German Development Cooperation Experiences in Gender and Climate Change

Daniel Johannes Schuett

Gender equality is a human right and an important factor for a country’s economic prosperity and social development. Thus, Germany has committed itself to ensure a gender perspective and the empowerment of women in its development strategies and programmes. With its Action Plan on Gender (GAP) the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) follows a dual track approach. This comprises gender mainstreaming as well as targeted measures through projects in partner countries. As Germany’s major implementing organisation, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) carries out development projects linking climate change and gender as part of its portfolio. The presentation illustrates a number of good practice examples outlining work in countries such as Bangladesh, Morocco, the Mekong Region and the Himalayas. Approaches include working with women’s cooperatives for the conservation of nature while creating sustainable job opportunities, increasing food security with the help of more profitable, sustainable cultivation methods, and improving the sustainability of watershed management through enabling women to train other women. Furthermore, women and girls’ vulnerability to natural disasters is being decreased by improving the communication between women and men and by mainstreaming gender specific needs in early warning systems. The projects highlight that gender and climate change are linked in different ways: on the one hand, women are more vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change. For example they fall victim to natural disasters more often than men. At the other hand, because of their specific knowledge and experience, they can be crucial agents of positive change.