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Gender and Social Development

Background

Gender refers to the socially defined roles and identities of men and women and boys and girls. These roles are dynamic – they can change over time and can differ across and even within societies. As an issue of human rights and social justice gender equality is an important objective in itself. Moreover, it has long been recognized to be an essential determinant of social outcomes. Gender affects health and education outcomes as well as access to and utilization of social services. Gender relations influence the vulnerability to economic and social risk as well as power and population dynamics. Gender inequality can exacerbate other forms of social exclusion, for example based on ethnicity or disability. In short, gender shapes every aspect of social development.

Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Gender equality is widely recognized as a key to effective and sustainable development. As such, it has received increasing attention on the international development agenda. Even though the reduction of gender inequality was already a goal in its own right in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the MDGs were often criticized for a relatively narrow approach to women’s and girls’ empowerment. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), therefore, offer a more holistic treatment of gender equality and empowerment. They explicitly recognize that gender equality makes a crucial contribution to all its goals and targets, arguing that “[t]he achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible, if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities.” (SDGs 2015) Accordingly, the achievement of gender equality is a goal in its own right (SDG 5) and is linked to virtually all other goals through distinct targets.

Implications for Education, Health and Social Protection

With regard to education and gender, the SDGs build upon the progress made in the past decades in primary and secondary education and aim for the elimination of all gender disparities in education by 2030 (SDG 4.5). They also recognize the growing contribution of sport for development, especially the empowerment of women and young people. As a response to the insufficient progress in reducing maternal mortality rates, despite significant international efforts, the reduction of global maternal mortality is taken up as a target again (SDG 3.1). Closely linked is the aim to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, which is target both for achieving gender equality (SDG 5.6) and health for all people (SDG 3.7). Significantly, the SDGs explicitly call for an end to harmful practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and early and child marriages (SDG 5.3), both of which are essentially linked to health as a human right. Social protection is explicitly recognized as supporting the goal of achieving gender equality by recognizing and valuing care and domestic work through social protection policies (SDG 5.4). Finally, inclusion of persons with disability is an integral part of the SDGs as a whole.

Gender in the Education Sector

Relevance

The positive relationship between the education of girls and women and development outcomes has long been established: improvements in girls’ and women’s education reduce fertility rates, newborn and child mortality; they contribute to HIV prevention, increase women’s employment opportunities and improve children’s access to education. Fortunately, the past decades have seen significant achievements in the area of gender and education: in primary education, gender parity has been reached and in

secondary education, differences have been reduced significantly. More women have access to higher education and the labour market today than ever before. However, challenges remain. In many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, girls' enrollment rates are still significantly lower than those of boys. Especially in rural areas, the access to education for girls and women is still limited. Reasons for this are a lack of female teachers, long and unsafe ways to school, insufficient sanitary facilities at school, as well as deep-seated convictions and traditions that constrain girls' access to education.

Our Expertise and Services

We have significant expertise in designing, planning, and implementing education programmes which systematically aim to eliminate unequal gender relations. Since girls and women tend to still be disadvantaged, a focus is put on providing access to education for girls and women. We understand education holistically to include early-child development, primary, secondary and tertiary education, vocational training as well as formal and non-formal education. Moreover, we promote girls' and women's access to the labor market. In order to achieve gender equality, it is also important to recognize situations where boys and men are disadvantaged and to address these inequalities accordingly.

We support our partners through the provision of equitable [sector policy advice](#), for example on legal and policy reforms in the education sector, capacity building for managers and technical experts, and the development of gender strategies. We also have significant experience in guidance on [gender-sensitive financing](#) to support planners and decision-makers in resource allocations that increase girls' equal access to education at all levels. Through different [pedagogical approaches](#) we support the training of female teachers, the development of gender-responsive curricula as well as dedicated support structures for girls. At school and community level, our programmes promote [supportive and enabling environments](#) for girls and boys. We have recognized that sport and physical activities can make an important contribution to peaceful development and the empowerment of women and young people. Through a gender-responsive approach, we ensure that both girls and women and boys and men can actively participate in and fully benefit from our [sport for development](#) programmes.

Gender in the Health Sector

Relevance

Health is a human right and an essential prerequisite for social, economic and political development. Gender plays an important role here as it influences people's susceptibility to different health risks, their access to essential health services, and the health outcomes they experience throughout the life-course. Globally, health has improved considerably over the past 25 years, but progress has been uneven across regions and population groups. Out of the eight MDGs, least progress has been made toward reducing maternal mortality (MDG 5). In many countries HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect women and girls. Insufficient access to reproductive health services and rights still restrict the empowerment of women and girls and hinder the right to healthy and self-determined lives for all people.

Our Expertise and Services

Health is a core capacity of GIZ. We can draw upon many decades of experience in assisting our partners to establish and reform health care systems to realize the right to health for all people. We have gained significant experience in working at the interface of sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and gender and improving coherence and synergies between different approaches. While access to reproductive health services and rights is essential for women's and girls' health and empowerment, we consistently recognize and include men and boys both as important change agents as well as beneficiaries in their own right.

We support our partners in [national and international agenda setting](#) to reinforce health as human right, including an end to harmful practices such as FGM or early and child marriages. Moreover, we [provide sector policy advice](#), for example in the areas of reproductive health and rights, maternal and child health, universal health coverage and health systems strengthening. We offer [capacity building and training](#) to improve the skills of specialists, organizations and networks to build effective, efficient and equitable health systems. Additionally, we support the development and implementation of gender-responsive targeted interventions at health facility and community level, such as improving equitable access to and quality of health services or gender-sensitive health education and promotion. Measuring the results of our programmes is part and parcel of our work. We, therefore, assist our partners in improving gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation and participate in and support international discussions to streamline reporting.

Gender in the Social Protection Sector

Relevance

Gender plays an important role when it comes to building and reforming social protection systems that are meant to shield the population from economic and social risks. Men and women experience different risks in the course of their life time and are affected by shocks and catastrophes in different ways. Due to their reproductive role and as a result of social and cultural norms, women often face a greater risk of losing their income and falling into poverty than men. Despite these well-established connections, research has shown that many social protection systems are still gender-blind and often do not take gender differences into account. This can lead to unequal access for beneficiaries and even reinforce existing gender stereotypes and inequalities that disadvantage women and girls.

Our Expertise and Services

We support our partners in designing, reforming, and implementing gender-responsive social protection systems. This means ensuring that women and men and girls and boys have equal access to social security schemes and receive relevant information about these services and their rights. We collaborate with our partners to develop gender-specific instruments that mitigate particular risks, for example catastrophic health expenditures during pregnancy and childbirth. This way, we contribute to creating social protection systems that promote gender equality, reduce poverty and contribute to long-term social and economic development for all population groups, including persons with disabilities.

We have gained significant expertise and experience in developing and implementing a range of gender-sensitive approaches and instruments and offer **sector policy advice** in all of these areas. In particular, these include systems of social protection, social health insurance, basic social security, micro-insurance, pension schemes, accident and insurance, and inclusion of persons with disabilities. In addition, we offer **capacity building and training** for managers and technical experts in designing, implementing and monitoring gender-responsive social protection systems. We often work jointly on advisory missions and assist other organizations in devising appropriate solutions for developing countries. This pooling of resources and the extensive **international networks** we have built enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our in-country advisory work and increase the benefits to our partners.

Strong Networks and Supportive Environments

– The Contribution of GIZ Gender Groups

The goal of GIZ's gender strategy is to comprehensively promote gender equality in partner countries and within the company. GIZ aims to ensure that managers and staff possess sufficient competence and expertise to plan and implement programmes so that they reduce imbalances in gender relations and promote equality. A company-wide network of gender focal points supports this process by gathering and exchanging sectoral and cross-sectoral evidence and expertise, and promoting a supportive environment for gender-sensitive programming and activities.

A good example comes from Yemen. There, the Gender Focal Persons Group covers all programmes implemented in Yemen and includes national and international staff. The group focuses on awareness-raising to create a culture of gender sensitivity amongst the GIZ staff and its partners, for example through an exhibition on "Men standing up for Gender Equality" on the occasion of International Men's Day 2014 and a short movie on the situation of female professionals in Yemen.

The movie is available on the GIZ Intranet:
<https://dms.giz.de/dms/lisapi.dll/open/98132721>

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Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Sitz der Gesellschaft
Bonn und Eschborn

Friedrich Ebert Allee 36 + 40
53113 Bonn/Deutschland
T +49 228 44 60-0
F +49 228 4460-17 66
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de



Male and female teachers attend a math and science workshop at the Teacher Training College in Takhar province (left).

A community member looks at the new books in the school library, which the school council received through a small grant (right).

Photos: left © GIZ / Shinwari, right © GIZ/ Denton

Gender-Balanced Quality Education

Increasing access for girls, improving quality for all students in Afghanistan

The Challenge

Since 2001, Afghanistan has seen significant achievements in the education sector. During the Taliban regime only an estimated 800,000 students were enrolled, of which around 6% were girls. Now, more than 9.1 million students are enrolled in school, of which 38% are girls. Despite these improvements, many challenges remain. There is a growing concern about the quality of education. Especially with regard to girls' education, the substantial lack of female teachers in rural areas, the absence of a secure school environments, as well as cultural barriers form major obstacles.

Our Approach

The Area of Intervention (AoI) on Gender Balanced Quality Education in Takhar of the Basic and Secondary Education Programme for Afghanistan (BEPA) aims to increase the quality of education in the province and make it more gender balanced. In order to mitigate the shortage of female teachers, especially in rural areas, and provide positive role models for girls' education, BEPA supports young women to complete secondary school and enroll in teacher training at the district level. To further improve the quality of education at least three quarters of math and science teachers in the programme districts will receive 10 days of subject-specific training by 2016, followed by in-class coaching sessions. In these trainings, a focus is put on avoiding gender stereotypes and systematically integrating the message that girls and women are as capable to succeed in these subjects as boys and men. School councils are supported to identify challenges for education in their communities, particularly for girls. In a participatory approach, they develop solutions and can then apply for small grants to receive further support. Local education

authorities are coached to integrate measures to promote girls' education in their annual plans.

Project name	Basic and Secondary Education Program for Afghanistan (BEPA)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ); co-financed by Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)
Project region	Afghanistan
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Education
Duration	01.09.2012 – 31.12.2016
Gender marker	GG-1

Results Achieved So Far

Since the beginning of the programme, there has been a steep increase in the graduation rates of female students from higher secondary education in the province as well as an increased share of women in teacher education at district level. The quality of education has also improved: a survey and observations showed that 81% of the trained math and science teachers now use student-centered methods. Qualitative feedback from partner schools and district education officials indicate a reduction in the number of absentees in the girls' schools and increased community involvement in addressing challenges for education quality.

Success Factors

- Working closely together with government counterparts and local communities ensures that all programme activities are culturally and locally relevant.
- The significant competence in gender and education demonstrated by the BEPA programme since 2005 has attracted co-financing from Swiss Development Cooperation this AoI.

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Sitz der Gesellschaft
Bonn und Eschborn

Friedrich Ebert Allee 36 + 40
53113 Bonn/Deutschland
T +49 228 44 60-0
F +49 228 4460-17 66
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de



Shamina is a new trainee and receives basic sewing skills to qualify her for the labor market (left).

Shanti Begum has successfully finished her initial training and has found a job as a garment worker in a factory (middle).

Akter has continued her skills training and has been promoted to become a quality controller in her factory (right).

Photos: © GIZ / Scherer

Inclusive Skills Development

Creating sustainable livelihoods for poor women in Bangladesh

The challenge

The Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh provides direct employment to over 4 million workers. The majority of workers are poverty-stricken women with little formal education and without any formal employment opportunities available to them previously. The death of more than 1000 mainly female workers as a result of the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in April 2013 and the injury and resulting disability of many more gave a tragic illustration of the brutal conditions, and lack of safety nets, which shape the lives of many Bangladeshi women.

Our approach

The Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in the Industry (PSES) Programme aims to improve the social, environmental and production standards of the RGM industry in Bangladesh. As a response to the Rana Plaza incident, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) provided additional funds and commissioned GIZ to introduce a new component on Inclusive Skills Development and Job Reintegration of Persons with Disabilities. PSES offers vocational training to workers seeking reemployment after injuries incurred in the RGM sector as well as other persons with disabilities seeking employment. A focus is put on creating employment opportunities for the advancement of women as a skilled workforce. Here, an incremental approach is used: the women first receive basic sewing skills that allow them to enter the workforce. Part of the women receives additional training in supervisory and leadership skills to become floor supervisors. Complementary to these trainings, PSES offers medical rehabilitation and follow-up support to reintegrate victims of industrial accidents and their

dependents. This innovative initiative is the first of its kind in Bangladesh.

Project name	Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in the Industry (PSES)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Bangladesh
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Duration	01.11. 2013 – 30.06.2017
Gender marker	GG-1

Results achieved so far

Since November 2013, more than 1500 women workers of the RMG and textile sector have been trained in inclusive skills development courses for the RMG sector; 225 of them are women with disabilities. In addition, 515 people affected by the Rana Plaza Building collapse have been reintegrated through medical, therapeutic and vocational rehabilitation; two thirds of them were women. Moreover, the management of more than 50 factories of the RMG and textile sector have been sensitized and supported in employing female workers with disabilities.

Success Factors

- A twin track approach was applied: equal access to skills training and formal employment has been mainstreamed and simultaneously women have been empowered through extra services like information on labor law, career counseling, and placement support.
- The high level of competence and experience in both gender and inclusion of persons with disabilities within GIZ Bangladesh provided an enabling environment for PSES.

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Bonn und Eschborn

Friedrich Ebert Allee 36 + 40
53113 Bonn/Deutschland
T +49 228 44 60-0
F +49 228 4460-17 66
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de



Refresher training of community health volunteers in Al-Mahweet (left).

Community health volunteers during a consultation visit at the nearest quality ensured health facility in the area (right).

Photos: © GIZ / Mugbil

Reproductive Health Promotion

Community-based volunteers improve access and acceptability in Yemen

The challenge

Fast population growth and a precarious health situation are major development challenges in Yemen. Maternal and neonatal mortality are among the highest in the region. They are caused by insufficient quality and accessibility of primary and secondary health care services. Inadequate health education, above all of women, and a low level of confidence in health facilities restrict demand. The outbreak of war in March 2015 has brought the already weak health system on the verge of a collapse.

Our approach

The Community-based Reproductive Health Promotion approach, supported by the Health System Strengthening Programme, aims to increase the access to reproductive health information and care in Yemen's remote villages. The approach is based on the voluntary engagement of community members. Each community nominates a man and a woman to be trained as community health volunteers. The trainings provide the volunteers with basic skills on how to raise awareness on family planning, antenatal care and skilled birth attendance. In close cooperation with the nearest health facilities, the volunteers are also able to distribute condoms and oral contraceptives.

One volunteer is Ali Ali Ahmed, a 42-year old married Imam in a small village with a population of 650 inhabitants. Together with his female counterpart, he organizes awareness sessions every month. These provide time and space for explanations, especially on the widely spread perception that Islamic principles are contradicting the use of modern family planning methods: "I often have to explain to couples that our religion is not forbidding us to use methods for preventing pregnancies," he says.

Project name	Health System Strengthening Programme
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Yemen
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP)
Duration	07.10.2013 – 30.09.2016
Gender marker	GG-2

Results achieved so far

In 2009, the approach was introduced in five districts in Yemen. Three years later, the positive results were already impressive: the rate of use of modern contraceptives in the programme communities surpassed the rates in comparable communities by 25%. Today, 240 volunteers ensure low-threshold access to information and modern contraceptives for the mostly rural population in 120 communities. The positive results are also visible in Ali Ali Ahmed's village and increase his motivation. "I feel that my work is very important and successful. Sometimes, even people from the neighboring villages come and ask for information about family planning and appropriate methods".

Success Factors

- Highly respected community members are chosen as volunteers by the communities themselves – this increases their leverage, especially on sensitive issues; having a male and a female volunteer in each community further increases access and acceptability of the approach.
- Community health volunteers are connected to the nearest quality ensured health facility to facilitate referrals and obtain family planning supplies and guidance.

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Sitz der Gesellschaft
Bonn und Eschborn

Friedrich Ebert Allee 36 + 40
53113 Bonn/Deutschland
T +49 228 44 60-0
F +49 228 4460-17 66
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de