



Short version
COMUNDO-Program 2017–2020



1. Introduction The COMUNDO Program 2017–2020 has been developed using a participatory approach and is based on the extensive experience of the two sponsoring associations Bethlehem Mission Immensee (BMI) and Inter-Agire (IA). These associations share the view that the Personnel Development Cooperation (PDC), how COMUNDO represents it, is an indispensable, complementary and target-oriented method.

2. Context COMUNDO operates in an environment where North-South relations are still very unequal and are drifting further and further apart. This tendency must be associated with the dominant development model based on economic liberalism, unlimited exploitation of natural resources and financial speculation (short-term profits). The resulting economic, environmental and social crises mainly affect countries in the South. Switzerland plays – as the headquarters of numerous multinational corporations, but also with a strong humanitarian tradition – an important role in this complex of problems. That is one of the reasons why COMUNDO is committed to provide equitable access to livelihoods and their protection, in the South and the North. One international strategy in the fight against poverty is promoted and implemented by the United Nations (Sustainable Development Goals). In the future more attention will be paid on sustainability. In many countries human rights are still being abused, the social contradictions are very large and prevent fair access to the means of livelihood. This is the case in those countries where COMUNDO operates.

The COMUNDO co-worker Christian Buchli, metal construction expert, is advising the school team on further development of the training center.

3. Vision and Objectives

Livelihoods

The term livelihood refers to the basic needs of food, shelter, health, protection, education and reproduction. In order to secure access to these livelihood assets permanently, it is linked with the essential sustainable use and thus the protection of livelihoods.

World consciousness

Under the term world consciousness we understand the recognition of the people in the south as in the north, that they are part of a single common world. Increased world consciousness and the commitment to social justice are conditions for more equitable access to livelihoods and their protection and thus essential for achieving the development goal.

4. Worldwide Learning and Personnel Development Cooperation as working practices

The vision of COMUNDO is a world with more social justice and well-being, and less inequality for all people. This worldview also includes intangible needs such as cultural world heritage, spiritual traditions, social life, policy-making, self-realization and recreational activities.

The objectives of the COMUNDO Program 2017–2020:

- 1. The situation of disadvantaged and excluded groups of population is improved through access to and their protection of livelihoods.**
- 2. The actors involved in the COMUNDO program are increasingly «world conscious» and are committed to social justice.**

To achieve these objectives COMUNDO works in the South and the North. COMUNDO is engaged in 7 countries with approximately 100 co-workers in the South.

- Latin America: Bolivia, Colombia, Nicaragua, Peru
- Africa: Kenya, Zambia
- Asia: Philippines

COMUNDO primarily cooperates with social grassroots movements and ecclesiastical organizations committed to:

- People who are disadvantaged because of their ethical and cultural conditions or because of their sex, age, race, sexual orientation, etc.
- People whose livelihoods are threatened by political or economic interests, but also through man-made climate changes and its effects.
- People who are threatened in their rights and dignity because of their physical or mental conditions.

COMUNDO focuses on the following cross-cutting themes working in the South and in the North: Gender, intercultural/interreligious dialogue and environment.

Aiming to achieve the program objectives, the concept of worldwide learning is central to the strategy. Worldwide learning means that people in the North learn from the people in the South, and vice versa, so they can obtain a broader perspective on global crises. This approach represents an alternative to the unilateral transfer of knowledge and resources. When learning we focus on the action-theory model which consists of three steps: awareness, information and extension of action competence. They are complemented by the networking that takes place at all three levels

COMUNDO counts on the PDC method in the process of worldwide learning, because it enables simultaneously learning and teaching. In our understanding the following two conditions must be fulfilled:

- First, the learners must be seen as holistic individuals in their life context (where also the spiritual/religious dimension is included).
- Secondly, the teachers need to explain the contents conveyed from their own learning and life experiences.

With PDC the following principles of the Paris Declaration to improve the quality of International Cooperation are included:

- Ownership: → Southern countries determine their own development goals to local circumstances
- Alignment: → the development of long-term partnership relations with mutual responsibility
- Harmonization: → our own activities will be coordinated with those of our partner organizations and other actors of development cooperation.

5. Program South and North

To achieve these goals, COMUNDO operates both in the South and the North, each with a specific program. The two programs «feed» each other and are interconnected.

5.1. South Program

The effect of development cooperation cannot be limited only to the perspective of poverty reduction, but also consistently need to reflect critically the systemic interrelation of poverty



production. Development strategies which aim to strengthen social transformation processes through empowerment of excluded social actors is of great importance to COMUNDO.

PDC as a concrete form of solidarity between people, organizations and companies of the North and the South paves the difficult way of intercultural understanding and enables the possibility of worldwide learning. That allows a holistic cooperation between partners and is not characterized by a unilateral transfer of knowledge. Lack of knowledge is not a necessary obstacle to development. Crucial to the strategy is the consequent reinforcement of social actors, so they can claim their right to equitable participation as a human right. Critical knowledge and the ability to construct their living environment are skills that people and organizations in the North and the South develop together in dialogue.

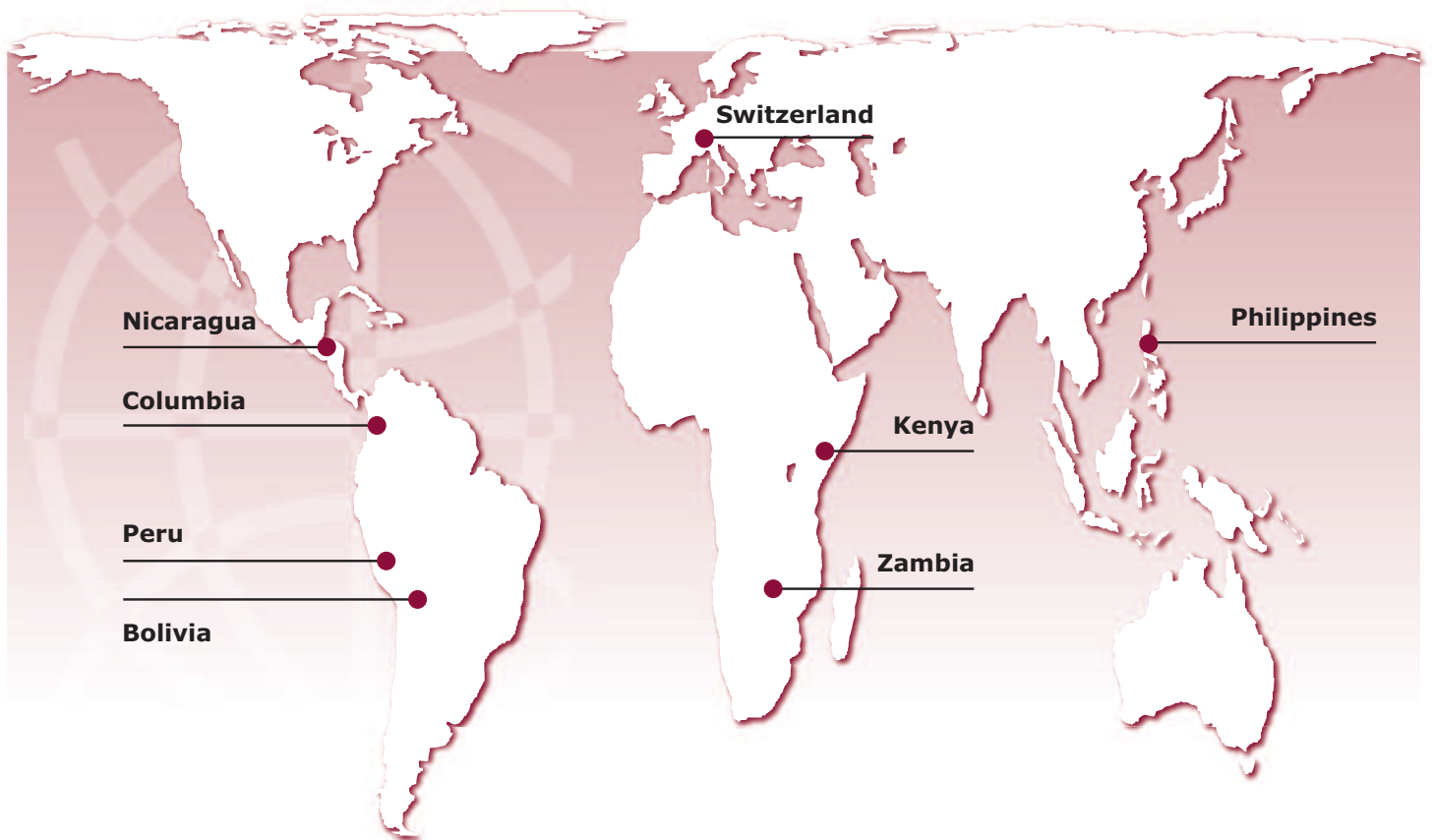
COMUNDO searches – in consultation with its partner organizations and with reference to their needs – skilled co-workers willing to be engaged on the partner organizations' side for a period of three years. Rejecting project financing and promoting locally adapted living conditions of co-workers, COMUNDO aims to create the condition, so that a horizontal exchange between actors, so that joint learning is possible.

The participation of co-workers in projects of partner organizations concentrates on enhancing skills of project staff (capacity development). Therefore the focus lies on the dimension of training, organizational development and network expansion (including communication and lobbying). The primary exchange as part of the assignment will take place between the co-worker and the partner organization. A direct exchange with target groups of the program (disadvantaged and excluded groups of population) is possible in the scope of capacity development of the partner organization and is not the primary focus of the assignment. Thus it can be ensured that the partner organization retains full ownership of the projects.

Likewise awareness-raising activities of co-workers in the North are an important part of their work. Thus, they contribute to create a world consciousness and inspire more and more people to stand up for social justice.

Anna Mumenthaler, expert of
COMUNDO, remedial teacher.
Support of children with disabilities

In order to effectively, efficiently and coherently implement the Program South, the following aspects are central to COMUNDO:



- Geographical concentration on 7 countries and the use of programmatic approach. The country programs were developed involving local partners and is based on a thorough context analysis and contribute to the achievement of the overall development objective of COMUNDO
- Selection of partner organizations in the South on the basis of strategically well-defined criteria with the perspective of a long-term cooperation.
- Recruitment of competent co-workers based on the specific needs of our partner organizations in the South.
- Adequate preparation of future co-workers for the complexity of their tasks in the assignment from the perspective of social justice, self-determination and the global learning.
- The labor of co-workers within a partner organization is continuously reviewed with adequate instruments. This allows us to measure and assess processes and results to learn from the experience and to boost future effectiveness.
- Long-term assignments are supplemented with other models of assignments, thereby giving adequate response to the specific needs of our partner organizations. These further forms of assignments include a one-year internship for young graduates, assignments of local co-workers, as well as South-North and South-South exchanges.

5.2. Program North

Aiming to increase the impact in the South, COMUNDO informs and raises awareness in Switzerland using various instruments.

The development objective of the Program North is derived from the development objective of COMUNDO:

In Switzerland, where COMUNDO operates within the framework of the Program North, civil society actors are sensitized regarding the precarious situation and the threat to livelihood of people in the South. Due to a mind shift more and more people develop a «world consciousness» and are committed to social justice.

The three steps of the action-theory model – within the framework of «worldwide learning» and the PDC – are concretized in three areas:

- (1) awareness-raising – inform
- The implementation of this step include among others:
- Encounter between people from different regions of the world
 - Exchange between co-workers and support groups through newsletters, social media and newspaper reports (whereby often new target groups can be reached)
 - Dissemination of information of personal experiences from co-worker in health care, media, schools, universities, parishes, professional associations, networking groups, etc.
 - Networking with COMUNDO affiliated organizations (SolidarMed, Erklärung von Bern EvB, Caritas, etc.)
 - World Social Forum with a strong involvement of multipliers

- (2) Knowledge and experience exchange – understand
- Knowledge management is not only an indispensable precondition for successful economic activities, but also an integral part of the technical competence in the field of development policy, global integration and interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

The following actions include different channels and spaces for an extensive and solid knowledge transfer and information gathering for one-world topics:

- Publications by COMUNDO, the websites, partnering with newspapers and with journalists
- Numerous events and experiences shared from members of partner organizations and co-workers
- RomeroHaus as a competence center of PDC and as a training center of COMUNDO
- Research projects of the unit «Developmental science and theology of religions»
- HOPLAA program, educational work with young people, school children and students
- Annual training cycle for development cooperation

- (3) Commitment to more social justice – action
- Awareness-raising activities and exchange of knowledge and experiences ultimately aims to support and empower the people who are attracted by the work of COMUNDO to take further steps in order to improve the specific situation – in the South and the North.
- In accordance with the development objective of COMUNDO Program it is about fair access and protection to livelihood assets to ensure a livable future for the generations to come.

In order to effectively, efficiently and coherently implement the Program North, the following aspects are central to COMUNDO:

- Co-workers and partners in the South play a central role in awareness-raising activities in the North. The direct testimony is a good way to persuade the Swiss audience and thereby counteract the emotional fatigue and resignation, but also the still growing skepticism about the actors of development cooperation.
- A national approach is implemented with local adjustments due to the different environment in the three linguistic regions.
- New groups of society are reached to inspire population for issues of international cooperation and social justice. To achieve this COMUNDO has defined as a target group both multipliers (mediators) – who due to their social and professional situation are able to share the knowledge and skills acquired with groups of society – as well as interested individuals.
- COMUNDO integrates into a wide and solid network of partners to jointly influence on the Swiss policy on issues of development cooperation.



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