

Dear Kitty van der Heijden and Pascalle Grotenhuis,

We are very pleased with the development of the Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) by the Netherlands. We feel supported by the fact that the FFP, as proposed in the recent [letter to the House of Representatives](#), takes Article 1 from the Constitution as its starting point, addressing equality and non-discrimination for all.

However, we are concerned that the proposed actions for its implementation rely on a well-intentioned but limited perspective towards gender mainstreaming and LGBTIQ+ rights. As organisations that work with groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, we are convinced that the ambitions of the FFP can only be reached through a truly intersectional approach. In this letter, we therefore share our suggestions on how to integrate an intersectional approach into the Dutch FFP. This includes a tool we developed to fully integrate intersectionality into decision making processes at the Ministries responsible for foreign policy areas. We hope that these recommendations support the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in the development of the FFP framework.

Why an intersectional approach is a key to success

- *It addresses root causes of inequality:* Intersectionality is about identifying and addressing the multiple systems of oppression and exclusion that produce marginalisation and discrimination.
- *It is transformative:* An intersectional approach brings the voices and experiences of those who are most marginalised to the forefront, so that systems of oppression and exclusion can be identified and exposed by those who are impacted by them the most. Such an approach also provides space for agency in addressing unique, multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination. As such, power dynamics are deeply transformed not only as an outcome, but throughout the whole process.
- *It is unifying:* In the current context of increasing polarisation and forces that undermine feminist movements, it is increasingly important to stand united and not let these forces create division in our common goal of equality. Moreover, when it comes to internally ‘walking the talk’ throughout the Ministries (incl. embassies) involved in implementation of the FFP, an intersectional approach helps to bring all staff on board. Supporting staff at all levels to reflect on the *various parts* of their own identity that may experience marginalisation or privilege, helps in creating internal ownership of the FFP.

Three actions to incorporate an intersectional lens

Based on our experience - and in the spirit of partnership - we hereby propose three actions which we believe would help to incorporate an intersectional lens. They relate to some of the focus areas mentioned in the recent progress letter on the Dutch FFP:

- *Embedding an intersectional lens:* For an appropriate analysis of policies and programmes, gender tools which only look at the power dynamics between men and women will not be sufficient for addressing root causes of overall power dynamics and inequality. To complement or adapt (not replace) existing tools, we have developed 10 questions that can be utilised during the development, implementation and evaluation of Dutch foreign policy areas under the newly adopted FFP (see annex). Answering these questions will highlight whether indeed no one is left behind, and what can be done to involve those affected by a certain policy. We also have various guidelines, videos and other training materials on intersectionality available, which could support staff in applying this intersectional lens.

- **Meaningful participation:** An intersectional approach fosters a diversity of points of view and prioritises diverse forms of knowledge, including from those typically excluded from 'expert' roles. Lived experiences are viewed as valuable sources of knowledge. Mechanisms of meaningful and ongoing engagement of communities impacted by the policies need to be put in place, throughout the stages of policy-making, implementation and evaluation. To support the development of such mechanisms, an FFP Advisory Committee can be set up to be a critical sounding board, consisting of representatives with diverse backgrounds, tapping into the rich knowledge and expertise of diverse social movements, practitioners and scholars of the Global South. Our coalition could support the co-creation of such a Committee, drawing lessons from mechanisms existing within MoFA and other countries. Another interesting mechanism is the DID4All Helpdesk, which was set up by DFAT in partnership with a disability NGO and a knowledge institute.
- **Setting the agenda & promoting learning:** The FFP ministerial conference in The Hague in 2023 provides an excellent opportunity for a session to address the crucial principle of intersectionality, to share the Dutch experience of the Voice fund (and other intersectional Strategic Partnerships), and to benefit from experiences of civil society stakeholders as well as governments who have taken an explicitly intersectional approach in their FFP (e.g. Spain).

Please note that these actions are not meant as an exhaustive set of recommendations on intersectionality. We understand them as being part of a long term process of transformation, which is layered and nonlinear. We truly hope that in partnership and dialogue with you, we can achieve the high ambitions that a transformative FFP deserves and requires.

We would gladly contribute to this process and would very much appreciate an opportunity to discuss the above suggestions with you.

With kind regards, on behalf of the organisations listed below,

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