

Editorial

Dear Readers,

September 2021 will mark precisely 60 years since the group of Western industrialised nations formed the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In 1961, the OECD also established its Development Assistance Committee to coordinate its members' development *aid* (as it was generally known at the time). This autumn, Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) will also commemorate its 60th anniversary.

These six decades have borne witness to many changes. We now tend to refer to development *cooperation* rather than development aid to stress the fact that it involves a mutually beneficial partnership with other countries. Development cooperation has long ceased to be the preserve of the Western industrialised nations and is now more diverse than ever. Countries that were among the largest recipients of development assistance just 20 years ago have now changed sides and become donors. However, not all of them share the view that successful development is linked to more democracy and rule of law.

The work of development cooperation has never been so complex. It is no longer limited to improving the lives of people in particular countries but has become a vital component of how we tackle global challenges such as security, migration, climate protection, and pandemic prevention. So, it is time to look at current trends and actors in development cooperation and ask ourselves how German development policy can hold its own in this environment.

It was against this background that the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development published its BMZ 2030 reform strategy more than a year ago. Its fundamental aims include making development policy more efficient and effective. Veronika Ertl takes stock of the reforms so far and highlights two issues that she believes deserve special emphasis in this reorientation of German development policy. First, Germany should forge alliances with other donor countries outside of the OECD. And second, it should raise its profile as a values-based donor country.

It is important to regularly scrutinise and document the effectiveness of public spending on development assistance. Therefore, many organisations have set up dedicated departments to deal with monitoring and evaluation (M&E). But Angelika Klein and Lukas Kupfernagel argue that M&E can and should do more, calling for an expanded understanding of its role with a stronger focus on consultation than control.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made us keenly aware of the importance of global health. Ranging from pathogens that are transmitted from animals to humans (zoonoses) to the problem of antimicrobial resistance: many problems can only be overcome by taking a holistic view of human, animal, and environmental health in development cooperation, as explained by Martina Kaiser in her article on the One Health approach.

Development cooperation always reflects the interests and values of the donors. For example, democracy and human rights are often an integral part of Western development cooperation. The fact that these standards come into conflict with other interests and cannot always be enforced as a pure doctrine is highlighted by Carolin Löprich using the example of the EU's budget support for Ethiopia. However, not every donor country sets standards relating to democracy and the rule of law – not least because they themselves fall short of the mark here. But are countries like China, Russia, or Turkey explicitly promoting autocracy in Africa? Mathias Kamp explores this question in his article.

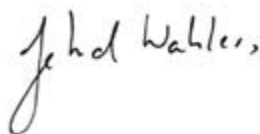
David Merkle turns his attention to East Asia, where Taiwan shows how even a small country with little diplomatic recognition can make its mark through development cooperation. Taiwan is deliberately using this area to expand its international influence and distinguish itself as an innovative and democratic counter-model to the People's Republic of China.

The example of the “pragmatic giants” – the term Fabian Blumberg uses to describe the Gulf states and their development cooperation – once again clearly demonstrates the extent to which self-interest shapes this policy area. Measured against their gross national income, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates have ranked among the world's top ten bilateral donors in the recent past. However, the distinction between development cooperation and investment is often nebulous.

But one thing is clear: Germany and other Western donors are no longer the sole actors in international development cooperation. Over the next few years, faced with global challenges, it will be important to cooperate even with those players that do not share our values. However, it is equally important to adhere to our belief that the rule of law and democracy in partner countries are essential components of successful and sustainable development. As Mathias Kamp points out using the example of Africa, we generally have one strong ally on our side – the citizens themselves.

I hope you will find this report a stimulating read.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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