



There is a need for *weltwärts* Exchanges beyond Africa!

Statement

Statement on planned changes in the funding scheme *weltwärts* Exchanges by the Committee for International Affairs of the German Association for Arts Education and Cultural Learning (BKJ)

The German Association for Arts Education and Cultural Learning (BKJ) and its 55 national and state member organisations demand that the funding scheme *weltwärts* exchanges continue to be open and available for partner projects beyond the African continent. Civil society organisations and young people must still be given the opportunity to decide for themselves with which partners on which continent they want to organise their activities within context of global education. Therefore, also the involvement of civil society organisations in the shaping of youth and development policy processes is still necessary.

Preserve a modern financing instrument!

At the 10th Open Promoters Conference of the *weltwärts* programme in January 2021 as well as on the website www.weltwaerts.de, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and its responsible agency Engagement Global gGmbH (EG) announced initial plans for the creation of a new German-African Youth Office. The plans foresee that this is to be accompanied by a restriction of the funding scheme *weltwärts* Exchanges (wwE) to possible collaborations with partners in countries on the African continent only.

As a nationwide network of cultural education organisations, the BKJ, like the BMZ and EG, sees a great need for the support of the development and expansion of youth-political relations with all African countries, including the facilitation of advisory services, collaborations and funding possibilities as well as of diverse forms of youth and professional exchanges.

➔ However, as a strategic partner of the BMZ and EG, BKJ rejects a narrowing of the successful funding instrument *weltwärts* Exchanges, which was only introduced in 2016, to African countries only.

On the one hand, because the worldwide dimensions of development education and sustainability must continue to be considered together in an overall global context, as it is the case with the youth encounters funded by wWE.

On the other hand, because a restriction would mean that the potential of project promoters can no longer be exploited, which already have or wanted to develop partnership relations with organisations in Asia, Latin America and Oceania in order to root creative forms of global education in their youth work.

Background

With the funding scheme *weltwärts* Exchanges, which was developed in a very partnership-based process with independent civil society organisations from various fields of youth work and development education, the BMZ and the EG in 2016 created a highly topical and contemporary funding instrument that has closed gaps on many levels.

For the first time, this funding scheme offers a comprehensive support for youth encounters between German NGOs with partners from countries of the Global South that were previously almost impossible to finance. With its focus on out-of-school youth groups, it also closes a gap between other EG programmes with focus on development education, such as the individual *weltwärts* voluntary service or the ENSA school-based funding program.

Moreover, with the underlying ideas of cross-continental partnership and its general framework conditions, it represents one of the most modern funding instruments at present. Among other things, because it not only provides resources for the physical encounters themselves, but also for the other important project phases before and after the encounters.

Via this approach, essential needs from the fields of development education and international youth work were recognised and very successfully taken up in the realities of a funding system during the pilot phase from 2016 to 2020.

Turning away from this approach, which enables collaborations between German NGOs and partners from all countries of the Global South, and thus also turning away from previous aspirations as well as from the positive insights gained to date, is therefore difficult to understand and a big step backwards. Furthermore, seemingly the funding needs of educational promoters identified before the implementation of the funding scheme in 2016 suddenly no longer play a role.

Development education requires global thinking

A unique feature of the *weltwärts* Exchanges funding scheme is the focus on development education with the intention of giving young people in the North and South equal opportunities to understand global (development) contexts and thus contribute to the emergence of a “global citizenship” and indirectly to a sustainable global development. It thus corresponds to a new global understanding of “development” and development education, which is also reflected in particular in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

However, global development education in this sense cannot happen if young people from three equally relevant world regions – Asia, Latin America and Oceania – as such as their voices and perspectives are completely excluded. The aspiration of a funding scheme impacting on global development education, e.g. in sense of a concrete implementation of SDG 4.7¹, can no longer be achieved in this way.

Unilateral action by the Global North, which does not question the existing post-colonial power imbalance, contradicts its own political aspirations and all global political signs of the times. There are already many obstacles for civil society actors and young people from North and South to get to know the respective local situations and thus global contexts through jointly conducted youth encounters: unilaterally issued travel warnings by the German Foreign Office plus the restriction of possible partner countries, restrictive visa regulations and the generally high effort of organising and financing encounters and collaborations across continents on a partnership basis. Likewise, the funding of exchanges via both project partners is unrealistic due to the strong economic differences between the countries.

➔ Therefore, from the point of view of the BKJ and the organisations it represents, in such a context a funding body should above all enable and not further restrict possibilities.

Listening to promoters and young people from North and South – and finally giving them a voice

Civil society organisations in the North and South that are willing and motivated to take on the challenge of carrying out cultural youth exchanges and putting global education into practice in partnership with an organisation from the Global South or North are the central element of funding instruments such as *weltwärts* Exchanges.

These organisations, their possibilities and limitations, as well as the framework conditions they require, should therefore be the benchmark of a funding strategy and the concrete design of a funding scheme. The implementing organisations themselves usually know best what works and what does not. They know their skills and the interests of the young people they work with. They know their needs in order to successfully carry out global education projects. Last but not least, they are the only ones who know with which partner organisation in which country a trusting, sustainable, long-term partnership is possible.

¹ Goal 4.7: by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

➔ The promoters of global youth exchanges must therefore be able to decide for themselves which partner they want to work with, without this being blocked by regional and (funding) political restrictions.

This applies vice versa to promoters from Asia, Latin America and Oceania having interest in a cooperation with a partner from Germany, which are without any voice in this context.

Also, the interests and life situations of young people themselves must be taken into consideration, who are to be reached in North and South on the broadest possible scale and to be sensitised for development issues and global education through the funding instrument of *weltwärts* Exchanges. How this is done, the *weltwärts* voluntary service has shown for more than ten years, which is specifically successful because it does not exclude any world regions, including the option of cooperating reciprocally with all countries of the Global South through the North-South and South-North components.

So instead of thinking and acting exclusively focused on the African continent and thus excluding a large number of young people and independent civil society organisations from several continents, the funding scheme *weltwärts* Exchanges should continue to be maintained for partnership collaborations with partners from

Asia, Latin America and Oceania, following the example of the voluntary service of the same name. This should be done independently of the politically desired focus on specific needs and undertakings under the umbrella of the new German-African Youth Office.

If civil societies in South and North are to be given the opportunity to achieve the ambitious goals formulated in the United Nations' Agenda 2030 regarding global development education, then a cosmopolitan funding instrument like *weltwärts* exchanges is still urgently needed.

Resolved by the Committee for International Affairs (*Fachausschuss Internationales*) of the BKJ

Berlin/Remscheid, 17 March 2021

Future Alliance for Youth

Shaping intergenerational justice, sustainability and digitality with arts education and cultural learning!

On the occasion of the 2021 Bundestag elections, the professional organisations of cultural education are making demands on child and youth policy, on the federal government's education policy and cultural policy, as well as on foreign cultural and education policy.

The BKJ demands the following from the foreign cultural and education policy:

- Sustainably secure and expand international cultural youth exchange.
- Recognise the importance of specialist organisations in cultural relations and education policy.
- Help cultural education and civil society organisations in partner countries to gain more political recognition and effectiveness.
- **All demands (in German): www.bkj.nu/zukunftsaallianz**

i Global Partnerships

Cultural youth group exchanges between North and South



Globale Partnerschaften

Kulturelle Jugendgruppenbegegnungen
zwischen Nord und Süd

Nothing enables a more intensive learning experience than personal encounters. In artistic exchange projects between countries of the Global South and the Global North, young people can directly live global connections together with peers from other continents and explore and reflect on them through artistic means.

This guide supports practitioners in organising cross-continental exchange projects with partners in the Global South and in successfully linking cultural education, international youth work and global learning.

Publication (in German): www.bkj.de/publikation/globale-partnerschaften

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