

Professional Development Workers

Guiding Principles

This updated version of the guiding principles for international personnel cooperation under the auspices of the German Development Workers Act (EhFG) has been agreed by the BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) and the seven development service agencies recognised by the state:

- AGIAMONDO e.V.
- Coworkers – Christliche Fachkräfte International e.V. (CFI)
- Dienste in Übersee gGmbH (a partner of Brot für die Welt)
- EIRENE - International Christian Peace Service e.V.
- Forum Civil Peace Service (forumZFD)
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)
- World Peace Service (WFD)

I. Objective and task of professional development workers

Professional development workers make a significant contribution to global sustainability and the quality of life of people across the world by serving in a personal capacity in the field of international partnership and cooperation. To this end, they work at the local or regional level in cooperation with local actors in their respective partner countries and thereby devote their professional skills and experience to the service of global sustainable development.

Development workers use their communication skills in personal encounters to create spaces for sharing and increasing understanding across linguistic and cultural boundaries. By contributing their professional expertise and applying an outside perspective, they contribute, in cooperation with local partner organisations, to the achievement of sustainable development goals. The search for innovative solutions to local and global challenges is at the forefront.

Development workers undergo intensive training and preparation for their service abroad. This is geared, on an individual basis, to the requirements of the placement. Development workers pass on to others the experience and the new perspectives that they gain during their service and become actively engaged in promoting development policy concerns, especially in their country of origin, even after the end of their contract. This means that the EhfG defines, in effect, a form of service that continues after the completion of service in the host country.

Development workers make a difference by:

- making themselves available, with their technical and methodological expertise, to partner organisations and local structures,
- promoting change and making a practical contribution to development, primarily at the local level,
- deepening cooperative partnerships, strengthening local ownership of projects, and fostering people's ability to take action,
- working together with partner organisations to exchange and generate new knowledge through this collaboration, and
- enabling people to see things differently by sharing their outside perspective so that it becomes possible to work cooperatively to create innovative solutions.

Development workers provide an international service which is guided by the following values:

- active social solidarity,
- justice and the global common good,
- dialogue and participation, nonviolence, tolerance, and partnership,
- democracy, the rule of law, and political participation,
- human rights, equal opportunities, and action to overcome discrimination.

Development workers are characterised by the fact that they

- have the professional training and experience that are required for the task and possess appropriate technical, methodological, and social skills,
- work in close cooperation with partner organisations and contribute to jointly agreed objectives,
- are open to engage in social interactions and experiences in different cultures abroad,
- reflect on their own role and are sensitive to intercultural, gender, and conflict-related issues,
- work to promote change and are open to being changed themselves,
- facilitate a change of perspective, bring newly gained perspectives back into the society from which they have come, and continue their social engagement after completing their service,
- contribute to mutual learning processes and global dialogue on social development in Germany and worldwide.

II. Practical structure

Service under an EhfG contract is undertaken for a limited period and is governed by a service contract which may be extended. The development agencies seek potential candidates who are willing to commit themselves for several years so that they can be involved in facilitating medium-term change in the host country. Development workers serve for a minimum of 12 months. As a general rule, contracts between three and six years have proven to be most effective.

For their service and active solidarity, development workers receive an appropriate allowance and social security benefits for themselves and any members of their immediate family who accompany them. The BMZ sets an upper limit for financial remuneration, which is adjusted regularly. The detailed structure and level of such remuneration is the responsibility of the sending agency concerned.

III. Purpose

Bearing in mind the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in view of the climate crisis, the BMZ and the development service agencies commit themselves especially to ecosocial transformation, nonviolent conflict transformation, and the building of a culture of peace.

Together with partner organisations, they use the services of development workers in accordance with the EhfG in civil peace service and in the realisation of private, church, and state-sponsored development projects.

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