Sector Initiative PD/SRHR
Population Dynamics / Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

The challenge

Today, the world population accounts for more than 7.3 billion people. By 2050, the number is estimated to rise to 9.7 billion, with the largest growth expected in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. While the demographic trend of population ageing continues unabated worldwide, population dynamics in the partner countries of German development cooperation are often characterised by a youth bulge. Furthermore, increasing migration and urbanisation heavily influence local, regional and global development processes. Our partner countries’ population dynamics constitute both opportunities and challenges for health, education and social protection systems, as well as for a range of other sectors.

German development cooperation’s guiding principle for population dynamics is the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population Dynamics (ICPD) held in Cairo. It formulates clear objectives for a sustainable, human-rights-based and gender-sensitive policy, focusing on individual sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). A key factor towards realising the ICPD agenda is improving maternal and child health. Never before has such progress been made in reducing child mortality (Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4) and in improving maternal health (MDG 5) as in the past 15 years. Yet, some 225 million women still lack access to modern methods of contraception. Every year, 100 million unintended pregnancies occur of which around one-third are terminated, often under unsafe conditions. In 2013, 289,000 women died from pregnancy and birth-related complications with nearly all deaths occurring in developing countries, most of them preventable.

Our approach

In line with the international Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) focuses in particular on promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, children and young people. The key factors of this work involve improving maternal and child health, strengthening the rights of girls and women, and supporting sustainable demographic development in the partner countries. German development cooperation supports comprehensive sexuality education, access to rights-based family planning, training of obstetric health care workers, cooperation with civil society and private actors, and the provision, analysis and use of disaggregated population data.

Our services

The programme strengthens the position of German development cooperation in realising the SDGs in the areas of population dynamics and SRHR both nationally and internationally. In doing so, we also support the implementation of a human rights-based approach and the realisation of the right to health.

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<th>Project name</th>
<th>Population Dynamics, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights</th>
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<td>Commissioned by</td>
<td>German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)</td>
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<td>Project area</td>
<td>Supraregional</td>
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<td>Overall term</td>
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From left to right: A group of male and female midwives in training in Douala, Cameroon, 2014.
Inquisitive pupils of a community school in the rural municipality of Andramibily, Madagascar, 2008.

Photos: Right © GIZ/ Markus Kirchgessner, left © GIZ/ Alexander Schnecke
1. Policy and technical advice to BMZ sectoral division

The sector initiative uses evidence-based policy and technical advice to provide BMZ with reports and strategies for presenting, refining and implementing its development strategies. At the same time it develops innovative instruments and supports technical processes in relevant thematic areas.

A particular focus is given to backstopping of the BMZ Initiative on Rights-based Family Planning and Maternal Health with the aim to leverage the high international political priority of family planning and maternal health for the population in the partner countries. Within the scope of the initiative the monitoring of maternal and child health could be improved and made internationally comparable. Based on innovative and promising approaches in the areas of population dynamics and SRHR as well as latest findings of German development programmes, the sector initiative currently supports BMZ in the further development of the initiative.

As part of the G8 Muskoka Initiative for improving maternal and child health, the German Government provided an additional EUR 400 million for Official Development Assistance (ODA) from 2011 to 2015 and established the BMZ Initiative on Rights-based Family Planning and Maternal Health. The activities will be continued from 2016 until at least 2019 with EUR 100 million per year.

BMZ’s position paper on population dynamics highlighted the significance of the topic for German development cooperation and defined areas of activity for multisectoral mainstreaming. Germany thus became a pioneer among European bilateral donors. To implement the policy guideline, a toolbox is now available that provides both BMZ and the German implementing organisations GIZ and KfW with instruments and practical recommendations for action. In the area of the right to health, we support BMZ with preparing publications and assessing human-rights issues.

2. Technical support and implementation advice

The sector initiative also supports technical cooperation programmes in implementing BMZ positions, proven concepts and new instruments in the areas of population dynamics and SRHR. In collaboration with these programmes, innovative approaches are developed and implemented in partner countries.

Results and lessons learned are evaluated and compiled. Relevant topics include the improvement of services in the area of sexual and reproductive health, cross-sectoral integration of population dynamics approaches and the realisation of the human right to health, which contributes to health system strengthening.

3. Strategic networking with partners (national / international)

The programme actively participates in strategic partnerships in order to shape the international technical discussion on SRHR, population dynamics and the right to health, and to strengthen capacities for implementation. On behalf of BMZ, we work together with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) on the Global Strategy for Maternal and Child Health, advocating for stronger partner coordination, results-based monitoring and accountability. Through the cooperation with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) the sector initiative contributes to strengthening national structures for obstetrics and newborn care.