

S4DA Gender Champions vying for the Real Champions Crown

S4DA Gender Champs:

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Who are the Gender Champs?

What happens when you give a group of colleagues the freedom to think about one specific topic, they are passionate about and encourage them to undertake action within that topic? You get the *S4DA Gender Champions*. We are a group of, currently, 8 colleagues within the regional project Sport for Development in Africa (S4DA) that started working together in June 2020. Staff members from all implementing countries are represented (Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Senegal, as well as the head office in Germany) with national staff, international staff, interns, development advisors and managers all being part of the group. One of the strengths of this group is that there is **no hierarchy**, and all initiatives are **developed by group members** and are decided on by the Gender Champs, who then share it with the entire S4DA team. A team that has an **unwavering commitment and energy to gender**, which is exactly why we have been able to come up with and organize such great initiatives!

"Never have I been part of such an inspiring and hardworking team. As the speaker of the group it is an honor to work with and learn from everyone and to see our ideas come to life"
(Veronique Sprenger, Development Advisor S4DA)

Let's get started: S4DA Gender Strategy

At the very first meeting of the Gender Champs, the group decided that they wanted to create an S4DA gender strategy with a specific vision and objectives. This vision serves as the basis

S4DA Gender Strategy: Indicators

- **Political will and accountability:** Agree on gender related annual objectives
- **Gender competence:** All S4DA team members have had an introduction to the gender strategy and all GFPs participated in the AIZ gender training
- **Gender equality within S4DA team and consultancies:** Gender ratio in all hubs is at least 40% female
- **Corporate culture:** Organize an S4DA project-wide competition
- **Impact and evaluation:** In all M&E processes a fair gender distribution should be considered
- **Activities and measurements:** Each country has at least 2 gender related activities around the selected topics

for the S4DA Gender Strategy with 6 objectives and indicators of success. Our vision is: We **educate and raise awareness** within our team and with our cooperation partners on **gender-related topics** through our sport for development approach. Our focus is to **use sport as a tool to increase equality** for girls and women.

With this vision in mind, one by one, we have accomplished almost all our ambitious objectives set through the S4DA gender strategy. Within this we have **organized four major project-wide**

initiatives that even grew beyond our project. We worked together with other projects, deepened our bonds with our partners, and kept everyone on their toes with regards to gender.

What have we achieved so far?

After creating our gender strategy, discussing it with the entire S4DA team and getting approval from everyone, the first major event was right around the corner. Every year from November 25 to December 10 international organizations and NGOs celebrate the *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)*. In 2020, we wanted to **join the international discourse** and contribute to raising awareness against GBV, especially in light of COVID and the increase of GBV it has instigated. We urged all project team members to wear orange and hold a note where they state how they fight gender inequality. At the end of the 16 days, we created a **collage with all pictures** that were sent in and published on IDA and the project's MS Teams channel.



Besides the photo action, we also **created awareness videos** which were released on the Sport for Development YouTube channel, ([part 1](#), [part 2](#), and [part 3](#)). The whole team in Germany got together to create these short videos with a clear message against gender-based violence. On top of these two initiatives, we also collaborated with an external partner. We had the privilege to **interview Lidya Tafesse** who was a FIFA World Cup referee in 2019, she is the only international female referee from Ethiopia.



The success of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV in 2020 served as motivation for the Gender Champs to come up with creative and more ambitious ideas for **Gender Week in 2021**. Throughout Gender Week, the Champs posted **daily quizzes** on the project's MS Teams channel to raise awareness on gender inequalities in different areas of life in an interactive manner. Team members were challenged to participate in a three-question quiz each day with a different theme: COVID, digitalization, political leadership & representation, education, and health. *Did you know that within Fintech companies, only 11% have women founders?* (OECD, 2018)



Furthermore, joining the international community in using the designated UN Women hashtag **#ChooseToChallenge**, we decided to do another **photo challenge!** Together with the Sector Program Sport for Development, the collage with how we choose to challenge gender stereotypes was published on the MS Teams channels of both projects, IDA and the GIZ Gender Week

[website](#). To amplify this message even more, we organized an online **“How we Challenge” brunch** with participants from both the regional and sectoral Sport for Development projects. During this hour the **participants reflected on their understanding of gender, its origins, and how it has developed over the years**. Finally, to really bring the message home, we asked project countries to write an **advocacy article** on gender equality within their specific context. These were the submissions from Kenya: **“It’s women’s turn, in the people’s game”** and from Ethiopia: **“A new generation running up the stairs”**. The articles were widely read and shared on IDA and the GIZ Gender Week [website](#).

One of the objectives in the S4DA Gender Strategy was to organize a project-wide gender activity that **engages our partners to promote gender equality** beyond our team. This time, the idea resulted from a brainstorming session that included all S4DA team members. What was the final decision? To create a video, where our partners across the continent **pass the ball of equality to each other**. Over 20 partners from 6 different countries, both male and female participated and passed on the ball of equality resulting in [a video](#) which was



shared on different platforms by the S4DA team and the partners themselves. We are extremely proud of this big initiative and did not just get to make a very cool video of our partners passing on the ball, but we also got to learn from them what they do and what they find to be important with regards to gender equality. What about the S4DA Team? We, of course, also contributed by creating our own videos. All submissions were compiled, and one project video was created and shared on our Teams channel.

"Fostering gender equality is the key for empowering woman's here in Ethiopia. Thank you S4DA Ethiopia for the opportunity to share my feelings!"
(Comment on Youtube)



For every initiative that we take, we always have a brainstorming session and try to produce innovative ideas. After the successful “16 Days of Activism Against GBV” campaign in 2020, we decided to focus on external engagement in the 2021 campaign. This year we are **hosting a podcast** to raise awareness

on GBV that consists of four episodes. In each episode, we interview a different expert from a different country. The episodes are shared on the Sport for Development website and through the social media channels of our partners. For this initiative, a special “16 Days of Activism Against GBV” section was created on our website. To support the podcast, we also share articles, songs, and book recommendations, along with portraits of our interviewees. Are you [following us on Instagram](#)? You should. This is where all the recommendations are posted.

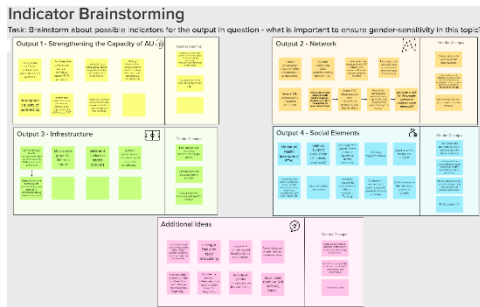


S4DA Capacity Development and Strategic Planning

The energy and prioritization of the gender topic in the team is what allows the Gender Champs to carry out such diverse and wide-ranging activities. To make sure that we are all well-equipped to continue contributing to gender equality within the team and in our work with partners, the Gender Champs drafted a **gender onboarding workshop**. The goal was to create an interactive format, while creating a safe space that allows for open and honest exchange on gender biases, diversity, sexual harassment in the workplace, and the diverse understandings of gender. The gender strategy was shortly introduced to the team to reflect on our experience thus far and to collectively validate or develop our roles and responsibilities. The onboarding also presents GIZ’s reporting mechanisms and relevant gender structures and ends with examples of other GIZ projects and how they successfully integrated gender in their implementation. The gender onboarding is now part of the onboarding process of all new team members.



An important aspect of reaching our goals and ambitions is the gender balance within the team. An equal gender balance creates a more tolerant and creative work atmosphere. Although our team was already well on track with regards to this, we noticed that some of our consultancies were not. We widened our influence specifically with one consultancy that was hired during the time when the Gender Champs already existed. This specific consultancy had a team of four consultants, but no females. We set up a meeting with our colleague accompanying the project and **successfully advocated for the inclusion of a woman** in the team of consultants.



In the next phase of our project, we will have a **GG2 classification**. To support the planning process, the Gender Champs facilitated a two-hour workshop with the team to brainstorm potential indicators and to identify objectives we would like to set for ourselves in the next phase. The results of this workshop were shared with our gender consultant as a supporting document to aid them in drafting the gender analysis.

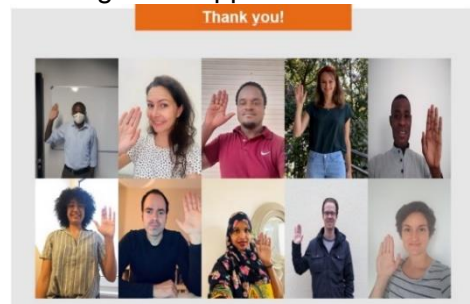
All of this is not possible without having the right structure in place and without working together with both internal and external parties. The Gender Champs have a bi-weekly meeting and when major events come up the group meets as often as necessary to reach the goal. The group also has a standard spot on the agenda for the full S4DA team Jour Fixe to give an update on current activities and planned campaigns. Within GIZ, the Gender Champs actively seek cooperation with the sectoral project Sport for Development to maximize the outreach to external partners, to exchange knowledge, and to foster collaboration. Through this, a wider variety of actions is accomplished.

What do we struggle with?

However, through all of these success stories, we have also faced challenges. One challenge has been that **no explicit budget** has been allocated to the group, meaning that we need to get creative with resources to support our initiatives. We are extremely ambitious, though we sometimes have too little time and want too much, instead of focusing on one target group or one specific topic. Moreover, we need to make sure that after each initiative we hold a **feedback round** to draw our learnings and keep developing from one initiative to the next. Finally, we would like to **increase the visibility** of the activities beyond the sport for development projects. We want our partners and their inspiring work to be seen by everyone.

Reaching for the stars

We are proud of what we have achieved so far and are eager and more ambitious when it comes to future planning. Objective 6 of our S4DA Gender Strategy focuses on **drafting policy papers** on three main topics: Menstrual Hygiene Management, GBV, and Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights & Relationships. With a budget we would have greater opportunities to make this a reality. We would also love to continue learning by **inviting external speakers** to our meetings to broaden our perspectives, deepen our knowledge, and grow our network. Finally, we seek **closer exchange and collaboration** with other GIZ projects working on gender equality. We strive to continue to create awareness within the company on gender equality through delivering creative, collaborative, and original ideas for campaigns reaching beyond the S4DA project.



The way we start this submission is also our key to success: *“What happens when you give a group of colleagues the freedom to think about one specific topic, they are passionate about and encourage them to undertake action within that topic?”*

“Innovative gender work needs the commitment and buy-in of all team members and a strong backing by leadership. But the key success factor is that highly motivated gender champions within the team are equipped with decision-making power and space for creativity and experiments.”
 (Thomas Levin, AV S4DA)

We are successful because we are a diverse team of passionate, committed, ambitious, and action-oriented individuals. We do not settle for less, instead we always try to reach for the stars. All group members put a lot of time and effort into the activities next to their day-to-day work. We are lucky to have the support from management, the entire S4DA team, and from external partners. This support is **the heart of our work** and is what enables us to reach for the stars.