



Comments from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) on the DEval Evaluation Report: "Promoting Gender Equality in Post-Conflict Contexts"

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) welcomes the detailed report submitted by the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) entitled "Promoting Gender Equality in Post-Conflict Contexts".

German development cooperation has set itself the goal of contributing worldwide to gender equality, the management of conflicts, and peaceful and inclusive societies and has been working to promote gender equality in post-conflict and fragile contexts for many years. Furthermore, Germany's development policy aims to address the structural, political and social causes of inequality and discrimination. These objectives are laid down in the Third Action Plan of the Federal Government on the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council's Agenda on Women, Peace and Security (NAP III, 2021-2024) adopted by the BMZ and other relevant ministries, in the Federal Government's Guidelines on Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace, which were adopted in 2017, and in the resulting strategies for the promotion of sustainable peace and the realisation of women's human rights and gender equality.

Relevance of the findings

The findings provide valuable insights for the assessment and further development of the BMZ's approach to strengthening gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts.

Although the dual objective of peacebuilding and gender equality is incorporated in many strategies,

no comparative evaluations focusing on this nexus was conducted before. In order to measure the success of the German gender mainstreaming approach (i.e. promoting gender equality as a cross-cutting task) in countries where armed conflict has just ended, the evaluation looks at two individual aspects. First of all, it explores the question of whether and to what extent the process of strategy, planning and implementation of gender mainstreaming measures is suited to integrate the gender- and conflict-specific interests and needs of women in development measures to a sufficient degree. The evaluation also examines whether the measures that have been implemented have actually achieved their purpose.

This was done in light of an important realisation: not only do conflicts have gender-specific consequences but promoting gender equality in fragile and conflict-affected states is also an important prerequisite for lasting peace and sustainable development.

In principle, the BMZ believes that the findings of the evaluation confirm the viability of the BMZ's approach of making the promotion of gender equality a strategic priority, also and particularly in (post-) conflict contexts. With the Third Action Plan of the Federal Government on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (NAP 1325), which came into force this year, the BMZ is expanding both its efforts to enhance gender equality and women's participation in post-conflict contexts and its support for the survivors of sexual violence and for prevention.

Moreover, the evaluation provides concrete advice on the implementation of development projects and

for the (further) development of instruments and strategies, including within the framework of the “BMZ 2030” reform process. The evaluation contains important recommendations on anchoring gender equality in the quality criterion of “Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion” and on the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda.

Conclusions

The key conclusions drawn by the BMZ from the evaluation and its recommendations are:

1. The evaluation emphasises, as a positive feature, the interlinkages between and coherence of the current strategy documents of the German Government in general and of the BMZ in particular, in the areas of gender equality and peace and security (Guidelines, interministerial strategies, NAP 1325). The BMZ confirms this assessment and intends to systematically take the “gender/conflict” complex into account also when shaping and implementing the quality criterion “human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion”, especially in the core areas.
2. The evaluation recommends developing country-wide gender analyses in post-conflict contexts, which can be used as a basis for the country strategies. In its Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020, the BMZ recognised that the consideration of gender analyses in the drafting of country strategies is an important instrument for the implementation of the equality approach. The EU’s Gender Action Plan (2021-2025) also recommends the joint drafting, as part of the Team Europe Initiatives, of implementation plans based on gender analyses so as to encourage the development of a coordinated country-level implementation plan. The BMZ will evaluate the feasibility of this recommendation as part of the implementation of the “BMZ 2030” reform process and the EU’s Gender Action Plan III in the post-conflict context.
3. The evaluation raises some criticism concerning the gap between the BMZ’s political objectives and commitments and the actual implementation in EU projects. In order to remedy this, the BMZ, through the NAP 1325, has already committed itself to expanding the portfolio with a dual objective of increasing gender equality and building peace. In addition, the Special Initiative on Displacement will continue to systematically encourage the submission of project proposals on how to implement the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda. The goal of strengthening the portfolio applies not only to post-conflict countries but also to conflict regions and fragile states and to humanitarian contexts and contexts of displacement.
4. The BMZ will examine the recommendations concerning a more consistent anchoring of gender equality as a main or secondary goal and, for post-conflict states, of the gender-conflict nexus in the conceptual design of projects. The BMZ has already completed a study that develops quality criteria for projects and was used as a basis for evaluating the existing portfolios of the implementing organisations. Consistently anchoring gender equality in the different concept and

planning phases of projects is a central element of these quality criteria.

5. The BMZ agrees with the evaluation's assessment that the risk of sexual violence and abuse is particularly high in post-conflict contexts and thus needs to be addressed by German development cooperation organisations both internally and externally. That is why, within the context of the OECD development committee (DAC), Germany has agreed on joint recommendations with other members. To implement these recommendations, new rules and provisions have been introduced and existing ones have been adapted. In addition, joint clauses for agreements with multilateral organisations (including within the UN system) have been developed. The BMZ has also elaborated a process for dealing with sexual harassment at the workplace within the BMZ. Training sessions on this process are available for all staff members and for managers and supervisors. A new training course for employees about to be deployed abroad on how to deal with sexual harassment is currently being developed.

6. The BMZ welcomes the suggestions made in the evaluation concerning a more effective and systematic processing of knowledge and experience, through studies and application-oriented research projects, with a view to promoting gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

To that end, the BMZ has already commissioned a systematic review on the role of women in peace processes. The review will explore what evidence there is for the assumption that women play a key role in fragile contexts both for development and for preserving peace and resilience.

To download the DEval report "Promoting Gender Equality in Post-Conflict Contexts",

go to <https://www.deval.org/en/evaluation-reports.html>