



Feminist Development Policy

For Just and Strong Societies Worldwide

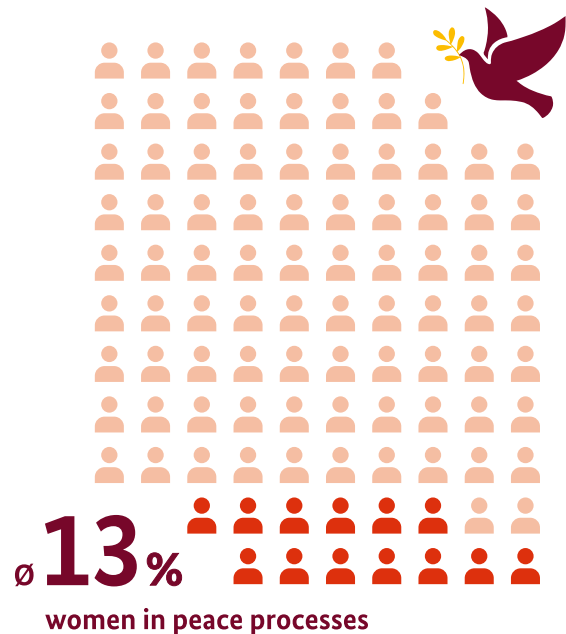
Feminist development policy is human rights policy; it is also a question of justice. It is one of the keys to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. When people have equal rights to participate in political, economic and social life – regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, skin colour or any other characteristics – societies are stable and peaceful.

The starting point: Feminist development policy is more necessary than ever

Global crises are putting the realisation of human rights at risk and entrenching existing inequalities.

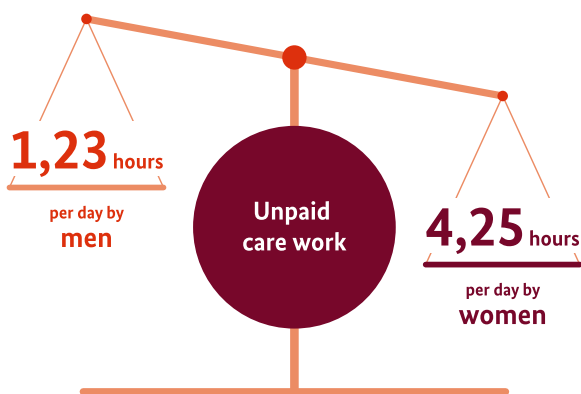
→ Conflicts are not gender-neutral.

In wars or armed conflicts, women are particularly exposed to sexual violence. And in peace processes, they are systematically underrepresented. Between 1992 and 2019, only 13 per cent of negotiators in peace processes were women.¹



¹ Council on Foreign Relations (2021): *Women's Participation in Peace Processes*.

- **The climate crisis is widening these inequalities.** In 2021, climate disasters prevented at least 4 million girls in low and lower-middle income countries from continuing their education.²
- **Housework and the work of caring for children, old people and the sick makes it harder for women to access education and jobs.** Women perform around 75 per cent of all unpaid care work.³ They do over 200 days of unpaid care work a year. That is time taken away from education, work or getting involved in politics.⁴



LGBTIQ+ people experience discrimination nearly everywhere. Same-sex sexual acts are a criminal offence in 64 countries and are punishable by death in at least six countries.⁵

Women, girls and marginalised groups can offer solutions to the challenges of today. They are **drivers of social change and justice**. The BMZ's Strategy on Feminist Development Policy was published in March 2023 and applies to all sectors, regions and instruments of German development policy. It draws on extensive discussions with, in particular, civil society organisations and experts from the Global South and North.

Future parameters of German development policy

Feminist development policy is guided by a vision of a just world in which all people can participate as equals. It is aimed at eliminating the structural causes of inequality. The focus is on overcoming gender inequality, as women and girls are the largest group in society facing discrimination.

Feminist development policy is made up of the following five key elements. It is founded on **human rights** and the associated principles of non-discrimination, equal opportunities, participation, empowerment, transparency and accountability. It also pursues a **gender-transformative** approach by explicitly focusing on eliminating discriminatory structures, including power structures, and also social norms and behavioural patterns. What is more, it does not look at inequalities in isolation but takes into account the various overlapping forms of discrimination (**intersectionality**). And finally, feminist development policy takes a **post-colonial** and **anti-racist** approach and seeks **broad alliances** within the international community and civil society.

The BMZ implements feminist development policy in four action areas. With their strategic aims, they form the frame of reference for the implementing organisations of German development cooperation.

² Malala Fund (2021): *A greener, fairer future. Why leaders need to invest in climate and girls' education*.

³ International Labour Organization (2018): *Care Work and Care Jobs for the future of decent work*.

⁴ Dalberg (2019): *It's About Time. The case for valuing women and girls' unpaid care work*.

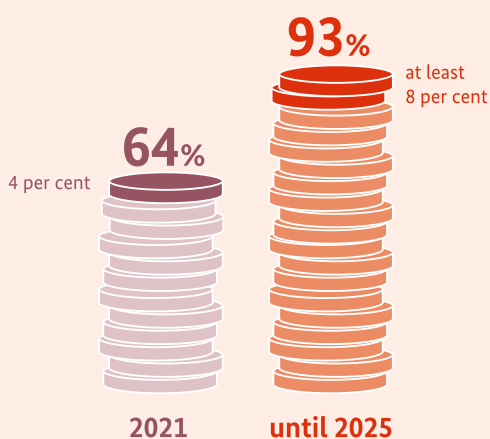
⁵ ILGA Database: *Legal Frameworks. Criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual acts*.

Action area 1**Rights, representation and resources – strengthening the “three Rs” in German development cooperation**

Strengthening rights, eliminating discriminatory laws and norms, ensuring equal access to and control over resources, equal representation and increased opportunities to exert influence are key factors for just, resilient, sustainable and peaceful societies that leave no one behind. These “three Rs” are the key starting points for the BMZ’s feminist development policy in all sectors and regions. The BMZ encourages its implementing organisations to systematically integrate the strengthening of the “three Rs” into programme planning and delivery.

Action area 2**Anchoring a feminist approach across the BMZ portfolio**

The BMZ will develop its projects and programmes in qualitative terms to align them with feminist development policy. There will be an increased focus in particular on the embedding of gender-transformative and intersectional approaches and participation by local actors. By 2025, the BMZ will use 93 per cent of **newly committed project funds to support gender equality. The proportion of funds for measures with the principal objective of gender equality** is to be doubled, taking it to at least eight per cent.

Gender equality portfolio**Action area 3****Building international alliances and working with feminist civil society**

In order to be successful and further strengthen the “three Rs”, it is important to find strong allies and build feminist alliances at the international level. The BMZ consistently integrates a feminist perspective so as to eliminate discriminatory structures in the context of cooperation. It is in close dialogue with partner governments and takes into account country-specific contexts and priorities. The BMZ will also advocate for feminist development policy through its work within the multilateral system and international institutions. And it is working to enable the knowledge, experience and solutions provided by women’s networks, women’s rights movements, LGBTIQ+ organisations and human rights defenders in the Global South to be integrated into political and economic decision-making processes.

Action area 4**Leading by example: developing the BMZ’s own structures and skills**


A feminist development policy is only credible and workable if it is accompanied by a continuous learning and adjustment process in relation to internal structures, processes and working methods. This must include an in-depth reflection on the attitudes and beliefs of employees and on the working methods applied in the cooperation with partners. Only then is it possible to avoid reproducing and institutionalising existing power inequalities.

Implementation of feminist development policy

The BMZ advocates for a whole-of-government dialogue, particularly with the German Federal Foreign Office, in order to safeguard the coherence of feminist and human rights-based approaches in external action.

With the publication of its **Third Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality 2023 – 2027**, the BMZ has laid out its goals, measures and indicators for the implementation of its feminist development policy. In the monitoring of the

Action Plan, the BMZ will use feminist approaches and methods as far as possible and will evaluate and reflect on the initial findings annually. The Action Plan was developed in cooperation with civil society from the Global South and Global North, the academic community, and the implementing organisations engaged in realising German development cooperation. A committee of civil society representatives will support its implementation.

The full Feminist Development Policy Strategy, the Third Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality (2023 - 2027) and further information on the topic can be found on the [BMZ website](#). 



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ADDRESSES OF THE BMZ OFFICES

→ BMZ Bonn
Dahlmannstraße 4
53113 Bonn, Germany
Tel. +49 (0) 228 99 535 - 0

→ BMZ Berlin
Stresemannstraße 94
10963 Berlin, Germany
Tel. +49 (0) 30 18 535 - 0

CONTACT

postelle@bmz.bund.de
www.bmz.de