

weltwärts 

FINDINGS OF THE 2017  
WELTWÄRTS PROGRAMME  
VOLUNTEER SURVEY

**uzbonn**

Richtig fragen.

uzbonn GmbH – Gesellschaft für empirische  
Sozialforschung und Evaluation

[www.uzbonn.de](http://www.uzbonn.de)

Dear reader,

This report presents the findings of the fifth annual volunteer survey. Following the surveys of the 2013 to 2016 returnees, this survey looked at the volunteers who returned from service in 2017.

The findings corroborate the previous years' positive results for the most part, with 94% of respondents again stating that they were satisfied overall with their voluntary service. This consistently positive result confirms that the weltwärts programme meets the needs of young adults. And it shows how diligently the sending and partner organisations implement the development volunteers' service.

Each year, there are more than 3,300 volunteers in service in around 60 host countries, sent there by approximately 160 different organisations. 2,147 volunteers participated in this year's survey (which was again conducted by Umfragezentrum Bonn), putting the response rate at 58%.

As part of the weltwärts quality system, which was introduced in 2013, the volunteer survey helps ensure that the programme constantly evolves as a development learning and exchange service for the volunteers and the partners in the North and South.

The quality criteria for the development volunteers' service are set out in the funding guideline for the weltwärts programme and the weltwärts quality standards.

This validation of the previous years' findings strengthens our commitment to ensuring that the stakeholders in the weltwärts programme collaborate successfully to continue to improve the quality and impact of the programme.

### Annette Chammas

Head of the Division for Civic Engagement;  
weltwärts, Engagement Global at the Federal  
Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development

Governmental Coordinator on the weltwärts  
Programme Steering Committee

### Esther Henning

Advisor for the Development Volunteer Service  
at the Federal Office of the BDJ (German  
Catholic Youth Federation)

Civil Society Coordinator on the weltwärts  
Programme Steering Committee

## FINDINGS OF THE 2017 WELTWÄRTS PROGRAMME VOLUNTEER SURVEY

### Who took part in the survey?

The target group of the latest online survey comprised all weltwärts volunteers who completed their service in 2017. 2,147 volunteers completed the entire questionnaire; the evaluation for 2017 is based on their responses (see Figure 1). With a response rate of 58%, volunteers' willingness to participate was again considerably higher than in the previous year<sup>1</sup> and on a similar level to the 2015 survey.

The volunteers surveyed participated in the weltwärts programme through 149 different sending organisations and worked in 58 different countries. As in the previous years, the most common destinations for weltwärts volunteers were India, South Africa, Bolivia, Peru and Tanzania.

All of Germany's 16 federal states were represented among the volunteers, with the level of representation predominantly in correlation with the population of the federal state concerned.<sup>2</sup> Only Baden-Württemberg was slightly over-represented, while Bavaria tended to be under-represented.

There continue to be more women participating in the weltwärts programme than men: 70% of all volunteers who returned in 2017 were female.<sup>3</sup>

The volunteers surveyed were between the ages of 18 and 30 when they returned from service. The average age was just under 20 years.<sup>4</sup>

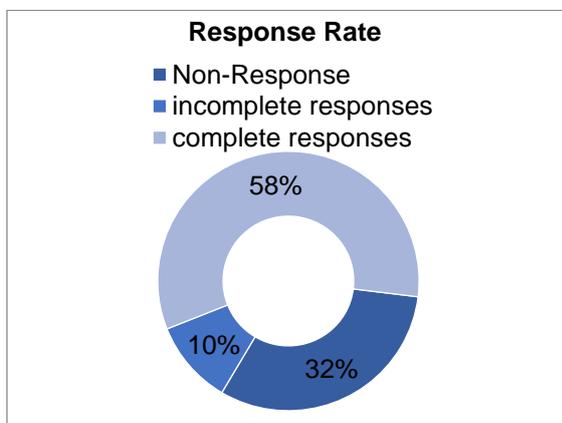


Figure 1: Response rate

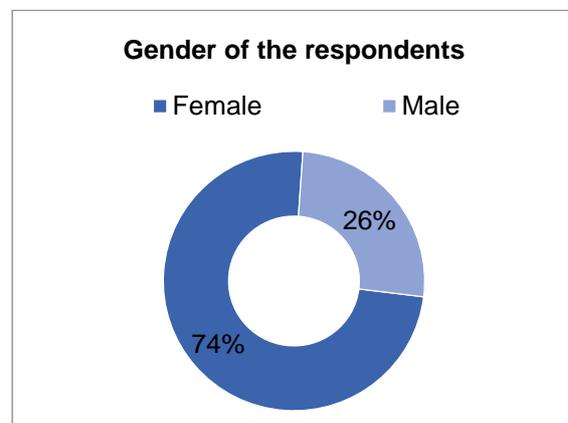


Figure 2: Gender of the respondents

<sup>1</sup> Several programme-wide surveys, particularly in connection with the evaluation of the weltwärts programme that the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) carried out in 2016, caused a slight drop in the participation rate in the 2016 weltwärts cohort compared to the previous years.

<sup>2</sup> DESTATIS. Population as at 31 January 2016: <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/LaenderRegionen/Regionales/Regionaldaten.html> [Accessed on 29 August 2018].

<sup>3</sup> The gender breakdown among the survey participants was roughly the same: 74% of respondents were women and 26% were men (see Figure 2). The women tend to be slightly more willing to take part in the survey.

<sup>4</sup> The previous years' reports on the volunteer survey gave volunteers' age at the time of the survey.

Most of the volunteers (81%) took part in the weltwärts programme immediately after they finished their schooling. In the majority of cases, they held an “Abitur” school-leaving qualification or a general qualification for university entrance (94%). A further 4% held a “Fachabitur” school-leaving qualification permitting them to study at a university of applied sciences. The share of volunteers with an intermediate school-leaving qualification or a qualification from a “Hauptschule” remains small (2%).

Since many volunteers join weltwärts straight after school, the number who had already started or finished professional/vocational training is lower (17%). Of those who had completed professional/vocational training, most had graduated from a conventional university or a university of applied sciences; the proportion who had undergone vocational training in the traditional sense was smaller.

These findings are practically identical with those of the previous years – both in terms of the volunteers’ school-leaving qualifications and their professional/vocational training.

The proportion of volunteers who stated in the survey that they had an officially recognised disability or a certificate of disability (as defined in Volume IX of Germany’s Social Code) was also unchanged on the previous year (1%). To learn more about the inclusion of persons with a disability in the weltwärts programme, the survey also asks the participants to specify whether they have a disability or impairment that is not officially recognised. Again, 1% of the respondents stated that this was the case. Together then, around 2% of the volunteers surveyed had a disability or impairment of some kind. This too was the same as in the previous year, which means participation by disabled persons remains an important issue for the evolution of the weltwärts programme.

A total of 12% of the volunteers surveyed had a migrant background<sup>5</sup> - a figure that has hardly changed since the first volunteer survey in 2013. Since most of the volunteers embark on a university course (71%) or are entitled to do so after their time with weltwärts, the share of students in Germany with a migrant background can be used as a reference value here. At 20%, it is higher than among the volunteers in the 2017 weltwärts cohort.<sup>6</sup>

The findings concerning the participants in the weltwärts programme largely correspond to those established for 2013 to 2015. It is therefore now possible to produce a very precise picture of the target group reached through the programme.

<sup>5</sup> Germany’s Federal Statistical Office defines a person with a migrant background as someone who holds foreign citizenship or was born abroad and immigrated to Germany post 1949, or someone who was born in Germany and naturalised or who has a parent who immigrated to Germany, was naturalised or is a foreign national. The 20% referred to above therefore includes both Germans and foreign nationals, some of whom are immigrants themselves.

<sup>6</sup> Middendorff, E., Apolinarski, B., Becker, K., Bornkessel, P., Brandt, T., Heißenberg, S. & Poskowsky, J. (2017). Die wirtschaftliche und soziale Lage der Studierenden in Deutschland 2016. 21st Social Survey by the Deutsche Studentenwerk, p. 32. [http://www.sozialerhebung.de/download/21/Soz21\\_hauptbericht.pdf](http://www.sozialerhebung.de/download/21/Soz21_hauptbericht.pdf) [accessed on 28 September 2017].

## Satisfaction

Overall, the volunteers remain extremely satisfied with their time on the weltwärts programme. This year’s findings again show that two in three were very satisfied. Taking the volunteers who were “quite satisfied” into account too, 94% were quite satisfied to very satisfied with their time on the programme. Since the very first survey in 2013, the volunteers have been almost consistently positive in their assessment of their voluntary service (see Figure 3).

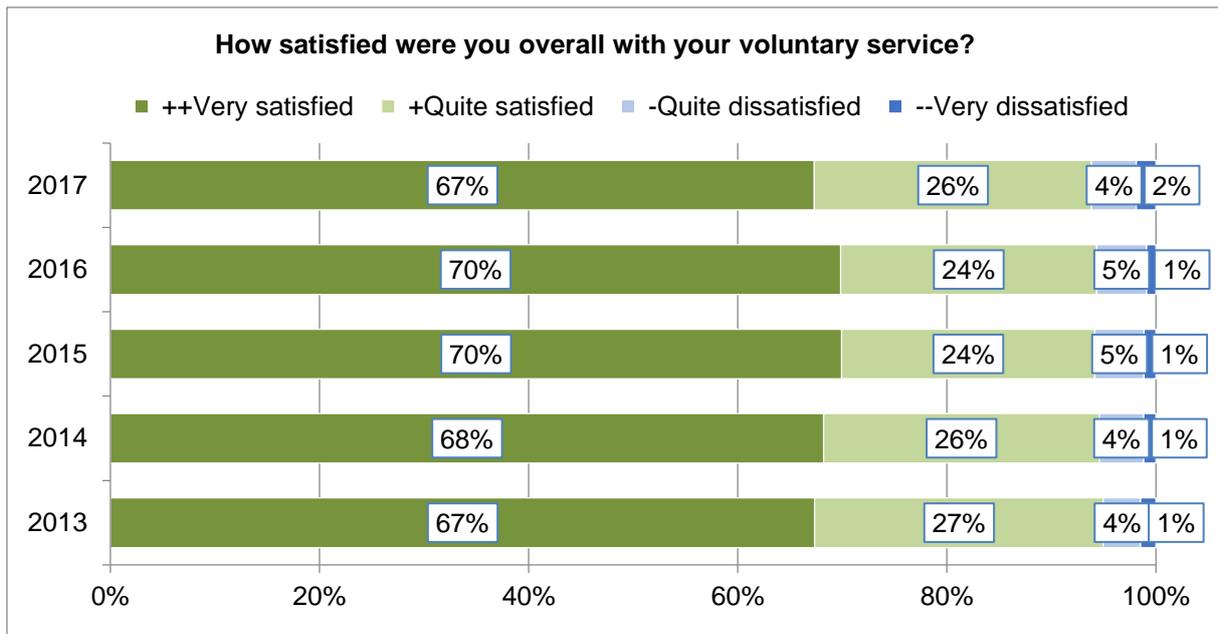


Figure 3: Overall satisfaction with time on weltwärts programme – Comparison of the 2013-2017 findings

This very positive assessment of the respondents’ voluntary service is also reflected in their high degree of willingness to recommend the weltwärts programme to their friends. Two out of three volunteers (67%) were very likely to recommend volunteering on the weltwärts programme to their friends (see Figure 4).<sup>7</sup>

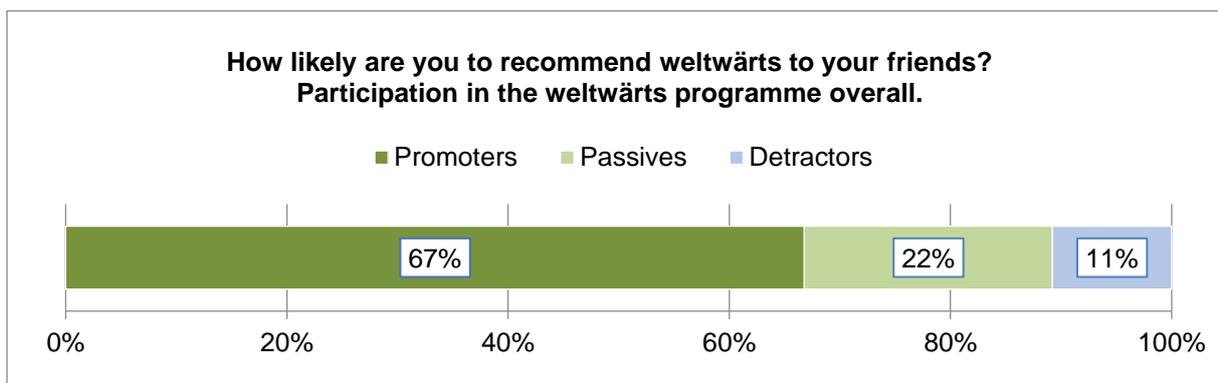


Figure 4: Willingness to recommend volunteering on the weltwärts programme<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 9 and 10 on a value scale from 0=Very unlikely to 10=Very likely.

<sup>8</sup> Willingness to recommend the programme to others was measured on a scale of 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely). The responses were then grouped in the following categories: ratings of 10 and 9 were promoters; ratings of 6 or lower were detractors; and the rest were passives.

## Preparation for the voluntary service

Since the first survey in 2013, there has been a constant increase in volunteers' satisfaction with their preparation for their voluntary service. In the latest survey, 61% were very satisfied with the support they received from their sending organisation during the preparation phase. The proportion of volunteers who were very satisfied was thus significantly higher than in the previous years. A further 33% were quite satisfied with this aspect, making a total of 94% who were positive in their assessment of the preparation given by their sending organisation (see Figure 5).

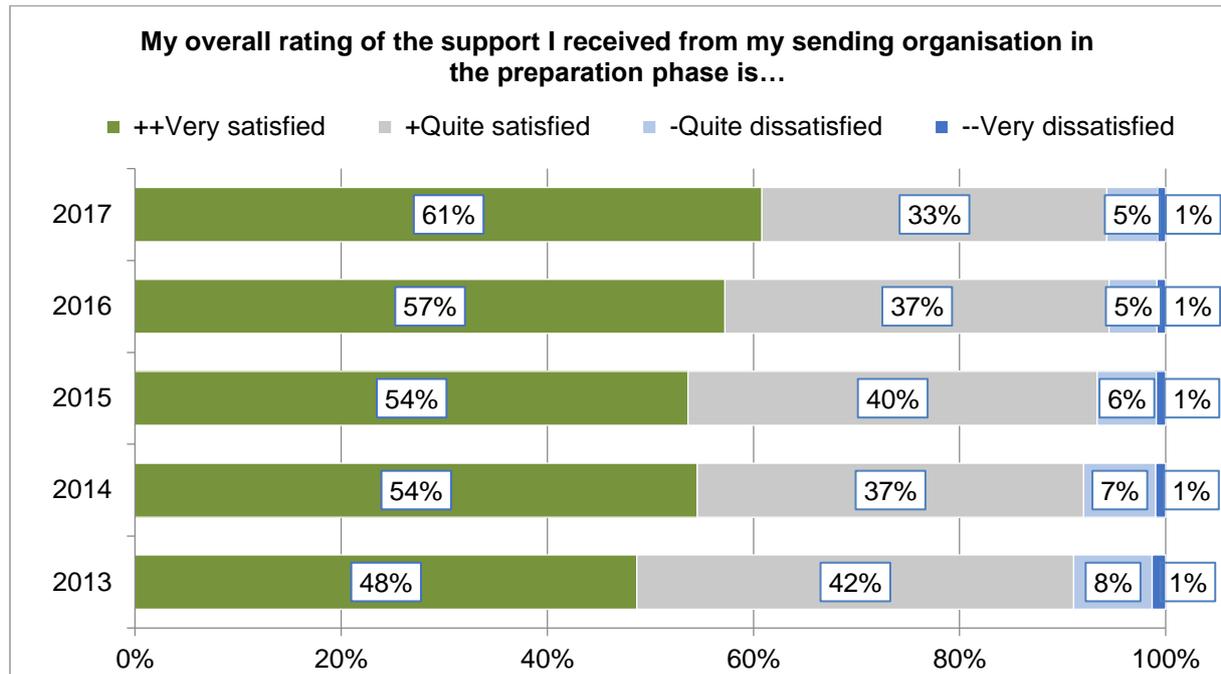


Figure 5: Satisfaction with the support given by the sending organisations during the preparation phase - Comparison of the 2013-2017 findings

The health-related information provided by the sending organisations by way of preparation was also rated positively by the volunteers. 95% of those surveyed this year were very or quite satisfied with the information regarding preventive healthcare (e.g. on recommended vaccinations or health insurance during the assignment) (see Figure 6). This aspect was thus rated more positively than in the previous years. Satisfaction with the information given by the sending organisations on the topic of health precautions (e.g. information about drinking water) remained at the same high level: 92% were very or quite satisfied with the preparation they received from their sending organisation in this respect (see Figure 6).

The last two surveys show that the preparation given by the sending organisations in the area of safety and security has improved greatly, with a positive trend evident in all aspects covered. 94% were very satisfied or quite satisfied with the information concerning and the contact data for the key contact people on the ground (e.g. the emergency cards) (see Figure 6). At 71%, the share who were very satisfied with this aspect was approximately 10 percentage points higher than in the first two surveys (2013 and 2014). Satisfaction with the information on what to do in the event of an emergency or crisis in the country of assignment was also higher. 90% were very or quite satisfied with this information. The findings of this latest sur-

vey also indicate that the sending organisations meet the volunteers' requirements for general information on the security situation in their country of assignment: 91% were very or quite satisfied (see Figure 6). The satisfaction rate is thus similar to that of the previous year and considerably better than before 2016.

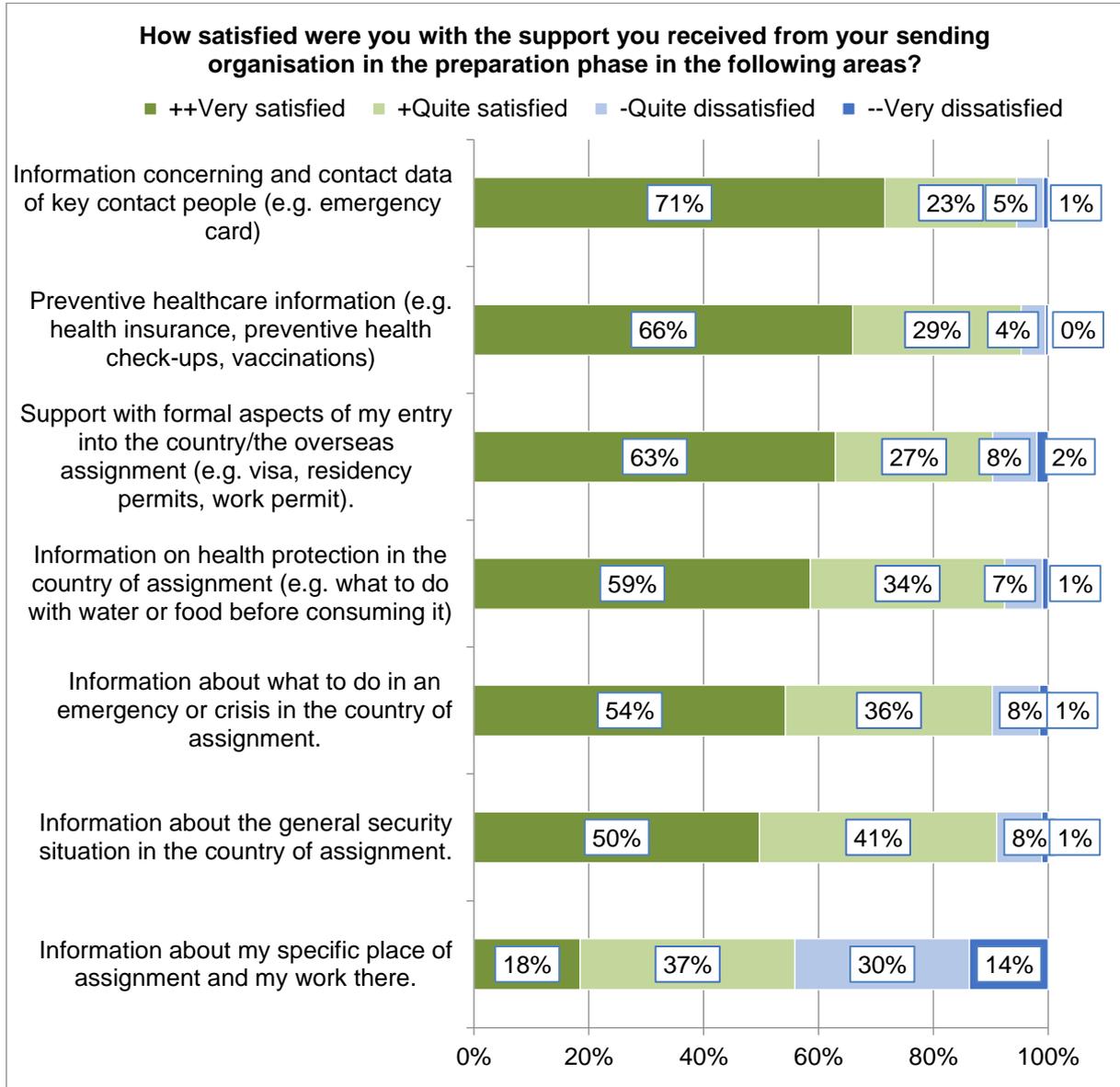


Figure 6: Volunteers' satisfaction with aspects of how they were prepared for their voluntary service

This year again, the vast majority of the volunteers felt that the sending organisations had supported them well in the preparations for the formal aspects of entry into the respective country (e.g. visas and residence/work permits). 90% were very or quite satisfied with this aspect (see Figure 6). This is reflected in the findings of the latest survey, which again show that the majority of volunteers had a residence permit or visa throughout their period of service abroad (90%). 8% stated that they did not, 1% were not sure and 1% were in a country that did not have a visa requirement. The number of volunteers who did not have the necessary visa or residence permit throughout their assignment was thus still low.

The last few surveys had already shown that it was more difficult to meet volunteers' need for information on their specific place of assignment and the work to be done there. In this year's survey, the respondents again gave this information category a lower rating than the others. However, with an increase of six percentage points in the past two years, a positive trend can be seen here too. In the latest survey, 56% of the volunteers were very or quite satisfied with the preparatory information (see Figure 6) - the best result to date.

The latest survey also again revealed that almost all the respondents had helped promote the work of the voluntary service before they left for their international assignment (98%). In most cases, this took the form of them drawing their friends' and families' attention to the voluntary service, their place of assignment, host country or development issues (87%). Over time, the share of volunteers who inform the general public about the voluntary service by, for example, giving presentations at schools, has decreased slightly (17%). 4% of the volunteers informed the general public about development/global issues – exactly the same percentage as the year before. Some of the respondents promoted the work of the voluntary service in some other form and provided details in the open comments section (3%).

All of the volunteer surveys to date have shown clearly that many volunteers take part in these pre-departure activities by collecting donations or helping to set up fundraising groups for the voluntary service. The latest findings show that this applies to 79% of respondents – a similar figure to the previous years. Their answers confirm that the sending organisations offer support specifically for these activities (e.g. additional information material). 85% felt that this was completely or quite true. There has thus been a significant rise in the last few years in the perceived level of support given by the sending organisations for donation-collection activities.

Since collecting donations and helping to set up fundraising groups is not a prerequisite for selection or participation in the weltwärts programme, in 2014 the survey began asking volunteers whether their sending organisations made the voluntary nature of these activities clear to them.<sup>9</sup> In recent years, it has become apparent that the sending organisations are improving significantly when it comes to ensuring transparency with regard to this point. In the latest survey, 76% of the volunteers said that it was completely or quite true that it had been made clear to them that donation collection was not a prerequisite for selection or participation in the weltwärts programme (see Figure 7).

<sup>9</sup> Since the question posed in the 2013 pilot study was worded differently than it is now, the findings for the 2013 cohort have been omitted in the chart in order to ensure comparability.

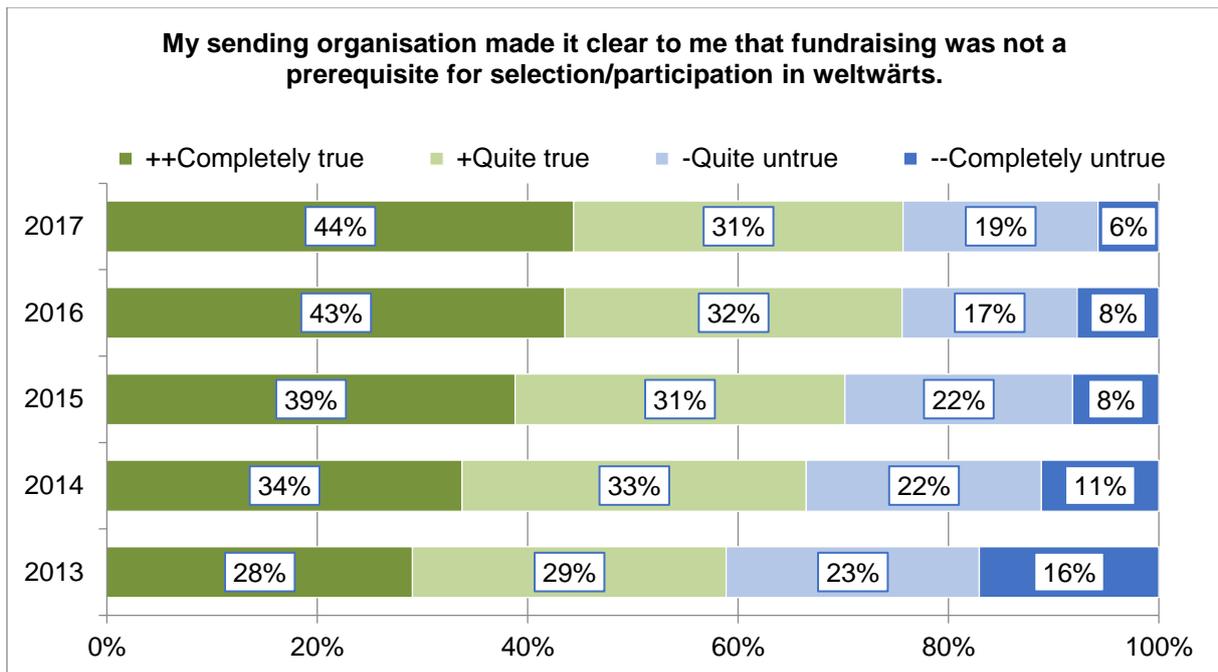


Figure 7: Volunteers' opinions on whether it was made clear to them that donation collection was not a prerequisite for selection – comparison of the 2014-2017 findings

### Assignment in the host country

As in the previous years' surveys, the volunteers were positive overall in their assessment of their places of assignment: 85 % were very or quite satisfied. The volunteers were also very positive about the way in which they were socially integrated into their place of assignment and their contact with their colleagues: 83% were very or quite satisfied with this aspect. Their responses regarding personal contact with people outside their immediate working environment painted a similar picture, with 80% saying this aspect was (very) satisfactory. These assessments are similar to those given in the previous years' surveys.

Another aspect that remains unchanged is volunteers' satisfaction with their work content at their place of assignment: 76% were very or quite satisfied in this respect. The latest survey therefore shows again that approximately one quarter of volunteers are less satisfied with the work content at their place of assignment than expected (see Figure 8).

Looking back at their place of assignment, most of the volunteers had the overall impression that their host organisation in the host country/their place of assignment was well prepared for their assignment. 73% felt that this was completely or quite true while a quarter were less satisfied with the preparations made by the host organisations and places of assignment. The respondents' assessment of how well the places of assignment were prepared for the volunteers' assignments has hardly changed since the first volunteer survey in 2013.

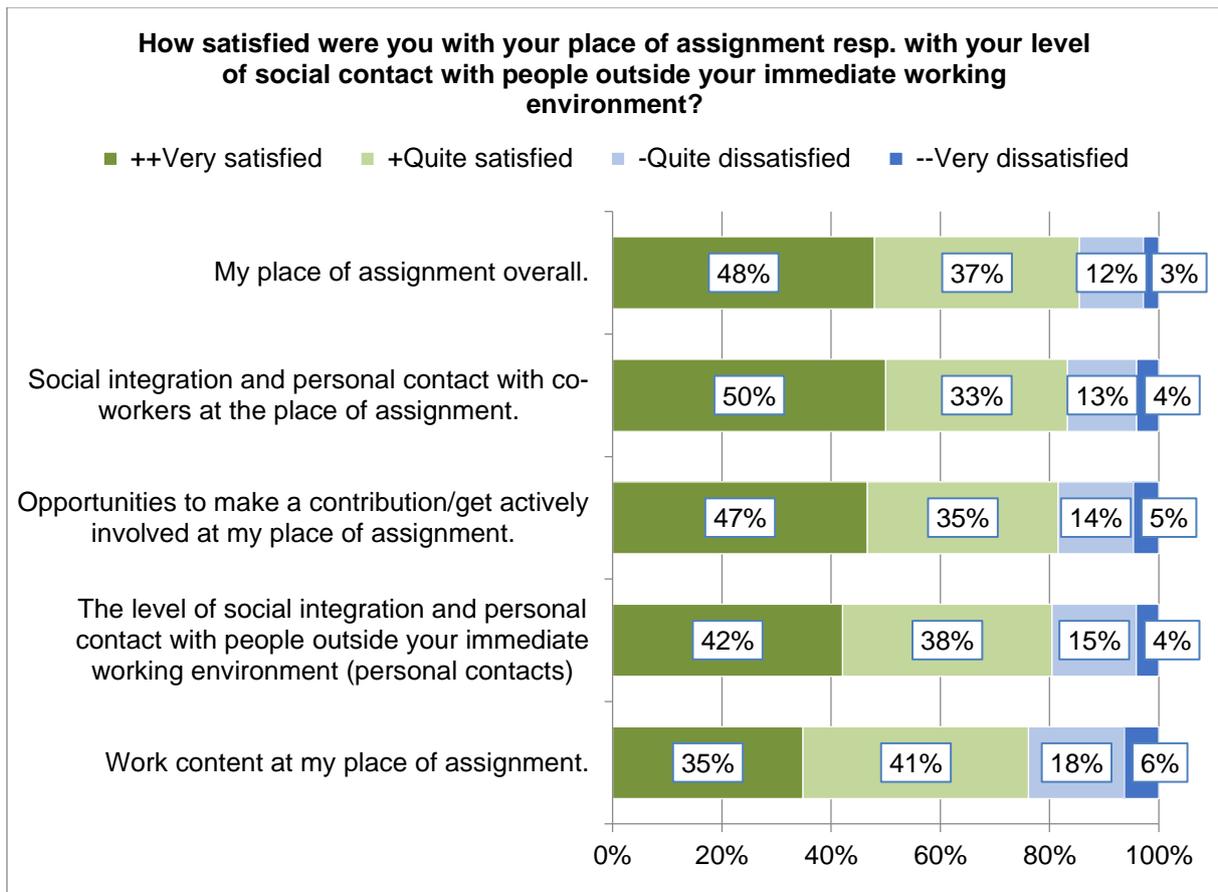


Figure 8: Volunteers' satisfaction with aspects of their place of assignment and their social integration outside of their place of assignment

The proportion of volunteers who stated that they had a contact person at their place of assignment who was there to give them instruction throughout their assignment was similar to that of past years, i.e. roughly two thirds. However, the latest findings also reveal that approximately one in three volunteers did not fully confirm that contact persons were available for instruction. The level of satisfaction with the introductory training and instruction given at the place of assignment is also largely unchanged compared with previous years. 64% of this cohort were very or quite satisfied with this aspect, while 36% were quite or very dissatisfied (see Figure 9).

The most common reason for volunteers being (quite) dissatisfied with this guidance was the permanent or prolonged lack of a contact person for this task at their place of assignment. The share of volunteers citing poor availability on the part of their contact persons as the reason for their dissatisfaction in this regard decreased by five percentage points to 33% - a significant drop on the previous year. There were also considerably fewer mentions of personal problems with contact persons as volunteers' reason for their dissatisfaction (19%). The original contact person being replaced, however, was a factor in 14% of volunteers' partial disappointment with the introductory training and instruction given at their place of assignment. As in previous years, the latest findings also show that a number of the volunteers who were dissatisfied with this aspect looked for (new) contact persons themselves (18%).

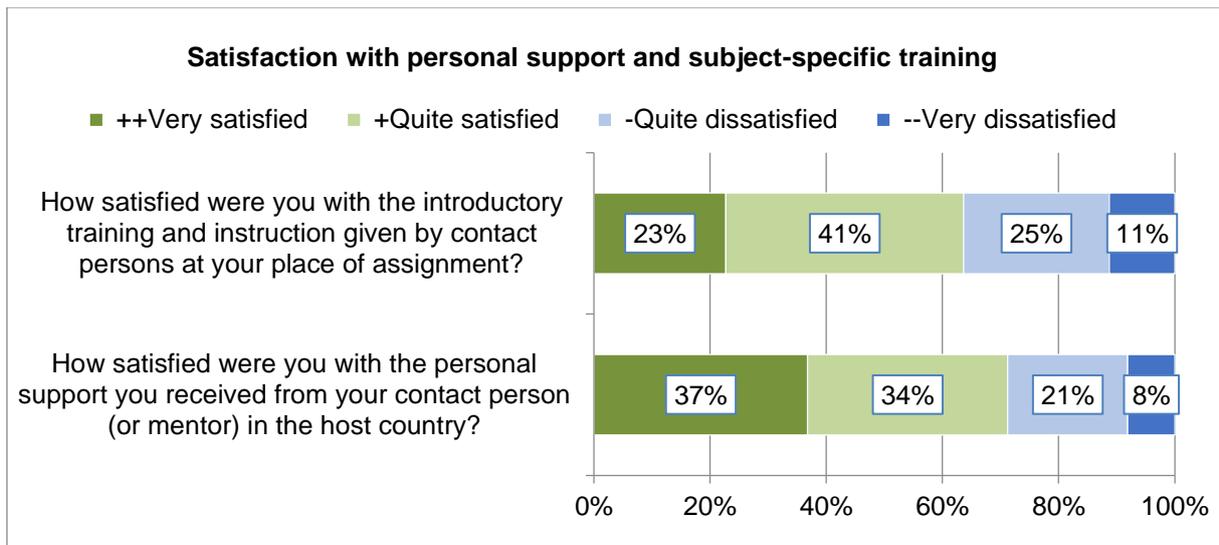


Figure 9: Satisfaction with the personal support provided during voluntary service overseas and the instruction given with regard to tasks at the place of assignment

The past volunteer surveys had already established that personal support (through mentors, for example) for the weltwärts volunteers during their overseas assignments was ensured in most cases. However, the latest findings show a significant improvement in the support provided in the past two years. In the 2014 and 2015 surveys, 75% of the respondents stated that it was completely or quite true that they had a contact person throughout their voluntary service, whom they could contact for personal support. But the figure now is 80%. Moreover, the share of volunteers who stated that this was not true at all in their case was smaller than ever before in the latest survey (6%). In a repeat of recent years' findings, satisfaction with personal support was higher than for the instruction given at the place of assignment. 71% were very or quite satisfied with the personal support (e.g. from mentors), while 29% were not so satisfied or very dissatisfied (see Figure 9). These results are very similar to those of previous years.

The question concerning the reasons for the respondent's dissatisfaction with the personal support they received was changed for the survey of the 2017 returnees. The new question asks for the main reason for this dissatisfaction and no longer permits multiple answers.<sup>10</sup> The most common answer given by volunteers who were quite or very dissatisfied with the personal support was the permanent or prolonged lack of a contact person whom they could ask for personal support (24%). The poor availability in emergencies of the person designated to provide personal support came a close second (22%). Personal problems with the contact person were an issue for 14% of the dissatisfied respondents. A lower percentage stated that they had looked themselves for a different person than originally planned to provide them with personal support (8%). A new contact person or place of assignment was also only rarely cited as the main reason for the personal support not being considered very satisfactory (4%). In a number of cases, however, the volunteers felt the need to explain the main reason for their dissatisfaction with the personal support in the open comments section instead of choosing one of the options given (23%).

<sup>10</sup> It is therefore not possible to compare the percentages with those of previous years.

Ensuring the safety and health of the volunteers during their year abroad is extremely important for the weltwärts programme. As part of the weltwärts programme quality development process, the volunteer surveys are therefore also intended to gather information on whether the volunteers are confronted with situations that are potentially dangerous or perceived as threatening during their overseas assignment. The findings of the latest survey show that 42% did not have any negative safety-related experiences or experience any situations that they considered potentially threatening. This figure has seen a negative development in recent years, with the proportion of volunteers who did not experience any such situations falling six percentage points since 2015.

When considering this finding, it is important to look at the type of dangerous situation involved. When volunteers mention situations of this nature, they are mostly situations that were subjectively seen as threatening without there necessarily being a real danger. This year's result mirrors that of last year exactly, with 47% reporting situations of this type during their overseas assignment. Cases of volunteers actually being threatened personally are still much rarer – 86% of them had not been confronted by such a situation. There were even fewer cases of volunteers experiencing physical violence first hand (5%). Up until this point, there are hardly any differences to the findings of the previous surveys. However, the share of volunteers who reported situations in which they were sexually harassed or threatened has increased significantly in recent years. In the latest survey, 23% of the volunteers said they had experienced situations of this type during their time overseas. This was five percentage points higher than in the previous year and, in fact, nine percentage points higher than in the 2015 volunteer survey. Previous surveys had already shown that women experience these situations much more often than men. In the latest survey, 30% of the female volunteers stated that they had been confronted with sexual harassment. The figure for the male participants was 4%. It is true that the proportion of female volunteers has grown in the past few years but this alone does not explain the rise in the number of volunteers reporting situations in which they were sexually harassed or threatened. The responses make clear the need to continue to take this topic seriously, especially when preparing the volunteers for their service. However, it should again be pointed out that these findings should not be interpreted as a weltwärts-specific problem. Sexual harassment is a common form of sexualised attack or violence, which plays a role throughout society internationally. Furthermore, the public attention that has surrounded the issue recently, e.g. in the context of #MeToo, has increased awareness. In the discussion of the findings with Engagement Global and representatives of the sending organisations and the volunteers, it was assumed that the increase in respondents reporting situations of this nature was linked to a heightened awareness of the topic. Whenever a topic such as sexualised violence is discussed in the public domain, there is usually an increase in the number of victims coming forward. It should also be noted that the programme's working bodies had begun actively addressing this topic in 2015 and that the sending organisations had therefore focused on it more.

The feedback from the volunteers also confirms the particular importance the German sending organisations and host organisations attach to this specific issue and to the general safety of volunteers when preparing them for and supporting them during their assignments. Even though the share of respondents who reported potentially critical situations was up in the latest survey, the support provided for the volunteers ensured that most of them felt in (quite) good hands despite these difficult situations (90%).

## Seminars

The preparatory, mid-term and returnee seminars are compulsory elements of the voluntary service. The latest survey again shows that it is very rare for volunteers not to attend these seminars. Almost all the volunteers surveyed had attended a preparatory seminar and at least one mid-term seminar during their time overseas. At the time of the survey, the majority of the returnees had also already attended a returnee seminar (since 2014, the figure at the time of the survey has consistently been around 92%). It was also still the case that many of those who had not yet attended a returnee seminar were scheduled to do so (48%). However, the share of those who had not yet been offered a returnee seminar was slightly higher than in the previous year (up from 2% to 11%).

The seminars offered by the sending and host organisations to accompany the programme were considered (very) useful overall by the overwhelming majority of the volunteers (see Figure 10). The increases observed in recent years have thus remained stable.

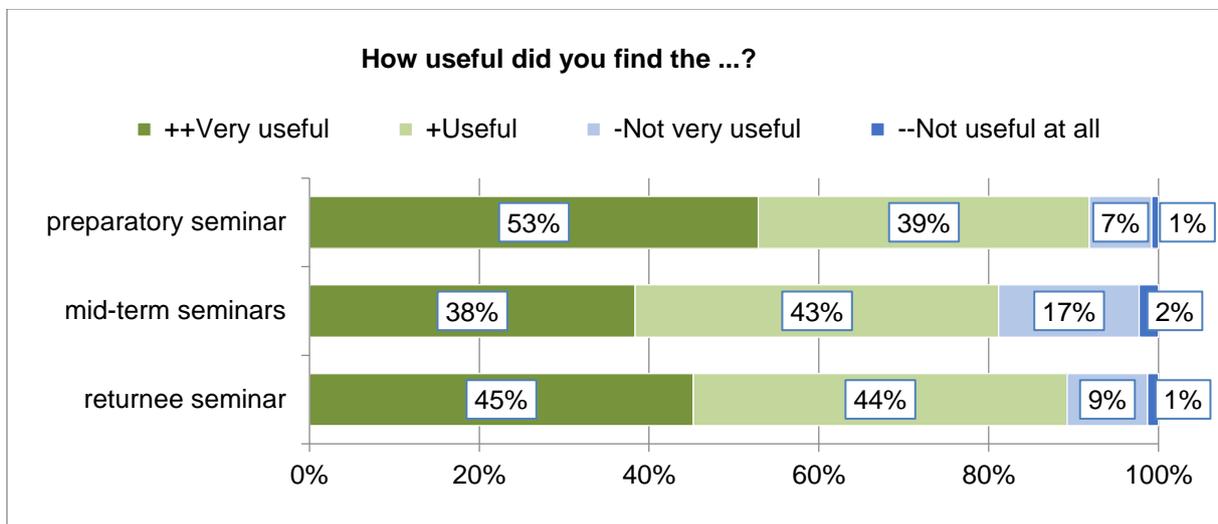


Figure 10: Assessment of the accompanying seminars on the weltwärts programme

The preparatory seminars were (very) useful for 92% of the volunteers. The latest findings also reveal an improvement in the quality of the preparatory seminars in the past few years. They received significantly better ratings with regard to the preparation given for work with development issues, general requirements, the role of the volunteer and everyday life during voluntary service. In particular, there was an increase in the share of respondents who described the preparatory seminar as “very useful”. 89% felt that it was (very) useful for preparing for development issues, while 86% saw it as (very) useful in terms of preparing for the general requirements of the voluntary service and their own role as a volunteer. In recent years, the seminars have become increasingly better at supporting the volunteers as they prepare for everyday life at their place of assignment. Whereas only one in five of the respondents in the 2013 pilot survey considered the preparatory seminar very useful in this respect, the figure now stands at one in four. Furthermore, the overall share of volunteers who found the seminar (very) useful as a means of preparing for everyday life at their place of assignment increased five percentage points on the previous year to 72% - a record high.

As in the previous year, 81% of the volunteers felt that the mid-term seminars were (very) useful overall. One particular strength that the volunteers continue to see in the mid-term

seminars is that they provide an opportunity to share experiences: 96% considered them (very) useful for this purpose. They are also a (very) useful way for volunteers to review what they have experienced so far during their voluntary service (85%). In a similar result to last year, approximately three quarters felt the mid-term seminars were useful in helping them deal with the challenges they faced during their overseas assignment. The mid-term seminars are not as focused on development issues as the preparatory seminars – a fact reflected in the volunteers' lower rating of their usefulness in this respect. Over the past few years, the share of volunteers who considered the mid-term seminars (very) useful as a way of learning about development issues has constantly been around 60%.

Since the first volunteer survey in 2013, assessments of the mid-term seminars generally developed positively until the 2016 returnee survey but that trend has not continued. Rather, the latest findings have remained at the same positive level as the previous year. It would appear that the modifications made to the seminar designs in recent years have helped to ensure that the volunteers draw increasing benefit and are better supported than in the past, leading to a stabilisation of the positive trend.

### **Post-assignment activities**

As with the other seminars, most volunteers felt that the returnee seminars were (very) useful overall (89%). This is a repeat of the previous year's result, meaning that the positive trend in this area has stabilised as well. As with the mid-term seminars, the respondents particularly valued the opportunity to share experiences with other volunteers in the returnee seminars. Almost all of them felt that the returnee seminar was (very) useful in this respect (99%). The returnee seminars also help the volunteers maintain the contacts they have established and network with other volunteers on the weltwärts programme (87%). In addition, the majority reported that the seminars were (very) useful as a way of reflecting on and reviewing their personal experiences during their overseas service (86%). The volunteers were similarly positive in their assessment of the seminars as a means of finding out more about how to get involved in development work after returning to Germany (88%). The seminars also encouraged the volunteers to continue their active involvement in development work after their return: 82% of the respondents stated that the seminars were very or quite useful in this respect. As the previous surveys had already shown, it is relatively difficult to provide targeted support through the seminars to help the returnees readjust to life in Germany after their time overseas. A total of 61% stated that the seminars had been (very) useful for this purpose.

The feedback on the returnee seminars was very similar to the previous year's. It can be said that the positive trend that had been observed up until the 2016 survey has not continued. Overall satisfaction with the post-assignment activities is also at a similarly high level as last year, with 87 % stating that they were very or quite satisfied with this aspect (see Figure 11). Again, the positive trend has stabilised.

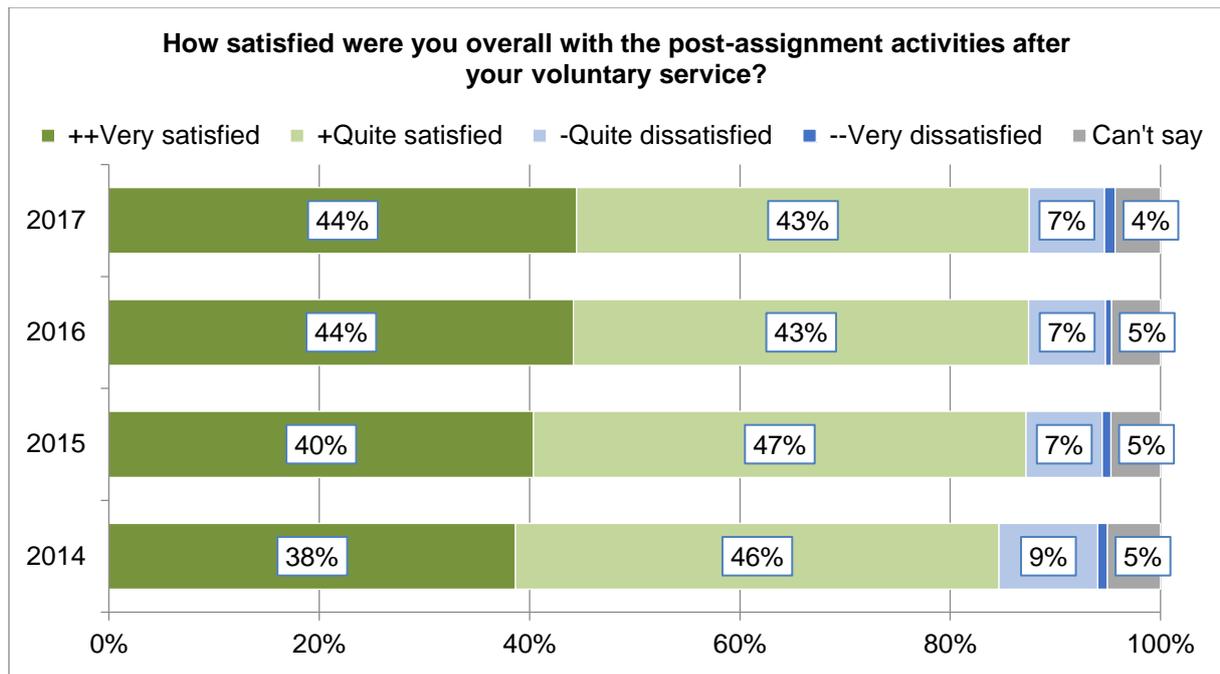


Figure 11: Satisfaction with the post-assignment activities on the volunteer service programme – comparison of the 2014-2017 findings<sup>11</sup>

### The weltwärts programme as a development learning service

In order to find out more about the effects of participation in the weltwärts programme, especially with regard to global learning, the annual online surveys ask volunteers to give an assessment of how they think their voluntary service has influenced various areas of their personal development.

The previous years' and the latest survey's findings reveal that voluntary service on the weltwärts programme is an enriching experience and the participants benefit personally in a variety of ways. This is true both of their personal skills and of the knowledge they gain in the area of international development. The responses given by the 2017 returnees differed only slightly from the findings of the previous surveys.

<sup>11</sup> The "Can't say" answer option was only offered for volunteers who had not (yet) attended a returnee seminar at the time of the survey.

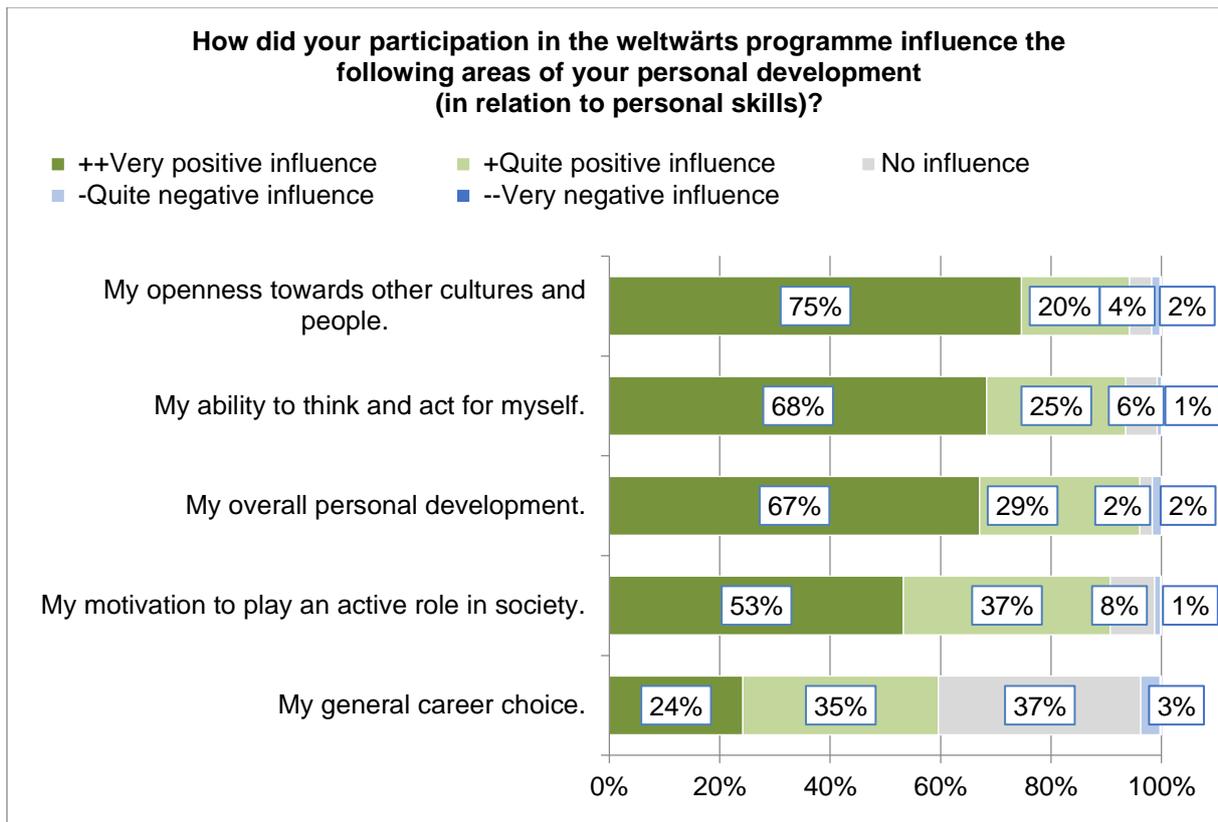


Figure 12: Volunteers' assessment of how voluntary service influenced the development of their personal skills

With regard to their personal skills, the volunteers observed particularly positive effects on their openness towards other cultures and people. Three in four saw a very positive influence and a total of 94% saw a very or quite positive influence. Only a very small number of volunteers (2%) felt that the programme had a quite negative effect on their openness towards others. Most of the volunteers also felt that volunteering with weltwärts had influenced their general personal development, with a total of 96% reporting a very or quite positive effect. In addition, very or quite positive influences were seen in terms of ability to think and act for oneself (93%).

At 90%, the share of volunteers who reported a (very) positive influence on their motivation to play an active role in society was also substantial. The respondents' opinions varied a little more when it came to the influence of weltwärts on their general career choice. Approximately one quarter felt that the influence was very positive; a total of 60% considered it quite to very positive. More than one third, 37%, did not see a connection between their participation in the voluntary service and their general career choice. Only a few volunteers were of the opinion that their weltwärts experience had a quite negative influence on their career choice (3%) (see Figure 12).

However, in the respondents' view, volunteering on the weltwärts programme affects other areas, not only the participants' personal skills. Many of them observe positive influences with regard to development-related aspects. More than 90% felt that their participation in the weltwärts programme had a (very) positive influence on their global awareness; the figure was the same for volunteers' interest in development issues. Only 8% saw no effect in either area. It is very rare for volunteers to state that participating in weltwärts had a quite negative

influence on their interest in development issues. The feedback in the surveys also shows that voluntary service fosters participants’ interest in social and political issues, with a total of 88% volunteers reporting a (very) positive influence (see Figure 13).

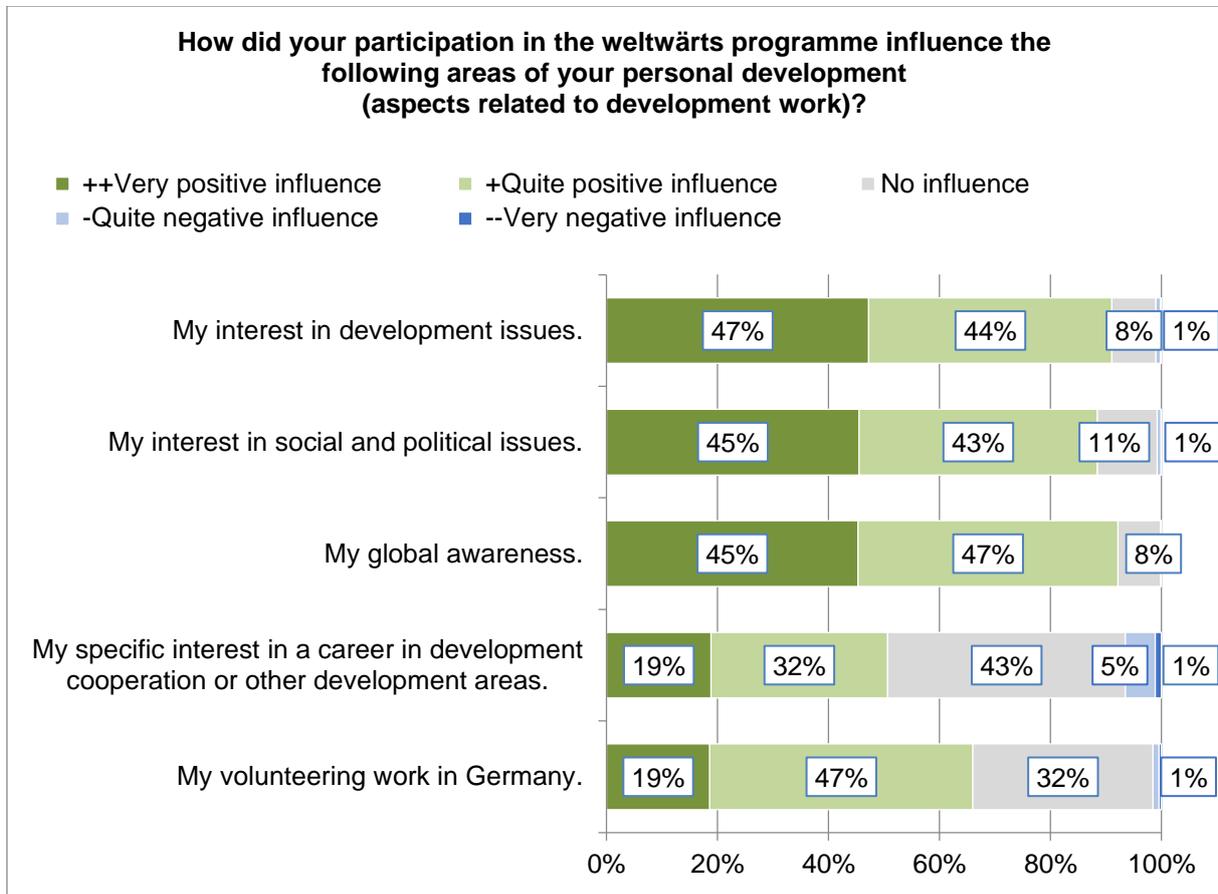


Figure 13: Volunteers’ assessment of how voluntary service influenced them personally with regard to development-related aspects

A substantial share of the volunteers felt that participating in the weltwärts programme had a positive impact in terms of their specific interest in a career in development cooperation or other development areas, with roughly half reporting a (very) positive influence. 43% saw no effect in this respect. However, some respondents stated that their volunteering experience had resulted more in a decline in their interest in a career in development (cooperation): 6% reported a quite or very negative effect (see Figure 13).

For the first time, this latest survey also asked respondents how participating in the programme had influenced their volunteering activities in Germany. The findings show that many returnees benefited from their voluntary service in this respect too, with two in three seeing a (very) positive effect. Having said that, one third felt that there was no influence on their (continued) volunteering activities. And only a very small number felt that the effect on their willingness to engage in voluntary work in Germany was quite negative (see Figure 13).

The latest survey again shows that willingness to volunteer<sup>12</sup> and actual volunteering activity have remained at the same high level: 39% of returnees were already engaged in volunteer work (again) at the time of the survey. In addition, more than a quarter (27%) were very certain that they would engage in voluntary work in society in the future or felt it was at least probable (19%). In total then, 85% of the volunteers were either already engaged in post-assignment voluntary work or would (probably) be at some time in the future. 12% were unsure about the idea and there were only very few returnees who said that they would probably or definitely not engage in voluntary work in the future (2%) (see Figure 14). One factor here is often that higher education is the returnees' first priority and so they do not feel that they have enough time. These findings are again almost identical to those of the previous years.

The fields in which returnees were already engaged in voluntary work or showed an interest in volunteering in the future are generally very diverse. This year's findings again reveal that a particularly high proportion of those already volunteering do so in the areas of work with children and young people, anti-racism, asylum and migration fields and in collaboration with the weltwärts sending organisations. Those who are not yet engaged in voluntary work also display a significant interest in these areas. However, human rights and environmental protection/conservation/climate protection were also considered particularly interesting areas for volunteering. With both the level of current volunteering and the interest in volunteering increasing for environmental protection/conservation/climate protection, this field is gaining significance.

For the purposes of the current survey, the areas in which the returnees engage in voluntary work or would be interested in doing so were grouped together under the heading "Global citizenship".<sup>13</sup>

According to the survey results, the majority of returnees who engage in post-assignment volunteering do so in the area of global citizenship: three quarters volunteer in an area that falls into this category (74%). The strong inclination for topics in the global citizenship category becomes even more evident upon examination of the areas in which respondents would be interested in volunteering in the future. 96% of them would like to volunteer in at least one of the areas in this category (see Figure 15).

---

<sup>12</sup> For this question, "voluntary work" was defined as any unpaid activity for the common good – not only in the area of development.

<sup>13</sup> This category included development cooperation, development education, work for the sending organisation, work for the host organisation overseas, international exchanges/relations, human rights, environmental protection/conservation/climate protection and anti-racism/asylum/migration. The areas considered relevant for the concept of global citizenship were chosen by Engagement Global.

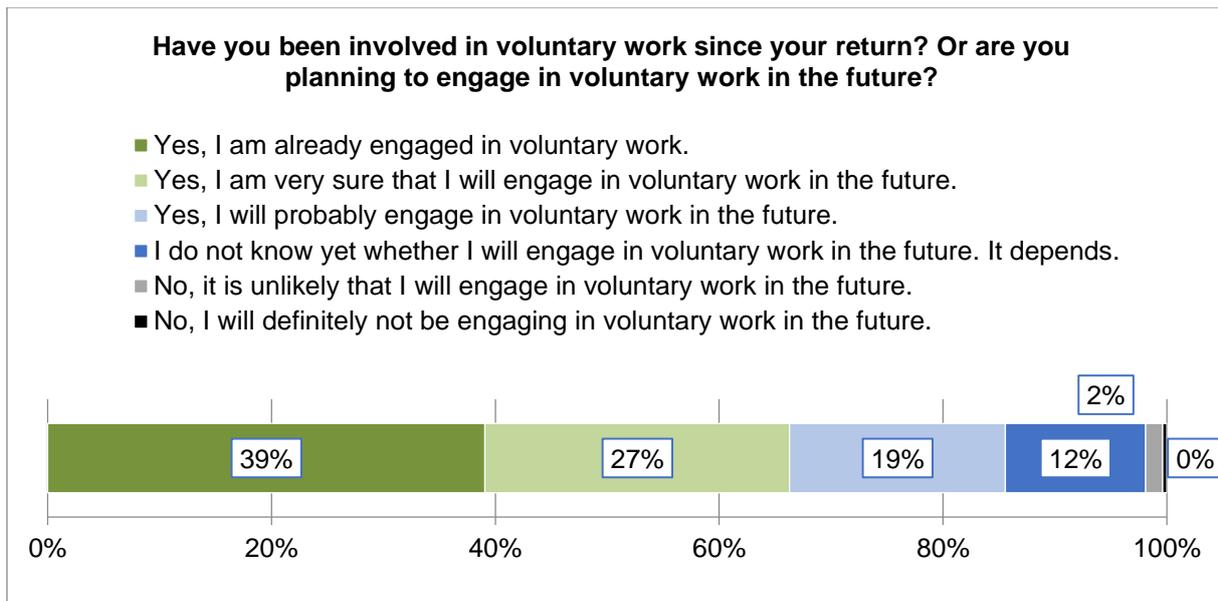


Figure 14: Post-assignment voluntary work

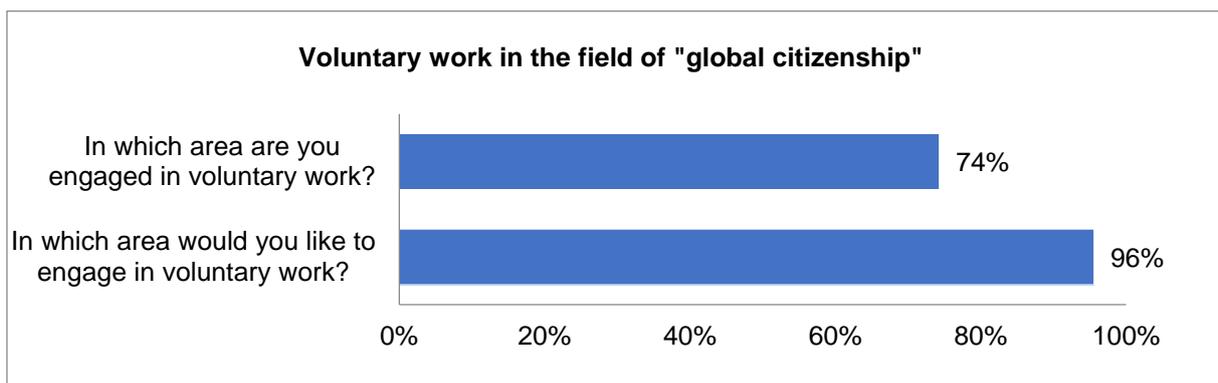


Figure 15: Current volunteering activity and interest in volunteering in the global citizenship category

Irrespective of their current volunteering activity, 56% of the volunteers surveyed stated that they would (quite) like to have more information about specific post-assignment volunteering options. Generally speaking, the proportion of volunteers who explicitly state that they would like more information has dropped over the past few years.

A similar trend can be observed in the development of returnees' interest in further development-related training (e.g. training for multipliers, seminars on specific subjects or project management). In the latest survey, 52% expressed an interest in training of this kind. This is down on last year's 56% and the 59% reported in the initial survey in 2013. However, this drop is not due to a rise in the number of volunteers who completely reject the idea of such training. Rather, there has been an increase in the number of respondents who are uncertain about whether they would be interested in further development-related training, i.e. those whose answer is "Don't know".

For the first time, the latest survey asked the returnees about their interest in working in development cooperation at a later stage. The volunteers' responses show that interest is extremely high: only 15% were not interested and a total of 84% were interested. There was

particular interest in working abroad - 70% of all volunteers, which works out at 83% of the volunteers who were interested in working in development cooperation at a later stage. Approximately half were interested in working in development cooperation in Germany - 63% of all those expressing a general interest in this work in the future. 47% of the respondents stated that they were interested in working in development cooperation in the country where they were on assignment, which is equal to 56% of those generally interested in working in development cooperation in the future (see Figure 16).

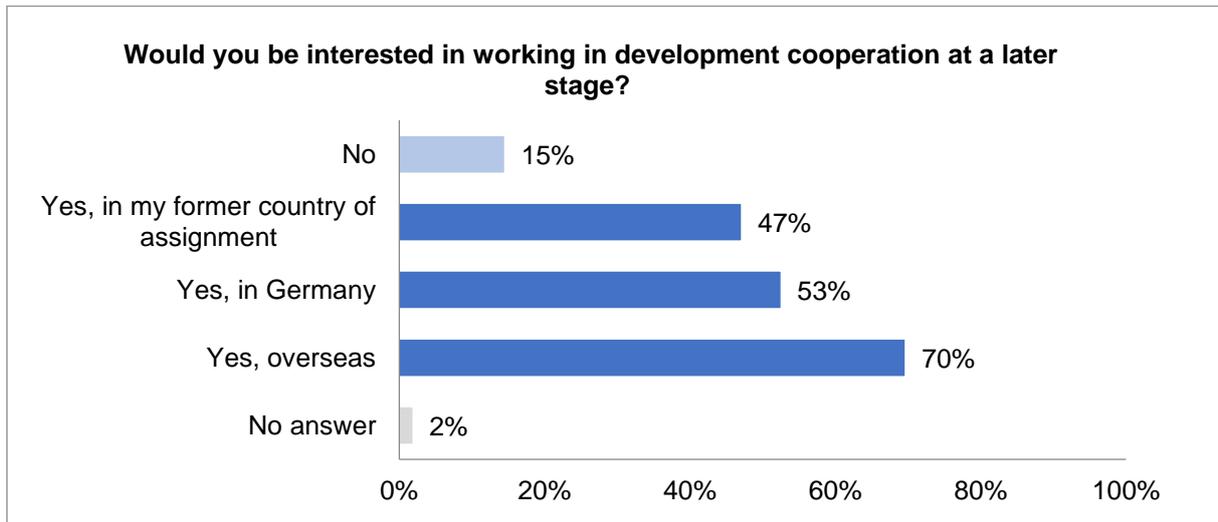


Figure 16: Interest in working in development cooperation in the future<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Apart from the “No answer” option, multiple answers were possible.