



In focus:
Feminist
development
policy



Crisis management in practice

BMZ Newsletter

Dear reader,

Thank you for your interest in the **fourth issue** of the 'Crisis Management in Practice' newsletter. It will give you insights into how we at BMZ steer our two crisis response instruments based on evidence: **Transitional Development Assistance and the Special Initiative Displaced Persons and Host Countries (SIGA) with the Partnership for Prospects (BONO)**.

On March 1, **minister Svenja Schulze presented her strategy for a feminist development policy**. In late 2021, BMZ committed itself to a **feminist development policy** that is aimed at a gender-just society and equal participation of all people in social, political and economic spheres – regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity or other traits. To address structural inequalities and discrimination, an intersectional approach is necessary, which recognises that different dimensions of discrimination can be both interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

However, what do we actually know about how development cooperation affects **gender equality**? Let us take a closer look at this question.

'We are living in times of multiple crises that are making existing gender inequalities particularly evident. The reasons for this are discriminatory social structures, norms and roles, which must be overcome if we want to achieve gender equality and sustainable democracies. And this is precisely why we need a feminist development policy, especially in times of crisis.'

Svenja Schulze

Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation
and Development (BMZ)



What are we achieving with our crisis response instruments in ... ?

Chad: Strengthening women's reproductive health



On average, a woman in Chad gives birth to six children, but maternal and infant mortality is among the highest in the world. Transitional Development Assistance contributes through UNICEF to reducing the health risks of mothers and children. They gain **better access to healthcare services** and facilities, even in remote areas. Women receive information on family planning and pregnant women get access to pre- and post-natal medical check-ups as well as to professional birth attendance. For this purpose, obstetricians such as midwives or doctors are trained.

In addition, the population receives **information on HIV/AIDS** and access to tests is increased. Since newborns are often infected with the virus, they need to be protected as a precaution. Moreover, the malnutrition of mothers and their children is prevented and treated, **access to clean drinking water and sanitation** is improved and better hygiene practices are developed by the population.

→ **Video:** WFP and UNICEF jointly strengthen the resilience of women and girls in the Sahel region (5 min.)



FEMINIST DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Henceforth, BMZ aims to consistently gear its work towards gender equality. **By 2025**, we will gradually increase the percentage of bilateral funding designed to foster gender equality from the current level of **around 60 per cent to 93 per cent**.

GENDER EQUALITY IN CRISIS RESPONSE

In order to promote gender equality in the Special Initiative Displaced Persons and Host Countries and in Transitional Development Assistance, all projects need to target gender equality as **at least a secondary objective** (giving them a 'GG1' marker).

BMZ's implementation partners are being encouraged increasingly to implement projects in which gender equality is the **principal objective**. The 'GG2' marker crucially emphasizes gender equality for the implementation of the project. There are already several such GG2-marked projects in the portfolios of both crisis response instruments.

Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador: Displaced LGBTQI+ youth



In 2021, some 125,000 unaccompanied children and many families left Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador for Mexico or the USA, although they had little chance of entering these countries legally. They fled violence, precarious living conditions, and a lack of education and work opportunities. After being forced to return to their countries of origin, their educational and work prospects are even lower. Especially young people who belong to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, and inter* (LGBTQI+) community experience structural discrimination and gender-based violence during displacement and in their communities of origin. A GIZ project offers them educational and job opportunities as well as psychosocial support. In cooperation with local NGOs, state and civil society organisations in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, and Costa Rica have been trained to provide psychosocial support to LGBTQI+ children and young people and their families, while at the same time sensitising the population.



‘What the LGBTQI+ population demands most is respect. This opens the doors to educational opportunities and advancement as a human being, without stigma.’

Brenda Rosales, Gender & Diversity Unit, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of El Salvador

Lebanon: Psychosocial work with migrant workers affected by racism



Many women migrate to Lebanon to earn money as domestic workers. Under the prevailing Kafala system, however, they have no protection under labour law and often experience racism and sexualised violence. GIZ helps improve the **mental health** of affected migrant workers by strengthening peer support structures. Migrant workers in key positions in the communities develop **skills** in protected spaces that enable them to provide psychosocial care to others without placing themselves under too much strain. They offer psychosocial activities in their communities, e.g., theatre workshops in which women process their experiences of oppression and exclusion.

‘Sharing my story with someone else helped me to understand that I’m not alone, which was very important for me.’

says Viany from Cameroon, who works in Lebanon.



➔ Transitional Development Assistance’s country fact sheet of Lebanon (EN, GER)

South Sudan: Women brace themselves against the floods



In South Sudan, climate change is causing more frequent and intense floods and droughts. The most devastating flood in 60 years destroyed in autumn 2023 a large amount of crops and drinking water supplies. 770,000 people, including many women and girls, were forced to flee. The NGO Welthungerhilfe supports them to develop new sources of income that allow them better prospects for the future. For example, women and girls are learning how to process **food** which they can sell at markets. In **village savings groups**, women are improving their skills in managing money responsibly in order to save and invest efficiently – and thus to prepare themselves as a community better for future **extreme weather events and environmental disasters** and to mitigate the impacts.



➔ Transitional Development Assistance’s country fact sheet of South Sudan (EN, GER)

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH PARTICIPATION: GLOBAL ACTION NETWORK ON FORCED DISPLACEMENT – WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

In 2020, BMZ initiated the Action Network on Forced Displacement – Women as Agents of Change with the aim of strengthening women's visibility and their voice as actors in situations of displacement as well as fostering their economic and political participation.

In September 2022, the 30 members met in Berlin with supporters from the realms of international politics and civil society. A dialogue between German Development Minister Svenja Schulze,

Taban Shores, genocide survivor and founder of the NGO Lotus Flower in northern Iraq, and Anila Noor, co-founder of the Global Independent Refugee Women Leaders network discussed at how **refugee policy can achieve more equity and is more participatory in the future.**

A feminist understanding of development policy in connection with displacement calls for genuine participation and direct dialogue with women as agents of change. Local knowledge and personal experience of displacement can be an essential basis for effective development cooperation. Displaced persons should be given room to speak for themselves, know and assert their rights, and take on leadership roles.



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HOW DO WE COOPERATE WITH UN WOMEN?



UN Women is an important partner in promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls in all their diversity. In Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Syria, GIZ has been implementing the project Promoting Women's Participation in Peace Processes in the Middle East together with UN Women since 2016. This enhances women's political participation and influence in peace and transition processes. In line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, this is intended to contribute to lasting peace in the region.

How we implement based on evidence



The projects of the crisis response instruments are meant to contribute effectively to gender equality and support marginalised people strongly affected by crises to improve their living conditions. We thus support the generation of evidence and incorporate research findings in our projects and policy-making.

DEval evaluation: gender equality in the aftermath of violence and conflict

The evaluation **Supporting Gender Equality in Post-Conflict Contexts**, carried out by the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval), confirms that BMZ's procedures are suitable for strengthening gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

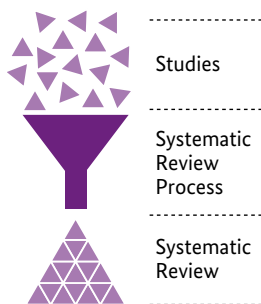
In practice, however, challenges arise: procedures rarely systematically consider **experiences of conflict**, which affect people differently based on their gender. Few projects implement activities that specifically aim to transform gender relations and roles. However, some of the projects under review had an **indirect positive impact on gender roles and norms**, particularly through **psychosocial support and income generation**. This potential should continue to be used for development cooperation. It is also important to regard strengthening gender equality and peacebuilding as interdependent.

→ Policy Brief (4 pages)

Women's empowerment and gender equality: which measures work best, and when?



On behalf of the BMZ, the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) conducted a **systematic review** on **Strengthening Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Fragile Contexts**. For this purpose, 14 measures designed to promote gender equality (in a gender-sensitive and gender-transformative manner) were analysed from over 100 rigorous impact evaluations.



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→ Findings in newsletter issue 3

BMZ recommends that implementing partners put the following findings into practice:

1. The **strength of the evidence** varies between different kinds of interventions. There is no intervention that can guarantee a positive impact in every situation. Interventions need to be **embedded in the context** and take into account relevant social norms and **gender roles**.
2. **Cash- and asset-transfers** are very well researched (strong evidence base) and have been **found to be particularly effective**. They should therefore be used more frequently. The **village community** should be involved in order to make households aware of their opportunity to participate in **cash and asset-transfers**.
3. There is also positive evidence for the impacts of **self-help groups and village savings and loan associations**. In particular, very poor women who are excluded from economic participation should be addressed. Self-help groups and savings associations are the only interventions studied that also reduce **domestic violence**.
4. **Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)** has a positive impact mainly on women's **self-image**, rather than on their access to employment. Programmes of this sort should only be implemented if **prior analyses** have identified a relevant shortage of skilled labour and societal barriers are addressed, such as traditional role models that prevent women from working or allow them to enter only certain professions. Some measures should be implemented **exclusively** for women, e.g., in male-dominated, technical professions.
5. Only few measures had an impact on **people's behaviour and social norms**. Besides cash transfers, **life skills, social and livelihood skills and capacity-building** reduced the acceptance of **violence against women**. These measures were even more effective when linked with **vocational training**.
6. Joint activities with **men** can help them to better understand the roles and realities of women in everyday life. These activities need to be designed sensitively and tailored to the context so as not to have negative effects. In training sessions for **men and boys**, for example, they can be made more aware of the consequences of male partner violence and taught how to deal with conflict without resorting to violence.
7. There are promising findings related to **inclusive development within the community**. If women are enabled to participate more in economic, political, and social decision-making, it is important to involve **established administrative structures** and promote cooperation between **institutions**. When community actors work with local structures and involve for example, **local and religious leaders** in project planning, they can enhance women's participation.
8. **Awareness-raising campaigns** help foster acceptance of gender equality measures. Men and **traditional and religious leaders and institutions** should also be involved in them. Activities are more effective when carried out **over a longer period of time**.

- ➔ **Brief/Summary** (6 pages)
- ➔ **Full report** (503 pages)
- ➔ **Brief explanatory video** (5 min.)
- ➔ Podcast episode: **Enhancing women's economic empowerment through financial services and social protection** (13 min.)



In Somalia, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe has trained displaced women to produce soap that they sell at markets.

How can the inclusion of refugees in national systems be promoted?



In recent decades, displaced persons have mainly been accommodated and cared for in humanitarian camps, but the number of displaced persons around the world is now at an all-time high. Situations of displacement are more protracted, making them an issue to be addressed by development cooperation. Rather than being in parallel systems such as camps, displaced people should have access to the same national systems as the local population from the outset. This enables more sustainable and cost-effective care in the longer term and can help forge social cohesion between displaced persons and host communities.

An analysis commissioned by BMZ has examined the extent to which the the Special Initiative Displaced Persons and Host Countries (SIGA) fosters the inclusion of displaced persons in national systems (such as social protection, education, and health). It is focused on approaches to inclusion at the political, institutional, and individual levels. The analysis came to the conclusion that **45% of all Special Initiative projects** already explicitly support the inclusion of displaced persons in national systems. The majority of them work with approaches at **institutional or individual level**, rather than the political level. Inclusion seems to work better in the education and health sectors than in employment promotion.

Furthermore, the analysis identifies **different influencing factors** that demonstrate the effectiveness of inclusion. The legal framework and the political will of the host countries, for instance, have a significant impact. While at the institutional level the awareness of actors in key roles is crucial, at the individual level it is gender-specific norms that marks an important factor.

Evidence-based psychosocial support for children and families



Around the world, children suffering from displacement, violence or school closures often have **poor access to appropriate psychosocial support**. However, particularly children urgently need this kind of support. In fact, there are very few forms of psychosocial support for children that involve the **entire family**.

On behalf of BMZ, the NGO WarChild has devised a family-based psychosocial measure for parents and their 10- to 17-year-old children, in conjunction with the Collateral Repair Project in Jordan, and has studied the effectiveness of this intervention. The intervention was unique in that it was developed with families from East Amman. The approach involves the whole family working on communication, problem solving and conflict resolution, as well as their family identity. The study indicates that involving the parents not only enhances the children's well-being, but actually benefits the entire family.

‘Before I used to be shy, but after joining the programme I became more open and actually can share my opinions with others and share my thoughts with my family’

Eman, a participant in the WarChild project in Jordan



The linkage between the oppression of women and fragile states



In the study **The First Political Order: How Sex Shapes Governance and National Security Worldwide**, Hudson, Brown and Nielsen 2020 use empirical data to demonstrate a statistical correlation between **the oppression of women in households and adverse developments for society as a whole**: strongly patriarchal countries in which women

have fewer rights and are more frequently exposed to domestic violence are less stable overall and more marked by violence. These states are often **more fragile, more authoritarian, more corrupt, and poorer**.

According to the authors, **strengthening domestic equality** should be in the interest of a state’s national security and development. However, it should be noticed, that the study does not make **any state-ments about causal relationships**, and does not conclude that gender equality by necessity results in less fragility. Furthermore, it should be considered that the study does not take into account the colonial past and does not address the intersectionality of discrimination.

→ The OECD’s **Social Institutions & Gender Index (SIGI)** also examines key **factors of discrimination** against women at domestic and national level. For this purpose, laws as well as social norms and practices are included.

More data on the situation of women and girls in fragile contexts can be found here:

- **Women, Peace and Security Index** of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS)
- **The WomanStats Project** examines the links between the situation and security of women and the security, stability and conduct of states.

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