

CONCEPT PAPER

Child and Youth Programme

(CYP)

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Concept Paper: Child and Youth Programme (CYP)

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FOREWORD

The concept paper of the Child and Youth Programme emphasises the significance of child and youth-related issues in the development co-operation of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe. It describes the conceptual background of the various focal support areas, for which guidelines with operational suggestions are still to be drafted. The concept paper serves as a basis for the commitment of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe in this field and promotes the exchange of ideas between non-governmental organisations in Germany and abroad as well as with local target groups.

The social, economic, political and cultural framework conditions in Africa, Asia and Latin America differ in part greatly. In order to allow specific country and continent-related factors and special aspects to be adequately taken into account, the guidelines, in particular the focal support areas, cannot be defined too narrowly. With this concept paper, we would like to offer a guide for the further development and piloting of new approaches in the support of children and youths.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The United Nations 1989 "Convention on the Rights of the Child " sets out that "children have a right to parental care, equality, health, education, play and leisure time, the freedom to express their opinion, to receive information and be heard, to be raised without violence, to be protected against war and displacement, to be protected against economic and sexual exploitation and to be provided assistance when they are handicapped".

The physical and mental development of young people encompasses all areas of life. In addition to the satisfaction of basic needs, action-oriented know-how and skills are to be conveyed, capabilities are to be developed and a value system inculcated. Children and youths should grow to become active and creative members of society with a feeling of responsibility for that society. In the assertion of their attested rights, they do however need support.

Children and youths are now increasingly being seen as subjects, and not as objects which have to be raised to adulthood, which are dependent and cannot assume responsibility as they were primarily viewed up till the end of the 70s. They are to be taken seriously as persons with equal rights and must be protected against exploitation, war, prostitution, trade in children and abuse. In face of lacking future prospects, children and youths develop their own survival strategies and organisational forms which in turn require new concepts and project approaches.

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe has been supporting children and youths since it was established in 1962. To improve the living situation of children and youths, institutions in Africa, Asia and Latin America are being supported.

Experience shows that the targeted support measures of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe are well suited to improving the situation of the children and youths this support reaches in a sustainable manner. In many cases co-operation between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social institutions, churches and government offices has taken place thus enabling the NGOs to influence educational, social and youth policy. In addition to targeted project interventions, another aim is to achieve long-term changes in society.

2 SIGNIFICANCE OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMMES

The goal of development co-operation is to contribute towards poverty alleviation and towards the securing of a better future for people in developing countries. In this, the support of children and youths is of utmost importance. In developing countries young girls and boys become part of the economically active population very early on. At a young age they are often fulfilling many of the major tasks and duties of the adult population. At the same time they are excluded from many rights and are subjected to manifold dangers which have a negative impact upon their physical, psychological and mental development. On the other hand, important potential harboured by youths, such as physical efficiency, endurance, learning ability, imagination and creativity, frequently lie neglected.

As late as the 80s development co-operation still assumed that the support of families and women would automatically improve the living conditions of children and youths. However, as more and more youths no longer live within the family unit, this approach is completely removed from reality. The discrepancy between the project approaches and the potential of youth has been recognised by NGOs as a result of their proximity to grass-level groups and to local and community initiatives. They took a leading role in the development of forward-looking project concepts in the 90s and in many countries have shown themselves to be important pillars of civil society. The increasingly precarious living situation of young people has been gaining in relevance world-wide. It will also have a long-term influence on the social, economic and cultural conditions in these countries and will remain a challenge for a poverty-oriented development co-operation.

Current social changes demand that group-specific project approaches be developed. Children and youths should be supported as a target group in their own right, since:

- approximately half of the population in most of the developing countries is below the age of 18;
- children and youths from poor population groups are particularly affected by structural problems and their consequences, such as increasing poverty, inadequate education, unemployment, migration and reduction of government programmes. They are increasingly forced to help earn money for the survival of their family. Insufficient nutrition and the lack of medical care, disastrous working and environmental conditions lead to long-lasting health impairments;
- children and youths are frequently no longer integrated in the family unit and have to ensure their own survival. Increasing poverty, armed conflicts, migration,

displacement, refugee movements and the spread of AIDS are resulting in more and more children and youths having to fend for themselves from an early age;

- the economic exploitation of young girls and youths on the labour market is increasing. They are often forced to accept work which poses health hazards, places them under intolerable strain and exploitation and which impedes their development. The worst excesses of this are forced labour, bonded labour and sexual exploitation;
- against the background of poverty and violence, armed conflicts and refugee movements it is in particular young people who become victims, but also increasingly perpetrators;
- the rights of girls and boys continue to be abused in many instances despite world-wide ratification of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Relevant laws and/or their implementation are lacking and many countries do not have any adequate child and youth policy.

International organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the European Union are increasingly recognising that the situation of children and youths is a development co-operation issue of vital significance for the future. The particular discrimination against girls has been a central theme at a series of UN conferences, most recently at the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The action platform devoted a chapter solely to this topic.

3 GUIDELINES FOR PROJECTS SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUTHS

3.1 Basic principles of child and youth programmes

Strategies and direct support measures for children and youths begin with the satisfaction of their basic needs, this being the prerequisite for the development of their aptitudes and skills. The great potential of youth for self-help and self-organisation is to be increasingly made use of and promoted. As active members of society, they contribute towards shaping society's development and should not be viewed as objects of assistance in the sense of a problem which needs to be attended to. The projects and programmes should not be developed for the young people, but developed with them. Innovative approaches which start with the needs and potentials of children and youths should be jointly devised with them. Except in cases of special circumstances, preventive measures should be given priority.

3.2 Objectives of the Child and Youth Programme of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (DWHH)

Objective is the sustainable improvement in the living situation of girls and boys within the framework of poverty alleviation. Children and youths should be involved in shaping their future. Possibilities for them to actively participate in this process need to be promoted and expanded.

The supported projects and programmes should open up life prospects for the children and youths, where ever possible based on the principle "help for self-help". Besides satisfying their basic needs, girls and boys should be enabled to recognise and assert their rights and obligations, to develop their talents and their personality in order to later be able to fend for themselves. Children and youths should be protected against disadvantages, discrimination and health hazards.

The supported projects should make a contribution to children, youths and their families developing a critical awareness of their social environment. The public portrayal and debate of topics having a relevance to youth policy should emphasise their social importance.

If possible, child and youth programmes should be implemented complementary to development co-operation programmes. This combination is to be found in particular in

rural areas. On the other hand, the high rate of urbanisation leads to specific problems for children and youths which cannot be adequately tackled in integrated projects. In these cases projects are necessary which are oriented on the actual problems of these children and youths.

The German population should be informed about the living conditions of children and youths and their social environment in Africa, Asia and Latin America within the framework of public-relations work. The understanding of the public for the social and economic interrelations in the Third World should be increased as well as their social co-responsibility for and their willingness to help these young people in the developing countries. This requires close collaboration with all social groups, especially youth, and the preparation and circulation of information. In addition, lobby work for an improvement in the living conditions of children and youth should be carried out in campaigns.

3.3 Target groups

Target groups are particularly high-risk groups as well as socially and economically disadvantaged girls and boys from rural and urban areas. The projects and programmes are aimed at children from poorer sections of the population. Due to the precarious material and social conditions of their families these children are subjected to many risk factors: poverty, physical and psychological and sexual abuse, social and family neglect, repression and violence. It is not primarily the age of children and youths which is decisive in determining the target groups, but rather their situation. The target groups include homeless, abandoned, orphaned and handicapped girls and boys as well as children of ethnic minorities.

3.4 Focal support areas of the Child and Youth Programme of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (DWHH)

Awareness-building

With the exception of Somalia and the USA all countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However even 10 years after passing of the Convention, the rights of children are still abused in many countries. Child and youth rights are not yet firmly implanted in social consciousness as natural human rights. The realisation of these rights requires tremendous efforts in the field of awareness-building and

information work in order to achieve a higher degree of responsibility and commitment for children and youths.

NGOs must carry out awareness-building and lobby work and demand legal and institutional reforms from their governments. They can critically monitor the establishment of youth commissions, the creation of child and youth officer posts at national and local level, as well as changes in criminal law and can bring in their experience in the drafting of concepts. Training in child and youth issues for personnel from the judiciary branch, the police and the public administration can be carried out under the responsibility of NGOs in collaboration with the responsible offices.

Social integration

Far-reaching economic, political and social changes often result in children and youths, who are actually dependent upon protection and support, being excluded, marginalised and ultimately abandoned. Regional - in some cases armed - conflicts worsen a situation which is already tense and difficult. As survival strategies children and youths are often only left with work in the informal sector. A general prohibition against child labour would force millions of children into illegality and, given the lack of alternatives, even jeopardise their physical survival. Working conditions which pose health hazards, which exploit children and youths, prevent them from going to school and which impair their personality development must be prohibited. The danger of becoming implicated in illegal dealings, such as the drug and weapons trade, is increasing.

The task is to integrate street children, demobilise former child soldiers and reintegrate them into existing social and economic structures. Social reintegration is also important for young delinquents, child prisoners, drug addicts, child prostitutes and refugees.

The project measures should not only guarantee economic survival but should also promote the social integration of children and youths. Material care which secures physical survival must be supplemented with social and psychological care in order to analyse and cure the trauma which has been incurred. In addition to actual survival aid, such as for example street social work, children and youths left to their own means should be supported in the development of new life perspectives. Youth-specific forms of expression such as music, dance, sports, art and literature are important forms of access. Youths who involve themselves in self-help initiatives or cultural activities within their community or promote the self-help organisation of girls and boys are important multipliers.

Education

Education not only serves the purpose of accumulating knowledge but should also promote the personality development of children and youths. Education involves strengthening personal identity and social learning. Conveying democratic modes of behaviour should contribute to the solving of conflicts without violence and in dialogue. Here special gender-specific aspects should also be respected, as youth seek orientation with regard to their role-related expectations and gender-related behaviour, particularly during adolescence. Alternative and supplementary educational as well as free-time activities have a significant preventative nature.

Formal and non-formal education must be relevant to the life realities of children and youths from lower income groups. Otherwise attending school will not appear a motivating and helpful factor in dealing with everyday life and gaining access to the labour market. Although school enrolment is increasing worldwide, the number of drop-outs is also increasing. In some countries up to 70 per cent of the children enrolled in school drop out before completing their primary education. Girls account for a disproportionately large percentage of this group.

To be supported are appropriate educational programmes in rural areas, formal and non-formal educational activities in poverty affected areas, youth and social centres and further training of teachers. NGOs should initiate and implement innovative action-oriented measures in the educational, didactic and methodological field so that school syllabus, curricula and teaching methods can be oriented towards the life reality of the pupils. It is only in this way that the increasing drop-out rate can be effectively countered and prevented. NGOs should not interfere in the core competencies of governments and not take over responsibilities of the formal educational system, such as construction or infrastructural improvement of schools, paying or training of teachers. Rather, they need to remind governments of their obligations and demand these are met.

Economic integration

Employment promotion through the provision of vocational training and assistance for small businesses is becoming increasingly important for youth from the informal sector. This particularly benefits young people from low income groups who have so far been excluded from formal vocational training or who have received training but have been

unable to find a job. They should be provided with better access to employment and to the means for earning a living, for example through income-generating projects.

Partner organisations primarily concerned in education and training should submit coherent curricula and after completion of education and training should try to offer initial financial aid and consultancy services in order to facilitate integration into the labour market.

Community development

Institutions working in this area follow an integrated approach which includes assistance in the fields of nutrition, health, hygiene, education, training, personality development, integration into the labour market and employment promotion.

In addition to the classic mother and child health programmes, young people's health is also an increasingly important issue. Health care and the promotion of a responsible and self-determined sexual behaviour, including AIDS prevention measures, are relevant youth policy issues. Child and youth programmes should be integrated into local community, family and social work.

Youths should be included as contact persons in rural programmes, in integrated urban redevelopment programmes and in measures to protect the environment and natural resources. The protection and sustainable utilisation of natural resources in rural areas is at the same time of particular importance, as this can help create a new awareness of the value of rural traditions.

3.5 Partner organisation requirements

Irrespective of membership in a political and/or religious community, all organisations whose aims include the holistic support of children and youths are eligible for support.

Project holders must be legally registered and have their own statutes.

Partner organisations should possess the appropriate technical know-how. In addition, they should be supported in the further training of their staff in order to qualitatively improve the work. The need for further training ranges from the further development of participatory approaches to instruments such as project planning, project monitoring and impact monitoring. Partner organisations must, at all times, be able to prove the correct utilisation of grants by submitting relevant narrative and financial reports.

Partner organisations should seek to integrate the children and youths they are assisting in the social environment - family, relatives, neighbours and community. This in particular applies to children and youths fending for themselves, such as orphans and social orphans. In the case of children's homes, it should be ensured that the children are not uprooted. Rather - if possible - reintegration into the family or network of relatives should be targeted.

Partner organisations should intervene on two levels - the working level and the structural level. The working level includes care and support for children and youths who require direct aid and support, including via the family or family-related structures. The structural level includes analysing and reflecting on the causes of abandonment, the absence of opportunities, criminality and violence. It also includes influence on and change in framework conditions.

Wherever possible partner organisations should work together with local administrative structures. Networks between government and non-government organisations, churches, local governments, the business world and youth organisations are indispensable if the use of resources is to be improved and synergy effects are to be achieved. With regard to co-operation between NGOs and government offices it is important that the NGOs clearly formulate their areas of competence and responsibility, i.e. their possibilities and limits, in order not to be monopolized and instrumentalised. Each and every social power should recognise its strength and define its responsibility.

4 FINAL REMARKS

The concept paper has been drawn up by the Child and Youth Programme working team. This is composed of staff members of the Programmes and Projects Department and the Press and Public-Relations Department. The working team works cross-sectorally and deals with questions and topics connected with the support of children and youths. Members of the working team represent Deutsche Welthungerhilfe at congresses, symposiums and conferences. The latest findings from research and from the field, as well as the conceptual further development of project approaches will continue to influence and be integrated into this concept paper.