

EDUCATION FOR GIRLS IN DEVELOPMENT

Putting the German Government to the Test



because **I am a Girl**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, 62 million girls throughout the world do not attend school.¹ These girls are unable to exercise their human right to education. In 2015, the United Nations adopted global goals for sustainable development with its Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs). Among other things, the member states agreed to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education by 2030. This is an ambitious goal. In recent years, some progress has been made: Today, 52 million more girls attend school than only 15 years ago. The quality of education has also improved, but significant challenges remain. Girls are still prevented from attending school in many parts of the world. The reasons are varied and include poverty and social norms such as child, early and forced marriage. Early pregnancy prevents girls from finishing school. Gender-based violence in schools and on the way to school, as well as inadequate sanitary facilities, also act as barriers to education. Many girls stop attending school once they reach puberty unless there are separate, lockable toilets because they fear sexual assaults.

This report assesses the German Government's support in strengthening the right of girls to education with a focus on two key questions:

1. Is the Government doing the right thing?

Is the right of girls to education a strategic priority of German development policy? Does the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) ensure through coordination with other departments and internally that the German Government is following a coherent approach in ensuring that girls can exercise their rights?

2. Is the Government doing enough?

Does the German Government provide adequate funding for girls' education in developing countries? Is the German Government actively committed at the international level to ensuring that all girls can attend school?

Methodology: The report's findings are based on an assessment of BMZ's strategy documents and project portfolio as well as semi-structured interviews with representatives of BMZ, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), KfW Development Bank (KfW), civil society representatives, international partners and Members of the German Parliament.

¹ For the purposes of the present report, a girl means every human being of female gender and below the age of eighteen years, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, organisations often use different definitions. There is no uniform definition which is endorsed by all actors.

Key findings of the report

BMZ is a leading funder of education, but basic education remains underfunded

Germany is the largest bilateral donor for education. BMZ has expanded its financial support in the education sector, for example, through its support for refugee children in Syria's neighbouring countries. However, basic and secondary education is underfunded overall. Basic education is one of three priorities of BMZ's Education Strategy, but in practice BMZ increasingly focuses on vocational training. This is problematic, since basic education is central to the development of girls and a core element of the SDG on education.

Gender equality and support for girls are not the centre of attention

Two BMZ strategies explicitly refer to girls' education – the Education Strategy and the Gender Equality Strategy:

- The *Education Strategy* emphasises the importance of equal access to education and the necessity to remove barriers to access for girls. However, it lacks a specific objective with indicators for gender equality. This, however, would be an important prerequisite to promote girls more effectively. Only a small number of BMZ-funded educational projects focus on addressing unequal gender power relations and barriers to access, such as early and forced marriage, and are thus “gender-transformative”. Furthermore, only 15% of projects with a focus on girls are located in sub-Saharan Africa, and only one in four projects is implemented in low income countries – the poorest countries of the world. It is in those countries that an improvement of girls' access to education is particularly needed.
- Education is one of nine focus areas in the *Gender Equality Strategy* and the corresponding *Gender Action Plan 2016-2020*. A Road Map outlines the priorities for 2016. All the three documents prioritize vocational training. Promoting girls in primary and secondary education is not a focus.

Coordination between ministries needs to improve

Coordination between BMZ and other Federal ministries focuses on vocational training. In particular, coordination between BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office with regard to girls' education in crisis and conflict situations is not close enough. Coordination within BMZ and with its implementing organisations, GIZ and KfW, is generally good. Yet it seems that existing guidelines aiming at increased promotion of girls in educational projects are not always considered.

First improvements in data collection

BMZ, GIZ and KfW mostly collect data disaggregated by gender and age when designing and implementing education projects. This is an important first step for making girls visible and for strengthening support. Data collection should be further expanded. Education data must be disaggregated systematically also by other categories, such as income, ethnic group, migration status, disability and place of residence. This is the only way to gain a better understanding of the needs of people facing multiple disadvantages.

Beyond vocational training, Germany shows little commitment at the international level

The German Government launched the Economic Empowerment of Women initiative during its G7 presidency in 2015. It aims to increase the number of girls and women in developing countries who receive vocational training by one-third by 2030. This is an important contribution to strengthening girls' right to education and to reaching the SDG on education. Apart from this, the German Government has so far not been very committed at international level and has not set a particular focus on improving girls' access to basic education.

Seven recommendations to the German Federal Government

1. Expand support for basic and secondary education:

BMZ should significantly increase funding for basic and secondary education. They are core elements of the SDG on education. Furthermore, basic education is one of three priority areas of BMZ's Education Strategy. BMZ should take this into account and provide more funds for its bilateral programmes and for multilateral organisations such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Furthermore, the Gender Road Map 2017 should focus on basic and secondary education.

2. Strengthen educational programmes and interventions in situations of crisis and conflict:

BMZ should provide more funds for programmes in crisis and conflict regions and support disadvantaged groups. Girls are particularly affected by crises and would benefit from such programmes. BMZ could support the new Education Cannot Wait Fund, which aims to improve access to education for all children affected by crises and conflicts.

3. Make gender equality a core objective of the Education Strategy:

In the next Education Strategy, gender equality should be a stand-alone objective. It should particularly address the barriers that prevent girls from exercising their right to education. Furthermore, the strategy should pursue a human rights and child rights-based approach. Concrete steps for supporting girls should be outlined in an action plan for education.

4. Support more projects that remove barriers to accessing education:

BMZ should expand funding of those education projects that aim to improve girls' access to education. Furthermore, a target value should be established for projects that address the causes of gender-based discrimination and help transform unequal power structures. BMZ should also support more projects that raise awareness among communities, parents and schools of barriers to access for girls.

5. Strengthen coordination within the German Government:

BMZ should initiate a regular institutionalized exchange with other ministries, e.g. through an inter-ministerial round table on education. This would promote the coherence of the German Government's support for girls' education. In view of the strong links between humanitarian aid and development cooperation, BMZ should especially coordinate its work more closely with the Federal Foreign Office. Within BMZ, the divisions on education and gender equality should be more closely involved in project planning with the regional divisions. This could contribute to raising the number of education projects that aim at overcoming barriers to access for girls.

6. Improve data on girls: In all educational projects, BMZ should collect data which are disaggregated by gender, age, income, ethnic group, migration status, disability and place of residence (urban/rural). In this way, groups at particular risk of multiple discrimination, such as girls with disabilities, will become visible and can be better supported. Furthermore, BMZ should increasingly support projects that help partner countries collect and use disaggregated data.

7. Strengthen international commitment: The German Government should continue its G7 initiative to promote vocational training for girls and women. Furthermore, it should enhance its commitment to overcoming barriers to access that prevent girls from attending primary and secondary school, for example, within Germany's G20 presidency in 2017. This would serve to strengthen Germany's contribution to reaching the SDGs on education and gender equality and ensure that education for girls receives the attention it requires if the global goals of education and gender equality are to be achieved and access to quality primary and secondary education is to be provided to all girls by 2030.

1. INTRODUCTION

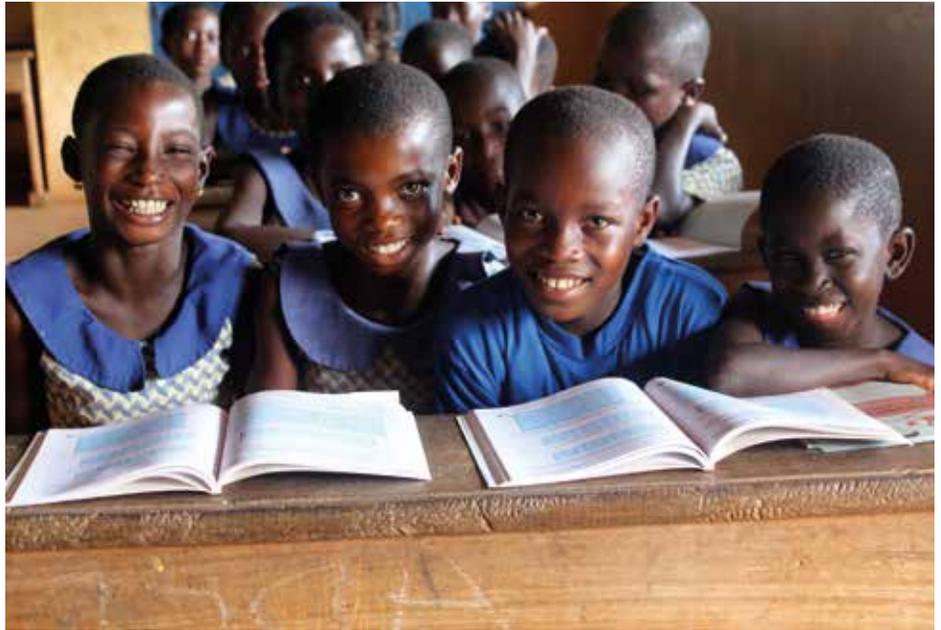


Photo: Antoinette Gyan

In September 2015, United Nations Member States adopted the Agenda 2030 with their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Until 2030, the 17 SDGs will be the framework of international cooperation on the most challenging global issues. Some of these goals put girlsⁱⁱ and women at the centre, because they are hit especially hard by poverty, inequality, discrimination and violence.

The right to education is a human right and a children's right. This is recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which have been endorsed by most countries in the world, including Germany.¹ By adopting the SDGs, the international community has made a commitment to ensure that by 2030 all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education.ⁱⁱⁱ These fields of education are particularly important, as

they are the foundation of all following levels of education, such as vocational training and higher education.

Important progress has been made in recent years: Today, 84 million more children and adolescents attend school than in 2000. Among these students, 52 million are girls.² Girls are catching up in terms of access to education: The number of girls for every 100 boys in secondary school has risen from 91 in 2000 to 97 in 2015. However, significant regional differences remain. For example, girls in Southern and Western Asia have caught up significantly, whereas poor progress has been made in sub-Saharan Africa.³ Much still needs to be done to improve education quality. Although education quality has improved across countries, teachers often lack sufficient education, or there are too many students sitting in the classroom.⁴

ⁱⁱ For the purposes of the present report, a girl means every human being of female gender and below the age of eighteen years, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, organisations often use different definitions. There is no uniform definition which is endorsed by all actors.

ⁱⁱⁱ See SDG 4 (Education), Target 1: "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes." Secondary education refers to the attendance of a secondary school after primary school. Its purpose is to prepare children and adolescents for academic studies or vocational training.

Many girls and young women are still prevented from exercising their right to education. Currently, approximately 62 million girls do not attend school globally.⁵ Half of them are of primary school age. Of these, one-half – 16 million girls – will most likely never attend school. In one-third of countries, more boys than girls are still enrolled in primary schools.⁶ In sub-Saharan Africa, poor girls have the lowest chance to go to primary school. For example, in Guinea and Nigeria over 70 per cent of girls from the poorest families have never attended school.⁷

Social norms often prevent girls from going to school, particularly arising from child, early and forced marriage. Every year, an estimated 14 million girls are married.⁸ This corresponds to 39,000 girls every day. The UNESCO Global Monitoring Report cites that over 30 per cent of women aged between 20 and 24 years in 41 developing countries were already married before they reached the age of 18.⁹ Girls who are married early often opt out of school or never even start. Early pregnancy is another reason why many girls are unable to attend school. 15 million girls gave birth in 2015 alone.¹⁰ When girls become pregnant at a young age, they often no longer go to school, do not attend secondary school or drop out of school.¹¹

Gender-based violence at school and on the way to school poses another problem. Not only are girls' human rights violated, but it also results in poorer performance at school and higher dropout rates.¹² Consequences of violence such as fear of teachers and schoolmates or traumatic experiences result in poor concentration. Parents take their daughters out of school if they are not safe. Missing or inadequate sanitary facilities at schools are another reason for girls not attending.

Ensuring access to education for girls in conflict and crisis situations poses a particular challenge. At the moment, one out of every four children (462 million) live in conflict-torn countries. Approximately 75 million children live in areas where there are acute humanitarian crises and are therefore either prevented from going to school or cannot rely on being able to attend school on a regular basis.¹³ Again, girls are particularly disadvantaged: The risk of being unable to attend a secondary school is almost twice as high for a girl than for a boy.¹⁴

Whether or not girls can go to school has an impact on other areas of life, especially on health: If all girls could complete secondary education, about 50% fewer children under five years of age would die, as educated mothers know more about illnesses and diseases and how to prevent them. This would help save the lives of almost three million children every year.¹⁵ More education for girls also contributes to tackling harmful social norms. Child, early and forced marriage among girls would decrease by almost two-thirds if all girls had access to secondary education.¹⁶ Furthermore, education increases income: For every additional year in secondary school, expected future earnings for a girl increase by up to 20%.¹⁷

The international community has increasingly recognized that girls' education is key to achieving the SDGs. The 2015 World Education Forum in Incheon, South Korea, marked a milestone. Over 1,600 representatives from governments, international organisations, civil society, the private sector and other organisations emphasized in their final resolution that education is key if gender equality is to be achieved. Led by Norway and Japan, some donor countries are particularly committed to supporting girls' education.¹⁸ According to Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg, girls' education is "the single most powerful investment for development".¹⁹ Japan made girls' education a priority of its G7 presidency in 2016. In addition, various international initiatives have been launched. They also include the United States' Let Girls Learn initiative under the leadership of Michelle Obama.^{iv}

It is also Plan International's aim to ensure girls' right to education throughout the world. The children's rights organisation is working to ensure quality education for girls mainly within the framework of its Because I am a Girl campaign and has provided more funding for educational programmes than in any other field. Furthermore, a comprehensive approach to sex education is an integral component of many of Plan International's programmes. This also includes information on how to avoid unwanted pregnancies, gender roles and violence against girls and women. In cooperation with other international partners including the ONE Campaign and the International Women's Health Coalition, Plan International launched a data initiative in May 2016. This initiative aims at collecting better data on the living situation and conditions of girls so as to be able to monitor the SDGs specifically in relation to girls.²⁰

^{iv} This also includes the Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education initiative launched by UNESCO, UNFPA and UN Women.

By endorsing the Agenda 2030, the German Government has also made a commitment to work towards achieving equal access to education for girls throughout the world and overcoming existing barriers. These aims are the standard by which the German Government will be judged both domestically and in its foreign policy and development policy.

The present report discusses the extent to which the German Government contributes to enabling all girls to exercise their right to education and go to school. This is a core element of the Agenda 2030. Furthermore, the report outlines how the German Government can strengthen and improve its efforts.

The report covers two *central questions*:

1. Is the Government doing the right thing?

(Strategic level)

The report examines the following questions:

- Is the right of girls to education a strategic priority of German development policy?
- Does the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) ensure a consistent and aligned approach through coordination within BMZ and collaboration with other ministries?

2. Is the Government doing enough?

(Implementation level)

This covers two aspects:

- Does the Federal Government provide adequate funding for girls' education in developing countries?
- Is the German Government actively committed at the international level to ensuring that all girls can attend school?

Chapter 2 presents the reference framework - the SDGs on education and gender equality. Chapter 3 explains the methodology used. Chapter 4 investigates to what extent the German Government in its strategies ascribes particular importance to girls' education, how well funded this area is and what the commitment at the international level looks like. Chapter 5 concludes with recommendations for the German Government on how to further expand its commitments.

2. THE REFERENCE FRAMEWORK: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION

The global Sustainable Development Goals are the central reference framework for the development cooperation of the German Government. The German Government has also highlighted the importance of the Agenda 2030 as a reference framework for its work in its draft strategy on sustainability to be adopted in Autumn 2016.²¹ In addition, on the occasion of the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2016, the German Government presented a first report to highlight Germany's implementation of the SDGs.²² However, the Government failed to explicitly outline how it intends to contribute to ensuring girls' right to education in either of these documents.

2.1. THE SDG ON EDUCATION AND THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Education is one of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4). Equitable, free access to primary and secondary education is paramount. Four out of ten of the goal's targets mention girls' access to education: All girls and boys are to complete free and quality primary and secondary education (Target 1), and have access to early childhood development (Target 2) and technical, vocational and tertiary education (Target 3). Furthermore, gender-based inequalities are to be eliminated (Target 5). By endorsing the SDGs, the German Government has committed itself to achieving the SDG on education.

The key elements of the *Education 2030: Framework for Action* were resolved at the World Education Forum in Incheon, South Korea, in May 2015, which was attended by over 1,600 representatives of governments, international organisations, civil society, the private sector and other organisations. In November 2015, the Framework for Action was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO.²³ It forms the framework for the implementation of the SDG on education upon which the German Government should base its work.

THE EDUCATION SDG AND PROPOSALS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE “FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION”

SDG 4

Target 1:

Free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education

Target 2:

Quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education

Target 3:

Affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education

Target 5:

Eliminate gender disparities in education

FRAME- WORK FOR ACTION

Public funding

At least one year free and compulsory pre-primary education

Remove barriers preventing women's access to vocational training

Guarantee access to education also in emergency situations

Nine years of compulsory education, 12 years of education offered

Identify & remove barriers of access to education

Adapt curricula to local requirements and involve the community

Better data on girls' access to education

The *Framework for Action* introduces different approaches for achieving the education goal:

- For SDG Target 1 (primary and secondary education for all) the focus is on providing adequate public funding and ensuring access to primary and secondary education. Twelve years of school education should be offered, nine years should be compulsory for all children. The curricula must be geared to local requirements and take into account disadvantaged groups, including girls.
- To provide quality early childhood development (Target 2), the request is for at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education.
- Removing barriers to access to vocational training is considered to be essential for the achievement of Target 3 (equal access to technical, vocational and tertiary education).
- Gender disparities overall (Target 5) can only be eliminated if barriers to access are removed. Furthermore, educational projects should be designed to ensure children's access to education in conflict and crisis situations, especially for refugees and internally displaced children. Apart from this, data quality in the education sector must be improved so as to better support disadvantaged groups. To this end, data on gender, age, income, ethnic group, migration status, disability and place of residence (urban/rural) are relevant. This would help to more effectively support multiple disadvantaged groups such as girls with disabilities or indigenous girls.

2.2. THE SDG ON GENDER EQUALITY

The gender equality SDG (SDG 5) aims at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The goal covers nine targets, four of which are relevant for girls' right to education: All forms of discrimination against all women and girls must be ended (Target 1). This includes discrimination from accessing education.

Sexual violence against girls and women, child, early and forced marriage, early pregnancy and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are barriers that prevent girls from exercising their right to education and must be eliminated (Targets 2, 3 and 6).

SDG 5 ON GENDER EQUALITY AND TARGETS WITH A FOCUS ON GIRLS

SDG 5:

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 1:

End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

Target 2:

Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

Target 3:

Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

Target 6:

Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

This report investigates to what extent the German Government aligns with these goals and whether they have already been included in its strategies on education and gender equality.



Photo: Anika Büssemeier

3. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

To answer the question of whether the German Government is, firstly, doing the right thing and, secondly, doing enough to support girls' education, the following methodology was applied:

First, a *desk review* was conducted of relevant BMZ strategies. These documents were scrutinized to find out to what extent their objectives and approaches are aligned to the international reference framework. The desk review focused on the following documents:

- The *BMZ Education Strategy* of 2015 - the central framework for the work of BMZ in the field of education.²⁴
- The *BMZ's cross-sectoral Strategy on Gender Equality* in German Development Policy of 2014 and the associated implementation plan, the *Gender Action Plan 2016-2020*²⁵: The Action Plan outlines key areas for implementation of the strategy. In addition, BMZ develops a *Road Map* every year, which outlines priorities for implementation of the Action Plan. BMZ published the Road Map 2016²⁷ in March 2016.
- *Inter-ministerial documents* referring to girls' education: These include the "Strategy paper of the Federal Government on international vocational training and training cooperation". In addition, the BMZ strategy paper "New Priorities of BMZ's Refugee Policy" published in early 2016²⁸ mentions cooperation with other ministries on educational programmes in conflict and crisis situations among other aspects.

Second, 14 *semi-structured interviews*^v were conducted with decision-makers from BMZ, GIZ and KfW as well as members of the German Parliament and representatives of civil society organisations and international partners (see list of interviews in Annex 1). The interviews served to validate the results of the desk review and to verify whether the priorities outlined in the strategy documents are actually addressed and implemented as matters of priority in practice.

^v In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer uses an interview guide; however, he or she can ask questions or focus on certain aspects based on the responses.

In addition, a *quantitative analysis* of BMZ's project portfolio in the field of education was conducted. Firstly, OECD data on bilateral *Official Development Assistance* (ODA) spending by the German Government and BMZ for the period 2012 to 2014 was analysed. Secondly, *funding commitments* made by BMZ for between 2013 and 2015 for educational projects were analysed^{vi} to assess to what extent the educational projects had a focus on girls. This included three steps:

1. Projects with a focus on gender equality:

Firstly, the educational projects were analysed to identify their gender equality marker ("G-marker"). The marker identifies whether a project has gender equality as its principal (G2) or a significant (G1) objective, or is not targeted to the objective of gender equality at all (G0).

2. Projects with a focus on girls:

The G-marker shows whether an educational project is targeted at gender equality. However, it cannot be concluded whether the project is designed to specifically promote girls. To this end, a keyword search was performed for all projects which had gender equality as a principal or a significant objective to identify projects with a focus on girls. Annex 2 contains a list of the keywords used.

3. Projects with a gender-transformative approach:

Next, project descriptions related to bilateral BMZ commitments from 2013 to 2015 were analysed regarding their approach in order to be able to assess more precisely the extent to which programmes and interventions aim at overcoming the root causes of gender-based discrimination.^{vii} In so doing, we applied the classification levels used by Plan International to determine the gender-focus of projects. It distinguishes between four levels:

- **Gender-blind:** Programmes and interventions that do not consider gender aspects and thereby potentially reinforce gender inequalities.
- **Gender-neutral:** Programmes and interventions that discuss questions of gender equality and the differences in girls' and boys' access to education, but do not include measures to counteract inequities and discrimination.
- **Gender-sensitive:** Programmes and interventions that improve the situation of girls and women and promote gender equality in a targeted way, but do not aim at overcoming structural causes such as power inequities and promoting the social status of girls and women.
- **Gender-transformative:** Programmes and interventions that actively challenge gender norms and address power inequities in order to promote the social status of women and girls in communities and work towards full realisation of the rights of girls and women.

Further details on the data basis and methodology are contained in Annex 2.

^{vi} BMZ provided a detailed overview of the commitments of BMZ in the field of education, including project descriptions. The following should be noted: The commitments cannot be matched directly with ODA disbursements from OECD data. Multiple years may often be between the funding commitment and the first disbursement. Funds committed are also generally disbursed over several years.

^{vii} Due to the amount of time needed for this exercise, only BMZ commitments were included in the analysis, i.e. no projects from the OECD database were considered. From BMZ commitments, only bilateral commitments were considered, since no project descriptions were available for grants made to NGOs and faith-based implementing agencies and the number of corresponding projects among the multilateral grants was very small (5 projects).

4. THE COMMITMENT OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT FOR GIRLS' RIGHT TO EDUCATION

4.1. IS THE GOVERNMENT DOING THE RIGHT THING?

Girls are not at the focus of the BMZ Education Strategy.

The BMZ Education Strategy “Creating equitable opportunities for quality education” was published in July 2015. It emphasises the importance of equal access to education and the necessity to remove barriers to access for girls. However, it lacks a specific objective for gender equality, which is an important prerequisite for promoting girls in a more targeted way. Basic education is central to the development of girls and one of three priorities outlined by the Education Strategy. In practice, however, the focus is increasingly on vocational training, not on basic education. Overall, what is lacking is an implementation plan for the Education Strategy, with indicators to measure whether objectives are achieved.

The analysis of the BMZ Education Strategy shows that:

- **Basic education is one of three priorities alongside vocational training and higher education.** BMZ has made a commitment to ensuring free and equitable access to primary education. BMZ has recognized the obligation of governments to provide quality primary education, which should be accessible, compulsory and free for all. In doing so, BMZ reiterates one key request of the SDG on education and the Framework for Action. However, almost all of those interviewed pointed out that the focus is increasingly on vocational training. Germany can draw on its extensive experience in vocational training. According to BMZ, this expertise is in high demand among partner countries. Early childhood development – a key target of the SDG on education and of particular importance for girls’ education – plays only a minor role in the strategy. BMZ merely refers to the cooperation with multilateral organisations such as UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). There are no additional details provided. It was confirmed by interview partners that early childhood development does not play a major role.
- **Gender equality is a “key cross-cutting issue”, but not a stand-alone objective.** Although BMZ made “Create equal opportunities for girls, boys, women and men” one of ten strategic objectives in its BMZ Education Strategy 2012, this is no longer the case.²⁹ BMZ only emphasizes that “all forms” of discrimination regarding access to education should be ended. BMZ further refers to barriers to access by using specific examples (e.g. lack of separate toilets for boys and girls at school). However, BMZ fails to indicate explicit, effective approaches to removing barriers and discriminating practices.^{viii} This makes it difficult for BMZ’s regional divisions to implement the strategy when designing educational projects.

^{viii} It is merely pointed out that gender-sensitive syllabuses can be essential in helping to eliminate “discriminatory mentalities and concepts of gender roles”.

- **The Education Strategy does not sufficiently take into account a human and, in particular, children’s rights-based approach.**

It does not go beyond mere references to the right to education enshrined in the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It would, however, be important to embed human rights and child rights-based approaches in every part of the strategy to ensure that the special needs of girls and the barriers facing them are kept in mind all along the way so as to be able to better support girls.

- **The Education Strategy lacks an implementation plan that includes measurable objectives.**

Overall, there are no concrete objectives, no time frame and no indicators to monitor how well the strategy is implemented. Indicators related to the promotion of girls would be of particular importance for bringing stronger focus to girls.

- **Partner countries receive increased support to gather quality data.**

Improved data on access to education is a key requirement for achieving the SDG on education by 2030. All data should be disaggregated systematically by gender, age, income, ethnic group, migration status, disability and place of residence (urban/rural) to increase visibility for groups at particular risk of multiple discrimination, such as girls with disabilities. According to the strategy, BMZ is supporting partner countries in establishing education information systems which are “specifically geared to poor and disadvantaged groups”. However, the strategy does not require systematic disaggregation of data for all BMZ programmes.

Education is one priority of BMZ’s strategy on gender equality; however, the strategy is not implemented consistently.

Education is one of nine focus areas in BMZ’s Gender Equality Strategy and the corresponding Gender Action Plan. In addition, the Road Map sets priorities for every year. All three documents prioritize vocational training. Primary education and barriers to access for girls are insufficiently addressed.

BMZ has published several interrelated documents on gender equality:

- The *BMZ Strategy on Gender Equality* of 2014 is a cross-sector strategy. It requires that gender equality be addressed as a cross-cutting issue in all BMZ work. Therefore, it is imperative also for cooperation in the field of education. The strategy defines nine key areas of intervention in BMZ’s work on gender equality. Education is one of them.
- The *Gender Action Plan 2016-2020*, published in January 2016, outlines how the Strategy on Gender Equality should be implemented. The Action Plan contains specific objectives to be achieved by 2020. It defines four objectives in the field of education.
- For annual planning, BMZ develops a *Road Map* to set the thematic priorities for the respective year. The Road Map 2016 was published in March 2016.³⁰

EDUCATION OBJECTIVES OF THE GENDER ACTION PLAN 2016-2020

Strategic objective 1:

Target efforts to give girls and women of all ages equal access to high-quality and culturally acceptable education and help them continue attending education facilities in all stages of life.

Strategic objective 2:

Substantially increase the proportion of girls and women in vocational training.

Strategic objective 3:

Design educational programmes to be gender-sensitive and work to dismantle discriminatory gender stereotypes.

Strategic objective 4:

Make comprehensive sex education an integral component of curricula, including information.

An analysis of these documents has shown the following:

- **Education is a core issue of the Gender Strategy and the Gender Action Plan.**

Education is one of nine focus areas in the Gender Equality Strategy. BMZ includes education as a focus area in its Gender Action Plan and defines four strategic objectives to be reached by 2020 (see box). According to the Gender Action Plan, girls and women of all ages are to gain access to quality education (see Target 1). The prioritisation of education and the definition of specific objectives are an important prerequisite for supporting girls. However, indicators on how the the targets in the Gender Action Plan could be implemented and monitored are lacking.

- **The focus of the Gender Action Plan is on vocational training**

Early childhood development, primary and secondary education are not main focus areas. BMZ states that access for “girls and women of all ages” to education as an objective in its Gender Action Plan. However, the Action Plan lacks specific objectives for early childhood development or primary and secondary education. Such an objective only exists for vocational training: To achieve Strategic Objective 2 of the Gender Action Plan (increase the proportion of girls and women in vocational training), the number of girls and women who can access vocational training is to be increased by one-third by 2030. Furthermore, data quality needs to be improved. Currently, two important targets of the SDG on education are taken up in relation to vocational training (access to vocational training and improving the quality of data collected on girls), but the key issues of primary and secondary education remain unaddressed.

- **The Gender Action Plan and the Road Map 2016 are not intertwined.**

The four education objectives of the Gender Action Plan are not taken up by the Road Map 2016. Instead, Road Map 2016 introduces individual educational projects and initiatives, such as the German G7 initiative on vocational training. In conclusion, future road maps should include specific objectives and indicators and place more emphasis on primary and secondary education.

- **International dialogue plays only a minor role.**

In its Gender Strategy, BMZ follows a three-pronged approach and highlights the political dialogue with partner governments. However, political dialogue is not taken up in the Gender Action Plan. Interviewees stressed that the design of BMZ's educational interventions was aligned to the interests of partner countries. Dialogue with partner governments could help to reduce discriminatory practises and access barriers for girls. One example of this is the objective to make comprehensive sex education an integral component of curricula, which could contribute to preventing early pregnancy. Thus, BMZ has brought into focus a key barrier to girls' education.

- **Improving data quality is not a focus.**

According to its Gender Action Plan, BMZ intends to increasingly collect and use disaggregated data on vocational training. However, improving data collection and use only in the field of vocational education is insufficient. Data that is systematically disaggregated by gender and other characteristics (such as income, ethnic group, migration status, disability and place of residence) should be collected for all fields of education, especially those that are particularly relevant for girls, like primary and secondary education.



Photo: Saikat Mojumder

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION FOR GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES:

NAYDELIN FROM GUATEMALA TELLS US HER STORY.

12-year-old Naydelin lives in Jalapa, a rural community east of Guatemala City. Since birth she has had difficulty walking. Due to a problem with her back she was born with one shorter leg. Walking often causes her pain, but she is a strong fighter. Naydelin is lucky, because she has loving parents who support her. But there are still moments when she has to fight more than other children.

In October 2013, Plan International began to build and equip a total of nine therapy centres co-funded by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in Jalapa and San Pedro Carcha. 417 Children and adolescents are now able to participate in rehabilitation programmes designed, for example, to increase their mobility or help them cope with pain. The main goal of the project is to provide children and adolescents living with disabilities with education and adequate healthcare.

In Guatemala, persons with disabilities are often discriminated and stigmatized. The majority of the population believes that a physical disability is always accompanied with mental disability. Furthermore, physical impairments are often perceived as punishment by God. Many families hide their children if they were born with a disability and deny them access to adequate care in their first years of life. Consequently, their chances of personal development are severely restricted. This is why Plan is working with teachers, parents and children to reduce prejudices and fears and foster social integration of children with disabilities in all areas of

life. For example, sensitisation workshops are conducted during school lessons in which children cover their eyes with a bandana or tie sticks to their legs to restrict their mobility. In doing so, they experience first-hand what it means to be blind or live with restricted mobility and thus develop a better understanding of their school-mates who live with disabilities.

In addition, trainings for parents and carers are provided to support the rehabilitation and social integration of children with disabilities. Community-based volunteers participate in the trainings to familiarize themselves with the concept of community-based rehabilitation (CBR) and learn more about measures designed to promote persons with disabilities. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supports schools to access government funding for adapted furniture and accessible infrastructure and specifically foster inclusion of children living with disabilities.

The intervention is designed to counteract marginalisation of girls and boys with disabilities, thereby ensuring that all children can exercise their right to education.



Naydelin with her brothers, her sister and her mother Alba in front of their house.

Photos: Vanessa Lerch



Naydelin in front of her house and during a therapy session.

What is most challenging for you?

For us, it is much more difficult to get to school than it is for other children. This is because the way is often long, bumpy and stony. But what is even worse is how the other children treat us. Instead of calling us by our names, they refer to us as “cross-eyed”, “gimp” or “cripple”. They can do that because their parents don’t do anything to prevent them from harassing us. Even our teachers are often ignorant and do nothing to protect us.

Many children call me “chenca”. It means something like “gimp”. I simply try not to listen or pretend I did not hear them. That is difficult. Sometimes, I am even particularly nice in such situations, so that teasing me is no fun for the kids.

What do you like about the therapy centre?

What I like is that now there is a centre where children with disabilities can come and find help. They showed me some exercises I can do to reduce my pain. For example, there is a yoga pose called “cat and dog” that helps me to stretch my hip. People working at the centre sometimes talk to me when they recognize that I feel sad and down.

Is there anything you would like to change?

At school there should be a playground for children with disabilities so that they also have a place to play during the breaks. We could do with some swings, for example. It would also be good for the children who cannot move well to have some blocks or cuddly toys or dolls to play with, so that they also have something nice.

I wish that the teachers would treat all children equally, and it would be better if there were more teachers to look after us during the breaks. Then they would recognise more often whether children with disabilities are treated badly, and they could do more to prevent this.

How has the project changed you?

My way of thinking and doing things has changed. I have learned that children with disabilities have the same rights as other children, and that their parents and teachers must not treat them badly. I am more self-confident and more able to assert myself.

What is your wish for the future?

If I had one wish it would be that all children with disabilities here in my community would receive support. And that everyone could see that we have the same rights as other children have. We also have feelings and wishes that others should respect.

**The project Naydelin participated in:
“Right in the Middle of Life - Community
Based Rehabilitation”
Duration: October 2013 - September 2016
Co-funded by BMZ**

Coordination in the field of education for girls leaves room for improvement.

Coordination between BMZ and other Federal ministries focuses on vocational training. Coordination between BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office in regard to education for girls in crisis and conflict situations is currently not coordinated well enough. Coordination within BMZ and with its implementing organisations, GIZ and KfW, works well. However, existing guidelines aimed at promoting girls in educational projects are not always taken into consideration.

Coordination among the departments of the German Government

BMZ is responsible for Germany's development cooperation and therefore has primary responsibility for promoting girls' right to education in developing countries. But other ministries also play a role: Humanitarian aid falls within the responsibility of the Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt, AA), which requires close coordination between BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office in situations of crisis and emergency. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry for Families, Senior Citizens,

Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ) works with organisations such as UN Women on gender issues.

The analysis has shown:

- **The departments work in close liaison on vocational training.**

Several respondents stated that the ministerial activities in regard to vocational training are well coordinated. Indeed, the German Government published the cross-ministry "Strategy paper of the Federal Government on international vocational training and training cooperation", which, however, does not discuss barriers to access to education for girls in depth. Furthermore, there is a round table on international cooperation in vocational training. The round table is supposed to implement the cross-ministry "Strategy paper of the Federal Government on international vocational training and training cooperation" and facilitate exchange. The interviewees also reported that the G7 initiative strengthened coordination among the ministries in particular on vocational training for girls and women, also within the context of the round table.



Photo: Luis Tobar

Interviews revealed that:

- **Coordination between BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office still leaves room for improvement.**

The interviews revealed that there has been no regular institutionalized exchange from BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office on educational programmes in crisis and conflict situations so far. The BMZ paper on new priorities in BMZ's refugee policy published in early 2016 explains that accountability for programmes with medium-term goals lies with BMZ. This includes the provision of school education for children and vocational training for youth. Short-term humanitarian aid and emergency interventions are the responsibility of the Federal Foreign Office. At present, education for refugees is almost exclusively funded by BMZ. However, given the strong links between humanitarian aid and development cooperation, a closer exchange between BMZ and the Federal Foreign Office on strategic approaches in education, and primary and secondary education in particular, appears necessary. This could contribute to ensuring that girls are able to exercise their right to education also in crisis and emergency situations.

- **Cooperation between BMZ and BMFSFJ could be intensified.**

BMFSFJ advocates at the international level for girls' and women's rights, for example, within the framework of the "HeForShe" campaign launched by UN Women. The campaign aims at encouraging men and boys to take action towards the realization of gender equality. BMFSFJ and BMZ consult each other to coordinate Germany's position. This includes, for example, organising meetings by the UN Commission on the Status of Women in which BMFSFJ represents the German Government. However, coordination has so far taken place on a rather ad-hoc-basis. Consultations between BMZ's Education and Gender Equality Divisions and BMFSFJ on the promotion of girls' education could therefore be scheduled more regularly. This could contribute to the German Government speaking more strongly with one voice on girls' education matters at an international level.

Coordination within BMZ

Within BMZ, the Education Division is working closely together with the Gender Division, for example in developing their strategic documents. Furthermore, desk officers in the regional divisions develop projects in cooperation with partner countries, GIZ and KfW.

- **The Education Division coordinates closely with the Gender Division.**

The Education Division involves the Gender Division in all of its relevant processes, including the BMZ Education Strategy. In addition, the Education Division contributed to designing the education-related objectives and activities of the Gender Action Plan. This coordination between divisions is a very positive finding. However, the strategic education approaches of the two divisions are not intertwined. For example, the four strategic objectives on education of the Gender Action Plan are not directly derived from the Education Strategy. This would be desirable in order to further promote girls.

- **There is little involvement of the Education Division and the Gender Division in designing content for educational projects.**

While it is true that BMZ's regional divisions involve in particular the Education Division in project planning at an early stage, this is mainly related to methodology and technical aspects. Overall, the influence of the Education Division on the general direction of programmes and interventions seems rather limited. This is problematic because the interviews expressed that overcoming barriers for girls is not yet sufficiently mainstreamed as a focus area in projects. Increasing the involvement of the Education and Gender Divisions in project design could contribute to a clearer focus on removing barriers for girls in educational projects and programmes.

- **Guidelines on how to improve gender focus in educational projects are not always systematically considered.**

KfW has developed a detailed "Reference Manual on Gender Mainstreaming in Education" for internal use. It is designed to increase gender equality focus in educational programmes and interventions. However, the reference manual does not seem to be consistently used in programme planning, as confirmed by the respondents.

4.2. IS THE GOVERNMENT DOING ENOUGH?

BMZ has expanded its financial support for education, for example, through the support for refugee children in Syria's neighbouring countries. However, basic and secondary education remain underfinanced. Only a small number of projects focus on addressing unequal gender power relations and access barriers for girls. At the international level, the German Government has primarily dedicated its work to vocational education; it has not done much to ensure access to basic education for all girls.

In relation to total ODA spending, education has declined in importance.

The German Government spends an annual €1.4 billion on ODA for education (see graph below). This makes Germany the largest bilateral donor for education.

In relation to total German ODA, education has however lost some significance: Education as a share of total German bilateral ODA has declined continuously since 2009. Germany's bilateral spending on education has remained almost unchanged since 2009, whereas its proportional contribution to total German ODA is declining.

GERMANY'S BILATERAL SPENDING ON EDUCATION HAS REMAINED ALMOST UNCHANGED SINCE 2009, WHEREAS ITS PROPORTIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO TOTAL GERMAN ODA IS ON THE DECLINE

Bilateral German ODA for education

- Imputed costs for students from developing countries studying in Germany (in € million)
- Bilateral ODA for education, excluding imputed student costs (in € million)
- Bilateral ODA for education in % of total bilateral ODA



Source: OECD DAC, Creditor Reporting System (CRS). Gross disbursements in 2014 prices.

GERMANY IS THE LARGEST DONOR FOR EDUCATION, BUT IMPUTED STUDENT COSTS DISTORT THE PICTURE

Bilateral ODA for education, Ø 2012-14 in € million



Source: OECD DAC, Creditor Reporting System (CRS). Gross disbursements in 2014 prices.

Overall high costs for students from developing countries at German universities, so called “imputed student costs” distort the picture of Germany being the largest donor for education. “Imputed students costs” account for more than 50% of German ODA for education. These must be paid by Germany’s federal states and are purely mathematical in nature, i.e. they are no direct funding for the students. If the “imputed student costs” are deducted, Germany is only the third largest bilateral donor for education (see graph above).

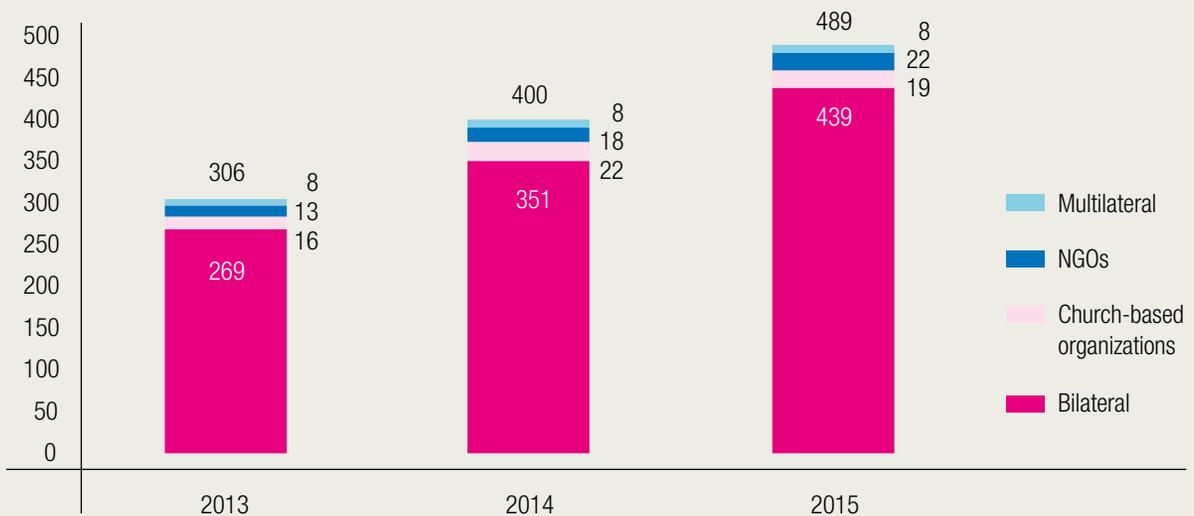
After the federal states, BMZ provides the second largest amount of financing at €350 million per year for education, equivalent to 26% of Germany's total ODA for education. BMZ is responsible for the majority of ODA for educational projects in developing countries. With one-fifth of total spending, the Federal Foreign Office is the third largest investor to education ODA. Its share includes expenses for German educational and cultural institutions (e.g. teaching staff at the German international schools) and scholarships for researchers from developing countries. **In the coming years, BMZ has committed additional funds.** BMZ's spending on ODA – meaning the actual disbursements for education projects – was relatively stable between 2012 and 2014 at €350 million. Between 2013 and 2015, the funds committed by BMZ for new educational programmes have considerably increased and now amount to almost €500 million (see graph below). It should be noted that the funds are not necessarily disbursed in the year in

which they were committed, but in most cases disbursed across a three-year period. Accordingly, these commitments made today allow for identifying emerging trends in spending for future years. The reason for the large rise in funding commitments is mainly attributed to new programmes approved for refugee children in Syria's neighbouring countries: €100 million were allocated to primary education programmes conducted by UNICEF for refugee children from Syria in Lebanon and Jordan in 2015 alone.^x

Funding focuses on bilateral projects. Grants for church-based organisations and NGOs were also on the rise, but remained comparably lower. **Direct funding for multilateral organisations levelled off at €8 million.^x The largest part of this funding (€7 million per year) went to GPE,** which places a focus on girls in its work around primary and secondary education.

BMZ INCREASES COMMITMENTS FOR EDUCATION

BMZ increases commitments for education



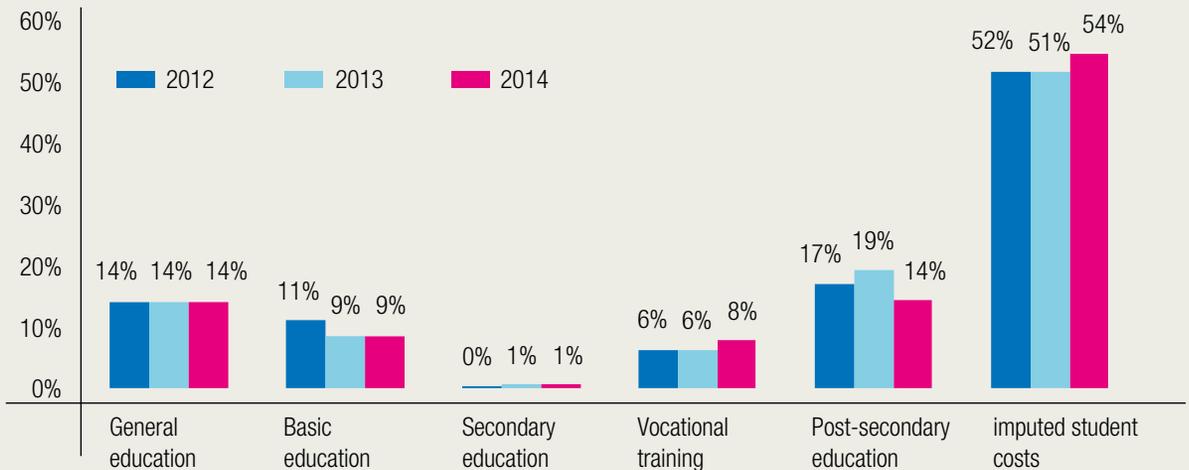
Source: BMZ

^x The funds committed are administered by KfW and therefore included in bilateral commitments.

^x Please note: Not included are commitments for the above-mentioned projects. These are administered by KfW, but implemented by multilateral organisations such as UNICEF.

BASIC EDUCATION ACCOUNTS FOR ONLY 10 PER CENT OF TOTAL EDUCATION SPENDING

Bilateral ODA for education by funding area



Bilateral ODA for education by funding area

Focus is on vocational education; funding for basic education is low

Looking at funding by education level reveals the following: **Only approximately 1/10 of bilateral ODA for education is spent on basic and secondary education**, which is of special importance for the development of girls (see graph above).

In 2014, this translated into €126 million for basic education and €7 million for secondary education. According to UNESCO, an additional US\$ 39 billion would be needed every year in order to provide access to primary and secondary education to all girls and boys.³¹ Measured by Germany's economic power, Germany's contributions are comparatively low. **At present, Germany spends only about one per cent of its total ODA on education.** The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) requests that Germany should spend ten per cent of its ODA funds on basic education. This reveals that core components of the SDG on education – primary and secondary education – receive very little funding overall.

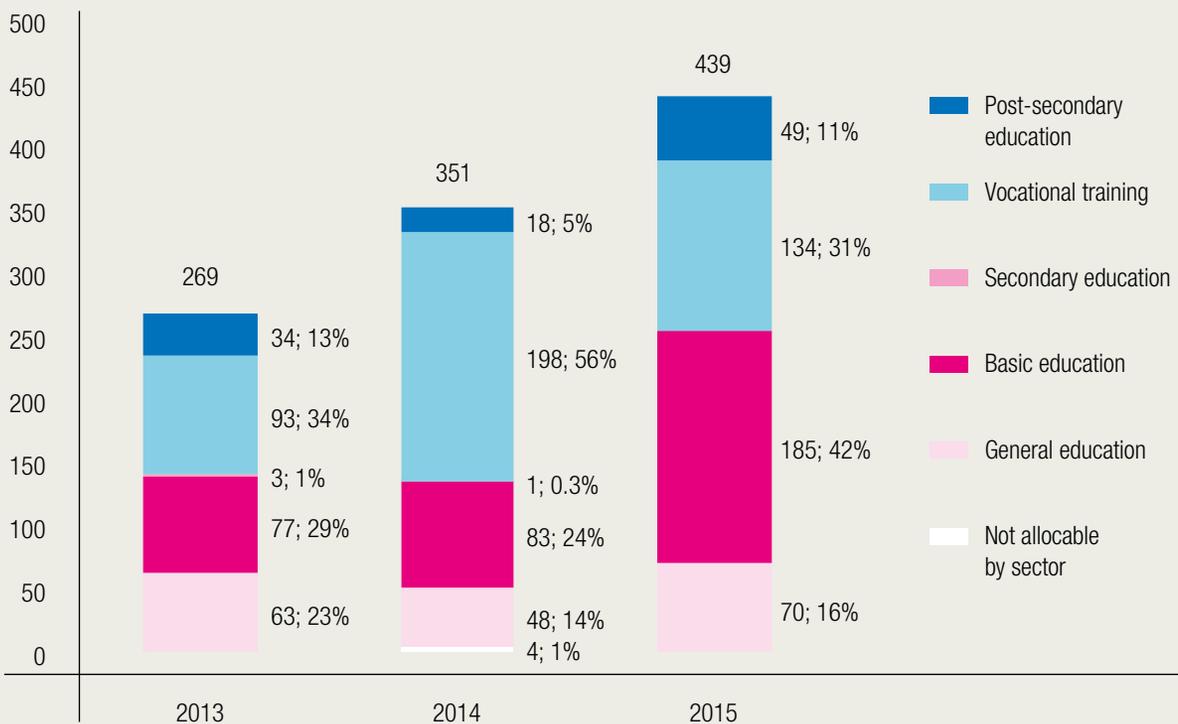
In 2015, bilateral funding for basic education almost doubled compared to the previous year.

This can be explained by the recent launch of primary education programmes for refugees, which is also the reason for the sharp decline in funding commitments for vocational training in 2015, which had doubled in 2014. However, looking at BMZ's commitments for education over a longer period shows that primary education was BMZ's second-largest education priority in 2013 and 2014, after vocational education (see graph below).

Basic education programmes for refugees are important, because children in conflict and crisis situations often cannot go to school. This is why civil society organisations and partnerships such as GCE have requested the German Government to make education a priority of its work in crisis and emergency situations and to provide more funding.³²

THE INCREASE IN COMMITMENTS FOR BASIC EDUCATION IN 2015 IS EXPLAINED BY FUNDING COMMITMENTS TO NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES OF SYRIA

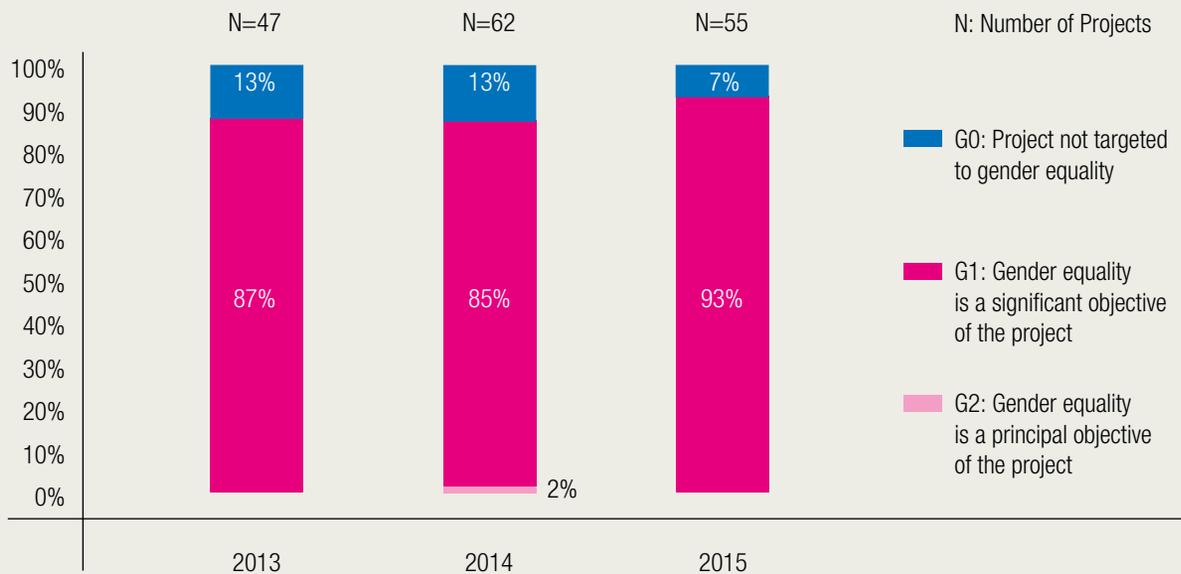
BMZ's bilateral commitments for education by funding area in € million



Source: BMZ

GENDER EQUALITY IS HARDLY EVER THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE IN BMZ'S EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

BMZ educational projects by focus on gender equality



Source: BMZ. The information provided includes only bilateral commitments.

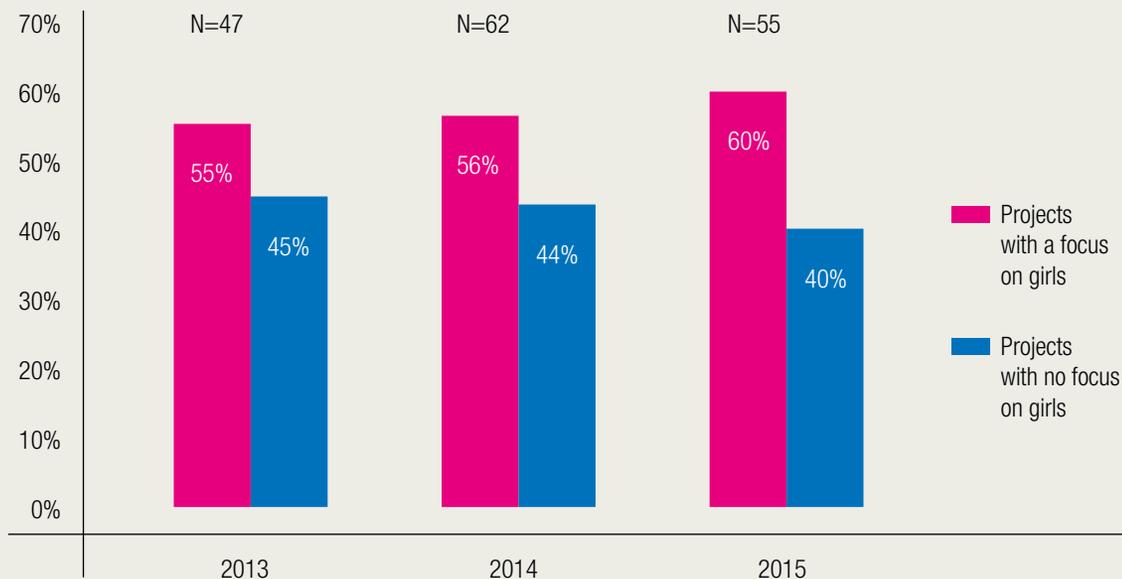
Only a few BMZ-funded projects primarily aim to promote gender equality.

Most BMZ-funded projects address gender equality. For example, two-thirds of BMZ funded projects from 2012 to 2014 made gender equality a significant objective (G1-marker). However, only a small number of projects (12%) had gender equality as their principal objective (G2-marker). This is particularly noticeable with GIZ or KfW projects: Only two per cent of projects had gender equality as the principal objective. In contrast, projects implemented by NGOs and church-based organisations more often had a primary aim of achieving gender equality (between 16% and 18%).

This finding is further supported by the bilateral funding commitments for educational projects between 2013 and 2015. Between 85% and 95% of projects funded have gender equality as a significant objective (see graph above). Only one project is primarily designed to promote equal access to education.

ONLY HALF OF THE PROJECTS HAVE A FOCUS ON GIRLS

BMZ educational projects by focus on girls



Source: Calculated by SEEK Development based on BMZ data. The information provided includes only bilateral commitments.

Very few educational projects embrace a gender-transformative approach

Of all educational projects examined (newly approved by BMZ between 2013 and 2015), between 50–60% were identified as having a focus on girls (see graph above). But this also means: **Girls are out of view in almost half of the educational projects funded by BMZ.** There are hardly any projects which explicitly aim at removing barriers preventing girls' access to education. Key barriers such as violence at schools, early pregnancy or child, early and forced marriage are rarely mentioned in project descriptions.

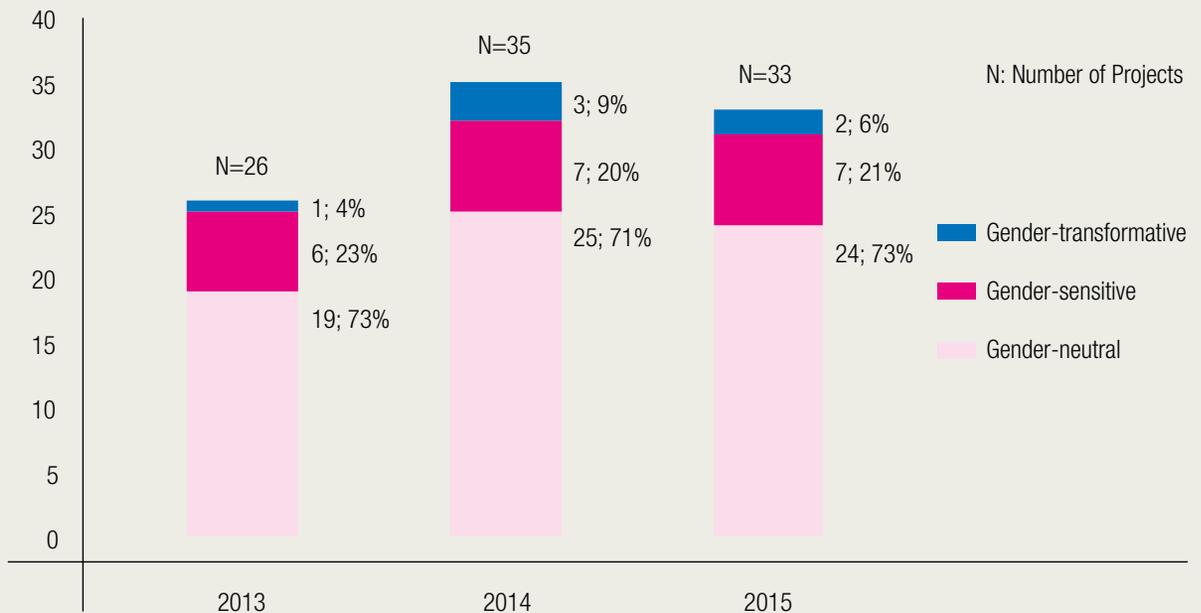
Plan International has developed a comprehensive methodology to define whether and to what extent projects support gender equality and equality of girls. This methodology is based on four categories of projects: gender-blind, gender-neutral, gender-sensitive and gender-transformative. Applying this methodology to projects approved by BMZ between 2013 and 2015 shows the following (see graph on the next page).

- Almost three-quarters of the projects are *gender-neutral*. This means that although unequal access to education is mentioned in the project documents, no specific measures are planned to promote girls and combat inequality and discrimination.
- One-fifth of the projects are *gender-sensitive*. The projects include measures to improve the situation of girls and women and promote gender equality. However, they do not aim at structurally overcoming power inequities.
- Not even one in every ten projects is *gender-transformative*. These projects do not target the root causes of gender-based discrimination and do not promote the social status of girls and women.

This was also reinforced through the interviews. While it was emphasized that in GIZ's and KfW's educational programmes and interventions girls' specific needs are increasingly being taken into account, only a small number of projects aimed at overcoming structural power inequities or barriers to access for girls.^{xi}

LESS THAN 10 PER CENT OF ALL BMZ EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS ARE GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE

BMZ educational projects with a focus on girls by project



Source: Calculated by SEEK Development based on BMZ data. The information provided includes only bilateral commitments.

^{xi} However, there are also projects that reflect such aspects: For example, KfW is supporting a cash transfer programme of Malawi's government targeted at enabling poor parents to send their children, and especially their girls, to school. There are also projects aiming at ensuring a safer school environment for girls, for example, by installing separate toilets for boys and girls in schools. GIZ, with the support of community leaders, is raising parents' awareness to enable access to education for their daughters in some projects.

Only a few projects with a focus on girls are implemented in the poorest countries.

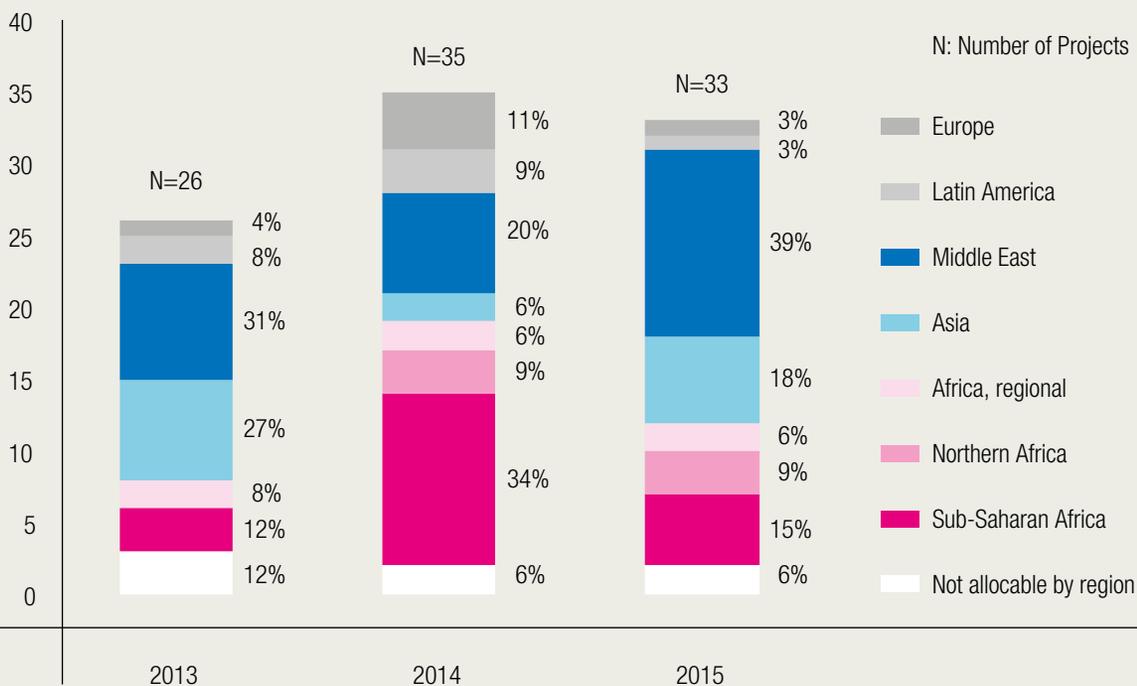
Support for refugees is also reflected in the geographical distribution of the projects. In 2015, almost 40% of all grants were allocated to projects that had a focus on girls and were located in the Middle East (see graph below). Only 15% were allocated to projects in sub-Saharan Africa. Only one-quarter of the projects approved in 2015 were implemented in low-income countries, the poorest countries of the world (see graph on next page). The majority of the projects are implemented in middle-income countries, including Syria's neighbouring countries such as Jordan and Lebanon, which also fall under this category.



Photo: Erin Johnson, Room3

SHARP DECLINE IN PROJECTS IN AFRICA

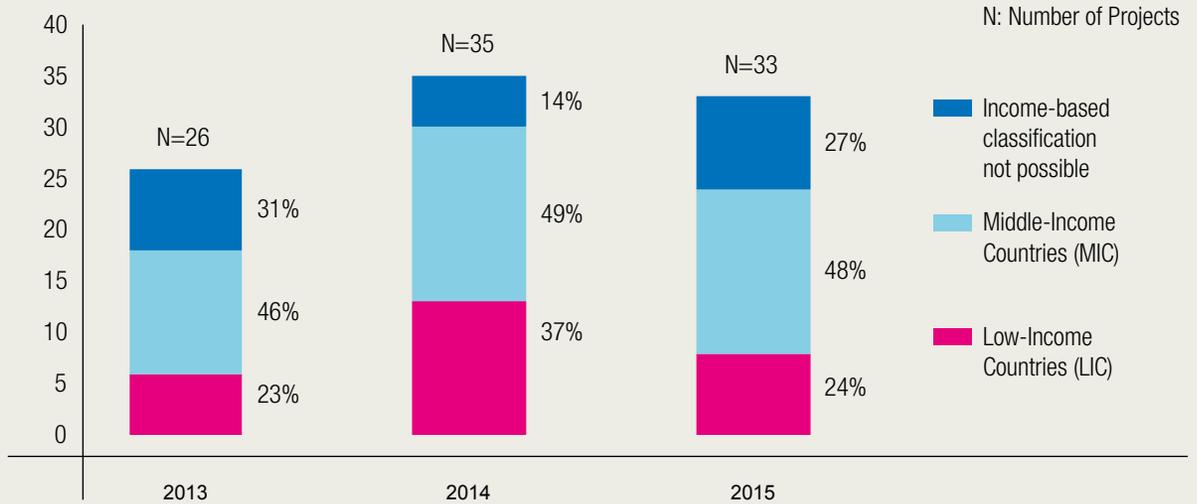
BMZ educational projects with a focus on girls by region



Source: Calculated by SEEK Development based on BMZ data. The information provided includes only bilateral commitments.

ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF PROJECTS WITH A FOCUS ON GIRLS ARE IMPLEMENTED IN THE POOREST COUNTRIES

BMZ educational projects with a focus on girls by income group of the recipient country



Source: Calculated by SEEK Development based on BMZ data. The information provided includes only bilateral commitments.



Photo: Mary Matheson

EARLY MARRIAGE MEANS DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL:

KOUNTE AND BAG'NA FROM TOGO ARE ACTIVELY AGAINST EARLY MARRIAGE

In the heart of Togo, Central Region, Kounte and Bag'na live in the rural area of Tchamba. Their perspectives on life are very different: Kounte unintentionally became pregnant in 2015 at the age of 13. Bag'na is an activist against early marriage and fighting vehemently for girls' right to education. In Togo, this cannot be taken for granted. Even though early marriage is prohibited by law, throughout the country one in every four girls is married under the age of 18. This is often the consequence of unwanted pregnancy and occurs more frequently in rural areas (37%) than in the cities (19%).

From April to December 2015, Plan International implemented a nine-month project on preventing early marriage in the Tchamba region. The project was funded by the Federal Foreign Office.

During this time, 234 local decision-makers and religious leaders were trained in the rights of girls and boys. They learnt about methods of how to prevent gender-based violence



Bag'na completed several trainings and is committed to ensuring that girls receive education.



and were informed about the negative consequences of early marriage. At the beginning of the project, many did not even know that early marriage is illegal, neither were they aware of the health and social consequences associated with young pregnancy and their impact on community development. Since then, they have jointly assumed responsibility to prevent child marriage. For example, before a planned marriage takes place they ask to see the bride's birth certificate. When no certificate is available, two independent witnesses are requested to confirm the age of the bride.

Furthermore, there is now a close cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs. In twenty cases of early pregnancy, the Ministry intervened. The pregnant girls did not have to marry as minors and were allowed to stay with their parents instead of having to move in with the child's father. This is normally against the tradition. After childbirth, some of the girls were able to go back to school.

Just like Kounte: When she became pregnant, she was so desperate that she simply ignored her state. Only when her friends insisted again and again did she tell her parents that she had had sex with a boy. Her father forbade her to go to school for the rest of her pregnancy. But after she had given birth to the child, she was allowed to return. Now she wants to obtain her school qualification.

One problem in the region, before the beginning of the project, was that it was hardly possible to talk about sexuality. Kounte tells us: "At school my teacher told me I was not supposed to play with boys. I did not understand what she was trying to say. Now I think that I am an example for my friends of how not to do it. It is important that the educational campaigns are continued so that my mistake is not repeated by others." Kounte's situation is not easy, but she is aware that a secondary school qualification is her big chance to find a job and live a better life. "At first, my father did not agree. But he also knew that by law I was not allowed to marry. The community worker told him that I was much too young. Things are not easy for me with the baby. I know that I am in a difficult situation now. If one of my friends should happen to be in the same position, I would tell her that she must not give up, that she must fight. And that she will need help from her parents by all means."

The project led to positive effects after just a short time. One such success was the establishment of Child Protection Committees in the communities. It is their mandate to sensitise the people living in the project area to the negative consequences of early marriage. They have successfully prevented many early marriages. If they could not solve a case, they referred it to the community leaders and/or the Ministry of Social Affairs. During the course of the project, 1,149 youth club members received training on the subject of early marriage. They



Kounte became pregnant unintentionally in 2015 at the age of 13.

now cooperate closely with the Child Protection Committees and inform them of planned child weddings and any other children's rights violations. During the project, which lasted only nine months, more than 50 teenage pregnancies, 113 child marriages, two cases of rape and 30 cases of abuse and neglect were brought to the attention of the ten Child Protection Committees. This is a clear sign of the trust that the population has for children and the Child Protection Committees.

Sixteen-year-old Bag'na attends her last year of secondary school. She has participated in various trainings in the course of the project and thinks that many things have changed in her community since its inception: "It has empowered us girls. For example, in Larigny some girls became pregnant. But they told each other that school is the most important thing in life, and after they gave birth, they went back to attend the lessons. That they were able to do so has to do with the project. It has made us girls stronger. For the future, I wish that also the other girls who stay at home with their babies receive school sets so that they can at least learn at home. And that we will continue to be empowered to know our rights and how to claim them."

On the final evaluation of the project, 89% of the adults and 95% of the children interviewed were against early marriage of girls. To ensure sustainability of the project, some of its activities were taken over by a newly launched programme on sexual and reproductive health after the project ended. In this way, the Child Protection Committees and the youth clubs will receive continued support in their fight against early marriage.

The project in which Kounte and Bag'na participated:

"Fight Child Marriage!"

Duration: April 2015 to December 2015

Co-funded by the Federal Foreign Office

The commitment of the German Government at an international level is still not sufficient.

The German Government launched the Economic Empowerment of Women initiative during its G7 presidency in 2015. It aims at increasing the number of girls and women who receive vocational training. The G7 countries have made a clear commitment to increase the number of girls and women in developing countries who receive technical and vocational training by one-third by 2030. This is an important contribution of the German Government to strengthening girls' right to education and to reaching the SDG on education. Apart from this, however, the Federal Government has so far failed to ensure that especially the removal of barriers that prevent girls' access to primary and secondary education is discussed at an international level. Other donor countries, such as Norway, the United States and Japan

are ahead of Germany in this respect. The German Government has little visibility in the international debate on gender equality. At the Women Deliver conference in May 2016, the German Government was represented only during work sessions – even though the conference is the world's foremost event on health, rights and wellbeing of girls and women. During the interviews, there were several requests that the German Government show more commitment in that respect. Also, the Association of German Development Non-Governmental Organisations (VENRO) has requested the German Government to increase its commitment at the international level for early childhood development as well as primary and secondary education for girls.³³ This would be a key contribution from Germany to stepping up the efforts to promote girls in the field of education and thus to achieving the SDGs globally.



Photo: Floor Catshoek

SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT

RECOMMENDATION 1

Expand support for basic and secondary education

- **Expand financial support for basic and secondary education as they are central to the development of girls and are core elements of the SDG on education.** BMZ should take this into account and expand its financial support to these areas. One focus should be on the poorest countries, which are most underfinanced. Specifically, BMZ should provide more bilateral funds and step up its support for multilateral organisations, e.g. by increasing its contribution to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Compared to its economic strength, Germany's contribution to the GPE is modest at €7 million per year. In comparison, Norway's planned contribution in 2017 amounts to approximately US\$ 97 million.
- **Gender Road Map 2017 should focus on primary and secondary education.** In the Gender Action Plan girls' access to primary and secondary education is out of view. Every year a road map is developed that serves to implement the Gender Action Plan. The Gender Road Map 2017 should focus on primary and secondary education.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Expand education programmes in crisis and conflict situations

- **Invest more in programmes in crisis and conflict situations that focus on disadvantaged groups.** Girls are particularly affected by crises and would therefore benefit from such programmes. BMZ could support the new Education Cannot Wait Fund, which was launched in May 2016. This would also give the German Government the opportunity to shape the programmatic approach of the fund.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Make gender equality a main objective of the Education Strategy

- **Establish gender equality as a stand-alone objective.** The current BMZ Education Strategy does not contain a stand-alone objective on gender equality. The next revision of the Education Strategy should make gender equality a stand-alone objective with a specific focus on girls. Overcoming barriers to access should be in focus. These barriers include, in particular, child, early and forced marriage, early pregnancy and gender-based violence at schools and on the way to school. These barriers prevent girls in many countries from exercising their right to education. Furthermore, BMZ should involve civil society organisations in strategy development at an early stage in order to benefit from their expertise in promoting girls and overcoming access barriers.
- **More firmly entrench a human and children's rights-based approach in the Education Strategy.** The Education Strategy makes little reference to a human and children's rights-based approach to education. However, it would be important to consider the right to education in all parts of the strategy to make sure that the specific barriers to access for girls are kept in mind all along the way so that targeted contributions can be made to ensure equal access to education for all girls. This way BMZ can also contribute to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by Germany.
- **Define concrete steps to promoting girls.** The Education Strategy needs an Action Plan with concrete objectives and a time frame for implementation. All objectives should be supported by indicators according to which implementation can be measured. Both targets and indicators should include a focus on girls.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Support more projects that remove barriers to access to education

- **Improve girls' access to education in a targeted way.** Only a very small part of the current educational programmes and interventions makes girls' access to education the highest priority. These interventions and programmes must be significantly increased in quantity and in financial terms so that existing inequities in girls' access to education can be overcome.
- **Establish a target value for gender-transformative projects.** A target value should be established for funding programmes and interventions addressing the root causes of gender-based discrimination and structural power inequities, i.e. programmes that are 'gender-transformative'. This would contribute to securing sufficient funding for cross-sectoral programmes designed to remove barriers, which cannot be overcome by educational initiatives alone.
- **Support programmes designed to raise awareness in communities about the problems that girls face.** NGOs and church-based implementing agencies often aim in their projects at sensitising communities to the problems and barriers facing girls. They seem to be in a particularly good position to implement projects to reduce barriers to access by, for example, sensitising communities, teachers and parents to the issue of child, early and forced marriage or informing them about the available services for sex education.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Strengthen coordination within the German Government

- **Initiate a regular exchange among the ministries.** In view of the strong links between humanitarian aid and development cooperation, BMZ should especially coordinate educational programmes in conflict and crisis situations more closely with the Federal Foreign Office. Furthermore, BMZ should ensure that the German Government puts gender-based discrimination in the field of education higher on the international agenda and speaks with one voice.
- **Involve the BMZ's Education and Gender Divisions more closely in project planning.** The BMZ's Education and Gender Divisions are currently involved in questions related to methodology and technical aspects. However, their capability to exert influence at the project design stage still appears somewhat limited. Both divisions can draw from their technical expertise in the field of girls' education to contribute

to ensuring that more education projects aim at overcoming access barriers for girls, and should for this reason be more closely involved in programme planning.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Improving the quality of data collected on girls

- **Disaggregate data by important categories such as ethnic group and disability.** The BMZ, GIZ and KfW mostly collect data disaggregated by sex and age when designing and implementing education projects. Data collection should be further expanded. In addition, data should be systematically disaggregated also by other important categories such as income, ethnic group, migration status, disability and place of residence in all fields of education. In this way, groups at particular risk of multiple discrimination, such as girls with disabilities, can be more easily identified and better supported. Furthermore, BMZ could, via the GIZ and KfW, increase support to projects that help partner countries collect and use disaggregated data.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Strengthen international commitment

- **Continue the G7 initiative to promote vocational training for girls and women.** Germany's expertise in the field of vocational training has gained wide international recognition. With its G7 initiative to promote vocational training for girls and women, the German Government has made an important contribution to strengthening girls' and women's right to education. The German Government should continue to focus on this initiative in cooperation with the other G7 countries; only in this way can it ensure that the core objective of increasing the number of girls and women in developing countries who receive vocational training by one-third by 2030 is achieved.
- **Enhance the commitment to overcoming barriers to access that prevent girls from attending primary and secondary school.** At the international level, the German Government has so far shown little commitment to remove key barriers for girls. The German Government should particularly concentrate its efforts at removing barriers to girls' access to primary and secondary education, for example, within the framework of Germany's G20 presidency in 2017. This would be an important contribution to ensuring that girls' education receives the attention it needs if the SDGs are to be achieved.

ANNEX

ANNEX 1

List of organisations interviewed

Category	Organisation
Government	BMZ
Implementing agency	GIZ
	KfW Development Bank
Civil society	Christoffel-Blindenmission (Germany)
	Kindernothilfe
	Oxfam (Germany)
	Plan International (Germany)
International organisations/partnerships	German Global Partnership for Education
	German UNICEF committee
German Parliament	Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development (AWZ)

ANNEX 2

Methods for the quantitative analysis of support provided for girls' education

Firstly, OECD data on bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending by the German Government and BMZ between 2012 to 2014 (actual disbursements) was analysed.^{xii} Furthermore, the grants approved by BMZ for programmes and interventions in the field of education from 2013 to 2015 were analysed to determine to what extent they focus on girls. The following should be noted: These commitments cannot be directly compared with the actual ODA disbursements

according to OECD data. Often there are several years between grant approval and disbursement during which the projects are planned together with partners. Furthermore, funds committed are also generally disbursed over several years. BMZ provided a detailed overview of its commitments in the field of education, including project descriptions. The overview included grants approved for bilateral programmes and interventions within the framework of German technical cooperation (GIZ) and financial cooperation (KfW), as well as institutional funding for multilateral organisations and grants for educational projects implemented by non-governmental and church-based organisations.

^{xii} The German Government reports detailed data on development cooperation activities to the "Creditor Reporting System" (CRS) of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD (OECD-DAC).

In order to determine to what extent a project focuses on the promotion of girls, a process consisting of three steps was applied:

STEP 1

Identification of projects with a focus on gender equality:

Firstly, for both ODA spending and the funding commitments all educational projects were analysed to identify their gender equality marker (“G-marker”). The marker identifies whether and to what extent a project has a focus on gender equality. There are three categories:

- *G-marker 2*: Gender equality is the principal objective of the project
- *G-marker 1*: Gender equality is a significant objective of the project
- *G-marker 0*: Gender equality is not a policy objective of the project

STEP 2

Identifying projects with a focus on girls:

The G-marker does provide indications that there is a focus on gender equality. However, it cannot be concluded to what extent a project specifically focuses on promoting girls. To identify interventions with a specific “focus on girls”, a keyword search was performed in the project descriptions for all projects with a G1 or G2-marker (projects that have gender equality as a principal or significant objective).^{xiii}

STEP 3

Identifying projects with a focus on girls with a gender-transformative approach:

To be able to assess more precisely the extent to which programmes and interventions aim at overcoming the root causes of gender-based discrimination in education, the project descriptions that were approved for bilateral funding by BMZ between 2013 and 2015 were scrutinized for their underlying approaches.^{xiv} In so doing, we applied the classification used by Plan International to determine the gender focus of projects.^{xv} It distinguishes between four levels:

- *Gender-blind*: Programmes and interventions that do not consider gender equality aspects and thereby potentially reinforce gender inequalities.
- *Gender-neutral*: Programmes and interventions that discuss questions of gender equality and the differences in both girls’ and/or women’s and boys’ and/or men’s access to education, but do not implement explicit measures to counteract inequalities and discrimination.
- *Gender-sensitive*: Programmes and interventions that improve the situation of girls and women and promote gender equality in a targeted way, but do not aim at overcoming structural causes such as power inequities between persons of different gender and promoting the social status of girls and women.
- *Gender-transformative*: Programmes and interventions that aim to address the causes of gender-based discrimination and overcome power inequities between persons of different genders in order to promote the social status of women and girls and work towards full realisation of the rights of girls and women.

^{xiii} The project descriptions were searched for the following keywords: Girl, Adolescent/-ce, child, young, youth, primary school, elementary school, secondary school, pre-school, nursery, gender-based violence, marriage, female genital mutilation, FGM, early pregnancy, teenage; and in German: Mädchen, Jugend, Kind, jung, Schüler, Grundschule, Kindergarten, geschlechterbasierte Gewalt, Gewalt an Schulen, Heirat, weibliche Genitalverstümmelung, früh, Inklusion, empower, Sekundar.

^{xiv} Due to the amount of time needed for this analytical approach, only BMZ grants were included, i.e. no projects from the OECD database from the years 2012 to 2014 were considered. From BMZ grants, only bilateral grants could be considered, since no project descriptions were available for grants made to NGOs and church-based implementing agencies and the number of corresponding projects among the multilateral grants was very small (5 projects).

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