

Gender Competition 2024

Entries in the GE1 project category



DGG's Gender Equality Checklist

Our programme, Decentralisation and Good Governance (DGG) in Rwanda focuses on three main field of interventions: the first field is local service delivery which aims at improving access to services to citizens especially in rural areas; the second field is citizen participation and accountability which fosters citizen's engagement in planning and budgeting processes and finally; the third field is local public finance management aiming at improving local tax collection.

At the core of our programme in Rwanda and in line with the Feminist Development Policy of BMZ is a commitment to assess and improve gender equality beyond mere numerical representation of women. To achieve this, we conducted a partner-driven assessment from October to December 2023, examining the unintended impacts of our activities within DGG in Rwanda. Through qualitative discussions with key stakeholders, including DGG's Rwandan Government Institutions partners and DGG's civil society organizations (CSOs) partners such as Never Again Rwanda (NAR) and Transparency International Rwanda (TI-RW) as well as Development Partners such as KfW and the EU, we uncovered a significant issue: **the superficial inclusion of women without real impact.**

The outcome of our collaborative efforts throughout this assessment revealed a disparity in the interpretation of gender equality between GIZ's perspective and that of Rwandan partners. GIZ's definition of gender equality means equal opportunities and rights for all individuals, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation or gender identity. Rwanda's definition of gender equality is a binary gender approach focusing on equal opportunities and rights for all women and men.

What is more, the assessment also showed that common practices, such as scheduling workshops or campaigns without considering the optimal time for women's participation, led to an uneven representation. For instance, in rural areas in Rwanda, most women start their day by walking on average two hours to fetch water and then take care of their children, which means that if a workshop starts at 08:00 am, these women will most likely have to wake up at 04:00 am if they wish to participate. Additionally, we found that a lot of our CSOs partners are merely counting equal participation during an event, which does not reflect true inclusivity of women, as women often remain passive or unheard especially when men are active. We also learned that most trainers and facilitators are not gender sensitively trained and do not create an inclusive environment for women.

Understanding the local context and challenges is vital for enhancing gender competence. In our programme, we faced the challenge of our CSOs partners and colleagues expressing a desire to implement gender equality in our activities without fully understanding how to implement it effectively.

In response to this and at the request of our CSOs partners, we developed the "DGG's Gender Equality Checklist" in collaboration with our CSOs partners, government institutions and development partners designed to guide all DGG's partners and colleagues in ensuring inclusion of women. The checklist is in line with BMZ's Feminist Development Policy as it follows the three Rs: 1) Equal Rights as through the checklist, we enhance the right for women to express their own opinion freely in a safe environment 2) Access to resources as through this checklist, the equal access to knowledge for women and men is promoted 3) Equal Representation as the checklist pushes for DGG's activities and their implementation to be planned and developed with women, especially promoting women's voices and influence on selection of topics for discussions. DGG's Gender Equality Checklist encompasses two key aspects: gender-inclusive participation planning before the start of the activity and gender-inclusive participation during the activity. The GIZ Gender Equality Checklist is as follows:

GIZ's Checklist for Gender Mainstreaming

INCLUSION OF WOMEN BEFORE THE START OF THE ACTIVITY

- Ensure that gender is included in all aspects in the concept note with a specific gender mainstreaming chapter with clear indicators as well as a DNH chapter and a sustainability plan that specifically addresses women's involvement.
- Include gender mainstreaming in monitoring.
- Take into account women-specific needs during the planning and execution of new activities.
- Ensure that half of the community-based facilitators, volunteers and focal points involved in dialogues, citizen forums and other activities are women (to the extent possible).
- Ensure that the venue is accessible for everyone (women with children, people with disability,...).
- Ensure that the venue, the setting and the agenda allow to bring children and to do care-work.
- Ensure that materials, documents, exercises and approaches used in dialogues, citizen forums and other activities are written with gender-sensitive language and messaging and have specific examples in the local context for women.
- Schedule the event at times and days that are favorable for men as well as women. If possible, share with participants the date and length of the event and ask for their time preference to ensure inclusiveness.
- Involve men as well as women in the identification and selection of discussion topics for dialogues, citizens forums, radio talk shows and other events.
- Check the possibility to compensate care work (incentives for private babysitters) or to provide care work (babysitters on site).

GENDER-INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION DURING THE ACTIVITY

- Establish ground rules for gender-inclusive conversations at the start of each event and monitors adherence to these rules among community members, intervening when necessary.
- Ensure a gender-balanced choice of moderators/facilitators.
- Make sure women make up at least half of the participants placed at the front of the room (to the extent possible).
- Instruct facilitators to alternate between male and female speakers.
- Ensure and encourage women's verbal contributions, and, if possible, measure women and male contributions in minutes (or at least how many women spoke compared to how many men spoke and intervene if necessary).
- Provide temporary childcare facilities or babysitter if possible.
- Ensure nearby toilets facilities are available with toilet paper.
- If possible, prepare a survey/suggestion box/other for participants to provide feedback on the gender responsiveness of the training/workshop/dialogue.

To ensure comprehensive understanding of the checklist among all partners and colleagues within our DGG Programme and equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to surpass mere quantitative numbers, we organized multiple training sessions. These sessions addressed the significance of inclusiveness, recognizing the diverse cultures and understanding of gender equality. Additionally, we provided a detailed explanation of the Gender Equality Checklist, with concrete examples resulting from the qualitative discussions of the unintended impacts assessment.

Through the implementation of the partner driven initiative of the DGG Gender Equality Checklist, our overarching objective is to catalyze a transformative shift in our programme towards gender inclusivity. Our objective is to integrate gender considerations comprehensively into all phases of our programme, addressing the diverse needs of women. Importantly, we envision the checklist not only to benefit our programme but to become a shared resource accessible to all GIZ projects and development partners starting with GIZ Rwanda where it is already planned that in January 2024, we will present the DGG Gender Equality Checklist to the Gender Working Group. The next step would be to include a non-binary gender approach in the DGG Gender Equality Checklist which for now is still difficult for Rwanda as the government does not have a clear stand on a non-binary gender approach as well as the inclusion of the LGBTI+ community and focuses primarily on women empowerment.

This checklist is designed to be user-friendly, requiring no internet connectivity, smartphones or sophisticated tools. Its simplicity ensures broad applicability, making it an easily transferable asset for fostering gender equality across diverse projects and regions.

To conclude, our entry to the competition addresses the four evaluation criteria, showcasing our commitment to promoting gender equality within the DGG programme. The partner-driven assessment conducted from October to December 2023 has yielded tangible results with a direct impact of developing the DGG Gender Checklist and aiming as a direct impact of gender inclusion beyond mere numerical representation in all our activities and long-term impact of enhancing gender equality and women empowerment in Rwanda, aligning with the first criterion of “Promoting Gender Equality”. The development and implementation of the DGG Gender Equality Checklist reflect our gender-differentiated approach and unwavering commitment to providing equal opportunities for women and men, as emphasized in the second criterion of “Gender as a Quality Feature of Our Work”. Our adherence to BMZ’s Feminist Development Policy, as demonstrated in the checklist, contributes to human-rights based approaches and the targeted dismantling of structural causes for inequality, aligning with the third criterion of “Implementing Feminist Core Principles”. The collaborative efforts highlighted in our entry, including partner-driven assessments and cooperation with various stakeholders showcase that the promotion of gender equality is indeed a joint task, meeting the fourth criterion of “Cooperation”. In conclusion, these key success factors have produced tangible outcomes, contributing to a workplace culture that actively embodies and champions gender equality.

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