

Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Team

Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in a holistic, cross organizational way

How can we support GIZ projects in establishing a holistic approach to foster gender equality within their projects, which goes beyond a reflection on counting participants, but rather towards the benefits to women in our partner countries?

How can we give a voice to people, inspire others, and learn from each other about what needs to be done to strengthen women's economic empowerment?

How can we keep our GIZ colleagues both at HQ and in our projects abroad informed about relevant trends, facts and figures as well as opportunities around women's economic empowerment?

Finding answers to these questions is a challenge for those in GIZ particularly interested in women's economic empowerment since many different units work on the topic without a central project being responsible for the topic. Therefore, the GIZ Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Team in GloBe was established in March 2020 by three sectoral projects (SP): The SP "Promoting Gender Equality" (SV Gender), the SP "Sustainable Economic Development" (SV NaWi) and the SP "Financial systems development, sustainable finance and investments" (SV FSE).

The Team consists of motivated and passionate cross-sectoral gender-focal points, who aim at providing meaningful and practical advice to GIZ colleagues in fostering women's economic empowerment in GIZ project operations. The GIZ WEE Team also promotes exchange between the internal and external structure of GIZ to connect people interested in engaging on women's economic empowerment. This also means engaging with other organizations and external experts to learn and get inspired by their experiences. By joining hands, the WEE Team is also in the position to provide advice to BMZ on WEE related issues more efficiently.

To do all that in service of promoting WEE, the Team has established a series of complementary formats. The results of all formats, which are described below, are shared on the IDA community ([Gender Network](#)). This allows the Team to sustainably disseminate and pass on the generated knowledge and insights.¹

WEE Helpdesk

A collaborative Problem Solving for Women's Economic Empowerment Challenges

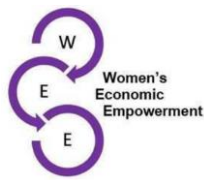
Organized as a collegial brainstorming session, the WEE Helpdesk provides a successful framework to pool gender-related knowledge from across the organization. By offering this innovative modality, the GIZ WEE Team brings together various perspectives in the search for meaningful and practical advice to foster women's economic empowerment in GIZ's project operations.

"Within a very short amount of time, we received solution-oriented inputs from real practitioners. No need to search for gender experts from multiple disciplines; no need to request and arrange individual calls with different experts; with one short presentation, we entered an arranged setting to capture all inspirations by a pool of experts."

Gabriela Rosales-Rogge, GIZ ProEcon program Mozambique

To use the Helpdesk, GIZ colleagues are invited to pitch the specific WEE challenges they are facing to the Helpdesk participants. This pitch is followed by a common brainstorming session. The participants range from GIZ colleagues from the internal and external structure to additional invited external experts (e.g. academia, KfW and other development practitioners), offering their specific advice tailored to the challenge.

¹ All materials are provided in English



A pitch can cover many different aspects and stages of an ongoing or planned project. Since the start of the Helpdesk in March 2020, seven projects have pitched their challenges:

1. “Ways to increase women’s economic participation“ Employment-oriented MSME Promotion Project in Jordan
2. “Increasing access to financial services for women“ ProEcon – Improving Framework Conditions in the Private and Financial Sector (Mozambique)
3. “Supporting Central Bank of Egypt in addressing the gender gap in financial inclusion“ Promotion of Access to financial services for SMEs in Egypt (PAFSME)
4. “Promotion of women in the transport and logistic sector“ Professional Driver Training Uganda project (PDTU)
5. “Women in informal cross-border food trade“ Global project Agricultural Policy and Innovation Fund (FABI) / SP Agriculture
6. “Women’s access to remittances and other financial services through digital solutions“ Digittances project in Jordan
7. “How can DFIs be supported in promoting gender sensitive financing“ Investment Climate Reform (ICR) Facility - Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries

The Ideas developed during the brainstorming session are documented, circulated to all participants, and uploaded onto the IDA community. In many cases, bilateral follow-ups – often between colleagues working in different departments – take place. This generates innovative solutions to dealing with the presented gender challenge. More information about the GIZ Helpdesk can also be found on the [Finequity blog](#).

The WEE team is constantly evolving and incorporating feedback to achieve the most effective modus operandi. A Helpdesk set up for specific regions (e.g. Africa, via the sector network NEDA) is currently being evaluated.

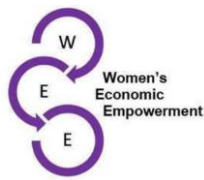
WEE Podcast

Listening to stories on WEE that have the power to inspire others

In the WEE Podcast series, the Team wants to give a voice to people with a wealth of experience. People who can share their impressions and shed light on challenges as well as opportunities women and female entrepreneurs are facing in their day-to-day work. The interview partners are providing interesting food for thought and fresh ideas on what needs to be done to strengthen women’s economic empowerment. And most importantly: the podcast allows listening to those stories that have inspired us and have the power to inspire others. Since the start of the Podcast series in September 2020, four episodes were produced and shared via IDA.

1. “Female Entrepreneurs in Uganda“ by Christine Kawooya from Uganda
2. “Female Entrepreneurs in Morocco” (episode in French) by Meryem Aziz Alaoui, Founder & CEO of Women in the City
3. “Female Entrepreneurs in India“ by Project Her&Now from GIZ India
4. “Gender-related experiences in the context of Finance in Displacement“ by researchers Swati Mehta and Julie Zollmann

One prominent example is the Podcast episode, which was produced together with Tufts University and Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and that provides information on the gender-related research findings in the context of Forcible Displacement. This episode can be found on the website of [Tufts University](#).



WEE Newsletter

“One-quarter isn’t equality. Equality is one-half.”

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women

Since July 2020, the Team publishes the WEE newsletter. Each newsletter features a special theme around women’s economic empowerment and reaches over 500 people inside and outside of GIZ. So far, five editions of the newsletter, which provide our readers with relevant news, facts and figures, trends, opportunities, and resources have been published.

1. “COVID-19 and Women’s economic empowerment” July 2020
2. “Women’s Labor Force Participation & Female Entrepreneurship” September 2020
3. “The Care Economy - Unpaid Care Work” December 2020
4. “Women and Trade” June 2021
5. “Generation Equality Forum” August 2021
6. “Gender-lens investing” November 2021

“I wanted to say congrats to your inspiring newsletter on Women’s economic empowerment! I think it is great and necessary, that you come together in this cross-sectoral team to tackle a common challenges and topic. Personally, I found the facts & figures section really helpful, and it was the first time I heard about the WEE Helpdesk. As (FSDI) projects, we often aim to include a “gender-perspective” but lack the knowledge on how to approach it and who to ask for information. The provided resources and contacts are definitely a motivation and inspiration. Keep up the good work!”

Lorena Zapata, GIZ Cluster Financial Systems Development

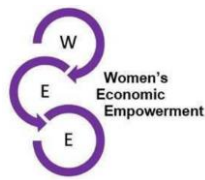
WEE related Toolkits & Handbooks & Project Lists

The WEE Team also helps disseminate and leverage gender-related tools that have been developed by individual projects.

Women’s Financial Inclusion Toolkit

A practitioner’s guide to address barriers to women’s financial inclusion

Since financial inclusion reduces poverty and improves peoples’ resilience, family well-being, and economic growth, the new [Women’s Financial Inclusion \(WFI\) Toolkit - Paving the way for women’s economic empowerment \(giz.de\)](#) – produced jointly by the Competence Centre Financial Systems Development and the Sector Project FSD – significantly contributes to women’s economic empowerment and gender equality. As the hindrances to women’s financial inclusion are multidimensional and often interlinked, the WEE Team through its wide-ranging network and experience around gender can help promote the application of the Toolkit in a variety of areas, for example, to address restrictive social norms.



“The Women’s Financial Inclusion Toolkit provides great insights and guidance that is relevant and easily digestible. The toolkit is very well structured and underlines its relevance by many practical examples. We have gained lots of knowledge, which positively affected the impact of our activities.”

Matthias Poser, GIZ Digi#ances Project in Jordan

In addition to that, the Sector Project “Sustainable Economic Development” (SV NaWi) has developed an interactive resource designed to equip GIZ colleagues with the knowledge and strategies required to meet the needs of women entrepreneurs.

Handbook on Accelerating Women Entrepreneurs

This Handbook developed by SV NaWi in collaboration with GIZ colleagues around the world equips practitioners with key strategies to apply a gender-lens to each component of an Accelerator program. It demonstrates the business case for accelerating women entrepreneurs and provides insights from GIZ-supported Accelerator programs that have applied a gender lens. The Handbook will be launched in January 2022.

“The inclusive approach of YGAP in the development of the Handbook on Accelerating Women Entrepreneurs offered an excellent foundation to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills. Our project has gained an additional toolkit that moves us closer towards the ultimate goal of supporting women entrepreneurs in Africa.”

Miriam Douiri, GIZ Women Entrepreneurship for Africa (WE4A) program, E4D Employment and Skills for Development in Africa

WEE Project List

A comprehensive overview of GIZ projects working on WEE

There are many projects in GIZ that work on WEE, but so far there has been no central overview of WEE projects. As a first step, the SV NaWi started the collection of WEE projects in collaboration with other members of the WEE Team by designing a survey. The current results have been collected in a sheet and contain information on the projects and their WEE related activities. In the future, the list is planned to be expanded on a running basis and will be shared openly and collaboratively within GIZ. This will provide the GIZ staff with a larger picture of GIZ’s current contribution to promote WEE and will help to improve the current work on WEE.

Outlook

The experiences made by the GloBe WEE Team show the continuous need for providing meaningful advice within GIZ project operations. This implies fostering the exchange between the internal and external structure, learning from each other, and keeping each other informed on how to best promote WEE. These needs are reflected by the strong interest in the complementary formats the WEE team provides, and the positive feedback received. Going forward, the WEE Team will continue enhancing the established formats and develop and implement new innovative ideas.

