

## **Health needs international cooperation**

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Development cooperation aims at reducing the global inequalities between the North and the South. The main objective of Austrian development cooperation is to strengthen the social, economic and ecological structures of the poorest countries as well as to increase their quality of life. The fight against poverty is the major goal of all projects and programs. Furthermore there is a strong commitment to promote respect for human rights, democracy and good governance, equal rights for men and women and environmental protection.

So far Austrian development cooperation has done a good job, but there still remains a lot to do. In the past few years development cooperation has managed to raise just under 6 Billion ATS on a bilateral and multilateral level. Our restricted funds are now allocated exclusively to certain key areas. This has led to the development of a new concept that emphasises on key regions and special target countries for cooperation as well as several key sectors. As a matter of principle new projects and programmes are developed together with our partner countries.

To increase the quality of life it is essential to ensure good health. Programs and projects aimed at achieving this objective offer a broad spectrum of possible measures which are adapted to the respective social, cultural and economic context. Such programmes include the fields of primary health care and preventive medicine as well as studies on traditional medicinal plants and food programs for primary schools.

In Austria, the University of Innsbruck offers a postgraduate training in "Community Health". It is a very practically oriented course that focuses on the particular problems of developing countries. Doctors from target countries such as Uganda and Ethiopia also contribute to this training program. Austrian development cooperation has supported this training program for several years now and first results can now be assessed: graduates are either working in the public health sector or in remote areas of their home countries with inadequate medical supply. Others teach at universities where they can pass on their knowledge and know-how to others.

Development cooperation is help for self-help. International exchange and friendly cooperation are crucial for its success.