



## SHIFTING POWER

How development and humanitarian NGOs can address the consequences of colonialism in their work



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# INTRODUCTION

Colonialism has had an impact on us in one way or another, and the state of our world can be linked to colonialism. However, it is often challenging for Germans and other Europeans to talk about it due to the privileges they have enjoyed even after the official end of the colonial period. Also, their position towards former colonies and the suffering they have caused are shameful. Nevertheless, discussing colonialism and its effects comprehensively will aid us to learn how best to contribute to questioning power relations and our role in this and in ending colonial continuities.

First, we must recognise that development cooperation and humanitarian aid are closely linked to European colonialism. The European concept of providing 'development aid' to colonised countries once served to legitimise the ruling claims of the colonial powers. After political independence, 'development aid' should also serve to 'make amends' for the suffering caused. Therefore, the examination of one's own role is an important component in development cooperation and humanitarian aid when it comes to understanding and countering the persistence and consequences of colonialism. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in development cooperation and humanitarian aid can play an important role here. They build bridges between people from former colonial powers and the former colonies. Breaking up colonial continuities means initiating structural systemic changes on both sides.

This can only be achieved with a high degree of humility and self-criticism, thus we need to reflect on our own actions and thinking, as well as our working methods and organisational structures.

Without a self-critical attitude, even the best intentions can contribute to continuing dependencies, superiority ideology, racism and structures of oppression, instead of fighting them.



Many NGOs have already begun to question and reform their work, structures and attitudes. We have gathered experience from some of these NGOs on the following pages. The examples should inspire you and invite reflection. They are also intended to illustrate how new paths are being taken in practical work within German NGOs and together with partner organisations. Changes in terms of decolonisation can succeed if spaces are created for critical self-reflection on difficult topics such as power relations, interests, organisational culture, racism and prejudice.

More needs to be said about colonialism and racism in development cooperation and humanitarian aid. It is necessary to develop new approaches for a fairer and more cooperative approach. With the practical examples, we want to demonstrate clearly that there are means and opportunities to take action. The examples presented by some NGOs are neither perfect nor sufficient, but they demonstrate that the consequences and continuities of colonialism can be addressed at different levels of international cooperation.

I wish you an insightful reading!

*Martina Schaub*



# INTRODUCTION

Politicians, the media and the general public have recently increased the emphasis on the consequences of colonialism and imperialism. For example, during the opening of the Humboldt Forum in Berlin in July 2021, a controversial discussion arose with regards to the origin of collected objects, 'stolen objects' and the issue of restitution. The government's decision to return Benin bronzes to Nigeria in the same year marked a turning point in the handling of works of art and other artefacts acquired during the colonial period – often under at least dubious circumstances. Critics see them as symbols of the continued existence of colonial structures; the act of returning is therefore primarily about identity and ownership.

The public became aware of crimes committed against people during the German colonial period in 2021, in particular through an agreement concluded between the Federal Government and the Government of Namibia. Germany thus recognises the mass murder of the Herero and Nama in the former colony of German South West Africa as genocide. However, the descendants of those affected did not feel sufficiently involved in the negotiations and criticised this as a continuation of colonial oppression and marginalisation.

The brutal actions of German colonialists in Cameroon were also discussed. For example, the Hamburg Museum am Rothenbaum – Kulturen und Künste der Welt [Cultures and Arts of the World] presented an exhibition on the royal family of Cameroon, Duala Manga Bell. Its focus was the impact of colonialism on personal lives, families and society, including the murder of King Rudolf Duala Manga Bell. The experimental show 'Hey, Hamburg, do you know Duala Manga Bell?' is expected to be shown in Hamburg until July 2023 and then in Cameroon.

With a decision of the Nobel Committee of the Swedish Academy in 2021, international attention was directed to Germany's colonisation of large parts of East Africa: the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to the author Abdulrazak Gurnah, who was born in Zanzibar and lives in Great Britain, for his 'uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gap between cultures and continents'. Gurnah, who was a professor of English and postcolonial literature until his retirement, addresses pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial identities in his literary work.

Internationally, debates on racism intensified with the Black Lives Matter movement, which originated in the USA. Since then, discussions on structural and institutional racism – and the fact that today's racism bears continuities with colonial racism – have increased in Germany.



**Hey Hamburg, kennst Du Duala Manga Bell?** 14. Apr 21 - 31. Dez 22

**verlängert bis 2. Juli 2023**

**duala.manga.bell** Person des öffentlichen Lebens  
Kommt zur Ausstellung ins #markk!

Abonniert von **markkhamburg, lukulule, princess\_marilyn** und **22 anderen**

Abonnieren Nachricht E-mail

Adolf Ngoso Din Hervé Youmbi Maria Mandessi Bell Karo Akpokiere



These developments and the resulting awareness raising also led to nationwide demands to rename streets named after colonial actors and to create memorial sites in places that were once built in honour of colonialism and racism.

## Global Order

Colonial continuities are evident not only in individual societies, but in the entire world order. How power and wealth are distributed, who is recognised as a nation, and whose voice is heard within the international community is related to the European colonisation of the world since the end of the 15th century.

Formally, the era of colonialism came to an end during the second half of the 20th century, and former colonies became sovereign states – with the exception of individual territories that are still under the rule of France, Great Britain or the USA or have become ‘overseas territories’ of the

former colonial powers. However, the world order that emerged from colonialism has remained intact. Former colonies are characterised by structures that are rooted in colonialism, and, in former colonial powers, the ways of thinking and strategies that first made the distinction between a ‘developed’ and an ‘undeveloped’ part of the world possible are still perpetuated. Racism as the central justification ideology of slavery and colonialism still shapes the societies of the former colonial powers today.

The Christian church also played a role in the emergence of colonial structures; their extensive missionary work was accompanied by colonisation in many parts of the world. They shaped, for example, gender roles and moral ideas and contributed to the suppression and persecution of sexual and gender minorities. European colonial powers following the example of the law in force at the time, introduced criminal laws against homosexuals in numerous countries





Former Mau Mau fighter tells tourists in Kenya about the war for independence

in the Global South. While this has long been decriminalised in the former colonial powers, the homophobic laws in the former colonies still apply today. The Hirschfeld Eddy Foundation, which advocates for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\* and inter\* people (LGBTI\*) in the Global South, therefore calls for ‘a postcolonial practice in development cooperation that also explicitly takes into account the colonial history of the persecution of sexual and gender minorities’ (Factsheet 03, 2021).

Postcolonialism researchers see the reason for colonial continuities in the absence of adequate decolonisation. Because the end of foreign rule is only part of this process, which includes not only political but also legal, economic, social and cultural dimensions. It works on three levels: the former colonies, the former colonial powers and the political and economic world order. This process has not yet been completed.

### **What does decolonisation mean?**

Ugandan human rights activist Sylvia Tamale writes in her book “Decolonisation and Afro-Feminism” (2020, p. 20):

*The prefix ‘de-’ in the terms ‘decolonisation’ and ‘decoloniality’ suggests an active act of reversal. With regard to Africa, the concept is heavily burdened by history, the consequences of which are often irreversible. It concerns the removal of several layers of complex and fixed colonial structures, ideologies, narratives, identities and practices that permeate every aspect of our lives. Most of these systems have become a normality, if not common sense, in our everyday lives, including religion, language, education, clothing, music, media, holidays, housing, sports, etc. We encounter the legacy of colonialism every day [...].*



## Implications for development cooperation

The issue of development cooperation is of particular importance, since it in itself is regarded as a legacy of colonialism. On the one hand, colonial powers tried early on to legitimise their approach by applying the racist argument of bringing 'development' to the subjugated countries (Hodge et al., 2014) or guiding them into 'civilisation' or 'modernity'. On the other hand, 'development aid' was and is understood as a form of reparation for suffering and injustice through colonisation. The example of Germany and Namibia shows that this is still the case today: as a former German colony, Namibia has always received a great deal of official development assistance (ODA), which the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) explicitly justified with the 'special historical responsibility of Germany towards Namibia'. In the course of the 2021 agreement between the governments of both countries, Germany has committed itself to providing compensation payments in the form of development projects. In this case, the state itself establishes a direct link between colonialism and development cooperation.



White safari tourists

The institutional framework in which development cooperation occurs is also characterised by structures that reflect the distribution of power and money between the Global North and the Global South. This is especially true, but not exclusively, if partners from countries with a colonial past are involved in the cooperation. In addition, development cooperation is accused of maintaining or even creating colonial structures. A frequent accusation is that development cooperation only alleviates the symptoms but not the causes of a structurally unjust world order through its project work, thus indirectly contributing to stabilising structural power inequalities. This goes hand in hand with the accusation that donors in the Global North have pursued their own interests in development projects.

## Who wants what kind of development?

Representatives of post-development approaches such as Aram Ziai, Chair of the Department of Development Policy and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Kassel, criticise that the term 'development' already furthers the colonial thinking of domination and superiority. They argue that the concept of development underlying the prevailing North-South development cooperation is based on Western-influenced – some say Eurocentric – ideas and values and includes evaluations of what 'developed' (versus 'undeveloped' or 'underdeveloped') means and in which direction development should proceed. According to this concept, there is a linear development path that all societies should follow that ends with the model of the industrial societies of the Global North.

In 2015, the United Nations attempted to abolish the global division of 'developing countries' and 'developed countries' with the 2030 Agenda; they are therefore all obliged to





report to the international community on the state of implementation of its development goals. After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the then Federal Development Minister Gerd Müller stated that Germany was also a developing country that, among other things, had to consume less and do more for fair trade in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda is, however, also based on many traditional development policy ideas. This can be seen, for example, in the eighth goal, 'Decent work and economic growth', according to which economic growth (measured by gross domestic product) of at least seven percent annually in the 'least developed countries' (according to the classification of the World Bank) is to be pursued, as well as 'higher economic productivity through diversification, technological modernisation and innovation'.

Education is also promoted within the framework of development cooperation in a form that corresponds to the international, Western-influenced system. Similarly, the rule of law and governance follow concepts that have emerged

in the Global North. In his book, 'Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World' (1995), Colombian-born anthropologist Arturo Escobar, who teaches at the University of North Carolina in the USA, calls for a general departure from the conventional Western types of knowledge in order to make way for other types of knowledge and experience.

The fact that the Western model, with lifestyles based on overconsumption, cannot be the benchmark for development is particularly evident in the overriding goal of social, ecological and economic sustainability. The reasoning here is that precisely these lifestyles and the related use of resources are the main cause of many of our current challenges and crises. It is clear that if all people lived according to the Western model, the goal of global sustainability would not be achievable.

As a result, questions such as 'What is the value of local and indigenous knowledge?', 'Who qualifies as an "expert" in which area?' and 'What kind of

development is strived for?' have increasingly been voiced. In current discussions about planetary boundaries and climate protection, post-growth and de-growth or new definitions of growth and prosperity, concepts from the Global South are also being included. Examples include Bhutan's focus on gross national happiness instead of gross domestic product and the Andean concept of Buen Vivir [Good Life], which draws on indigenous traditions and values and is enshrined in the constitutions in Ecuador and Bolivia. Both concepts are alternatives to the capitalist growth model.

### Addressing the Consequences of Colonialism

The system of international development cooperation has long been fundamentally questioned, especially by the Global South. The Mexican post-development pioneer, Gustavo Esteva, for example, has been calling for its abolition since the early 1990s. Rwanda's long-time President Paul Kagame regularly stresses that his country would benefit more with fair trade than with development aid. Zambian-American economist Dambisa Moyo

argues in her bestselling book 'Dead Aid', published in 2009, that development cooperation is part of Africa's problems rather than its solution.

More recently, many civil society organisations and movements in the Global South are advocating for a shift in power within international cooperation. Since 2016, the NGO Global Fund for Community Foundations, headquartered in Johannesburg, has been bringing them together under the hashtag #ShiftThePower. In its 'Manifesto for Change' (2020), the initiative calls for more justice, sustainability and recognition of local resources, among other things.

#### Localisation, Shift the Power, decolonisation – an attempt at conceptual demarcation:

Dylan Mathews (2022): Localisation, decolonising and #ShiftThePower; are we saying the same thing?



Street scene in Lagos, Nigeria



## No White Saviors

No White Saviors, headquartered in Kampala, Uganda, addresses destructive forms of international cooperation with concrete measures. In this, predominantly African women who work in the development sector and have had negative experiences with self-proclaimed 'white saviors' have joined forces.

The writer Teju Cole, to whom the NGO refers, describes 'white saviors' as privileged people, primarily from Europe or North America. They want to help less privileged people, for example in Africa, but without understanding the causes of and correlations to the suffering. Ultimately, they are concerned with their own emotional gratification. In doing so, they ignore principles such as 'do no harm' and do not coordinate with the people involved about everything that concerns them.

No White Saviors has compiled numerous examples of such 'white saviors' actually doing harm – intentionally or unintentionally. Their work focuses on bringing perpetrators to justice in the case of particularly serious crimes. This includes, for example, sexual abuse of minors, provision of medical services without appropriate training or unlawful foreign adoptions. Another focus of the work of the NGO is education and training work oriented towards at both Western and African organisations.

The majority of the efforts within the system aim to improve development cooperation and humanitarian aid rather than abolish it. International cooperation is subject to constant change. New – government and non-government – actors are added; goals are redefined; approaches are questioned.

China, whose influence is growing in the world as well as in international cooperation, plays an important role in this. China links its engagement in the Global South to conditions other than the West and offers an alternative – albeit undemocratic – development model. On the one hand, partner countries welcome that they are not required to be accountable, for example, for compliance with human rights or democratic principles. On the other hand, new dependencies and exploitative conditions arise, so that China is partly perceived as a neocolonial power.

More recently, the importance of South-South cooperation, which includes Chinese cooperation with countries of the Global South, as well as triangular cooperation have increased. More focus is placed on global problems, which can only be solved by a joint global effort, and new relationships beyond donor-recipient roles have emerged.

Ideally, values such as solidarity and anti-discrimination, the self-determination of communities, and the connection between man and nature have come to the fore in Western development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The declared goal is self-determined development in local ownership, whereby development and humanitarian NGOs consider their role to be partnership support without dominating the processes themselves. The discussion

on how all this can be achieved in practical work has gained momentum in recent years – both internationally and in Germany. It deals with topics such as the development of localisation strategies, sovereignty over financial resources, structural changes in organisations, planning programs and projects, or addressing racism and discrimination in one's own organisation and in society.

Many development NGOs have already begun to redirect their actions towards greater partnership and overcoming colonial continuities. Many others have embarked, but are still looking for working solutions. For the first times, others are perhaps concerned about the question of the consequences of colonialism and racism for themselves and their partners in the Global South. With this publication, VENRO wants to point out challenges, but, above all, present examples of association members who can serve as inspiration and role models. Four areas are relevant for this:

- Partnership in project work abroad,
- Structural adjustment in one's own organisation,
- Raising awareness of racism, discrimination and privileges,
- Germany as a developing country.

The project examples presented are based on interviews conducted by the author with representatives of the organisations.

Like any development, that of civil society development cooperation and humanitarian aid aimed towards greater partnership and overcoming colonial continuities is also a process. The aim of the report is to provide food for thought for this process and promote dialogue on the subject among NGOs.



Tea harvest in Western Kenya



## Why there can be no sustainable development without decolonisation

*Interview with Nana Asantewa Afadzinu, Executive Director of the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)*

Nana Asantewa Afadzinu is a Ghanaian lawyer who has been committed to sustainable development and a strong civil society in Africa for more than 20 years. Through her cooperation with many national and international organisations, she has gained experience in a wide range of areas relevant to development policy. Since 2010, she has worked at the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) in Accra, which was founded by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) in 2005 to strengthen civil society in the region. Today she is the Managing Director there.



we need each other as people within our communities and societies, countries need each other in global society. In Akan, a Ghanaian language, there is the saying 'nnifa dware benkung na benkung dware nnifa' which, literally translated, means 'the right hand washes the left and the left the right'. No matter how big the right hand is, it can't wash itself. The same goes for the left hand. In order to be able to clean both hands, they need each other. So it is on earth as well. It thrives through mutual dependencies. Look at nature, the solar system, animal world. Where there is no giving and taking, no interdependencies, there is stagnation and death. Countries also depend on each other. The challenge begins where, instead of interdependence, one-sided dependence and exploitation prevail. Where support does not lead to the strengthening of the other, but to permanent dependence and thus weakening, and where support does not arise from mutual respect, trust and appreciation.

**From an African perspective, you place a critical focus on development cooperation. Do you see development cooperation as fundamentally problematic or does the approach to the cooperation need to be changed?**

Development cooperation is not wrong; on the contrary, it should be pursued further. However, cooperation requires respect and trust – just as in any relationship. Where this does not exist, no real cooperation can succeed. That is why the answer to your question is: it is about the 'how', the manner of the cooperation.

**How important is the role of development cooperation? Shouldn't international cooperation focus more on things like fair trade relations, access to markets, fair taxation, etc.?**

Development cooperation is important. Just as

The issues raised in your question should all be included in development cooperation. This should have one goal: to strengthen each other and make it possible for each other to flourish. The above-mentioned aspects are very important to establishing equality and justice in trade relations. However, development cooperation cannot solely concern itself with trade, it must involve all aspects of human exchange.

**In your experience, what role does colonialism play in relations between organisations from the Global North and South?** Colonialism has strongly shaped the structure of development cooperation and how it is carried out. It is



Open mine with workers in Botswana

decisive in who makes the decisions. It determines who is considered competent and who is an expert. It determines whose resources are considered important and valued. It determines who sets the standards for success and assesses whether these goals are achieved. It is decisive for the definition of risks and who is considered most at risk.

In the logic of the colonial order, Africa and actors in the Global South must be pitied and rescued and are not considered competent and trustworthy. The resources of colonised people are predominantly exploited without recognising their value or – where this does happen – by their value to the local actors.

*'The right hand  
washes the left hand  
and the left the right'*

I would like to say that this has changed. But it hasn't. It has received a civilian coat of paint, but, essentially, it has remained the same. I would like to refer here to the publication 'Time to Decolonise Aid' by Peace Direct (2021) and to the diagram on structural racism in it. It is one of the best I have seen so far and shows clearly how structural racism affects the development sector. One major cause of this is colonialism and neocolonialism. Colonialism has not ended. Maybe in name, but not in practice. The system of development cooperation continues to have similar values.

**Are all injustices and inequalities based on the colonial past – or are new dependencies created currently, for example, by patents for vaccines against COVID-19 which are not released by industrialised countries?** Not all injustices and inequalities stem from the colonial past. But we cannot exclude ourselves from the fact that the attitudes and values that come from this time, have set the framework of the development cooperation

and continue to determine the established practice. The example of patents in the Covid-19 pandemic may seem new because it is a response to a current development. But, to a great extent, this reaction corresponds to the course of events. It is just a new scenario.

**What changes do you believe need to be made to the international cooperation system, and what can individual NGOs do?**

If we are serious about sustainable development, we must first admit that the system is flawed and needs to be improved. What can be done:

- Self-examination and self-reflection (check for racism, patriarchal power relations, othering, recognise privileges and use them for change).
- Trigger a system change to fix the weaknesses – based on standards, frameworks, control, administration, culture.
- Let yourself be guided by values – less transactional, more transformative.
- Participating partners: governments, the private sector, civil society, especially at the local level, where positive changes should be made possible.
- Be prepared to learn.
- Build trust, respect others.
- Support co-creation.
- Practice Ubuntu: 'I am because you are'.
- Appreciate what the Global South has to offer. Money is important, but so are other resources that partners bring.

- Localisation does not simply mean putting a geographical stamp on a project, programme or organisation, but rather on the ethos of an organisation and on the fact that its interventions originate from local actors and are tailored to them.
- Leaders and other actors from the Global South (with me speaking primarily for Africa) should be more appreciative of what we have and do more to expand and protect it. We must work together in solidarity and improve the way we use our own resources.

If we do not work towards these things, we will never achieve the sustainable development we seek. To do so, we must all make a common effort, in partnership, with trust and respect, in equality and recognition of others and the resources that everyone brings. It is not wrong to have pity, but let's have more empathy and the will to truly strengthen others.





**Everyone wants development to start with the people it affects. Why is it so hard to achieve this?**

Because the best intentions do not lead to the goal if they are not backed by appropriate action, including the necessary human, material and financial resources.

Some intentions require political will, and if decision-makers say all the right things, but in practice do nothing that could limit their privileges and interests, good intentions will not be implemented.

**WACSI also works with partners from the Global North. How do your experiences relate to colonial continuities?**

WACSI has experience with various partners from the Global North. To a large extent, we have had good relationships and a few not-so-good ones. But that cannot hide the fact that we all work in a flawed system. As a result, WACSI faces the same challenges as other organisations in the Global South.



**RINGO**

The RINGO Project is an initiative that aims to change the system of international NGOs (international non-governmental organisations, INGO) so that it can better respond to the challenges of today. The aim is to create a fairer, more balanced and more effective civil society worldwide. It was launched by Rights CoLab, a team of international experts dedicated to strengthening human rights through collaboration across sectors such as civil society, technology, business and finance. WACSI is one of RINGO's partner organisations, and Nana Asantewa Afadzinu acts as a consultant with the project.

We had very respectful relationships, in which the partners – despite the inequality created in the system – strived for equal status and recognised the values that WACSI brought to the partnership, as well as our integrity and skills. But there were also others who showed a condescending attitude and set their standards for evaluation and benchmarking, without including WACSI or taking the context into account. Some engaged in exploitative behaviour or even launched attempts at micromanagement. Some did not acknowledge the contribution of WACSI. These are a few of the negative experiences, but, for many organisations from the Global South, this is nothing extraordinary. This is seen in studies such as 'Voices from the South' (2021), which WACSI conducted as part of the RINGO Project and for which more than 600 organisations working in the Global South were surveyed.

**One of the main obstacles to true partnership is seen in the fact that money from the Global North is not arriving in the Global South.**





Coffee beans in East Africa

**How can this obstacle be overcome?**

It will be overcome when money is no longer seen as the only valuable resource. It will also be overcome when money flows from all directions in all directions – from the Global North to the Global South, from the Global South to the Global North, from South to South and from North to North. This is one of the reasons why it is essential to invest in and strengthen philanthropic culture and infrastructure in the Global South.

**How do you see the future of development cooperation and the possible role of NGOs in the Global North?**

I am glad that for some time now the focus has been on the need to change the current structure of the development system for the better, shift the power and ensure that power and resources are distributed more equitably within the system. There is new courage to tackle structural racism, and it is

heart-warming to see all the efforts being made to first diagnose the problem, then find the solution and finally implement it.

Noteworthy in this are movements such as 'Shift the Power', projects such as 'Reimagining the INGO (RINGO)', the work of networks such as ICSC, Partos, Bond and others, as well as the path to strategic change that organisations such as Oxfam have taken. Ground-breaking research by, for example, Peace Direct and Adeso is encouraging. For me, they present a certain light at the end of the tunnel, which has seemed very long and quite dark for a long time. We are now hopefully much, much closer to the end of this tunnel.

*'We are now hopefully  
much, much closer to  
the end of this tunnel'*



# PARTNERSHIP IN PROJECT WORK ABROAD





Partnership or cooperation on equal footing between partners from the Global North and Global South is one of the principles of current civil society development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Everyone strives for local ownership; no one wants to be perceived as patronising. The power should not be concentrated in the North. The image of donors on the one hand and relief recipients on the other has long been outdated: both are regarded as equal partners - at least in theory.

In practice, development cooperation and humanitarian aid are mainly financed by the Global North. Money is power, and overcoming the unequal distribution of power, which accompanies the unequal distribution of money, is a challenge for both sides. Tahirou Sy, who coordinates the anti-racist change process at the ecumenical peace organisation EIRENE (see page 42), formulates the problem as follows: 'Our local partner organisations rely on external resources. This makes establishing equal footing difficult. They do what we want to obtain money. Or what they think we want'.

An important initial step is to make transparent who has which decision-making power and how

this is distributed in the cooperation. One way to counteract a one-sided financial dependence is to establish economic independence in partner organisations. For example, the GLS Zukunftstiftung Entwicklung is working to ensure that each of its partner organisations has a commercial branch through which they can finance their own activities (see page 21). In areas where money flows from North to South, the conditions under which it flows are very important. Organisations such as Oxfam and medica mondiale, for example, strive to ensure that as few funds as possible are earmarked.

Another difficulty is that German development cooperation and humanitarian aid follow their own rationale and – changing – goals. Guidelines are defined and programmes are set up – and not developed in true partnership. Political priorities such as climate protection or better education for girls mean that a significant amount of money is available for projects that 'fit' here. In addition, only partners who respect certain values, such as human rights, and are not corrupt, are eligible for cooperation.

EIRENE has changed its project formulation process: previously, it often began with a BMZ programme, and partner organisations interested



Health Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa in October 2021

in being a part of it were sought accordingly. Today, on the other hand, the proposals are made by the partner organisations and EIRENE examines how the financing can succeed. Development organisations that are fully or partially donation-based and thus work beyond state requirements have significantly greater freedoms. For GLS Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklung, for example, the possibility of long-term cooperation with partner organisations regardless of project durations is important – this only enables genuine partnership (see page 21).

Oxfam Germany is increasingly focusing its work on political influences – in Germany as well as in partner countries and at the international level. The aim is to expand the scope of action of the partner organisations in the Global South and thus to supplement their commitment. This orientation also influences the selection of cooperation partners: Oxfam is increasingly striving for long-term strategic partnerships with initiatives, networks, trade unions and youth associations that are working towards political transformation (see page 24).

An essential factor for meeting on equal ground is the communication between partners in the Global North and South. In this context, perspective from external sources, in addition to internal reflection and further education, can also be helpful. In her social science thesis, Katarina

Mozetič (2008) analysed the language in communication between the organisation, Indienenhilfe e.V. Herrsching, and a long-standing Indian partner organisation. 'We lacked time for a detailed evaluation of the results', says the Chairwoman of Indienenhilfe e.V. Herrsching, Elisabeth Kreuz, 'but such a thing can of course be helpful for one's own work'.

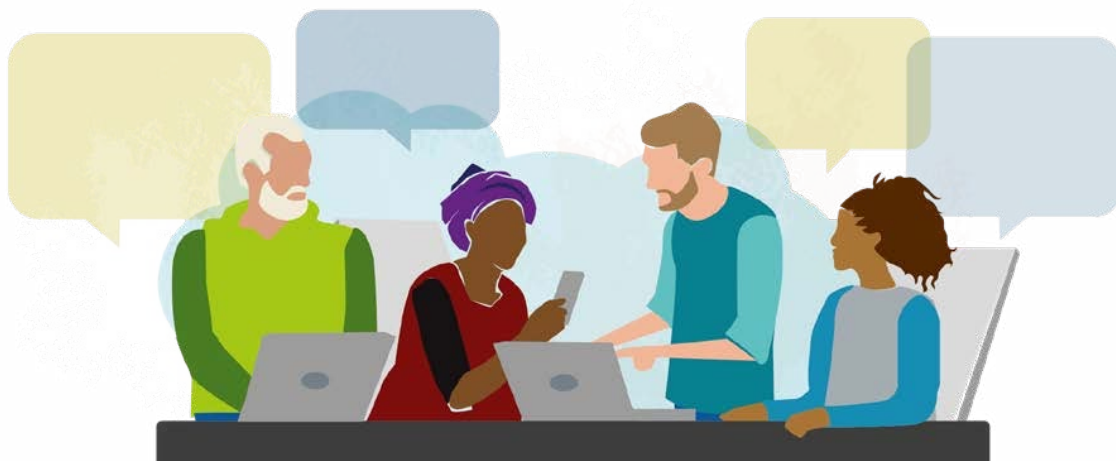
Kreuz regards long-term cooperation and constant exchange as critical requirements for partnership. For example, the joint training on the topic of inclusion, in which representatives of all partner organisations, the Indian advisory team representing the Indienenhilfe organisation in Calcutta and employees from Germany participated. 'It was a great experience to do something together on one level', says Kreuz. The partnership, however, goes beyond the relationship with the partner organisations. 'In the local projects, we would like more participation from the target groups', says Kreuz. 'Certain measures are simply planned; not everything starts bottom up'. In this area, she still sees a need for action, although there is a lack of capacity for this in her own organisation.

#### Recommendations:

BOND (2022): ↘ Becoming locally led as an anti-racist practice

Partos (2022): ↘ Dream Paper: Shift the Power.

Partos (2021): ↘ Power Awareness Tool.





# GLS ZUKUNFTSSTIFTUNG ENTWICKLUNG: LONG-TERM COOPERATION AND REDUCTION OF DEPENDENCIES

*GLS Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklung relies on long-term cooperation with partners in the Global South, beyond the durations of projects. The focus is on the establishment of institutions and the independence of the partner organisations. It is also important to the foundation that the work of the partner organisations always has an entrepreneurial component – in order to achieve social and environmental as well as economic sustainability. In an interview, Annette Massmann, Director of GLS Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklung, reported on her work with partner organisations.*

'We work exclusively bottom-up; our project partners are always the actors of the event, and the groundwork is always the existing material and immaterial resources', Annette Massmann, Director of the GLS Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklung, explains the approach. On this basis, a joint decision will be made as to the kind of support the partner organisation needs to achieve its goals. This can be a microcredit, consulting and support in the implementation of a project or networking with other actors in the Global South.

GLS Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklung, which belongs to the GLS Group and has been involved in development cooperation since 1980, is a relatively small organisation with eleven employees in Germany. Nevertheless, it works with 77 partner organisations in 18 countries – with some already

for a quarter of a century. Massmann, who has been there since 2005, says: 'I personally know all the partners'. At the beginning of a cooperation, an on-site visit and the development of a common goal perspective always take place.

Many partner organisations are social enterprises that are committed to improving the living conditions in their communities, – for example, in the context of the integral development of informal settlements by strengthening organic farming or women's rights. 'In order to achieve sustainability, long-term cooperation is necessary,' Massmann is convinced. 'We deliberately decided against the projected logic of traditional development cooperation with fixed terms'.

The foundation collects donations in Germany for every project it supports. Funds from the BMZ are also included, but they only account for about one-sixth of the total budget. 'For this, the partner organisations must be institutionalised to such an extent that they can work in the same direction on a large scale over several years', explains Massmann. But many are not. 'Specifically in crisis and poverty regions, we need flexibility. We cannot always

*"We mainly do South-South exchanges - it's about finding the next best suitable solution»*

Annette Massmann, Director of GLS Zukunftsstiftung

guarantee the quiet planning that the BMZ wants to see, which I can absolutely understand'. In addition to the sustainability of the work, the foundation's focus would be on the freedoms and independence of the partner organisations, usually made possible by private donors.

The cooperation between GLS Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklung and its partner organisations is based on mutual trust combined with auditing and an assessment of the use of funds. Above all, however, it is about being able to assess the skills and commitment of the partner organisations. Thus, it is necessary that the partners know each other well. The foundation views its role primarily in providing advice and support to the partner organisations and moderating change. Therefore, it does not send any specialists or volunteers from Germany, but facilitates networking between the partner organisations.

'We mainly do South-South exchanges', says Massmann. 'It's about finding the next best suitable solution'. In practice, this means, for example, that the foundation networks various partner organisations in East Africa, all of which aim to preserve common goods. While the partner organisations bring their specific experiences and approaches, the foundation organises contact with

solicitors and finances necessary trips of representatives from the partner organisations. 'This sometimes slows down processes, but increases participation and ownership', emphasises Massmann.

The Director explains why she considers the economic component to be fundamental in the example of a women's organisation in Nepal. Initially, it operated as a women's rights organisation for traditional lobbying. Then it became clear that it needed a women's home to provide a safe space to victims of domestic violence. According to Massmann, this raised the question: 'How can this be financed without being permanently dependent on the mercy of a lender?' The solution was a production centre for textiles, which the women's organisation set up with the help of GLS Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklung. The proceeds go to the women's shelter. The foundation has supported 'in all areas: developing a business model, buying equipment, obtaining product certification for the international market, building sales and more'. In good times, the textiles were able to finance 80 percent of the operating costs of the women's shelter until the earthquake in Nepal destroyed three of the production sites in 2015 and the corona pandemic brought tourism to a standstill in 2020. 'Our partner organisation suffers from this, which is why it continues to rely on our support'.



Agriculture and farming in Kenya

Such setbacks make it clear to Massmann how important long-term cooperation is. The economic consolidation and independent institutionalisation of partner organisations are important objectives. That is why NGOs should, in her opinion, always have a commercial branch 'so that they can become

entrepreneurial players in their context'. In state development cooperation, Massmann would like to see debate on whether institution building should be eligible for funding. She herself considers this to be very important.

### The most critical points from the perspective of a partner

The Rural Initiatives Development Programme (RIDEP) in Kenya is a civil society organisation with which GLS Zukunftstiftung Entwicklung has a long history of cooperation. It is committed to improving food security, reducing poverty and providing more environmental protection. The Director, Zachary Makanya, was the director of the umbrella organisation, Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM), which organises organic small-scale farmers in Kenya, until 2020 and is therefore also very familiar with the foundation's other cooperations in Kenya. He particularly appreciates the foundation's work for the following reasons:

#### GLS Zukunftstiftung Entwicklung

- supports value-based development that focuses, for example, on organic farming, preserving ecosystems and ensuring that future generations will also be able to farm and produce healthy food;
- supports organisations that use financial resources in an open, transparent and accountable manner;
- supports organisations with stable leadership and employees with integrity;
- requests that their partner organisations clearly record their objectives and their approach to attainment, whereby the foundation assists them wherever necessary;

- attaches importance to the fact that affected communities are included in the project design. This puts target groups in the best position to influence the actions that organisations want to take to reach them;
- helps their partners achieve independence in terms of sustainability and income generation in order to support their own development;
- works towards reducing dependency in target groups;
- supports organisations over a long period of time;
- supports organisations that are willing to promote new, young actors;
- emphasises that the majority of funding directly benefits the target groups;
- works to ensure that their partners reduce their dependence on external funding over time and develop strategies to increase funding from their own resources;
- supports cooperation and networking among development partners and farmers in order to learn from each other, spread best practice examples and thus increase the impact of their work.



# OXFAM GERMANY: STRENGTHENING POLITICAL INFLUENCE

*For Oxfam Germany, the premise is that decolonial program work cannot avoid dealing with the systemic causes of global inequality. The organisation is part of the international Oxfam network, which – according to its own understanding – originated against the background of colonial structures and is still partly characterised by a privileged white view. For this reason, Oxfam is deeply concerned with its responsibility to overcome these structures within the organisation. The aim is to exert greater influence on political decisions in Germany, in the partner countries and at the international level. Frank Falkenburg, Director of Civil Society Programmes at Oxfam Germany, explains this in an interview.*

'The living conditions in the countries of the Global South are closely related to the policies that are determined by industrialised countries and international institutions', says Frank Falkenburg, Director of Civil Society Programme at Oxfam Germany. 'That is why we want to expand our impact from the local to the global level and thus also counter the colonial continuities in development cooperation'.

Oxfam Germany is increasingly placing political influence at the centre of its global programme work. 'We strive for long-term strategic partnerships with local partner organisations whose political interests we share', Falkenburg explains. In this context, Oxfam is increasing its cooperation with initiatives, networks, trade unions and youth associations that are working towards a political

transformation. The focus is on issues such as access to land, public services or the rights of marginalised groups.

It is important to take the structural and process levels into account – such as legislation, the creation of awareness and the formation of networks across national borders. 'In addition to financial support, our local partner organisations see, above all, added value in the expansion of their own sphere of influence through their cooperation with us', says Falkenburg, 'for example, along value chains in the political sphere, vis-à-vis corporations or in networking with other civil society actors'. The combination of political campaigning in Germany with the global programme level ideally leads to broadening the scope of action of the partner organisations and thus complements their commitment.

*'Extending the scope of action of  
the partner organisations'*

Frank Falkenburg, Director of Civil Society Programme

An expansion of the levels of impact is already taking place, as the example of the labour rights of plantation workers in South Africa and India shows. Within the framework of the programme work,



Vineyard in South Africa

Oxfam Germany supports harvesters on tea plantations in the Indian state of Assam and farm workers on wine plantations in two South African provinces to advocate individually and collectively for their rights, fair working conditions and a decent livelihood. At the local level, these are organised in networks and thus improve their negotiating position with respect to the plantation owners.

On a national, regional and international level, Oxfam, together with partner organisations, works through advocacy and lobbying to ensure that labour and human rights are respected and protected by the state. Addressees are governments and regulatory authorities as well as private sector actors such as supermarkets and intermediaries, who have a strong influence on value chains as well as the working conditions on the plantations through pricing. The mobilisation of the population is another lever.

Oxfam's partner organisations in South Africa and India working on the same issues have been

cooperating since a meeting included in the evaluation of the Oxfam campaign, Make Fruit Fair, in Berlin in June 2018. A planning workshop in South Africa in the beginning of 2019, in which representatives of Oxfam India and Oxfam South Africa also participated, defined the cooperation goals at a global level. 'Overall, the South-South exchange has generated valuable insights both in terms of the direct enforcement of labour rights on the plantations and the influence on regional and global value chains', reports Falkenburg. These were useful for further work on the ground: for example, encouraging farm workers and in dealing with trade unions, which perceive problematic roles for local actors at the political level both in India and in South Africa.

The Director of Civil Society Programmes sees further advantages of international cooperation in solidarity as well as in the synergies of the analysis. At the same time, this could better influence state and non-state actors in international value chains in terms of labour rights and conditions on

plantations. Overall, coordinated international lobbying and campaigning for compliance with labour and human rights in the harvesting sector in the Global South are more effective.

The coordination of the program in both countries is supported by a local Oxfam employee in India, who was selected in consultation with the partner organisations involved in the programme. According to Falkenburg, it was a conscious decision not to settle this position in Germany, but in one of the partner countries – this was also a contribution to the dismantling of colonial structures. A programme component in South Africa concerning land rights also involves decolonial work: the farm workers are empowered to participate actively in government processes to ensure that they are considered in the demand for land reform and structural improvements to their living conditions are made.

As part of the cooperation with partner organisations in South Africa and India, Oxfam Germany is also dealing with its own role: 'From the outset, we have set ourselves the goal of addressing the power relations, because, inevitably, there are power imbalances between the different levels of cooperation, in particular due to the financing aspects', says Falkenburg. The asymmetry caused by the transfer of funds and the associated accountability towards third-party funding providers was hardly resolved. 'These things, however, need to be increasingly addressed in the cooperations from our side, especially as Oxfam, in cooperation with local partner organisations, bears the claim to act in a participatory and solidarity manner'.

Ideally, the financial aspects would not be at the centre of cooperation, but the common or complementary coordinated levels of impact. However, as Falkenburg states, it remains a challenge to keep an eye on the possible synergies between North and South when it comes to political demands. Often, the respective national dynamics dominated. 'At first glance, the main demand from our South African partner organisations to supply sufficient toilets for women at the wine plantations appears banal in the debate on the supply chain law at the German and European level. Nevertheless, it is essential for safe working conditions for local workers'.

For Oxfam, the focus of its work on feminist principles is central to overcoming colonial power relations. In addition, it is important to question the concept of development, especially in dealing with one's own role as an international NGO. 'In contrast to the common understanding of "development", Oxfam has set itself the goal of promoting economic action that is no longer oriented towards a maximum increase in profits, but towards the common good and is based on the preservation of natural resources', explains Falkenburg. Thus, global challenges such as the climate crisis could also be better met – away from the North-South transfer, towards a systemic global approach.

#### **Recommendations:**

VENRO (2021) ↗ [We Intervene – Advocacy Work in Civil Society Development Cooperation](#)



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# STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN ORGANISATIONS



Partnership and equality must be structured in order to function sustainably and reliably. NGOs anchor the co-determination of partners and target groups in their committees and processes, shift decision-making power to the Global South and promote diversity in their own ranks. Some organisations are creating entirely new structures for greater co-determination, for example, terre des hommes with the Delegates' Conference introduced in 2003 which is responsible for strategic orientation (see page 30). Or they anchor the lively co-determining management binding in their statutes, as KOLPING INTERNATIONAL did as a result of an association development process (see page 33).

Oxfam International caused a stir when the association to which Oxfam Germany also belongs moved its headquarters from Oxford to Nairobi in 2018. Managing Director Winnie Byanyima founded this step with the aim of relocating the leadership centre and giving more weight to votes from the South in decisions.

At the ecumenical peace organization EIRENE, an anti-racist change process started in 2017 (see page 42) led to concrete structural changes. In the meantime, about a quarter of the team in the Neuwied office are of non-German origin, while, in the past, non-Germans were at most a few individuals. This was achieved with a personnel policy focusing on cultural and racial awareness. EIRENE actively promoted proposals for women and men with a migration history and reduced hurdles. For example, employees whose mother tongue is not German can use a translation service for written reports.

In an interim report on the anti-racist change process, Process Coordinator Tahirou Sy writes:

*This increase, which affects almost all departments, corresponds to the international character and work of EIRENE. According to the feedback received, this not only gave EIRENE employees in the regions the opportunity to identify with EIRENE, but also gave colleagues in the office the opportunity to acquire more in-depth knowledge of different regions. The work atmosphere in the teams has greatly improved both in the quality of the relationships with the partners and in the design of the work instruments.*

The Board of EIRENE also strives to promote diversity among its members and improve its dialogue with the partner organisations. To this end, it has set up a work group and is putting forth great effort to advance the topic. A new introduction is, for example, a direct dialogue between partner organisations and the Executive Board, which gives the partner organisations the right and the opportunity to present their goals and needs at the highest level themselves.

The selection process in organisations that send specialists to the Global South is a decisive success factor. Some organisations are increasingly involving partner organisations in this process. EIRENE is also an example of this. As a result of the anti-racist process, the partner organisations are now participating on equal footing – from the tender to the review of the applications and shortlist creation to the selection interviews and, finally, the selection itself. This also applies to coordination offices. 'We now have to accept that partner organisations reject specialists or coordinators – both situations occur', says Sy. However, the balance of power has greatly improved relations with partner organisations as a whole. 'This also applies to the relationship between specialists and partner organisations'.

An important lever for the desired – and often demanded by actors in the Global South – power shift is the sovereignty over the use of the funding that is needed by partners in the South and made available by partners in the North. Involved parties see the power gap caused by financial inequality as the greatest obstacle to genuine partnership. However, there are also solutions for this such as the instrument of Core Funding, a non-purpose-bound basic financing that medica mondiale has introduced (see page 36). Moreover, Oxfam Germany will not donate funds to the partner countries in the future. 'This process has recently begun', says Falkenburg.

Funding is one aspect of the much-discussed topic of localisation, which aims to strengthen local actors and shift the weight of the development cooperation and humanitarian aid system as a whole to the local level. However, if localisation goes so far that NGOs create locally registered 'offshoots' that also raise funds at the local level, this sometimes encounters fierce criticism from organised civil society, which sees it as a competition. In 2020, dozens of organisations from all over the world turned to international NGOs in an open letter stating: 'If you are serious about the shift in power, then reduce your footprint and your brand and use your fundraising machinery to help grassroots organisations create structures for their own fundraising and secure their work on a permanent basis'.





# TERRE DES HOMMES: DELEGATES' CONFERENCE CREATES BINDING CO-DETERMINATION

*'Since 2003, the Delegates' Conference has been responsible for the strategic orientation of terre des hommes (tdh), which includes elected representatives from the partner organisations as well as the members and youth groups and employees of the federal office. The General Meeting of the association as a decision-making body is bound by the resolutions of the Delegates' Conference. 'The co-determination process costs money and a significant amount of effort. But it is worth it – after all, it is about the essence of our work', says Jens Kunischewski, the Latin America expert at tdh, who supports the preparation for the upcoming Delegates' Conference 2023 from the office.*

Founded in 1967, the international children's charity has been striving for 'cooperation instead of help' since the 1970s and has not sent experts to the Global South since 1975, but it works exclusively with local organisations. 'The decolonisation issues that were raised at the time were heavily debated at terre des hommes', Kunischewski reports. This has been reflected in practical co-determination since the 1980s: a partner conference in Southeast Asia started this by calling for changes in the project criteria. This was followed by a women's conference, which advocated the introduction of women's advancement. The General Meeting accepted both demands – 'out of goodwill', says Kunischewski, 'nothing was formalized'.

The next step taken by terre des hommes was partner conferences at the regional level. This helped coordinate framework plans for the work in the respective region. The decision nonetheless remained in the hands of the General Meeting. 'In 1998, at a framework planning seminar, the proposal was made to introduce a committee that could co-decide', explains Kunischewski. An

impulse that came strongly from the partners, but was also supported by the volunteers at terre des hommes. The Delegates' Conference thus created a body which was launched in 2000 and has been meeting every five years since 2003. Their decisions define the strategic direction of tdh's programme work for five years, the programmatic objectives, fields of experimentation, and international publicity and participation campaigns.

Preparation for the next edition of the Delegates' Conference 2023 has already started, this time two years earlier. 'We have expanded the co-determination process', says Kunischewski. Rather than strongly working towards the conference as before, terre des hommes is now placing more emphasis on the process. In the first phase, which takes place completely online, the seminars are open to all interested parties from the various groups. 'This promotes the exchange of information and forms a common knowledge base,' states Kunischewski. This 'exploration phase' is about looking at current objectives and topics. External content inputs are also obtained.

In the second step, regional conferences set the priorities. Their findings go to the Standing Committee, which prepares the Delegates' Conference. This panel consists of representatives of all groups (honorary, full-time, partner organisations, youth networks) who were previously delegates and were elected to the Standing Committee at the last Delegates' Conference. 'They ensure continuity between the conferences and contact between the groups', Kunischewski says. He himself provides content and logistical support from the Osnabrück office.

The global coronavirus pandemic, which triggered a digitalisation spurt, unexpectedly provided a positive impetus for co-determination. Since then, terre des hommes has experienced many exchanges about online conferences and other digital tools, both within its own structures and partner organisations. 'In general, the participation of partner organisations, young people and colleagues from the regional offices in global debates, webinars, etc. has increased significantly', reports Kunischewski.

This also applies to the preparation for the next Delegates' Conference. Thanks to the digital possibilities, the elected delegates from all groups and regions now hold discussions together earlier in the planning process and are therefore more involved in the development of proposals for the transregional orientation. 'This means that the Standing Committee no longer has as much responsibility', explains Kunischewski. The innovations also brought about some improvements in the established co-determination processes at terre des hommes:

### *'From global soup kitchen to common table'*

Jens Kunischewski, Latin America Consultant

**1 The strong regional separation:** so far, the majority of the debates – in general and in particular in preparation for the Delegates' Conference – have taken place on the regional partner platforms in Latin America, Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Germany as well as in work groups of volunteers and in the terre des hommes office. The exchange between the regions usually only transpired at the Delegates' Conference. Previously, the Standing Committee was the only organisational entity that collected inputs from all regions and tried to cluster them.

**2 The focus on delegates:** the global co-determination process was limited to delegates. Although they had the responsibility to discuss proposals within their regional groups and reflect on the decisions afterwards. However, non-delegates could not directly participate in the decision-making process.

The biggest challenge, according to Kunschewski, is to unite the interests of the various groups. He calls this the 'quadrature of the circle'. There will be no disputes either. For example, the representatives of the partner organisations put the focus on content-related issues, while the fundraising team attaches importance to the fact that the goals can be marketed well. In the end, however, there are decisions that are binding for the entire organisation. The current terre des hommes campaign, 'My Planet, My Rights' (see box on page XXX), which was initiated by the youth representative, is an example of this. The General Meeting is bound by the resolutions; there is only a financing reservation in the event that the Delegates' Conference decide on something that is not affordable. 'The General Meeting has passed competences on to the Delegates' Conference', Kunschewski summarises.

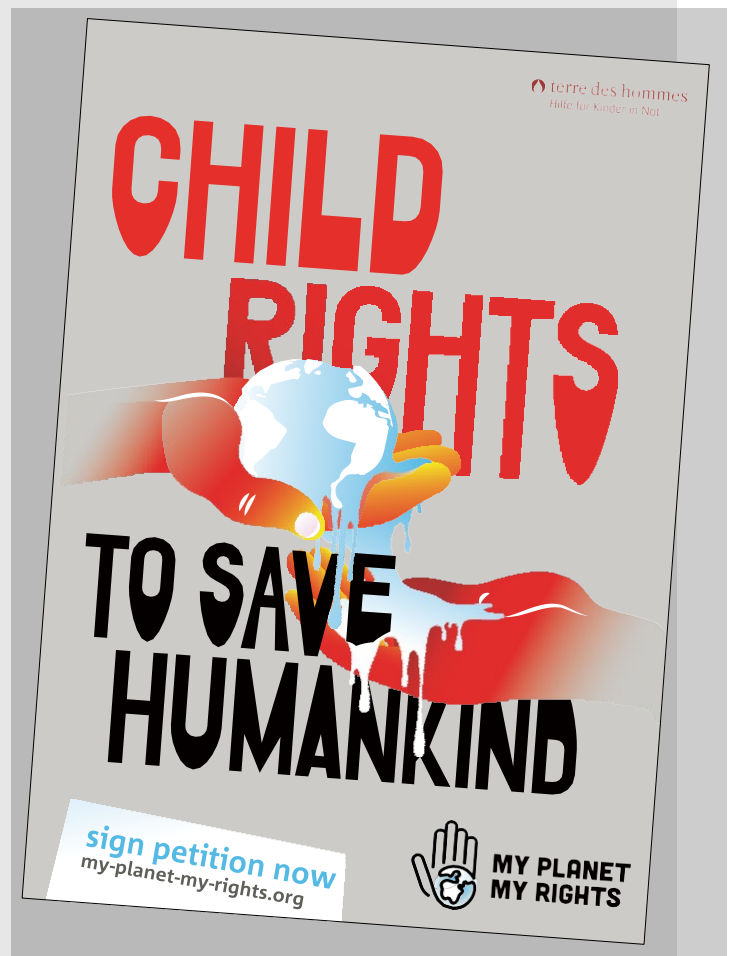
Kunschewski established that the co-determination process is worth the great effort involved, among

other things, that it concerns the essence of development cooperation: cooperation between North and South. It's about 'moving from a global soup kitchen to a common table'. But he also admits that terre des hommes is still far from being on equal footing with the partners. The association is headquartered in Germany, important positions such as the presidium and board of directors are filled with Germans, and only a few colleagues from the Global South work in the office. 'This will also be an issue at the next Delegates' Conference', says Kunischewski.

Even in this committee, more than half of the members come from Germany: the ratio is 23 to 19. 'The imbalance of power is far from being reduced', notes Kunischewski, and there is also resistance within terre des hommes and debates about how far to shift the weight. The basic problem remains in that money flows from North to South and there is a donor-recipient relationship with the partner organisations. 'Nevertheless, we are making progress: the process is established in the organisation – and the learning factor is immense'.

### My Planet, My Rights

The current international campaign at terre des hommes, My Planet, My Rights, emerged from the co-determination process. It addresses the right of children and young people to a healthy environment. Part of the campaign is a petition for the recognition of the right to a healthy environment for humans and children, which appeals to the governments of all countries, the UN Secretary General and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The impetus for the campaign came from the tdh youth representatives. However, the idea did not initially meet with unanimous approval, as, for example, some employees considered the topic difficult to convey. In the end, however, the youth representatives were able to convince the majority, and the Delegates' Conference voted for the campaign theme. 'Even if not all critics have been convinced, everyone is now fully engaged at the international level, working towards a common goal and supporting the campaign', says Jens Kunischewski from terre des hommes.





# KOLPING INTERNATIONAL: EQUAL RIGHTS CREATED IN THE ASSOCIATION STRUCTURE

*KOLPING INTERNATIONAL has always seen itself as a 'global family' in which all members work together in partnership and solidarity. As a result of an association development process that began in 2012, the association has also anchored the spirit of partnership more strongly in the international decision-making committees. The local project promoters are now even more closely involved in the relevant bodies with their seat and voice. 'In doing so, we have brought what we have already experienced into the structures', says General Secretary Markus Demele.*

KOLPING INTERNATIONAL is a member association. This means that everyone who participates there is part of the association or – as Demele puts it – part of the family. While other development NGOs work together with partner organisations in the Global South, the local Kolping families in the Catholic Social Association are personally working at the grassroots level: associations of like-minded people, self-help groups that address a wide variety of social topics. Together, they aim 'to promote the common good in the Christian sense and participate in the constant renewal and humanisation of society', as stated in the KOLPING INTERNATIONAL General Statute.

Project applications, including budget planning, are developed on site; the respective regional consultants in Germany advise. 'The partner has full ownership,' Demele emphasises. 'We only advise and support, particularly in the development of indicators and the planning process'. From Germany, the funding applications are then submitted to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). As members of the association, all Kolping brothers and sisters (as per the self-description) are automatically involved in the democratic decision-making structures. At every level, from the individual Kolping family

via the diocesan association, the regional and national association through to the international association based in Cologne, the General Meeting is the highest decision-making body. The number of votes granted to an association at the next higher level through posting delegates depends on its size. Countries with many members, such as Germany, India or Tanzania, therefore have more weight than countries with smaller associations.

'With us, decisions are no longer dominated by Europeans', says Demele. The membership structure is changing massively internationally: of the approximately 400,000 members, which are organised in about 9,000 Kolping families in 60 countries, more than half still live in Germany, but the weight continues to shift towards the Global South. 'The Catholic Church in Germany is experiencing a dramatic loss of members and our society is aging steadily. Although our association is losing significantly less members than the church, the number of members is decreasing in Europe', explains Demele. However, in other parts of the world, the situation is very different: 'In

*'The whole community is  
going to be African'*

Markus Demele, General Secretary



General Assembly of KOLPING INTERNATIONAL 2017 in Lima

Africa, for example, we are growing dynamically in an incredible way. This will make the whole association more African – and will certainly change as a result'.

Another change is due to the fact that formerly economically weak countries are emerging from poverty and they are becoming donors themselves as in, for example, the case in Eastern Europe. 'In the past, many Eastern European countries were project partners in development cooperation; now they are entering into partnership work with the Global South', says Demele. 'This creates a new, broader form of North-South cooperation'.

However, although partnership and equal co-determination were already established in the Kolping structures, the association saw a need for internal change. In 2012, an association development process started that was initially content-oriented and, for example, took a fresh look at the common values and revised the structures in the second step. One result of this process is the General Statute adopted in 2017. 'The structure of the General Meetings had been like this before. But anyone who wanted to run, for example, for the General Presidency, the then supreme governing body of the association,

should ideally speak some German. This was indirectly expected', says Demele. However, such hurdles have been dismantled, among other things, by increased work with translators and interpreters.

For the Board of Directors, one of the five elected members should come from Africa, Asia, Europe, America and the strongest national association in terms of members each. The other three members of the Board of Directors, General President, General Secretary and Managing Directors, are all Europeans. However, if it was up to Demele, this should not always be the case. 'I hope that my successor does not come from Germany', he says. He sees obstacles to this outside of Kolping: in the German bureaucracy, the 'not always simple regulations' of development cooperation, the funding guidelines of the donors and more.

At Kolping International, money usually flows from the Global North to the Global South. But Demele also has a counterexample ready: 'After the flood disaster in the Ahr Valley in the summer of 2021, members of the National Association of Burundi – without exception, small farmers –

collected the incredible sum of 1,600 euros for those affected and transferred it to Kolping Trier'. This shows the self-understanding of partnership, in which colonial thinking has no place.

Collaboration is facilitated by the close connections across continents, which have often grown over decades, and the collective canon of values of the Kolping members. 'We see ourselves as a world family, which is not to be underestimated', says Demele. There is no 'above' and 'below', but real togetherness. 'I think we are more closely connected with our target groups than other development organisations because we have been on a common path for decades. Songs and prayers connect us – and the individual, Adolph Kolping'. Overcoming cultural boundaries and reducing resentment would take time, which would be better in long-term partner relationships.

However, a conflict-free atmosphere is not possible in the large global Kolping family. As an example of a controversial topic, Demele cites homosexuality. According to the General Statute, anyone who is committed to the goals and values of KOLPING INTERNATIONAL can become a member. This includes homosexual people. On

the one hand, there was sometimes vehement opposition, for example, from Brazil and some African countries', reports Demele. However, comprehensive anti-discrimination was essential and ultimately found a majority among the international delegates. 'Among other things, our General President, who, as successor to Adolph Kolping and a Catholic priest, has great authority among the members, has campaigned for this'.

Even if the Kolping structures are unique, Demele believes, many other organisations could similarly organise themselves in a grassroots democratic manner. 'One has to be aware that it takes a lot of time and money'. Every six years, Kolping flies approximately 250 people from all over the world to Cologne for the General Assembly, the highest decision-making body of the association. Many interpreters are needed for the translation of all contributions to the meeting. Every two years, the General Council meets to advise and decide on all matters not reserved for the General Assembly. It has approximately 40 members. 'In 2021, we held a digital General Council for the first time because of the coronavirus pandemic', says Demele. However, this could not be a substitute for analogue meetings in the long term, because: 'Personal exchange is extremely important for Kolping members – this is the only way to achieve long-term partnership-based exchanges'.



General Assembly of KOLPING INTERNATIONAL 2017 in Lima



# MEDICA MONDIALE: CORE FUNDING FOR FINANCIAL AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY

*As a rule, financial support in development cooperation is earmarked for specific purposes and projects. For partner organisations in the Global South, this means that they are not very flexible in the use of funds, can hardly make independent decisions about them and can rarely react spontaneously to unforeseeable necessities. Since the women's rights organization medica mondiale regards this as disadvantageous, it provides its partner organisations, wherever possible, with Core Funding, a non-project-related basic financing. This enables ongoing costs to be covered, the organisation to be further developed and autonomous decisions to be made without the need for prior approval. The instrument has also proven itself in crises and emergencies.*

'Solidarity and activism can be poorly depicted in a logic of action', Daniela Gierschmann, who has long been responsible for programme and organisational development at medica mondiale, describes the problem. However, this is an important part of the work of their partner organisations in the Global South. They often react to situations that were not foreseeable in a way that could not be planned in advance. It takes time and money that was not intended for this.

Caroline Bowah, the former director of medica Liberia, a local NGO and partner organisation of medica mondiale, gives an example: a young women's rights activist was massively threatened in Liberia and had to be brought to and cared for in a safe place. 'Thanks to Core Funding from medica mondiale, we were able to respond to this', says Bowah. 'With other forms of financing, this would have hardly been possible or perhaps not possible in time'. The coronavirus pandemic also posed

challenges for which medica Liberia needed flexible means. Other partner organisations of medica mondiale repeatedly use Core Funding to provide rapid and solidarity-based help for threatened activists or to strategically supplement their programme work.

Another typical case is financing gaps between project periods. Often, promised follow-up financing takes longer than planned. In this case, Core Funding is used to finance the work in the transitional period without restrictions. 'Something like this happens repeatedly, including delays in the payout', explains Bowah. 'In such situations, there is a risk that we will have to suspend offers for our target group or lose employees we have trained and invested heavily in'.

According to Gierschmann, the reasons for funding gaps and delays often lie on the side of donors and NGOs in the North. 'In this case, it is our responsibility to ensure stability. If possible, we try to use Core Funding to support the planning security of our partners, for example, with interim salary financing.'

*'A lot can happen in three years'*

Caroline Bowah, former director of medica Liberia



Incidentally, this is not only important in times of crisis: 'In order to be able to act sustainably, an organisation not only needs budgets for project implementation, but also free resources for business management and organisational development – but not every donor likes to finance these,' says Gierschmann. It is also important to develop stable management, retain good employees and rent appropriate premises. 'Core Funding also helps with this'. Bowah also indicates the area of self- and employee care: 'In our work, we are often confronted with violence and great suffering. This can be very stressful and lead to the retraumatization of employees who have been personally affected by violence'. In order to counter this and be able to take responsibility for one's own people as an organisation, an independent budget is helpful.

Overall, from the point of view of medica mondiale and medica Liberia, Core Funding is a proven and important instrument for strengthening local

ownership and autonomy, local agenda and effectiveness (see box p. 38) – which is why medica mondiale is trying to systematically expand Core Funding as an instrument in partner work. 'We focus on the needs of our partners. However, the scope of Core Funding is also highly dependent on our own access to funds that are not earmarked for specific purposes and projects', explains Gierschmann. These are currently mainly donations from their own fundraising, which account for about half of the budget of the feminist organization based in Cologne. However, a large portion of the donations also goes to the co-financing of public projects, which often have to be co-financed from their own resources.

Core Funding has long been one of medica mondiale's partner instruments, but the circumstances and the amount involved are usually negotiated individually based on the case. For example, medica Liberia has been receiving Core Funding for more than ten years. 'In order to expand, structure, finance and make the instrument even more predictable for our partners in the future, we are developing a concept for Core Funding', explains Gierschmann.

Gierschmann and Bowah want the state donors to develop additional holistic funding strategies in the future that will cede more financial ownership to the local partners. 'However, as NGOs, we can also exert our own influence, especially on our own funding and partner policy', emphasises Gierschmann. She sees opportunities for this, for example, in the inclusion of Core Funding in funding guidelines and strategies, in the targeted provision of a percentage of the acquired donations or in the forwarding of management costs to local partners. Concerted negotiations with their own donors so that they recognise or introduce Core Funding as an instrument could also contribute to this. 'Many organizations in the North are wondering how they can address power imbalances. Core Funding can be a means to achieve this', says Gierschmann.

Bowah also attaches importance to the fact that donors acknowledge the unpredictability of events and developments. 'A lot can happen in three years', she says. 'It is impossible to always deliver according to contract'. And one more thing is important to her for cooperation: trust. 'Core Funding can shift power. But it depends on how it is granted, whether there is trust between the partners and whether they really listen to each other'. Thus, every instrument is only as good as the partnership in which it comes into play.



### Why Core Funding? The most important points according to medica mondiale

Advantages of predictable, ideally multi-year Core Funding for partner organisations in the Global South:

- Securing commitment beyond project durations through planning security and a long-term perspective
- Creation of institutional security by covering financing gaps and administrative costs and the possibility of creating reserves
- Enabling flexibility to be able to respond quickly in crisis situations
- Enabling activist, solid and collective action, which usually cannot be represented under 'eligible expenses' or impact logics

Contribution of Core Funding for a solidary, power-sensitive and partnership-based cooperation:

- Reduction of dependencies and power asymmetry through independent use of resources
- Creation of security and stability for employees
- Strengthening local priorities and agenda
- Strengthening local ownership for self-determined institutional development
- Reduction of competition among NGOs for funding as a barrier to cooperation
- Redistribution as a contribution to global justice



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# RAISING AWARENESS OF RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND PRIVILEGES



Colonial continuities, structural racism and inequalities of all kinds do not stop with development and humanitarian NGOs. In the past, however, this was not always perceived internally. Marianne Pötter-Jantzen from Misereor has observed that there is a certain 'colour blindness' within NGOs. 'White people in particular who work for non-governmental organisations or volunteer for One World often do not want to see skin colours', she writes in a post for Forum Weltkirche (2021). They imagined themselves in an environment in which skin colour played no role and racism had been overcome.

Pötter-Jantzen, who is also involved in the Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland [Initiative of Black People in Germany] association, considers this to be wrong: the privileges of white people would be hidden with this – quite well-intended – attitude and discrimination negated. German development and humanitarian NGOs are predominantly 'white' – although around a quarter of the people in Germany have what is considered a migration background. That, according to Pötter-Jantzen, raises the fundamental question: 'what can

we, as an organisation, contribute to a real change if our own structure precisely reflects the hierarchized inequality based on ethnic attribution?'

German NGOs are increasingly posing this question. First of all, it is a matter of consciously making structural, but also personal assumptions that favour phenomena such as racism, inequality or power gaps, and recognising them. Approaches such as critical whiteness and intersectionality help to understand and reflect on the social dimensions of whiteness and the interplay of different forms of discrimination categories. Anti-racism training programmes impart knowledge about the origins and manifestations of racism and enable confrontation with one's own attitudes and behaviour, and empowerment seminars strengthen self-determination.

Often, the discussion of the topic begins in a small circle, for example among the employees of the NGO headquarters, and then expands to other



levels such as the Executive Board or voluntary employees or, in a further step, involves partners in the Global South. In particular, Colonial continuities and racism play a role in the North-South exchange between specialists and volunteers. The posting of – sometimes very young – people who may have the best intentions, but enter into these new relationships largely without reflection, can have undesirable consequences: from the cementation of power asymmetries and racist thought patterns to the exploitation of children.

*Who do we want to be?  
How do we want to work?  
What do we want to change?'*

Various associations, initiatives and individual consultants accompany change processes, carry out training programmes and seminars, or provide materials. Research areas such as postcolonial studies or intersectionality research provide background knowledge. In addition, NGOs are keen to learn from the experiences of other organisations, such as EIRENE in connection with its anti-racist change process (see page 42).

Within organisations, fundamental questions play a decisive role in changes such as: Who do we want to be? How do we want to work? What do we want to change? Occupation with these questions can lead to a new formulation of values and guidelines – or to a new consideration of established or implicitly underlying values in daily interaction.

In her contribution to Forum Weltkirche, Pötter-Jantzen writes: 'A goal should be to strive for a diverse staff or membership. This requires concrete concepts and an inclusive culture that recognises different identities and benefits from their perspectives'. The Nord-Süd-Brücken foundation is an organisation that has set this goal for itself and has taken the path towards achieving it (see page 44).

### Recommendations:

Autor\*innenkollektiv Rassismuskritischer Leitfaden (2015): [↘ Rassismuskritischer Leitfaden](#) [Racism Awareness Guide].

Arndt, Susan (2004): [↘ Kolonialismus, Rassismus und Sprache: Kritische Betrachtungen der deutschen Afrikaterminologie, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung](#). Colonialism, Racism and Language: Critical Considerations of German African Minology, Federal Agency for Civic Education].

BOND (2021): [↘ Taking British politics and colonialism out of our language](#).

BOND (2022): [↘ Becoming locally led as an anti-racist practice](#).



# EIRENE: CHANGE IN PERSONAL ATTITUDES

*Raising employees' awareness of issues such as racism and discrimination, privileges and non-violent communication has led to numerous changes within the ecumenical peace organisation EIRENE – both personally and structurally. The partner organisations in the Global South are also involved in the process on a voluntary basis.*

Several years ago, EIRENE stated that entitlement and reality do not always fit together within one's own organisation. The aim is to live the self-defined values of freedom of expression, respect for the dignity of all people and respect for our One World. With the founding of EIRENE in 1959, the organisation already established that racism had no place within it. In reality, however, it turned out that not everyone lived these values, that racist attitudes and discriminatory actions occurred. 'It was unintentional and unconscious', says Tahirou Sy, the coordinator of the anti-racist change process at EIRENE. 'The reason was a lack of awareness'.

Whether EIRENE should focus on anti-racism was controversially discussed by the Board and among the employees. In 2015, however, the route was taken. Three motives were decisive for this:

- 1** The desire to act more authentically, i.e. to also pursue the claim of non-violence at work in anti-racist structures and constellations,
- 2** To accept criticism from partner organisations that point to the unequal balance of power in the cooperation and
- 3** To strengthen efforts in thinking about non-violence and racism awareness together.

An external advisory team, which came from KARFI – Black Education Collective for Empowerment and Anti-Racist Education and glocal, Association for Power Critical Education and Counselling, helped with the inventory and conducted workshops and training programmes at home and abroad. Their results served as a foundation for the process. In 2017, the General Assembly decided on the anti-racist change process with a five-year mandate and 200,000 euros in funding. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the process was delayed and is expected to continue until 2024.

The EIRENE office in Neuwied, where between 30 and 35 people work, now has an anti-discrimination and anti-racism team. Its two members, elected by the employees, organise workshops on various topics, partly with external moderation. 'The content depends on the needs', explains the coordinator, Sy. 'Employees have the opportunity to speak to the two employees confidentially if they notice something'. In addition, an external ombudsman is available, who also offers a safe space to talk about discrimination and other similar experiences.

According to Sy, a lot has already changed internally as a result of the workshops. Initially, there was resistance to these – always voluntary – offers. 'Some colleagues were anxious about talking openly about racism. Or never saw the need for it.



However, the experience was very good; the participants had positive impressions of the entire programme. Also, everybody, with the exception of those who were sick or on vacation, participated. It is important to note that racism is usually unconscious.

Personal changes are harder to detect than structural ones, Sy admits. But he clearly perceives differences in attitudes compared to the time before the anti-racist change process began. 'Communication, for example, has become much more relaxed', he says. 'As a black man, people now ask me questions about Africa without fear or doubts about whether its okay to ask or not'.

EIRENE is also important for the regionalisation of the process. In the Global South, it involves two domains: the offices and professionals of EIRENE and the partner organisations. For the latter, the offer is voluntary. 'Not all partners are interested in participating – they prefer to implement projects or receive funding or see the anti-racist change process as an internal EIRENE process',

### *'Racism is often unconscious'.*

Tahirou Sy, Coordinator of the Anti-Racist Change Process

Sy explains. Others joined because they thought EIRENE expected that. He still sees a need at this point, because the process is internal, but has to deal directly with the attitude towards the partners and with the cooperation: 'We want to talk to them about what racism is, how it can show itself and how it can disrupt the work'.

As an organisation, EIRENE wants to be a role model, but does not want to put pressure on partners. One approach, according to Sy, could be to convince other international donor organisations to also tackle anti-racist change processes and work together in the Global South. Within Germany, he has noticed a trend in addressing such topics for some time. 'Many organisations have already approached us, and we are happy to share our experiences with the anti-racist change process'.

# STIFTUNG NORD-SÜD-BRÜCKEN: INTERNAL DIVERSITY PROCESS LAUNCHED

*In 2019, the Stiftung Nord-Süd-Brücken [North-South Bridges foundation] used its 25th anniversary as an opportunity not only to look back on what has been achieved, but also to set the course for the future. One of the objectives defined in this context is to become more diverse in one's own ranks. 'In our work, we deal with discrimination and inequality on a daily basis. As a foundation, we have a global responsibility and a role model function. It's time to make a change internally', says Carolin Fliegner. She is the coordinator for development cooperation projects at the Nord-Süd-Brücken foundation and has been the diversity commissioner since 2021. As further justification to devote herself to the topic, she cites the fact that the foundation was able to observe in its work with migrant-diasporic associations in East Germany that they encounter many barriers in their development policy work: 'Their participation in society should be promoted'.*

In the beginning, the question arose as to which definitions of diversity are decisive for the foundation. 'Among other things, we orientated ourselves on the contributions of Tsepo Bollwinkels and, as an East German foundation, also included the East-West reference for us', explains Fliegner. Nord-Süd-Brücken works exclusively with East German associations that accompany them in their project work with partner organisations in the Global South. Projects are also financed under the EZ Small Project Fund of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The exchange with other actors of development cooperation was also sought, for example, with One World promoters from the working community programme of the One World Regional Networks in Germany (agl) (see page 48).

'At the foundation, we focus primarily on the critical understanding of diversity', says Fliegner (see box on page 45). Diversity is not understood here as a given phenomenon, but as continuously forming. The approach also focuses not only on marginalised and discriminated people, but also on members of privileged groups and looks at similarities and differences.

'This can affect children or people with disabilities and is of course also relevant to the balance of power in North-South cooperation', explains Fliegner.

The internal diversity process began in 2021 with the preparation of a working paper entitled 'Towards a Diverse Foundation ...', which was adopted by the Foundation Board in April and by the Foundation Council in June. On this basis, the nine-member office drafted a roadmap, which was coordinated with the Foundation Board by the end of 2021 and finally adopted. In the course of the process, the employees of the Nord-Süd-Brücken foundation addressed anti-racism in their first voluntary workshops. 'On the one hand, our white read colleagues dealt with power structures in a workshop on critical whiteness. On the other hand, our colleagues have initiated an empowerment process with a migration biography, which serves to strengthen the handling of racism. It should be

*'Personally living the global responsibility'*

Carolin Fliegner, Coordinator for Development Cooperation Projects



noted that the assignment was and is partly irritating – just like the process itself, says Fliegner. In advance, there were many discussions about whether such workshops were necessary at all. 'There was friction, and that is desirable – after all, it is about discussing these things'.

The experiences from the workshops were then discussed in a team. 'Of course, the complex topic is not solved with a two-day event, but a long-term process', emphasises Fliegner. Among other things, they have learned that the needs of individual employees must be included in the processes and discussed together. 'For example, some colleagues have expressed the desire to become competent in dealing with racist statements at events or in consultations'. A continuation is planned. Since migrant-diasporic associations in particular belong to the target group, integrating expertise, such as that which participants have acquired in the empowerment workshop, into the internal and external diversity processes has been considered.

The implementation of the measures stipulated in the diversity roadmap began in the beginning of 2022. They initially focus on a year to lay the foundation for the process. 'The aim is to incorporate the know-how and the different perspectives from all committees – and recapitulate at the end of the year what we have achieved and how and on what we want to continue working', explains Fliegner. The measures include various workshops, some with external experts, the establishment of a diversity work group, and the development of guidelines for hiring employees and interns.

'Of course, we don't start from scratch', says Fliegner. 'Even now, three of our nine colleagues in the office have a migration biography or are BIPoC [political self-designation Black, Indigenous and

People of Colour, editorial note], and of the four interns per year, we take at least one student with a migration biography'. The foundation also fills podiums with non-white experts and five of the 15 Board of Trustees members are non-white, including the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Nord- Süd-Brücken uses the gender star and has a commissioned employee for gender issues. 'Nevertheless, we are still at the beginning of the process', emphasises Fliegner. In the future, the various levels of power relations and privileges will be examined intersectionally in the office and the committees as well as in project funding at home and abroad, and the dismantling of barriers will be promoted.

The Diversity Commissioner considers it important to place greater focus on post-colonialism and anti-racism in development policy. 'These issues are increasingly entering the public discourse – I hope that they will also gain in importance in our field'. In any case, she could only recommend dealing with this to every development NGO: Just become aware of the composition of your own organisation, open your eyes to whatever power relations – often unintentionally and unconsciously – are being reproduced there, where it is therefore necessary to start and how work groups should be composed. 'Ultimately, it is crucial that we ourselves implement what we demand from our partners in the promotion of foreign countries, that is: living global responsibility itself'.

### Recommendations:

BER (2021): ↘ [Checklists for an anti-racist development public policy work](#)

↘ [Diversity on the webpage for the foundation Nord-Süd-Brücken](#)

Prof. Dr. Andrea D. Bührmann (2018):

↘ [Diversity.](#)

Lee Gardenswatz, Anita Rowe (2002):

↘ [Four Level Model of Diversity.](#)



# GERMANY AS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY



The division of the world into developing and developed countries – as well as countries transitioning from one group to another, known as emerging economies – is outdated. In order to achieve the global objectives of sustainable development, every country must change. The 2030 Agenda therefore defines all countries as developing countries. All must, within their means, contribute to the achievement of the objectives, together and by learning from each other.

In Germany and Europe, it is also a question of assuming responsibility for the causes of global inequality, which are rooted in European colonialism. This includes raising awareness of the mechanisms of world trade and the origin of raw materials and commodities (see page 48), but also raising awareness of social phenomena such as racism, Eurocentrism and privilege. The goal is a change in attitudes and behaviour which can only be initiated by the people themselves.

Many development NGOs in Germany are therefore doing domestic work so that as many people as possible acknowledge global responsibility and take action in this sense. They go to schools, parliaments and companies, hold public information events, develop campaigns, and publish publications. The actors range from large, diverse educational institutions such as Kolping Germany to small associations such as Indienhilfe Herrsching, that supports individual school partners and works together with the local Agenda 21 groups.

The development and environmental organisation Germanwatch, for example, introduced a new instrument for development education with its handprint campaign. The concept – based on the long-established ecological footprint – goes back to the Centre for Environment Education (CEE) in India and was further developed by Germanwatch.

Not only individuals can learn how they can increase their 'handprint', the effect of their commitment to a socially and ecologically just society. The 'handprint' also provides actors in education for sustainable development and global learning as well as other multipliers with a concept for their work. The handprint campaign includes numerous, partly interactive elements such as the 'Handel-O-Mat', the handprint test that Germanwatch has developed together with the Brot für die Welt [Bread for the World] organisation, and a graphic with a decision path.

Global development profits to a great extent from mutual learning. This has been taking place for a long time in various exchange formats, including reverse programs, in which volunteers from the Global South come to the Global North. The South-North world service programme by AGIAMONDO (see page 53) offers a still quite new approach to specifically bringing knowledge and experience from the Global South to Germany and strengthening cooperation. Luis Carlos Hinojosa Moreno, who worked for two years as a specialist on the South at the diocese of Aachen, describes the underlying idea as follows: 'In the world, no one is so rich that he could not receive anything from others'.

*'In the world, no one is  
so rich that he could not  
receive anything from others'*

Luis Carlos Hinojosa Moreno



# A WORLD PROMOTER: CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE, SUSTAINABILITY AND DECOLONISATION

*One World Promoter provides an impetus for responsible action in Germany through education on global contexts and imparting knowledge on topics such as climate change, colonial continuities and globalisation. They offer consulting, networking and qualification measures in various areas and also develop and support actions and campaigns. Their target groups range from schoolchildren and NGOs to local politicians and business enterprises. Oscar Choque von Ayni – Association for Resource Justice e.V. is a world promoter of resources, environment and technology in Saxony. His aim is to show people in the state how mining in the Global South is connected to raw material waste in the Global North and migration.*

Choque grew up in a mining village in Bolivia and experienced the consequences of the extraction of raw materials there. 'I would like to pass on this experience', he says. The topic of resource justice is still quite unknown; his work therefore consists to a large extent of building structures, forming networks, rousing interest in the problem and making the promoter's work known.

Large companies that rely on critical raw materials, such as Volkswagen and Infineon, produce in Saxony. However, raising awareness in small and medium-sized enterprises concerning their entrepreneurial responsibility in dealing with resources originating from the Global South is particularly important to Choque. His impression is:

'Many entrepreneurs are well aware of the problem. But they don't know anyone who is personally affected by it'. However, there is a difference between whether someone reads something about a topic or talks to an affected person – such as Choque himself.

In addition, he benefited from his professional background: in his studies of the timber industry in Russia and international forestry at TU Dresden, he dealt in detail with the handling of natural resources. 'It is very important to build trust with the target group, in this case representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises', he explains. "As someone who comes from a mining area and is from the field, I experience little rejection." Sometimes he also meets people who do not want to discuss the unfair use of resources – then it is important to engage in persuasion work.

Other important target groups of the One World Project are universities and scientific institutions. He presents his offer at events, meets with project managers and establishes new contacts.

*'Awareness must be raised on the handling of critical raw materials'*

Oscar Choque, a World Promoter

Choque's main topic is conventional mining and, more recently, lithium mining in Latin American countries such as Bolivia, Chile and Peru. The demand for the raw material, which is used, among other things, in batteries for electric cars, is increasing rapidly. Choque informs about the consequences of the degradation for people and the environment in the affected countries. A close link to the climate crisis also exists here: 'Resources play a major role in European climate targets. Countless projects deal with this, for example, the Helmholtz Institute for Resource Technology and the TU Bergakademie Freiberg. I was able to take this up'.

Choque sees the unfair use of resources as a clear consequence of colonialism. The exploitation of man and nature in Latin America began in the 17th century under Spanish colonial rule. 'The Spanish mined silver in Bolivia; the huge mine in Potosí

was their main source. In Europe, this has created wealth. Bolivia has had none of it'. Today, critical raw materials played the most important role. Awareness of this is growing, and Choque's work as a promoter also contributes to this. 'I am not interested in confrontation, but in pointing out the problem', he emphasises. Global learning, like sustainable development, is a long process.

Germany's role in this process is not just about resource justice. 'It's about the economy as a whole, about our consumption'. It has not yet been widely understood that there are alternatives to the eternal growth with which we have destroyed ourselves. He also wants politicians to involve actors who are affected by German legislation more closely in their planning. Choque cites the Supply Chain Act passed in June 2021 as an example: 'This affects mining in Latin America; it can have consequences for workers. With local actors, however, this



Potosí, a mining town in Bolivia

was essentially not discussed'. Politicians, trade unions and civil society in Latin American countries are hardly informed about relevant developments in Germany – while conversely, for example, problems in the governance are well-known. 'The BMZ, but

also NGOs, should inform the partner countries about what is going on here', says Choque. This also means decolonisation.

### The One World Promoter Programme

Around 150 One World Promoters are deployed nationwide. Their work is based on the understanding that the people of the Global North must change their behaviour in order to make global justice possible. To this end, the promoters seek to bolster knowledge and competence regarding ecological and social sustainability and promote political participation and civic engagement.

The One World Promoter Programme is supported by the Association of One World Regional Networks in Germany (agl) and the Nord-Süd-Brücken foundation. At the country level, the sponsorship lies with the 16 One World Regional Networks. They act as coordinating bodies, modulate the implementation of the programme with the actors at the federal level and are contact persons for the state

governments. The programme is financed 40 percent by the federal states and 60 percent by the BMZ.

The promoters work together nationwide in the following specialist forums:

- Global learning
- Eco-social consumption, production and supply chains
- Migration, diaspora and development
- Environment, climate and development
- Civil society and participation
- International cooperation and partnerships
- Development policy in rural areas



# AGIAMONDO: SOUTH-NORTH SPECIALIST PROGRAMME RAISES DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION TO A NEW LEVEL

*With the South-North world service programme, AGIAMONDO recruits specialists from the Global South to international cooperation organisations in Germany. The declared objective of this new form of exchange is equal cooperation between the South and the North. For the Colombian priest Luis Carlos Hinojosa Moreno, who worked as a southern specialist at the diocese of Aachen, mutual learning is at the forefront of cooperation. The Project Manager in Germany, Thomas Hoogen, wants to anchor the initiated changes in the partnership structurally and sustainably. In addition to these two, we spoke with Francia Cordero Brinkmann, a consultant for the South-North specialist programme.*

Francia Cordero Brinkmann, speaker for the South-North specialist programme of AGIAMONDO, clarifies: 'The concept of development aid is no longer up to date'. Today, it is about the fact that the Global South and Global North complement each other with their knowledge and experience. It is simply logical that specialists are not only sent from the North to the South, but also in the opposite direction. The Catholic organisation, which recruits staff for international cooperation between church and civil society organisations, has been following this path since 2017. In the South-North world service programme, which started as a pilot project and is now part of the regular offer, AGIAMONDO employs specialists from the Global South to work in development-related projects that fall under the responsibility of European partner organisations.

'A particular focus is on personal and institutional learning processes', explains Cordero Brinkmann. AGIAMONDO, the participating church and non-profit organisations in the Global South and North and the Southern specialist itself declared their interest and their willingness to actively participate in shaping these learning processes.

The pilot project, in which five specialists worked for two years each, was so successful that demand now exceeds supply. Therefore, the project duration was extended to three years. 'The ten positions for 2022 were already firmly planned in August 2021', says Cordero Brinkmann. The feedback from the German partner organisations was very positive. 'Already during the deployment, it was apparent that the specialists opened up new perspectives and built bridges between Germany and the dispatching country'. The partner organisations in the Global South also appreciated the networking and synergy formation established by the programme. This is a result of the external evaluation of the pilot project, according to Cordero Brinkmann.

*'The concept of development aid is no longer up to date'*

Francia Cordero Brinkmann, Speaker for the South-North specialist programme

Hinojosa Moreno can confirm the positive effects from his own experience. The priest from the diocese of Quibdo in Colombia worked as a Southern specialist at the diocese of Aachen from December 2019 to November 2021. The aim of the collaboration was to strengthen the partnership between the diocese and the Catholic Church of Colombia, which was established approximately 60 years ago. It should be shaped more by the Colombian perspective; concrete topics such as sustainability, flight and migration, human rights, and peace and reconciliation work should be more clearly accentuated. Instead of financial dependence, mutual learning, exchanges of experience and support in both directions should be the current priorities.

'During these the two years, we have been thinking together about what we can bring to the partnership', says Hinojosa Moreno. One idea is to conceive and preserve the Earth as a 'common home,' as Pope Francis describes it in his 2015 encyclical 'Laudato si'. 'This applies to Colombia as well as to Germany', says Hinojosa Moreno. 'The challenges are different, but, as a church, we can contribute to this in both countries'.

For the further development of the cooperation, the deployment of the Southern specialist was only the beginning. Thomas Hoogen, a consultant for universal ecclesiastical tasks in the diocese of Aachen and the direct project partner to Hinojosa Morenos, now wants to bring the Colombian bishops' conference on board. To have the conference on board as the most important partner in the cooperation with the Catholic Church of Colombia 'is an important next step in moving forward structurally and achieving sustainability'.

In addition to the diocese of Aachen, Hinojosa Moreno himself has also been able to establish contact with many other organisations that cooperate with Colombia. Both project partners consider this networking work to be very valuable. The priest promises: 'I will keep in touch – and certainly come back to Germany'. A visit is already planned: Hinojosa Moreno wants to participate in the 2023 Aachen pilgrimage with a large group of Columbians to anchor the idea of a partnership idea more strongly among the people. The pilgrimage, which takes place every seven years, was postponed in 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.



In terms of the effects, the South-North world service has thus been received with great satisfaction, but some hurdles in the administration of the programme need to be overcome. Contracts with Southern specialists based on the Development Aid Workers Act (EhFG) are not yet possible. The payment of the Southern specialists employed by AGIAMONDO is based on the collective agreement for the public service. Of the costs, 70 percent are financed by the BMZ, administered by the Bishop's organisation, MISEREOR e. V. The other 30 percent shall be borne by the German host organisation from non-government sources. However, this poses a problem for many, especially smaller, organisations, according to Cordero Brinkmann. 'We hope that a posting via the Development Aid Workers Act (EhFG) will be possible in the future. We are currently negotiating this with the BMZ'. She believes that South-North cooperation should be given the same opportunities as North-South cooperation. As a type of recognised South-North development aid worker, the Southern specialists would be entitled, for example, to maintenance benefits for spouses and children and the reimbursement of travel costs. 'But we are already adjusting this despite the other contract regulations, so that Southern specialists will not have any disadvantages'.

Any German organisation involved in international cooperation can apply for the programme. The South-North specialist can come from a partner organisation with which the German organisation is already working – or from anywhere else. The requirement is that they come from a 'developing country or region' according to the definition of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

'For example, Fian has been working in Brazil for decades and has been looking for a specialist in human rights lobbying who is familiar with the situation in rural areas and in particular the indigenous population', explains Cordero Brinkmann. 'Justitia et Pax, on the other hand, wanted someone to build a new program to work on colonial heritage, involving partners in countries of the Global South. For this, we have found a consultant who comes from Cameroon and has already been in Germany'.

As a personnel service, AGIAMONDO takes over the recruitment and selection of personnel in coordination with the partner organisations, prepares the specialist in Germany and accompanies the specialists and partner organisations during the project implementation. 'In addition to language lessons, preparation also includes courses in intercultural communication and regional studies,' says Cordero Brinkmann. 'Based on the feedback from the specialists, we know that this part is very important for them'. AGIAMONDO is also responsible for contractual matters, insurance, etc.

With the South-North world service, the organisation wants to contribute to a global learning and change process. 'Of course, this also happens in a reverse exchange', says Cordero Brinkmann, 'but, for the partner organisations in Germany, the South-North dispatch makes a huge difference'. The partners from the South can have so much more influence, the global perspective is sharpened, networks expand and: 'big differences become smaller'.





# ANNEX

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**BMZ**

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

**DAC**

Development Assistance Committee

**EhfG**

Development Aid Workers Act

**ICSC**

International Civil Society Centre

**INRO / INGO**

International Non-Governmental  
Organization

**KfW**

Reconstruction Loan Corporation

**NGO**

Non-Governmental Organisation

**ODA**

Official Development Assistance

**OECD**

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and  
Development

**RINGO**

Re-Imagining the International Non-  
Governmental Organisation

**SDG**

Sustainable Development Goals

**VENRO**

Verband Entwicklungspolitik und Humanitäre  
Hilfe [Organisation for development and  
humanitarian aid]

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# OUR MEMBERS

**A**

@fire International Disaster Response Germany  
 action medeor  
 Action Canchanabury Aktion gegen den Hunger\*  
 [Action against hunger]  
 ADRA Germany AGIAMONDO  
 AMICAAMICA e. V.  
 ANDHERI HILFE e. V.V.  
 Apotheker helfen [Pharmacists help] e.V. Apotheker  
 ohne Grenzen [Pharmacists without borders] e.V.  
 Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland  
 Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Eine-Welt-Landesnetzwerke in  
 Deutschland [Work group of One World Regional  
 Networks in Germany] (agl)  
 Arbeitsgemeinschaft Entwicklungsethnologie  
 [Work group on Development Ethnology]  
 arche noVa  
 Ärzte der Welt [Médecins du monde/Doctors of the  
 World]  
 ASW - Solidarity Action Group  
 AT-Association  
 AWO International

**B**

Behinderung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit  
 [Disability and development cooperation] (bezev)  
 BONO Direct Aid  
 BORDA e.V.  
 Bread for the World – Evangelical Development Bund  
 der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend [Service of the  
 Federation of German Catholic Youth] (BDKJ)  
 Bundesvereinigung Lebenshilfe [Federal Association  
 for Counselling Aid]

**C**

CARE Germany e.V. Caritas International  
 CBM Christoffel-Blindenmission Christian Blind  
 Mission e.V.  
 CHANGE e.V.  
 Childaid Network Foundation  
 ChildFund Germany Christian Initiative Romero  
 Community of Sant'Egidio German Doctors

**D**

Dachverband Entwicklungspolitik Baden-Württemberg  
 (DEAB) [Umbrella Association for Development Policy  
 Baden-Wuerttemberg]  
 DED-Freundeskreis [DED Circle of Friends]  
 Deutsche Entwicklungshilfe für soziales Wohnungs-  
 und Siedlungswesen (DESWOS) [German Development  
 Aid for Social Housing and Settlement]  
 Deutsche Lepra- und Tuberkulosehilfe (DAHW)  
 [German Leprosy and Tuberculosis Aid]

Deutsch-Syrischer Verein [German-Syrian Association]  
 e.V. (DSV)  
 Development and Peace Foundation (SEF)  
 DGB-Bildungswerk BUND – North-South Network Difäm –  
 German Institute for Medical Mission Don Bosco Mondo  
 DVV International – Institute for International  
 Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association

**E**

Ecumenical Initiative One World e.V.  
 Eine Welt Netz NRW [One World Network North-Rhine  
 Westphalia]  
 EIRENE – International Christian Peace Service  
 Energypedia UG  
 EPIZ – Centre for Global Learning in Berlin Erlassjahr.de –  
 Development needs debt relief Protestant Academies in  
 Germany (EAD)

**F**

Fairtrade Germany e.V. Fairventures Worldwide  
 Fair Trade Forum  
 FIAN Germany  
 Foundation for World Population Germany (DSW)  
 FUTURO SÍ

**G**

German Commission Justitia et Pax  
 German Parity Welfare Association  
 German Toilet Organisation Germanwatch  
 GLS Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklung

**H**

Habitat for Humanity Germany Handicap International  
 Help – Help for self-help  
 HelpAge Germany  
 Hilfe für Afrika [Help for Africa] e.V.

**I**

Indienhilfe  
 INKOTA Network  
 Internationaler Bund (IB)  
 International Hilfsfonds [International Help Fund]  
 International Justice Mission Germany Internationaler  
 Ländlicher Entwicklungsdienst [International Rural  
 Development Service] (ILD)  
 Internationaler Verband Westfälischer Kinderdörfer  
 [International Association of Westphalian Children's  
 Villages]  
 Islamic Relief Germany

**J**

JAM Germany Johanniter Foreign Aid



**K**

KAIROS Europa  
 Karl Kübel Organisation for Kids and Families  
 KATE – Contact Point for Environment and Development Children's Aid Foundation Global-Care Kindernothilfe  
 Kinderrechte Afrika [Children's Rights Africa]  
 KOLPING International Cooperation e.V.

**L**

Latin America Centre  
 Lesben- und Schwulenverband [Lesbian and Gay Association] (LSVD)  
 Lichtbrücke  
 Light for the World

**M**

Malteser International Marie-Schlei-Association  
 mterra – Foundation for Women and Health  
 medica mondiale  
 medico international MISEREOR  
 Mission East Germany e.V. German Institute for Medical Mission Würzburg

**N**

NETZ Partnership for Development and Justice e.V.  
 Neuapostolische Kirche-karitativ [New Apostolic Church-Charitable] e. V.  
 Nord-Süd-Brücken Foundation  
 nph Kinderhilfe Lateinamerika [Child Aid of Latin America] e. V.

**O**

OIKOS ONE WORLD e. V.  
 Opportunity International Germany  
 Ora International Germany  
 OroVerde – The Tropical Forest Foundation  
 Oxfam Germany

**P**

Partnership for Transparency Fund e.V. (PTF Europe)\*  
 Plan International Germany

**R**

Rhine-Danube Foundation

**S**

Samhathi – Help for India  
 Save the Children Germany  
 Senegal Aid Association  
 Senior Expert Service (SES)  
 Sign of Hope humedica

Society for International Development Chapter Bonn (SID)  
 SODI – Solidarity Service International  
 SOS Children's Villages Worldwide  
 SOS Humanity\*  
 Stiftung der Deutschen Lions [German Lions Foundation]  
 Stiftung Kinderzukunft [Foundation for the Future of Children]  
 Street Child Deutschland e.V.\*  
 Susila Dharma – Social Services  
 SÜDWIND – Institute for Economy and Ecumenism

**T**

Tearfund Germany e.V. Terra Tech funding projects  
 TERRE DES FEMMES  
 terre des hommes Germany  
 Tierärzte ohne Grenzen (ToG) [Veterinarians Without Borders]  
 The Hunger Project

**V**

Verband Entwicklungspolitik Niedersachsen (VEN)  
 [Association for Development Policy Lower Saxony]  
 Verbund Entwicklungspolitischer Nichtregierungsorganisationen Brandenburgs (VENROB) [Association for Development Policy Non-Governmental Organisations of Brandenburg]  
 Verein entwicklungspolitischer Austauschorganisationen [Association of Development Policy Exchange Organisations] e.V. (ventao)

**W**

W. P. Schmitz Foundation  
 Welthaus Bielefeld  
 Werkhof Darmstadt  
 World Day of Prayer for Women – German Committee  
 World Hunger Aid  
 World Peace Service  
 World Shop Association  
 World emergency work of the KAB of Germany  
 Workshop Economics  
 World University Service  
 World Vision Germany

**Z**

ZOA Germany gGmbH

\*Guest member

VENRO currently has 143 members (as of July 2022)

# IMPRINT

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**VENRO** is the umbrella organisation of development policy and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Germany. The organisation was established in 1995. It currently consists of around 140 organisations. They come from private and ecclesiastical development cooperation, humanitarian aid as well as development education, public relations and lobbying.

VENRO's core objective is to make globalisation more equitable, in particular through the eradication of global poverty. The association is committed to upholding human rights and to the preservation of natural resources.

#### **VENRO**

- represents the interests of development and humanitarian NGOs vis-à-vis politics
- strengthens the role of NGOs and civil society in development policy and humanitarian aid
- raises public awareness of development and humanitarian issues and sustainable development

VENRO – Association for Development and Humanitarian Aid of German Non-Governmental Organizations

[www.venro.org](http://www.venro.org)