

Manifesto for responsible communication on international cooperation

Original wording – 10 September 2020

International cooperation is born of solidarity with excluded and disadvantaged people. Those communicating about international cooperation assume responsibility – towards people who enhance their livelihoods thanks to cooperation and towards those who show solidarity. As development organisations we assume this responsibility by reflecting critically on the way we shape the content of our communication and fundraising. This reflection comprises a continuous learning process in which the people about whom we communicate are just as involved as those to whom we address our communication.

Therefore, over and above legislative requirements, ethical standards and mission statements, our organisation's communication is also guided by the following principles:

1. **We convey our actions against the backdrop of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** We draw on our values to explain what motivates our actions, and in so doing reveal our self-conception and establish a connection with the realities of life and the values of people in Switzerland. This is how we explain the basis and convictions underlying our actions, as well as the relevance of those actions.
2. **We convey an authentic and truthful image of the global South.** We explain the context in which we operate, and shine a light on the structural causes of poverty and exclusion. We place the focus on sustainability and on altering political, economic and social framework conditions. In so doing we play a part in moulding public opinion and we encourage fact-based discourse on development and cooperation.
3. **We use understandable, clear and transparent language.** Our communication remains consistent and coherent across all instruments and channels. Our actions and our impacts reflect professionalism. We build trust in this way.
4. **We explain our objectives and the manner in which we attain them.** That process is guided by realistic expectations. Our work helps people to develop their potential, strengthen their rights and gain access to vital resources. We report openly, transparently and self-critically on the attainment of our goals and on our failures. In this way we create credibility.
5. **We show respect for the dignity and the universal rights of all people through our communication.** Whenever possible we let the people and our partners in the South speak for themselves. We depict them as active partners who are taking their future into their own hands and exerting a positive influence on their political, economic and social environment. In so doing we steer clear of a paternalistic concept of development, stereotypes of poverty and the image of passive recipients of aid.
6. **We provide the public with facts and figures on the challenges confronting the global South.** We examine and elucidate backgrounds and interlinkages and counter one-sided, polemical and self-serving representations of the global South and of international cooperation. In so doing we do not leave the prerogative of interpretation up to politicians and the media alone.

7. **We take up topical social issues that create a concrete link between development cooperation and the everyday realities of people in Switzerland.** We highlight possible ways of championing the causes of disadvantaged people and opposing unjust structures in countries of the South. Our communication thus becomes relevant and gains acceptance among the local people. At the same time, this allows us to strike up a relevant dialogue with key stakeholders, in the pursuit of our objectives.

This manifesto was drawn up jointly by Alliance Sud and its member and partner organisations in a participatory process and adopted on 10 September 2020 in Berne:

SWISSAID

Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund

Bread for All

Helvetas

Caritas

HEKS/EPER

Solidar Suisse

Terre des Hommes Switzerland

Swiss Red Cross