

weltwärts: our terminology

Development policy – Global learning – Non-formal learning

Development policy

The weltwärts programme's understanding of development policy mirrors that of the 2030 Agenda: a policy for social change that seeks to achieve a universal improvement in quality of life for present and future generations in a manner that is fair and sustainable. Given persistent global inequalities and the need to develop a sustainable, globally responsible economic system – and in the knowledge that this can only be done if the international community pulls together – global multi-stakeholder partnerships are a strong basis for implementing a forward-looking development policy.

Development, in this context, is interpreted as having a global scope. It is not limited to economic growth, but also incorporates social justice, democratic decision-making and environmental sustainability. In other words, it seeks to allow all parts of society to engage freely and equitably in shaping their lives. Sustainable and fair development for all requires that social groups with differing opportunities engage in a shared dialogue on the global issues of the future.

Global learning

The weltwärts programme understands global learning as a form of learning that promotes globally sustainable development. weltwärts creates opportunities to acquire and strengthen the skills that are needed to contribute towards global sustainable development at a level that goes beyond the volunteering service itself. While emphasis is given to the learning process of volunteers, it is expected that all participants and stakeholders in the weltwärts programme undergo learning processes of their own.

Genuine interaction and the development of personal relationships between individuals from the Global South and Global North open up opportunities for global learning. In interacting with a broad range of stakeholders, it becomes possible to learn about other opinions, perspectives and value systems, reflect on one's own, and begin to identify solutions across the cultural divide. The availability of pedagogical support provides a space to reflect on and enhance one's experiences, creating a clear conceptual and methodological connection between the volunteering experience and global learning. The places of assignment and the general environment allow volunteers to experience first-hand the significance of the 2030 Agenda. By respecting the philosophy behind sustainable development, human rights, international cooperation and consensus-building and most recently, the Sustainable Development Goals, volunteers can begin to understand global developments and interdependencies and engage in critical thinking.

During their placement, volunteers can hence acquire an awareness of the significance of global sustainable development, contribute actively towards solving global challenges, and encourage their peers to reflect on their own role and embrace responsibility for creating a sustainable world.

Non-formal learning

weltwärts sees itself as a non-formal educational programme. Volunteering means connecting informal, i.e., unplanned, learning that happens through interaction and collaboration between volunteers and individuals in the host country with organised, supervised learning processes.

Non-formal activities to promote global learning provide a setting in which volunteers and individuals in host countries interact in a respectful manner, motivated by an interest in learning about and from one another. In addition, in seminars during and after the volunteering assignment, informally acquired knowledge and skills are reflected and contextualised against the backdrop of social and global processes, at all times enabling volunteers to draw their own conclusions and adapt their actions accordingly. Learning processes are shaped by all parties in the weltwärts programme.