

Mission Statement  
of KOLPING in Germany

**TOGETHER  
WE ARE  
KOLPING**



**Kolping**

***“KOLPING THRIVES ON  
SHARED VALUES AND AN  
ACTIVE COMMITMENT  
TO PEOPLE THAT IS VISIBLE  
IN MANY FACETS OF ITS  
WORK.”***

## KOLPING Mission Statement in Germany

**KOLPING'S** mission statement in Germany sets out the willingness of all members, managers and employees – inspired by Adolph Kolping and his work – to accept the challenges of the present and the future, and to courageously help to shape our society and our church. This mission statement is the basis and the frame of reference, taking account of upheavals in society and the church and providing a foundation for the further development of **KOLPING'S** position in Germany.

The Kolping families, Kolping Youth and Kolping communities, on the local as well as the regional and national levels, the institutions and companies, are all interconnected and known under the short name **KOLPING**. **KOLPING** thrives on shared values and an active commitment to people that is visible in many facets of its work.

**KOLPING** allows people to experience a lively and formative community. With a view of the challenges and hardships of our times, we, the wider **KOLPING** community, give our world a human face by campaigning for a just society, a church committed to the people and a sustainable approach to creation.

Everyone who supports this mission statement and wants to share our responsibility in society, politics and the church is welcome in our community and can become a member.

***“WITH A VIEW OF THE  
CHALLENGES AND  
HARDSHIPS OF OUR TIMES,  
WE, THE WIDER KOLPING  
COMMUNITY, GIVE OUR  
WORLD A HUMAN FACE.”***

**I. | KOLPING TODAY – CONNECTED TO PEOPLE,  
COMMITTED TO SOCIETY AND THE CHURCH**

- **KOLPING** – the connecting identity of committed people
- **KOLPING** – rooted in the Christian faith and in the midst of life
- **Adolph Kolping** – a person who inspires and encourages
- **KOLPING** – committed to solidary society
- **KOLPING** – a community of committed people
- **KOLPING** – vibrant local communities

**II. | KOLPING IN ACTION – ADOLPH KOLPING'S WORK TODAY**

- A focus on people
- Perspectives through lifelong education
- Actively shaping the world of work
- Commitment to families
- Commitment to the world community

**III. | KOLPING IN THE FUTURE – THE NEEDS OF THE TIME  
AS A MANDATE FOR ACTION**

- Globalisation – actively and socially involved
- The European Union – from project to necessity
- Climate justice and sustainability – an obligation for us to act
- Digitalisation – both a task and an opportunity
- Diversity – commitment in a society shaped by diversity
- Demographic development – cross-generational action as a strength

## *I. KOLPING TODAY*

*CONNECTED  
TO PEOPLE,  
COMMITTED TO  
SOCIETY AND  
THE CHURCH*

## 1 | **KOLPING – THE CONNECTING IDENTITY OF COMMITTED PEOPLE**

- 2 | In the spirit of our association's founder, Adolph Kolping, we are today a community of way, faith, education and action. We promote responsible living and acting in solidarity.
- 3 | As a democratically constituted Catholic social association and recognised employees' organisation, we are committed to the values of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany and assume social and political responsibility.
- 4 | **KOLPING** depends upon its members and employees who volunteer or work full-time in the association and its institutions and companies.
- 5 | We organise and implement cross-generational and target group-oriented programmes, events and campaigns.
- 6 | The Kolping Youth is an independent part of **KOLPING** and shares responsibility for the association, its institutions and companies. Children, teenagers and young adults participate and make a big contribution to an attractive association life.

## 7 | **KOLPING – ROOTED IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND IN THE MIDST OF LIFE**

- 8 | Faith in Jesus Christ and his good news moves us. On this basis, we develop the fundamental attitude for our personal life and our community action. **KOLPING** is a place of faith and offers searching and questioning people a religious home. Social and socio-political commitment is an inseparable part of the Christian faith.
- 9 | Jesus Christ stood up for the poor, the weak and the socially excluded. His example encourages us to point out injustice in society and the church by its name and to work against it.
- 10 | In following Jesus Christ, we are interested in people's life stories. In our concrete everyday encounters, especially with people in social need, we rediscover our tasks again and again.
- 11 | **KOLPING** is part of the Catholic Church. In keeping with the dignity and responsibility of all of the baptised, we work together, independently and as constructively critical participants, in the renewal and shaping of our church. For us, the Church of Jesus Christ is realised where it serves people through genuine attention.
- 12 | **KOLPING** contributes to a further development of the social and pastoral commitments of our church in today's world.



### **13 | ADOLPH KOLPING – A PERSON WHO INSPIRES AND ENCOURAGES**

- 14 |** The founder of our association lived from a deep trust in God, was enthusiastic about Jesus Christ and loved his church, whose bright and dark sides he knew.
- 15 |** He did not give up in the face of the social hardships of his time. In his actions, he was simultaneously a pastor and a social reformer. He had the courage to leave the well-trodden paths in order to learn from his encounters with people what needs to be done.
- 16 |** He imparted joy in praying, in learning, in socialising and in work. In this way, he won people's hearts and encouraged personal development and the active shaping of society and his church.
- 17 |** He openly expressed Christian beliefs and values in the language of the people, gave a testimony of faith in his time and remains a role model and a man of the worldwide church to this day.

## 18 | **KOLPING – COMMITTED TO A SOLIDARY SOCIETY**

- 19 | As a Catholic social association, we face the social, ecological and economic challenges of the present and promote appropriate awareness and action. We pay particular attention to the disadvantaged and those seeking help who need our support.
- 20 | As an association, we work together with other Christian social associations in the interests of employees and with trade unions in social and economic self-government.
- 21 | We support the participation of members of our association in all areas of co-determination in the world of work.
- 22 | **KOLPING** promotes political engagement in parties that support the basic democratic principles and the free democratic constitutional order, as well as in parliaments, and other forms of social participation. We see this as an indispensable contribution to the responsible co-determination of our society.
- 23 | **KOLPING'S** positions are discussed in an ongoing dialogue between the association and politicians and brought into decision-making processes.

## 24 | *KOLPING – A COMMUNITY OF COMMITTED PEOPLE*

- 25 | People from many cultures and with different life plans and realities are involved with **KOLPING**. This diversity is an enrichment for our association life.
- 26 | At **KOLPING**, all generations have the opportunity to introduce their own ideas, projects and impetuses to the association. It is the cross-generational work and the resulting variety of positions and projects that makes **KOLPING** strong.
- 27 | **KOLPING** lives democracy. Any form of political or religious extremism has no place in our association. A commitment to equal rights and opportunities is essential to us.
- 28 | **KOLPING** can be experienced in many ways and accompanies you for a lifetime. The community is formed through common concerns. It develops in Kolping families, in communities, around Kolping houses and in the institutions and companies.

## 29 | **KOLPING – VIBRANT LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

- 30 | **KOLPING** thrives on the joint efforts of local people. There are different forms of communities and a wide range of commitments.
- 31 | Above all, it is in the Kolping families that **KOLPING** becomes visible and tangible at a local level. They are family-like communities that thrive on the partnership between the generations. Through their commitment to local church life and local society, the Kolping families form an important basis of our association.
- 32 | **KOLPING** enriches local life through social and cultural commitment. We bring people together, offer space for the development of individual talents and enable formative experiences of community. This is reflected in mutual trust, willingness to engage in dialogue, and the ability to deal with conflict when developing joint ideas and positions and in planning joint actions.
- 33 | Kolping families are communities of solidarity, which stick together in good times as in bad.
- 34 | The commitment of the Kolping Youth is an indispensable part of our association.
- 35 | **KOLPING** thrives on being open to different forms of community. The networking of **KOLPING** members and staff is constantly being developed further.

***“KOLPING ADVOCATES  
MUTUAL RESPECT,  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND  
EQUAL RIGHTS, AND  
A NON-DISCRIMINATORY  
SOCIETY AND CHURCH.”***

## *II. KOLPING IN ACTION*

# *ADOLPH KOLPING'S WORK TODAY*

## 36 | *KOLPING A FOCUS ON PEOPLE*

- 37** | The principles of Catholic social teaching and Christian social ethics, which are indispensable to our identity as an association, have to be reinterpreted again and again and applied to concrete life situations and the prevailing challenges of our time.
- 38** | Personhood means that the human being is the centre and the aim of our actions, with an unalienable dignity and thus fundamental rights from the beginning to the end of life.
- 39** | Subsidiarity means that every single person and every small unit is first and foremost responsible for itself. Where their strengths are overstrained, we feel that the community has an obligation to provide help. Just as we champion subsidiarity as a political principle, it also characterises our association life.
- 40** | Solidarity means that we stand up for each other and see it as our core task to work for a dignified life for all people.
- 41** | By the principle of the common good, we mean that the benefit for society as a whole takes priority over the fulfilment of individual interests when making decisions.
- 42** | In the interests of present and future generations, we help to ensure that social, ecclesiastical, state and private actions are shaped by the principle of sustainability.

### 43 | *PERSPECTIVES THROUGH LIFELONG EDUCATION*

- 44 | **KOLPING** supports people in the development of their personality, as well as in their professional orientation and future planning. Lifelong educational services are essential features of our activities as an association.
- 45 | **KOLPING** stands for value-oriented education. It is the basis of a successful personality development, the development of social skills and solidarity in practice. Our work – whether in the associational groups and communities or in our educational institutions – promotes a genuine formation of hearts and values.
- 46 | **KOLPING** is active on all social, political and economic levels to ensure that the transmission of values in education and training is given a higher status.
- 47 | By offering political education, we make an important contribution to the promotion of democracy in our country.
- 48 | Our institutions and companies cover the entire educational and support chain with a wide range of services. This ranges from child and youth welfare to professional and educational qualifications and cross-generational educational work. **KOLPING** offers community, a home and opportunities for professional and social participation.
- 49 | Vocational training, which at **KOLPING** especially includes qualifications for people with special needs, has always received particular attention. It is the best



basis for starting work and professional life, and thus the foundation for a self-determined existence.

**50 | KOLPING** lives the idea of inclusion: we are committed to and work with people with impairments. With a wide range of qualification, care, rehabilitation and employment services, we make a permanent contribution to enabling participation.

### **51 | ACTIVELY SHAPING THE WORLD OF WORK**

**52 | KOLPING** sees work as an opportunity for personal development and as a contribution to society. For us, gainful employment, family work and voluntary work are of equal value. We advocate social recognition and appreciation of family and volunteer work.

**53 | KOLPING** is committed to more equal opportunities for all people in the world of work.

**54 | KOLPING** is committed to ensuring that as many people as possible can participate in working life. Our educational institutions respond to structural change and changing working environments, with training and further education offers that are adapted to these changes.

**55 |** Since its foundation, **KOLPING** has been closely linked with crafts. Diversity of employment and the large number of apprenticeship places in the skilled crafts sector and trades account for its great social and economic importance. We are committed to craftspeople, which is why we participate on committees of crafts.

**56** / **KOLPING** is committed to ensuring that people have shelters guaranteed by law, especially on Sunday, to practice their religion and enjoy leisure and recreation.

### **57** / **COMMITMENT TO FAMILIES**

**58** / **KOLPING** sees family in its diverse forms where people shape their lives together on a permanent basis, and take responsibility for each other as children and parents. Family is also everywhere where different generations live together under one roof and support one another in solidarity.

**59** / **KOLPING** understands families as places for the learning of faith, of imparting values, of culture and solidarity.

**60** / **KOLPING** encourages people to live in and with families and champions the special Protection of marriage and family as enshrined in the constitution.

**61** / **KOLPING** sees the family as the foundation stone of society and is dedicated to a successful family life.

**62** / **KOLPING** advocates the promotion of the value and dignity of human life, in particular in the interests of the unborn, physically, mentally and health-impaired, as well as the vulnerable and the elderly.

**63** / **KOLPING** is committed to fair and far-reaching family support. The social and financial parameters must be designed in such a way that families are supported and life with children can be successful.

- 64 | As a cross-generational community, family education is of great importance to us.
- 65 | Through the diverse services in the association, family holiday resorts and family recreation, **KOLPING** provides a visible example of a family-friendly society.
- 66 | **COMMITMENT TO THE WORLD COMMUNITY**
- 67 | **KOLPING** relies on partnership as a prerequisite for understanding and respect for all people.
- 68 | We are committed to peace in the world community so that all people can live together in cultural diversity.
- 69 | For people who come to us from abroad, we offer language qualification courses, as well as vocational training and further education, with the goal of professional integration and cultural and political inclusion.
- 70 | **KOLPING** champions the worldwide realisation of just and democratic structures and for safeguarding human rights.
- 71 | **KOLPING** connects people from many different countries through partnership contacts and projects. **KOLPING** in Germany is part of the global network **KOLPING INTERNATIONAL**, in which we particularly encourage people to meet one another.

### *III. KOLPING IN THE FUTURE*

# *THE NEEDS OF THE TIME AS A MANDATE FOR ACTION*

## 72 | *GLOBALISATION – ACTIVELY AND SOCIALLY INVOLVED*

- 73 | KOLPING** promotes an expanded awareness of global connections, the consequences of globalisation and the necessary commitment to international cooperation.
- 74 | KOLPING** lives and works from the conviction that worldwide development policy must be sustainable and based on partnership.

## 75 | *THE EUROPEAN UNION – FROM PROJECT TO NECESSITY*

- 76 | KOLPING** provides counsel to European politics on the basis of the Judeo-Christian conception of humanity and is clearly committed to the goals and tasks of the European Union, in particular the safeguarding of peace and the wellbeing of its citizens.
- 77 | KOLPING** uses its Europe-wide presence to exert influence on EU policy on the basis of joint coordination of the Kolping societies in the member states.
- 78 | KOLPING** participates in the consolidation of Europe through cross-border contacts and actions.
- 79 | KOLPING** advocates the EU, and within it Germany, taking responsibility for global developments and taking appropriate measures to vigorously promote peace, democracy, freedom, the rule of law and human rights.

## 80 | *CLIMATE JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY – AN OBLIGATION FOR US TO ACT*

- 81 | **KOLPING** sees the world as a unity of man and nature. The preservation of creation is inseparable from service to mankind. The obligation to act in an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable manner results from God's mandate to preserve creation.
- 82 | **KOLPING** advocates efficient measures to mitigate man-made climate change, which also include taking precautions against the threat of expected changes. This requires a joint effort by the state, the economy, science and every single member of our society.
- 83 | **KOLPING** is aware that the sustainable development goals agreed by the United Nations can only be achieved through joint action by all of the countries on earth, whose capabilities nonetheless differ greatly. In order for this to become a reality, we are convinced that international solidarity is required in order to distribute the burdens on people in all countries fairly and appropriately. **KOLPING** advocates a climate policy that is always developed in a socially acceptable manner.
- 84 | We also perceive this demand to politicians and society to develop and implement sustainable concepts as an obligation for ourselves.

## 85 | *DIGITALISATION – BOTH A TASK AND AN OPPORTUNITY*

- 86 | KOLPING** sees that the digital transformation is changing our society and the world of work as fundamentally as only the industrial revolution before it did. In this process of profound change, opportunities must be seized and risks simultaneously mitigated.
- 87 | KOLPING** is committed to ensuring that the focus of action remains on people, even in the digital age. Digitalisation must serve all people – and create added value for society.
- 88 | KOLPING** recognises, in spite of all the possible dangers, the potential of digitalisation in the field of global communication, growing prosperity and sustainable economic activity. To ensure that these possibilities are not reversed, **KOLPING** is consistently committed to human dignity and autonomy in times of digital change. In view of contemporary developments, Catholic social teaching and Christian ethical teaching must be developed sensitively and in a differentiated manner.
- 89 | KOLPING** sees that the educational landscape, from school to training and further education, has a duty to take people into an increasingly digitalised age through needs-based formats. In addition to effective educational services, this also includes a holistic approach to education in dealing with the digital transformation.

**90 | DIVERSITY – COMMITMENT IN A SOCIETY  
SHAPED BY DIVERSITY**

- 91 | KOLPING** stands for human dignity, which according to the biblical view has its foundations in God and its ultimate goal in the Creator himself. Every human being, regardless of dimensions of diversity, bears inherent and inviolable values and has inalienable rights.
- 92 | KOLPING** advocates mutual respect, equal opportunities and equal rights, and a non-discriminatory society and church.
- 93 |** As a place of encounter, social participation and intercultural education, **KOLPING** is also a place for learning inclusiveness and the added value of diversity.



## 94 | **DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT – CROSS-GENERATIONAL ACTION AS STRENGTH**

- 95 | KOLPING** is committed to a fair distribution of burdens among the generations and the different groups in society.
- 96 |** At **KOLPING**, people of all generations work closely and confidently together in the Kolping families, in educational work and in other areas of association. This cooperation is future-oriented and shapes discourses within the association, as well as its positioning on political and social issues.
- 97 | KOLPING** makes its contribution to the respectful dialogue between the generations and advocates ensuring that older people develop according to their own ideas, and can actively and self-determinedly shape the later phase of life. **KOLPING** thrives on the enriching commitment of older people.
- 98 |** In all its activities, **KOLPING** has the future in mind. In particular, the voice of the Kolping Youth impacts upon all areas of the association, its institutions and companies, and motivates us to a future-oriented programme and future-oriented actions.

This mission statement depends upon people realising the connecting values of **KOLPING**.

We are convinced that the joint commitment to solidarity is worthwhile – because we witness this in our association and strengthen society with our experiences.

The fact that Adolph Kolping's work is still relevant gives courage to everyone in our large **KOLPING** community.



Kolpingwerk  
Deutschland

Verband der  
Kolping-Bildungs-  
unternehmen

Verband der  
Kolpinghäuser

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**Publisher:**

Alexandra Horster,  
National Secretary

**Design:**

designunit., Düsseldorf

**Campaign design:**

SQUIRREL & NUTS, Cologne

Cologne, December 2022

With the use of PEFC-  
certified paper, Kolpingwerk  
Deutschland contributes to  
the responsible use of creation.  
Climate neutral print.



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