

Guidelines for the selection of projects by DKA Austria – Development Cooperation Agency of Austrian Catholic Children’s Movement

1. Criteria for Project Selection

1.1 Our Principles

On the basis of Catholic social teaching and human rights, in our specific areas of operation we attribute particular significance to the following principles:

- **Solidarity** with the exploited and marginalized
- **Dialogue** with our partner organisations
- **A holistic view** of people, groups and societies
- **Community oriented** for an equitable distribution of resources
- **Sustainability** in the use of natural, social and economic resources
- **Participation** through the active involvement of those affected
- **Mindfulness** in encounters with different cultures, generations and in gender issues
- **Effectiveness** in terms of long-term changes in situations of poverty and injustice

The aim of our project and programme work is to improve effectively the long-term living conditions of people in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Oceania. The strategic direction of our work is oriented towards country strategies that are developed with the participation of partner organisations. DKA Austria prioritizes the following areas in its project and programme work.

1.2 Geographical Focus

Effective development cooperation requires a good knowledge of local conditions. We are therefore committed to long term efforts in a limited number of countries and regions. With the donations collected by Katholische Jungschar (= Catholic Children’s Movement of Austria) DKA Austria does support people in the following countries:

- **Africa:** Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda
- **Asia/Oceania:** India, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines
- **Latin America:** Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru

In each of these partner countries there are also specific areas of emphasis on particular regions and/or certain issues. Projects that comply with these areas of emphasis are given priority.

1.3 Thematic Areas

To increase the effectiveness of our development work, DKA Austria thematically concentrates on five areas. These establish the framework for our activities in projects and programmes, advocacy, education and public relations.

- **Empowerment of Children and Adolescents**
 - Children's rights initiatives and prevention programs
 - Living situation street
 - Working children
 - Sexual exploitation
 - Victims of child trafficking
 - Children and adolescents in areas of conflict and in conflict with the law
 - Children and adolescents affected by HIV / AIDS
 - Hazardous practices
 - “...because they are girls”

- **Secured and Sustainable Livelihoods**
 - Smallholder agriculture: production that ensures food security
 - Improved urban and rural incomes: a special focus on adolescents
 - Natural resources: equitable access, collaborative management and sustainable use
 - Water, sanitation and energy: model solutions and claiming rights
 - Economic and agricultural systems: innovation and transformation
 - Climate change and disasters: prevention and management
 - Ecological awareness and environmental protection

- **Education that leads to Empowerment**
 - Personality development of children and adolescents
 - Adult education
 - In the context of schools
 - Alternative approaches to education, training centres and research
 - Vocational education and training
 - Shared learning, exchange and networking
 - Peace work and non-violence
 - Initiatives for equal educational opportunities

- **Human Rights and Civil Society**
 - Supporting community and identity formation
 - Fostering leadership, capacity building and multipliers
 - Fostering civil society networks, alternative media, and political participation
 - Fostering social innovation and research
 - Supporting prevention, legal assistance, education and rehabilitation
 - Supporting the enforcement and implementation of indigenous rights
 - Fostering women's groups and women's rights

- **A Church in Service to the People**
 - Empowering local churches and focus on social pastoral ministry
 - Pastoral work for and with children and young people
 - Biblical pastoral programmes and awareness-raising processes
 - Vocational ministry and formation programmes
 - Ecumenism, intercultural and interreligious dialogue
 - Conflict prevention, peace building and reconciliation processes
 - Trans-regional communication and networking
 - Infrastructural measures

1.4 Partner Organisations

DKA Austria works together with church-based and non-church-related organisations of civil society.

DKA Austria itself does not implement projects and programmes but, in line with the principle “helping people to help themselves”, supports initiatives conceived and implemented by partner organisations on the ground. We prefer long-term relationships and a continuous dialogue with our partner organisations. Proposals submitted by existing partner organisations are therefore given preferential treatment.

In order to receive project funding from DKA Austria, applicant organisations must fulfil the following minimum standards:

The organisation must

- have a valid registration
- provide DKA Austria with detailed information about the applicant organisation and show willingness to engage in an open dialogue
- agree with aims and principles of DKA Austria
- possess sufficient capacity for implementation and management of a project
- submit a comprehensive project application
- be willing to sign a project contract with DKA Austria which defines the rights and duties of both partners

1.5 Project-related Criteria

Church-based and non-church related civil society organisations alike request support by means of a project application. Our project officers examine the application, taking the respective country's context into consideration and clarify all unresolved questions with the applying organisation. The project application must fulfil the following requirements:

1.5.1 Formal Requirements

- Presentation of the precise aims of the project (general and specific project aims)
- Target group(s) (direct/indirect beneficiaries)
- Project measures and activities
- Planned outcomes of the project
- Scheduled project duration
- Planned personnel for the implementation of the project, as well as qualifications, function and extent of employment
- Other necessary resources
- Planned cooperation (with other organisations / institutes and/or networks) for the implementation of the project
- Project budget (financial guidelines available on request) and financing plan

1.5.2 Requirements related to Contents

In addition to the principles, thematic and regional areas of emphasis and criteria for the selection of partners, the following aspects are particularly important during our project selection process:

- Participative planning: Involvement of the affected group in the planning process
- Gender and culture sensitive planning and focus
- Effective and sustainable improvement in the living conditions of the target group(s)
- Attainability of the aims
- Efficient use of the financial resources and an appropriate local monetary or non-monetary contribution to the project by those affected or by the applicant organisation itself
- In case the partner organization does not have a child safeguarding policy, it commits itself to develop an organizational child safeguarding policy in a participatory process during the first two years of the project

In addition to the formal criteria and the requirements related to the content, the decision whether a financial support for the project application can be recommended also depends on the availability of resources in the respective country's budget.

2. Decision on Project Financing

The incoming project applications are examined in detail by the corresponding project officers in the office of DKA Austria. Complex projects are discussed internally in our continental teams and occasionally we even ask for advice from thematic consultants. If necessary, additional information will be asked from the applicant organisation and/or the project officers of DKA Austria will offer consultancy regarding the presented concept and the plans in the project application.

After the project application has been processed by the responsible project officer, the so-called Inter-Diocesan Committee of Katholische Jungschar decides on the project funding. This committee is composed of diocesan representatives and board members at the federal level and meets three times a year.

3. Accompaniment of the Implementation of a Project

The partner organisation runs the project within a particular period (usually three years) and agrees to keep DKA Austria informed about the progress of the project by means of annual (occasionally also semi-annual) activity and financial reports. The project officers stay in touch with the partner organisations and visit the projects regularly. They advise, support and monitor the implementation process. More extensive projects have to submit to external financial audits. In a few countries of cooperation local advisors or organisations accompany the cooperation with our partner organisations. They complement the work of our project officers in Vienna through a more intensive form of counselling and accompaniment for the projects. They also encourage the networking of partner organisations among themselves and by doing so they build a solid foundation for joint activities, for example in the field of advocacy.

At the very end of a specific project, its effectiveness is evaluated by the partner organisation itself and sometimes by an external consultant. The key-findings of such an evaluation are discussed with the DKA project officers and will have an influence on the planning process of a possible follow-up project.