

Short Documentation of the Evaluation workshop „Inclusion in the South-North Programme“



30th of September – 1st of October 2021 via zoom

Introduction:

The first Evaluation workshop on inclusion in the “weltwärts” South-North Programme took place online from 30th of September to the 1st of October 2022. In total eleven participants and four *bezev* staff members were discussing the importance of inclusion for the South-North component in the “weltwärts” programme. Members from organisations in Germany, Mexico, South-Africa and Zambia who are already engaged in the implementation of the South-North component, three former volunteers with impairment/disability from Ecuador and Germany and representatives of Engagement Global were exchanging their ideas of the needs and developed recommendations for action for a successful, inclusive South-North voluntary service. The workshop was organized by *bezev*, a German non-governmental organisation who is engaged in inclusive volunteer services. *bezev* holds the Centre of Excellence for the Inclusion of volunteers with an impairment/disability on the “weltwärts” programme. Since 2020 the Centre of Excellence has the mandate to operate also in the South-North component.

Main section:

Day 1:

The first day of the workshop focussed on the introduction on the topic of inclusion and experiences of inclusion in the “weltwärts”-programme. After getting to know each other and collecting the expectations for the workshop, the participants shared their ideas of what inclusion means to them. Continuing on the term of inclusion the three staff members of *bezev* gave a presentation about the

understanding of inclusion and the different levels where inclusion takes place (volunteers, sending and partner organisations, programme level) and shared the history of the Centre of Excellence. In addition to this *bezev* presented what the programme guidelines of the “weltwärts” programme mean for the topic of inclusion.

Furthermore, two former volunteers with impairments/disabilities shared their experiences with the other participants. Karla C., a former volunteer from Ecuador, completed her voluntary service in Germany in 2018 and Stefanie R. a former volunteer from Germany, completed her voluntary service in Ghana also in 2018. Stefanie has glass bones and is sitting in a wheelchair. Karla has a mobility impairment and uses a prosthesis. Both of them shared their experiences as volunteers having an impairment/disability with the audience. Karla mentioned two main barriers she experienced during her voluntary service in Germany. In preparation of the volunteer service, it was especially difficult for Karla to find a project / place of assignment. Most projects did not consider her as a value to their work and seemed to believe that she would be an additional burden. Through a German friend Karla found a project and was able to start her service. This project had a different approach than the others. They said that they will find tasks Karla can do, even so there were some things she couldn't do. Another barrier Karla was confronted with, was that her prosthesis was broken during her stay in Germany. Even so she had two medical insurances, no insurance felt in charge to cover the costs of a new prosthesis right away. Therefore, it was a long process to get the right medical treatment. Karla pointed out, that people with impairment/disability have the same dreams and motivations as everyone, but often don't have the same trust that they are able to do it. They need a support system to encourage them to follow their dreams and motivations.

Stefanie shared that she had the wish to do a volunteer service abroad for a long time. She had huge difficulties in finding an organisation who was willing to send her abroad while sitting in a wheelchair. Even so she experienced Ghana as less sensitized towards impairments/disabilities she was able to make her way around. Her accommodation was accessible with the wheelchair, and she had a personal assistant and a personal chauffeur to support her in her daily life.

Before the wrap-up of day one the participants were sharing and discussing their experience they already made in the South-North programme. This could have been on different levels: as a volunteer, as a sending or receiving organisation or on programme level. One example of the discussed experiences is about communication. This includes the communication about the impairment/disability and requirements before arriving in Germany but also communication which is induced by the lack of knowledge and experience of the implementing organisations. In addition, the tabu of having and talking about impairments/disabilities in the society. Further, bureaucratic barriers were mentioned.

Based on the experiences the groups were collecting barriers in the “weltwärts” South-North programme for persons with impairment/disability. One important barrier, which is associated with the experiences, is the stigma. Not only based on the impairment/disability but also on their race. Intersectionality and the multi-layered discrimination need to be addressed by all the actors in the programme. Furthermore, the question of having an inclusive application process was mentioned as a barrier but also the accessibility of the seminars was highlighted. The day closed with a wrap-up.

Day 2:

The second day of the workshop was all about trying to come up with concrete ideas on how to implement an inclusive South-North voluntary service. The participants were mostly working in groups for the day. The first session was about “Development of needs for a successful, inclusive

South-North volunteer service". The group was divided into three small working groups. One group consisting of the former volunteers, one group of the host organisations and one group of colleagues from Engagement Global and the partner organisations.

The assignment was to develop needs that need to be met to make an inclusive South-North volunteer service successful.

The second session was focussing on the development of recommendations for action for a successful, inclusive South-North volunteer service. Participants from each working group were now paired together into new groups to encourage exchange and to develop recommendations for a successful, inclusive South-North volunteer service.

In the following the results are combined and divided into different categories.

Communication:

The main claim of the social and human rights movement from people with impairment/disability was always "Nothing about us without us!". And this should also be indicated within the "weltwärts"-program. In detail this would mean, that the volunteers should be involved in the whole process of developing an inclusive programme from the beginning since they are the main actors in the programme. People with impairment/disability should talk for themselves because they know best what their own requirements are. Furthermore, it is important to create a safe communication space from the beginning so that people can communicate their needs without fearing that those could affect their chances to participate in the programme. In order to achieve this, it is important to empower the volunteers to share their needs. The volunteers need to have the chance of educate themselves on how to talk about your own wishes as well as on defining your own needs. Tools that help to define each person's individual needs must be created, while considering that people might not know their needs because they are met in their own home and therefore became irrelevant. Here the question on how we communicate while being aware of the power relations involved in the whole process, is relevant and needs to be targeted. The collaboration with local organisations in the Global North as well as in the Global South can be helpful in the whole process. An increase of education on how to communicate despite language barriers and cultural differences is elementary. The program must need specialised persons in the programme to answer questions and offer guidance for different problems implementing organisations or volunteers might face during the whole process.

Public relations:

Another category would be public relations, which should work completely inclusive. Therefore, it is important to work towards a bigger range to be able to address more people with the existence and knowledge about the programme. The programme must target groups that are excluded already within the society because of certain characteristics (race, class, gender, body/impairment etc.).

System changes:

A third category is the change of the system as a whole. This mean a mindset must be created, which states out that everyone can participate. This is the base of a truly inclusive "weltwärts"-programme. One barrier is the certain level of school education which is required to participate in the programme. This requirement is not as easy to meet for people with impairment/disability in the Global South as for people without impairment/disability. Another barrier is the whole Visa Process. German government only provides Visa for "perfect" candidates, which pressures organisations to accept only those candidates who fit the profile. It is important to get into a discussion with the embassy and the ministry of foreign relations to make the Visa-process more inclusive. The whole programme should become more flexible and open to be inclusive to different individual situations.

For example, one does not need to reach the level of education postulated by the programme. Furthermore, another point to create a quota in order to increase the participation of volunteers with impairment/disability in the programme.

Workshops and trainings:

The following category is focusing on possible solution for the mentioned barriers and claims. One possible solution would be offering workshops for all the stakeholders within the program, like hosting organisations, partner organisations, host families, mentors, Engagement Global. This would help to create an inclusive mindset and to prepare for volunteers with impairment/disability. In addition to this a sensible language education helps to increase communication. Another workshop idea is to focus more on the administrative level. Possible ideas would be to sensitize/inform on how to apply for additional costs.

Peer groups:

The last category is emphasizing the peer groups of people with impairment/disability. One main goal must be to connect volunteers with impairment/disability with each other, with former volunteers, with local people with impairment/disability and local organisations. This connections between different actors can help to encourage an exchange of experiences. Moreover, peer counselling and trainings should be an integral part of the programme. As well as a network in which peers can help each other, including peer groups of projects, host families, host organisations and partner organisations. Experiences can be gathered in a communal spot and formed into guidelines to ease administrative and other processes.

To highlight the most important facts of the whole day, they can be summarized under the question: What are the most important facts, which needs to be improved?

First of all, it is highly to point out, that currently everyone is mostly working on their own. To face this barrier a network and a place where experiences can be shared must be established. This network will be profiting for everyone and the whole programme. Awareness for the intersectionality (race, class, gender, body/impairment etc.), especially volunteers with impairment/disability from the Global South experience need to be raised. Moreover, small host organisations have to deal with a lot of different problems all the time. It would be helpful to have contact persons for different issues in the programme. Their job would be to answer all the questions and offer guidance. Nevertheless, the most important aspect is to collect as much information about the individual volunteers and their requirements. Then the information can be communicated to projects, host families and host organisations. To accomplish that, we need to create an atmosphere where everybody can talk freely and won't be excluded because of anything he*she said.

Before the workshop officially ended *bezev* presented recent discussions on programme level.

For further information and counselling here are the contact details of the staff members of *bezev*:

Counselling for inclusion in the “weltwärts”- South-North volunteer programme: Melanie Kroll (kroll@bezev.de)

Counselling for inclusion in the “weltwärts”- North-South volunteer programme: Stephanie Haase (haase@bezev.de)

Counselling for inclusive targeting an PR as well as political work: Jelena Wander (wander@bezev.de)

The staff members of *bezev* would like to thank all the participants for their attendance and participation on the two workshop days.

bezev (Disability and Development Cooperation)

Altenessener Straße 394–398 | D-45329 Essen

Germany

Tel.: +49 (0)201/178 89 63

www.bezev.de

Supported by ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL

With funding from the

