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weltwärts

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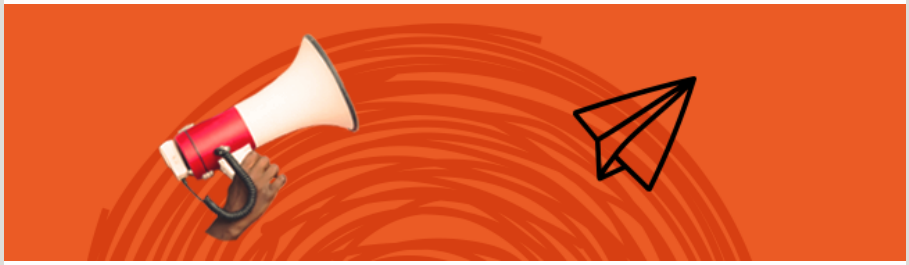

Partners in weltwärts – Newsletter for partners on the weltwärts programme

Dear weltwärts partners,

This year, 50,000 young people will have completed a weltwärts volunteer service in Germany or in countries of the Global South. This makes us incredibly happy! A big thank you goes to all involved – your partnerships make these cross-border exchanges possible.

What's more, in 2023 we will be celebrating a double anniversary, which is definitely cause for cheer. You can find out how and where we're celebrating below.

This issue also contains insights from recent partner conferences, information about the West African weltwärts network, as well as notes from the last meeting of the Programme Steering Committee.

Happy reading! Bonne lecture ! Viel Spaß bei der Lektüre! ¡Disfruten de la lectura!

With warm regards

On behalf of the weltwärts joint operation

Natalie Tawamba Tessa, contact person for partner communication at the weltwärts coordination centre and
Lourens de Jong, PSC civil society representative responsible for the partner newsletter

Party! Party! Party!

We find ourselves in a double anniversary year: 15 years of weltwärts and 10 years of the South-North component! The first 2,000 volunteers travelled to take part in various projects in the Global South back in 2008, the year weltwärts was founded. The first 130 South-North volunteers travelled to

Germany five years later. This year, we count a total of 50,000 young people who have made the journey with weltwärts.
If that isn't reason to celebrate, what is?! Three events are being organised to celebrate this anniversary and to raise a toast to the partnerships developed along the way, as well as to One World exchange projects:

- German implementing organisations will meet on 31 March and 1 April at the Open weltwärts stakeholder conference in Bonn (Germany).
- All former North-South volunteers and current South-North volunteers are invited to a festival in Göttingen (Germany) taking place between 31 May and 4 June
- And from 16 to 20 October, there will be another partner conference in Berlin (Germany); all weltwärts partner organisations from the Global South are invited to apply for a place.

So, get excited and come and celebrate with us!

Link to the festival page (in German)

Meet – network – exchange

At the end of last year, 243 people from 46 countries came together at a total of four partner conferences to discuss the weltwärts programme. These conferences took place between September and November 2022 in Colombia, Bosnia, the Philippines and Germany. You can see what they got up to and what these partner conferences involve here:

To the report on the partner conference in Colombia

To the report on the partner conference in Bosnia

To the report on the partner conference in the Philippines

To the report on the partner conference in Germany

News from the Programme Steering Committee (PSC)

Firstly, the good news: the pandemic is easing, which means that, generally speaking, more travel to countries in the Global South is once again possible. As well as this, fewer journeys are being cancelled and fewer volunteer services are being abandoned. By way of comparison, in 2021/22, 1,179 volunteers went abroad, whilst in 2022/23 the figure currently stands at 2,238.

There is a similar picture with arrivals in Germany: in 2021/22, 608 volunteers arrived, whilst in 2022/23 the number is already 438 as of February. What is particularly pleasing is that the negotiations on the future of the South-North component between the Federal Ministry for Development (BMZ) and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs (BMFSFJ) were successful. With that, the long pilot phase of the weltwärts programme's South-North component has finally been concluded. In 2022, we celebrated news that cooperation between weltwärts and the Federal Volunteer Service (BFD) could continue indefinitely.

In the last few months, volunteers have faced major difficulties in obtaining a Visa to enter South Africa. The BMZ, in close cooperation with the contact point for visa and security matters and the relevant quality association, has made great efforts to try and find a solution to the problem. Following on from discussions in the South African embassy, there is finally some good news: the embassy has indicated that there are no longer any obstacles preventing visa applications from being submitted and processed. This means that it should once again be possible for visas to be issued, provided all the usual requirements are met. Implementing organisations can now continue or start planning assignments in South Africa.

The PSC also discussed the future of the country-specific contact points for visa and security matters (LAVIS) from 2024. These contact points, which collate information on visa and security matters in 15 countries for the German implementing organisations to use, are set to continue operating in principle. The choice of countries is currently being reviewed.

You can find further information here

Unfortunately there are also some not-so-good news. Many countries across the globe are facing enormous financial difficulties due to inflation. Weltwärts stakeholders are noticing this too. Funds for the weltwärts programme for 2023 have not been reduced, which is a very positive sign considering the austerity measures implemented by the federal government. However, due to the increase in the funding rate for the South-North programme, it is expected that, in total, fewer weltwärts volunteers will be able to travel both to and from Germany.

The unfortunate situation the partner organisations find themselves in, as well as the desire for more resources to maintain the programme's high standards, were discussed by the Programme Steering Committee. Whether and how the funding rate for the North-South component can be increased, or whether there are any other financial possibilities that will allow the programme to continue to a high standard, will now be discussed in a PSC work group. Good resource management is essential, especially when they are in short supply, as is the case right now.

You can get more details on the results of the Programme Steering Committee meeting of December 2022 through your German implementing organisations, which have all received a short version of the minutes in German, English, French and Spanish.

You can find more information on the Programme Steering Committee here

Networking across language barriers

We give weltwärts networks the chance to introduce themselves in our partner newsletter. For the latest issue, we spoke to Felix Edem Kodzo Ekpeko from the West African weltwärts network.

When and why was the weltwärts network in West Africa set up?

The West African weltwärts Network (WAWN) was set up in October 2018 at the partner conference in Lomé, Togo. The network is a result of organisations from five different countries creating a platform that aims to provide opportunities for communication and a framework for the weltwärts programme stakeholders in West Africa to refer to.

How many members does WAWN have? Which countries do they come from?

We currently have around 30 members from organisations in Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal and Togo. During the partner conference in Berlin, Germany last November, we met many other organisations from these countries and I think that soon we will have around 40 members. One difficult aspect, however, is the language. Some people prefer French, some only speak English, but we always find a solution that allows us to understand one another.

What are the WAWN's aims for the next two years?

We are looking for opportunities to organise a general meeting with existing members and interested organisations. This year we will also be organising seminars with members from the five countries and an international volunteering day as part of the network. As well as this, we would like to create a website for the network. At the moment, all communication takes place via a WhatsApp group.
Since we work in five different countries, we want to set up a sub-network in each country to enable more effective dialogue within the individual countries and find more members in the five countries.

Link to the full interview

Dates

- **Open weltwärts stakeholder conference in Bonn, Germany,** 31 March and 1 April
- **Partner conference in Kigali, Rwanda**, 8–12 May, hosted by the German Red Cross Volunta in Hessen in collaboration with the Rheinland-Pfalz-Rwanda partnership association
- Next **Programme Steering Committee meeting**: 24 May
- **Anniversary festival** for former North-South volunteers and current South-North volunteers, Göttingen, Germany, 31 May–4 June
- **Partner conference in Berlin, Germany,** 16–20 October, hosted by Deutsch-Indische Zusammenarbeit (German-Indian Cooperation) together with Dream School Foundation
- **Partner conference in Ghana**, between October 2023 and February 2024, hosted by Eine-Welt Netz NRW (One World Network North Rhine Westphalia) and partner organisations
- **Partner conference in Argentina**, planned for February 2024, hosted by the Rottenburg-Stuttgart Association of Catholic German Youth and partner organisations.

Follow us on ...

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