



Leading Change

Gender-Transformative Practice Examples from GIZ



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Foreword

At GIZ, the Gender Competition is more than an award. It reflects our shared commitment to embedding gender equality in everything we do. Every two years, it highlights projects and initiatives that turn ambition into practice by challenging existing norms, improving processes, and strengthening equitable decision-making.

These achievements are made possible by the dedication of Gender Focal Persons and colleagues across the organisation. Their continuous engagement ensures that Feminist Development Policy is not only upheld but actively translated into tangible results.

We are operating in a global context where gender equality is increasingly contested. Resistance is growing, and inequalities persist. This makes it all the more important to remain focused on addressing structural barriers, supporting inclusive approaches, and fostering equal opportunities for all people.

Gender equality is firmly embedded in our core business and portfolios: In 2025, 93 per cent of new commissions identified gender equality as a principal or significant objective, aligning day-to-day work with our ambition to deliver measurable, lasting change. This is a strong signal of progress. The examples in this publication illustrate how innovative approaches can help move us from commitment to consistent practice.

Ultimately, sustainable transformation depends on this shift. When gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches are fully integrated, the results are more resilient, more inclusive, and more impactful.

I would like to thank all teams who submitted their work, as well as the GIZ-Gender Ambassador and the Gender Commissioner Team for their continued commitment. My special congratulations go to all winning teams. Your work offers concrete and inspiring examples of gender equality in practice. These are the examples that this publication seeks to share across GIZ.

Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven

Vice Chair of the Management Board of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH





Path to the Gender Competition

VISION

United in promoting gender equality at GIZ and around the world.

1. Call for Participation

Every two years GIZ staff members are invited by the GIZ Gender Commissioner Team to participate in the GIZ Gender Competition in three categories.

2. Submission Phase

From September to October 2025, teams had the chance to hand in their entries.

3. Entries Received

In November 2025, we received a total of 96 competition entries from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Germany. The entries were handed in in English, French, Spanish and German.

4. Evaluation Process

The entries were evaluated until the beginning of January 2026 by a jury composed of 41 members from different departments, organisational units, and country offices.

5. Selection of Winning Teams

The seven winning teams were informed about winning a prize at the beginning of February 2026.

6. Award Ceremony

The teams were honoured in the 10th GIZ Gender Award Ceremony on the occasion of International Women's Day on 9 March 2026 at GIZ Bonn by the Vice Chair of the Management Board of GIZ, Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven and the Parliamentary State Secretary Dr. Bärbel Kofler from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

7. Use of Prize Funds

With the prize money, the teams carry out further measures to reach Gender Equality.





Categories and Assessment Criteria

Gender-transformative approaches in Gender Equality 2 (GE2)

Gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this objective.

Gender-transformative approaches in Gender Equality 1 (GE1)

Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/ programme.

Gender-sensible culture and gender competence (GSC)

Enhancing gender equality within the company, at organisational unit or country level.

Assessment criteria for GE1 and GE2 projects:

- Analysis of core challenges, including power dynamics, intersectional perspective, gender relations, and norms
- Gender-transformative theory of change
- Contributions to gender-transformative change
- Cooperation with change agents

Note: GE2 and GE1 refer to the OECD DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker.

Assessment criteria for GSC projects:

- Strategic relevance for gender equality and corporate culture
- Transferability of the approach to other units
- Impact on gender equality and gender competence
- Effectiveness and results achieved
- Collaboration and stakeholder engagement



Gender Award Ceremony 2026

On the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8 and as part of Gender Month in March, the Gender Award ceremony took place in Bonn. More than 100 guests gathered on Monday, March 9, to celebrate the winning teams of the Gender Award 2026, while another 300 colleagues worldwide followed the event online.

Nearly 100 teams handed in their good practice examples. From increasing women and girls' rights awareness in Nairobi's informal settlements (winner award category Gender Equality 2) to strengthening education and health services for Afghan refugees and host communities in Pakistan (winner award category Gender Equality 1) to a comprehensive effort towards promoting gender equality and implementing the GIZ gender strategy in Nigeria (winner award category "gender sensible culture and gender competence") – GIZ is taking gender to the next level.

"We will not only celebrate the winners", said Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Vice Chair of the Management Board at GIZ, in her welcoming speech. "All of you who have participated are part of the winning teams." Hoven acknowledged that it takes more courage today than it did a few years ago to advocate for gender equality and thanked the teams for their contribution, which is leading to a measurable change in the lives of women and men.





Keynote speaker Dr. Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), underscored that advancing gender equality is not only a moral imperative but also an economic driver. She highlighted its role in stabilising societies and promoting political change, adding: “The backlash is not a sign that gender equality is irrelevant, it is a sign that it is powerful.” Dr Kofler thanked the winners teams of the GIZ Gender Competition for their work and, together with Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, presented the certificates to their teams.

The event also spotlighted a critical frontier for gender equality: global supply chains. In the panel “Advancing Gender Equality in Global Supply Chains” Iris Van der Veken (Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030), Anne Kathrin Raab (Bayer AG), Anna Falth (UN Women), and Susanne Friedrich (Agency for Business and Economic Development, GIZ) highlighted persistent knowledge gaps on the business case for gender inclusion - particularly the lack of gender-disaggregated data and evidence linking gender-responsive practices to performance outcomes.

The speakers emphasised that multi-stakeholder platforms are effective vehicles to align expectations, build capacity, and translate commitments into common standards and measurable requirements across industries, thereby accelerating uptake and accountability.

Despite ongoing gender backlash movements around the world, political will for gender equality remains strong. Gender equality was a key focus in the G20 context, with an emphasis on the care economy, financial inclusion of women, and combating gender-based violence. And the BMZ's reform plan reaffirms that German development policy remains feminist.



Winner and Honorable Mentions Gender-Transformative Approaches in Gender Equality 2 (GE2)

Gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this objective. In this category, only the first prize is awarded. Three honourable mentions highlight further innovative approaches in advancing gender equality in GE2 projects/programmes.

First prize: Increasing Women and Girls' Rights Awareness in Nairobi's Informal Settlements through Innovative Community-Based Approaches: Translating the Maputo Protocol into Local Action (Promotion of Human Rights and Empowerment of Women in Africa (AWARE), African Union)





Translating the Maputo Protocol into Local Action

Increasing women and girls' rights awareness in Nairobi's informal settlements

Badili Africa, in collaboration with the GIZ African Union project Promotion of Human Rights and Women's Empowerment in Africa (AWARE), advances women's rights awareness in Nairobi's informal settlements. The project matters because women and girls in these dense, underserved neighbourhoods face persistent barriers, including limited access to essential services, heavy unpaid care work, insecure housing, and exposure to gender-based violence.

A standout feature is the strategic use of trusted informal social spaces — particularly chamas (self-help groups/women's cooperatives) and salons — as culturally legitimate platforms for sustained dialogue, rights education, and solidarity. An intersectional focus centres young women, women-headed households, and women with disabilities, recognising how age, poverty, and disability

compound discrimination and risk.

The approach is co-created with grassroots women leaders, youth, male allies, teachers, health workers, and faith and traditional actors, ensuring joint planning, implementation, and reflection. Continuous community communication through forums, neighbourhood walks, and digital groups maintains engagement, addresses resistance, and builds accountability.

The project has strengthened awareness of rights, catalysed shifts in attitudes toward GBV and women's leadership, fostered local advocacy and leadership among women and youth, and influenced local policy and service responses. Sustainability is supported by alumni mentor-ship networks, long-term partnerships aligned with city initiatives, and ongoing documentation for adaptation in other African urban contexts.

THE PROJECT

- Increasing Women and Girls' Rights Awareness in Nairobi's Informal Settlements through Innovative Community-Based Approaches strengthens women's rights awareness, agency, and community-led change in informal settlements.
- Implemented by the GIZ African Union project Promotion of Human Rights and Women's Empowerment in Africa (AWARE) in partnership with Badili Africa and commissioned by BMZ.

THE APPROACH

- Gender-transformative and intersectional approach addressing structural inequalities and power dynamics affecting women, youth, and marginalised groups.
- Leveraging informal social spaces such as chamas and salons to foster trust, rights awareness, and community dialogue.
- Community co-creation with women leaders, male allies, and traditional/religious leaders, combining rights education, economic skills, and continuous engagement.

THE CHALLENGE

- Women and girls in Nairobi's informal settlements face limited access to basic services, high exposure to GBV, and economic marginalisation.
- Heavy unpaid care burdens, restrictive social norms, and insecure housing limit participation in income generation, leadership, and decision-making, reinforcing inequality.

THE CHANGE

- Capacity building and awareness: Strengthened knowledge of rights and agency among women and girls, with over 3,000 trained.
- Attitude and behaviour change: Reduced gender bias and increased male engagement in preventing GBV and supporting women's leadership.
- Leadership and policy influence: Adoption of project recommendations in two Nairobi districts led to new GBV prevention investments and better women's health policies.

Generation Dialogue to End Harmful Practices

Dialogue, services, and data against female genital mutilation and gender-based violence in the Horn of Africa

THE PROJECT

- The regional programme Improving the Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the Horn of Africa strengthens community-led prevention of harmful practices and promotes gender equality across borders.
- Implemented by GIZ in partnership with local organisations, community actors, and public institutions across Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan and commissioned by BMZ.

THE APPROACH

- Addressing root causes of harmful practices by linking individual reflection, community action, and institutional response.
- Generation Dialogue as a multi-step community process bringing together youth, elders, women, and men to openly discuss FGM, child marriage, and gender roles, leading to joint declarations and locally agreed action plans.
- Community Initiative Fund (COIN-Fund) supports locally led follow-up actions through small grants, while system linkages strengthen services, and cross-border coordination ensures aligned responses.



THE CHALLENGE

- FGM, child marriage, and other forms of gender-based violence remain widespread, driven by entrenched social norms, gender inequality, and weak protection systems.
- Limited access to services, low awareness of rights and reporting mechanisms, and increased risks in fragile and conflict-affected settings hinder effective prevention and support.

THE CHANGE

- Capacity building and service strengthening: Improved skills of health workers, teachers, and local actors to provide counselling, referral, and protection services.
- Attitude and norm change: Increased public rejection of FGM and harmful practices, with religious and traditional leaders advocating for change and communities adopting new norms.
- Policy and system influence: Strengthened coordination, standard procedures, and data systems linking community action to institutional and cross-border responses.



Local Perspectives for Peace

Incorporating Local Perspectives in the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Great Lakes Region



THE PROJECT

- The project Incorporating Local Perspectives in the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Great Lakes Region (iWPS) supports the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and its member states in integrating the Women, Peace and Security agenda into mainstream regional peace and security processes — not as a parallel track, but as a structural component of durable peace.
- Commissioned by BMZ, iWPS operates across all 12 ICGLR member states.

THE CHALLENGE

- Protracted conflict, political instability, and resource competition in the Great Lakes Region expose women and girls to violence while limiting their participation in peace negotiations, leaving it incomplete.
- Grassroots women's organisations face restricted access to decision-making spaces and financial challenges, leaving local needs underrepresented in peacebuilding efforts.

THE APPROACH

- iWPS works across three reinforcing levels:
 - building the capacity of grassroots women's organisations to engage in peace processes;
 - connecting them to regional decision-making through structured civil society-ICGLR dialogue;
 - grounding both in a shared evidence base that holds WPS implementation accountable across all 12 countries.

THE CHANGE

- Community-level action: Over €1 million disbursed to 24 grassroots organisations across six countries, directly funding women-led peacebuilding initiatives at community level - translating regional commitments into local reality.
- Participation and representation: More than 100 Civil Society Organisation participants across five regional consultations built a unified advocacy base that influenced six agenda-setting processes at Heads of State and Ministerial level.

Power, Choice and Change

A gender-transformative approach to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights among young people



THE PROJECT

- Strengthening Girls' Rights! Project in Zambia focuses on the prevention of the "triple threat" of early pregnancy, HIV, and gender-based violence among adolescent girls by promoting rights, knowledge and access to services.
- Implemented in cooperation with Zambian state and non-state partners and commissioned by BMZ.

THE APPROACH

- Gender-transformative and intersectional approach addressing root causes of inequality across gender, age, disability, geography and social status.
- Combination of comprehensive sexuality education, community and intergenerational dialogue, and youth-led social accountability to shift norms and empower adolescents.
- Engagement of boys as allies and religious and traditional leaders, alongside co-creation with adolescents and strengthening of youth-friendly, gender-responsive SRHR services.

THE CHALLENGE

- Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) remain a taboo topic in Zambian culture, especially for young people. As a result, they often receive incorrect information and are vulnerable to the "triple threat."
- Deeply rooted harmful social norms as well as gender stereotypes drive unequal gender relations, increasing the "triple threat".
- Limited access to correct information as well as youth-friendly and gender responsive services restrict adolescents' wellbeing, and life opportunities.

THE CHANGE

- Behavioural change and empowerment: Adolescents show improved knowledge, increased confidence in accessing SRHR services, and shifts in attitudes towards gender equality.
- Service quality improvements: Youth-friendly health services became more accessible and gender-responsive, supporting better SRHR outcomes.
- Norm change and leadership: Religious and traditional leaders publicly support girls' rights and challenge harmful practices, reinforcing community-level change.





Winner and Honorable Mentions Gender-Transformative Approaches in Gender Equality 1 (GE1)

Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/ programme.

1st prize: Balancing Power and Decision Making: Improving equitable access to public services for Afghan refugee and host communities in Pakistan (Strengthening Education and Health Services for Refugees and Host Communities, Pakistan)

2nd prize: Peaceful Transformation of Conflicts over Natural Resources: Advancing gender-equitable land governance through dialogue, restorative justice, and community leadership in Northern and North-Eastern Uganda (The Civil Peace Service of GIZ in Uganda)

3rd prize: Building an Inclusive Circular Economy through Partnerships and Innovation: Feminist Development Approaches and Public-Private Sector Partnerships for Waste Management (Circular Economy Solutions Preventing Marine Litter in Ecosystems, India)





Balancing Power and Decision Making

Improving equitable access to public services for Afghan refugee and host communities in Pakistan

The Strengthening Education and Health Services for Afghan Refugees and Host Communities project, implemented by GIZ in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, aims to improve equitable access to public services for Afghan refugee and host communities.

Operating in a context marked by displacement, restrictive gender norms, and limited service access, the project particularly addresses systemic barriers that marginalise women from decision-making and essential services.

A key feature is the integration of women into governance structures, notably through mandatory inclusion in Primary Care Management Committees, ensuring their participation in health service oversight.

The creation of safe learning spaces for digital skills development support promoting digital

literacy and economic participation among women and girls while engaging families to shift norms around women's access to technology.

The project adopts a cross-sectoral and participatory approach spanning health, education, and local governance. It combines policy advocacy, capacity development, and community engagement, including training women leaders, fostering support networks, and promoting inclusive planning processes.

As a result, women have gained greater voice in local decision-making, improved confidence and leadership capacities, and increased acceptance of their roles in public and digital spaces. These changes have contributed to more responsive service delivery and gradual shifts in gender norms, supporting more inclusive and equitable community development.

THE PROJECT

- Strengthening Education and Health Services for Afghan Refugees and Host Communities (EHS) improves equitable access to health, education, and governance services for women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.
- Implemented in partnership with provincial Departments of Health, Education, and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, with collaboration from international organisations including the World Bank and UNHCR. Commissioned by BMZ.

THE APPROACH

- Gender-transformative and participatory approach addressing power imbalances across health, education, and local governance systems.
- Policy advocacy combined with community co-creation, including integration of women into Primary Care Management Committees and strengthening women's roles in local councils.
- Creation of safe learning spaces and mentorship networks for digital literacy, alongside engagement of male family members to shift norms and support women's participation.

THE CHALLENGE

- Women, including Afghan refugees, face restricted access to public services due to entrenched gender norms, limited mobility, and exclusion from decision-making structures.
- Weak representation of women in governance and service delivery systems reduces responsiveness to their needs and reinforces inequality in health, education, and local development.

THE CHANGE

- Gender-inclusive policies: Mandatory inclusion of women in Primary Care Management Committees strengthened representation and responsiveness in health service delivery.
- Capacity building and training: Women and girls developed leadership, governance, and digital skills, increasing confidence and participation in public and economic life.
- Social norms and leadership shifts: Greater acceptance of women's roles in decision-making and technology use, with emerging women leaders influencing community development and service provision.



Peaceful Transformation of Conflicts over Natural Resources

Advancing gender-equitable land governance through dialogue, restorative justice, and community leadership in Northern and North-Eastern Uganda

The Building Equality from the Ground Up initiative, implemented by the GIZ Civil Peace Service in Uganda with local partner organisations, promotes equitable access to land rights and inclusive land governance for women and marginalised groups. Operating in post-conflict and rural regions, the project addresses the gap between progressive legal frameworks and the persistent exclusion of women from land ownership and decision-making.

A central strength of the initiative is its conflict-sensitive design, targeting structural inequities embedded in formal institutions as well as prevailing social norms. Equally notable is the integration of restorative justice mechanisms with community dialogue platforms, engaging women, men, cultural and religious leaders, and

youth to reshape power relations and resolve land disputes. The project combines participatory analysis, capacity building, and multi-level engagement across households, communities, and institutions. It strengthens awareness of land rights, supports women's leadership in mediation and governance, and fosters male engagement to shift attitudes.

As a result, women have gained confidence to claim and defend land rights, increased their participation in decision-making, and taken on leadership roles in conflict resolution. Communities have adopted more inclusive practices, improved dispute resolution mechanisms, and shown growing acceptance of women's rights, contributing to more equitable and sustainable land governance.

THE PROJECT

- Building Equality from the Ground Up supports gender-transformative change in land governance to improve women's access to land rights and participation in Uganda.
- Implemented by GIZ Civil Peace Service (CPS) Uganda with 12 interest groups and a national partner organisation, LANDnet Uganda
- Commissioned by BMZ.

THE APPROACH

- Gender-transformative and conflict-sensitive approach addressing structural inequalities and power relations in land governance.
- Community co-creation through dialogue platforms, capacity building, and engagement of cultural, religious, and local government leaders alongside grassroots movements.
- Integration of restorative justice mechanisms and male engagement strategies to shift norms and support inclusive decision-making.

THE CHALLENGE

- Despite progressive legal frameworks, women's land rights remain limited in practice due to entrenched gender norms, weak implementation, and exclusion from decision-making.
- Post-conflict contexts, poverty, and cultural practices reinforce disputes, marginalisation of women and youth, and barriers to equitable land access and governance.

THE CHANGE

- Gender-inclusive governance: Increased representation of women in land governance structures, supported by quotas ensuring at least one-third participation.
- Capacity building and leadership: Women and youth strengthened skills in mediation, advocacy, and rights awareness, becoming active agents in resolving disputes and influencing decisions.
- Social norms and conflict resolution: Positive shifts in attitudes towards women's land rights, with more men supporting inheritance rights.



Building an Inclusive Circular Economy

Feminist development approaches and public-private sector partnerships for waste management in India

The Circular Economy Solutions Preventing Marine Litter in Ecosystems project, implemented by GIZ in India in partnership with government and private sector actors, promotes inclusive and sustainable waste management systems. Operating across multiple states, it aims to reduce environmental pollution while addressing gender inequalities faced by women and members from the informal waste sector, where contributions remain undervalued and working conditions precarious.

The project stands out for its feminist development approach based on Rights, Resources, and Representation (3Rs), which links environmental action with gender equality. Another distinctive element is the use of digital tools and public-private partnerships to formalise informal waste work, increase

transparency, and strengthen women's roles in data management, entrepreneurship, and decision-making.

The project applies an intersectional and participatory approach across individual, community, and institutional levels. It combines skills development, digital inclusion, and support for women's collectives with policy engagement and private sector accountability. As a result, women have improved access to income, resources, and leadership opportunities, while gaining visibility within formal waste systems. Communities have adopted more equitable practices, including shared household responsibilities, and private sector actors increasingly support inclusive models, contributing to more effective waste management and gradual shifts in gender norms.

THE PROJECT

- Circular Economy Solutions Preventing Marine Litter in Ecosystems (CES) promotes inclusive and sustainable waste management while advancing gender equality.
- Implemented by GIZ India with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and co-financed by the European Union (EU-India Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Initiative), in partnership with private sector actors.

THE CHALLENGE

- Women form a large share of the waste workforce and informal economy but face low recognition, unsafe working conditions, limited income, and exclusion from decision-making and formal systems.
- Structural inequalities linked to gender norms, caste, and poverty restrict access to resources, skills, and leadership, while unsustainable waste management contributes to environmental degradation.

THE APPROACH

- Linking environmental governance with social inclusion through Rights, Resources, and Representation (3Rs).
- Community co-creation with women's collectives, engagement of men and local leaders, and integration of digital tools to increase visibility, accountability, and participation also enabling officials, and policymakers to better manage, monitor, and recognise contributions through data.
- Public-private partnerships facilitated by Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) mechanisms and innovative business models to formalise informal work.

THE CHANGE

- Capacity building: Women gained digital, entrepreneurial, and technical skills, enabling improved income opportunities and leadership roles in waste management systems.
- Formal recognition of women's work and participation in waste governance increased visibility and influence within institutional and market structures.
- Greater acceptance of shared responsibilities in households and stronger private sector engagement in gender-responsive practices improved both environmental outcomes and women's empowerment.

Empowering Women for Better Nutrition

Enhanced food and nutrition security through multisectoral and gender-transformative approaches

THE PROJECT

- The Global Programme “Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience” improves food and nutrition security while strengthening women’s empowerment and household resilience across 12 countries.
- The programme is implemented in cooperation with communities, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, volunteers, media actors, and government institutions at local and national levels, and commissioned by BMZ.

THE APPROACH

- Multisectoral and gender-transformative approach addressing nutrition outcomes alongside shifts in gender norms, power relations, and governance structures.
- Combination of behaviour change communication, economic empowerment, and gender-responsive policies, as well as engagement of men through, e.g. Husband Schools or Father-to-Father Groups.
- Community co-creation with peer educators and dialogue platforms to redistribute unpaid care and link household practices with institutional change.

THE CHALLENGE

- Persistent food insecurity and malnutrition disproportionately affect women and children due to unequal food distribution, high unpaid care workloads, and limited decision-making power.
- Structural gender inequalities, restrictive norms, and weak integration of gender in nutrition and agriculture policies limit women’s access to resources, services, and opportunities, especially in contexts of poverty and climate shocks.

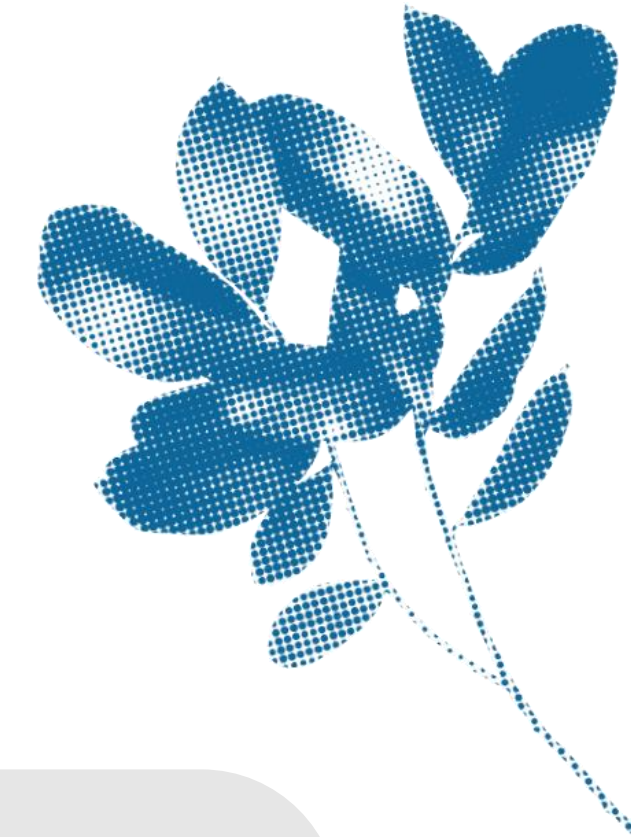
THE CHANGE

- Nutrition and wellbeing: Improved dietary diversity and child nutrition outcomes, particularly in households where men actively engage in gender-transformative approaches.
- Gender roles and empowerment: Increased women’s decision-making power, and greater male involvement in childcare and nutrition.
- Economic and institutional change: Higher incomes and savings through groups, improved access to land, and stronger participation in local governance.



#FemAI Leaders for Africa

Catalysing AI excellence for an ethical, inclusive and development-oriented AI governance



THE PROJECT

- #FemAI Leaders for Africa is a GIZ self-funded initiative that strengthens African women political leaders to shape ethical, inclusive and development-oriented AI governance in Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, and Tanzania.
- Implemented by GIZ in partnership with Smart Africa and Women Political Leaders (WPL), in cooperation with national parliaments, ICT ministries, civil society, academia and private sector actors.

THE CHALLENGE

- Women are underrepresented in AI governance and political decision-making, while male-dominated and Western-centred systems reproduce gender bias and exclude African perspectives.
- Intersecting inequalities related to gender, race and geography marginalise African women's voices in AI datasets, policies and governance, limiting inclusive and context-relevant outcomes.

THE APPROACH

- Gender-transformative and intersectional approach addressing structural exclusion and reshaping norms around expertise, leadership and AI governance.
- In-Country and Global FemAI Labs build AI competencies, policy skills and networks, enabling women leaders to co-develop policy outputs such as calls to action and policy briefs.
- Strategic engagement with parliaments, global forums and partners, combined with network-building through the FemAI Champions Network to position women in decision-making spaces.

THE CHANGE

- Capacity building and leadership: Women leaders strengthened confidence and expertise to engage in complex AI policy debates and act as recognised policy actors.
- Policy influence and representation: FemAI Labs produced concrete outputs such as Tanzania's Call to Action and Nigeria's policy brief, while participants shaped discussions in global forums.
- Norm change and visibility: African women gained visibility in AI governance spaces, contributing feminist and regional perspectives and challenging male-dominated, Western-centred narratives.

Building Safe Workplaces

Preventing sexual harassment in manufacturing factories in Viet Nam



THE PROJECT

- The Initiative for Global Solidarity (IGS) programme focuses on the prevention of sexual harassment in manufacturing factories in Viet Nam.
- Implemented by GIZ Viet Nam in cooperation with government bodies, enterprises, workers, civil society organisations, international partners and global brands, and commissioned by BMZ.

THE CHALLENGE

- Sexual harassment in the workplace remains a gender issue in Viet Nam's garment and manufacturing sector, where women form the majority and often remain silent due to fear, stigma and entrenched patriarchal norms.
- Legal reforms exist, but gaps in implementation and weak workplace practices limit effective prevention, reporting and protection for workers.

THE APPROACH

- Gender-transformative approach addressing root causes such as power imbalances, culture of silence and victim blaming, grounded in human rights principles.
- Improving enterprises' policies and complaint mechanisms, building capacities among employers and workers through targeted training and awareness-raising activities with practical tools.
- Multi-actor engagement including employers, workers, trade unions, public authorities and global brands, with dialogue platforms and supply chain cooperation to scale change.

THE CHANGE

- Capacity building and training: 125 participating manufacturers were equipped with knowledge about anti-sexual harassment policies and handling of complaints, enabling them to address sexual harassment more effectively.
- Workplace improvements: Enterprises introduced stronger policies, reporting systems and communication practices, fostering proactive prevention.
- Policy uptake and sustainability: The anti-sexual harassment training manual was approved and adopted by brands, enabling scale-up of gender-responsive practices.

Livable Cities for All

Gender-responsive urban governance and safer public spaces in Rajshahi, Bangladesh

THE PROJECT

- The Livable and Inclusive Cities for All (LICA) project in Rajshahi, Bangladesh, promotes gender-responsive urban governance and safer public spaces.
- Implemented in cooperation with Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC), youth networks, faith-based institutions, civil society organisations and local female leaders, and commissioned by BMZ.

THE APPROACH

- Addressing power relations in urban governance and challenging norms restricting women's visibility and leadership.
- Youth-led, participatory data collection using digital tools to generate gender-disaggregated evidence on safety and accessibility in public spaces.
- Community co-creation and engagement of male allies, faith-based actors and female leaders, combined with integration of gender data into RCC planning and budgeting processes.

THE CHALLENGE

- Urban spaces in Rajshahi are often unsafe and male-dominated, limiting women's mobility, safety and participation in public life and the workforce.
- Patriarchal norms and limited female representation in city governance restrict gender-responsive planning and reinforce institutional exclusion.

THE CHANGE

- Capacity building and youth leadership: 200 trained youth volunteers, including women and madrasa students, increased civic confidence and led data collection and advocacy.
- Institutional change and policy uptake: RCC integrated gender data into budgets and introduced gender indicators, supported by newly appointed gender focal persons.
- Norm change and safety: Community dialogues and media engagement increased acceptance of women in public spaces, with a reported 20% rise in women feeling safe.



The Price of Power

Fighting sexual corruption and gender inequality in Peru

THE PROJECT

- Several projects of the Governance thematic cluster in Peru have jointly contributed to strengthening institutional approach to sexual corruption at different levels by integrating gender into governance and anti-corruption efforts.
- Implemented by GIZ Peru in cooperation with public institutions, academia, civil society, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center, Transparency International Peru, and Swiss and Canadian cooperation, and commissioned by BMZ.

THE APPROACH

- Gender-transformative and intersectional approach addressing sexual corruption as a structural governance issue rooted in unequal power relations.
- Development of conceptual frameworks, policy proposals and risk management tools with academia, public institutions and civil society to integrate gender into integrity systems.
- Capacity building through workshops and dialogue engaging public officials and civil society, alongside evidence generation to make sexual corruption visible and actionable.

THE CHALLENGE

- Sexual corruption is widespread and underreported in Peru and worldwide, driven by abuse of authority, fear of reprisals, lack of trust in institutions and lack of information about sexual corruption itself. This affects women disproportionately.
- Absence of legal recognition, weak reporting mechanisms, and entrenched patriarchal power relations limit accountability and obscure links between gender inequality and corruption.

THE CHANGE

- Policy integration and institutional reform: Gender mainstreamed into the National Policy of Integrity and risk management tools, including recruitment and procurement guidelines.
- Capacity building: 230 public officials and civil society leaders trained, strengthening recognition of sexual corruption and positioning them as change agents.
- Agenda setting and accountability: Sexual corruption placed on the public agenda, reporting mechanisms strengthened, and Peru positioned as a pioneer in addressing this issue.



Inclusive Land Tenure Security

How the Promotion of a Responsible Land Policy project is transforming land governance in Côte d'Ivoire

THE PROJECT

- [The Promotion of a Responsible Land Policy project](#) promotes inclusive and gender-transformative rural land tenure security in Côte d'Ivoire.
- Implemented by GIZ in partnership with the national Rural Land Agency (AFOR) and the NGO Audace Institut Afrique (AIA) and commissioned by BMZ.

THE APPROACH

- Addressing norms that define land ownership as male and redistributing decision-making power within households and communities.
- Community co-construction with traditional authorities, men and youth through participatory land clarification, intra-family agreements and conflict resolution tools.
- Combination of institutional reform, development of key reference documents and digital innovation, including the ContraTerre application, alongside social mobilisation methods such as the “Amazons of Land” and participatory theatre.



THE CHALLENGE

- Customary land systems and inheritance practices largely exclude women from land ownership and formal recognition, despite their central role in agricultural production.
- Transition to formal land documentation under national programmes risks reinforcing exclusion, particularly for women facing intersecting inequalities related to status, age, origin or literacy.

THE CHANGE

- Institutional integration and policy uptake: Gender-sensitive tools and methodologies embedded in AFOR's national procedures, strengthening inclusive land governance.
- Successful integration of inclusive land tenure security in the male-dominated cocoa sector involving global multinationals, leaders in the cocoa and chocolate sector.
- Access to land rights: Around 8,000 households obtained land documents with improved inclusion of women and recognition of joint and women-specific rights.



Reflecting Different Realities

Designing social services through a gender lens in the Western Balkans



THE PROJECT

- The regional project on Social Inclusion of Disadvantaged Groups in the Western Balkans (SoRi) leverages evidence and intersectional analyses to design gender-responsive social services.
- Implemented in partnership with the Network of Associations of Local Authorities in South-East Europe (NALAS) and in cooperation with local government associations, municipalities, public institutions, civil society organisations, and others and commissioned by BMZ

THE CHALLENGE

- Patriarchal norms in the Western Balkans drive feminisation of poverty, labour market insecurity, unequal unpaid care burdens as well as unequal access to social services.
- Social services too often assume gender-neutral needs and fail to reflect differentiated realities of women, men, and disadvantaged groups, reinforcing existing inequalities.

THE APPROACH

- Social mapping gathers gender-disaggregated data from a Leave-No-One-Behind and intersectional perspective from over 1,600 individuals and transforms it into evidence used to identify service gaps, barriers to access, and needs of vulnerable groups.
- Creation of gender-responsive and -transformative social services, combining engagement of fathers, vocational support for mothers and inclusive service models such as daycare centres and mobile outreach teams.

THE CHANGE

- Service design and delivery: Evidence-based design of daycare and outreach services reduce barriers and improve psychosocial support and inclusion for children and adults with disabilities and elderly people in 11 municipalities.
- Increased awareness of unequal care burdens and greater involvement of fathers supported shifts in household roles and paved the way for women's economic opportunities.
- Beneficiaries reported improved confidence, emotional stability and participation in community life.



Winner and Honorable Mentions Gender-Sensible Culture and Gender Competence (GSC)

*Enhancing gender equality within the company,
at organisational unit or country level.*

1st prize: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: A comprehensive effort towards promoting gender equality and the implementation of the GIZ Gender Strategy (Gender, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Secretariat, GIZ Nigeria & ECOWAS)

2nd prize: Gender Toolbox for Skills Development: Practical tools tailored to local contexts to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment in skills development in Francophone Africa (Francophone Technical and Vocational Education and Training network, Task Force Genre & Inclusion)

3rd prize: Handling menstrual health: A teleworking policy for women and individuals who menstruate for GIZ Colombia





Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

A comprehensive effort towards promoting gender equality and the implementation of the GIZ Gender Strategy

The Gender, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Secretariat, established by GIZ Nigeria and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2023, coordinates efforts to embed gender equality and inclusion across organisational portfolios in Nigeria. It provides support and advisory services to projects, responding to persistent inequalities, including gender-based violence and the marginalisation of persons with disabilities.

A defining feature of the initiative is linking organisational culture change with programme-level interventions. This includes structured mechanisms and informal social spaces, such as a Men's Safe Space to engage male staff on positive masculinity, the Interns Network as an employee resource group, and intersectional

training for managers and focal persons.

The approach is grounded in evidence from a diversity audit, followed by targeted capacity building, strategic partnerships and continuous awareness activities. Actions include mentorship programmes, inclusive recruitment practices, accessibility improvements, and collaboration with UN Women to strengthen gender-responsive governance, budgeting and sectoral initiatives.

These efforts have led to improved representation, strengthened institutional capacities, increased attention to disability inclusion, and the adoption of more inclusive policies and practices within the organisation and partner institutions.

THE INITIATIVE

- The Gender, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Secretariat is an initiative to embed gender equality and inclusion across GIZ Nigeria and ECOWAS portfolios through coordination, advisory services, technical support and capacity development.
- Implemented by GIZ Nigeria in partnership with ECOWAS and UN Women.

THE APPROACH

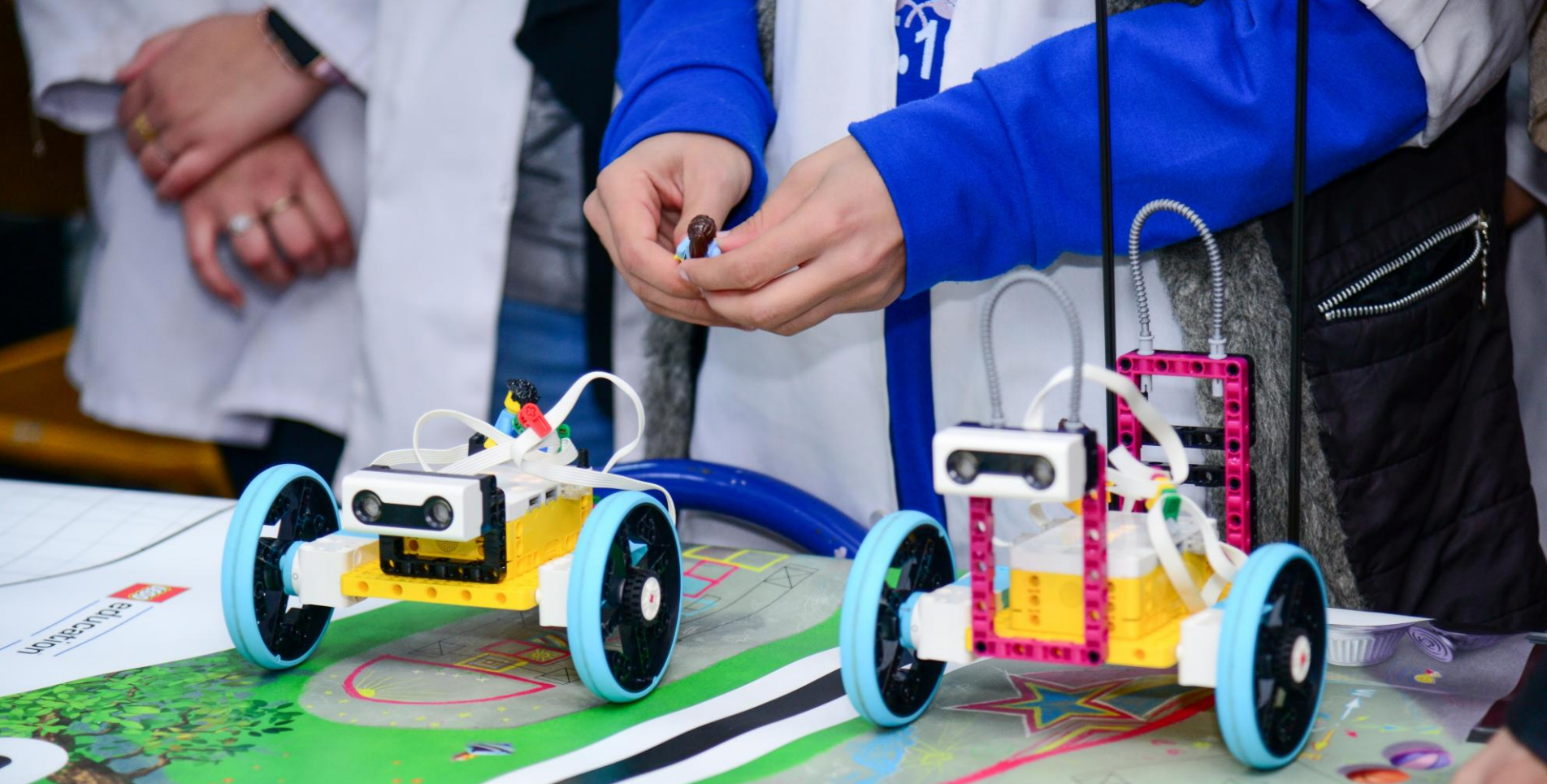
- Intersectional and gender-transformative approach linking internal organisational change with external programme support.
- Evidence-based actions following a diversity audit, including manager trainings, mentorship programmes, inclusive recruitment and accessibility improvements.
- Engagement through formal and informal mechanisms such as employee resource groups, a Men's Safe Space, strategic partnerships with UN Women and continuous awareness campaigns.

THE CHALLENGE

- Persistent inequalities in Nigeria, including gender-based violence, low representation of women in leadership and barriers for persons with disabilities, limit inclusive development.
- Organisational gaps in gender competence, inclusive policies and workplace accessibility hinder effective implementation of gender strategies.

THE CHANGE

- Capacity building: strengthened gender competence among managers and focal persons, improving leadership and decision-making on inclusion.
- Workplace improvements: increased representation of women, enhanced accessibility for persons with disabilities and introduction of inclusive policies such as support for nursing mothers.
- Gender-inclusive policies: adoption of gender-responsive governance and budgeting practices, and stronger integration of inclusion across programmes and partner institutions.



Gender Toolbox for Skills Development

Practical tools tailored to local contexts to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment in skills development in Francophone Africa

The Francophone Gender Toolbox, developed by the GIZ Gender and Inclusion Task Force within the Francophone Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) network, supports the integration of gender-transformative approaches across project cycles in Francophone Africa.

It provides practical tools tailored to local contexts to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment in skills development. This initiative addresses persistent structural inequalities and the limited inclusion of Francophone staff in existing resources due to language barriers.

The toolbox stands out for its participatory and context-specific design, developed colla-

boratively across multiple country projects and grounded in local realities.

Practical tools, training materials and documented initiatives are compiled into user-friendly formats and disseminated through internal networks and webinars. This has strengthened gender competence among staff, improved access to relevant resources for Francophone practitioners and enabled the adaptation of successful initiatives across countries and sectors.

As a result, gender-responsive and transformative practices are increasingly embedded in TVET programmes, contributing to more inclusive organisational cultures and project outcomes.

THE INITIATIVE

- The Francophone Gender Toolbox supports the integration of gender-transformative approaches in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) projects through practical, context-adapted tools.
- Implemented by the GIZ Gender and Inclusion Task Force within the Francophone TVET network across multiple African country projects.

THE APPROACH

- Gender-transformative and participatory approach grounded in local contexts and socio-cultural realities.
- Collaborative development through a task force, including monthly exchanges, peer support, co-creation of tools and classification of good practices.
- Provision of operational, user-friendly instruments such as training modules, guidelines and project fiches to support implementation and replication.

THE CHALLENGE

- Structural gender inequalities, including limited access to training, under-representation of women in technical sectors and gender-based violence, restrict women's participation in economic and social life.
- Dominance of English and German resources within GIZ limits inclusion, knowledge sharing and capacity development for Francophone staff and projects.

THE CHANGE

- Capacity building and training: strengthened gender competence among staff and improved understanding of inclusive and transformative approaches.
- Knowledge sharing and adaptation: increased access to French-language resources enabled replication of initiatives across countries, such as mentorship models in renewable energy.
- Organisational inclusion: enhanced participation of Francophone practitioners and stronger integration of gender-responsive practices in TVET programmes.



Handling Menstrual Health

A teleworking policy for women and individuals who menstruate for GIZ Colombia

GIZ Colombia introduced a Telework Policy for Women and Menstruating Persons in 2025 to address menstrual health as a workplace issue and strengthen gender equality within the organisation. Included in GIZ Colombia's annual plan by the National Staff Representative Committee, this policy was developed jointly by the gender and human resources units with technical support from the Sanitation for Millions project.

The initiative enables flexible working arrangements linked to menstrual health needs. It also responds to the absence of institutional measures recognising menstruation, which limited employee wellbeing and equitable working conditions.

With its rights-based and inclusive design, the policy explicitly addresses women and menstruating persons to reflect diverse gender

identities. It is complemented by a practical Menstrual Wellbeing Guide that supports both staff and managers in handling menstrual health with empathy and clarity.

The approach combines policy reform with capacity building and internal dialogue, building on prior sensitisation campaigns to translate awareness into structural change. Clear procedures allow staff to access telework or paid leave when needed, while guidance tools facilitate consistent and supportive implementation across teams. The process was co-created across departments, ensuring relevance to different roles and working conditions. This has contributed to improved recognition of menstrual health, more inclusive workplace practices and strengthened organisational commitment to gender equality and employee wellbeing.

THE INITIATIVE

- Telework Policy for Women and Menstruating Persons supports menstrual health and gender equality through flexible working arrangements within GIZ Colombia.
- Implemented by the GIZ Colombia Gender Unit and Human Resources with technical support from the Sanitation for Millions project.

THE APPROACH

- Rights-based and gender-transformative approach integrating organisational policy reform with health and inclusion perspectives.
- Co-creation across departments, incorporating contributions and comments from the National Staff Representative Committee. The policy combines gender expertise, human resources processes, and medical input to ensure its relevance and feasibility.
- Complementary tools such as a Menstrual Wellbeing Guide and internal awareness campaigns to support implementation and foster open dialogue.

THE CHALLENGE

- Lack of institutional recognition of menstrual health in the workplace limited employee wellbeing, dignity and equal working conditions.
- Previous awareness efforts on menstruation did not translate into practical tools, leaving managers and staff without guidance for addressing related needs.

THE CHANGE

- Workplace improvements: introduction of telework and paid leave options linked to menstrual health needs, improving wellbeing and flexibility for staff.
- Strengthened understanding among managers and employees on how to address menstruation in a respectful and informed way.
- Gender-inclusive policies: formal recognition of menstruation as a workplace issue and inclusion of diverse gender identities, reinforcing an inclusive organisational culture.

One Goal, Multiple Approaches

Building a diverse and inclusive workplace in Viet Nam



THE INITIATIVE

- With the strong commitment and support from country management team, GIZ Viet Nam has been taking a range of measures, fostering an enabling corporate culture that upholds dignity, respect, and equal opportunity for all employees.
- Implemented by the Gender & Diversity Working Group, under the coordination of the Senior Gender Specialist (Country Gender Focal Person).

THE APPROACH

- Core approach is gender-transformative and intersectional, embedding gender and diversity considerations in HR recruitment, procurement, and organisational processes.
- Key mechanisms include co-creation of policies, tools, and campaigns; awareness-raising through trainings and events; and visible leadership support.
- Initiatives leverage community spaces internally, link gender to corporate health, and highlight marginalised voices through inclusive events by MenstruAction or Pride events.

THE CHALLENGE

- Women, LGBTIQ+ persons, and persons with disabilities face persistent barriers to decent work and career advancement and are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence and harassment, further deepening inequalities in the workplace.

THE CHANGE

- Updated anti-harassment policy, gender responsive and socially inclusive HR checklist, code of conduct on anti-sexual harassment for local service providers, and adapted infringement and misconduct reporting system.
- Annual gender trainings combined with promotion of gender events have increased knowledge and motivated LGBTIQ+ colleagues to be more visible.
- Leadership support and co-creative engagement strengthened institutional legitimacy and influenced partner enterprises.



From Strategy to Practice

Advancing gender-specific migration counselling within the programme Centres for Migration and Development (ZME)



Gender-sensible culture
and gender competence
Honourable Mention 2

THE INITIATIVE

- The global programme Centres for Migration and Development (ZME) has developed a Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2025-2027 to systematically embed gender equality across its structures, services, and counselling work.
- To operationalise the GAP, ZME created a practical Guide and a Training Module that translate gender concepts into concrete counselling practices across cooperation countries.
- The initiative is implemented jointly by headquarters and country teams, particularly through its network of Gender Focal Persons.

THE APPROACH

- ZME seeks to drive structural improvements through: The GAP framework, which establishes a structure with defined goals, roles and responsibilities; the Guide, which simplifies gender analysis into concrete counselling approaches; the Training Module, which uses case-based learning to bridge the gap between theory and practice.
- The application of a gender lens across the entire migration cycle ensures context-sensitive support at every stage.
- The participatory approach gives country teams the flexibility to adapt strategies to their specific cultural contexts.

THE CHALLENGE

- Migration counselling often remains gender-neutral in practice, overlooking how social norms, power relations, and expectations shape migration decisions, risks, and outcomes.
- Counsellors require practical, context-sensitive tools to address diverse client situations — including women, men, families, and persons with disabilities facing specific constraints and barriers.
- Previous approaches lacked systematic operationalisation, making it difficult to consistently apply gender-sensitive practices in day-to-day counselling.

THE CHANGE

- Counsellors apply gender-sensitive communication, build trust, and adapt their counselling approaches to the diverse needs of different client groups.
- The training has been successfully implemented in Ghana, where participants translated the Guide into concrete, context-specific actions for their daily counselling work.
- Gender is embedded as a core quality criterion of service delivery, strengthening the inclusiveness, effectiveness, and overall quality of ZME counselling services.



Gender & Cities Competition

Making Feminist Approaches in Urban Development Visible

Gender-sensible culture
and gender competence
Honourable Mention 3

THE INITIATIVE

- The Gender & Cities Competition identifies, showcases, and connects innovative feminist approaches in urban development implemented by GIZ projects.
- Implemented by the sector programme Cities on behalf of BMZ, with active participation from GIZ project teams across a range of urban interventions.

THE APPROACH

- The core approach is gender-transformative and intersectional, using a competitive “call for solutions” format to make feminist practices visible and promote mutual learning.
- Key mechanisms include structured submissions, presentations, jury evaluation, and a final award event fostering organisational dialogue and cross-project exchange.
- Practices highlighted address rights, resources, and representation, integrating gender and intersectional perspectives in climate action, municipal governance, infrastructure, and skills development.

THE CHALLENGE

- Women, girls, and other marginalised groups in cities of the Global South face poverty, insecurity, and limited participation in public life, especially in informal settlements.
- Existing gender-responsive urban development practices were somewhat fragmented, not widely visible, and not yet systematically connected within the GIZ portfolio.

THE CHANGE

- 13 submissions and a final online event increased the profile of gender-transformative urban development.
- Presentations and exchanges enhanced understanding of feminist and intersectional approaches, fostered networking, and inspired the adoption of similar measures in other projects.
- Results achieved by the winning projects include the implementation of Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) frameworks for climate action and the integration of gender-mainstreaming indicators in municipal councils.



A photograph showing a group of people, including women, gathered around a table during an award ceremony. A banner in the foreground reads "Connective Cities".

Gender & Cities Award

October 9th, 2025

Congratulations to the Connective Cities team for their outstanding dedication and hard work.

Their approach fosters gender-responsive urban governance through peer learning and locally adapted solutions

AV: Ricarda Meissner



A graphic featuring the acronym "ISUD" in large red letters, surrounded by icons representing urban development, social inclusion, and gender equality. A banner below the text reads "ISUD".

Gender & Cities Award

October 9th, 2025

Congratulations to the ISUD team for their outstanding dedication and hard work.

ISUD uses participatory, gender- and generation-sensitive planning with marginalized communities to co-create inclusive, scalable neighbourhood solutions in Namibia.

AV: Thomas Haenert



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