

## Inclusion-specific documentation of the 2017 weltwärts partner conferences

“The ability of the volunteer matters!”

(Quote from a participant at the partner conference in Georgia)



The following document is intended as a supplement to the documentation of the four weltwärts partner conferences that took place in 2017. It summarises the inclusion-specific findings, wishes and recommendations of the approximately 220 participants who attended the weltwärts partner conferences in 2017, as identified by the Competence Center for Inclusion of Volunteers with Impairments/Disabilities (*bezev*).

Essen, January 2018

**Summary: Inclusion at the 2017 weltwärts partner conferences**

Place	Dates	Organisation responsible for conference	Participating countries	Number of participants
Kenya	20 - 23.04. 2017.	Children's Hope Home e.V.	Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Germany	64
Chile	24 - 28.04. 2017	Mission EineWelt	Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Germany	48
India	18 - 21.09. 2017	Deutsch-Indische Zusammenarbeit e.V. + DRK in Hesse – Volunta and bezev	India, Cambodia, China, Thailand, Philippines, Germany	67
Georgia	10 - 14.10. 2017	Brot für die Welt	Georgia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Germany	37

**Inclusion, the Programme Steering Committee's theme of the year, at the partner conferences**

The topic of inclusion and, in particular, the target-group diversification strategy for the weltwärts programme (the Programme Steering Committee's theme of the year 2017) was presented at all four partner conferences.

In many cases, the participants at the conferences (including the German representatives) were not aware of the work done by the competence centres for inclusion in the weltwärts programme. Having said that, they very much appreciated and approved of the idea of inclusion.

The outcomes of the discussions can be read in detail in the documentation of each partner conference. The following sections present the aspects that were discussed particularly often. This document is available in four languages. A separate, longer version of the document for the weltwärts programme sets out recommendations concerning inclusion in the weltwärts programme arising from the conferences. The recommendations are available in English and German.

### **Definitions: inclusion and disability/impairment**

Initially, the partner organisations found it difficult to understand why the topics of impairment/disability, vocational training and migrant background had been grouped together under the heading “Inclusion”, resulting in (now) three competence centres.

It was also suggested that the definition of inclusion used in the weltwärts programme be expanded beyond the three categories of “volunteers with a disability/impairment”, “volunteers who have completed vocational training” and “volunteers with a migrant background”. Some participants felt that the term should be defined as including “young people with fewer opportunities” in general.

At the partner conference in Kenya, the aspect of inclusion of ethnic groups/minorities was also discussed because the participants felt it was important, particularly with regard to the South-North component. There is therefore a requirement for the weltwärts programme to take inclusion into consideration in the South-North component too and possibly to expand the definition of inclusion.

The partner organisations applauded the way in which the terms “impairment/disability” were defined and interpreted on the weltwärts programme and how it included persons in this group. At the same time, in Chile, Kenya and India in particular, there was a very critical discussion about the choice of terminology. For instance, the English and Spanish translations of the German terms “Beeinträchtigung” (impairment) and “Behinderung” (disability) give no indication at all of the social model and progressive definition of disability/impairment that the programme is actually based on. The translated terms focus on the individual’s limitations rather than the barriers that disable them. Although the partner organisations are aware that the terms used are those officially recognised in the UN Convention, they would like different terms to be used when addressing the target groups and conducting PR work. In addition, the differences between the terms “Beeinträchtigung” (impairment) and “Behinderung” (disability) and their definitions on the weltwärts programme should always be explained (even if the translated terms are modified) because the distinctions made in the UN Convention and the weltwärts programme are not known in many countries and partner organisations.

### **Experience and openness regarding inclusion in volunteer services**

At the four partner conferences, the participants cited numerous examples of best practice in the inclusion of weltwärts volunteers who have an impairment/disability, have completed vocational training or have a migrant background.

The participants at the conferences generally felt that hosting volunteers who have completed vocational training and volunteers who have a migrant background was not a problem. In particular, it became apparent that many partner organisations would specifically like to take on volunteers who have completed vocational training.

The partner organisations' experience regarding sending and hosting volunteers with an impairment/disability covers a wide variety of support needs, e.g. physical/motor, visual, auditory, mental and medical. To a considerable extent, the partner organisations already cater for the need for medical support as a matter of course. Diabetes and rheumatism were the most common examples mentioned. This again resulted in a generally very positive attitude on the part of the participants towards the topic of inclusion.

In this context, the importance of a good working relationship and communication with the cooperating organisation in Germany was stressed. Where communication between volunteers, sending and host organisations was open and honest, it was usually possible to find solutions for volunteers' additional support needs, according to the conference participants.

The reservations voiced by the participants with regard to the inclusion of volunteers with impairments/disabilities were mainly to do with the local infrastructure, especially the transport situation, and the language.

One area in which there were many reservations and much scepticism was that of mental disorders. In Georgia, Kenya and Chile, some individuals mentioned the possibility of consulting a medical specialist to help decide whether people with such disorders can take part in the programme.

### **Provision for additional costs**

All participants at the conferences applauded the fact that inclusion costs can be claimed as additional support needs for volunteers on the weltwärts programme. Neither the partner organisations, nor a number of the EG and sending organisation representatives were aware of the provision for additional costs.

### **South-North component**

There was also praise for the fact that the concept of inclusion has been integrated into some parts of the South-North component. It was recommended that the inclusion activities on the weltwärts programme focus on this component more in the future. Interested organisations should be supported in their efforts to be inclusive in their work in the South-North component as well in the future.

### **Conclusion**

The partner organisations were hardly aware that the weltwärts programme was seeking to become more inclusive but they very much welcomed the decision. Some of the participants had already had positive experience with inclusion activities. All parties very much wanted to be able to discuss the topic of inclusion at the partner conferences. The participation levels in

the workshop phases and discussions following them were very high. It became apparent that there was a strong willingness to host volunteers from previously under-represented groups. The participants also stressed their wish that the South-North component be made inclusive too.

### **Immediate post-conference impacts**

After the conferences, bezev received a number of enquiries from partner organisations that would now like to work with volunteers with impairments/disabilities or join the “inclusive volunteering abroad” network. Many organisations had actually told their German partners this immediately after the conferences but their partners were not always open to the idea. One positive example was an official letter to the weltwärts programme, resulting from the conference in Kenya, expressing an interest on the part of six organisations from Uganda. bezev has already forwarded the letter to the weltwärts programme.

In addition, following the partner organisation conferences, bezev received approximately five requests for advice for South-North volunteers with impairments/disabilities as a result of competence centre representatives attending the conferences (immediate increase in the number of applications from South-North volunteers with impairments/disabilities).

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