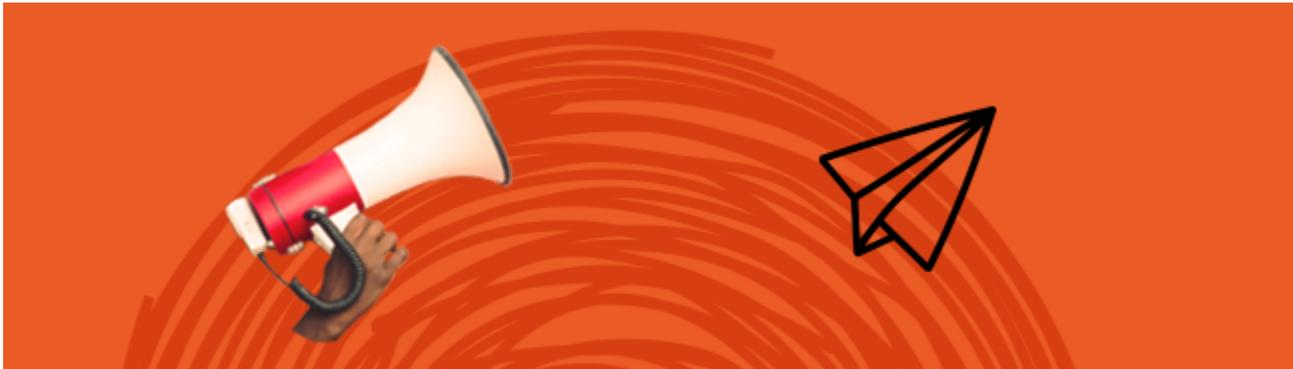


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NR. 001 | JUNE 2021



Partners in weltwärts – Newsletter for partners on the weltwärts programme

Dear weltwärts partners,

Thank you for signing up for the weltwärts newsletter. We'll be bringing you a whole range of information concerning the weltwärts joint operation, including the latest news, background information, reports on events and examples of good practice straight from the programme.

2020, the “year of Covid-19”, was a challenging year for us all. Once the volunteers had been brought back home, there were lots of questions to be answered and lots of things to be rethought and planned. A lot of us wondered – and still wonder – whether we would manage and whether the weltwärts programme would survive.

January saw the open stakeholder conference for the German implementing organisations, which was held digitally for the first time. Attended by around 200 participants, it sent a clear signal about the programme's future.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has made new arrangements, which were discussed by the Programme Steering Committee (PSC). The aim is to provide support for all stakeholders and to maintain the existing programme structures. It will also be possible to fund more incoming and outgoing volunteers. In other words, we will survive!

We wish you – and all of us – the best of health and the strength and confidence to know that this year will be better than last.

Regards and happy reading! Bonne lecture ! ¡disfruten de la lectura! Viel Spaß bei der Lektüre!

Natalie Tawamba Tessa, Partner Communications Coordinator at the weltwärts Coordination Unit and

Lourens de Jong, PSC civil society representative responsible for the partner newsletter

on behalf of the weltwärts joint operation

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weltwärts to continue – but how?

weltwärts is continuing. That was the clear message at the weltwärts programme's tenth conference for implementing organisations. But what needs to happen to ensure it can be continued successfully?

The conference for implementing organisations is an annual meeting, at which the German implementing organisations, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the weltwärts Coordination Unit dis-

cuss current issues concerning the weltwärts programme. This year, the approximately 200 participants met online to talk about the challenges posed by current events and ways of recruiting new volunteers.

Learn more

The BMZ thanked everyone for their hard work and support. In particular, there was praise for how superbly everyone pulled together in the repatriation effort to bring volunteers home at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and in the implementing and partner organisations' tireless work to support volunteers. The BMZ will continue to provide funding for the implementing organisations to ensure that structures in Germany and the partner countries can be maintained.

Many of the stakeholders took a creative approach to the pandemic with the result that almost all of the preparatory seminars, training courses and communication between organisations were conducted via virtual platforms – and still are. Some of the current South-North volunteers cook together on Zoom or present their favourite places on live stream.

A number of the participants at the conference wanted to see more ecological responsibility in the volunteer service. For example, funding for the additional costs of carbon-offsetting flights. Some organisations are already actively engaged in sustainability, growing educational gardens with their volunteers, planting trees or incorporating the topic of the “ecological footprint” of voluntary service in their accompanying seminars.

At the moment, a lot of advertising is being done in Germany to recruit new volunteers for weltwärts. The current online campaign was presented at the conference – an encouraging insight and one that gives us good reason to look forward to the next generation of volunteers.

The conference certainly gave all the participants a boost and made them feel motivated to stick with weltwärts, forge new plans and be optimistic about the future.

Decisions on the weltwärts programme

Decisions in the weltwärts joint operation are taken by the Programme Steering Committee (PSC). Returnees and representatives of civil society, the BMZ and the weltwärts Coordination Unit all have a voice on the committee.

The members meet twice a year (in May/June and December). The decision-making process starts with working groups producing input, progress and result reports concerning key topics, which are then discussed by the committee and used to inform decisions.

Learn more

With the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to have an impact on the programme, it was one of the main topics at the digital PSC meeting on 8 December 2020. The representatives of the shared-interest groups outlined their current situation and challenges facing the weltwärts programme, basing their comments on surveys conducted among all active organisations.

The BMZ usually provides funding for up to 75% of the costs of implementing the volunteer service. 25% is supplied by the participating organisations, mostly through volunteer donations. In August, the BMZ introduced a mechanism in the North-South component that made it possible to reduce the share of the funding to be supplied by the organisations to 10% in order to reduce the financial burden on implementing organisations. At the PSC meeting, the shared-interest groups requested that the percentage be decreased for the South-North component too. The BMZ has since done so, thus lessening the financial impact on implementing and partner organisations. It is also possible to obtain a reimbursement for additional costs incurred due to the pandemic, provided that good reasons are given and documentation is supplied.

To continue improving quality on the weltwärts programme, irrespective of the pandemic, the Programme Steering Committee has adopted a new catalogue of quality standards, which now includes both programme components. It came into effect on 1 January 2021 and sets out the criteria for quality in the volunteer service:

Learn more

In addition, from 1 January 2022 the implementing organisations in the South-North component will also have to be certified by an external body. This obligation has applied in the North-South component since back in 2014.

Other topics discussed by the Programme Steering Committee included the online survey of all returnees and inclusion and diversity on the weltwärts programme. It also adopted a programme-wide intervention logic model, which describes the intended impacts of weltwärts. We'll tell you more about that in a future issue.

Partner organisations can obtain summary minutes of the meeting (in English, French or Spanish) from their German partners.

Dates for your diary

bezev (Behinderung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit e.V.) will be holding a digital workshop about evaluation from 30 September to 1 October 2021. The aim of the workshop (which will be held in English) is to discuss the inclusion of volunteers with an impairment or disability in the South-North component and to identify the needs of sending and host organisations. More information to follow.

Next Programme **Steering Committee meetings:**
27 May and 8 December 2021

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