consistent and transparent use of sex and age disaggregated data, to target programs to those it will most benefit
- Innovative approaches to international development
- New technologies for program design, implementation and evaluation
- Removal of barriers which undermine the U.S.’s ability to work with the most effective partners

Furthermore, investing in research is critical to improving foreign aid effectiveness and efficiency in the long-term. This includes increased investment in:

- Research to understand and develop new practices and proof-of-concept programming
- Data collection methods and efforts to further improve targeting of assistance and an understanding of impact
- Technology and innovation that can improve current and future programs

In addition, shifting focus away from empowering women and girls under the guise of finding “efficiencies” would undermine rather than streamline the U.S. Government’s ability to be effective. The U.S. Government’s work with women and girls has proven to have catalytic and multiplier impacts that go beyond the initial investment of resources. Research by the International Monetary Fund has found that gender inequality is, quite simply, bad for economic growth³ and that the stability and economic growth of other nations helps the U.S. In fact, 11 of America’s top 15 trading partners were once recipients of U.S. foreign aid.⁴

Serving vulnerable and marginalized communities: Efforts to redesign U.S. foreign assistance must not ignore marginalized groups, including but not limited to women and girls, sexual and gender minorities, people living with HIV, ethnic and religious minorities, people living in poverty, those living in hard to reach regions, people living with disabilities, and indigenous peoples. Dedicated standalone policies and programs designed to address the unique needs of these populations are critical and necessary but are not sufficient in and of themselves. Investing in women and girls by mainstreaming gender equality

³ Hakura, Dalia, Mumtaz Hussain, Monique Newiak, Vimal Thakoor, and Fan Yang. “Inequality, Gender Gaps and Economic Growth: Comparative Evidence for Sub-Saharan Africa.” IMF Working Paper. June 2016. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2016/wp16111.pdf>

⁴ U.S. Global Leadership Coalition. “Here’s Why Foreign Assistance is Important.” January 4, 2017. <http://www.usglc.org/2016/01/04/heres-why-foreign-assistance-is-important/>