

GIZ GHANA – GovID Programme - GENDER COMPETITION

The Governance for Inclusive Development (GovID) Programme, which in October 2019 was composed of the two predecessors, the Support for Decentralization (SfDR) programme and the Good Financial Governance (GfG) programme, is a GG1 marker programme, which prioritizes gender not only in its activities and indicators but also within the programme.

The GovID Programme has a team of 123 with a male female ratio of 62.6% to 37.4%. There are no official numbers regarding intersex or gender-non-conforming staff. The five components of the programme are Domestic Revenue Mobilization (DRM), Internally Generated Funds (IGF), Public Financial Planning, Budgeting and Management (PFM), Accountability and Resource Governance (ARG) and Agricultural Business Dialogues (ABD) with the Regional Coordination Structure (RCS) for the regional and sub-regional implementation of interventions in 100 partner Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). The Agenda 2030 Component of the SfDR programme ended in March 2021 and has been taken up by the IGF and the PFM components since.

1. Promoting Gender Equality through Gender Responsive Fee Fixing Resolutions

One of the most important sources of internally generated funds in Ghana are property rates and permits that have to be renewed on an annual basis for commercial enterprises both in the formal and informal sector (Business operating permit)

The Fee Fixing Guidelines are determined every four years by the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization and Rural Development (MLGDRD), including benchmarks for fees and other rates and requirements for the process of setting municipal expenditure in Ghana. The respective levies to be applied are determined by the assemblies on an annual basis in a statute, the Fee Fixing Resolution.

The currently valid guidelines only require of assemblies to pass communal fees which are socially acceptable. However, a study conducted in July 2021 showed that the determined fees often are not gender-appropriate and even discriminating, disadvantaging women. For example, the cumulated daily fees for market-stands are often much higher than the respective business operating permits for sales in a regular business premise. Market-stands are primarily run by women, whilst regular businesses are mainly owned by men. Another case is that of women having to pay an 'entrance-fee' for the beach because fish-sellers are often female.

Also, the majority of participants in the public hearings, which have to be conducted in line with the annual fee-fixing, are male, as in most of the communal hearings. A survey conducted in 2018 amongst partner districts of the SfDR programme showed that only a third of participants in public hearings for fee fixings were female, whilst women in these communities contributed to 2/3 of the communal income.

To counteract these disproportions, MLGDRD has been provided with comprehensive advice to shape and phrase the Fee Fixing Guidelines in a gender-responsive way. Successfully: In August 2021 the ministry published the guidelines for the cycle 2022 -2025, in which it is now stated that the assemblies have to take gender-aspects into adequate consideration in their fee-fixings: § 2.7.1 b para 2: *In fixing fees and charges by Assemblies, gender responsiveness should be considered to promote fairness and equity.*

In addition, the procedural guidelines have been amended with a remark, that the provisions of the Local Governance Act relating to citizen participation should be applied and gender aspects be taken into specific consideration: § 2. 8. f: *Participatory processes for the*

preparation of the draft Fee Fixing Resolutions for approval by the General Assembly and subsequent gazette, should comply with the Participatory Governance at the Local Level stipulated in Sections 40-48 of the Local Governance Act 2016 (Act 936) as amended. In doing so, issues related to gender should be considered as critical to the process in the fixing of the charges, fees, and rates.

This established the legal framework for making the procedure of determining and fixing but also the actual amount of the fees at the communal level both gender appropriate and responsive.

GovID will now have to provide the 100 partner MMDAs and others with advice and guidance on how this new provisions can be realized and executed and maybe even taken a step further by using the fees proactively for a gender-sensitive or even gender-transformative communal Economic policy.

2.1 Gender as a quality feature of our work by developing an app to combat GBV

Statistics available at the Accra Regional Office of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) from August 2020 suggest that 31.9% of Ghanaian women have faced at least one form of domestic violence - physical, economic, psychological, social or sexual. According to the Ghana Living Standards Survey, nine out of ten cases of GBV go unreported to authorities (GLSS 7, 2019: p.252). Reasons for underreporting span from the relationship between the perpetrator and survivor through to the lack of available and accessible institutional arrangements.

Effective policies and interventions, however, depend to a large extent on the quality, timeliness and availability of data. Citizen-generated data (CGD) has demonstrated great potentials in providing sub-national statistics especially on sensitive topics such as GBV. GCD is a problem-focused type of data that can take many forms. It is often framed around people collaborating to collect data they need to understand and tackle a problem that affects them.

To enhance the generation of such data, the Agenda 2030 programme within the SfDR and GovID programmes partnered the Ghana Statistical Services (GSS) and other key stakeholders including the Ministry MoGCSP, Software Developers, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Local Opinion Leaders, Local Authorities, Citizens and Academia among others to design and build a mobile app aimed at collecting raw data on GBV incidents from respondents to complement other data sources of official statistics through a pilot project. This was developed using a participatory design thinking approach from March to September 2020; Pre-testing application with potential core users in three selected partner districts for the piloting, Buipe, Techiman, and Ho, located in the main ecological zones of Ghana to better understand the various dimensions of GBV across the country, was conducted in September 2020. Data were then collected conducted from November to December 2020 whilst extraction, data cleaning and report writing ended in February 2021.

Technological advances were leveraged on to develop an application that was put in the hands of citizens and thus bypassed middle agents (such as survey enumerators or police officers among others), whose role in extracting sensitive information could potentially contribute to the underreporting of GBV. Multi-stakeholder national and sub-national governance structures were set up for ownership and sustainability. A grassroot understanding of GBV was sought through the conduct of a situational analysis.

The “Let’s Talk” App provides survivors of GBV with the opportunity to report anonymously any form of violence they have experienced via SMS, interactive voice response (IVR) or voice recording – either in English or the three main local languages spoken in the pilot districts (twi, Ewe and Gonja). The data was extracted from the app dashboard section as a csv (comma-separated values) file while that of the IVR came from the Frog Dashboard with an R script run to clean and combine raw datasets.

The findings show a lot of GBV goes unreported but, if given the opportunity of anonymous reporting, victims seem willing to break the culture of silence. This is so because it was realized that a considerably higher number of reports were made through “Let’s Talk” App than through administrative means. The gender disaggregated analysis came up with about 61% of people who filed a report being female; 62% of actual victims being female and the most common age group for a victim of age ranges between 20-29. Other revealing statistics were that about 24% of reported victims had a form of disability and also that a staggering 75% of the users opted to being read to in a local dialect which they understood.

MoGCSP included CGD in their annual report for 2020 and action plans for 2021. The CGD methodology has gained a lot of international recognition: it was presented at the UN World Data forum 2021. GSS plans with further support of GIZ to upscale CGD methods to strengthen people-driven statistics, drive change and improve services for vulnerable groups.

2.2 Gender as a quality feature of our work: mainstreaming gender by strengthening the position of gender desk officers (GDOs)

The gender desk officers (GDOs) of the MMDAs, usually staff who take on or are given this role as an addition to their actual job, more often than not lack the necessary standing and capacity to mainstream the topic of gender into the assemblies’ work. Previously, in some cases, teachers of local schools were appointed - with no chance of any impact on Gender Policies and Mainstreaming in the MMDAs.

The Department of Gender (DoG) of the MoGCSP has very minimal influence in key national development processes and discussions as well as low capacity for inter-/intra- agency gender coordination. Furthermore, the Ministry still operates without a coordinated system at the Ministry Department and Agency (MDA) level and lacks decentralized offices in the various MMDAs. Thus, the implementation of the National Gender Policy, launched in May 2015, has been unsatisfactory, due to weak decentralised structures and insufficient coordination between national and local level. GDOs, who should be part of, if not even be crucial in this coordination, are currently not part of the District Planning and Coordination Unit (DPCU) – the management board of the districts. This is based on a lack of commitment by the leadership, insufficient budget, but also on the low capacities of the GDOs, whose job descriptions are often unclear. Therefore, a lot of important and gender relevant decisions are taken at MMDA level without considering gender perspectives.

To this end, GovID, in partnership with (MOGCSP), Local Government Service (LGS) the central management body of all district officials – being responsible for their employment and career development, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Foreign Commonwealth Development Organization (FCDO), have held broad consultations and stakeholder meetings leading to the development of guidelines and a strategic framework for the establishment of Gender Desk Officers. In November 2020, an agreement between the MoGSP and the LGS was achieved, which resulted in formally establishing and locating GDOs within the Social Welfare Departments across the Country. This is a milestone in the coordination and activities of

gender at MMDA level because GDOs are now an established function in the MMDAs administration. A structured career development is now possible for GDOs which gives administrative officers an incentive to assume this role. Furthermore, their capacities and experiences will not get lost anymore because in case of transfers they will remain in the Social Welfare Departments of MMDAs. Some of the champion GDOs – who supported as trainers during the Gender trainings and workshops of GIZ, can be strengthened in their position as role models to build a network of Gender Desk Officers.

In the remaining timeframe of the programme until June 2022, some of GovID's interventions will be to Strengthen the capacities of GDOs with the development of an institutional capacity building action plan and trainings in 100 MMDAs. GDOs will be included in DPCU meetings, for which leadership will have to be sensitized. Furthermore, the M&E unit of the MoGSP will be supported by including MMDAs data and statistics through the GDOs (e.g. by using softwares developed by GIZ, such as GovID's Agenda 2030 District Development Data Platform to enter citizen generated data on gender-based violence and other relevant data)

B. Contribution to Internal Gender Mainstreaming

1. Corporate culture of prioritizing gender

Within the GovID programme, gender plays an important role. Given the size of the programme and its history of two merged programmes, there are three gender focal points (GFPs) at GovID, one even with the function of a technical advisor for gender responsive planning and budgeting.

Together, the three GFPs organize and facilitate the GovID gender working group, which consist of representatives of all 5 components, as well as the M&E and the F&A unit, to ensure on the one hand that the topic of gender is considered by all components and staff throughout their activities, but also, on the other hand, that overlaps are recognized and synergies efficiently used. For example, both the PFM and the ARG component worked on the inclusion of marginalized groups, but had different target groups, the similarities and differences of which were then communicated between components and taken into further consideration.

In line with this, the AV also specifically reminded all GovID staff to abide by GIZ's standards and values when confronted with or engaging in the increasingly homophobic and transphobic debates that were sparked by the attendance of EU delegates of the opening of Ghana's first LGBT+ Rights Center beginning of 2021.

2. Gender competence through regular GovID Gender Talks

In consultation with the AV, several GovID Gender Talks have been organized, focusing, amongst others, on the topics from GIZ HQ for the International Women's Day, but also on masculinity and International Men's Day, or generally on gender, explaining, for example, the meaning and protection of intersex people by the GIZ Gender Strategy and Code of Ethics, in addition to German legislation.

All these sessions were well accepted as they gave GovID staff the opportunity to better understand the differences and commonalities of gender in the Ghanaian and the German context, and to discuss both challenges and potential ways to overcome gender stereotypes and barriers, which is not only helpful for the daily work, but also for the private lives of the GovID team, and thus, contributes to widening the gender debate within the country.