



Documentation of Conference
Kakhreti, Georgia

Brot
für die Welt

Brot für die Welt –
Evangelischer
Entwicklungsdienst

CENN
Caucasus Environmental NGO Network

10th to 14th October 2017

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1. Introduction and background

1.1. Welcoming address PSA



Welcoming address by the Weltwärts Programme Steering Committee to the partner conference in Georgia 2017

Dear members of partner organisations and attending sending organisations,
Dear conference management team,

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to this weltwärts partner conference.

In past years, 25 partner conferences have taken place worldwide. This is the first weltwärts partner conference for Central Asia and the Caucasus and we will take this opportunity to exchange about the weltwärts programme and about cross-cutting issues concerning international volunteerism and social engagement.

The feedback from former participants and evaluation of previous conferences confirm great interest in and success of these cross-programme partner conferences. We are pleased that these conferences are now to take place on a regular basis as an instrument of partner dialogue, partner networking and participation in the weltwärts programme. We would thereby like to better involve local partners in the further development of the weltwärts programme.

The past year has again seen many developments in the weltwärts programme. The feedback from participants of previous partner conferences has provided an important impetus. To point out some of these aspects: The South-North component is seeing a strong demand and is growing. We started with 150 placements in 2013. In 2016, there were already 471 weltwärts volunteers in Germany. For this year, 600 placements have been approved. In this conference there will be room for questions and discussions on

this programme component, including the evaluation that was carried out in 2016.

Social inclusion and diversity is gaining in importance. To increase the engagement of volunteers with impairments/disabilities and volunteers with vocational training, two "competence centres" were set up in 2015 with the mandate of providing service across the programme and approaching these under-represented target-groups. In 2016 there were already 26 weltwärts volunteers with impairments/disabilities and 95 volunteers with vocational training.

Finally, new instruments were introduced for a more structured participation from you, the partner organisations, as one of the main pillars of the weltwärts programme. It is important to us to take your experiences, issues and concerns into account for further program development.

The central forum for management and development of the weltwärts programme is the programme steering committee, in which state and civil society representatives advise on the structure of the programme. Representing the state is the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), which is funding the weltwärts programme, as well as Engagement Global, which is responsible for the coordination of the program and which presents the state during this partner conference. The civil society is represented by members of the shared interest groups and by returned volunteers. Members of the programme steering committee are taking part in all partner conferences.

We would like to take this conference as an opportunity to exchange views with you about the above named topics and other recent developments in the weltwärts programme. We would like to answer your questions, and most importantly, to take on board your

comments and suggestions for the weltwärts programme in the programme steering committee.

In addition to discussions with members of the programme steering committee, the partner conference offers you the opportunity to raise topics of your own, share with others your experiences of day-to-day work with the volunteers, initiate joint projects, and in doing so, bring many new contacts and ideas back with you as you return to work. Use the conference to discuss the latest developments in the weltwärts programme, and give the programme steering committee your feedback in order to help shape the future direction of the programme.

We would like to thank the hosting partner organisations and sending organisation for

their commitment, which has made the conference possible. We thank all of you for coming all this way to take part in this partner conference.

We are looking forward to getting to know you and hope all participants will have enriching discussions and productive workshops.

With our very best regards

*The members of the Weltwärts Programme
Steering Committee*

1.2. Foreword by the organisers

Dear participants of the partner conference 2017 in Georgia,

Dear readers of this documentation,

above all, we would like to thank everyone who made this partner conference in Georgia possible: the PSA for approving our expression of interest in carrying out the conference in the Caucasus region, in spite of the low density of volunteers, the BMZ for the funding, the colleagues from Engagement Global in Bonn, who supported us with information and gave us the possibility to exchange with other organisations, who were going to carry out a partner conference this year, Julia Jacobi Gies, who took part in the conference and represented the governmental side of the Programme Steering Committee and presented facts about the weltwärts programme, Daniela Puhrsch, who represented the civil society of the Programme Steering Committee and worked with us on the topic of the follow up of the South-North programme, Franziska Koch, who represented the competence centre "weltwärts and inclusion" and worked with us on this topic, we would like to thank the representative of the German Ministry of Financial Cooperation and Development and German Embassy, Daniel Haas, for his welcoming speech from the Ministry, and the representative of the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science, Teona Tigishvili, for her interest and participation on one day of the conference. Of course we also thank our country mentor Levan Abashidze, who started organising long before the conference took place and our cooperating partner organisation Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN), above all the young colleagues Vakhtang Kochoradze and Megi Gamtkitsulashvili, other partner organisations, who participated by giving their ideas beforehand and to our current North-South volunteers Hanna (CENN) and Johann

(CSRDG).

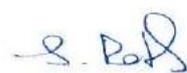
We also would like to thank the three organisations, who presented their volunteer placements/offices, day care centre and social café to the participants of the conference during the excursion: Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN), Centre of Strategic Research and Development (CSRDG) and Women's Union RHEA.

The most wonderful support during the conference, however, we received by you, the participants, who were taking part so actively, never complained about any (logistical) inconveniences and were so much caring for each other and for us. We really enjoyed the conference!

Writing about the excursion, we have to mention the severe accident which happened on the way back from the excursions to the hotel and we would like to express again, how sorry we are for the injured and for everybody who was involved in the accident! We hope you are all fine now, enjoy reading this report and will not suffer any long-term effects of the accident.

We hope this documentation will help those who participated in the conference to remember the topics and important thoughts and to reconnect and the ones who have not participated, to get a good overview about what we worked on in Kakhreti and which different points of view were expressed. There might not be a lot of findings or conclusions, but the readiness and wish to exchange experience, to build up supporting networks and to participate in the steering of the programme will be shown clearly.

Berlin, 22nd of November 2017



Susanne Roth



Wiebke Strelow

1.3 Schedule of the partner conference

	Tuesday, 10.10.2017	Wednesday, 11.10.2017	Thursday, 12.10.2017	Friday, 13.10.2017	Saturday, 14.10.2017
morning session	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast
	arrival of participants answering individual organisational questions of participants	10:00 welcome by Daniel Haas, Head of Development Cooperation South Caucasus, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Georgia Information about current state and development of weltwärts programme by Julia Jacobi-Gies (PSA) Work groups: basic information development of programme, volunteering in diff. cultures /relevance of ww	9:30 PSA topic 1: Follow-Up of the South-North Volunteer Programme Introduction and input by Daniela Puhirsch (PSA) workshops/small working groups to different topics of interest about south-north programme	9:30 topics of interest of participating partner organisations Workshops/working groups session 1	9:30 Looking back on the past four days summary of findings, recommendations for steering committee, future perspective feedback and evaluation of conference
afternoon session	14:00 registering for the conference 15:00 greeting and opening of the event, getting to know each other collecting expectations/topics of interest, presenting progr.	13:00 lunch 14:30 PSA topic 2: Inclusion Introduction and input by Franziska Koch, bezev workshops/small working groups to different topics of interest within the field of inclusion	13:00 lunch 14:00 Excursion: visiting volunteer placements CSRDG in Kakheti region CENN in Tbilisi RHEA in Tbilisi	13:00 lunch 14:30 Workshops/working groups, session 2 presenting and discussing findings and conclusions of working groups	12:00 lunch After lunch: departure of participants
	19:00 dinner "market place"	19:00 dinner "market place"	19:00 dinner free time	19:00 buffet dinner and networking evening	

1.4. Table of facts about the partner conference

Location of the conference: country and city	Georgia, Kachreti
Sending organisation in charge	Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung (Brot für die Welt – Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst)
Cooperating sending organisation	none
Partner organisations involved in the planning/organisation	CENN – Caucasus Environmental NGO Network
Date of the conference	10th – 14th of October 2017
Total number of participants	43 (incl. daily guests, organisational team, interpreters)
Number of participants from the following countries	Armenia: 1 Georgia: 22 Germany: 13 Kazakhstan: 1 Kyrgyzstan: 2 Moldova: 1 Tajikistan: 2 Ukraine: 1
Relation men/women	11 / 32
Number of participants with the following functions	PO: 24 EO: 4 ex North-South volunteer: (2)* ex South-North volunteer: 1 Representatives PSA : 2 Representative BMZ/German Embassy: 1 Representative Georgian government: 1 Team (organisation & carrying out): 5 plus 2 volunteers Translation: 2 Photography: 1 Other: 1 *included as PO / Team – double function
Language of the conference	English, Russian
Main topics	PSA topics: Inclusion, Follow Up of the South-North ww-Programme, different topics of partner organisations



Getting to know each other

2. Findings regarding the topics brought in by PSA

2.1. Feedback by participants about the following topics

To begin with, a presentation with general and current information about the weltwärts volunteer programme was given. Due to the fact that participants had different levels of knowledge about the programme, participants could split up in three work groups where they could discuss with each other and ask questions. After a certain time, there was the possibility to change groups, so that every participant had the opportunity to participate in each work group.

2.1.1. Current information about the weltwärts-programme

Julia Jacobi-Gies from Engagement Global gGmbH, who represented the Programme Steering Committee on the part of the government, presented basic information about the weltwärts programme.

Weltwärts was created in 2008 with the goals to strengthen partnerships between sending organisations and partner organisations and to provide young people with the possibility of getting to know more about development work and work in foreign countries in general. The programme is funded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development to open up the volunteer service to everyone, so that the participation does not depend upon the financial status of participants. Already the first evaluation in 2011, which included discussions with partners and German sending organisations, showed that there is a strong wish for a South-North programme as well. As a result, the South-North component was finally introduced in 2013, starting with a three-year pilot period.

Julia Jacobi-Gies emphasized the great value of dialogue and exchange with partner organisations. Therefore, weltwärts partner conferences have been initiated to foster the exchange between local organisations and the Programme Steering Committee and to create networks of partner organisations in the respective countries or regions.

Work Group: General Information

The first work group discussed general information about the weltwärts programme with Julia Jacobi-Gies. These guiding questions were given:

- Which information do you need?
- What is unclear to you about weltwärts?
- About which topic/aspect would you like to know more?
- Which area/topics of weltwärts would you like to work on more in your organisation and what do you need to do so?
- Which difficulties did you experience when searching for information?
- How would like to increase your knowledge about weltwärts?

The participants were part of organisations which just started to participate in the programme. They indicated that they need more information about the responsibilities of sending and receiving organisations, about the reimbursement of mentors in hosting organisations and about the quality management of the programme. Additionally, financial issues and budgeting were topics that were unclear to some partner organisations. Many wished to know more about the seminars that volunteers are participating in during their preparation, but also in the host country. Moreover, open questions that have been answered referred to the tasks of quality associations, funds for projects of (former) volunteers, the integration of young German volunteers into the host country and work life, the termination of a volunteer service and post-

assignment activities. In order to receive this kind of information, partner organisations would appreciate more trainings, conferences or visits to discuss with other partner organisations and also Skype calls with their German partner organisations.

One partner organisation indicated that they would like to know how to get involved in and start with the South-North programme and whom to contact. When searching for information, partner organisations face difficulties. Some of them mentioned that when googling "Federal Volunteer Service" (cooperating with weltwärts in South-North programme) there is a big amount of information, but many parts can be found only in German.

Work Group: Development of the Programme

Regarding the development of the weltwärts programme, the following guiding questions were given:

- Which aspects would you like to improve within the programme?
- How can you personally contribute to the improvement of the programme?

Participants of this work group made several suggestions for improvement. To begin with, during the selection phase, communication between sending and hosting organisations should be improved and communication with the place of assignment should be possible. A former South-North volunteer reported that before her volunteer service, she got only very basic information from the German hosting organisation, so she studied the website of her place of assignment, but as it was only in German, she was not able to get the information she needed. Other participants suggested a better fit between the candidate and the organisation by distributing the CV and conducting Skype calls in which potential volunteers can ask their questions directly to host organisations. Another imaginable solution for a better fit would be a database of host organisations or places of assignments

participating in the South-North programme. Thereby, applicants can get an impression of the fit, decrease frustration and avoid miscommunication. Also communication between former and current volunteers should be the rule and contribute to the prevention of frustration.

Host organisations should create a network to share positive and negative experiences. From this network, one country representative should express the problems that have been detected to the steering committee.

According to the participants in this work group, not only the country mentor (if existing) and the German mentor, but also the mentors from the host organisation should be included in the midterm evaluation. This evaluation should be a space where volunteers can speak freely about their problems and sorrows.

Participants agreed that returned volunteers should try to continue their work and raise awareness about development policy topics and use their experience to continue working in this field.

Work Group: Perception of Volunteering in different Cultures and Relevance of weltwärts

The participants worked on the following guiding questions:

- Why do people volunteer in your culture?
- Which forms/programmes from volunteering exist?
- What distinguishes weltwärts from other volunteer programmes?

All participants of the work group on the perception of volunteering in different cultures agreed that the perception highly depends on age. Young people are more likely to be "looking for something", while older people want to help by using their knowledge and experience. A current volunteer contributed his motivation which is based on the wish to experience a different culture and

to reflect on his own culture by getting to know a foreign one. When one participant stated that 18-year old volunteers are too young and weltwärts should only start at 19, most participants disagreed. In contrast, almost all agreed that personality and motivation are more determining for the success of a volunteer service than age.

A participant from Georgia told that in his culture volunteering is personal, implying that it is about helping one another instead of a whole group. Another participant mentioned that usually neither the North-South volunteers coming to Ukraine nor the South-North volunteers going to Germany have any problems, even if the life circumstances are different. The only problems that might occur are due to personal reasons. In order to prevent unpleasant surprises, a Kazakh organisation matches current German volunteers with future South-North volunteers. The participant states that this creates a win-win-situation. Also the contact with returned volunteers helps the future volunteers with their preparation. Most group members agreed that former volunteers are valuable for the expectation management. The group also agreed that nonetheless, everyone who goes abroad is affected by a cultural shock, regardless of if he or she does a North-South or South-North volunteer service and needs to be prepared for this as good as possible. When a current North-South volunteer contradicted by saying that he did not have a cultural shock in Georgia, the group changed their minds and acknowledges that a cultural shock does not have to be negative, but can be positive as well. The term only refers to the realisation that things are different in different countries.

This discussion led to the question of how much freedom and flexibility host organisations should allow their volunteers and if they should allow them to travel the host country. A Georgian participant outlines that his organisation allows volunteers to go anywhere and also finish work earlier, if they

need to, so that their volunteers are very flexible. Therefore, he was wondering if they are too relaxed. Other participants approve his approach saying that they also encourage their volunteers to travel and help them organise trips as long as they are available

when they are needed. All participants agreed that only people who saw more than one country can really understand their own country and that volunteers should be supported (except for extreme activities) in getting to know their host country.



Work group about basic information

2.2.2 PSA-topic 1: Follow-up of the South-North Programme

2.2.1.1 Follow-up process of the South-North programme

Daniela Puhrsch from „Evangelische Freiwilligendienste gGmbH“ introduced the topic of the South-North programme and the follow-up process.

After the three-year pilot phase from 2013 to 2016, the South-North programme was evaluated by a consulting firm. They developed several hypotheses regarding different aspects:

Volunteers

- Volunteers have achieved further development within a non-formal learning on training process (e.g. personal development and global learning)
- After returning the volunteers act as multipliers and are involved in civil society volunteer work (e.g. in their sending organisations)

Host and sending organisations

- The host organisations are strengthened by participating in the programme
- The sending partner organisations are strengthened by participating in the programme

- Existing partnerships between partners of the Global South and North are strengthened/expanded

Places of assignment

- Through exchange and interaction with volunteers, new target groups are reached, sparking their interest in development policy linkages

Objectives

- Development education in Germany is stimulated

The results showed that partnerships are strengthened and development policy is reflected across all levels of impact. The needs and expectations match with the objectives of intercultural exchange and personal development. Moreover, the Federal Volunteer Service (BFD) offers the advantage of a predefined legislative and a framework for the South-North volunteer service.

Nevertheless, the consulting firm also elaborated several topics to work on. The development policy (impact) orientation needs to be reconciled – among others by answering the questions what a development policy profile is and if it has to be in the place of assignment itself or if seminars with a focus on development policy are enough. In addition to that, specific instruments for promoting the goal achievement should be defined and procedural certainty for participating organisations and volunteers needs to be ensured. The matching of volunteers and their places of assignment is a topic that requires further elaboration as well. Also the legal framework has to be examined regarding the question if the FVS is the right one. Furthermore, the target group needs clarification. In order to do so, it has to be clear how volunteer service is understood and for whom it should be. The goal of “strengthening partner competence” also needs a clear definition and specific instruments for exchange between organisations should be developed and implemented.

From these results, a follow-up process with four areas for action has been developed. The first one is the development aspect of the programme both at programme and implementation level. The second area includes the legislative parameters required in Germany for the South-North component and the third one refers to the volunteer target group and volunteers' expectations regarding the volunteer service. The role of the partner organisations in the programme is the final area for action.

The follow-up phase is planned for one year during which a South-North work group works on recommendations and makes suggestions for change in order to improve the programme. During this phase, several workshops with different stakeholders are taking place in different regions. The partner organisations from the countries that took part in the weltwärts partner conference from Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine are invited to the regional workshop in India, taking place from 29th of January to 1st of February 2018 in Bangalore.

2.2.1.2 Basic information on the South-North programme: Bus stop exercise on flipcharts
Daniela Puhersch prepared six flipcharts with different topics related to the weltwärts South-North volunteer programme. Participants were invited to discuss in small groups and write their previous knowledge or thoughts on the flipchart papers. After a while, the small groups switched so that each participant has dealt with each topic.

Objectives

According to the participants, the main objectives of the South-North volunteer service are the personal development of the volunteers, sharing experiences and getting involved in the volunteer movement. On the flipchart, they wrote that the focus of weltwärts is on non-formal education, global learning and the development of intercultural skills. By participating in weltwärts, the

volunteers should stay socially active and become active citizens who are sensitive and aware of diversity and appreciate it. In order to reach these objectives, the support of the hosting organisation is required and sending and hosting organisations should establish contacts, for instance by elaborating common or collaborative projects.

Host organisations

On the flipchart about host organisations, it was written that their tasks are setting up a budget plan, applying for grants, selecting volunteers, promoting the programme and organising mentors. Host – or coordinating, as the participants preferred to call it – organisations serve as the contact point between all stakeholders, including the place of assignment, volunteers, ministry and sending organisation. In the participants' view, the hosting organisations are responsible for supporting volunteers in any cases and also giving them a cultural orientation. Besides, it is important to note that volunteers may not replace an employee. The workplace of the volunteer, which the host organisation provides, needs to be well-equipped and suitable and the interests of the volunteer should be taken into account.

Places of assignment

First of all, the place of assignment should be safe for the volunteer and well-equipped for his or her work, for example with a computer or desk, depending on the tasks. Moreover, the description of tasks in the working place should be clear and detailed and an alternative place of assignment should be available in case the volunteer does not fit to the initial place. According to the participants, the places of assignment should have a connection with social and political topics for development and cooperation. For the development of the volunteer, there should be a variety in tasks he or she gets and the place of assignment should help with the adaptation.

Accompanying mentoring and training

Regarding the accompanying mentoring and training, participants consider psychological support and the assistance of volunteers as important. In addition, preparation seminars and a one-month introductory training before the volunteer service starts are proposed. Mid-term evaluation and steady visits by mentors should secure a successful mentoring. Volunteers should be able to give recommendations to their mentors as well. Finally, the participants proposed a train-the-trainer event or a summit for trainers from different hosting countries, where they can share their experiences and best practices.

Sending organisations

First of all, sending organisations should promote the weltwärts programme and at the same time spread information about weltwärts throughout the society. The previous knowledge about sending organisations comprised that they need practice as well as joint projects with partner organisations and that they need to select candidates and prepare documents. A pre-departure training and logistical preparation (e.g. travel arrangements) are supposed to ensure a smooth start into the volunteer service. Moreover, volunteers should be trained in their activities in time. During the service, the sending organisation has to stay in contact with the volunteer and conduct a continuous monitoring and evaluation and help him or her to reintegrate and to stay active after return by developing prospects. The whole time, the sending organisation should stay in active collaboration with the hosting organisation.

Volunteers

The first and most important points about volunteers that were written on the flipchart are motivation and the interest for intercultural exchange. According to the participants of the partner conference, the volunteers have the expectation of learning and getting professional skills. It is also important that they are willing to go back to

their home countries after the end of the volunteer service.

2.2.1.3 Discussion: Best practices, challenges, specific recommendations

The participants split up in work groups to discuss best practices, challenges and specific recommendations regarding different topics. The results and conclusions of the group works will be presented in the following paragraphs.

Post-assignment activities and engagement

Many participants agreed that mentorship for volunteers is a best practice in post-assignment activities and engagement. In contrast, the reintegration is considered a challenge, often because there are no job positions in the home country. Many participants from sending or hosting organisations have already experienced volunteers who wished to go back to Germany to study or do a vocational training after their South-North volunteer service ended.

Matching of volunteer needs and expectations

In order to match volunteer needs and expectations, the groups discussed that the sending organisation should be involved in solving problems that volunteers might have and provide flexible solutions for problem solving for the host organisation. The host organisations should provide the reports (beginning, mid-term, end) of volunteers to the sending organisation, so that they are updated as well. Moreover, a common understanding of "voluntary service" is indispensable and includes clear definitions of volunteer, sending and hosting organisation. The (academic) experience of the volunteer should be matched with the task in the hosting organisation. Another recommendation by participants was that the detailed CV of the volunteer should be spread to everyone involved in the selection process as well as a detailed list of tasks. Thus, more human resources should be made available for the selection and matching process. In

order to evaluate the work, the sending organisations should visit the host country (Germany). The participants of this work group also recommended that volunteers need more than one choice for their assignment and that hosting organisations should put more effort into choosing the right project. Partner organisations endorsed the idea of a central and transparent database where volunteers can see all places of assignment. Julia Jacobi-Gies replied that German hosting organisations already have their partners which offer places of assignments. The difference between North-South and South-North in this regard is that in the North-South programme, volunteers choose the placements or organisations they apply to, whereas in the South-North programme volunteers often come from the surrounding of partner organisations.

Preparation of volunteers

Best practices regarding the preparation of volunteers are found to be joint projects with the potential volunteers to be involved in the South-North programme from six months to one year period before the departure to Germany. Examples could be the project of producing furniture for schools or the organisation of a celebration event in a house for elderly people.

Qualifying of sending organisations and hosting organisations

Participants agreed that hosting organisations should ideally provide volunteers with concrete tasks, according to the flipchart discussion. According to them, challenges include the lack of written procedures and regulations in organisations and also the lack of information. Therefore, participants made several recommendations, including a qualification framework - "do no harm" - introducing a checklist of capacity, a platform for exchange and support as well as a toolbox for South-North volunteer services. Furthermore, a discussion arose in this work group between partner organisations and

German hosting organisations stating that volunteers are no specialists and therefore do not need professional skills. The hosting organisations underlined that weltwärts is no professional programme. Due to the fact that this discussion could not be concluded during the limited time frame of the conference, there is a need for further discussions about the intention and aim of the weltwärts volunteer service.

Cooperation between partner organisations

Regarding the cooperation between partner organisations (sending and hosting

organisations), a meeting of all sending organisations in one country should be arranged. Moreover, there should be info sheets, emails and calls to exchange information. Challenges might arise in unexpected situations in the hosting organisations. Recommendations that were given by the participants of the conference include setting up an advanced planning visit from the sending to the hosting organisation in Germany, introducing common projects as a tool for hosting and exchanging experiences for new organisations.



Plenary session

2.2.3 PSA-topic 2: Inclusion

The topic of inclusion has been dealt with starting with an information input by Franziska Koch from "Behinderung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit e.V./"Disability and Development Cooperation" (bezev).

The inclusion of as many young people as possible in developmental topics is considered an important objective by the BMZ. The ministry has therefore developed an action plan for inclusive development cooperation in order to improve the inclusion of people with disability or impairment in the weltwärts volunteer programme and to diversify the target group.

Franziska Koch defines inclusion as participation for everyone. To reach this objective, not the individuals, but the system needs to change. As diversity is considered to be the normality, everyone should have the possibility to be included in the weltwärts programme. Therefore, the programme should be adapted to accommodate this diversity.

Currently, there are three competence centers for inclusion:

1. The competence center for people with disabilities is located at "Behinderung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit e.V." (bezev), a small non-governmental organisation in Essen, Germany, which was founded in 2015.
2. IN VIA Köln e.V. hosts the competence center for volunteers with vocational training and was founded in 2015 as well.
3. The competence center for people with migration background only exists since June 2017 and is located at Sage net e.V., transfer e.V. and Jappoo Hand in Hand guG.

Different measures have already been taken to promote inclusion in the weltwärts volunteer programme. Firstly, structural improvements included the adaptation of financial guidelines, for example regarding the

coverage of additional costs like insurances, sign language interpreters or any other costs to cover special needs (See list of literature for information about fundable additional needs). Moreover, the age limit has been lifted even further from 30 to 35 for volunteers with disabilities. Secondly, publications have been released and experiences evaluated. The involvement of partner organisations in the evaluations has shown that many of them already have experience or at least are very open to host volunteers with a disability.

In line with the focuses of the competence centers, the group of participants split into three groups. The participants were free to change the work groups twice, so that everybody had the possibility to discuss each topic. The main points of discussion and the findings will be presented in the following paragraphs.

2.2.3.1 Work group: volunteers with migration background

The discussions in the first work group focused on volunteers with migration background. The participants told different stories and discussed their experiences.

- One participant shared her only negative experience with a volunteer with migration background. The German volunteer with Kazakh background became depressed after she met her previously unknown father in Kazakhstan and terminated her volunteer service, the participant wondered if she should host people coming to search for their roots during their service. However, she states that the success of a volunteer service depends more on the individual character. When disregarding the personal background, she sees no difference between volunteers with or without migration background and therefore wants to continue hosting volunteers also with Kazakh background.
- Another participant experienced that German volunteers with Armenian roots

often chose psychologically challenging projects. They argue that they want to help people in Armenia because they feel Armenian themselves, but are not from Armenia. Concluding, she appreciates the high degree of motivation and devotedness that the volunteers she hosted brought and thus plans to continue providing them with opportunities.

- A participant from a Georgian organisation hosted a girl with Slavic roots who had difficulties adapting to the Georgian culture and changed her project and city twice. However, he does not want to relate her problems to her migration background, but thinks that it was her individual background or personality.
- The first intention of another participant was that she has no relation to the topic of volunteers with migration background until she remembered that she hosted a girl who was German-Turkish and had difficulties adapting to the culture of her host country. She was unable to explain what was wrong and eventually decided to terminate her volunteer service. Despite this negative experience, the participant does not want to relate the problems to the volunteer's migration background.
- Moreover, an organisation experienced a girl who was ethnically Russian and moved to Germany as a child. She was unable to adapt to her *weltwärts* host country. The participant stated that this was due to the gap of knowledge about the latest developments in Russia, but also because she was considered German instead of Russian. She concludes that there are two sides of the coin: On the one hand, people with migration background know that there is something else than the culture of the country they live in, but on the other hand, those people sometimes expect to know how a country works even though they do not know it as well as they think.
- One participant even told that this year she is hosting hardly any "real" German

volunteers as all have different roots, e.g. Turkish, Greek or Finish, and no problems have occurred yet. In line with her statement, the two volunteers supporting the organisational team of the partner conference shared their experiences. Both are German, but have at least one parent who comes from another country. They state that integration during the volunteer service is facilitated by the fact that they are used to different cultures and languages at home.

As a conclusion, the participants of the work group agree that hosting organisations should not focus on the migration background and should not consider volunteers as migrants if they have the German citizenship because it does not or at least should not make a difference. Although it became obvious that many of the volunteer services of volunteers with migration background terminated early, there was consent among participants that those problems are not related to the migration background itself. Instead, all agreed that the success of a volunteer service depends on the expectations of both the hosting organisation and the volunteer him- or herself. Problems might occur if the main motivation of a volunteer for going abroad is the search for roots. The reasons for migration can be very individual and determining in these cases.

2.2.3.2. Work group: volunteers with different abilities

The second work group discussed their experiences with volunteers with different abilities. The following guiding questions have been worked on:

- Do you have experiences with volunteers with impairment/disability?
- What are expectations towards volunteers?
- What should a volunteer be able to do in your project?
- How can matching between your project and a volunteer with impairment/disability work? (Consider

the following steps: Communication, workplace, mobility, accommodation, pedagogical support, etc.)

The definitions are relatively broad. Disability is a legally accepted status, whereas impairment also includes chronic illnesses, mental and emotional problems, learning difficulties and illnesses which delayed the formal education. A question that could not be answered during the partner conference was if a difference between the expressions is also made in the Russian language.

Several organisations have already hosted or sent volunteers who have a disability or impairment and talked about their experiences.

- A volunteer with cerebral palsy from the Ukraine did an EVS in Greece. This was a good experience for all people involved.
- A volunteer with diabetes came from Germany to the Ukraine and all medical needs could be met.
- Short-term volunteer with additional needs in the area of motoric (could only use one hand) worked in a camp in Italy. The sending organisation informed the worked place about the impairment and no problems occurred.
- Volunteer with official/known mental problems/illness from Germany, where no problems occurred during the volunteer service
- Volunteer with additional needs in the area of motoric (could only use one hand/leg) and one volunteer with epilepsy from Germany were sent successfully abroad
- A volunteer with psychosomatic disorder did not inform the sending and receiving organisation about the fact that she will fall unconscious in different situations. This scared the responsible person, but was no problem after all.
- A blind person did a very good voluntary service but needed shorter working hours
- The EVS-program allows short-term voluntary service and advanced planning visits so that the volunteer can check out

the surrounding and working conditions for the voluntary service

Summarising, there was a broad agreement among participants that those volunteer services did not imply any major problems linked to disabilities and mostly worked out well. Almost all organisations agreed that they would host or have already hosted volunteers with disabilities, while only one hosting organisation explained that they cannot host volunteers with mental impairments because of their work with children. The consent was that instead of the presence or absence of disability, the motivation of the individual volunteers is the crucial factor for success of a volunteer service.

However, a few adaptations in the weltwärts volunteer service should be made to improve conditions for disabled or impaired volunteers. The topic of finances was addressed in this work group, but most questions are answered in the funding guideline of weltwärts, which among others explains the costs for special needs that are covered (see list of literature).

2.2.3.3. Work group: Volunteers with completed vocational training or university degree

In this working group a lot of exchange of experience between the partner organisations took place. Very different experiences with volunteers with and without professional background were presented:

- partner organisation has been looking for a volunteer with vocational training without positive results
- one organisation affirms that German volunteers with professional background are very rare and that they are highly appreciated. Nevertheless, the placements or projects they work in are not designed for volunteers with this kind of background.
- organisation provides trainings in case they receive volunteers without professional skills

- there is a disparity between receiving and sending volunteers: Within the pool of volunteers they receive from Germany, there are only very few with professional background, it is not common at all. Once they had six applicants for a volunteer placement and they choose the (only) one with professional background.
- One organisation is hosting a volunteer with university degree for the first time right now. They communicated directly with the volunteer before she came to the country and on this base they chose the field in which she is working within the organisation.
- Another organisation would like to receive volunteers who have not an a-levels/high school leaving certificate, but vocational training. However, they never get this kind of volunteers.

Partner organisations agreed that language skills are very important too, and that sometimes volunteers help each other with language knowledge.

A discussion about the possible reasons for not getting volunteers with vocational training started: The main reason, they concluded upon, might be the fact that these young people are in another situation and phase of their lives than the typical German applicant for the weltwärts program, who is still living with his/her parents after having finished high school/A-levels and does not have to give up an already independent life and working place.

- One of the representatives of a German sending organisation stated that the age about 18 to 19 years is the best time to work with these young people, who start vocational training at an age of 16 and finish at 19. They should be reached when they are still in the training and have not already started to work.
- Another representative of a German sending organisation stated that the average German weltwärts volunteer is

between 17 and 18 years old when they apply for the program and has at least one parent with an academic background. Young Germans who do not come from this background, often see volunteer service as wasted time in which they should better earn money.

- One partner organisation introduced its pedagogical project, in which a volunteer year is included in the whole measure: It consists of study and practice phases in the home country plus a volunteer service in a determined field of work in Germany.
- Another partner organisation found it very difficult to find qualified social workers in the country. They would like to send young social workers to Germany, to gain professional experience through a volunteer service and afterwards use this experience back home.
- One partner organisation working in the pedagogical field is sending volunteers to Germany to a similar organization over there. They expect volunteers to come back with deeper knowledge and more interest in the field they gained experience in Germany. They suppose that this has a positive impact on the work they will do in their home country afterwards.
- One partner organisation provides a training once a year for social workers and expects that German professional volunteers could support this training, the same could be put to practice vice versa.
- Maybe the weltwärts program, especially South-North has to be adapted to the needs of the partner organisations?
- A South-North volunteer expressed her astonishment to find disabled people be included in workplaces in Germany. It was a positive surprise to her and she is willing to support including people with disabilities in workplaces in her home country.
- In Germany, lots of incoming volunteers work in elderly care, because there are social funds for paying such kind of work.

- The volunteers' motivation to come back to their home country is mainly to study at university and then start to work afterwards.
- One of the representatives of partner organisations said that the south-north-programme is not suitable in Georgia, because it does not match the time line of young people: They lose one year, because university already starts by beginning of September, when they are coming back to their home country. The time in Germany should be limited to eleven or eleven and a half months.

Summarising what has been discussed in the working group about volunteers with vocational training, partner organisations are generally very eager to receive volunteers with professional knowledge and/or

experience. A lot of creative ideas about possible programs for this type of volunteers which could benefit both partner organisations and volunteers have been generated. These ideas seem to be more trainees than volunteer programs, or more precisely put: they are trainee measures including phases of volunteer services.

It has not been talked about how to face a probably higher need of personal support by volunteers without high school diploma/a-levels or even university degree, but with vocational training concluded. On the contrary, professional volunteers seem to induce a certain grade of maturity, which induces less need of being guided and accompanied.



Work group: volunteers with migration background

2.2. Findings regarding cross-cutting questions

2.2.1. Which expectations do partners have regarding the volunteer programme?

An interesting discussion came up in a work group about the added value that South-North volunteers bring back for their sending organisations. The participant who raised this point stated that if volunteers work in a place of assignment in Germany in a work field different than the one their sending organisation is working in, he/she cannot contribute any professional experience coming back to his/her sending organisation. Another participant shared his view that volunteers are not meant to gain professional experience and knowledge during the volunteer service and to work in their future area of activity. Instead, they should deal with topics related to development cooperation and gather intercultural experiences. Thus, sending organisations profit from the knowledge of returned volunteers about a foreign country and culture and about work life abroad. Based on this assumption, the participant with the initial question requests an orientation phase for the volunteers to get to know the foreign language and culture, but also a professional orientation and training for hosting organisations about the aims of the weltwärts programme and mentoring for volunteers.

During the conference and in different work groups, it became obvious that many partner organisations expect South-North volunteers to have a professional education or experience in the work field of the host organisation. Many partner organisations expressed the wish for more flexibility regarding places of assignment. They imagine that when a South-North volunteer is very dissatisfied or facing problems in his or her placement, it should be possible to change the place of assignment on short notice. This goes hand in hand with the partner organisations'

wish for a more flexible matching, implying that places of assignment can be re-assigned easily among volunteers, if necessary.

In different work groups, the topic of a database for South-North volunteer placements came up. Partner organisations emphasised several times, that they would appreciate a database with information about places of assignment in Germany. Thereby, transparency would be increased and future volunteers can already get information about the placements before the volunteer service and get an impression of the fit.

2.2.2. Which topics from the conference are relevant for the future development of the programme and will be reported back to PSA?

In general, the topic South-North programme and the follow-up process were regarded as very important by most participating partner organisations. Even though it initially only was a topic set by the programme steering committee, it would have been discussed anyways at the request of the participants. Most participants were very eager to come up with suggestions for improvement regarding the future development of the South-North programme. Among others, many expressed the wish for an expansion of the programme with the goal of enlarging it to the same size and number of volunteers as the North-South programme.

Moreover, almost all participants highly appreciated the partner conference as an opportunity to get in exchange with other sending, hosting and partner organisations. They expressed the request and need for more workshops, meetings or conferences. Partner conferences should take place regularly also in the Caucasus region for discussing the current status, the development and recommendations for the weltwärts volunteer programme. However,

the conference was also appreciated as a chance to exchange with own partner organisations and to work on the existing

partnerships because meetings in person are not comparable to a communication via email, Skype or telephone.

2.3. Miscellaneous feedback to PSA

On the last full day of the partner conference, there was space and time for the topics of partner organisations. The participants split up in different groups, depending on their topics of interest.

A group of four Georgian participants (Ucha Vakhania, Nino Vasadze, Eka Urushadze, Pavle Tvaliashvili) worked on recommendations for the development of the volunteer programme and for the South-North programme. Their drafts have partly been presented to the other participants on the last day and can be read below.

Recommendations for the Volunteer Program Development (DRAFT):

1. Ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the Evaluate-Recommendation-Improve process;
2. Consider the programme positive experience as a pilot phase and significant growth of its scope;
3. Specify and expand involvement criteria and procedures for the sending and hosting organisations (who and how can be partners, how to find German direct-partner organisation for South organisations; to create user-friendly "step-by-step" guidelines);
4. Improve the volunteer selection process and add some new steps (i.e. collect information about volunteer's health status, criminal record, carry out psychological tests and assess his/her skills in teamwork, decision-making, conflict management, etc; to have live meeting and do observation on behavior of candidate during group/team-work);

5. Ensure availability of comprehensive information on hosting organisations (including a preliminary visit of a sending organisations' representative to the hosting organisations to collect detailed information, also photo/video materials, "B2B style meetings" etc);
6. Promote communication between local organisations involved in the program;
7. Promote communication between the respective sending and hosting organisations;
8. Develop and implement program standards to hosting organisations.
9. Create common platform for partner organisations (web-based: google, drop-box , FB page, etc)

Recommendations for improvement of South-North program:

- Roles and responsibilities should be more defined for all actors;
- Sending organisation should be integrated in the process of selection of workplace for volunteer in order to avoid mismatching of interests;
- Volunteer should receive detailed information about work assignments prior to arrival; - Exchange of information between volunteers and host projects should be promoted prior to arrival;
- Public database listing all hosting organisations and host projects should be accessible to the sending organisation;
- Direct communication of sending organisation with host project should be ensured before, during and after service;

- Cooperation between sending organisation and hosting organisation and hosting project should be improved;
- Sending organisation should be involved in evaluation process of volunteer (involvement in mid-term and final evaluations);
- Hosting organisations/projects should report directly to the sending organisation too;
- Hosting organisation should share all reports to sending organisation;
- More flexible policy of problem solving should be elaborated;
- Procedure of finding new workplace for volunteer willing to change the assignment should be much more simplified, facilitated in order to achieve results at a proper time;
- Crisis management of program; skills of persons involved in it should be improved;
- More focus on partnerships as well as on needs of sending organisations;
- Support of global partnership-participation in international experience

sharing conferences, workshops and exchange information with similar programs, organisations needs to be supported.

- In general, the program needs to review selection procedures of their host projects and job assignments, as well as managing emergency situations.
- official documents should not only be in German

In addition to that, it was criticised by many participants that not all official documents related to weltwärts exist in other languages than German. To give examples, participants mentioned the South-North volunteers' contracts (including the so called "Rahmenvereinbarung"), which the sending organisations would like to be able to read as well. Plus, the weltwärts website and many documents like the funding guideline can be accessed in German, English, Spanish and French. As many employees of partner organisations in the Caucasus region know Russian rather than English, it would be helpful to get information in Russian as well.

3. Individual part of documentation

3.1. Expectations and wishes of participants regarding the conference and topics

In addition to the topics from the programme steering committee that had to be treated during the conference, participants had the possibility to bring up their own topics in the registration form under an open question.

The most mentioned expectation regarding the contents of the conference was the exchange of experiences, including experiences from other countries, best practice cases, new ideas and discussions with other partner organisations. Moreover, participants wanted to talk about mentoring, pedagogical support and training and

integration of volunteers. This involves sub-topics like the motivation of volunteers, challenges for volunteers, conflict management, the development of a "Trauma System", social, (inter-)cultural and psychological aspects of voluntary work as well as the preparation, adaptation and integration of volunteers. Another topic that was mentioned often in the registration forms was the programme development and improvement. Besides, networking among partner organisations with potential partners and personal contact and cooperation between partner organisations

and German sending organisations was a motivation for participants to join the conference. Many also expected talking about places of assignment and tasks of volunteers or about post-assignment activities and engagement and the impact of the programme. Some participants indicated the wish to cover the diversification and promotion of the weltwärts programme, for instance how to make a region more attractive for potential volunteers or how to

include young people with less opportunities. In addition, weltwärts in general, culture, administration, financial grants and inclusion were named.

Most of the topics mentioned were already covered by the schedule. The last full day was dedicated for the rest of the topics and for all miscellaneous topics that came up during the conference. Those will be described in the following section.



Work group: development of the programme

3.2. Miscellaneous topics that have been discussed during the conference

Participants came together in small groups and discussed their expectations and additional topics they would like to talk about. The reason why the results of the group discussions and miscellaneous topics will be described in detail is that not all groups presented what they discussed. Thereby, participants had more time for discussions.

It was mentioned several times that the capacity of the South-North programme should be expanded, so that more volunteers can come to Germany and ideally, the number of North-South and South-North volunteers should equal. Furthermore, many participants demanded more information about the South-North programme, including general information, the frame of the programme,

financial aspects and building the respective partnerships. Many wished for and wanted to seize the conference for open communication and constructive criticism. Moreover, the exchange of experiences was mentioned again regarding different aspects, such as the concept and understanding of volunteering in different cultures resulting in different expectations of volunteers. Many participants were curious to get to know how other organisations do things like coping with difficult situations, experiences with volunteers living in host families or projects and experiences made with volunteers with disabilities, A-levels or migration background.

In small work groups in which participants split up depending on their interests, different topics were discussed and some results will be briefly summarised.

One group talked about public relations of the weltwärts volunteer service. They concluded that the selection process of the volunteer depends on the organisation and that they had different ways of selecting. Thus, no overall recommendation could be made, but the participants said that they had a fruitful

discussion and appreciated each others' insights.

Another group, consisting of participants from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Georgia, exchanged their hosting experiences, for example regarding visa, places of assignment, information they and the volunteers need, cultural differences and the preparation of South-North and North-South volunteers. They also had a fruitful discussion, asked questions and got answers and perceived their group work as extremely productive.

A group of partner organisations and German sending organisations talked about their partnership. They concluded that they want to start with the South-North programme in the next year and discussed how to implement it and which financial possibilities there are. Besides, they talked about their current crisis and emergency management, insurances, regular problems coming up when hosting and the impact the voluntary service has on volunteers.

3.3. Excursion to volunteer placements

On the afternoon of the third day of the conference, three partner organisations offered their volunteer placements to be visited by the participants:

Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN)

CENN's office in the old town of Tbilisi was visited by one of the groups. CENN's mission is to foster modern and sustainable development values and practices through the bridging of society and environment. They aim to build a strong and responsible civil society, good governance and accountable business to safeguard the environment and improve people's life.

CENN has been participating in North-South and South-North programme and is hosting the volunteer Hanna Lietz, who was supporting the conference organizational team.

Her tasks at CENN's office is to get to know how an NGO works and to learn about environmental and developmental topics. She supports and accompanies the colleagues whenever it is needed or possible and widens her understanding through field visits to some of the regions where environmental problems occur.

Women's Union RHEA

RHEA works on the psycho-social rehabilitation of children and youngsters with intellectual disabilities and supports them to develop life skills, educational and vocational skills. RHEA fosters their integration in Tbilisi and in the multi-ethnic environment of the Samtskhe-Javakheti region.

RHEA opened up its doors to let the participants greet the young adults in the day care centre for young people with intellectual disabilities. After visiting the day care centre, the participants went on to the social café, where each day one of the beneficiaries from the day care centre is working together with other colleagues.

RHEA is currently hosting their fourth North-South volunteer within the weltwärts programme. The volunteer is integrated in the team working with the young adults in the day care centre and works in the social café as well. She can bring in creative ideas producing handcraft articles with the young people, which are sold in the social cafe and soon in the newly opened shop close to the café.

Centre of Strategic Research and Development (CSRDG)

CSRDG aims to empower Civil Society Organisations and to motivate the Government on local and national levels, so that both effectively contribute to the democratic developmental processes in Georgia. As a consequence, the quality of life for the most disadvantaged population in Georgia should improve. CSRDG works in different regions of Georgia, either through their local office or through a partner organization, which themselves work with the local community centres. In the Kakheti region in the small town of Lagodekhi, CSRDG works with its partner organization Georgian Civil Development Association - GCDA.

CSRDG has received several North-South volunteers and is participating in both programmes, North-South and South-North. Right now, GCDA is hosting the volunteer Johann Schilling, who supported us by taking photos of the partner conference. His tasks consist in designing and preparing activities such as language and creativity clubs for children and youth. He travels to the community centres in several nearby villages to introduce and carry out leisure activities on regular basis.



Work group: development of the programme

3.4. Evaluation of the conference

3.4.1. Aims of the conference

In order to evaluate the weltwärts partner conference in Georgia, the aims that have been determined beforehand have to be analysed and assessed.

The aims predefined by the PSA include the following:

1. Strengthening partnership cooperation
 - promotion of cooperation based on partnership (focus on programme implementation) by accompanying measures
 - strengthening the dialogue and networking between partner organisations in weltwärts partner countries
 - identification of relevant common topics
 - exchange and networking to enable a qualification of the programme on an implementation level
2. Strengthening the dialogue between steering level of the programme, especially the programme steering committee and the partner organisations in weltwärts partner countries
 - Discover the perspectives of partner organisations regarding specific questions about the programme steering and the programme itself
 - Information of partner organisations about PSA topics (inclusion and follow-up of the South-North programme)
 - Appreciation of the contribution from partner organisations to the success of the programme
- strengthening the civic structures in the partner countries
- giving a common voice to partner organisations by connecting individual partner organisations

Apart from these official aims given by the BMZ, Bread for the World wanted to give

partner organisations in the Caucasus and central Asia region the possibility to participate in a cross cultural weltwärts conference, as they had not been included so far. Weltwärts partner conferences have always taken place in countries or regions with a huge density of weltwärts volunteers in order to reach the biggest amount of partner organisations possible. We thought that all partner organisations should have the possibility to participate at least from time to time and therefore applied for Georgia as the location of the conference.

Another expected aim was to create motivation to develop the cooperation in both programmes, north-south and south-north, between our own participating partner organisations and Bread for the World and to get impulses for the future cooperation within the frame of weltwärts.

Networking or at least getting in touch with other German sending organisations was also important to us, as there are only few German sending organisations cooperating in the area within the weltwärts programme and we appreciate cooperating (e.g. in midterm-seminars) and exchanging experience in different areas. This exchange was not necessarily expected to take part during the conference, but to be fostered through the contact to the other German sending/receiving organisations.

3.4.2 Target group

The target group is defined by the programme steering committee and includes persons directly involved in the weltwärts programme. Partner organisations of as many sending organisations as possible of different interest groups and quality associations should participate in the conference. Therefore, the following groups should take part:

1. Partner organisations and places of assignment in weltwärts partner countries
2. Representatives of German sending organisations

3. Two members of the programme steering committee or surrogates
4. Representatives of returned volunteers (one conference per year)

We had the chance to include representatives of every German sending/receiving organisation, so each partner organisation from the region could count with at least one representative from their German partner organisation. As mentioned before, there are only few German organisations involved in this area within the weltwärts programme, so it was possible to invite all of them without passing the given limit of German participants. The official representatives of returned (North-South) volunteers did not register for any partner conference this year, so we invited one of our own former volunteers who still lives in Georgia to participate, which she did.

There were two former South-North volunteers among the participants, one as a representative of a hosting organisation and one as part of the organisational team. Apart from that, two of our partner organisations gave their actual north-south volunteers the chance to support the organising team, so they took part as well and – as we noticed - were included very well and asked to give their points of view sometimes.

Apart from all these participants deeply involved in the programme, both the representative of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development in the German Embassy in Tbilisi, Daniel Haas and Teona Tigishvili, the representative of the Ministry of Education and Science of the host country of the conference, Georgia, participated in the conference on one day.

We learned that it was not the different points of view given by different roles in the programme (partner organisations, German sending organisation, former south-north or north-south volunteer) but probably the different base of information or the generally low level of (background) information about

the weltwärts programme that made it difficult to go deeper into discussions.

Very often, it was not clear to the partner organisations, which regulations are fixed by the BMZ/programme steering committee and which are set and therefore to be discussed with their own German partner organisation.

3.4.3 Evaluation by participants

The evaluation questionnaire developed by BMZ was distributed among the participants on the last day of the conference. In total, 20 persons filled in the survey (9 from Georgia, 4 from Germany, 2 from Kirgizstan, 1 from Armenia, 1 from Moldova, 1 from Ukraine and 2 who did not indicate their country). The feedback can be summarised as follows.

Overall impression

Out of 20 participants, 16 completely agreed or mostly agreed that the conference fulfilled their expectations, while only two persons agreed and two did not give any answer. Most participants especially liked the exchange with other participants and networking. Moreover, many indicated that they appreciated the organisation of the conference, the work groups, the atmosphere, the work on the South-North programme, the moderators and the participation of volunteers. What many did not like refers to time management and working hours. They criticised that there were too little breaks, whereas the time spent in group work was too long and that the working days started too late and therefore also finished too late. Somebody also mentioned that non-formal communication took place only on the last evening. Other negative aspects mentioned were the waste of food (especially meat and fish every day) and the use of plastic bottles, the repetition of topics or the lack of structure in the country presentations. Nevertheless, it can be said that the overall impression by participants of the conference was very positive.

Content and methods

In the questionnaire, nine participants completely agreed, seven mostly agreed and four agreed that the topics covered by the conference were relevant to him or her. Except for one person who slightly disagreed, all respondents completely agreed, mostly agreed or agreed that they were able to incorporate topics that are important to him or her into the conference. The majority completely agreed to be happy with the combination of inputs, work groups and other working methods and completely or mostly agreed that the contents of the conference were easy to comprehend. Most participants would have liked more time to discuss/talk about the topics of development of the weltwärts programme (especially the South-North programme), financial issues in weltwärts, networking and partnership building as well as working with volunteers and talking to them about their experiences in Georgia or other countries. Other topics mentioned were the selection of volunteers by hosting organisations, guidelines for organisations and volunteers, organisation support, insurance, programme challenges and crisis management. In contrast, only one participant indicated that he or she could have done without talking about inclusion in plenum, while four participants wrote that all topics discussed were relevant and useful and the other respondents left the question open.

The majority of respondents were completely or mostly satisfied with the conference management, while one person was satisfied. 11 persons completely agreed, five mostly agreed, one agreed and two slightly disagreed that they were able to make valuable contact with other organisations during the conference. Besides, most participants indicated that they had enough time during the conference to chat with other participants. Regarding the duration of the conference, three respondents stated that it was too long and 15 respondents found it exactly right.

Conference organisation and location

12 participants completely agreed that they were happy with the administration and organisation of the conference. Six persons mostly agreed and one slightly disagreed to this question. Regarding the accommodation and catering, 14 participants completely agreed to be happy, three mostly agreed and two agreed. There was also an open question included in the questionnaire asking for participants' comments about the conference organisation and location. A negative comment that was mentioned twice was that the standard of the hotel was a bit too high. In addition, it was written that too much food was wasted and that the conference should be more structured with more free time. Regional issues should also be considered, according to one respondent. Positive comments all stated that the organisation and location were very good.

Recommendations for the future

Recommendations for future partner conferences given by participants include more presentations of conclusions in plenum and organise translation in small groups like in the joint session with a translator who is not involved in the discussion. Moreover, the next partner conference should be organised in another country in order to give participants the opportunity to see the projects and learn how they work or it should even take place directly in a hosting or sending organisation.

It was also mentioned that more conferences like this should be organised to improve the North-South as well as the South-North programme because the exchange of experiences is important for organisations to develop. The conferences in the Caucasus region should take place regularly. Some participants wished for more time for networking and encouraged a shortening of the working hours during a day. Besides, many participants would have liked to have even more time for exchange and networking among partners, but also for partner

organisations to work together to use the occasion of coming together productively.

Content wise, some people indicated that the "burning" topics should be identified and discussed earlier than on the last day. Someone mentioned the wish for more detailed information about the programme procedures because discussions showed that many participants missed a lot of information about the programme. Another respondent would have wished for a basic introduction of the South-North component, as it is not in his or her working field and one participant would have liked to hear more concrete stories about the life and work of volunteers in Georgia. Most of the participants appreciated the participation of the current and returned volunteers and proposed to invite more volunteers to future conferences.

It would have been also appreciated by participants if there would have been more time for discussions in the whole group in order to agree on common recommendations made by all the partners represented in the region.

On the last day of the conference, most of the participants evaluated the conference by writing down their own likes and dislikes and commenting what had been written by other participants in a so called "silent discussion":

I liked:

- Good atmosphere, friendly smile of organisational team
- Balance between input and working groups
- Vibe, people, NGO work – got a lot of inspiration
- Site visit
- Group which was really motivated and ready for positive changes
- Organisational points – preparation / interpretation of seminar well done → inspiring project

- Ability and readiness to listen to different problems of organisational team
- To meet and network with other partners
- Excursion to project
- Working atmosphere
- Mutual exchange of experiences
- Cultural night
- To have volunteers with us
- Good connection between moderators and participants, overall good content and Georgian cuisine
- Working groups
- Translators
- Format of the meeting

I didn't like

- Too few time to develop and discuss recommendations
- Too less basic introduction to S-N → many things that were explained were too fast
- Fast taxi drivers
- Projects were very inspiring, but going back/forth to Tbilisi wasn't very time-efficient
- Lack of time for icebreaking, get into contact only last two days
- Bad taxi service
- Only hosting/sending organisations from South were present

- Little free time
- Accident

Learning outcomes

Besides, the findings of workgroups and plenum discussions, some participants stated individually, what they have learned in the conference:

- that the South-North programme is still being developed and that they can send volunteers to Germany
- something about Bread for the World (programme and organisation)
- met different organisations for further partnership
- best practice examples on all kinds of topics
- got inspired by TEMI organization and Lagodekhi site visit was awesome (two other participants agreed)
- got to know my partner organization better (another participant agreed)
- got to know the perspective of the partner organisations better (another participant agreed)
- tasks and responsibilities of partner organizations and programme
- got e-mail from weltwärts
- that weltwärts has a useful facebook page



Networking

3.5. Conclusion

As a conclusion by the organizers of the conference, it can be stated that we are very satisfied with our decision to carry out a weltwärts partner conference in Georgia. Although the number of participants did not reach the limit of 50 persons, the interest and need to participate, learn and exchange about the weltwärts programme was clearly shown in the active participation in discussions, in the feedback of the participants during the conference as well as in the questionnaire filled out on the last day.

One of the organizational challenges we had to face were the different languages dealt with before and during the conference: Officially using English and Russian, in reality mixed with German and Georgian, was quite demanding, not only during the seminar sessions themselves: All the information provided and collected beforehand, flipcharts and materials had to be translated or

facilitated in at least two languages. During the work group phases it took quite a long time and some patience was needed to listen to every statement twice due to consecutive interpreting. At this point we would like to thank everybody who supported us by providing translation during the conference in small groups or during the market place or excursion! And we would also like to thank you and the rest of the participants for the patience you all showed. These challenges could probably be met through additional expenses for more interpreters as well as translation of documents and materials.

The fact that we were located outside of Tbilisi and slept, ate and worked in the same place, made the organization manageable and spared a lot of time compared to other options.

Among the wishes and expectations of the participants, networking and exchange were the most important contents of the conference, because they were most widely mentioned beforehand by the participants. We were happy to note a lot of networking and exchange taking place, not only in work groups, but also during the activities outside the formal frame of the main conference room. The Market place, which took place on two evenings, the excursions and the networking evening were seized as opportunities for talking to each other, getting to know each other (better) and getting insights in each other's work with the volunteer programme and above. Of course breaks and meals were also used for this purpose.

As an activity which took place outside of the working units on topics, the excursions to different placements were offered. As we could learn from the feedback of the participants, the excursions were inspiring and it was worth going to the placements, although it took a lot of time to get there. The side effect of the excursion was to get out of the conference hotel some time, to get to know the people in the same excursion group a little better and to experience at least a little bit of Georgian landscape and/or Tbilisi. Unfortunately, this was overshadowed by the accident happening on the way back just in front of the hotel.

The motivation to contribute thoughts and opinions in work groups and plenum discussions was generally very high, probably due to the big interest of the participants in the programme and the pleasant atmosphere created by the group itself. There was an appropriate level of dynamics, which made working groups fruitful: several times, discussions or work groups had to be stopped due to the lack of time. Luckily, there was never shown any lack of interest to go on with discussion.

Regarding our role as the German sending organization in charge of the execution of the conference, it felt a bit strange that on the one hand we were in charge of organizing the conference, but on the other hand we were not the ones who suggested and brought in the topics. The regulations for the conference indicate that PSA and partner organizations should fill half of the time with their topics. This target was met: we spent two half days with each PSA topic (South-North programme and inclusion) and one whole day with the topics of partner organizations. As the South-North programme was important to both, it took part of the day reserved for partner topics, too. Anyway, we realized by the feedback of the participants that some of the partner organizations would have preferred to have more time to work on their own topics. It can be said that one of the biggest challenges of the partner conference was to find the balance between providing needed information and going deeply into the discussion of topics or working on recommendations for the development of the programme. Introducing topics with the objective that everyone has a base to participate in discussions takes some time – more time than we probably had.

We recommend carrying out regular weltwärts partner conferences in the Caucasus and Central Asia region, so that the demand of the partner organizations to network, exchange and participate in the development and steering of the programme can be met. Anyway, the need to exchange within the group of partner organisations with their German sending/hosting organisation is very big, too. The existing instrument to make this possible, soliciting and carrying out an extraordinary measure, is probably too time consuming and complicate for the German sending/hosting organizations to be used on regular basis. Therefore it would be helpful to offer additional financial resources within the normal volunteer project to make regular conferences between German sending/hosting organizations and there

partners in a region or country possible. This would lead to the fact that the partner organisations had a far better base to participate in the cross cultural partner conferences to exchange with PSA and participate in the steering of the programme.

In spite of the above mentioned challenges, we enjoyed very much facilitating the

exchange and common work of the representatives of partner organisations from seven different countries plus the participants from Germany. We have taken back a lot of motivation for improving our own work within the volunteer programme.



Organisational team

(from left to right: Levan Abashidze, Susanne Roth, Wiebke Strelow, Vakhtang Kochoradze, Megi Gamtkitsulashvili)

4. List of Authors

Below, relevant literature is listed which was treated during the conference or can be read for further information. Unfortunately, most information currently only exists in English and German.

General information about the weltwärts volunteer programme

- Engagement Global (2013-2017): weltwärts – Der entwicklungspolitische Freiwilligendienst (EN)
<https://www.weltwaerts.de/en/>
- Engagement Global (2013-2017): Information material
<https://www.weltwaerts.de/en/informational-material.html>

PSA topic 1: Follow-up of the South-North programme

- Engagement Global (2013-2017): The South-North component
<https://www.weltwaerts.de/en/the-south-north-component.html>
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (2017): The South-North component of the development volunteers service weltwärts. Summary of the evaluation in English:
https://www.weltwaerts.de/en/detail.html?id=268&file=files/_media/content/Dokumente/4_Uebergreifendes/Infomaterial-uebergreifend/Evaluierung_Sued_Nord_Komponente_en_kurz.pdf
in German:
https://www.weltwaerts.de/de/publikation-detail.html?id=265&file=files/_media/content/Dokumente/4_Uebergreifendes/Infomaterial-uebergreifend/Evaluierung_Sued_Nord_Komponente_dt_kurz.pdf

PSA topic 2: Inclusion

- bezev e.V. (2014, updated in 2017): Guidelines for the Inclusion of Volunteers with disability within international volunteering services
<http://www.bezev.de/en/home/voluntary-commitment-abroad/information-for-organizations/publications/jetzt-einfach-machen/just-do-it-now/>
- bezev e.V. (2014): Inclusive Volunteer Service - weltwärts alle inklusive!
https://www.weltwaerts.de/en/detail.html?id=139&file=files/_media/content/Dokumente/3_EO/Publicationen/Final-Report-of-Three-Partner-Workshops.pdf#Inclusion
- bezev e.V. (2017): Script/Reader for the topic inclusion for partner conferences 2017 can be requested at bezev e.V. (alleinklusive@bezev.de)

Additional information material

- ventao, Verein entwicklungspolitischer Austauschorganisationen e. V. (2016): Volunteer security checklist for weltwärts partner organizations
https://www.weltwaerts.de/de/publikation-detail.html?id=226&file=files/_media/content/Dokumente/5_Ausland/Publicationen/en/Volunteer_security_checklist_for_partner_organizations.pdf

5. Appendix

5.1. List of abbreviations

AO	hosting organisation
BMZ	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
EG	Engagement Global
EO	sending organisation
FVS / BFD	Federal Volunteer Service
PO	partner organisation
PSA	programme steering committee
ww	weltwärts



Listening to simultaneous translation from English to Russian

5.2 PowerPoint Presentations

The presentations that we heard during the partner conference in Georgia are listed below:

Information about current state and development of the weltwärts programme

- Jacobi-Gies, Julia: “Basic information – News and updates”

PSA topic 1: Follow-up of the South-North programme

- Puhrsch, Daniela: “The South-North component”

PSA topic 2: Inclusion

- Koch, Franziska: “Inclusion in the weltwärts volunteer service”

5.3. Tables

The following terminology in English, Russian and German was given to all participants in the beginning of the conference to ensure a shared understanding of the most important terms related to weltwärts.

English	Русский	Deutsch
development learning service The main emphasis of weltwärts is on the developmental and intercultural learning of the volunteers. Receiving organizations also learn through the intercultural encounter with their volunteers	межкультурное обучение Для «вельтверц» на первом месте стоит усвоение волонтерами политики развития и межкультурное обучение. Работа с волонтерами, принимающие организация также проходит процесс межкультурного познания.	entwicklungspolitischer Lerndienst Bei weltwärts stehen das entwicklungs-polititsche und interkulturelle Lernen des/der Freiwilligen im Vordergrund. Auch Aufnahmeorganisationen lernen durch die interkulturelle Begegnung mit den Freiwilligen
Engagement Global gGmbH (EG) Works on behalf of and is financed by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development	«Энгейджмент Глобал gGmbH» (Engagement Global, или EG) Работает от имени и при финансовой поддержке Федерального министерства экономического сотрудничества и развития (BMZ)	Engagement Global gGmbH (EG) Arbeitet im Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) und wird von diesem finanziert
Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development Provides funding for the weltwärts programme	Федеральное министерство экономического сотрудничества и развития Германии (BMZ) Обеспечивает финансирование программы «вельтверц»	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) Bietet die Förderung für das weltwärts-Programm
host organisation An organisation that provides	принимающая организация Организация, которая	Aufnahmeorganisation Eine Organisation, die die

English	Русский	Deutsch
the places of assignment for the volunteers, supports and assists them and is responsible for the practical implementation of the volunteer service	подыскивает для волонтера место назначения, поддерживает и сопровождает волонтера и отвечает за практическое осуществление волонтерской работы.	Einsatzstellen für die Freiwilligen anbietet, sie begleitet und den Freiwilligendienst praktisch durchführt
North-South Programme German volunteers doing a volunteer service in countries from the global south	Программа «Север-Юг» Волонтеры из Германии, которые выполняют волонтерскую работу в странах «глобального юга»	Nord-Süd-Programm Deutsche Freiwillige absolvieren ihren Freiwilligendienst in Ländern des globalen Südens
place of assignment organization or project in which the volunteer takes her/his volunteer service	место назначения Организация или проект, который предлагается для волонтерской работы.	Einsatzstelle Organisation oder Projekt, in dem die/der Freiwillige seinen Freiwilligendienst leistet
post-assignment activities social/ developmental commitment in the home country after the volunteer service	работа по возвращению Включение в работу по социальному направлению и в области развития по возвращению на родину.	Rückkehrarbeit Gesellschaftliches/ entwicklungspolitisches Engagement im Heimatland nach dem Freiwilligendienst
programme steering committee Main forum for discussions and decisions regarding the weltwärts programme in which both the civil society and the government are represented	оргкомитет программы (ОКП) Главный форум для дискуссии и принятия решения в программе «вельтверц», в котором участвуют представители как гражданского общества, так и государства.	Programmsteuerungsausschuss (PSA) Hauptforum für Diskussionen und Entscheidungen um das weltwärts-Programm, in dem sowohl die Zivilgesellschaft als auch der Staat vertreten sind
quality association Objective: Assuring, monitoring and improvement of the quality in the weltwärts programme 1. Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden (AGDF) weltwärtsqualityassociation 2. „fid-Netzwerk“ quality association of the German Catholic Association for Development Cooperation Staff Service (AGEH) 3. weltoffen qualityassociation in the “Arbeitskreis Lernen und Helfen in Übersee e.V.” (Learning and Helping Overseas Association) 4. German Red Cross (GRC) quality association 5. EvangelischeFreiwilligendienste and Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World)	ассоциации качества Цель: Обеспечение, отслеживание и повышение качества в программе «вельтверц» 1. Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden (AGDF) weltwärtsqualityassociation 2. „fid-Netzwerk“ - Ассоциация качества Германской Католической ассоциации развития (AGEH) 3. Ассоциация качества в “Arbeitskreis Lernen und Helfen in Übersee e.V.” (учеба и помощь за рубежом) 4. Ассоциация качества Германского Красного Креста. 5. Evangelische Freiwilligendienste and Brot	Qualitätsverbund Ziel: Sicherung, Kontrolle und Verbesserung der Qualität des weltwärts-Programms 1. Qualitätsverbund weltwärts der Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden (AGDF) 2. Qualitätsverbund fid-Netzwerk des Personaldienstes der deutschen Katholiken für Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (AGEH) 3. Qualitätsverbund weltoffen im Arbeitskreis “Lernen und Helfen in Übersee” e.V. (AKLHÜ) 4. Qualitätsverbund des Deutschen Roten Kreuzes (DRK) 5. Evangelischer Qualitätsverbund weltwärts

English	Русский	Deutsch
<p>protestant weltwärts quality association (EQEB)</p> <p>6. Quality association of the "Vereinentwicklungspolitischer Austauschorganisationen" (Association of weltwärts Exchange Organisations in Development Cooperation, VENTAO)</p>	<p>für die Welt («Хлеб для мира») (Протестантская ассоциация качества «вельтверц»).</p> <p>6. Ассоциация качества "Vereinentwicklungspolitischer Austauschorganisationen" (ассоциация «вельтверц», VENTAO)</p>	<p>von Evangelischen Freiwilligendiensten und Brot für die Welt (EQEB)</p> <p>6. Qualitätsverbund Verein entwicklungspolitischer Austauschorganisationen (VENTAO)</p>
<p>sending organisation</p> <p>An organisation that collaborates with partner organisations to offer places of assignment in countries of assignment, prepares volunteers for their volunteer service and provides impetus for post-assignment activities</p>	<p>отправляющая организация</p> <p>Организация, которая сотрудничает с партнерской организацией, предлагая места назначения в принимающих странах, подготавливает волонтеров и способствует их активной деятельности по возвращению на родину</p>	<p>Entsendeorganisation</p> <p>Eine Organisation, die gemeinsam mit Partnerorganisationen Einsatzplätze im Einsatzland anbietet, die Freiwilligen auf ihren Einsatz vorbereitet und Impulse zur Rückkehrarbeit gibt</p>
<p>South-North Programme</p> <p>Volunteers from the global south doing a volunteer service in Germany</p>	<p>Программа «Юг-Север»</p> <p>Волонтеры из стран «глобального юга», которые служат в Германии.</p>	<p>Süd-Nord-Programm</p> <p>Freiwillige des globalen Südens absolvieren einen Freiwilligendienst in Deutschland</p>
<p>weltwärts Coordination Unit</p> <p>Part of the EG and responsible for the implementation of weltwärts (forwarding of funds, consulting, etc.)</p>	<p>Координационная группа «вельтверц»</p> <p>Часть «Engagement Global», отвечающая за осуществление программ «вельтверц» (направление средств, консультации и т.д.)</p>	<p>Koordinierungsstelle weltwärts (Kww)</p> <p>Als Teil der EG für die praktische Umsetzung von weltwärts zuständig (Weiterleitung von Fördermitteln, Beratung, etc.)</p>
<p>weltwärts joint operation</p> <p>weltwärts is a joint operation of BMZ and civil society, who work together and jointly take responsibility for the programme</p>	<p>совместная деятельность «вельтверц»</p> <p>Программа «вельтверц» является совместной инициативой BMZ и гражданского общества, которые работают совместно и разделяют ответственность за программу.</p>	<p>Gemeinschaftswerk weltwärts</p> <p>weltwärts ist ein Gemeinschaftswerk des BMZ und der Zivilgesellschaft, die das Programm gemeinsam tragen und verantworten</p>



6. Imprint

Publisher

Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V.
Brot für die Welt - Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst
Caroline-Michaelis-Str. 1
10115 Berlin, Germany
Tel.: +49 (0)30-652111358
Email: pc-georgia@brot-fuer-die-welt.de
www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de

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Brot für die Welt – Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, as the publisher of this publication, is responsible for the content, which does not reflect the opinions of the BMZ.

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With funding from the



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

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Entwicklungsdienst

CENN

Caucasus Environmental NGO Network