



The Right to a Future



Promoting development, integrating young people

Good practices from the children and youth sector

More young people than ever before currently stand at the threshold to adulthood. There are about 1.8 billion people aged between 10 and 24. 85 percent of these young people live in developing countries. Children and youth have long been recognised as being not only a target group of development cooperation, but also as important actors in it. The United Nations include children and youth in the indicators for four of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs 2, 3, 4 and 8). Integrating young people in society, giving them prospects for the future and letting them take part in decision-making processes: for many countries, these things pose great challenges. Of all people, children and youth are disproportionately affected by conflicts and poverty, and by the knock-on effects of both, such as the disintegration of family structures. At the same time, like no other, the next generation will be a driver of social change.

Reinforcing human rights

The primary role of any state is to protect and promote the civil, political, economic and social rights of its citizens, including those of the children and youth. The particular rights of children and youth are written down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Even so, young people are excessively disadvantaged by adverse social, economic and political circumstances. With the Development Policy Action Plan on Human Rights 2008-2010, German development cooperation underscores the significance of human rights. Using this human rights-based approach, while also providing capacity development for relevant officials in positions of responsibility, targeted support is given to political, social and institutional reform processes that are sustainably

reducing the social exclusion of young people. As well as providing policy and organisational consultancy, youth promotion also builds on young people's own potential for self-help and self-organisation. As individuals with rights, children and young people are encouraged to contribute actively to changes in their situation and to insist that their rights are respected.

Success factors

This publication describes the results achieved by German technical cooperation projects funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in the field of children and youth promotion. The analysis of many reports on the projects has revealed some significant success factors.

The multi-level approach links together the work being done at the macro, meso and micro levels. Policy advice at the macro level helped governments to reform the social framework for the benefit of children and youth. This involves capacity development and the increased professionalism of the institutions. At the meso level, projects provide advice to state and non-state organisations to promote the formation of networks and for the practical implementation of national policies. At the micro level, project support is given to local organisations during the development and implementation of innovative pilot projects, for example, mobile youth social work, community work or awareness raising campaigns. If these innovations prove successful, they are fed back into the policy advice at the local and national levels, thus completing a cyclical system.

Strengthening structures helps to promote the participation of young people systematically. This includes the responsible state bodies and offices, as well as structures in the youth sector. The work with youth organisations and the establishment of youth councils are also factors in the success of development cooperation projects.

Linking up actors in networks or through the use of multi-stakeholder processes adds to the success of youth promotion. Dialogue and the coordination between the partners is easier if different societal actors are involved, including those from the private sector, politics and civil society.

Empowerment approaches help young people to appreciate, use and expand their resources and the scope they have to shape their lives. They reinforce the young people's autonomy and enable them to represent and organise their interests with self-responsibility and self-determination.

Another success factor is youth participation – young people's contribution to development processes. Youth participation means involving the youth as partners on an equal footing in decision-making that affects them and in the implementation of the decisions that are made. The youth themselves are the experts on their own life situation. If children and youth are able to shape their own surroundings, later, in adulthood, they will be better placed to use their potential. It is only through their own participation that young people learn to take responsibility (so-called 'ownership') for economic, social and political processes.

The communication of life skills and other important abilities raises the social competence of the youth. Life skills include the ability to think critically and creatively, as well as strategies for coping with emotions and stress. Partaking in life skills training benefits young people in many ways: it helps them to orientate themselves and find their way in society, and it enables them to examine existing social values. A responsible approach to one's own health and to the health of others, and the ability to treat the environment with respect are all relevant competences which benefit the youth. Modular training programmes combine life skills and entrepreneurship with self-organisation and mediation methods. Life skills training therefore decisively improves the chances of success for integration and prevention projects.

The publication "Promoting development, integrating young people."¹ presents the results and the success factors using numerous examples. It describes approaches taken in the thematic areas of rights and protection, participation, employment, health and the prevention of violence.

Reinforcing rights and protection

In countless countries children and youth are abused through the use of child labour, with child trafficking and through exploitation. It is commonly overlooked that children and youth have some fundamental rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines the duties of states to create an environment in which children and youth are able to assert their rights, while being adequately protected at the same time. Successful interventions by German development cooperation include, for example, advisory services provided for the implementation of child protection laws. This includes targeted training for state officials in the administration, the police and in the judiciary. Education and sensitisation campaigns on the rights of children and youth create awareness among the population about the special situation of young people.

Results:

- In Nepal, the government passed its Master Plan on Child Labour with advice from GTZ. Thanks to day care activities and employment promotion, school attendance in the project region rose by 37 percent. The proportion of children in the region not attending school fell by 24 percent in five years.
- In Guatemala, GTZ supported youth promotion reforms. Since then, a protection law for children and youth and a national youth policy have defined the framework and guidelines for youth promotion. Through youth councils, the participation of the youth has been secured in selected local authorities.
- In Kenya, with the support of GTZ, the government passed a child protection law in 2001. In 2005, the Government of Kenya formed the new Ministry for Youth Affairs and, in 2006, it presented a national youth policy. The ministries of education, health, labour, trade, agriculture and local government have all integrated children and youth topics in their own sector policies and their respective budgets. These measures reached 100,000 young people.

Increasing participation

Although the social and political participation of young people is written into international agreements, in many states around the world the youth have little or no right to contribute to the decision-making processes that are relevant to them. Development cooperation projects systematically promote the participation of young people. Open, functional structures are an essential precondition for this. Building up the state and non-state youth sector is therefore always a priority. In terms of practical implementation this means, for instance, advice on youth policies that help to integrate the concerns of girls and boys in the various sector ministries as well as in cross-sectoral international, regional, national and local strategies. A youth policy together with an appropriate action plan form a targeted, results-oriented way of securing the resources of the state – including financial resources – for youth promotion in all sectors. At the same time, the

projects are keen to secure the participation of children and youth in their activities, so that, as youth promoters, peer educators or multipliers, they feel motivated to play an active role in shaping their society.

Results:

- With support from GTZ, Uganda passed a children's act as well as its cross-sectoral National Youth Policy. The National Action Plan based on this was used to push through the policy directives for the protection of children and youth. In addition, the Ugandan Government extended the youth promotion approach taken by GTZ into a national programme. This meant that considerable amounts of additional financing flowed from Uganda's poverty reduction fund into cross-cutting measures to benefit young people.
- A project in Chile provided advice to the National Youth Institute and the Chilean social fund. Some 42 municipal administrations set up youth support services and developed regional youth plans. Three years after the end of the project, the Chilean Government is providing USD 2 million to renew the funding for a GTZ-initiated youth employment programme run by the social fund.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a project is supporting the National Youth Commission as it develops a youth policy. With youth councils at the local authority, new structures have been formed for youth participation that will consolidate their involvement, sustainably. Already 85 percent of the pilot local authorities – in this case 50 communities – have passed a multi-sectoral youth strategy through which they have reached more than 50,000 young people. Thanks to an officially recognised training course for youth officers and the decision of these officers to form an association, the quality of community-level youth work has improved.
- In Kosovo, with the support of GTZ, a youth law is about to be passed ensuring the promotion and participation of young people (expected in autumn of 2009).

Promoting employment

More than other sections of the population, young people are at risk of unemployment. Worldwide, between 1995 and 2006 the number of unemployed youth (15 to 24-year-olds) rose from 74 million to 85 million. To confront this problem, the approach taken to promote youth employment uses a combination of vocational training, youth social work, labour market and social policies, and private sector support. Youth employment projects support the creation of new jobs for young people and use vocational education to improve the employability of young women and men. Labour market information systems ensure the effective balancing of supply and demand in the labour market. Alternatively, the promotion of youth employment may also involve expanding youth projects by incorporating employment-related components, such as youth entrepreneurship schemes, or focusing private sector support on the inclusion of young people.

Results:

- The project Return and Reintegration of Youth in Sierra Leone is helping reconstruction efforts following the civil war. By reintegrating 1,700 young people in their villages, the project is boosting the social capital of the districts in which it operates. Among other achievements, the returnees have started cultivating 1,200 hectares of rice paddy. In this way, they are securing their own food supply while also producing some extra to sell at the local markets.
- GTZ advice contributed to the passing of a national youth plan by the Government of El Salvador. Local job centres formed networks and were therefore able to decentralise competences and services in order to place young job seekers across the project region. Entrepreneurship programmes provided the youth with micro-loans as start-up capital. The Salvadorian Government took over GTZ's employment approaches.
- A project in Sri Lanka revised the vocational training courses offered by two state training institutions. The modernisation of the training involved needs analyses of the job market, the introduction of modern teaching methods and the use of obligatory practical experience components. The approach was successful: more than 60 percent of one year's graduates who were surveyed had found paid positions.
- In 2005, Uganda passed its Youth Employment Plan, which is intended to improve the employability of young people and to create income opportunities. 25 percent of the youth promoters in one Ugandan project earned a higher income than in the control group. At the same time, they benefited from a more differentiated source of income, which meant they were no longer dependent on the subsistence economy.

Promoting health

Children and youth are usually curious, creative and innovative. However, these characteristics can lead to higher levels of risky behaviour. The statistics for violent crime, drug abuse, under-age pregnancy and HIV infections are all rising among the youth of many developing countries. Girls and boys – especially those from disadvantaged sections of the population – are exposed to a wide variety of health risks caused, for example, by poor nutrition, child labour or unhygienic living conditions. The comprehensive promotion of youth health is based on integrated, multi-sectoral approaches to youth work. This integrated youth health promotion accompanies young people on their path to adulthood. It takes into account all the socio-cultural influences in their local environment. Integrated youth health promotion brings together institutions from the health sector with stakeholders from educational, employment, social, sporting and cultural fields, in order to plan and implement programmes collectively. It is not limited to medical care and prevention, but rather reinforces young people's self-confidence and personal development. The specific support for girls is particularly important in this respect.

Results:

- In Paraguay, with support from GTZ, the government passed a national strategy for integrated youth health. This established needs-oriented counselling services for youth in health centres. It also ensured that financial, material and human resources would be devoted to young people's needs in the education and social sectors, and in the local administrations. The activities undertaken by youth organisations, communities and municipal authorities reached 18,000 young people directly. In the space of 12 months, the number of people accessing health services and social services for the youth rose by 44 percent.
- In Tanzania, a GTZ project introduced HIV/AIDS counselling services and peer education for sex education at schools. The proportion of school children in the project region with a basic knowledge of HIV/AIDS rose from around 40 percent to 90 percent. The counsellor-teachers have conducted approximately 60,000 counselling sessions. The measures have reached 26,000 young people.
- In a slum in Lima, GTZ and a local non-governmental organisation have reduced the level of drug dealing. In the district of Manzanilla II, a model was developed that used an integrated urban district improvement approach to achieve measurable successes in drug prevention and municipal development, and which influenced the youth policy of the local authority.

Preventing youth violence

Everywhere in the world, children and youth experience violence and crime as they are growing up. Not only in developing countries, they are victims as well as perpetrators. The causes of violence in its different forms are as varied as they are complex. A lack of social competences, violence in the family and social exclusion play a role; so, too, do poor quality education – or a lack of education – social envy or an absence of future prospects. Unfortunate processes of socialisation can promote violence among the youth. For this reason, programmes to prevent youth violence start at an early age and involve many sectors. They take into account the family backgrounds and the

key actors in young people's lives. For the systematic prevention of youth violence, it is very important to pursue policy advice and build networks that involve actors from key sectors, such as the judiciary, police, education, health and vocational training. The focus should be on enhancing youth promotion in the ministries and official departments, in commissions, councils, professional associations and youth organisations. Training young people to act as youth promoters or mediators in conflicts means the youth themselves can contribute to their social environment and violence can recede.

Results:

- A project in South Africa is training young people to be conflict mediators in the townships. Due to their presence violence has fallen by 30 percent in the project areas. The respect for the mediators is considerable. Some 20,000 applications are received for just 365 positions every year. Thanks to the training they receive as conflict mediators, 90 percent of the young people find some way of earning an income following their social year.
- In the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, 6,000 young people are enrolled in catch-up primary education courses and subsequent vocational training. Some of these are former child soldiers, while others are street children or orphans. 60 percent of the youth and young adults today earn their own livelihoods. With support from the GTZ project, their monthly income has risen by around 300 percent, from less than USD 15 to USD 45. This represents an important contribution to the social inclusion of young people, who would otherwise be at risk of mobilisation by armed groups.
- A supra-regional project for the prevention of youth violence in Latin America supported the networking of its partner countries and helped them to pursue relevant measures. For example, Honduras established a youth ministry, while in Columbia, municipal administrations developed youth policies and projects to promote employment and discourage violence. Nicaragua passed a cross-cutting national youth policy.

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