

Gender strategy for foreign policy crisis engagement



Federal Foreign Office

Gender equality in foreign and security policy

Feminist foreign policy is grounded in the conviction that all people have the same rights and deserve the same freedoms and opportunities. Furthermore, feminist foreign policy upholds that societies are more peaceful and prosperous if all people are able to participate in political, social and economic life. In order to achieve this goal, women, girls and marginalised groups in all their diversity must be empowered. They must be given rights, representation and access to resources in order to overcome historically manifested unequal power structures.

In line with the guidelines “Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy”¹, the Federal Foreign Office promotes gender equality in all areas of foreign and security policy, including its crisis engagement. We want to strengthen the role of women and marginalised groups as *first responders* and *change agents* in overcoming crises and conflicts by ensuring their equal and effective participation. At the same time, women, children, people with diverse gender identities and sexual orientation (LGBTQI+), refugees and internally displaced persons as well as other groups that are considered particularly vulnerable in the context of crises and conflicts need special protection. Structural discrimination and resulting vulnerabilities are often exacerbated in crises and conflicts and lead to different needs that we must take into account.

1 Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy – Federal Foreign Office Guidelines, March 2023

The Federal Foreign Office pursues a human rights-based approach. In addition, in line with a gender-transformative approach, we want to tackle the causes of discrimination whenever possible. Further, the Federal Foreign Office takes a context-specific and conflict-sensitive approach. We focus on human security and recognise that multiple dimensions of discrimination (e.g. discrimination experienced by women who also belong to a marginalised ethnic group) can lead to heightened vulnerability (intersectionality). Our commitment is based on the Federal Foreign Office's guidelines "Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy"; further important references are the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Germany's corresponding third National Action Plan, the Federal Foreign Office's Diversity Strategy – "Diverse Germany, diverse diplomacy!" as well as Germany's LGBTI Inclusion Strategy for Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation.

Strategic aims and priority areas

The Federal Foreign Office commits to integrate gender equality systematically and coherently in planning and implementing its crisis engagement. **The main goal is to consistently take into account gender equality in our foreign policy crisis engagement.**

Gender equality in crisis engagement means developing more inclusive and more effective measures and thus fulfilling Germany's political commitments and obligations within the international framework.

Our strategy was drawn up on the basis of an intensive consultation process involving like-minded states, multilateral organisations and civil society – a process that is to be taken forward continuously. We have identified four priority areas for implementation:

I. Consistent gender mainstreaming

Objective: Crisis engagement measures supported by the Federal Foreign Office are designed to be gender-sensitive and, whenever possible, gender-transformative. The responsible units at the Federal Foreign Office collect data on gender aspects of their activities.

II. Anchoring gender-specific approaches in crisis engagement

Objective: Gender-specific approaches are systematically integrated into crisis engagement instruments and concepts of the Federal Foreign Office.

III. Leading by example

Objective: The Federal Foreign Office advocates consistently for gender equality in crisis engagement both internally as well as in bilateral and multilateral contexts, and strategically communicates its work thereon.

IV. Strengthening alliances

Objective: The Federal Foreign Office liaises closely with like-minded states and partner organisations on the promotion of gender equality in crisis engagement, involves civil society and lends support to implementation partners in this area.

Priority areas

1. Consistent gender mainstreaming

The aim of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. The Federal Foreign Office ensures gender mainstreaming as a methodology in all crisis engagement measures including projects, initiatives and events through the following mechanisms:

In 2023, the Federal Foreign Office set the goal of **allocating 85% of project funding on a gender-sensitive basis and 8% on a gender-transformative basis by 2025** – taking the criteria of the OECD gender equality policy marker as a guide. All Federal Foreign Office project funding – including that for crisis engagement – is to be deployed in a way that enables all genders to enjoy equal access to resources. We intend to expand our work on intersectionality and diversity aspects in the future.

Gender perspectives play an important role in **early warning** and strategic foresight. Therefore, thematic indicators and gender-related aspects feed into interactive visualisations and analyses of the Federal Foreign Office and form part of both quantitative models and qualitative analyses for early warning.

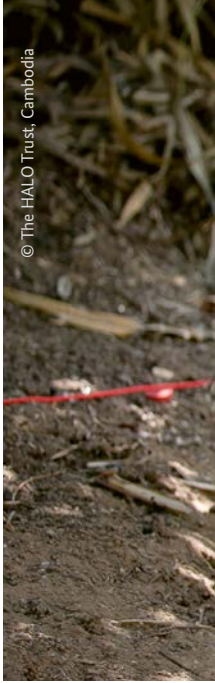
Gender perspectives and dimensions are systematically integrated into projects in the fields of **crisis prevention, stabilisation and peacebuilding**. Women and marginalised groups ought to actively participate in all project phases, including project design and monitoring. To this end, the Federal Foreign Office expects implementation partners to consistently take into account gender aspects in context and conflict analyses as well as in the design,



implementation and impact assessment of projects. Therefore, mandatory gender analyses and gender-sensitive context and conflict analyses play an important role. They identify the interactions between gender, patterns of marginalisation and other conflict risks, and thus provide a better understanding of power dynamics. They also expand the scope for action, as they broaden the range of possible approaches and actors. As a result, they enable more effective and more inclusive peace measures.

The principle of gender mainstreaming also applies to initiatives such as studies or workshops; organisers must take gender aspects into account from the beginning, i.e. the planning and design stage.





In **humanitarian assistance**, a **gender-age-disability (GAD) marker** is being used. It ensures that all humanitarian assistance projects funded by the Federal Foreign Office are gender-sensitive, and also take age and disability into account as further dimensions of potential marginalisation. It also takes systematic account of participation and inclusion. Our aim is to deploy **100% of our humanitarian assistance in, at the least, a gender-sensitive manner** and implement gender-targeted measures whenever possible by the end of the current legislative term (2021 – 2025). This means that gender-specific differences and inequalities are consistently taken into account when planning, implementing and following up on humanitarian assistance measures. The Federal Foreign Office further pursues a **gender-targeted approach** in humanitarian assistance for targeted funding of mitigating measures that address gender-specific risks and challenges.

Similarly, gender mainstreaming is systematically taken into account in the design of evaluations and in evaluation practice. As part of the project cycle, gender equality is taken into account in impact assessments of projects, programmes and strategies.

2. Anchoring gender-specific approaches in crisis engagement

Crisis prevention, stabilisation and peacebuilding

Instruments used by the Federal Foreign Office as part of its integrated peace engagement include peace mediation; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration; security sector reform; promotion of the rule of law and democracy; targeted support for the return or building of statehood in conflict contexts; and the prevention of and fight against violent extremism and transnational organised crime.



As a rule, **all measures need to systematically include gender aspects/perspectives on the basis of gender analyses and gender-sensitive context and conflict analyses.** In the future, we want to put more focus on the following:

- Strengthening the role of women and marginalised groups as *change agents*
- Participation by women and marginalised groups in the planning, implementation and monitoring of measures
- Localisation through support for local women's organisations and organisations working with marginalised groups
- Involving men in promoting gender equality and addressing violence-centred concepts of masculinity
- Systematic consideration of gender-specific risks such as sexualised and gender-based violence
- Protection and support for at-risk groups, in particular LGBTQI+ people, human rights and women's rights defenders and peace activists


The **Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF)** also focuses on gender-sensitive approaches in its training of German secondees and is expanding its pool of experts in this area. Gender equality is an integral part of pre-secondment training for all ZIF secondees and in many instances part of their responsibilities during deployment. The aim is to further increase the proportion of women secondees (currently over 40%), especially in leadership positions.

Selected crisis prevention, stabilisation and peacebuilding projects

Earmarked contribution to the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)

The WPHF supports the work of women who prevent conflict, respond to crises and accelerate peace within their communities. It helps empower women as mediators and strengthen their participation in peace processes. The Federal Foreign Office has made earmarked contributions to the fund since 2019, most recently the sum of €13 m in 2023.

Women Engaged in Responsive Solutions to Conflicts and Violence in Mindanao (We-RESOLVE), Relief International

The project supports the active participation of women in the peace process in Mindanao, Philippines, by setting up women-led peace communities at local level. Funding also goes to the establishment and support of women-led civil-society organisations. 

Empower Women, Build Peace – Creating Conditions for the Civil-Society Participation of Libyan Women in Conflict Transformation in Libya as a Contribution to UN Resolution 1325, ifa/zivik and AMICA e.V.

In cooperation with the Libyan non-governmental organisation Hope Charity, the project provides psychosocial and legal counselling to war-traumatised and vulnerable women and girls in Libya. It also raises awareness on women's rights and political participation, and provides training for women mediators.

Improving Gender Equality by Facilitating Access for Women to the Justice System and Police Services in Pakistan, UN Women

The project aims at improving gender equality in Pakistan's judicial and security sector by building gender-sensitive rule of law structures and facilitating access to the justice system and police services for survivors of sexualised and gender-based violence.

Addressing Violence against Women and Girls as a Catalyst for Peace, Phase 2, CARE

The project aims to support the women, men, girls and boys affected by conflict in Wau and Pariang, South Sudan. In particular, it seeks to support communities in identifying and countering structural causes of gender inequality. Measures include support for women's centres and strengthening the rights, representation and resources of women and marginalised groups.

Humanitarian assistance

Humanitarian assistance supports people who are suffering acute hardship due to crises, conflicts or natural disasters and cannot overcome this hardship alone. It enables those affected to survive and live in dignity and security, offers them prospects and alleviates human suffering.

The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence require humanitarian assistance to be offered solely according to need. At the same time, the specific needs of women, children and marginalised groups must be identified and taken into account in order for humanitarian assistance to effectively reach them.

In this context, the Federal Foreign Office supports, among other things, the involvement, promotion and cooperation of local women-led organisations. Moreover, targeted measures address gender-specific needs, for instance with regard to sexualised and gender-based violence or sexual and reproductive health and rights.

To provide further details on commitments and measures with regard to gender in German humanitarian assistance, the Federal Foreign Office has developed its own strategy on gender in humanitarian assistance.²

2 *Gender in Germany's humanitarian assistance*, Federal Foreign Office 2024.

Selected humanitarian assistance projects

Supporting WASH measures by the International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The Federal Foreign Office supports IOM activities to improve women's and girls' access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in humanitarian crises worldwide. In this context, women are specifically involved in decision-making processes and are trained to take on responsibilities and leadership roles in the projects.

Promoting Localised Gender Accountability to Address Inequality and GBV in Humanitarian Crises, UN Women

The project aims to improve the integration of gender-specific needs. To this end, gender advisers are seconded in crisis contexts, or women-led organisations are given targeted support to participate in humanitarian coordination structures. In addition, the project seeks to streamline better protection against gender-based violence in the planning of humanitarian measures across all sectors, for example by raising awareness among staff of humanitarian organisations.

Scaling Up Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE) Programming in Ethiopia and Somalia, UNICEF

In order to prevent and respond to sexualised and gender-based violence in the Horn of Africa, measures include the provision of healthcare services and psychosocial support for survivors of sexualised and gender-based violence. The project also includes the establishment of safe houses for survivors. By deliberately focusing on the participation of local women-led organisations, local communities and adolescent girls, the project aims to not merely provide short-term assistance, but to ensure longer-term security. ►

Humanitarian and Emergency Response via Provision of Psychosocial and Medical Care for People Affected by War in the Republic of Moldova and the Odessa Region, Ukraine, action medeor

This project provides healthcare services for refugees from Ukraine, with a particular focus on children and nursing mothers, as well as people with disabilities and the elderly. It also aims to prevent sexualised and gender-based violence and offers psychosocial care to help refugees process traumas of war and displacement.

3. Leading by example

In order to pursue gender equality and promote diversity credibly and effectively, the Federal Foreign Office intends to lead by example in its crisis engagement.

Internal gender mainstreaming

There are gender focal points who coordinate gender equality and related topics within their respective divisions. In addition, there are WPS (Women, Peace and Security) and FFP (Feminist Foreign Policy) focal points at missions abroad. Executive personnel plays a particularly important role in setting the tone and spreading awareness. Leaders must take responsibility for gender equality.

We further support the development of gender competence and help build an organisational culture for gender equality. The Federal Foreign Office has, for instance, developed tailor-made trainings on gender mainstreaming in crisis engagement.



Strategic agenda setting

The Federal Foreign Office actively addresses gender equality in various platforms and forums, for example as a Catalytic Member of the UN Women, Peace & Security and Humanitarian Action Compact (WPS HA Compact) and as lead of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (CtA). These efforts are being continued and further expanded. We also address gender equality and intersectionality in settings where they are not the primary focus and receive less attention – for instance in the context of the Grand Bargain. In addition, equality for all, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, is to be addressed even more intensively with countries that do not respect and promote this principle to the same extent.



As part of our strategic communication on crisis engagement, we will consider gender equality and diversity both as cross-cutting issues as well as priority themes. We want to positively highlight women and marginalised groups in our communication products.

4. Strengthening alliances

Germany is unequivocally committed to multilateralism and its partnerships. Alliances are needed in order to lend weight to the above-mentioned goals for gender equality in crisis engagement.

Like-minded partner countries

In light of the global pushback on women's rights and equality for all, standards, commitments and obligations already in place are under threat. The Federal Foreign Office is committed to defend and strengthen the equality of all genders and marginalised groups as part of its crisis engagement through enhanced exchange and communication as well as coordinated approaches with like-minded members of international and regional formats like the United Nations, the European Union, the G7 and the G20.

Civil society, academia and foundations

Civil-society organisations and networks in Germany and partner countries as well as political foundations and academic institutions are indispensable for Germany's crisis engagement. We intend to further extend their participation.

The Advisory Board to the Federal Government for Civilian Crisis Prevention and Peacebuilding, including its project on gender, peace and security, is a key interface with non-state actors in this regard. Civil-society perspectives of our global partners also play an especially important role. We aim to further increase their participation, not least to reflect post-colonial realities.

Implementation partners: localisation

Local partner organisations enable us to build on local structures, strengthen their capacities and act in accordance with the circumstances on the ground. Within the context of our crisis engagement, we particularly emphasise cooperation with women's and human rights organisations as well as women-led organisations and activists. At the same time, the Federal Foreign Office encourages state partners to step up the dialogue on gender equality issues. To that end, even greater use is to be made of the experience and perspectives of local organisations.

Strategy monitoring and evaluation

The success and progress of this strategy is being continuously followed through monitoring and evaluation systems. An external evaluation is to be carried out after three years to review its implementation and effectiveness.

As part of the strategy's implementation, we will provide information on the attainment of goals as well as examples of best practice. New ideas for the design of measures and recommendations for adjustments feed into goal-setting. These processes also serve as a basis for reports and publications such as the third National Action Plan for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

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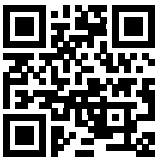
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