

Feminist Development Policy

1) Feminist Development Policy – For Strong and Just Societies Worldwide

- The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) strives for strong and just societies worldwide by dismantling discriminatory structures for women and girls as well as marginalised groups. The focus is on gender justice.
- BMZ's approach is gender transformative and intersectional, focusing on overcoming the structural and systemic causes of inequality.

The focus is on three central areas, the so-called "3 Rs" – Rights, Resources and Representation – on three levels:

1. The implementation level

- Feminist development policy is anchored in the BMZ's procedures and instruments.
- By 2025, 93 percent of newly committed project funds are to flow into projects that advance gender equality (64% in 2021).
- The BMZ distinguishes between measures that have gender equality as a primary objective and those that have it as a secondary objective.

2. International cooperation

- Increasing cooperation with and support of civil society organisations, especially in the Global South.
- Development of goals and programmes in cooperation with partners and adaptation to country conditions.

3. The institutional level

- Initiation of a process of change and learning in the BMZ itself.
- The BMZ will also work with its implementing organisations (e.g., GIZ, KfW) to promote these processes in their organisations.

2) The Initial Situation: Feminist Development Policy Is More Necessary than Ever Before

- European (post-)colonial thought patterns continue to prevail, often leading to the devaluation of indigenous knowledge and education systems.
- The global crises endanger the realisation of human rights and reinforce or cement existing inequalities.
- The realisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and access to appropriate health services is not only a question of self-determination in humanitarian contexts, but also of survival.
- The impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss disproportionately threaten marginalised and poverty-affected groups.
- By 2050, it is estimated that up to 216 million people will be displaced within their country of origin as a result of gradual climate change.

- Women are particularly likely to be exposed to sexualised and gender-based violence, exploitation and trafficking.
- Women and indigenous peoples are also severely affected by poor environmental conditions, such as air and soil pollution, as their livelihoods often depend directly on access to natural resources.
- Poverty and hunger also often exacerbate discrimination against women and girls and other people in vulnerable situations, such as people with disabilities, young and old people, workers in informal sectors and people on the run.
- The Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath exacerbated the economic situation, as women and girls were significantly more likely than men to have to give up or lose their jobs.
- People living in cities – two-thirds of humanity by 2050, according to forecasts – are affected by an increasing "urbanisation of poverty".
- The global rise of right-wing populist and anti-feminist tendencies poses a major challenge to gender equality.

3) Rethinking Power: A Feminist Approach to German Development Policy

- Women, girls, and marginalised groups must be brought to the centre in their role as knowledge bearers and decision makers in decision-making processes.
- The lack of inclusion of women and marginalised persons fails to take into account possible solutions for global challenges, including a socio-ecological transformation (Just Transition).
- Studies show that adequate participation of women and girls in the agricultural sector would lead to an increase in agricultural production and that when women manage household finances, they are more likely than men to invest in the nutrition and health of their families.
- The BMZ is convinced that systemic change is needed to realise gender equality, freedom, human rights and empowerment, to achieve the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda and to address the global crises.
- The realisation of human rights and the human rights-based form the basis for the BMZ's feminist development policy that promotes an environment in which women and marginalised persons act as agents of change for social change.
- The "Do-No Harm" approach ensuring that measures taken do not consolidate existing discriminatory power relations and structures is the minimum standard for all German development policy measures.
- The BMZ's feminist development policy is based on partner orientation, participation, and a postcolonial, anti-racist understanding of development policy.
- For a feminist development policy, cooperation with civil society organisations, especially women's rights, LGBTQI+ and other human rights organisations, is of particular importance.
- The Civil Society Atlas 2022 shows that the scope of feminist civil society organisations and organisations working on women's rights is the most restricted internationally ("shrinking spaces").
- The BMZ will increasingly evaluate and analyse its own work in order to identify effective approaches from existing projects, notably through the systematic review of effective approaches to gender equality in fragile and conflict-related contexts.
- Agenda setting at the international level plays an important role in the realisation of feminist development concerns. The EU Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021-2025 (EU GAP III) has created an important strategic basis and formulated concrete goals in the field of gender equality. In particular, the implementation of Global Gateway and Team Europe initiatives, the systematic use of Country Level Implementation Plans (CLIPS) in programming, and the general mainstreaming of gender in European foreign policy can be built upon.

- In order to implement the goals of feminist development policy, the BMZ will strengthen cooperation in multilateral organisations and international bodies, increase its involvement in the multilateral development banks and initiate a process of learning and change.
- The new orientation towards a feminist development policy will be in substantive coherence with the feminist foreign policy of the Federal Foreign Office, including in thematic areas such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, participation in peace and reconstruction processes and overcoming conflict-related gender-based violence (implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda under the auspices of the Federal Foreign Office) and in the area of women's economic empowerment.

4) Future Orientation of German Development Policy in the Fields of Action: Strategic Guidelines

In order to achieve the overarching goal of overcoming discriminatory power structures, the BMZ sets itself the following sub-goals:

Field of action 1: Realising the rights of women and marginalised groups, ensuring their access to resources, and promoting their representation

1. Rights

- Promotion of women's and marginalised groups' access to justice and their participation in non-discriminatory legislative processes.
- Commitment to dismantling social barriers that prevent girls and women as well as LGBTQI+ persons from knowing and claiming their sexual and reproductive rights.
- Realisation of rights and holistic, stress- and trauma-sensitive support for survivors of sexualised and gender-based violence
- Contribution to the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices, offline and online.
- Right to education and lifelong learning for girls and women.
- Removal of legal barriers that limit women's career choices and economic opportunities.
- Accessible, safe, and inclusive digital space for all.
- Equal rights and equality before the law regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Acquiring knowledge about human rights through non-formal education.
- Human rights-based approach to nature conservation and the management of natural resources.

2. Resources

- Gender-equitable access to (school and vocational) education, to the formal labour market and to decent work.
- Development of social protection systems that enable equal access to social protection for women.
- Equal access to universal health services for all.
- Ensuring that women's rights organisations and self-advocacy organisations of indigenous peoples and local communities receive more funding, are involved in important decision-making processes and that their access to climate funds is simplified.
- Implementation of feminist approaches in the financial protection against climate risks within the framework of the Global Climate Risk Shield.
- Direct financial instruments to explicitly strengthen indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant initiatives.
- Food security and sovereignty, better access for women to land and land tenure, good and fair working conditions in global supply chains.

- Protection of local farmers in free trade agreements.
- Strengthening of women's access to the formal financial system.
- Access to resilient, inclusive and gender-responsive water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in public institutions.
- Gender-responsive digital transformation.

3. Representation

- Equal representation of women and marginalised groups in political and corporate decision-making bodies and in local and regional planning and budgeting processes in partner countries.
- Inclusive and gender-equitable rule-of-law structures and political planning and decision-making processes.
- Greater orientation of financial and non-financial services to the needs of women.
- Equal participation of women in peace processes, processes of reconstruction, dealing with the past and with conflicts, and reintegration.
- Creation of national and international interest groups and networks.
- Gender-responsive design of the digital transformation.

Field of action 2: Anchoring the feminist approach across the BMZ portfolio

- The BMZ will double the share of newly committed project funds for measures with the primary goal of gender equality to 8 percent by 2025.
- The share of newly committed project funds for measures with the secondary objective of gender equality is to be increased to 85 percent.
- Expansion of gender-transformative approaches to support the change of discriminatory social structures and norms.
- Promotion of the inclusion of persons with disabilities, among other things.
- Implementation of organisations to examine formats and opportunities to enable the participation of local civil society, especially feminist civil society, throughout the project cycle.
- Improving the evidence base on feminist development policy by collecting and using gender data.

Field of action 3: Strengthening feminist development policy in international alliances

- Continuous integration of a feminist perspective in discussions with partner governments.
- Greater inclusion of the countries of the Global South in the multilateral system.
- Development of effective counterarguments to the narratives of the anti-gender movement.
- Creation of alliances in multilateral forums, development banks, funds and working groups to position and promote feminist development policy.
- Achieving more resources, ambitious goals, and measurable impacts for gender equality.
- Implementation of structural change processes and support of the UN Gender Review.
- Commitment to gender equality in the G7 and G20, the Generation Equality Forum and the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi).
- Achievement of the GG1 and GG2 objectives of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Europe in the World (NDICI-GE), and the EU Gender Action Plan III.
- Expansion of international exchange formats for experience sharing and greater use of communities of practice.
- Comprehensive contribution to the implementation of the German government's third action plan on the "Women, Peace and Security" agenda (2021-2024).

- Incorporation of the experience and solutions of feminist civil society, women's networks, women's rights movements, LGBTQI+ organisations and human rights into political and economic decision-making processes.

Field of action 4: The further development of own structures and working methods in the sense of a feminist development policy

- Examination of contact structures and personnel resources for the implementation of a feminist development policy.
- New and adapted training concepts.
- Promotion of diversity, equal opportunities, participation, and competencies within the BMZ's own structures.
- Design of events in an inclusive and gender-responsive manner.
- Zero tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in the workplace.
- Greater integration of the knowledge and experience of local staff in the German implementing organisations.
- Integration of diverse civil society perspectives in planning and strategy processes.
- Greater use of the instrument of triangular cooperation to build horizontal partnerships.
- Examination of direct forms of participation and mechanisms for financing local civil society, grassroots organisations and (human rights) activists.

5) Performance Evaluation

- There are currently six quality features (human rights, gender equality and inclusion; poverty reduction and inequality reduction; environmental and climate assessment; digitalisation; anti-corruption and integrity; conflict sensitivity), whose strategic orientation and requirements are specified in performance profiles.
- The BMZ has set itself the goal of increasing the share of its newly committed project funds for the promotion of gender equality to a total of 93 per cent by 2025.
- Monitoring of the impact of development policy measures is carried out within the framework of the new BMZ Gender Action Plan. The Gender Action Plan will be published in the second half of 2023.
- The performance evaluation of the achievement of objectives will be carried out, inter alia, via the new BMZ Gender Equality Plan (2023 - 2026) and within the framework of the new BMZ Gender Action Plan.