



Contribution to the

GIZ GENDER COMPETITION

GIZ International Services Campaign

UNITE!

**16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

giz

Violence silences, equality echoes. 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

In November 2023 and for the second year in a row, International Services (InS) took part in the international UN campaign 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Together not only with different InS stakeholders, but also with actors from the wider company, we developed a rich and multifaceted campaign running from November 25 to December 8 with the objective to unite, to raise awareness about GBV, and to speak up against it.

GBV is a global issue: it is as much of a problem in the global north as it is in the global south, and survivors are facing very different challenges, be they of social, cultural, normative, or legal kind. It is a dreadful habit that manifests itself in very diverse forms and that systematically weakens societies and the trust in judicial systems. With our campaign, we want to emphasise that GBV is not an abstract issue, that it affects and concerns everyone and that it therefore can only be effectively fought against if we join forces and unite.

As such, we consider the campaigns' conception phase and its first week of implementation an eligible contribution to the internal gender mainstreaming section of the GIZ gender competition 2023.

1. Context

As Gender Focal Points for International Services, we consider it our task not only to support projects in developing gender competence, but also to push for gender equity and diversity in our own department and teams. First of all, internal gender mainstreaming is of course relevant for the acknowledgement of diversity as a beneficial factor to corporate culture, and as a business case. And in addition, an internal culture of equity showcases our dedication when providing services to our clients: we walk the talk.

Our campaign is a call for action: instead of ignoring or witnessing in silence, listen, ask, speak up! However small they are, these actions can have a significantly positive impact on survivors of GBV, on our teams, and on our corporate culture. And this has the potential to resonate in our work, all over the world. Ultimately, this is the objective of our campaign: bring people to speak up and to act.

With policies such as the German Feminist Development and Foreign Policy, gender issues are increasingly at the centre of the public sphere. Seeing as BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office aren't the department's primary clients, InS projects are not required to meet the same requirements as projects from the public-benefit area of GIZ. Nevertheless, we want to make use of the current opportunity to draw attention to topics of relevance, including gender-based violence. We believe that shedding a light on gender and fostering related discussions with our colleagues will undoubtedly trickle down into our projects. Our campaign embraces this approach and is open to all InS staff, including project staff in the field.

However, focusing exclusively on the work International Services is not sufficient. It is essential to us to understand and take into account the wider context (including the UN campaign and the feminist policies), to build alliances, to identify synergies and to spotlight individuals and teams working on the fight against GBV.

In our campaign, we highlight different forms of GBV, different stakeholders, and various measures to stop the abuse of power. Every day of the campaign, we are organising one action: informational formats to communicate key resources or link to project campaigns,

online sessions with a focus on active listening, distribution of merch and more engaging formats such as a movie night and quizzes. The 16 days agenda is meticulously balanced with these different formats, allowing for the widest outreach possible while ensuring the topic is met with the right level of sensitivity and cautiousness. Where appropriate, a code of conduct was introduced, building the base for a tolerant and respectful discussion culture and establishing a zero-tolerance policy for any kind of discriminatory or toxic comments and behaviour.

To ensure that the campaign reaches all colleagues of International Services, a thorough visibility and communication strategy was developed: in collaboration with InS Communications and the InS Competence Development teams, invitations were sent out to the entire workforce, including project staff on the ground. IDA News were published on several occasions, including for the launch of the campaign, daily messages were posted on the InS IDA OrgUnit, and the InS Microsoft Teams rooms were used to spread information as well.

The campaign's visual identity was developed by external designer Marko Zakovski, who designed the key campaign visual, together with a logo for the InS Gender Team. The new logo, a modern and fresher take on the existing GIZ gender logo, was received positively internally and proposed as replacement for the old logo. The offer was taken up by GIZ's Gender Commissioner Angela Langenkamp, who presented the new logo in October during the Gender Network Meeting 2023 in Berlin.

Internally, the conception and preparation phase for the development of the campaign started in August. In the last three and a half months, the InS Gender Team, together with motivated colleagues from InS and beyond spent a considerable amount of resources on the campaign.

2. InS campaign "Unite"

We started the campaign on Monday, November 27 with a launch communication e-mail from InS General Director Carsten Schmitz-Hoffmann. The communication introduced and framed the campaign, and included the full programme of activities. Furthermore, it contained a link to the highlight of this day's action: a video message by member of the GIZ Management Board Anna Sophie Herken, in which she highlighted the relevance of the fight against GBV, mentioning her personal experience and activism. This message shared with the rest of the company with the publication of an [IDA-news](#) on the same day. Both Ms Herken and Mr Schmitz-Hoffmann invited InS staff to actively join the campaign and to unite against gender-based violence. In addition, we also gave voice to our InS colleagues: throughout the campaign, their quotes were projected on loop in the lobby of the InS office in Eschborn.

Day 2 of our campaign marks the distribution of pens with the logo of the InS Gender Team. Pens are used as a symbol of literacy and education in the global fight towards equal opportunities for all genders. This translates for instance into improved access to female healthcare and sexual education, both of which are relevant in the fight against GBV. In our InS offices in Bonn, Berlin, Eschborn, Brussels, Belgrade, Beirut, New Delhi, Bogota and Addis Ababa, the pens were handed out to the InS staff by colleagues who supported the campaign.

We used Wednesday, the third day of the campaign, to turn the spotlight on the UNIDAS 16 days campaign: UNIDAS is a network of women in politics, society, culture, media, science and business in Latin America whose Secretariat is coordinated by the InS project "Latin America and Caribbean Initiative to Promote stability, Democracy, and the Rules-Based International Order (LAK-FSDRIO)", commissioned by the Federal Foreign Office: a fantastic example for the German Feminist Foreign Policy. With a post shared in the IDA OrgUnit, the

network's activities were presented and colleagues were invited to join a panel discussion later that evening on the challenges and opportunities of abortion by telemedicine, as part of an UNIDAS project on access to sexual and reproductive rights in Latin America and Germany.

On day 4 of the campaign, short movies showing diverse aspects and manifestations of GBV were projected during a live event. The movies were part of the official selection of the initiative 16 days, 16 films – a competition showcasing films from female-identifying filmmakers during the 16 days of activism campaign. A total of 20 InS staff joined the screening in the InS office in Eschborn and took part in a discussion after the projection.

On Friday, an online event addressed the topic of outing of colleagues in the workspace and the risks and consequences associated. "Don't out!" is a session developed together with the GIZ Rainbow Network. 30 participants accepted our invitation to take on an active listening role, therefore providing a safe space for the panellists to share their experience.

The second week (Day 6) will start with an IDA News on masculinities, showing toxic masculinity as one of the main causes of GBV and as a harm to entire societies. Healthy masculinity will be introduced as a manifestation of masculinity that has the power to dismantle historically harmful norms. The communication will be available to the entire company.

On Day 7, we raise flags against gender-based violence: paper flags will be distributed in the InS office in Eschborn, as well as in front of house 1 and 3 to GIZ colleagues. This awareness-raising action aims at informing about the UN campaign and urging colleagues to take action. The advantage with flags is that their colours can outlast the campaign – we hope to keep seeing them in the offices, whereas in desk organisers, flowerpots or on pin walls.

The communication to be shared on Day 8 presents GIZ's internal resources and contact points that colleagues can reach out to if they witness or experience sexual harassment and other forms of GBV. The information will be spread out via the InS IDA OrgUnit and in the different MS Teams rooms to ensure InS-wide outreach.

Day 9 provides an insight in the development of the story-based e-learning course "El caso de Lucia" by a team of InS colleagues. The course tells the story of a fictitious case of domestic violence and its prosecution. It adopts different perspectives in an interactive manner, therefore putting the learner in a decision-taking role, in which their decisions have direct consequences. The course is designed for staff working in the legal system in Latin America. It aims at revealing unconscious biases and multiple discrimination in the processing of GBV cases. In the session, we use the same format of storytelling by changing perspectives: seven speakers take the audience through the development process, from ideation to implementation, by sharing their experience and role. Lucia, as a fictitious survivor of GBV, introduces herself to the participants through a short video.

The campaign will officially end on Day 10 with an email communication from Carsten Schmitz-Hoffmann, Director General at InS. In addition, the InS Gender Team will include a wrap-up video of the campaign and a gender quiz.

At the time of submission of this contribution to the gender competition, the campaign isn't yet completed. However, some observations on the results and challenges could already be made:

1. Communication and visibility are key to the success of the campaign: most colleagues were aware of the campaign, recognised the visuals and took active interest in it.
2. The support of the management, their involvement and their interest in the campaign added weight to the cause. It helped with sparking the attention of colleagues.

3. Coordination is challenging. The nature of the campaign is such that it requires the involvement of different actors, the development of different communication strategies, the use of different communication channels and the development, preparation, and follow-up of different formats. It took four months of consistent work to prepare optimally the various activities and to ensure that they formed together a coherent campaign.

3. Cooperation within and outside GIZ

This year's company slogan is "Unite!". As mentioned above, it was essential to us to liaise and collaborate with many colleagues from InS and from other departments and teams. It is only with their contribution that we can achieve the full potential of the campaign. In line with this, the GIZ Gender Network Meeting 2023 in October served as source of inspiration: not only did we meet and exchange with various colleagues, but we also benefited from and made use of their input, for example regarding the harmful masculinity peer-to-peer session.

Within InS, the InS Gender Team acted in a leading and coordinating role. The Competence Development Team, the Communications Team and the Department Advisory Team tremendously supported with the communication and visibility aspects of the campaign. Active colleagues from the InS Gender Network also contributed with parts of the input and took over the distribution of pens in the distant GIZ offices.

Within GIZ, we were glad to cooperate with the GIZ Rainbow Network for a joint session on the involuntary outing of colleagues. We further exchanged with the coordinator of the UNIDAS Network and referred to one of their panel discussions. We initiated an exchange with representatives from COPE for the development of a session on the role of their department in fighting GBV. However, due to limited capacities, we adapted our initial plan and created, in discussion with representatives from the Equal Opportunities Commissioners and the Works Councils, a different information format on internal resources and contact points.

For the e-learning module session, we invited GIZ external speakers to join our campaign: Gabriela Vilchez, story writer; Nataly Ponce Chauca, lawyer and executive director of the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (implementing agency of the course in Latin-American countries) and Ana Andrea Villa Camacho, lawyer, criminal law teacher and tutor of the training in the Dominican Republic.

On occasion, we came across underlying company politics we were not aware of and that caused us to slightly redirect our initial plans. However, we found that remaining flexible, together with the support of the high management in the company helped solve these smaller hurdles. In each collaboration process, the people involved were highly engaged and motivated to make a contribution to the campaign. We learned from each of them, and enjoyed a very smooth and enriching exchange. The richness of the programme is proof of this fruitful collaboration. To bring everything together, lots of efforts and time went into the coordination of the involved teams: numerous planning sessions were necessary to achieve the holistic outcome.