

Policy for the YWCA-YMCA of Sweden's international development cooperation

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SUMMARY

The YWCA-YMCA¹ conducts international development cooperation together with YWCA and YMCA partners around the world. The overall aim is to strengthen the YMCA and YWCA movement globally. The work is concentrated on democracy and advocacy as well as support to young people's development. Young people are in focus both as actors and target group. An important part of the cooperation is mutual learning and exchange of experiences. Other basic principals are learning by doing, sustainability, human rights, equality and environmental sustainability.

To ensure the quality of the development cooperation, which the national council of the YWCA-YMCA is responsible for, it is conducted in a small number of countries and regions. The principle of "local-to-local" is important in the development cooperation and the aim is that all development projects should have a local connection in Sweden. The ambition is thus that large parts of the movement should be working with a common focus towards an increased commitment in development issues and for a stronger YWCA-YMCA-movement in Sweden and in the world.

1. INTRODUCTION

The YWCA-YMCA is part of an international movement with a strong social commitment and with a long history of working with international development issues. The international belonging and the work for international solidarity and justice means a lot for our identity and our values. Working for global justice and contributing to poverty reduction around the world is an important task for the YWCA-YMCA.

1.1 Purpose of the policy

The main purpose of the policy is to give guiding principles for the international development cooperation. The principals expressed in the policy are valid for all development cooperation conducted by the YWCA-YMCA movement of Sweden, no matter if the national council is responsible or if the project is conducted by a Swedish local association, region or one of the special alliances. Section 4 is specifically about the international development cooperation, which the national council is responsible for. This development cooperation is supported by governmental funds, funds collected on the "90-account" or from funds that cannot be applied to by local associations.

The ambition is that each principle, value or position, framed in the policy, should be possible to put into practise. The general direction of the policy is meant to be valid in a long-term perspective, but the policy will still need to be updated by regular discussions and revised when found necessary.

¹ In this document the expression "YWCA-YMCA" means "YWCA-YMCA of Sweden"

2. The YWCA-YMCA AS AN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH MOVEMENT

It is important to relate the international development cooperation to the goals and mission of The YWCA-YMCA.

2.1 The mission of the YWCA-YMCA of Sweden

The YWCA-YMCA is a border-crossing Christian youth movement with a holistic view on the human being. Our triangle is a symbol for the development of body, mind and spirit. We welcome all into our fellowship and we specifically stress the importance of the influence of young people.

We want to

- through our activities, inspire to a Christian belief
- stimulate taking personal responsibility in society
- work for Christian fellowship and cooperation with other religions
- work for cooperation and fellowship in a multicultural society which is based on the belief in the equal value of all human beings
- work towards international solidarity and justice
- through our activities, promote a healthy lifestyle free from abuse
- take active responsibility for the living conditions of future generations.

2.2 The international work of the YWCA-YMCA

The YWCA-YMCA is part of the international organisations World YWCA and World Alliance of YMCAs. Being part of an international movement, it is natural for us to have many international contacts. Our international activities consist of many different parts: from representation in international meetings, sports exchanges and scout camps to development cooperation. It may also consist of international activities in Sweden or advocacy in global issues.

Our vision of the YWCA-YMCA of Sweden as an international movement

- The YWCA-YMCA is a well-known international youth movement in the Swedish society.
- The international work embraces the whole movement and strengthens the YWCA-YMCA identity at all levels of the organisation.
- All members are aware of the fact that the YWCA-YMCA is an international movement.
- The majority of all local associations are involved in international work through the YWCA-YMCA.
- We are engaged in development cooperation and we do it well.
- The YWCA-YMCA is seen as a reliable and competent partner.

3. THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION OF THE YWCA-YMCA

This section encompasses all development cooperation conducted by the YWCA-YMCA, regardless if the main responsibility of the cooperation is held by the national council, one of the special alliances or by a local association or region.

3.1 International development cooperation

An important part of the international work of the YWCA-YMCA is the development cooperation with YWCA and YMCA partners around the world. By international development cooperation we refer to an activity where partners cooperate and together strive towards mutually formulated goals. The cooperation is often carried out in projects. Mutual learning and exchange of experiences are fundamental in the cooperation with our partners. In the development cooperation, both partners are contributing with resources. The resources can for instance be economical resources, labour, competence, time and commitment.

3.2 Overall aim

The overall aim for the international development cooperation is to strengthen the YWCA and YMCA globally. By doing so, we contribute to our mission that among other things encompass working towards international solidarity and justice. We want to strengthen the YWCA and YMCA globally by strengthening both our YWCA and YMCA partners and ourselves through the development of both individuals and organizations.

3.3 Basic principles for the development cooperation

- ***Young people in focus***
The YWCA-YMCA is a youth movement and we therefore give attention to the needs of young people as well as the fact that they are and will be a resource in society. It is thus natural that young people are both actors and target group in the development cooperation of the YWCA-YMCA.
- ***Learning from experiences and meetings***
We want to give young people in Sweden and in other countries the opportunity to, through personal experiences and meetings, learn more about the world and share experiences with young people in other parts of the world. Through international exchanges and contacts we want to raise young people's awareness of the YWCA-YMCA as an international movement and strengthen the movement in Sweden and in other countries.
- ***Reciprocity***
The YWCA-YMCA and our partners work together with issues that both partners prioritise and have a great interest in. The partnership is based on reciprocity and the cooperation should be characterised by respect and equality. A close and deep relationship is a precondition for reaching fruitful development cooperation characterised by quality.
- ***Long-term perspective***
It takes time to strengthen organisations and individuals, as well as to develop close relationships to partners. For this reason sustainability and continuity are important issues to take into account in the development cooperation.
- ***Human rights***
The principal of the equal value of all human beings is fundamental in the ideology of the YWCA-YMCA. The United Nation's Declarations of the Human Rights, with a

special focus on the rights of children and young people, is therefore a cornerstone in our development cooperation.

- ***Equality***

The YWCA-YMCA forms a part of the World YWCA and World Alliance of YMCAs that both work towards an equal society. The main goal of the World YWCA is to strengthen young women's possibilities to take control over their lives and to take an active part in society. The YWCA-YMCA want for girls, boys, women and men to have equal opportunities, rights and obligations. This implies that all development cooperation should have a gender perspective.

- ***Environmental sustainability***

One goal of the YWCA-YMCA is to take active responsibility for future generations' life conditions. The development cooperation should therefore be characterised by environmental sustainability.

3.4 Ensuring quality

The YWCA-YMCA should have high quality in the development cooperation and should develop methods for regular improving of quality of the efforts. The quality work includes ensuring that the development cooperation is based on the principles framed in this policy.

3.5 Direction of the development cooperation

All efforts in the development cooperation aim directly or indirectly to support development and capacity building in our partner organisations and in the Swedish movement. Through our cooperation with YWCA and YMCA partners we want to contribute to create well-functioning organizations that can play an important role in their societies to improve young people's situation.

Since mutual learning and exchange of experiences is an important part of our development cooperation we focus on issues where we ourselves can contribute with experiences and where we have an interest in learning more. We do for example use the same methods in the development cooperation that we use within the movement, such as sports, scouting and camp activities.

The YWCA-YMCA works with:

- ***Democracy and advocacy***

The YWCA-YMCA has as a goal to strengthen the influence of young people and stimulate to taking personal responsibility in the society - in Sweden and in other countries. The development cooperation should focus on democracy issues and support to the development of young people as democratic leaders for example through leadership training. We should also work together with our partners to change unequal structures in the society and strengthen the influence of young people, especially that of young women.

- ***The development of young people***

The YWCA-YMCA supports the personal development of young people and want to contribute to developing the self-esteem and independence of individuals. The YWCA-YMCA can within the scope of the cooperation contribute directly to activities aiming at giving young people the opportunities to develop through for example good health and self-sufficiency.

3.6 Humanitarian aid

The YWCA-YMCA does not normally work with humanitarian emergency aid, but should have a flexibility in emergency situations. The YWCA-YMCA can apply for and supply support to an area affected by a catastrophe, if we have an established cooperation with a partner in the affected area.

4. THE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

The following section covers the development cooperation conducted with support from governmental funds, funds collected on the “90-account”² or from funds that cannot be applied to by local associations. The national council is thus responsible for this kind of development cooperation (see below for more information regarding division of responsibility).

4.1 A small number of countries and regions in focus

To enable a development cooperation characterised by quality, the cooperation should be limited to a small number of countries and regions at one time. The cooperation with a country or a region should last for at least five years.

4.2 Partner organizations

When selecting partners for cooperation a number of different factors have to be considered.

- ***Common interests***
The YWCA-YMCA and our partners should cooperate in issues that both prioritize. It is crucial that the work is in a line with the interests and/or the existing knowledge in the Swedish movement and in the partner organization.
- ***Needs and capacity***
The YWCA-YMCA should take into account the number of other partners and sponsors the organization has. There should be both a need and a capacity for cooperation with the Swedish YWCA-YMCA.
- ***Established cooperation with a local connection***
An established cooperation with one or more local associations, regions or special alliances in Sweden should be considered a very positive factor.
- ***Geographic concentration***
It is important that the geographical areas, that the YWCA-YMCA’s different partner organizations belong to, are not too spread out. The YWCA-YMCA sees many advantages in cooperating with partners in bordering countries. This can facilitate co-ordination and strengthen the cooperation between YWCA- and YMCA-partners in the region.
- ***YWCA and YMCA in the same country***
The YWCA-YMCA sees advantages in working with both YWCA and YMCA in the same country.
- ***The priorities of the World Alliances***
The priorities of the World YWCA and the World Alliance of YMCAs in a geographical area, such as expressed in the YMCA Global Operation Plan (GOP) and

² NGOs involved in public fundraising can apply for a special bank account with special control from an independent authority. These bank accounts are called 90-accounts.

the strategic plan of the YWCA, Focus for the Future, should be taken into account in the over all assessment of a potential partner.

- ***Even distribution of YMCA and YWCA***

In total, the aim of the YWCA-YMCA is to have an even number YWCAs and YMCAs as partner organizations.

4.3 Roles and responsibilities in the development cooperation

The YWCA-YMCA is striving towards a development cooperation that large parts of the Swedish movement is involved in. With a joint focus of the development cooperation, local associations, regions, special alliances and the national council are able to intensify the cooperation, strengthen the YWCA-YMCA identity in the movement and attain an increased commitment for working with development cooperation in Sweden.

The National Council

The national council has the overall responsibility for the administration and coordination of the development cooperation that is supported by governmental funds (for example through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency³ or The Swedish Mission Council⁴), collected funds in the 90- account or funds that can not be applied for locally. A close dialogue with both international partners on national level and with the special alliances, regions and local associations in Sweden that already are or would like to be involved in the development cooperation, is a vital part of the work of the national council. The national council is further engaged in coordination with other funders and partners and with the World YWCA as well as World Alliance of YMCAs.

The national council is responsible for the rules and regulations of the donor organizations and authorities to be followed. The national council should also make sure that the parties concerned (in Sweden and in the world) are aware of and comply with the rules regarding the funding of the current cooperation.

The national council is a guarantor for the quality of the development cooperation. This responsibility implies developing the experiences and competence in the area of development cooperation, the knowledge about the geographical areas currently involved in and keeping up to date with the development in the partner organisations. The national council should encourage exchanges of experiences between international partners and local associations in Sweden and work actively to develop the partnership.

The national council should, based on the framework of this policy, be sensitive towards the requests raised within the YWCA-YMCA to participate in the development cooperation. An important task is to inspire and support local associations to participate in the development cooperation, for instance through arranging meetings and seminars.

The national council should be a motor for information and communication connected to the development cooperation, both internally and externally. Internally the support from the special alliances and regions is crucial in order to reach the local associations. All levels need to coordinate their communication and spread information about the development cooperation and which opportunities there are to get involved. The local associations should be offered concrete tools to enable their participation in the development cooperation.

³ Sida

⁴ SMC

The national council should, as far as resources permits, also encourage and support local associations and regions to conduct their own development cooperation, in accordance with this policy, outside the countries and regions in focus, mentioned above. The national council should assist with certain information, education and support regarding possibilities for financing, but cannot take the main responsibility in such a development cooperation.

Local associations

The local YWCA-YMCA associations in Sweden have an important role in the development cooperation and the YWCA-YMCA strives towards a local connection in Sweden for all development projects.

Local associations should have the possibility to participate in the development cooperation based on their interests and prerequisites. There should be far-reaching opportunities, for the associations that so wishes, to get engaged in contacts and exchanges with primarily local associations in the countries where the YWCA-YMCA has cooperation projects. This kind of cooperation is called “local-to-local”. The purpose of the local-to-local cooperation is mutual learning and exchange of experiences. The cooperation is based on issues of common interest which both partners prioritise and find rewarding.

It should also be possible for local associations to conduct short and specific contributions in the development cooperation, such as arranging meetings on a special topic or to raise funds for a specific project.

The Special Alliances⁵

The special alliances have an important role in the YWCA-YMCAs international development cooperation. Their main task is to communicate the international development cooperation to local associations and to mediate the needs and opinions from the local associations in order to adjust the development cooperation to the area of that specific alliance. It is also positive if the special alliances are involved directly in the cooperation with the partners. The special alliances should also be active in the development cooperation by exerting influence on the board of the national council and its international committee.

Regions

The YWCA-YMCA strives towards making the regions more active in the development cooperation. Based on their preconditions they should play an active role in informing and communicating the international development cooperation, encouraging exchange of experiences between local associations with international engagements and inspire new local associations to get involved.

4.4 Resources for the international development cooperation

Since the international development cooperation is of great importance to the YWCA-YMCA movement, it is a common responsibility to mobilize the resources required to enable a development cooperation in accordance with this policy.

⁵ YWCA-YMCA Sports Alliance, YWCA-YMCA Guide and Scout Association and YWCA-YMCA Triangle Alliance.