

2023 Gender Competition Submission

Category: Gender Mainstreaming

Contributors: Jaslyn Reader, Julia Niklewski and Mariana Gonzalez Carrillo

Project: Digital Innovation in Pandemic Control (DIPC)

Linked Document: [A Blueprint for Actioning Feminist Development in Technical Projects](#)

Context and initiative

The *Blueprint for Implementing Feminist Development in Technical Projects* is a document derived and extrapolated from lessons learned from the Global project DIPC (Digital Innovation in Pandemic Control). Its purpose is to provide projects that traditionally face challenges in addressing gender issues with opportunities to establish concrete activities aligned with feminist development principles. As GIZ/BMZ aims to significantly increase GG1 and GG2 projects and enhance the quality of gender mainstreaming efforts, ensuring that all projects support this goal is pivotal. This is especially true for more specialized projects that traditionally assume gender considerations are obsolete due to their technical, abstract, or fixed nature. However, these projects are pivotal to the success of the overall feminist development policy. The plan aims to fill a gap by supporting these projects in finding ways—whether small or large, operational, structural, or normative—to facilitate gender transformative change.

The underlying assumption of the blueprint is that DIPC is not alone in trying to understand how to systematically overcome gender-blind programming. Instead, it aims to contribute to meaningful change in various sectors. While the blueprint is not exhaustive and may not be suitable for all projects, DIPC hopes it provides useful information and steps to navigate what can be a tricky, messy, and uncomfortable process. Consequently, this submission to the 2023 GIZ Gender Competition aims to support other projects in similar domains to adopt a comparable approach, drawing from best practices and lessons learned. In doing so, the product aims to ostensibly promote gender equity, inadvertently bolstering the quantity and quality of gender contributions of GG0 or GG1 projects— especially for those projects that may not have explicitly or initially set out to pursue feminist development.

Within the submission lies a detailed account of the blueprint's genesis, tracing the evolution from the DIPC Gender Action Plan and its ancillary documents. It encapsulates the collaborative efforts of team members and implementing partners, culminating in a continuous learning process and a commitment to disseminate these insights widely.

Gender: a Quality feature of our work

DIPC's Commitment to Feminist Development

The Global project **Digital Innovation in Pandemic Control** (DIPC) emerged from the Emergency funds of BMZ in direct response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. DIPC aids five

partner countries in implementing software solutions for vaccine logistics and pandemic prevention. It places a strong emphasis on mainstreaming the adoption of the WHO Smart Guidelines for immunization, along with global and local capacity-strengthening efforts. These efforts include the creation of an eLearning course and an operational and strategic research program.

Due to the nature of the initial funds, no gender analysis was undertaken, and no gender marker, activities, or indicators were mandated. Despite this, DIPC successfully completed its first phase and, in its second phase, explicitly sought to integrate gender as a core strategy across all four work packages. In this pursuit, a deliberate process unfolded to understand current issues and potential best practices, *aiming to support gender-transformative change in digital health systems*.

Initial research and engagement with external consultants revealed a scarcity of literature on the intersection between gender/equity and digital health systems. This confirmed initial concerns that interventions supporting gender equity in this domain are either minimal, in their infancy, or non-existent. This is troubling because, despite not having an immediate user-interface, digital health systems significantly impact women and marginalized groups in systemic and structural ways. Questions around data poverty for marginalized groups, historical legacies in the medical and digital field, tensions between privacy and public safety, and lack of representation in the sector underline the importance of engaging with feminist development in technical projects.

Given the less-travelled path for gender mainstreaming within digital health systems, DIPC underwent an extensive process outlined in its **Gender Action Plan (GAP)**. The lack of current literature was seen as both a challenge and an opportunity for DIPC and its implementing partners. Out of the desire to understand and pioneer what a gender strategy could look like in digital health projects came a process of breaking down the theory of BMZ's feminist development policy through relevant pain points. This helped delineate areas of action and required active contributions from all team members leading their respective work packages, as well as the participation of implementing partners.

Some outcomes of this process within the GAP have led to the **creation of ancillary products**, including:

- **A workshop on Feminist Development in Digital Health Systems:** Presented to DIPC hub + country-coordinators and implementing partners, this session facilitated reflexivity by premising the feminist development policy and DIPC GAP. The workshop encouraged participants to reflect on gender and equity in the dimension of the country context, governmental positions on the topic, and project-level blind spots and opportunities.
- **Gender Checklist for implementing Digital Health Solutions in Partner Countries:** Created based on in-depth research and findings from the GAP and team-wide expertise, this product supports similar projects/endeavours implementing Digital Health solutions, considering gender and working towards ensuring gender equality throughout operations.

- **Localization plan to support gender-specific country activities:** Drawn up to support the gender mainstreaming of in-country activities, this plan takes the principles of postcolonialism and outlines a process to achieve gender sensitivity and/or responsiveness in existing activities. The plan creates a mechanism to absorb existing GIZ Country-level gender documentation and coordinate with country coordinators and implementing partners to ascertain- similar to the GAP- which activities can support a gender element. As such, it systematizes the approach to incorporating gender in five different countries, each with their own individual work plans and implementing partners.
- **Gender Logic Model:** A complementary facet within the DIPC GAP, this model provides the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the proposed gender activities. The logic model ties the desired impact to be a contribution to Germany's Feminist Development Policy and enhanced equity for all genders, benefiting the wider digital health sphere and society at large. Each activity and output is linked to an existing indicator and pre-emptively given a supporting marker of gender-sensitive, responsive, or transformative to understand the levels of impact.

Inspiration behind the Blueprint?

Reflecting on the accomplishments, insights gained, and strides made within DIPC, the concept of supporting similar projects and *contributing to GIZ's knowledge management* serves as the impetus for the Blueprint. As highlighted earlier, its primary objective is to serve as a comprehensive guide, particularly for technical or specialist projects, in effectively incorporating BMZ's feminist development policy into their activities. The intention is to distil this policy in a manner that is clear, robust, and measurable.

The anticipated outcome—and invaluable benefit—of implementing such a process and document is the generation of project-wide buy-in, enhanced accountability, measurability, and, crucially, active engagement with, and successful overcoming of, gender-blind programming. The Blueprint, thus, strives to be a catalyst for positive change, fostering a commitment to feminist development principles within the realm of technical projects.

Blueprint Overview in Six Steps

1. **Introduction to BMZ Feminist Development Policy:**
 - Provide a concise overview of the theory and specific implications of the BMZ feminist development policy within the context of the project's scope of work and thematic area.
2. **Baseline Gender Analysis:**
 - Utilize the project's existing gender analysis, supported by established GIZ processes, as the foundational component for subsequent sections.
3. **Critical Examination of Current and Planned Activities:**

- Evaluate all current and/or planned activities, reflecting on potential risks and opportunities in light of the gender analysis. Classifying activities into three categories:
 - Gender Sensitive: Considers gender norms, roles, and relations without addressing unequal roles and relations.
 - Gender Responsive: Acknowledges gender inequalities and actively addresses different needs of men and women.
 - Gender Transformative: Specifically aims to rectify root causes of gender imbalance, power differentiation, decision-making, and resource control.
- 4. Logic Model Clarification:**
 - Use a logic model to detail planned activities, outputs, and outcomes, ranging from gender-sensitive to transformative, aligning them with the desired impact outlined in the feminist development agenda.
- 5. Alignment with BMZ Feminist Development Policy:**
 - Circle back to the project's activities, reflecting on how they directly correlate with and support the BMZ feminist development policy.
- 6. Conclusion:**
 - Important Must-Have's
 - Would be Nice-to-Have's.
- 7. Supplementary Resources:**
 - Provide additional resources to support potential spin-off activities, including:
 - Workshop Template for Project Staff and Implementing Partners
 - Guideline for Deciphering and Supporting In-Country Activities from a Postcolonial Development Lens
 - Glossary of Terms
 - Links to Potentially Relevant/Helpful GIZ Processes/Guidelines/Checklists

Conclusion

The DIPC team collectively hopes and believes that every project, particularly those with a technical focus, can actively contribute to gender-equitable change. The creation of this blueprint aims to inspire, support and guide GIZ projects to engage with nuanced, structural, and meaningful change. Consequently, it seeks to contribute to the **knowledge management** of GIZ and its desire to increase its gender interventions, and crucially, to work towards achieving a more **gender-equitable world**.