

Our Recommendations

1. Invite people with some similar or related problems or professional background, working context, special interest, target groups... In our case it was for example: (ecological) agriculture and regional development, Fair Trade, education by the means of culture, and cooperation between administration, NGOs and parliament.
2. Involve partners from the global South as early as possible in the preparation of the event: We consulted our partners in advance about their ideas for presentation and for the programme. Step by step, everyone came up with a lot of ideas, which helped us to prepare the programme. Therefore, the content of the programme was defined jointly by both us and our partners. Involve domestic counterparts and make clear agreements regarding their role.
3. All involved persons should be very well instructed concerning cultural diversities. Joint preparation through workshops or other appropriate methods is highly recommended.
4. Always keep at the back of one's mind the real existing relationship between the global South and the global North regarding power: which of the partners is the one with the funds to realize an exchange project and who depends on being invited? Look for a strategy to deal with this complex problem that exists in every partnership, even if we think we are equal.
5. Starting with the preparations, pay attention to an appropriate reflection and evaluation during the whole process. This is important to make sure that the own quality standard is assured as well as to avoid excessive demands of the partner from the South during his/her stay.
6. Bear in mind that it takes some time for acclimatization and orientation in a new environment and context, as well as the (possible) cultural and contextual difference in the organization of a working day. Be prepared for the cultural shock!
7. Arrange with the partners how to use such an event as a starting point for development of (just started) South-South-exchange, relations, joint projects, ideas and look for opportunities on how to support these attempts.
8. Be aware of the importance of interpreting and translation work: Berlin had 9 (nine!) interpreters at its conference, and this was just what was needed. Interpretation work is a necessity - and pure stress for the actors.

Further information

Berlin

- GSE - Gesellschaft für solidarische Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. www.gse-ev.de
- KATE - Kontaktstelle für Umwelt und Entwicklung, Berlin, www.kateberlin.de
- ASET - Intercultural atelier Angelo Soliman – Echanges – Treffpunkt: www.aset-ev.de

Linz:

- Welthaus Linz, <http://linz.welthaus.at>

Berlin & Linz, January 2013

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Photos: © Welthaus Linz, KATE, GSE, BGZ

Project "Awareness for Fairness"

www.be-fair.eu

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The project "Awareness for Fairness" has been co-financed by the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.



Cooperation with Partners from the Global South



Are we on an Equal Level?

As organisations that are active in the fields of global learning and development cooperation, we profit from our partners from the global South, count on their expertise and expert knowledge, and on their willingness to share this with us. This other view of the South-North cooperation is not accepted as much in public view, where another viewpoint dominates: money flows from North to South. We looked for a possibility to give our partners from the global South the chance to actively participate as competent experts in discussions on issues that apply to everyone; irrelevant of whether they live in the North or the South. We wanted a chance for ourselves and for people in our local contexts to learn about our partners from the South's points of view and status regarding global and local problems, direct and unfiltered.



We invited representatives from our partner organisations – that also meant that we paid for all travel and accommodation costs. What may sound obvious provokes however the question: Are we really equal? Does it not mean; whoever pays, decides? Global conditions do not offer much room for manoeuvre here. NGOs from the South very rarely have the resources to afford a trip to Europe unaided. NGOs from the North are often given subsidies from public and private donors. How do we deal with this situation? Our exchange projects, which are briefly described below, followed the line: the North creates the conditions and provides the frame; the South fills the frame with their own contents and determines the entire direction with regards to content.

Intercontinental Farmers' Meeting in Upper Austria – an unexpected and surprising event



Welthaus Linz invited a project partner from the Kagera Region, Tanzania, for meetings and speeches at selected places in Upper Austria. Our guest was a representative of the partner organization Mavuno, which focuses on regional development. The main projects are:

- a Water Tank programme
- a Needy Children programme
- Agriculture and environmental Conservation
- Community Secondary School
- a HIV/AIDS project
- a Biogas programme
- the Mavuno Microfinance programme.

The guest himself cultivates pine in an ecological way and is very interested in ecological agriculture. He held some speeches in the so called "Agenda 21 communities" and communities that take part in a b-fair-community-process. The Austrian farmers were very interested in all that he mentioned about the topic of agriculture in the Kagera Region. However the highlight was that both parts discussed their similarities and not their differences. They sort of detected how much they have in common according to the agricultural systems of both regions, both countries – and how much they can benefit from their active exchange of experiences and opinions. "It's not a one way street!"

In Linz, our approach is as follows: We focus on topics that might be interesting for both sides and allow a discussion that may lead to common strategies.

- The partners from the Global South are presenting their project work, which is partly funded through grants – the expectations from our guests are defined by the project-concepts they had provided.
Or:
- We realize the good work they are providing in their countries and want to allow an exchange. We help them to organise the journey and the workshops. The partner from the Global South delivers the content and Welthaus Linz provides methodical support.

Intercontinental connections via Berlin – Global Learning in a South-North-Dialogue



As part of the Berlin project team, GSE invited representatives from organizations or institutions, which are partners of the Berlin NGO's, to an international workshop – the content of which was proposed and designed by the partners from the global South. They brought the ideas and defined the main content of the conference. Plus: the partners from the global South lead the working groups. The frame was defined by Berlin partners. According to the interest of our target groups we asked to "keep it short and simple" – and we were sure that our partners from the global South would respect this. The guests from Bolivia, Cameroon, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Senegal did not have much in common,

but they found out soon that there were so many unexpected crossovers. Bolivian guests from a cultural education centre work with drama teachers – and so did our guest from Senegal, who is the founder of a private school. The Nicaraguan and the Cameroon guests have some similarities in their formation history. The Senegalese and El Salvadorian partners discovered that they have a close collaboration with local or regional administrations, parliaments and NGO boards. Bolivian, Cameroon and Nicaraguan partners noted the similar interest in fair trade particularly regarding the products cocoa and coffee. Some of our guests expressed a desire to stay in touch and to exchange common ideas.

