

Volunteers from weltwärts partner countries serving in Germany

Pilot project
South-North Component
of the *weltwärts* program

- Strategy -

1. Objectives

The South-North component of the *weltwärts* program has the following objectives:

- ✓ to promote interaction, on an equal footing, between partners from our One World's Global South and Global North, and thus strengthen existing partnerships;
- ✓ to allow volunteers to grow personally in an informal learning process through personal interaction, intercultural exchange and the transfer of knowledge and experience;
- ✓ to strengthen civil society and especially the partner organizations in the South, which benefit as returned volunteers tell others about their experience and continue to be active in civil society; and
- ✓ to provide input and inspiration to development-related work within Germany. Interaction with international volunteers helps to get new target groups interested in development issues.

As the program pursues these goals, attention is given at all levels to gender equality.

2. Duration of assignment

In order to ensure that volunteers are able to integrate well into their host countries and working environments in terms of language and culture and are able to gain a meaningful understanding of development issues, the minimum duration of South-North assignments is 6 months, but the recommended duration is 12 months. Assignments may be extended to 18 months and, by way of exception in duly justified cases, to 24 months.

3. Volunteer requirements

With a view to social inclusion, the South-North component of the *weltwärts* program is open to a broad range of young adults from countries of the Global South.¹ For the service to be successful, volunteers should meet the following requirements:

¹ Participants in the South-North component must be from countries that are part of the OECD/DAC country list.

- Generally, volunteers are at least 18 and under 29 years of age when they start their assignment. In duly justified cases, people who are 29 years or older may participate by way of exception.
- They have completed secondary school or vocational training or hold a higher education degree, or are otherwise personally suitable.
- They are prepared to learn German before and after their departure for Germany, or already have basic language skills in German. Learning the language is absolutely vital if a volunteer's service is to become a success. However, thorough knowledge of German is not a precondition for participation if learning the language in the country of origin presents too big an obstacle. Language classes are part of the assignment.
- Participants are open to serving in an informal learning setting. They are willing to learn, interested in intercultural and development issues, and willing to contribute to the work of a relevant entity.
- They participate in all the components of the accompanying mentoring and training program.
- They are willing to get involved in civil society and share their experience upon returning to their home country.
- Desirably, they have already been active in the local *weltwärts* partner organization or other civil society organizations in their home country.

4. German host organization requirements

International volunteers in Germany may be hosted by agencies that have officially been recognized as *weltwärts* sending organizations and by *weltwärts* alumni associations, especially if the organization in question already has experience with hosting volunteers within Germany. Host organizations also need to have development and gender expertise, or be willing to acquire gender competence. They must demonstrably be able to handle the tasks they are charged with.

Not-for-profit organizations with experience in development that are headquartered in Germany may use the pilot phase of the South-North component to qualify for hosting volunteers under the *weltwärts* program.

The host organizations have the primary responsibility, in organizational terms, for ensuring that volunteers' service in Germany is successful. They work at the interface of sending organizations in the Global South, places of assignment in Germany, and the volunteers. Their tasks are, in particular:

- to coordinate with the sending organizations in the Global South and to help them build the institutional capacity to fulfill the tasks that have been laid down;
- to select and support entities that host volunteers: provide guidance on technical and development matters (e.g., advice, training and networking between an organization's own places of assignments and those at other entities), mediate in cases of conflict;
- to ensure suitable conditions for the volunteers in terms of board, accommodation, personal allowance, insurance, language classes, transport and visa/residence permit; the personal allowance is intended to enable the volunteers to take part in social life in Germany;
- to provide individual advice and assistance to volunteers and ensure that volunteers have support as they build social networks, thus facilitating integration outside the place of assignment;
- to engage with *weltwärts* alumni; and
- to hold seminars in Germany.

As it assigns volunteers to places, the host organization is responsible for taking into account each volunteer's specific potential and for enabling the volunteers to develop beyond gender stereotypes.

5. Accompanying mentoring and training

The sending organization in the Global South and the host organization jointly guarantee high-quality mentoring and training for the volunteers both in their country of origin and in Germany.

The accompanying mentoring and training program comprises the following elements:

- informing and advising interested people and applicants;
- selecting volunteers;
- providing support and advice on residence status and administrative aspects of the stay abroad;
- assisting with preparatory language classes;
- offering seminars and training;
- offering individual advice and assistance; and
- working with host entities and other persons or groups that play a role in the volunteer's life, for instance host families.

The mentoring and training is provided by educators and/or other appropriately qualified personnel. Gender issues are taken into account throughout the entire program. It is possible for several sending organizations from the Global South and/or several host organizations to provide accompanying programs together, especially if there are only a small number of volunteers.

There must be at least 25 days of *seminars and training*.²

- Orientation and preparation. Orientation takes place in the country of origin and at the beginning of the volunteer assignment in Germany. In the course of orientation and preparation, volunteers gain a clear understanding of their job as a volunteer and of the working and living conditions in Germany. They also discuss global issues.
- Support during the assignment. Accompanying seminars that are held throughout the period of assignment give volunteers a chance to reflect about their experience, life in Germany and their work at their host entity, and to examine intercultural and development issues.
- Political education seminar. There must be at least 5 seminar days of political education (pursuant to paragraph 4 in conjunction with paragraph 3 of Section 4 of the Federal Voluntary Service (BFD) Act) in cooperation with one of the BFD education centers operated by the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions.
- Reflection seminar at the end of the assignment. This includes preparation for re-entry and reflection about personal options for the period after re-entry.
- Follow-up after re-entry. The sending organizations in the Global South actively support returnees in developing ideas on how to link their experience as volunteers with their day-to-day lives in their home

² Please note that Germany's Federal Voluntary Service requires proof of 25 in-service seminar days in Germany. In addition, the organization responsible needs to ensure that there are orientation and follow-up workshops in the volunteer's home country as laid down in this strategy.

countries, and they show them ways of getting involved in civil society and, in particular, in development.

Personal support is provided by designated contact persons from the sending organizations in the Global South, the host organization in Germany, and by mentors designated by the host organization and/or the entity to which the volunteer has been assigned.

Cooperation with host entities and host families. The host organization ensures that the host entity will introduce the volunteer to his or her job and provide instruction. The host organization pays at least one visit to the host entity during the service of the volunteer.

In addition to providing support to volunteers, the host organization also needs to ensure that potential host families and other contact persons in the volunteer's living environment receive proper support before and during the volunteer's stay.

Peer-to-peer approach. Learning, especially in terms of global learning and language skills, is to be fostered through contacts between future, current and former volunteers both in sending and in host countries. Specifically, this peer networking approach is meant to encourage interaction between North-South and South-North volunteers, thus giving alumni further options for involvement.

6. Host entity requirements

Volunteers work full-time in not-for-profit organizations. Places of assignment may be at cultural, social, education, environment/nature conservation, or sports institutions. Institutions concerned with development education are particularly suitable.

Volunteers are fully integrated in their host entities. Induction and training periods count as part of the assignment period. Learning the language is of particular importance and may, if necessary, be pursued continuously and systematically over several months. The assignment is primarily considered a learning service and is a combination of training and volunteering with a high level of commitment. The host entity must have an express need for temporary volunteers with a clear timeframe and goals for the work to be done. The volunteers must be valued; they must be given proper induction, work and support. Volunteers must not be used to fill paid positions.

For the volunteer service to become a success, it is crucial that the host entity be willing to accept and make provision for the special characteristics of a *weltwärts* assignment in Germany. Host entity workers must be open for self-reflection and intercultural learning, and they must be aware of the special challenges of hosting an international volunteer, and of the special needs of international volunteers. In order to enhance their skills in terms of interacting with the volunteers, host entity workers liaise closely with the host organization. The host organization facilitates exchange of experience between host entities. The *weltwärts* program also sponsors training programs for host entity workers.

During the pilot phase, an entity may only host volunteers if it has been recognized under Section 6 of the Federal Volunteer Service Act (BFDG) by the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (BAFzA).

7. Sending organization requirements

Under the South-North component of the weltwärts volunteers service, it is, as a rule, weltwärts partner organizations in the Global South that become sending organizations. Their central role in the Global South contributes significantly toward strengthening the partnership and facilitating interaction on an equal footing.

The sending partner organizations in the Global South have the following tasks in particular:

- publicizing the program among the target group in a non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive manner;
- inviting applications and selecting applicants, with equal attention being given to women and men;
- offering pre-assignment orientation and post-assignment follow-up workshops and encouraging alumni to become involved in civil society;
- staying in touch with volunteers and assisting them with administrative matters, for instance visa application.

They carry out their work in close consultation with the coordinating host organizations in Germany. The program responds to the diversity and varying capacity of partner organizations in the Global South by helping them to form networks. For instance, several sending organizations may carry out the said tasks in cooperation. Organizations with less experience may be trained by organizations that already have the requisite skills. Where appropriate, they may let other sending organizations carry out some of the tasks. If it is not possible for a sending organization to engage in this type of cooperation, it may temporarily let the host organization carry out those tasks that it cannot yet carry out itself.

The sending organization must present a binding plan that shows how it will gradually assume more and more tasks related to preparation and follow-up as well as the promotion of alumni's civil society involvement.

For an organization to take part in the program, it needs to have, as a minimum requirement, entities in the Global South that are able to guarantee volunteers' basic preparation prior to their departure, are able to do public relations work and can take part in selecting volunteers. Basic preparation takes place at a seminar or a multi-day orientation.

Sending organizations need to have gender expertise, or be willing to acquire gender competence.

8. Pilot phase, quality assurance and evaluation

The South-North component of the *weltwärts* program will start with a three-year pilot phase.

The pilot phase will be monitored by a working group set up by the *weltwärts* program steering committee. All stakeholders involved will be represented on the working group. This South-North Working Group may carry out various consultations and regular checks on the component. On that basis, it may readjust the component in the course of the pilot phase. There will be a special focus on the perspective of the sending organizations in the Global South and on the experience of the South-North volunteers.

During the pilot phase, implementation of the South-North component will be based on cooperation with the Federal Volunteer Service at places of assignment that have been recognized by the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions.

After three years and a minimum of three groups of South-North volunteers, the new component will be subjected to external, independent evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to gain insights into the South-North component of the *weltwärts* program and to make recommendations for its further development. The terms of reference for the evaluation will be drawn up by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the *weltwärts* Coordination Unit (Kww) in cooperation with the South-North Working Group. The BMZ will provide adequate funding for the evaluation.

During the pilot phase, the *weltwärts* quality alliances will assist with quality management and quality assurance for the South-North component. Quality assurance for the component will be further developed as part of the evaluation.