

**South-North Component
of the *weltwärts* programme**

**Strategy outline
and information concerning the
collaboration between *weltwärts* and the
BFD (German Federal Volunteer Service)**

Information correct as of January 2020

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All the documents and forms relating to the South-North component are available online. In addition, *German*, *French* and *Spanish* versions of the strategy for the weltwärts South-North component can be found in the Downloads section on the following website:

<https://www.weltwaerts.de/de/sued-nord-plaetze-anbieten.html>

The staff at the *weltwärts* Coordination Unit will be happy to answer any questions you have. Please email them at:

zentralstelle-sued-nord@engagement-global.de

1. Strategy for the weltwärts “South-North component”

(1) Objectives

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

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

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

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(2) Duration of assignment

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

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(3) Volunteer requirements

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

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

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

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(4) Requirements for host organisations in Germany

International volunteers in Germany may be hosted by approved *weltwärts* sending organisations and *weltwärts* returnee associations, especially if the organisation in question already has experience with hosting volunteers within Germany. Host organisations also need to have development and gender expertise, or be willing to acquire gender competence. They must demonstrably be able to handle the tasks they are charged with.

Not-for-profit organisations with experience in development that are headquartered in Germany can qualify to host volunteers under the *weltwärts* programme.

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

- to coordinate with the sending organisations in the Global South and to help them build the institutional capacity to fulfil the tasks that have been specified;

- to select and support places of assignment: provide instruction and guidance on development matters (e.g. advice, training and networking between an organisation's own places of assignments and those at other entities), mediate in cases of conflict;
- to ensure suitable conditions for the volunteers in terms of meals, accommodation, personal allowance, insurance, language classes, transport and visa/residence permit. The personal allowance is intended to enable the volunteers to participate adequately in social life in Germany. It must not exceed 6% of the income threshold applied in the German statutory pension fund;
- to provide individual advice and assistance to volunteers and ensure that volunteers have support as they build social networks, thus facilitating integration outside the place of assignment;
- to engage with *weltwärts* returnees; and
- to hold seminars in Germany.

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

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(5) Accompanying education and mentoring activities

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

The accompanying education and mentoring programme comprises the following elements:

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

The education and mentoring is provided by educators and/or other appropriately qualified personnel. Gender issues are included in all these activities. It is possible for several sending organisations from the Global South and/or several host organisations to perform these activities together, especially if there are only a small number of volunteers.

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

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

Personal support is provided by designated contact persons from the sending organisations in the Global South, the host organisation in Germany and by mentors designated by the host organisation and/or place of assignment.

Cooperation with places of assignment and host families. The host organisation ensures that the place of assignment provides introductory training and instruction. The host organisation also pays at least one visit to the place of assignment during the volunteer's service.

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

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

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(6) Requirements for places of assignment

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

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

For the volunteer service to be a success, it is crucial that the place of assignment be willing to accept and make provision for the special characteristics of a *weltwärts* assignment in Germany. Staff at the place of assignment must be open to self-reflection and intercultural learning, and they must be aware of the special challenges of hosting an international volunteer and of the special needs of international volunteers. In order to enhance their skills in terms of supporting volunteers, the places of assignment liaise closely with the host organisation. The host organisation facilitates exchange of experience between places of assignment. The *weltwärts* programme also sponsors training for staff from places of assignment.

Volunteers may only serve at a place of assignment if it has been approved under Section 6 of the Federal Volunteer Service Act (BFDG) by the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (BAFzA).

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(7) Requirements for sending organisations in the Global South

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

The sending organisations in the Global South have the following tasks in particular:

- publicising the programme among the target group in a non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive manner;

- inviting applications and selecting applicants, with equal consideration being given to women and men;
- offering pre-assignment orientation and post-assignment follow-up workshops and encouraging returnee engagement;
- staying in touch with volunteers and assisting them with administrative matters, for instance visa applications.

They carry out their work in close consultation with the coordinating host organisations in Germany. The programme caters for the diversity and varying capacity of organisations in the Global South by helping them to form networks. For instance, sending organisations can join forces to carry out their tasks. Organisations with less experience may be trained by organisations that already have the requisite skills. Where appropriate, they may have some of their tasks carried out by other sending organisations. If it is not possible for a sending organisation to engage in this type of cooperation, it may temporarily request the host organisations to perform the tasks that it cannot yet carry out itself.

The sending organisation must present a binding plan that shows how it will gradually assume more and more tasks related to preparation and orientation, follow-up and promotion of returnee engagement.

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

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

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(8) End of pilot phase; outlook

The pilot phase of the South-North component came to an end on 1 January 2020 and the component is now a fixed part of the *weltwärts* programme. The collaboration between *weltwärts* and the Federal Volunteer Service (BFD) has been extended until 31 December 2022.

In 2017, an external, independent evaluation of the pilot phase was carried out on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) (https://www.bmz.de/de/mediathek/publikationen/reihen/strategiepapiere/Strategiepapier_EvalBericht_066_415_2017.pdf). In an extensive follow-up process, the various programme stakeholders took action to address the evaluation's findings.

The *weltwärts* joint operation is currently working on an integrated guideline for both the North-South and the South-North components. Until the revised guideline takes effect, the South-North component of the *weltwärts* programme will continue to be implemented in accordance with the strategy outlined in this document.

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2. Information concerning the collaboration between *weltwärts* and the BFD

The South-North component is implemented in collaboration with the BFD, which operates under the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). To this end, Engagement Global gGmbH serves as a “central office in the BFD”, to which the places of assignment for the South-North component are allocated.

The *weltwärts* South-North component is financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). As a result, where expenditure of the type described in Section 17 of the Federal Volunteer Service Act (BFDG) is incurred in the South-North component, it cannot be claimed back from the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (BAFzA); instead, these costs will be covered by the BMZ.

The quota of places for the South-North component will not reduce the quota available to the BFD. All South-North places are funded by the BMZ as part of the *weltwärts* programme and supplement the BMFSFJ’s BFD quota.

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(1) Engagement Global’s tasks as a BFD central office

In accordance with Section 16 of the BFDG, the BAFzA has assigned the following tasks to Engagement Global in its role as a BFD central office:

- management of the quota of places for the *weltwärts* South-North component;
- forwarding of the BMZ funding for hosting international volunteers in Germany and for the supporting structure and education and mentoring activities (through grants to civil-society implementing organisations using BMZ funds);
- preliminary review of places of assignment for the BFD (if not yet approved for the BFD) and forwarding to the BAFzA for approval;

- provision of general advice to host organisations (approval matters, BFD and the South-North component in general)

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(2) Host organisations' tasks

Unlike in the BFD, where places of assignment enter into a contract with the BMFSFJ, in the *weltwärts* South-North component the host organisations sign a contract with Engagement Global and are the recipients of the BMZ funds. They work at the interface of sending organisations in the Global South, places of assignment in Germany and the volunteers (see Section 4 in the “Strategy for the South-North component”).

The host organisations' tasks include:

- general quality management with regard to the places of assignment and education and mentoring activities;
- education and mentoring activities (e.g. planning and organisation of seminars);
- advisory activities specifically for places of assignment; and
- advice and support for volunteers and places of assignment.

The *weltwärts* implementing organisations can seek the support of the quality association to which they belong in order to help them perform the tasks delegated to them.

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(3) Requirements for education and mentoring activities

The strategy outline for the South-North component specifies a minimum of 25 seminar days for seminars and educational activities, including preparation and follow-up in the partner country. The seminar content should include an appropriate focus on development-related global learning topics. In the BFD, however, where proof of 25 seminar days is also required, the current legal stipulation is that only seminar days during the period of service in Germany can be recognised.

As a result of the different requirements in the BFD and in the “Strategy for the *weltwärts* South-North component”, the total number of seminar days (including preparation and follow-up, the political education seminar, support during the assignment, language classes and in-house continuing training) is more than 25. Please bear this in mind when drawing up your educational plan.

It is, however, possible to recognise accompanying language classes or at least six hours of continuing training provided by the host organisation or the place of assignment. To find out more, please contact the *weltwärts* Coordination Unit.

Five of the specified 25 seminar days must be for “political education”, as stipulated in the BFD Act. The seminar days must take place at a BFD education centre operated by the BAFzA (<http://bildungszentren.bafza.de/>). However, the host organisation should reserve these seminars at least three months in advance. No charge is made for South-North volunteers’ attendance of the seminars at the education centres. Travel expenses for travel to and from seminars are eligible for funding under the weltwärts programme.

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(4) Approval of places of assignment

The places of assignment used for the *weltwärts* South-North component must be approved as BFD places of assignment.

If a host organisation has approved BFD places of assignment, they can be made available as *weltwärts* places of assignment for South-North volunteers. **Please give “Engagement Global” as the central office** even if you usually deal with a different central office in the BFD. This is because the South-North component is 100% funded by the BMZ, not the BMFSFJ. Engagement Global is the only BFD central office that can forward BMZ funds. Places of assignment that are repurposed for *weltwärts* can later be used for national BFD volunteers again. They are then no longer managed by Engagement Global in the role of central office.

The application form for approval as a place of assignment can be found at www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de/fuer-einsatzstellen/anerkennung-als-einsatzstelle.html. It must be submitted to Engagement Global in its capacity as the central office. Engagement Global conducts a preliminary review of the application before passing it on to the BAFzA.

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(5) Further BFD requirements and guidelines

For further information concerning the BFD requirements, please consult www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de.

A large number of core documents are provided (in German only) at www.bundesfreiwilligendienst.de/service/downloads.html. In particular, please ensure you follow the “Rahmenrichtlinie für die pädagogische Begleitung im Bundesfreiwilligendienst” (“General guideline for education and mentoring in the Federal Volunteer Service”) and the “Anerkennungsrichtlinien” (“Approval guidelines”).

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