



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

Agents of Change

Children and youth rights in German development cooperation activities

BMZ PAPER 04 | 2017
ACTION PLAN



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Message from the Ministry



Never before has the world been home to so many children and youth – **around 3.1 billion of the current global population are younger than 25**. Most of them (some 90 per cent) live in developing countries, where they often form the absolute majority of the population. **Despite their large numbers, young people are particularly vulnerable**. Around the globe, there are many places where extreme poverty, malnutrition, illness and exploitative child labour have a detrimental impact on their development. Half of the refugees and displaced people in the world are children or youth. **Nobody gets a second chance at childhood**. It is extremely difficult – if not impossible – to regain access later in life to the opportunities one misses out on in youth. The foundations of a person's future are laid in the very early years of childhood – through access to food, healthcare, education and much more. Only if girls and boys are protected, supported as they develop and given a say can they help bring about peaceful and sustainable development in our world. As the Agenda 2030 makes a point of highlighting, they are critical **agents of change**.

These are the reasons why the BMZ **stands up for children and youth rights around the world, working to ensure they are respected, protected and guaranteed**. This is a key component of our development policy, a policy based on values. Our efforts are especially focused on providing prospects for a better future for the particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society in our partner countries.

To cite just one example of what the BMZ has achieved in the educational sector, in 2016 alone we were able to **improve the school education received by more than 25 million children and youth worldwide**. We are also currently supporting 160,000 Syrian and Turkish pupils in Turkey and providing psychosocial support services for 40,000 children there.

However, with many challenges facing the world, there is still much to be done. This action plan is therefore intended to expand our activities and includes two points in particular that I should like to highlight:

- a) **A person's rights "begin" with their right to a name and a nationality**. At present, around 35 per cent of all children worldwide have not had their existence, age or identity acknowledged by the state. Yet that acknowledgement is crucial to gaining access to education, healthcare and protection against violation of their rights. **We will step up our efforts to support the birth registration process in our partner countries**.
- b) **Young people have a right to active involvement in decisions that affect them – be it at the social, political or economic level**. Their voices need to be heard if their ideas and suggestions are to be put to effective use. That is why German development cooperation policy takes child and youth participation seriously.

I am particularly grateful to the young people who made an active contribution to this action plan through their participation in the Youth Consultation Forum, providing us all with a shining example to follow. I would like to encourage all young people to play an active role to become part of the decision-making process and help us create a better world.

State Secretary Dr Friedrich Kitschelt

Message from the Youth Consultation Forum

This action plan is special because it puts children and youth in the spotlight of German development policy. We believe that this is vital to implementing children's rights, which are now set to play a more significant role in the work of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as a result of the action plan.

In fact, the story of how this action plan was drawn up is special too. The BMZ set up a youth consultation process, designed specifically to give children and youth an opportunity to voice their opinions. From October 2015 to March 2016, we, the 24 young people who participated in the consultation forum, drafted our ideas on development-related issues, along with concrete proposals for the BMZ action plan. We were particularly keen to include a focus on the rights and protection of refugee children and child and youth participation in Germany and Germany's partner countries. We recorded the results of the youth consultation process in an outcome document¹ and a video². You will see some of the results reflected in the content of the following pages.

We realise how important it is for us to have a say in matters that affect us, our rights and the rights of our generation in Germany's partner countries. Not only do we want to be given the opportunity to participate – we want to actively grasp that opportunity. Child and youth participation brings benefits for everyone, and the intention is that the ideas developed by children and youth should benefit both the action plan itself and the actions it contains. Achieving that will require youth networks in the partner countries, pro-



fessional support and a forum for children and youth in Germany who wish to get involved. Implementing these measures will lend children and youth a voice in development cooperation policy. Having a voice is what youth civil society is all about – and as members of youth civil society we also want to be involved in the implementation of this action plan.

We would like to thank the BMZ and everyone involved for making the youth consultation process possible and we hope that it will continue in the future. We'd be happy to participate!

The participants in the Youth Consultation Forum

¹ http://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF-Dateien/Sonstiges/Kinder_und_Jugendrechte_in_der_EZ_verwirklichen_Lasst_uns_gestalten.pdf

² http://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/service/mediathek/?tx_medialibrary_medialibrarylist%5Bmedia%5D=333&tx_medialibrary_medialibrarylist%5Baction%5D=show&tx_medialibrary_medialibrarylist%5Bcontroller%5D=Media&cHash=271f83eb6d525f1ee4d1896c369f21c2

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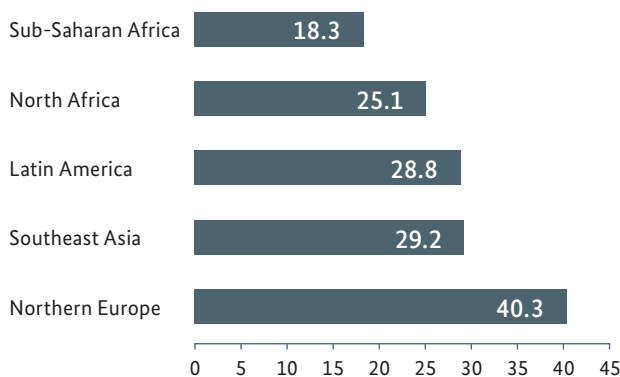
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1 Why children and youth rights are important

Children and youth are the potential on which the future of humankind rests. Their dynamism, creativity, capacities and dreams will completely revolutionise the families, societies and countries in which they grow up and live.

Numbering around 3.1 billion, today's generation of 0 to 24-year-olds³ is the largest there has ever been. The majority of them (approximately 90 per cent) live in developing countries. And the share of young people in the global community is set to grow even further over the next few decades.

Average age of population in years



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015): "World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision"

Youth have high expectations of their future. They are extremely innovative and eager to shape their future. A young population profile can provide a special **window of opportunity for the development of a country**

and a door to tremendous prospects for sustainable economic development, alleviation of poverty, conflict prevention and democratisation.

Children and youth are **particularly defenceless** in the face of extreme poverty, hunger, violence, exploitation and natural disaster. Displacement, uprooting, neglect and a lack of educational opportunities are part of everyday life for millions of children.

Denying young people the prospect of a healthy, safe, productive and full life can threaten **peace and security** in a country and influence entire families' **migration decisions**.

In most partner countries in German development policy, young people account for the majority of the population. For instance, it is already the case that almost half of the African population is under 18 on average – in Niger and Uganda the average is under 16. Development cooperation programmes that target these large segments of the population have to identify their specific needs and ensure they are given adequate consideration in activities carried out with partners.

It is crucial that such efforts take the specific roles and responsibilities, lives, needs and interests of girls and boys into account since equality between girls and boys is one of the keys to sustainable development and alleviation of poverty.

³ Whilst the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides the basis in international law for the rights of girls and boys until their 18th birthday, this action plan uses the terms defined by the United Nations Statistics Division. Thus, all persons up to the age of 14 are referred to as "children", all of those between the ages of 14 and 24 are referred to as "youth" and the term used for the overall 0-24 age group is "young people".

Young people want to – and we want them to – **participate** in the planning of development projects. We do not want to wait, indeed we cannot wait, for today's children to become adults before they start helping to shape society. Young people have rights that have to be implemented here and now for the present and the future. That is the stated aim of German development policy.

1.1 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Children and youth are particularly hard hit by the major challenges facing the world. By signing up to the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the goals it sets out** (SDGs), the international community made a commitment to implement girls' and boys' rights across all sectors worldwide and to tackle fundamental problems faced by young people. This includes reducing child poverty, significantly improving the food situation, health, education and employment opportunities, putting an end to abuse and harmful child labour and providing easier access to basic sanitary facilities. The impact of poverty on children and youth is disproportionately high. They are twice as likely as adults to be living in extreme poverty (below 1.90 US dollars per day), with the very young being particularly badly affected. More than 20 per cent of under-five-year-olds in developing countries live in extreme poverty. In SDG 1, the international community has made a commitment to eradicate all forms of extreme poverty by 2030.

Each year, **5.9 million children do not live to see their fifth birthday**. This number could be halved through simple, low-cost interventions, for example, by improving the food situation and healthcare for mothers and children. The aim of SDG 3 is for the international community to ensure year-round access to sufficient and well-balanced meals and to “reduce under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births”.

In 2014, the total number of children and youth who did not attend school was 263 million; more than 60 million were not in primary schooling. A good half of children without access to education are girls and it is assumed that the majority of those girls will go their whole lives without any form of school education. Boys do not suffer this disadvantage to the same extent (the figure for them is 35 per cent). Girls from



poor or rural households are at a particular disadvantage, as are children with a disability. In SDG 4, the governments of the world have made a commitment to ensure quality education for all.

Around the world, there are currently some 71 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 **out of work**; in the MENA region, one in three is affected. 168 million children and youth worldwide between the ages of 5 and 17 are engaged in **child labour – 85 million in hazardous workplaces**. In SDG 8, the governments have made a commitment to create decent jobs for all, immediately eliminate the worst forms of child labour and end all forms of child labour by 2025. Only if the worst forms of child labour are eliminated will children have an opportunity to develop and to find decent work as young people.

Worldwide, almost 230 million under-fives have never had their birth officially registered. This is particularly true of children from segments of the population that are vulnerable or subject to discrimination and/or children growing up in countries in crisis. Often, children who are not registered and do not have a **birth certificate** cannot avail themselves of their rights (for example, the right to attend school or receive medical care). Governments have made a commitment to change this situation too, through SDG 16, to ensure all people have a legal identity.

More than two thirds of children are **victims of various forms of violence**. The share of girls worldwide who have experienced sexual violence, often within their own families, is slightly higher than 1 in 10. Girls and boys with a disability are particular-

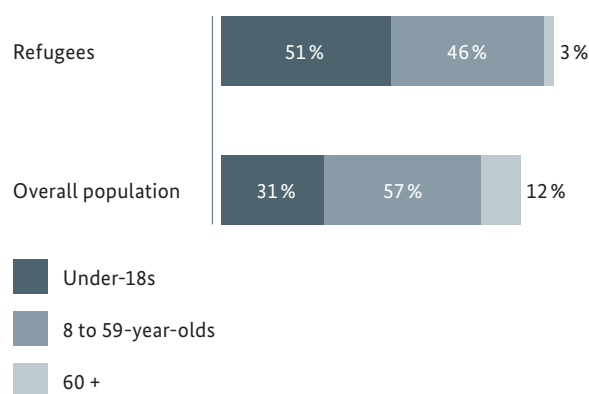
ly affected by stigma, exclusion and physical violence. **One third of human trafficking cases worldwide involves children**, two thirds of them girls. Children and youth are both victims and perpetrators – as child soldiers or members of armed gangs, for instance. The SDGs are ambitious in this respect too: numbers 5, 8 and 16 are intended to put an end to these forms of violence against children.

15 million girls per year are **married** before they turn 18 – **a third of them before they turn 15**. In the majority of cases, these girls do not have access to family planning services and often become pregnant too young and unintendedly. In addition, as many as 44 million under-15 girls worldwide are affected by female genital mutilation. SDG 5 seeks to ensure gender equality and to “eliminate all harmful practices, such as child... marriage and female genital mutilation”.

Worldwide, there are 65 million people fleeing war, violence and persecution, of whom approximately 28 million are children. Half of the world’s refugees are 18 or younger and the number is rising. With armed conflicts raging, families being uprooted and systems – including education systems – collapsing, there is a threat of a lost generation. In several UN resolutions, the international community has made a commitment to take into account refugee children’s special protection needs.

However, young people are not only victims of major global challenges – they are also agents of change, playing an active role in improving their lives. Across the globe, they work to obtain the rights due to them and to secure their society’s future. They work in youth organisations and conduct awareness campaigns across all sectors. Their ideas, dreams and their energetic, critical involvement offer inexhaustible potential. They are a driver of innovation and play a significant role, nationally and internationally, in shaping the present and the future in line with their own ideas. Not only did they play a central part in the **SDG negotiations**, they are a major driving force for the implementation of the SDGs.

Age breakdown of refugees and total population



Source: UNICEF (2016): “Uprooted: The growing crisis for refugee and migrant children”, p. 21. http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_92710.html.

1.2 INTERNATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Children and youth have their own specific rights and are entitled to have those rights enforced. Since 1992, when it acceded to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** (UNCRC), Germany has been committed to respecting, protecting and guaranteeing children and youth rights. The Convention’s provisions are established law, to be implemented at the national and international level. By ratifying the UNCRC, all partner countries in German development cooperation activities have made a commitment to implement young people’s rights – irrespective of social, cultural, ethnic or religious factors.

September 2015 saw 193 heads of state and government, including Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, **adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. The aim is to fundamentally improve the situation of, in particular, all young people by the year 2030. The international community has made a commitment to create a world that invests in its children and in which every child can grow up in an environment free of violence and exploitation. As such, the 2030 Agenda provides an important political framework for the implementation of children and youth rights. It cites children, young women and men as “critical agents of change”.

The **Addis Ababa Action Agenda** on Financing for Development identifies investments in children and youth as essential for sustainable development.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UNCRC was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and covers three categories of rights.

- **Survival and development rights** ensure basic welfare for every child, including the right to a suitable living standard and the right to health.
- **Protection rights** ensure protection against physical and psychological violence, neglect, exploitation and abuse, as well as ensuring special protection in armed conflicts, disasters and displacement scenarios.
- **Participation rights** guarantee freedom of expression and free, child-friendly access to information and media. They also include the right to have the expressed opinions heard and taken into account by society.

It is vital that all three categories of rights are implemented if children and youth are to be guaranteed the chance to exercise their rights.

There are **three optional protocols**, which supplement the UNCRC and deal with involvement of children in armed conflict, the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the establishment of a communications procedure through which children can lodge complaints about violations of their rights.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

A large number of the 17 SDGs are directly or indirectly aimed at implementing children's rights. These include the eradication of child mortality and malnutrition; access to education; improvement of training and employment opportunities for youth; access to healthcare; abolition of child labour, sale of children, child marriage and all forms of violence towards children; and a guaranteed legal identity through registration of birth, which is the prerequisite for access to numerous services provided by government. In its July 2016 report to the High Level Political Forum, Germany described the steps it plans to take to implement the SDGs and support its partner countries.

Even before the 2030 Agenda was adopted, the **Third International Conference on Financing for Development**, which took place in Addis Ababa from 13 to 16 July 2015, was a milestone event, partly because the outcome document cites investment in children and youth as a prerequisite for inclusive and sustainable growth.



1.3 OUR PRINCIPLES

- **Children’s rights are human rights.** They are indivisible, universal and apply equally to all. German development policy pursues a human rights-based approach, with human rights influencing our objectives, programmes and collaboration with other countries and partners. Children and youth have specific rights with special entitlements vis-à-vis the state.
- **A ban on discrimination** on such grounds as ethnicity, age, gender or social status, is an integral part of all human rights treaties and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We reduce discrimination against children and youth and against girls and boys in our partner countries and assist them in their efforts to overcome such discrimination.
- **The welfare of the child** is a fundamental implementation principle in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We take what are referred to there as the “best interests” of the child into account when planning and conducting German development cooperation interventions.



- **Children and youth have a voice.** The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child gives them the right to participate and have their voice heard. We see children and youth as active members of society and promote their right to have a say.



- **Gender equality is an underlying principle of German development cooperation policy.** Our aim is to improve the lives of girls and boys to an equal extent.
- **Children and youth are a diverse group,** comprising various age groups, life phases (newborns and infants, school-age children, adolescents and young adults) and social backgrounds. Our policies reflect their different needs whilst also seeing children and youth as one target group – a group united by its members’ strength, creativity, potential to develop and learn but also by their vulnerability.

1.4 WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SO FAR?

Recent years have seen major progress in the incorporation of child and youth rights into German development cooperation strategies, projects and programmes:

- Children and youth are a direct or indirect target group in much of our work, for example, in education, health and employment promotion. Numerous programmes, particularly in the new special initiatives on “Tackling the root causes of displacement – Reintegrating refugees”, “Stability and Development in the Middle East and North Africa” and “One World – No Hunger”, place a special focus on young people.
- UNICEF is a key strategic partner in the BMZ’s efforts to implement children’s rights around the world. Since the BMZ became the lead ministry in the German government’s cooperation with

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UNICEF in 2012, the partnership has been continuously intensified. In 2016, the BMZ provided UNICEF with 260 million euros in funding, of which a large part was for projects in the context of the Syria crisis.

Examples of our activities

- In the special initiative on “Tackling the root causes of displacement – Reintegrating refugees”, concrete action is being taken to improve the situation of displaced girls and boys. For example, 100,000 places have been created in schools in the host communities in Jordan and in other countries neighbouring Syria. Psycho-social support is being delivered for 38,000 children in Ethiopia and 20,000 children in Iraq. As of 2015, around 144,000 displaced children from South Sudan and host communities in Kenya had received medical care and benefited from improved infrastructure.
- The ombudsman institutions for human rights from 20 Latin American and European countries have joined forces in a working group on children and youth rights. It was this group that gave the impetus for a training course on the practical implementation of children’s rights, which was delivered in 2016 as part of German development cooperation activities. Representatives from the ombudsman institutions learned about methods for involving young people and making decision makers more aware of child and youth participation issues. They also presented approaches that had proven successful in their own work, such as how children and youth can communicate complaints to them, how children are involved in decision-making processes and how they cooperate with civil society.
- In 2013, we initiated the “WorldWeWant” youth project in cooperation with UNICEF. Its aim was to include young people in the discussion surrounding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The participants discussed their vision for the world they wanted and presented their ideas to policymakers.



- Our strategy on “Human rights in German development cooperation activities” includes young people’s rights as an integral part for the first time.
- Our national, sector and regional strategies incorporate demographic trends and topics of relevance to children and youth rights.
- There is also a binding requirement for official development cooperation projects to consider children and youth rights throughout the entire project cycle.
- We have compiled examples of best practice in the implementation of children and youth rights plus a list of practical tools, in collaboration with civil society.
- We have formed numerous development partnerships with the private sector to promote the development of young people, including training initiatives.
- In cooperation with UNICEF and the EU Commission, we have developed and systematically deliver innovative training courses for national and international professionals.

Much has been achieved but there is still a great deal to be done to ensure more systematic integration of young people’s rights in German official development cooperation activities.

2 Action plan

2.1 AIMS OF THE ACTION PLAN

Young people and their prospects in life are crucial to sustainable development. This action plan is intended to frame a strategy for and expand our worldwide activities to promote children and youth. We want German development cooperation policy to reflect their needs better, in line with their status as a key target group, and help ensure that their rights are systematically strengthened.

The action plan is an important part of our work to help **implement the SDGs**. It has been formulated based on one of the main principles of the 2030 Agenda – “leave no one behind” – and highlights children as “critical agents of change”, as described in the introduction to the Agenda.

We have thus set ourselves **three strategic goals**:

- to expand and improve the projects we carry out to implement child and youth rights;
- to play a leading role in international dialogue to ensure children and youth rights are respected, protected and guaranteed; and
- to make the risks facing and the potential of children’s rights a strategic aspect in the design of our support activities and to ensure those activities are aligned with the interests and needs of our partner governments.

These goals are to be achieved using a **three-pronged approach**, consisting of the following:

- regional, bilateral and multilateral **development cooperation programmes**, which are directly or indirectly targeted at young people;

- **mainstreaming** of children and youth rights into German official development cooperation institutions, their methods and activities; and
- deeper dialogue with bilateral and regional partners plus multilateral actors that are committed to these issues, with a stronger focus on children and youth rights.

2.2 GERMAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

In the period up to 2019, we will implement the **regional and worldwide activities** described on the following pages in order to achieve the goals mentioned above.

The action plan is based on the regional categories used in German development cooperation activities, which in turn are based on the needs of the partner countries as described in the country portfolios and government pledges. It contains a specially chosen selection of examples and illustrates sectoral and/or regional priorities of German development cooperation policy. It does not provide an exhaustive description of the BMZ’s worldwide portfolio, particularly in the areas of education, vocational training and health, which are typically geared to young people. The interventions have been chosen, and grouped together where appropriate, based on the special features of the region in question. The examples given after the description of the activities provide details of current projects that already show well how the action plan is being implemented. They are examples of projects that would lend themselves well to adoption in other countries and regions too.

AFRICA

In the period up to 2019 we will:

Action area 1: Health

- give higher priority to funding projects aimed at improving the **health** and access to healthcare of children and youth, through such measures as support for:
 - interventions to promote maternal health;
 - interventions to provide sexual education and improved access to services in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights;
 - youth work aimed at preventing HIV/AIDS; and
 - interventions to improve the supply of drinking water and sanitary facilities as well as to improve hygiene, especially in healthcare and education institutions.

Action area 2: Education and vocational training

- enhance the quality of **primary and secondary education** to provide children and youth with skills that reflect their realities and to help eliminate inequality;
- support **vocational training** for young people, including through joint interventions with the private sector, and new measures aimed at promoting employment;
- create prospects for **rural youth**, including through employment promotion and use of ICT solutions; and
- help ensure that disadvantaged **primary school** children get a balanced **meal** at school.

Action area 3: Poverty and nutrition

- improve the **nutritional situation** of children, especially in crisis contexts, including by supplying them with micronutrients and medicines;
- help improve the nutritional situation of infants and thus, ultimately, children's health and school enrolment ratios through **social cash transfers** for families living in absolute poverty; and
- protect children and youth from the **after-effects of drought** and El Niño.

Action area 4: Fair working conditions

- support interventions aimed at **eliminating exploitative child labour**.

Action area 5: Protection against violence and discrimination

- expand our activities in the area of **violence prevention** work with children and youth, especially where stigmatisation and exclusion prevent participation in social life. In Public Private Partnerships (PPP), we will empower youth to achieve positive, social change and non-violent behaviour as well as creating new prospects for youth.

Action area 6: Registration

- promote **registration** of newborn and older children and the issuing of birth certificates by supporting partner governments' efforts to establish civil status records.

EXAMPLES

Basic social protection to improve living conditions

In Malawi, we are stepping up our contribution to an improvement in the nutritional situation of infants through social cash transfers, thus helping to improve health and school enrolment ratios and reduce the number of teenage pregnancies. Through these regular transfers, we help families escape absolute poverty. We also advise the ministries concerned with the implementation of government welfare programmes.

Youth for safer communities

In South Africa, we are backing youth-specific interventions designed to prevent violence. The “Youth for Safer Communities” initiative encourages young people to recognise – and play – their part in the establishment of safe communities. In addition, ICT and social media are being used to improve the technical facilities of the “Youth Crime Prevention Desks” and foster dialogue between youth and governmental institutions.

Promoting employment to improve living conditions

Through an employment-promotion programme in North Cameroon, we are helping to improve the living conditions of young women and men and provide youth with workplaces and prospects for the future. This is being done through specific training courses for young people and through support for educational establishments. We also support youth platforms and dialogue fora to enable youth to voice their concerns.

Sexuality education and youth-friendly health services (ESA Initiative)

We are supporting the implementation of the ESA Initiative (Eastern and Southern African Ministerial Commitment) in Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and South Africa. The aim of the ESA Commitment is to improve HIV prevention and the sexual and reproductive health of youth through comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly health services. Our support provides assistance for communication and networking between partner governments and youth organisations and for improved, needs-based access to healthcare for children and youth.

Green innovation centres for rural prospects (Ethiopia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, India, Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Zambia, Togo and Tunisia)

As part of the “One World – No Hunger” special initiative, we are promoting employment opportunities and prospects for youth in what are known as “green innovation centres for the agricultural and food sector”. They provide training and advisory services for young people from smallholding families or companies up or downstream of such smallholdings to help them increase yields and income in a sustainable manner. By doing this, we counter rural flight among young adults and create prospects in rural regions.

Improvement of living conditions for cocoa farmers – German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO)

We are working with the private sector and civil society in the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO) to tackle abusive child labour and malnutrition in West Africa. The extreme poverty of the cocoa growers in the region often leads to the worst forms of child labour in the agricultural sector. GISCO works to improve the living conditions and income situation of cocoa farmers and their families.

Child labour and trafficking in Burkina Faso

A security officer from Fada N’Gourma in the east of Burkina Faso in his own words:

“When we’re out on patrol, we’re always picking up children who are trying to leave their village and home to cross the border to Benin and then on to Nigeria. They want to work in the fields there to earn money to support their family or pay their school fees. Often, there are human smugglers involved. They promise the children lots of nice things but the children end up working in inhumane conditions. They’re economically exploited, often fall prey to violence and are exposed to many other dangers.”

In the “PRO-Enfant, Implementation of children’s rights in Burkina Faso” programme, we are working to promote children’s rights. Child protection networks are being created there in cooperation with community representatives and the local labour and welfare authorities. Courses for the security personnel, social workers and community leaders are raising awareness of



the problem and the risks involved. The training shows them ways to manage and tackle the problem. Awareness campaigns based on modified forms of communication are being used to teach the population, including the children themselves, about the risks of work-related migration and child trafficking. This has already proved successful in convincing many children and parents not to opt for migration as a means of finding work.

“The world’s young people – who make up the largest generation of youth in history – can lead a global drive to break the patterns of the past and set the world on course to a more sustainable future.”

(Ban Ki Moon, World Youth Day, 12 August 2016)

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA)

In the period up to 2019 we will:

Action area 1: Education and vocational training

→ ramp up support for **vocational training** for youth in order to create better prospects.

Action area 2: Peace, security and displacement

→ help counter the impact of conflict in the Middle East on children and youth and prevent a “lost generation”, including through:

- improved access to **primary school education** for displaced children, especially from Syria and Iraq, as well as for children from host communities;
- expansion of inclusive measures to provide **psychosocial support**, especially for children and youth in host communities; and
- training for young people who are affected by the Syria crisis and seeking new ways forward.

Action area 3: Protection against violence and discrimination

→ help to protect children and youth, particularly girls, from abuse and violence and tackle these phenomena.

Action area 4: Participation

→ promote participation of youth as part of civil society.

EXAMPLES

Support for youth organisations

Youth participation is at the heart of our support for civil society in the Palestinian Territories. Youth organisations such as the *Palestinian Youth Network for Citizenship and Reform* are receiving assistance specifically to boost their networking activities and ensure their voices are heard. Since young people are particularly affected by conflict due to the lack of prospects it causes, these measures will also be conducive to peaceful conflict solution.

Youth action against sexual harassment

In Egypt, we are working to tackle sexual harassment and violence. Creative workshops make young women and men aware of the issue and empower them to actively defend themselves and take action against sexual harassment. We are also strengthening inclusive youth initiatives active in this area and working with social networks to conduct awareness campaigns.

Psychosocial support for refugee children

In the special initiative on “Tackling the root causes of displacement – Reintegrating refugees”, we are providing psychosocial support for Syrian and Iraqi refugee children and internally displaced children. By drawing on the lessons learned by UNICEF and other actors on the ground and promoting synergies, we are facilitating a harmonious, child-friendly approach to psychosocial support in the host region.

Employment-driven participation – Simplifying access to the labour market

In Morocco, we are promoting youth employment by supporting the implementation of the national employment strategy. In rural areas especially, there is often a lack of non-agricultural employment and training opportunities. To open up new prospects for young people, we are expanding our advisory and job-placement services, developing training programmes and providing start-up funding.

Sport for development

Sport gets people moving and bonding. It contributes to the physical and mental health of children and youth, is fun and teaches values such as fair play, team spirit, tolerance and mutual understanding. That is why we provide support to a number of our partner countries for informal sports opportunities and for the incorporation of sports lessons into national curricula.

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Backed up by special teaching methods, sport can be used as an educational tool, help in HIV/AIDS and violence prevention and teach valuable life skills at the same time. We also use sport in our vocational

training and employment-promotion activities, for instance, by giving information on vocational training opportunities at sports practice.

Opening up new prospects through academic training for young Syrians and Jordanians

“This scholarship and all of the project staff’s hard work mean so much to me – they aren’t just a gift, they’re a blessing from God. It is the only way for me to improve my life, my knowledge and my entire situation.”

Participant in the scholarship programme, December 2015

“The social projects in which we’re involved are great. They enable us to help our community and give something back – we’re very grateful for this opportunity.”

Participant in the scholarship programme, February 2016

A lack of finances, residence status or required documents prevents many Syrian refugees in Jordan from being able to study there. Young Jordanians also often find themselves without any prospects. For the young generation from both sides of the border, education is a tremendous opportunity to secure a better future.

This project awards scholarships for master programmes. Half of them go to Syrian refugees and half to disadvantaged Jordanians, with



young women accounting for 50 per cent of each group. The project has enabled a total of 80 young people to study at Jordanian universities, giving them prospects that they greatly appreciate. In addition to their studies, the students perform volunteer work, providing psychosocial support for Syrian refugees, running afternoon play schemes for orphans and supporting non-violent co-existence of Jordanians and Syrians in the host communities. By bringing their knowledge and skills to their host community, they contribute to the integration process.

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Sport for development

Kassam and his friends play in a football team and have a coach who acts as a role model for them. With the help of the “Vocational training and preparation for the job market through sport for development” project, he has learnt football and life skills as well as finding out about the vocational training options available to him. Kassam had problems at school but playing football and talking to his coach helped him discover new prospects for his future. He decided to move from his school to a vocational college as of September 2016.

“Our target group is 14 to 16-year-olds since they make up a large share of the community. We provide careers advice and try to use the sports activities to raise awareness of vocational training programmes so that the youngsters can develop their own career opportunities.”

(Tamara Awartani and Sameh Masri, Ramallah, Palestinian Territories)

In the Palestinian Territories, German development cooperation projects use sport as a means of boosting the image of vocational training and thus improving youth participation on the labour market. Careers information at sports events and the integration of the “Sport for development” strategy in vocational training programmes make vocational training more appealing and interesting to youth.



ASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

In the period up to 2019 we will:

Action area 1: Fair working conditions

- help improve working conditions in the textile sector and eliminate exploitative child and forced labour in global supply chains.

Action area 2: Health

- improve healthcare for mothers and newborn babies as well as access, particularly for young people, to sexual and reproductive healthcare services;
- improve, through multi-sector interventions, the nutritional situation of, in particular, pregnant women, mothers and infants and make them more resilient to future hunger crises; and
- improve children's school environment by introducing and enforcing minimum standards for water, sanitary facilities and hygiene.

Action area 3: Protection against violence and discrimination

- promote work by and with youth in the areas of violence prevention and conflict mediation and support the establishment of youth networks; and
- promote opportunities for young people to analyse and come to terms with the past.

Action area 4: Governance

- improve youth access to the law and legal aid and support partner governments in their efforts to implement child and youth legislation.

Action area 5: Participation

- promote youth participation in peace processes and the democratic development of their country.

EXAMPLES

Working with youth to come to terms with the past

We provide support in Cambodia for the “Youth Resource Development Program” (YRDP) through the Civil Peace Service. The aim of the YRDP is to create forums for young people for critical and open dialogue. Through events at which they can talk to victims and perpetrators of the Khmer Rouge regime as well as memorial and reconciliatory activities, we are helping to establish a Cambodian culture of remembrance and support young Cambodians as they look back at the country's past and forward to their future.

Health information for children and youth

In Nepal, we are working to ensure equal access to and improved quality of sexual and reproductive healthcare services. We want to make it easier for adolescents to obtain health information and ensure that it meets their needs. Another aim is to raise awareness in the population of the issue of acceptance of youth sexuality.

Afghan Youth for Peace

We are helping to empower young Afghans through the Civil Peace Service so that they gain a voice in society and can contribute to the process of reconciliation between the various ethnic groups. In the “Afghan Youth for Peace” project, we are strengthening youth participation in the peace process and reinforcing the country's democratic development by doing so.

Tackling child labour – supporting the ILO

We have been supporting the International Labour Organization's (ILO) “International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour” (IPEC) since the beginning of the 1990s. The aim of the programme is to rid the world of child labour, particularly in its worst forms.

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Our support helps, for example, to improve education and training opportunities for the children affected and to provide opportunities for decent work for youth in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Developing peace, promoting youth and fighting corruption in Timor-Leste

“The training showed me how to apply participatory methods in work with preschoolers. These methods focus on the children and view them as independent actors who can help shape learning and change processes.”

Estelina Gomes, 30, preschool teacher in Ursabe

“I look forward to school because my teacher teaches us the alphabet, numbers, singing, stories and drawing. And I play with my friends – I’ve got a lot of friends here. My parents don’t have to walk to school with me. I can draw animals and flowers! When I showed my parents my pictures they were very happy and they bought me a new bag.”

Maria do Céu, 4, pupil at Suri-ubu Preschool

The “Peace Development, Youth Promotion and Fight against Corruption” project works closely with civil society organisations to support non-violent approaches to youth development and children’s rights in Timor-Leste. In cooperation with the Office of the Secretary of State for Youth and Sports, the peace fund offers a national training programme on youth development for aspiring managers. It also supports various other projects in the area of peace and youth development. In rural regions, there is hardly any access to quality education or early childhood education. Violence towards children is still a widespread phenomenon in rural homes and schools. In response, the



“Institute Matasalan Integradu” is setting up new preschools in rural areas. To ensure the quality of the education there, the teachers receive regular training on children’s rights, curriculum design and the implementation of participatory, non-violent approaches.

LATIN AMERICA

In the period up to 2019 we will:

Action area 1: Prevention of violence and protection against discrimination

→ help reduce youth violence by means of training on violence prevention, careers guidance for youth and expanded capacities at schools and training institutions.

Action area 2: Education and vocational training

→ support decentralisation, transparency and participation in the field of education.

Action area 3: Participation

→ Expand freedom of information for youth, especially in rural regions, and use new media to bolster political participation by youth.

EXAMPLES

Reduction of youth violence

We are helping to reduce youth violence in Central America through the “PREVENIR” and “CONVIVIR” programmes. Based on an integrated approach, we are supporting vocational training opportunities for

young people and advising our governmental partners on approaches to youth-specific violence prevention in schools and training institutions. A method called Miles de Manos (thousands of hands) is being used to boost teachers’ and parents’ educational and communicative skills and the cooperation between the two groups. In Honduras, Miles de Manos is already a fixed part of government-provided parental training; in Guatemala and El Salvador, it is part of the government’s prevention strategy for schools.

Freedom of information

In Guatemala, we are supporting freedom of expression and media development – and a radio station that gives young people a say and takes them seriously. Unique in Guatemala, the content on “Sónica 106.9” is put together by youth from rural areas. It paves the way for discussion and addresses difficult issues too, such as youth crime or sexuality. We also support training programmes for students and media professionals in rural areas, enabling us to point young adults in rural regions in the direction of a future that leaves violence behind.

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Acting together against violence – “MamMut”

“What I liked best was discovering new things with my friends and things that were interesting and unusual. Plus, me and my friends got to learn more about violence and that you have to stand up to it.”

“I learnt that you have to be respectful, you shouldn’t hit people and that we just have to say ‘no’ to violence!”

“I learnt that you shouldn’t hit mummies and that I’m worth something!”

Statements by boys and girls who took part in the course

“MamMut” is an interactive course for six to nine-year-olds, designed to help prevent violence against girls and women. Based on children’s rights, it promotes respect and appreciation in interpersonal relations. There are five tasks to complete, inspired by real-life situations familiar to the girls and boys. The children learn to (a) say “no” to violence, (b) think about gender-specific role assignments, (c) name different forms of violence and (d) develop an awareness of the damage it does.

Furthermore, the girls’ and boys’ self-esteem is boosted and the silence broken. They are given the confidence to get help if they experience violence.

More than 6,000 children in Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru and Germany have taken part in MamMut so far. To support them in their learning process, over 500 people from public, civil society and private-sector institutions have been trained as coaches – and the number is ever increasing!



ASTERN EUROPE AND THE CAUCASUS

In the period up to 2019 we will:

Action area 1: Employment promotion

→ provide new prospects for youth through support for employment schemes and vocational training.

Action area 2: Peace, security and displacement

→ provide assistance for internally displaced children and youth in the form of psychosocial support services, accessible, discrimination-free “child-friendly spaces” in childcare facilities, preventive healthcare in schools and support for youth organisations.

EXAMPLES

Protection for children and internally displaced youth

We are working to protect and develop children and youth who are displaced within Ukraine. We do this by, for example, installing “child-friendly spaces”, offering active recreation programmes and psychological support for children and youth from vulnerable sections of the population. We also support participatory approaches to youth work, which actively involve young people and thus foster dialogue in the host communities.

Raising awareness of social rights

In the Western Balkans, we are working to ensure the social rights of vulnerable groups. Girls and boys with a disability, from minorities such as the Roma and internally displaced children are particularly likely to be discriminated against when endeavouring to access welfare services. We support institutions run by the government and civil society in five countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia) and help them optimise and establish their approach to social work at the regional level. We teach children and youth about their social rights in tailored, interactive workshops. This involvement of young people is crucial as they pass on what they learn, making them key drivers of social development in the region.

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Psychosocial support for children in East Ukraine

“Thank you! With your help, I’ve managed to overcome my fear. I don’t feel so alone anymore and I’m not afraid of the dark anymore.”

(Masha, 11)

“I can hardly wait for the next time! I love it. Finally, I understand myself and my friends. Thank you!”

(Nastya, 10)

“I don’t know how you did it exactly but the lad’s completely calmed down again!”

(Grandmother of a seven-year-old boy who previously suffered from anxiety)

The repercussions of the conflict in East Ukraine are particularly severe for children and their families. They have no protection against the psychological and social impact of the conflict. Children are still suffering from post-traumatic disorders years later. There are no protective or coping mechanisms especially for children and youth and the evolving civil society structures are overburdened.



German development cooperation activities are supporting UNICEF Ukraine’s work to create 20 Community Protection Centres in East Ukraine and to train mobile teams who look after, in particular, families in difficult-to-access areas very close to the conflict zone.

More than 10,000 people are therefore participating in a training programme to teach them new ways of identifying problems at an early stage and preventing long-term consequences for the children. With the help of German development cooperation support, UNICEF is also working with nurseries in the region and distributing 6,000 psychological first aid kits.

GERMANY

In the period up to 2019 we will:

Action area 1: Integration of children and youth rights

- integrate children and youth rights more into mandatory governance instruments and the **control processes and management tools** of development cooperation organisations;
- provide a **training strategy for children and youth rights** in development cooperation activities and carry out training for the BMZ and the implementing organisations;
- produce a **toolbox** with sector-specific checklists and best practice examples for more systematic and non-discriminatory inclusion of children and youth rights in German development cooperation projects;
- examine the possibility of introducing a **child protection policy** to protect children within the sphere of influence of German development cooperation policy and its institutions; and
- push ahead with the collection of **disaggregated data**, broken down by age and gender.

Action area 2: Participation

- support the development of lean, efficient **development cooperation participation formats** for young people in Germany and worldwide; and
- publish information about development cooperation activities on a new **website** (“**Check (D)eine Welt**”) for children and youth.

Action area 3: Partnership

- work closely with **partner and children’s rights organisations** that are strong advocates of children and youth rights.

EXAMPLE

Youth Consultation Forum for the action plan

The Youth Consultation Forum brought together 24 young people between the ages of 14 and 24, who were involved in development work themselves. They took part in three workshops where they drew up recommendations for an action plan on children and youth rights and set out what they would like to see included in it. By means of this process, we are supporting youth participation in German development policy and strengthening young people in their role as agents of sustainable development.

WORLDWIDE INITIATIVES

In the period up to 2019 we will:

Action area 1: International partnerships

- contribute to international processes and continue to consolidate **close partnerships**, specifically with the EU Commission and relevant UN organisations (especially UNICEF, ILO, UNHCR and WHO) and the UN Global Compact;
- step up our cooperation with UNICEF and develop it in line with our strategy;
- continue our bilateral and multilateral efforts to improve the health situation of children and youth (Initiative on Rights-based Family Planning and Maternal Health, “Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance”, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative); and
- work with partner countries to expand youth exchanges and school twinings that are inclusive and based on equal opportunities.

Action area 2: Partnership with non-governmental organisations

- support projects and programmes by church organisations and private German organisations that aim to empower young people to exercise their rights.

Action area 3: Partnership with industry

- take action worldwide to help promote sustainable supply chains that comply with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy, the maternal mortality rate and the number of girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy, as well as improving education prospects.

Youth exchange

Through the African-German Youth Initiative, we are promoting North-South and South-North youth exchange projects. We are strengthening civil society capacities for youth exchanges in the partner countries, expanding volunteer services in Germany and facilitating access to education and personal as well as professional development for more young people. In this way, we are both supporting interregional cooperation based on equality and partnership and promoting active participation by young people, who go on to become “citizens of the world.”

Partnership for Sustainable Textiles

We are working with businesses, industry associations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and certification organisations on such issues as the elimination of child and forced labour in the textiles and clothing industry and better protection for young people employed in textiles factories. The members of the Textiles Partnership pledge to support measures to expose and eliminate child and forced labour and to protect young workers in their supply chains. We are also working with supply firms in Asian production countries in bilateral and regional projects to raise awareness of the issues and to highlight alternative approaches that focus more on the welfare of the children and youth.

EXAMPLES

Initiative on Rights-based Family Planning and Maternal Health

In the cross-regional Initiative on Rights-based Family Planning and Maternal Health, we are contributing to maternal and child health. We are working to improve healthcare for mothers and newborn babies and supporting sexual education for youth as well as equal access to modern family-planning methods. By doing so, we are helping to

Time to talk – Children’s take on child labour

We are promoting children’s right to participation by supporting an NGO project in which around 2,000 working children are to be asked about their situation, the causes of child labour and their suggestions for solutions – as part of a global survey. The findings will serve as input for the preparation of and the debates at the Fourth Global Conference on Child Labour, in 2017, and the international political debate. They will also contribute to long-term solutions to the problem of exploitative child labour.

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Support for worldwide health initiatives

Through its involvement in Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Germany is helping to improve children's and adolescent girls' access to vaccinations. Gavi, an alliance of governments from donor and developing countries, private industry, international organisations and civil society, sets out to save children's lives and protect human health by means of simplified access to vaccinations in developing countries and strengthening of the healthcare systems necessary to provide that access. Another way

in which the German government is helping to improve access to healthcare services for young people is through its support for the multilateral Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. With an annual contribution of 800 million euros from 2017 to 2019, Germany is the fund's fourth largest donor. The government has also been a strong and reliable partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) for many years, providing more than 500 million US dollars in funding to fight polio since the initiative's launch.

2.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This action plan contains the strategic goals and priority actions through which German development cooperation policy will implement measures to protect and support children and youth and ensure their participation both in terms of policymaking and implementation of programmes and projects in the period from 2017 to 2019.

The action plan will end in November 2019, on the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with a statement of achievements.

The action plan will be implemented and its implementation monitored by the BMZ and the official development cooperation institutions, coordinated by the core team for children and youth rights in development cooperation activities. The coordinating work will be supported by a dialogue forum for governmental and civil society organisations involved in development cooperation (the "Children and Youth Rights in Development Cooperation Activities" team).

The monitoring of the action plan will take the form of a mid-term report (mid-2018) and a final report. This will enable us to determine what has been achieved and what still needs to be done.

Once the action plan ends, an external expert report will examine its implementation and effectiveness. A conference with representatives of the implementing organisations and civil society is also planned to mark the end of the implementation phase.

The conference will set out to identify strengths and weaknesses in the action plan plus "lessons learned" for future development activities.



Annex

1. ABBREVIATIONS

BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
CRC (or UNCRC)	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
EU	European Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

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AS AT

April 2017

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