



Development Communication & Education in Austria

Strategy



Imprint

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Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AGEZ	Working Association for Development Cooperation
BMaA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
BMeiA	Ministry for European and International Affairs
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
EU	European Union
GENE	Global Education Network Europe
NGDO	Non-governmental Development Organisation
NRO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEZA	Austrian Development Cooperation
ÖFSE	Austrian Foundation for International Development
UN	United Nations
VENRO	The Association of German development non-governmental organisations



Preface

The Austrian Development Cooperation has the task to initiate communication and debate about development policy among the Austrian public. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) fulfils this task in two ways. On the one hand, its Information and Communication Unit disseminates public efforts in the field of development cooperation and development policy, which are carried out under the lead of the Ministry for European and International Affairs. On the other hand, its Department for Development Communication and Education in Austria funds projects of civil society organisations about development issues, for which this strategy forms the basis.

ADA supports the funding of a broad spectrum of approaches and perspectives both in content and methods. ADA also supports coordination and networking and offers its partnership to other public but also private funders. The strategy also supports synergies with projects funded by other ADA units.

The Austrian Development Cooperation Act is the national frame of reference, which identifies poverty reduction, peace and protection of the environment as the key targets of Austrian development policy. This includes central issues like globalisation, human rights and climate change. The strategy "Development Communication and Education in Austria" describes the core issues of Austrian Development Cooperation in this field of activities. Information and knowledge about the situation in the world, understanding of global interdependences and their critical reflection, the connection of everyday realities in Austria with global developments, insight in attitudes and values, and the readiness to participate in development activities are the basic components of development communication and education in Austria.



Ambassador Mag. Brigitte Öppinger-Walchshofer
Managing Director of Austrian Development Agency

1. Why Development Communication and Education

...to be informed...

The global rise of the new information and communication technologies and the rapid growth of knowledge which goes hand in hand with it – about every four years the number of data files and publications doubles – confronts everybody who provides, prepares or documents information with manifold and difficult tasks. The way into an information and knowledge society, in which the production of and access to knowledge is shared very unequally on a worldwide scale, requires a higher competency from the individual when selecting and digesting new knowledge. Only after the integration of new knowledge, along with one's existing knowledge, can it be understood and made use of properly and usefully.

...to understand complexity...

Caused by the very rapid changes in almost all areas of life, it has become a big challenge to understand the growing complexity in global developments. Development communication and education contributes to our understanding of globalisation as a frame for development and to recognise the contradictions which are connected to it. Furthermore, on an individual, social and political level it can inform about options for action, which exist for the individual as well as for the decision makers in politics or the economy.

...to reflect critically...

Austrian politics is obliged to fulfil and implement international development goals. One basis for it, in order to accept the challenges in a constructive way, is to bring about a public which is well-informed and sensitised for development issues, capable of analysing global developments and able to judge ways of political action. The engagement with authentic experiences in matters of development and profound knowledge are therefore of utmost importance.

...to participate...

In the light of the rapid changes in the global political framework and in the changing conditions that go with it, societal processes of communication will continue to gain importance. The questions, how and where to, that societies will develop, will more than ever before will become increasingly important. They will be discussed and decided on a local, national and international level alike. The ability of the Austrian public to actively participate in this process in a forward-looking way will be the key to successful further development. Success will also depend on the possibilities for democratic participation for all and whether dialogue across differing political conceptions, cultural approaches and religions are begun and led.

...to develop perspectives...

The international community of nations has assigned the obligation to increase its efforts for better quality and effectiveness in its development policy, to align it to the international framework and wishes to improve coordination. To avoid gaps between international policies and their embedding in its own society, the importance and need for clear and practical information work based on the real-life realities of the Austrian public is better understood.

...to seek cooperation...

Relations between and within continents do not only exist on a political, economic, national and international level, but also in cultural and humane respects. A lot happens in local contexts, is based upon cooperation between civil society actors and is also determined by the behaviour of individuals. Development policy is framed by public as well as by private institutions, by interest groups, churches, the media, industry and trade, by the academic sector, educational and cultural institutions. Therefore, all of them should participate in the work and debate about development issues.

In order to master the challenges as mentioned, cooperation of all public and private stakeholders should aim for coherence in their efforts. ADA sees it as its task to win new cooperation partners for the implementation of the development agenda.

2. Experiences and results

Successful funding in the past shows that through development communication and education, issues of development cooperation are placed into a more general development context. Thus it allows people to understand them better. Through the integration of issues like globalisation, migration or climate change the overall societal relevance of the sector has increased. It can also be shown that the thematic developments happened and happen in an international context and that new target groups could be addressed: consumers, tourist, people interested in culture or in films, but also national and local parliamentarians, communities, shop stewards. Moreover, development communication and education supports future work in this field. It successfully addresses Youths, students and young researchers.

issues

target groups

Access to resources is for civil society actors of utmost importance. On the one hand, voluntary work still plays a key role in development work. ADA acknowledges the high commitment of individuals and groups as well as the capacity of civil society organisations to win volunteers for their work. On the other hand, the acquisition of income and money from third parties is increasingly important. Across all projects which were funded, over the years ADA has contributed around 50% to the overall costs. It is one more indicator which shows that development communication and education is more than what ADA pays for. Therefore a comprehensive view and a differentiated debate is necessary.

funding

A further positive result is that since the beginning of the 1990s the range of specialisation and division of labour has increased (e.g. Fair Trade, Women and Development, Global Environment, Conditions of Labour/CSR, Global Learning). However, the structures are still young, not sufficiently consolidated and faced with challenges concerning their quality management. Also the new information and communication technologies have expanded and decisively changed the possibilities for access to and distribution of information and its exchange.

quality development

The ADA evaluation (2008) states that the preconditions for both approaches – development cooperation abroad and development communication and education at home – are in their content and organisational build-up very different from each other due to the international agenda and the national structures. It is also for this reason that it makes sense to develop a strategy for development communication and education of its own. It should pay tribute to the experiences in the past, to its own principles of development communication and education as well as to present and future challenges.

3. Framework

Programmatic frame

Development communication and education go along with international agreements and issues which form the basis of the Austrian development policy.

In 2005, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament agreed on a joint declaration on development policy (“European Consensus on Development Policy”). This declaration also refers to the commitment for education and public awareness raising. According to the paper its aim is to allow all people in Europe throughout their whole lives to become aware and understand concerns of global development and its relevance for themselves and their environment. People should be put in a position to appreciate their rights and duties as citizens in an interdependent and changing world aiming at more justice and sustainability.

European Consensus on Development Policy

Millennium Development Goals, UN-Decade Education for Sustainable Development

The current international framework includes the Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015) and the UN-Decade Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014). The focal point of all EU-partners and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD is to bring about a better informed public. The recent Peer Review of the DAC on Austrian development cooperation (2009) concretely suggests: "... to prioritise and increase resources for a comprehensive and well-targeted communication and advocacy strategy that promotes public and political debate about development in Austria." The strategy on "Development Communication and Education in Austria" is following these international standards.

Development Cooperation Act, Three-Year Programme

The national basis of the strategy on "Development Communication and Education in Austria" are the Federal Development Cooperation Act (2002) and the Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy in its latest version. The strategy replaces the previous "Support Programme for the development of information, education, culture and public relations", which until now was the basis of project appraisals by ADA and therefore defined the frame for support. More detailed information on the different actions can be found in focus papers where each area with its main perspectives and relevant measures of support are outlined (see www.entwicklung.at).

Time and financial frame

The strategy is in line with a time perspective of at least ten years. Together with the most important partners of ADA it will be reflected upon regularly. The results will form the basis for revisions.

ADA recently (2008/2009) provided 4 million euros on an annual basis for financial support of development communication and education in Austria. In order to continuously support long-term projects and new projects at the same time, there will be an increase of financial support – if the general development of ADA's budget allows it. Such increased funds can be used for a reasonable enhancement of new fields of action.

4. Subject of the strategy

ADA uses the term Development Communication and Education as an umbrella term. This implies the provision of information, education/Global Learning, research activities, public relations, advocacy work and lobbying, realisation of campaigns, cultural activities, film productions, media work and publications.

The term strategy is used in an open way. The strategy may also be read as a general outline or concept.

5. Aims and target groups

Aims

- Through Development Communication and Education in Austria ADA wants to attract attention and interest for issues and questions of development policy. Another important aspect is the demonstration of global interdependences and their impact on all areas in society as well as on individuals.
- Therefore ADA supports the objectives of lively communication about development policy focusing on a broad and qualified participation of the general public as well as on the commitment for development issues by the Austrian population.

- With this strategy ADA contributes to quality development in various fields of action of development communication and education in Austria.
- Finally, the strategy also wants to contribute to the mutual, institutional and financial acceptance and support of Austrian Development Cooperation on behalf of Austrian society and politics.

The achievement of these objectives will depend on successful collaboration of all relevant stakeholders. The strategy should be understood as a contextual reference.

Civil society actors play an important role in the implementation of the targets, because they are very well positioned in Austrian society and share useful contacts and manifold competencies.

Target groups

Basically there should be a broad range of target groups. For an effective and efficient use of instruments the following target groups are of central importance: decision makers, as well as opinion leaders in politics and public administration, education, science and research, culture, media in social areas, the environment and economy. It means indirectly that the top priority is the alignment of target groups like students and young people including consumers.

The enlargement of target groups is welcome and has to be justified as project-related.

6. Strategic approach

ADA considers the following strategic approaches of particular importance in order to achieve the objectives mentioned above.

Content

- Introduction of the global dimension in all relevant fields
- Funding of quality assurance and enlargement of competencies, support of capacity building
- Addressing problems and needs of groups, which are especially discriminated by global development
- Participation in international years, campaigns, programmes and projects
- Acting complementary to other fields of interests

Methods and target groups

- Giving room for innovation, open-mindedness towards new challenges
- Commitment to the importance of participative planning, further education and evaluation
- Funding of multi-stakeholder-approaches, particularly the involvement of partners outside development policy fields
- Addressing target groups through projects adapted to their environments
- Prioritisation of strategic approaches vis-à-vis selective measures; encourage strategic cooperation

Quality in project implementation

- Consideration for the experiences and competences of actors
- Protection of results through comprehensive follow-up; projects have to contain mechanisms for sustainability.

Key issues

The effectiveness of many of the projects in the field of development communication and education is only given if they are planned and implemented in a long-term frame. Therefore the key issues are set for a medium-term period and are not changed on an annual basis.

issue priorities The current key issues (2009) are: Global Education, Intercultural Dialogue, Human Rights, gender equality, world trade/fair trade, corporate social responsibility.

In a structured dialogue with partners of ADA the continuation or stopping as well as the acceptance of new key issues is discussed. In order to support coordinated and publically effective measures on current topics there can also be calls for proposals alongside the key issues. Part of the funds can be reserved for that.

areas of activities In order to support innovation and to strengthen projects in new fields of action it is planned to give awards.

The implementation of issues is embedded in the structure of fields of action on development communication and education. Those action fields are composed as follows:

- Global education and intercultural dialogue in the field of education
- Measures of advocacy and lobbying as well as fair trade and campaigns in the field of public relations
- International encounters and exchanges as well as measures of the film industry in the cultural sector
- Communication via information and communication technology or via target group oriented media work as well as measures for funding young research in the field of research and media

gender The gender issue is – independent of medium-term changes – one of the key issues for funding: the EU countries are committed to abolishing inequalities between the sexes and to actively encourage equality of men and women. The Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy highlights the importance of the participation of all women on all levels of measures of development policy. Measures of development communication and education should contribute to a change in approach, structures and mechanisms.

The gender-sensitive orientation of projects (regarding target groups, topics, messages, methods, distribution of funds) is a requirement for funding. It includes gender-sensitive language used in all project documents. In the context of gender mainstreaming the expected gender-specific consequences of the project have to be clearly identified.

communities and development A special challenge is the expansion to communal development policy. In order to achieve sustainability it requires a broad participation of all relevant stakeholders and the acquisition of additional funding.

7. Contribution of ADA

For the successful implementation of the strategy ADA applies the following measures:

- Main activity is the funding of projects. ADA still prefers the idea of funding to mandating.
- In order to communicate contents more effectively, ADA supports projects which are planned and realised in coordination with comparable activities and which serve synergies.
- The appreciation of work performed so far and of approved methods will be kept. That is why ADA supports the continuity of projects for the achievement of long-term objectives.
- ADA looks for collaboration with other public institutions. In particular ADA turns to ministries, provinces and municipalities. It continues networking, e.g. by working with the Strategy Group for Global Education (thus it follows a special recommendation of the ADA evaluation in 2008). Furthermore it supports institutional cooperation with partners outside the field of development policy.
- Consultancy work and services in order to provide the different target groups with the latest information is continuously funded.
- ADA strengthens future development and innovation. These should be examples of “good practise” and put in practise locally or rather be an encouragement for their own projects.
- ADA supports international collaboration, for instance through Global Education Network Europe (GENE).
- Furthermore ADA is in contact with experts about all projects and professional development twice a year in four advisory boards in the fields of education/global learning, research and publications, public awareness raising as well as culture/films. In addition at least once a year ADA keeps a structured dialogue with partners especially with the umbrella organisation of NGOs. Further meetings regarding various contents are being held and are generally carried out in cooperation with other departments of ADA or with external partners.
- Staff members in the department of Development Communication and Education in Austria do consultancy work, assess applications, prepare documents for the advisory boards, monitor projects and control the reports. ADA stays in contact with the environment relevant for the projects and gives its expertise to further development in this field. ADA supports national and international cooperation and coordination.

8. Funding instruments

To realise the strategy, ADA provides a set of funding facilities. ADA supports organisations by funding individual projects, EU co-financing projects funded by the European Commission and assignment abroad as part of Development Communication and Education. The implementation of a project that covers all these points is being contemplated. The handling of projects is carried out by organisations.

Find more detailed information on all funding facilities as well as information on criteria, applications and procedures in ADA guidelines and filed explanations.

9. Reflection and measurement of success

As the document is more a strategic concept than a strategic programme with exact indicators of measurement, a regular reflection will be the best way to monitor how far the aims have been reached. In such a process the results both on the strategic level of ADA and on the project level will be reflected. The mechanisms for it still have to be developed.

Certain expectations about development communication and education shall also be reflected on critically:

Is it the task of information work to support a political agenda?
Should education be used as an instrument of political will?
Should it be made possible that the results of communication and education can be measured easily?

The comparative results of strategies in other countries should be acknowledged.

At information events (presentations, workshops, trainings) strategic, thematic and methodical approaches shall be presented and discussed.

Detailed assessments in single fields of action are carried out on the basis of specific focus papers.

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