



Sexualised misconduct at the workplace – A holistic approach to implement GIZ's Zero Tolerance Policy

Categorie:

Internal Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Equality as a key value of GIZ and our corporate culture entails that we do not tolerate any form of sexual - or sexualised as we would suggest to name it - misconduct in the company. Therefore, GIZ Rwanda has developed and is implementing a holistic approach because we do not need only a policy, but a system and a structure that offers support, including low-threshold opportunities for consultation (*niedrigschwellige Ansprechstrukturen*) as well as sensitization and creative awareness raising at the same time.

Situation and Challenges

From studies such as the one from Transparency International Rwanda we know that sexual misconduct or gender-based corruption (how they call it) is widespread in Rwanda. Even though Rwanda has quite progressive laws and policies in place that ensure equal opportunities, the society is still characterised by a deep-rooted patriarchal structure and a high prevalence of sexualized and gender-based violence.

GIZ Rwanda regularly conducts Knowledge, Attitude, Practices Studies (KAP Study). These studies address the one mainstreaming themes of GIZ Rwanda (gender, inclusion of persons with disabilities, HIV, population dynamics). They serve as baseline and help to identify knowledge gaps, attitudes and behavioural patterns that constitute barriers to gender equality, inclusion of persons with disabilities and HIV control.

In 2015, questions on sexual misconduct at the workplace were included for the first time. The KAP study results from 2018 show that colleagues experienced different types of sexual misconduct at the workplace – from sexually determined comments, unwanted/repeated stories or paternalistic remarks to physical violence and sexual assault. However, no official complaints have been made.

Following the discussions with all project/programme teams as well as the management team, the latter one decided that GIZ Rwanda should be a safe working environment free of sexual misconduct and that appropriate measures are necessary. Even though GIZ has a policy and GIZ Rwanda has a policy on country level since 2015 colleagues seemed not to be aware of the policy and support structures in place.

During a country planning event with all colleagues working on technical level someone raised the topic and many colleagues raised their voices and complained that “something needs to be done”.

Then management team wanted the policy to be revised and new accompanying documents to be developed. Furthermore, sensitization on GIZ zero tolerance policy was needed.

Since the country offices are supposed to develop their own structures and little support from head office was in place, GIZ Rwanda decided to nevertheless take up the challenge and develop its own holistic approach.

Holistic Approach: Policy and accompanying documents go hand in hand with creative sensitisation and awareness raising

This decision was followed by a longer of revising the policy, developing new documents to make the response mechanism and support structures in place better known. The process and all its activities have been implemented by the Gender Focal Person with support of the One Mainstreaming Team and the country management.

Since sexual misconduct at the workplace is a very sensitive topic and requires thinking about the big picture, including very many different aspects on individual and company level we developed a holistic approach to tackle the issue in a way that can bring a change. With regards to sexual misconduct at the workplace, holistic refers to addressing the whole issue, including the policy, the response mechanism, the support structure as well as the sensitization, awareness raising and training.

Since documents alone probably wouldn't have such a strong impact, we also had an event launching the revised policy and new documents, we expanded the local support structure, developed creative awareness raising campaigns and were and are sensitizing colleagues on the topic – knowing that each change we make to one part can affect the whole and hopefully empower our colleagues encourage everyone to seek support when they are affected by sexual misconduct at the workplace.

First steps, decisions, activities with regards to documents		
1.	Starting point: Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Study (KAP Study) 2018 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduction the KAP Study -with regards to Gender, HIV/Aids, Inclusion of Persons with disabilities, Population Dynamics ▪ KAP Study entails questions on sexual misconduct at the workplace (see results above) ▪ Development of recommendations ▪ Discussion with all project teams and the management team 	2018-2019
2.	Decisions of the management team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decisions on the measures: GIZ RW needs a revised policy, accompanying documents, local support structures and awareness raising on the topic ▪ Management requested Gender FP to work on this topic 	Mid 2019
3.	Revising the policy and developing new accompanying documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Period of exchange with colleagues from different countries ▪ revising the policy and developing two new accompanying documents (guidance note with grievance mechanisms and one page overview). ▪ Published in English and Kinyarwanda to ensure that all staff can read the relevant information. 	Mid 2019 - Nov 2020 Policy and accompanying documents on IDA country page
4.	Announcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Virtual bilingual event with the Country Director – Raising awareness on GIZ' zero tolerance policy, introducing the revised policy and accompanying documents as well as the local contact persons ▪ Documents have been published on IDA country page 	25h November 2020 (International Day against violence against women)

Measures with regards to sensitization/ awareness raising and training of staff:		
1.	Event/ announcement (see description above) 25th November 2020, International Day against violence against women: Digital event with Country Director and Gender FP	25.11.2020
2.	Sensitisation and training of management in different steps a) Induction workshop for the management team (developed by Gender Focal Point) b) Follow up workshop for the management team and line managers (with external trainers)	a) November 2020 b) February 2022
3.	Trainings for all staff a) Slot on the topic integrated in general onboarding b) Induction sessions for project teams upon request c) Workshops for all staff (mandatory) with external trainer team	a) since 2016 b) Since November 2020 c) January 2021
4.	Notebook campaign ▪ Gender FP has developed notebooks providing key information about the policy and the response mechanism, which has been distributed to all staff ▪ The country office is printing more notebooks in order to provide one to each new staff (for ensuring that everyone is aware of the policy)	Video (can be shared) In 2020 From January 2022
5.	Poster campaign with digital component ▪ Displaying a poster, which is sensitizing on the different types of sexual misconduct and GIZ zero tolerance policy in all offices (in collaboration with GIZ Cameroon) ▪ Followed by a second campaign with an added digital component: The characters of the poster come to life in video clips; additional posters with Zapparcode to watch video clips are displayed in the offices Video clips of the campaign were additionally published on the IDA country page	Ongoing since June 2020 Video clips on IDA: Series 1 Series 2 Series 3 (to be published soon on IDA country page)

Cooperation

The cooperation with different actors was and still is an important success factor in the process. With regards to the process of revising the policy, developing accompanying documents and creating awareness raising campaigns the exchange and collaboration with a number of Gender Focal Persons from various countries as well as the exchange with the Gender Focal Person of the Africa Department was extremely helpful. Especially with regards to the poster campaign collaboration across countries was a big success factor. The poster has been developed by the former Gender Focal Point of GIZ Cameroon. Through collaboration with GIZ Cameroon and with GIZ Rwanda's Project on Digital Solutions for Sustainable Development and its DigiCenter it was possible to use the poster and develop it further to a poster with a digital component, which makes the characters of the comics come alive in video clips.

On country level the collaboration with the management was and is extremely important. The country director invited all colleagues to the event launching the revised policy and new documents as well as introducing the appointed local contact person and it gave a clear sign to all colleagues that shows the importance and the seriousness the management is giving to this topic. Furthermore, it has to be mentioned that the management team requested a training on the topic before the launch of the revised policy with the argument that we cannot launch this

policy without having at least an induction training for colleagues in the management team who have special responsibilities when it comes to preventing and dealing with sexual misconduct.

Next steps

GIZ Rwanda wants to continue to train local contact persons. The next KAP Study should have more specific questions to measure the impact of the measures. A monitoring system has been developed; a feedback from head office is needed with regards to an implementation that guarantees confidentiality.

Attachments

Material that has been developed to guide and support local contact persons as well as colleagues in managerial positions when colleagues are asking for information, support or want to make an official complaint.

Receiving a case: Action steps

2.Preparing to meet/talk to the person

Make sure you create an environment where the person feels safe (find a suitable venue for the discussion – where there will be no interruptions).

Maybe the person feels more comfortable when meeting outside the office (e.g. in a café). You can suggest different options and ask the person where s/he feels most comfortable.



1.Try to find out the urgency

Try to find out if the person wishes to talk to you the same day because it is very urgent or if you can make an appointment within the next days.

Treat the matter as urgent, but find a time where you will be able to attend to the issue without feeling pressed for time and need to rush off to attend to other business.



3.Conversation/Meeting – Part I

1.Seating arrangement must be open and comfortable

2.Start with appreciating that the person is so courageous to seek support

3.Explain that everything you are going to talk about remains confidential

4.Take time to listen: Do not interrupt the flow of the story except to reassure that you have understood things correctly. Allow the person to finish telling their story before asking questions for clarity.



4.Conversation/Meeting – Part II

Once the person affected has explained everything and you have listened and understood:

5.Ascertain the views of the person affected as to what outcome he/she wants

6.Ensure that the person affected understands GIZ's procedures for dealing with a complaint

7.Discuss and agree on the next steps: either informal or formal complaint, on the understanding that choosing to resolve the matter informally does not preclude the person affected from pursuing a formal (or outside) complaint later on. Respect the choice of the person affected – even if you have a different opinion!



5.Support and selfcare

If you feel you need support on how to handle the case you may contact the persons mentioned in the guidance note (e.g. equal opportunity commissioner, COPE).

Acknowledge that you supported another person and that this might have also been stressful for you. Take your time. Make space to just breathe, go for a walk or do something that helps you to relax.



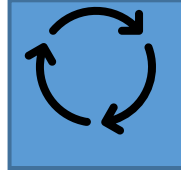
Receiving a case: Important aspects

Confidentiality:

All interactions which take place in the setting of a meeting, request, consultation or support of a person asking anything related to sexual harassment at the workplace are considered confidential.

This includes requests by telephone, all interactions, any scheduling or appointment notes, all content and any notes that are taken.

Contact persons can consult other persons to receive support on how to handle a case (e.g. integrity advisors, equal opportunity commissioner, COPE). In these consultations the anonymity of the persons involved has also to be guaranteed.



Continuous sexual harassment:

Be aware that the harasser could continue the sexual harassment and that the person affected might ask your support again. You would then again follow steps 1-5.

A support person supports and listens – it is not your responsibility to find a solution or to stop the harasser.

You can offer the person affected to keep in touch and offer to meet again.

Taking notes:

It might be helpful to ask the person affected whether it is an informal complaint/initial talk to seek support and s/he just wished some guidance at the first place.

▪ Informal complaint/support session:

If the person agrees you may take notes.

Please make sure that you keep these notes confidential (e.g. in a closed envelope) and not accessible for anyone!

▪ Formal complaint

You can use the case recording form (Annex 2, Guidance Note).

All information in this form is voluntary.

Please make sure that you keep these notes confidential (e.g. in a closed envelope) and not accessible for anyone!

