

CLIMATE CHANGE

WE ARE
CHANGING TOO

A man wearing a dark t-shirt, light blue jeans, and a wide-brimmed hat is using a long-handled tool, possibly a pickaxe or a shovel, to dig in the soil. He is standing on a rocky, uneven terrain. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene suggests a rural or agricultural setting.

International
Climate Service
A new idea

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IMPRINT

Association of German Development Services
Meckenheimer Allee 67-69, 53115 Bonn, Germany
www.agdd.de/en
October 2024
Cover photo: © Mirko Klein, Dienste in Übersee

Dear reader,

Climate change is undoubtedly one of the greatest global challenges of our time. And the people who have contributed least to climate change – those who live in the Global South – bear the brunt of its consequences. They often lack the resources to implement the measures of mitigation and adaptation that are needed. The impacts of climate change are complex and vary from place to place. All this means that we must act and invest now. Because responsibility lies to a large extent with us in the Global North. That is why we, the German development services¹, have launched this proposal for a new programme: **the International Climate Service (ICS)**. We began working on this idea by reviewing our experience of climate-related projects, commissioning expert reports, and talking to our partner organisations. The results of these activities and our proposals for the new programme are presented in the following pages. The ICS complements other international climate protection initiatives and is in line with the goals and policies of the German government. Personnel cooperation is at the heart of the ICS. By deploying professional development workers, we want to strengthen and build cooperation on a broader basis in civil society networks that are combatting climate change. Our aim is to jointly develop and implement innovative and sustainable strategies to tackle the climate crisis. Let us journey together – towards a just and climate-friendly future.



Robert Mehr, Chairperson, AGdD

¹ The member organisations of the Association of German Development Services (AGdD) are: AGIAMONDO e.V., Coworkers – Christliche Fachkräfte International e.V., GIZ – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH, DÜ - Dienste in Übersee gGmbH, EIRENE – Internationaler Christlicher Friedensdienst e.V., forumZFD – Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e.V., Weltfriedensdienst e.V.





Climate change: The greatest challenge of our time

As a result of climate change, we are experiencing significant changes not only in temperatures but also in broader weather conditions worldwide. Extreme weather events such as heatwaves, droughts, and heavy rainfall are becoming more frequent and more intense. This increases the risks of forest fires and flooding, which cause the death of livestock, crop failures, and the destruction of housing, especially in countries in the Global South.

This means that, in many places, climate change poses a serious threat to health, safety, and the sustainability of people's livelihoods, which are often already precarious. And all this increases the risk of violent conflict as well.

And it raises major climate justice issues. People in the Global South have contributed relatively little to global CO₂ emissions, one of the main causes of climate change. And yet they are often the least able to adapt to changing environmental conditions because they don't have the resources.

The climate crisis can only be overcome by an eco-social transformation, a "just transition", as some people call it. But the policies and programmes of national governments and international bodies will not be enough to bring about the fundamental change that we need. A successful transition will only be brought about by working together with people and their communities. This requires joint international effort – with a multitude of actors working together.

This is where the idea of an International Climate Service (ICS) comes in.

Heavy rain and mud
cause destruction at the
foot of the Sugar Loaf
Mountain, Sierra Leone
© Wolf

International Climate Service: An innovative concept

The International Climate Service (ICS) is intended to supplement Germany's international climate action with an instrument that has proven its worth in development cooperation and peacebuilding: personnel cooperation. This has been successfully implemented for decades by the development service and Civil Peace Service sending agencies. The basis for personnel cooperation is the German Development Workers Act, which defines and establishes the legal basis for the deployment of professionals as a form of 'solidarity service'.

The primary aim of the ICS programme is to make a fundamental contribution to promoting climate protection and climate adaptation strategies in regions where they are most urgently needed. The programme is to be jointly implemented by civil society, church, and state actors, and especially by the development service agencies and their partner organisations in the Global South. Bearing in mind the strengths and potential of international partners-

hips (SDG 17), professionals will be deployed in such partnerships to work on climate change issues and challenges where climate policy and development policy meet. Together with local employees, they will develop local and regional climate and sustainability goals and suitable measures for achieving them. The critical eye of an outsider will bring special added value when it comes to working together to find effective solutions.

Paying attention to vulnerable groups and their needs will play a key role in this. The aim is to strengthen commitment and social resilience in the face of climate change and to mitigate damage and prevent future damage. Finally, improvements in climate policy, climate justice, and the strengthening of civil society actors will be important elements of the ICS.

Participants in the ICS will share their findings (experience, products, and knowledge) within existing and new international networks which will play an integral part in the



Adaptation to climate change in Mozambique: People's commitment to reforestation projects has increased noticeably following severe cyclones. © Coworkers

programme. In this way, new basic competences, a wide variety of learning processes involving planning, action, and evaluation, and a deeper understanding of the impact and sustainability of climate action are expected to emerge in the ICS.

Experience has shown that individual projects on their own do not bear fruit in this way. German develop-

ment and climate policy can also profit from the diverse experiences and perspectives gained through cooperation with civil society and other partners in the Global South. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the ICS will lead to new partnerships and globally valuable knowledge.

Successful development and climate projects

Almost 1,000 professionals are currently performing development service in more than 80 countries. They are working in food security, education and technical solutions, resource conservation, and economic development. About one third of these professionals are in the Civil Peace Service programme. A further 15 % are already working in projects focusing on climate protection and climate justice. This proportion is to be steadily increased and anchored in the new ICS programme. The intersection of development and climate policy is an important field of work in which to tackle global inequality, environmental degradation, and social justice all at the same time.

A recent study focused on the work of one of the development service agencies, Coworkers. The results show that the deployment of professionals in climate-related projects makes a significant contribution to climate adaptation and mitigation of the consequences of climate change (TomConsult, 2024)². The researcher also confirmed that

there is “considerable potential for improving organisational learning and the dissemination of shared experience through organised co-operation”.

This is illustrated by the following three examples of professionals at work in development service:

Daniel Pianka, Coworkers-CFI, Indonesia

Daniel Pianka is an engineer who has supported a rural university establish a renewable energy research centre. There are now new buildings and solar modules that are used for teaching.

Even more important, however, are the people who profit from the project, including Anita Yuan who teaches photovoltaics, students, and the local population, who can use the new sources of energy in the region, which tends to be neglected otherwise.

² „The contribution and potential of professionals deployed by Coworkers - Christliche Fachkräfte International (CFI) in climate-related projects“, viewable at www.coworkers.de/climate-study

Daniel Pianka
(centre) at work
in Indonesia
© Coworkers



Claudia Wittgens (centre) during a tour of the parish after heavy rainfall and mudslides.
© Pastoral Social Care, Archdiocese of Cali

Claudia Wittgens, AGIAMONDO, Colombia

Claudia Wittgens has been working since 2019 as an AGIAMONDO professional in pastoral social work in the Archdiocese of Cali, Colombia, where she leads the ‘rural pastoral and preventive care’ team. The team is committed to holistic sustainability, which embraces both

ecological measures such as tree planting and social transformation. Children and young people in particular benefit from the educational work in the field of environmental awareness and self-care. Sustainability seminars are also held and are well attended. The positive consequences can be seen in the waste separation that is practised in private households, for example.



Dr. Atsbaha Gebre-Selassie (right) visiting Maasai herdsman in Tanzania.
© Atsbaha Gebre-Selassie

Dr. Atsbaha Gebre-Selassie, AGIAMONDO, Tanzania

Atsbaha Gebre-Selassie works as a consultant for social/pastoral and development programmes in the Horn of Africa. Together with Misesreor's local partner organisations, he works with people to prepare for dealing with extreme weather events, such as droughts. Together with pastoral tribes in Tanzania and South Sudan, they are developing strategies that are based on traditional knowledge and promote climate-resistant crop varieties. Community water management and the integration of herders into

local markets are also important tasks that strengthen economic resilience and the ability to cope with the effects of climate change.

A new ICS programme can build on these successes, create synergies between individual projects, promote the transfer of knowledge between regions, and strengthen long-term involvement. Many more successful projects like this are needed worldwide, because climate change poses huge challenges.

ICS: Voices of partners from the Global South



"We are experiencing more and more extreme weather events that lead to crop failures and food shortages."

Francis Cajo, Ndejje University, a partner of Coworkers, Uganda

Partner organisations in Mexico and Burkina Faso are reporting dramatic changes: A lack of water and the degradation of natural resources are already part of everyday life. Regina Cornish Morales (Director of Pronatura, an NGO in Mexico that is a partner of OroVerde and AGIAMONDO) and Alain Traoré (Programme Officer of the Association pour la Gestion de l'Environnement et le Développement, AGED, an NGO in Burkina Faso that is a partner of EIRENE) stress the fact that this threatens the social cohesion of local communities.



"In the 'Climate Change and Resource Conservation Dialogue Centre' project, we're working with partner organisations to understand their climate risk and develop sustainable adaptation measures together with severely affected communities."

Mirko Klein, development worker with Dienste in Übersee / Bread for the World, Mexico

Here are a few examples that explain why the idea of a new programme focusing on climate, international networking, and strategic cooperation has met with such great interest. Partner organisations that have already gained valuable experience in working together with development service professionals, describe the potential of the programme.



“We’ve seen the positive results that long-term partnerships bring. Cooperative projects like this inspire mutual respect between foreign professionals and locals and often result in personal friendships. Such relationships are crucial for fostering effective partnerships which have a lasting impact. The exchange of ideas and discussion between the partner institutions within the network will be hugely enriching and of great benefit.”

Samuel Handali, UKRIM, a partner of Coworkers, Indonesia



“The ICS could unleash enormous potential for mutual learning and act as a catalyst for joint action to strengthen the resilience of local communities.”

Sahara Mishra, HDCS, a partner of Coworkers, Nepal



“It is essential to work with professionals who respect and integrate the knowledge and experience of local communities in order to develop sustainable solutions.”

Felix Viteri Gualinga, Sarayaku, a partner of OroVerde and AGIAMONDO, Ecuador

It is crucial that partner organisations express their needs clearly. Indeed, this is a necessary basis for the further development of the ICS idea, which will result from close cooperation and dialogue.

Parishioners in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe, reinforce erosion ditches created by heavy rain and extreme weather events.
@ World Peace Service



Special strengths and potential of an ICS

The proposal to establish an ICS is in line with the German government's goals and policies for the promotion of international climate protection and corresponding adaptation strategies, such as those set out in the Strategy on Climate Foreign Policy (2023).

The ICS programme promises significant added value towards achieving the government's goals. This is the conclusion reached in a report by Active Philanthropy (Berlin)³, which investigated this question and examined the international climate programmes of the various German government departments in early 2024. The experts identified clear unique selling points and potential in the proposal for an ICS:

- Civil society participation in Germany and the Global South enables the ICS to address new target groups.
- The ICS is a participatory and partnership-based instrument.
- It involves grassroots movements and addresses the concerns of vulnerable population groups.
- The ICS increases the visibility of the German government's commitment to international action to combat climate change.
- The ICS reveals a new perspective in order to facilitate a better understanding of local realities.
- The ICS opens up the potential of a South-North component to promote mutual learning.

The ICS can achieve a high level of sustainability and make a major impact across a broad spectrum of international cooperation aimed at combating and adapting to the consequences of climate change. And the ICS is expected to have an impact at several levels of society that have often been neglected until now.

This is exactly what we need.

³ www.activephilanthropy.org

Thematic focus and structure



Trainees at the Don Bosco Solar Centre in Ghana participate in the practical use of solar panels. © Don Bosco Solar

In designing a structure for the ICS, the development service agencies are using the Civil Peace Service (CPS) as a template, because the structure of the CPS has proved its worth over the past 25 years. Various stakeholders work together in specialist committees focusing on political strategies, methods, and implementation measures. The agencies then pool their resources accordingly. They record how the measures work and ensure that expertise is shared and knowledge effectively managed. Responsibility for the deployment of professionals lies with the individual organisations. The Development Workers Act will serve as the legal basis for the

deployment of professionals, as in the case of the CPS. In order to make sure that the programme is as effective as possible, the agencies plan to work together on selected key topics. There will be three areas of focus initially, each with a coordinating team of experts. Particular exchange formats play a special role: Experts from several continents can share their project-based experience, advise each other, learn together, and thereby bring about the necessary changes step by step.

1. Climate policy and climate education

The development of international climate policy needs advocacy and lobbying to promote the concerns of vulnerable groups in particular. Their needs are often disregarded when national or international climate policy is under discussion.

The relationship between state institutions and the population is a key element where climate policy is concerned, not only at the national but also at the local level. The local level is therefore the usual starting point for ICS projects. And climate justice is then a key aim.

2. Renewable energy

Due to the climate crisis, there is an urgent need to increase the use of energy resources which do not produce carbon dioxide emissions. Many people who do not have access to a modern energy supply live in rural areas. Renewable energy resources such as solar power and wind power are well suited to meeting local and regional demand. For the expansion of renewable energy to succeed, support is needed for the training of local specialists who can build the systems and make sure that they are properly maintained. And public participation in decision-making must be organised during the design and implementation of new projects. Finally, support is needed for the development of technical solutions for the provision of affordable power supplies which do not require a lot of maintenance.

3. Food sovereignty

The climate crisis threatens the livelihood of a great many people in the Global South. Droughts, water shortages, and extreme weather events put food security at risk, because they lead to declining and unpredictable yields. Smallholder farmers in particular do not have the resources to mitigate this. This exacerbates the threat of growing global injustice and hunger. Only an eco-social and economic transformation that creates food security will enable us to tackle the climate crisis.

The industrialised countries bear a heavy burden of responsibility, as they are the main producers of greenhouse gases and other forms of environmental degradation that are leading to climate change. Modest but effective **programme monitoring** will record the effectiveness of the ICS. In each individual project, care will be taken to achieve well-documented impacts within predefined geographical and thematic boundaries and thereby demonstrate the feasibility of broad-based and sustainable outcomes.

Why personnel cooperation is so important

The core concept at the heart of the ICS is the deployment of development service professionals in cooperation with local partners. Development service professionals live and work in a country in the Global South for a limited period of time (at least one year, on average 3-4 years). In cooperation with partner organisations and local people, they put their professional experience and skills to good use in the service of global, sustainable development at the grassroots level. This means that their work is especially productive and sustainable⁴.



Professionals and employees of PORET, a local organisation, organise tree planting in water catchment areas in Zimbabwe. @ World Peace Service

The legal framework for the service of professional development workers is provided by the German Development Workers Act. The Act regulates the social security contributions and benefits of professionals, for example. Development service is always undertaken for a limited period of time⁵.

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.

(from the mission statement, „Professional Development Workers Guiding Principles“, May 2023)⁶

⁴The most comprehensive evaluation was presented by the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval): Roxin, H., Schwedersky, T., & Polak, J. T. (2015) Entwicklungshelferinnen und Entwicklungshelfer. Ein Personalinstrument der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit

⁵ Further information at: www.agdd.de/what-is-development-service

⁶ www.agdd.de/professional-development-workers-guiding-principles

Commitment that is sought after – What the professionals say

The German Development Workers Act is unique. It offers people with professional experience the opportunity to work in other parts of the world for the global sustainability goals, poverty reduction, and peace – while benefiting from good social security and a service contract that is based on solidarity. Commitment to the common good is still the key motive for professionals who decide to undertake development service⁷.

The demand is high. In 2023 alone, almost 6,900 professionals applied for the 375 advertised positions in development service and the Civil Peace Service (source: AGdD 2024). A new ICS programme could increase the number of jobs on offer and establish the achievement of climate goals as an additional priority.



“My development service assignments were eye-openers for me. They changed my view of the world, so that I became very conscious of the differences in the world. We are incredibly privileged. It was this realisation that impelled me to get involved.”

Carmen Kugele served from 2016 to 2019 with GIZ in Aswan, Egypt



“Speaking from experience, I can tell you how relevant our theoretical project designs are to the practical everyday lives of Nepalese farmers. This makes it easy for me to demonstrate the global significance of joint strategies and local action.”

Claudia Mahneke, climate networker for the EnergieAgentur. NRW, 2010 – 2013, with Dienste in Übersee / Bread for the World in Nepal

Development service pays off for the professionals too: Through their project work and diverse professional, social, and personal relationships, development workers gain valuable experience, which they can put to good use during their subsequent careers. Claudia Mahneke now works for the Energy Agency of North Rhine-Westphalia, for example. After their return, professionals are more


likely than most other people to be significantly engaged in voluntary work – serving development goals and other objectives. Development service has a lasting impact and ultimately makes a lasting difference to our society⁸.

This potential must be used, especially in view of current political and social tensions.

⁷ See the AGdD Study: www.agdd.de/tracer-study-2022


⁸ More on this subject at: www.agdd.de/staying-involved-after-returning-home

Why the ICS is a brilliant idea



Dr. Martin Bruder, Head of Department, Civil Society and Human Rights, DEval:

“The potential of personnel cooperation has been subjected to thorough evaluation and is well-documented – especially as regards cooperation with partner organisations and the implementation of measures that benefit particular target groups. It is worth using this potential, especially in the context of transformative climate policy and evaluation of its impact.”



Ulrich Malessa, Head of the International Projects Division, OroVerde – Tropical Forest Foundation

“The expertise and solidarity that professionals bring to the ICS are crucial to the achievement of local and global climate goals, which is a joint North-South task. An exchange of professionals, especially in both directions, i.e., North-South and South-North, can make a significant contribution to tackling this task.”



Prelate Dr. Anne Gidion, Representative of the Council of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD)

“The climate crisis affects everyone and can only be contained globally. This requires international partnerships that are networked, sustainable, and based on equality. The aim of the ICS is to build and deepen these attributes. So it would be wise for us to invest in the ICS.”



Stefan Rostock, Head of Division, Education for Sustainable Development, Germanwatch e.V.:

“Only through international cooperation can we contain the global climate crisis. And the learning experiences of the Global South can help us to better adapt to the rapidly growing challenges. Democracy and the experience of the global community need meeting places. The International Climate Service (ICS) offers an ideal platform for bringing together civil society and state actors worldwide and sharing experiences of local solutions. Germanwatch strongly supports the idea of an ICS.”

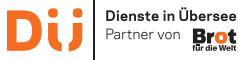
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