



Checklist for Reflection and Practical Transformation

The following Checklist for Reflection and Practical Transformation is based on *glokal* e.V.'s experience from workshops, and discussions with German-speaking NGOs and other associations focusing on North-South issues. In the course of developing this publication – and in exchange with the contributing authors – new aspects have been added. The checklist is directed at predominantly white organisations with partners of Colour and/or in the Global South. It may serve as an impetus for questioning their practical work and structures, thus encouraging them on the path to more equal partnerships.

The format of a questionnaire carries some risk, because we do not believe that the mere checking off of the catalogue's questions will automatically lead to a more reflective and critical practice. Rather, the questions should be considered in the framework of postcolonial critique and understood as an invitation to reflect, to constantly examine existing relationships and societal positions, attitudes and practices, and to continuously address them within the organisation or group. We are convinced that enhancing self-critical reflection and analysis, promoting constructive criticism within and between groups and organisations and raising awareness of uncomfortable issues in partnership work is essential. We have repeatedly noticed that critical reflection facilitates the process towards a more equal partnership. Nevertheless, it does not replace a critical theoretical examination of central concepts such as 'development' or 'charity', as undertaken in the contributions in this publication. However, a purely theoretical approach on critical perspectives also does not necessarily lead to eliminating racism and discrimination within organisations in the Global North. Increasing awareness of power structures and privileges is an ongoing, never completed process. Thus, the essays, interviews and the checklist are meant to serve as an introduction to the analysis of the Northern organisations' or groups' own concepts and practices.

The following issues for reflection are not isolated chapters but interlocked with each other: for example, ideology determines identity and in turn forms individual motivations. Ideology also influences the structure of the organisations with respect to hierarchies, decision making, communication processes, and finances. Some issues appear several times or might only be briefly touched on in one section to then be taken up in detail in another. Each main topic includes questions on the reproduction of racism and power as well as suggestions for alternative approaches and structures. The organisations from the Global North are abbreviated as NO, Southern organisations (or migrant-diasporic groups) as SO. (For reflection on the work with refugee groups, see the forthcoming *glokal* publication on solidarity work between refugees and supporting groups.) We understand this checklist as work-in-progress and are looking forward to critical questions and feedback that we can integrate in the downloadable checklist on our website.

If you would like support in the reflection process, please contact us to plan and carry out joint seminars or counselling,

Your *glokal*-team (www.glokal.org)

Ideological level

Getting Started

- What is the ideological superstructure of your NO?
- Do fundamental political assumptions exist?
 - If so, do you communicate them?
 - How and to whom?
- Which concepts you are working with?
 - Do you have a consensus on the meaning of central concepts (for example, 'development', poverty, 'charity', solidarity, reparations, [inter-]culture)?
 - If so, who shares this consensus?
 - Do you embed these concepts historically (for example, poverty in colonial history)?
 - Do you address global injustices and connections between wealth and poverty (regularly, only poverty is referred to, but not wealth)?
 - Is there a common understanding and discussion of central concepts between SO and NO (for example, peace, justice, 'development', democracy, racism, war, violence, poverty, flight)?
 - Is there a critical discussion of what 'developed' means, who is constructed as 'developed' by whom, and who is in need of being 'developed'?
 - Is 'development' used by your NO as an implicit synonym for industrialisation or adaptation to Western standards and/or values?
 - Is Germany (or other Western capitalist countries) seen as the ideal for successful 'development'?
 - If so, why, what lurks behind this ideal?
- Do you address problematic issues around 'charity' and 'helping'?
 - Who do you think is to be 'helped' and who can 'help' others?
 - What do you think is the benefit of 'helping' and who benefits?
 - How does your NO explain the presence of the Global North in the Global South?
 - Does your NO need to be active in the Global South?

- If yes, why?
- How could you promote critical awareness within your NO at different levels (among activists/employees, in public relations, etc.)?
 - If concepts are used critically (for example, 'development', or partnership), is such a rhetorical turn ensued by different behaviour, concrete actions and structural transformations?
 - If not, what could concrete steps look like?
- To what extent is the NO willing to take a stand for transforming its environment and/or society and to promote anti-racist, anti-imperialist ideas, actions and policies?
 - What could such practises look like?

Historical-political framework

- Do you embed present problems in a wider historical framework?
 - If so, how, where and when?
 - How do you address the historical dimensions of global inequalities?
 - Do you address colonial history?
 - Do you discuss colonialism or colonial history with the SO?
 - Do you consider colonial history and (neo-)colonialism as historical periods of the past or as phenomena affecting the present?
 - Do you address the responsibility of Germany and other Western capitalist countries when you discuss problems (for example, poverty, inequality, exploitation)?
- Does your NO facilitate a discussion on privileges?
 - Do you address individual and structural privileges (as a result of colonialism)?
 - Is there a discussion on the implications of privileges and power relations for practical work?
 - within the NO?
 - within the SO?
 - between the NO and the SO?
- How does the NO define racism?

- Is this definition of racism explicitly addressed within the organisation and in publications?
 - If so, when, where and how is racism addressed?
 - Is racism trivialised or naturalized by reducing racism to simple prejudices and stereotypes?
- Do you consider the existence of your NO as dependent on poverty in the Global South?
 - If so, in what way and which other dependencies are caused by this system (for example, do I have a secure job in 'development cooperation' also in the future, because the Global South will continue to be affected by the dependencies of the Global North)?
 - Is there a reflection on whether and how long-term dependencies of the Global South are created or sustained by the NO?
 - Do you have ideas of how a collaboration could look without creating long-term dependencies?
 - Do you discuss within your NO and with the SO how mechanisms or social structures can be created to override the dependence of the Global South on the Global North?
- Is your NO willing to practise power-sharing?
 - If so, which specific strategies do you consider for sharing power more equitably (in the near future and/or as a vision, which can be implemented after structural changes)?

Objectives

- What are the objectives of the NO?
 - How were these objectives formulated?
 - Who formulated the objectives?
 - Do you know what the specific objectives of the SO are within the NO?
 - Was there a process in which the SO could formulate its own goals independently?
 - Is there an open North-South exchange about possible differences in objectives?
- To whom are the goals primarily directed (to others [for example, in the Global South], to structures, to yourself as NO, etc.)?
- Do the objectives have limits (for example "we only help at the local level" or "we attempt to challenge global power structures")?
- Does the work of the NO also have the function of calming individual or societal guilt complexes?

- If not, how do you support your argument?
- Who is supposed to be 'liberated', 'saved', who is to be 'helped'?
- Does the NO have as an objective to uncover and challenge unequal power structures and racism?
 - If so, is this objective reflected in its structures (for example, in finances, decision-making processes, etc.)?
- Does the possibility and will exist to formulate objectives in cooperation with the SO?
 - If yes, how could such a process be facilitated?

Values

- What values are the work of the NO based on?
- Are these values of emancipatory nature (for example, inclusion, equality, freedom, *buen vivir*, solidarity) or do they reflect dimensions of domination and paternalism (for example, tolerance, mercy, charity)?
 - Is there an active knowledge among the activists/employees of your NO about the values and norms characterising the organisation?
 - If so, what are these values and norms?
- Who sets these standards?
- Are the positions of your NO an implicit norm, to which the SO has to conform?
- What is the self-perception of your NO?
 - Who participated in developing this self-perception and from which perspective did this happen?
- Which values are non-negotiable and most important for your NO?
- Were these values decided on together with the SO?
 - Are the non-negotiable values made transparent to everybody?
- Is there a willingness to accept different values within the organisation?
- Is it possible to initiate or intensify a discussion on values and norms in cooperation with the SO?

Construction of Identities

Motivations

- What is your personal motivation for your commitment/work in the NO?
 - Is tackling bad conscience part of your motivation?
 - Does the motivation you just expressed turn you into a hero*ine?
- Is there space within the NO to openly talk about different motivations (for example, how our individual motivation is composed of different motives (altruistic, self-serving, etc.)?)
- To what extent is your motivation similar to or different from motivations in the SO?
 - Do I know what the motivations are for the SO activists/employees?
 - If so, is this based on your assumptions or on exchange with the SO's activists/employees?
- How could you respect the motivations of the SO in your work?

Othering

- What is the self-perception of your NO?
- What is your own self-perception?
 - How do other people in your organisation perceive you?
- How do you perceive the SO?
 - How do you perceive the activists/employees of the SO?
 - How do the activists/employees of the SO perceive you?
- Are there differences between "us" and "them", and who is perceived as belonging to the "us"?
 - What is your norm, from where do you define "otherness"?
 - Do you perceive the SO as a homogeneous group or as composed of heterogeneous actors?
 - Who is constructed as active subject, who as passive object?
- How does this affect communication within your NO and with the SO?

- Who is talking to whom and about whom and what?
- Who speaks in what way to whom (for example, tone of voice, public or private, etc.)?
- How does your NO talk about the SO?
- How does “othering” affect the public relations of your NO (When talking about the Global South, are you mainly or only talking about 'the Other', the exotic, poverty, or helplessness)?
 - Are 'needy' people represented as people who lack education, resources and civilization/culture and who should be grateful for your help?
 - Do you exoticise the SO, its activists/employees or the 'target group'?
 - To what extent does this exoticism evidence characteristics similar to racism?
 - Who is the subject here (for example, who is addressed with first and last name and/or title) and who is a recipient of charity?
 - How is the identity of the recipient of charity identified?
- Who works? Who participates?
- Who is imagined as responsible and active subject (Is there a self-perception that assumes that the NO consists of responsible activists/employees who, through their work, improve the lives of people in the Global South)?
- Do you think that you are unaware of certain attitudes that influence your thinking and actions?
 - If so, what could they be?
- Do you think that you have internalised feelings of superiority?
 - If so, what exactly do they look like?
 - Towards whom or towards what are they directed?
- How could processes of othering be openly challenged in your NO?
- How could you challenge othering together with the SO?
- How could your NO contribute to challenging othering in your society?

Structures

- How would you describe the power structures of your organisation?
 - within the NO?
 - between NO and SO?
 - within the SO (for example, from SO to 'target group' in the South)?
- Who is represented by whom in the organisational structure?
 - Who has a job?
 - Who decides what the structures look like?
 - Who is in decision-making positions?
- What is the project development process like?
 - How are topics and priorities developed (for example, who proposes these topics)?
 - Are programs reciprocal or 'one-way' (for example, from North to South only)?
- What is the composition of the team (for example, gender, race and social background)?
 - Who is seen as part of the team, who as a partner?
- Are staff in the Global South and Global North valued differently?
 - Does the staff in the Global South have the same significance?
 - If so, how is this reflected (for example, similar work contracts, equal pay, labor rights, equal access to social benefits, etc.)?
- How are working hours dealt with (for example, is communication with the SO regarded as working hours)?
 - How do you deal with the working hours of the SO (for example, is the time the SO spends on communication paid work)?
 - Does your perception that time is limited also apply to the working time of the SO?
- How are the dynamics of work and participation structured?
 - Who gets paid for tasks, who is invited to participate?
 - Who has access to health care and social services?

- Are current structures of cooperation perceived as unchangeable?
 - Do you discuss visions of how North-South-cooperation structures could be transformed in your organisation?
 - If so, how radical can you be regarding visions (for example, shutting down the offices in Germany, shifting absolute decision-making power to SO, etc.)?
 - How could the structures between your NO and SO become more equal?

Decision-making structures

- How are decisions made?
 - Who decides for whom?
 - Is it transparent to all parties how decisions are made (by whom, based on which criteria, etc.)?
 - Is the SO included in the decision-making process?
 - If so, in which decisions and when?
- Do you have clearly-defined decision-making mechanisms?
 - If so, what do they look like?
 - Whom do they favor?
 - Who created them?
- Is there a joint critical analysis of who has decision-making power and who doesn't?
 - Is the objective of combating power differences and racism reflected in decision-making structures?
- Who selects the programs, who decides on the staff?
 - Who takes the initiative for collaborations or project planning?
 - Whose needs are at the base of this?
 - Who decides what should be changed or where help is needed?
 - Who decides on what the collaboration should look like (for example, are there fixed components such as the deployment of 'development experts' or volunteers)?

- Who decides on which target groups to work with?
- Who selects staff or participants?
- Who decides which tasks must be completed?
- Who decides on ending a project?
- Who evaluates a project and who sets the standards for the evaluation?
- Does your NO aspire to complete honesty and transparency?
 - Is there exchange on rationales for and dangers of transparency and intransparency?
 - Which decisions are deliberately made intransparently, by whom and why?
 - (Why) Should the SO be protected by not participating in certain decisions?
- Do you reflect on paternalism in decision-making processes?
 - If so, do such reflections have concrete consequences (for example, structural changes)?
- What could equal decision-making structures of NO and SO look like?
- At which concrete levels would decision-making structures have to be changed?

Finances

- Who has what kind of resources in SO and NO (employees, 'experts', reputation, money)?
 - What values are connected to the resources?
 - How are they distributed between NO and SO?
 - How are they represented financially?
- Who controls whom?
 - Can the SO spend money as it wants?
- Who is responsible for the acquisition of funding or donations?
 - Are the finances unilaterally acquired by the NO or is there joint acquisition?

- What are the consequences in terms of positions of power (for example, for decisions, writing of applications, etc.)?
- Who decides on the funds applied for and what consequences result from that (for example, project restrictions and requirements, possible instrumentalizations and exploitations, etc.)?
 - Is there transparency about the constraints and dependencies that some funds bring along?
 - Do you take joint decisions on whether and where to apply for funding and how to circumvent certain conditionalities?
- To what conditions/benefits/claims (for/by whom) are the finances of NO and SO tied?
 - Does the NO in some situations become an accomplice of the funding institutions?
- Who decides on the budgets for projects?
 - How is a financial plan drawn up?
 - Who creates the plan (with/without participation or feedback)?
 - Are financial plans, expenditures, etc. controlled in a unidirectional or reciprocal manner?
 - Who is accountable to whom?
 - Are the budgets fully disclosed to the SO or only partially?
 - Does the SO have insight into the overall financing of your NO beyond the concrete projects in which it is involved?
- Do deliberate or unconscious allegations of mistrust exist (for example, embezzlement of funds)?
 - If so, how are these addressed and by whom?
- Is your NO willing to transform unequal power structures of the partnership in financial terms as well?
 - If so, what could be concrete measures?
- Is your NO looking for solutions together with SO (for example, acceptance of 'creative bookkeeping')?
- How could the NO and SO challenge the structures of the donors?
- Is your NO actively lobbying against the structural restrictions that limit the SO?

Evaluation/Documentation

- Who sets the standards for measuring the quality or success of a project?
 - Are they designed together with SO?
 - Are evaluation and documentation undertaken together with the SO?
- Who evaluates whom?
 - Does the SO evaluate the projects itself, are they evaluated by the NO or by external audits?
 - Is the NO also evaluated?
 - If so, by whom and does the SO have access to the evaluation?
 - Are all documents needed for the evaluation accessible to the SO (open access, accessible language, etc.)?
 - Is the quality of cooperation also evaluated?
 - If so, what methods are used and who evaluates?
- Who writes project and program reports, and for whom (authors, addressees, readers)?
- How could evaluation structures incorporate SO in a more equal role?
- How can power disparities regarding evaluations of donor institutions be challenged by NO and SO?

Travel and Meeting Structure

- Who travels?
 - Who visits whom?
 - What are the objectives and aims for the visits?
 - Are these openly spoken about?
- When North-South meetings take place, who expressed the need for these?
 - Who sets the agenda/topics/contents?
 - Who plans the meeting and how?
 - Where do meetings take place?

- Who finances the meeting and how?
- Who invites whom, who is invited and who is not?
- When a meeting of NO and SO takes place, is there time and space for exchange between the different partners from the Global South (without the presence of activists/employees from the Global North)?
 - Are there other fora for South-South exchange that enable the development of common positions of SO?
- What visa requirements apply to NO and SO when travelling to the respective partner country?
 - Are restrictive visa requirements accepted?
 - Do you lobby against restrictive visa policies?
- How could the travel structure of NO and SO become more equal?

Structures of communication, knowledge and vocational training

Communication and conflict resolution

- What attitude prevails in your NO towards the SO?
 - Do you think that the SO is generally capable (for example, of fulfilling its tasks)?
- What is the communication like during meetings between NO and SO?
 - Do you as employees of the NO try to “take a back seat” at partner meetings in order to make space for the partners?
 - What forms of communication are employed to find out where NO and SO are at in their work?
 - Are these diverse and appropriate (for example, oral, written, formal or non-formal)?
- Do you have a common language?
 - What language is used to share information?
 - Which information is shared?
 - Is translation a given or do people (who?) have to ask for translation (by whom)?
- How do you deal with differences in opinion?
 - Are there institutionalised and/or safe spaces to talk about conflicts, power asymmetries and discrimination?

- Do you perceive the desires and views of the Southern partners as disturbances or demands to be taken seriously?
- Do you consciously pursue some form of active listening?
- How are defence mechanisms among the NO activists and workers dealt with?
- Do you take the voice of one person from the SO as representative for the whole partner organisation?
- Do you listen and accept if the SO has its own agenda or goals, or its own time management?
 - What methods and structures could be used, developed and strengthened in order for South partners to openly express their concerns?
 - What kind of structures can be created so that Southern partners are not only consulted, but are equally involved in decision making?

Handling of knowledge and information

- Is there transparency towards the SO (for example, concerning finances, settlement requirements, job allocation and tasks within the NO)?
 - Does the NO find suitable ways to communicate these structures and processes?
 - Is there any transparency with regard to salaries and insurance regulations of German employees abroad?
- Transparency creates clarity about possible scopes of action. Thus discrimination can be avoided: Are such scopes talked about with the SO in order to make use of them?
 - Are there any scopes known to the NO that are consciously not used – against the interests of the SO?
- Is there knowledge or dispute about possible scopes that have not yet been actively used?

Vocational training

- Do you have vocational or other training courses or political education programs for the activists/employees of your NO that deal with reflecting your organisation's power relations?
 - Are the needs and questions of activists/employees of Color taken into consideration?
 - Is there sufficient training on anti-racism for the activists/employees of NO?
 - Do you explicitly invite facilitators/educators who have migrant-diasporic or non-white perspectives?
- Are trainings and seminars on political education also offered and financed for the SO?
 - If so, who decides on the content?

- Do you follow emancipatory educational approaches?
- Who facilitates the seminars?
- Do you offer empowerment trainings for the SO?
- Are funded meetings for networking and training courses for different SO in the Global South in place?
 - If not, how can training and networking be funded and implemented for SO?
- How can SO and NO identify, and respond to, the needs of activists/employees for training and networking?

Public relations and educational work

Reflections on public relations and educational work can be found – unfortunately only in German – in the checklist at the end of the *glokal* publication "Education for sustainable inequality. A postcolonial analysis of materials for development education in Germany" (free download at www.glokal.org) and in the "Checklist to avoid racism" of the *Berliner Entwicklungspolitische Ratschlag* (free download at www.eineweltstadt.berlin).

Political Work

- Is your NO only involved in project work or also in political work (for example, campaigns)?
 - If yes, is the political work only oriented towards transforming structures in the Global South or also in the Global North (and specifically in Germany)?
- Do you follow emancipatory approaches?
 - If so, what do they look like and why do you consider them emancipatory?
- Are healing, reparations and responsibility issues you deal with as part of your political work?
- How can the political views and demands of the SO be integrated equally into the work of NO?