

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

The longstanding mission of USAID is to “advance a free, peaceful, and prosperous world” through development and disaster assistance, with the end goals of saving lives, reducing poverty, strengthening democratic governance, and helping people to emerge from humanitarian crises. This mission is grounded in universal goals that are intentionally broad and nonideological. Packaging our foreign aid in the language and ideology of radical gender theory, however, is in stark contrast to USAID’s mission.

The draft policy says that “USAID affirms and celebrates lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) people and all people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics as integral parts of every society.” However, it does not address whether USAID also celebrates people outside these categories, which suggests an exclusionary approach to development. Efforts to highlight specific individuals or groups on the basis of a subjective gender identity or sexual orientation is antithetical to promoting human rights on the basis of inherent human dignity.

The document also states, “USAID recommits to its staff, local partners, the international community, other development agencies, and program participants around the world,” while neglecting to mention its commitment to serving the interests of the American people. This is a glaring omission.

Rather than informing development approaches and defining practices for LGBTQI+ programs, the purpose of this policy appears to be to promote a radical ideology, as is illustrated by its references to “intersectionality.” The concept of “intersectionality” is a neo-Marxist notion found in Critical Theory which defines people as the sum of immutable characteristics and amplifies categories of “oppression.” Today, this ideology is espoused by the Democratic Party in the United States, but it has little support within the general American population, and it is rejected by Republicans as divisive and anti-American. It is entirely inappropriate for USAID, which is supposed to be a neutral and non-partisan government agency, to corrupt its development and humanitarian programs with a radical ideology.

Gender ideology is offensive to many of the peoples and cultures that USAID programming is intended to assist. Much of the developing world embraces religion and adheres to traditional moral values. But efforts by USAID and other Western donors to use political and financial power to compel developing countries to adopt “LGBTQI+” policies and laws has led to opposition from local leaders and ordinary citizens, who see the imposition of alien ideology and foreign social mores as an aggressive form of neo-colonialism. The draft policy refers to these dissenters as “the antigender movement” and “undemocratic actors,” without defining “antigender,” or explaining how citizens participating in a political debate within their own country is “undemocratic,” while foreigners dictating law and policy is not.

This draft policy references several other U.S. Government policies that are deeply problematic and radical, in particular the U.S. National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality and the USAID Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy. As evidence of the partisan and ideological nature of this document, all of the policies cited as informing it were developed over the last two years by the Biden administration. None of the policies cited in the document were enacted under a Republican administration.

BACKGROUND

The fact that 64 countries criminalize consensual same-sex relations between adults (as noted in the draft policy) should lead USAID to foster greater respect for the religious and cultural traditions of those societies, not to entangle development programs with ideological colonization to promote social acceptance of sexual behavior that is offensive to many. There is no human right to engage in sexual relations outside of marriage, and consequently many countries regulate or prohibit behavior such as adultery, fornication, prostitution and pedophilia. Such public morality laws do not violate human rights.

This draft policy asserts that "civil and political rights are indivisible from economic, social, and cultural rights." This is patently false. The U.S. has not ratified the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, and as a matter of longstanding U.S. policy, economic, social and cultural rights are not on par with civil and political rights, which are enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and in many federal and state laws.

GOALS

The draft policy acknowledges its primary purpose to force legal and cultural change in the developing world through Development Diplomacy. This entails using American foreign assistance programs to engage in "agenda setting, promulgating norms and precedents, and encouraging multisectoral investments that support LGBTQI+ inclusive development globally." As stated above, it is inappropriate for U.S. government employees to advocate for controversial policies or their preferred priorities in a USAID policy document.

POLICY INTO PRACTICE

This draft policy requires every USAID Mission have a LGBTQI+ Focal Point. The intended purpose of this Focal Point appears to be to advance and protect the ideological agenda internally, among employees and partners. The requirement that all USAID employees and contractors complete a training program on "LGBTQI+ 101: LGBTQI+ Inclusion in USAID's Workplace" amounts to political indoctrination.