

## The crisis and emergency system on the weltwärts funding programme

### 1. Introduction

Each year, some 3,300 young men and women volunteer in Global South countries through the weltwärts development volunteer service. These assignments are not without risk. The actors in Germany and the host countries that are involved in the organisation and implementation of the programme are aware of the responsibility that risk places on them. The volunteers receive extensive support during their service thanks to collaboration with experienced and professional partner organisations in the host countries and to the sending organisation's crisis and emergency systems.

The sending organisations prepare their volunteers for risks in the countries of assignment and country-specific requirements, procedures and rules of conduct.

Nonetheless, some volunteers experience crisis situations during their voluntary service. In response, the BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) teamed up with representatives of civil society to produce a guide to crisis management. In it, crisis situations are defined as "situations that jeopardise the volunteer's mental and physical health"<sup>1</sup>. The guide cites the following as possible causes of crisis situations:

- 1.) Accidents, severe mental illnesses/stress
- 2.) Unrest and armed conflicts
- 3.) Natural disasters
- 4.) Crime
- 5.) Sexualised violence, rape
- 6.) Death of a volunteer

Since crises come in various guises and it is not usually possible to foresee them, the crisis and emergency system reacts flexibly, taking into account the different parameters and contexts. These include region-specific conditions, such as a weak medical infrastructure without country-wide emergency services and, for example, the longer transport times that might cause.

It is particularly important to be able to respond to a crisis flexibly and rapidly when the crisis takes the form of an emergency that requires immediate action.

The key to a rapid, effective response capability is a shared understanding of crisis and emergency management by everyone involved. This requires all of the actors involved to communicate regularly, keep each other informed, know emergency contact details and crisis/emergency procedures and be aware of what insurance cover is in place.

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<sup>1</sup> Weltwärts secretariat at the GIZ (ed.): Krisenmanagement im Freiwilligendienst: Ein Leitfadens für Entsendeorganisationen im Rahmen von weltwärts. December 2011 (to be updated in 2016).

The following provides an overview of the weltwärts funding programme requirements for crisis and emergency management and how the actors involved can ensure compliance with those requirements. This information is supplemented by findings from a review entitled *Beschreibung von Krisen- und Notfallsystemen im weltwärts-Programm* (Description of crisis and emergency systems on the weltwärts programme), which was commissioned by the BMZ/Engagement Global in 2015.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Requirements for and implementation of crisis and emergency systems on the weltwärts funding programme

Through the *Quality standards for the weltwärts scheme* (January 2014) and the *Funding guideline weltwärts* (of 1 January 2014), the weltwärts quality system stipulates the following requirements to ensure effective crisis and emergency management:

### a) (Preventive) healthcare

As part of their education and mentoring activities, the sending organisations ensure that the volunteers receive information about any necessary preventive healthcare measures (e.g. vaccinations) and general healthcare (e.g. list of important addresses at their place of assignment) as well as about the general safety situation in the country of assignment (e.g. code of conduct).

The sending organisations provide the volunteers with a 24/7 immediate-response contact (e.g. an emergency assistance phone number) for emergencies.

In addition, a number of sending organisations provide their volunteers with additional contacts (not available 24/7), e.g. local mentors, regional coordinators or their own weltwärts volunteer coordinators in Germany, for personal crisis situations.

### b) Insurance cover

The sending organisations are obliged to insure volunteers for the full term of their assignment abroad. The insurance cover must comprise international health insurance, accident insurance including invalidity/death (insured amount of 200,000 euros with a multiplying factor of 225%), liability and repatriation insurance.

An analysis of the insurance packages used by most sending organisations for their volunteers (e.g. from Dr. Walter or Hanse Merkur) shows that the range of insurance benefits is similar (cf. review report by Dr Peter Schmitz). The report defined a checklist of minimum requirements for international health insurance cover<sup>3</sup> and recommended that it be used as the benchmark against which to compare different insurance packages.

In addition, the volunteers sent abroad are insured against commuting accidents, occupational accidents and occupational disease through *Unfallversicherung Bund und Bahn*.

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<sup>2</sup> Dr Peter Schmitz (2015): Review report, "Beschreibung von Krisen- und Notfallsystemen im weltwärts-Programm" (Description of crisis and emergency stems on the weltwärts programme)

<sup>3</sup> See Annex 1

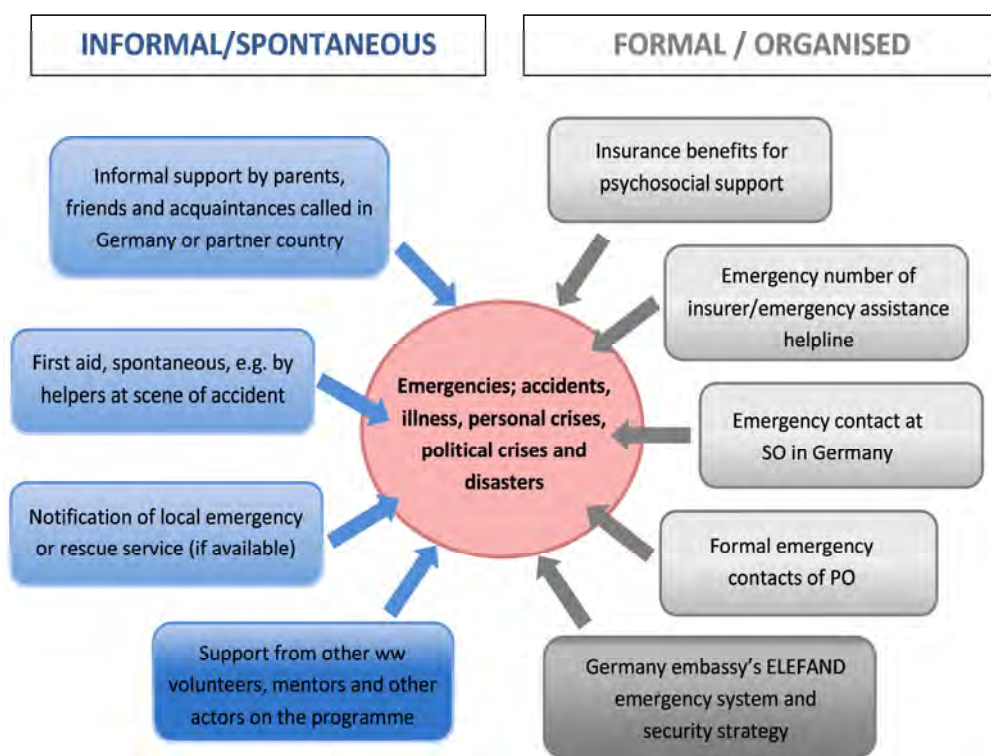
The volunteers “automatically” become insured with *Unfallversicherung Bund und Bahn* when their sending organisations register them with Engagement Global/the weltwärts Coordination Unit for voluntary service.

**c) Crisis and emergency management plan**

The sending organisations have a documented crisis and emergency management plan.

Each sending organisation fleshes out the crisis and emergency system in line with its own structures and processes. This also involves producing a crisis and emergency management plan. The details of the system are communicated to all actors involved. In part, this is done through the education and mentoring activities (e.g. in the preparatory seminars).

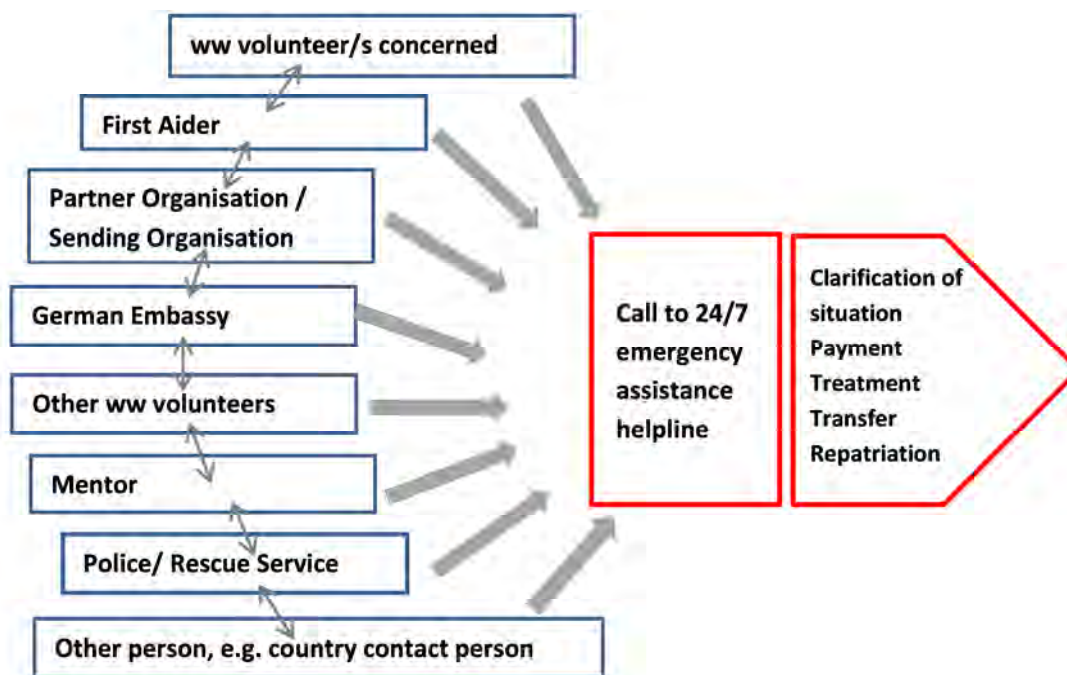
The crisis and emergency management system usually includes informal/spontaneous and formal/organised elements:



Networks in crisis and emergency management, from Dr Peter Schmitz (2015): Review report, “Beschreibung von Krisen- und Notfallsystemen im weltwärts-Programm” (Description of crisis and emergency systems on the weltwärts programme)

The sending organisations provide a 24/7 immediate-response contact.

Most international health insurance providers offer emergency assistance as part of their package. These ensure a 24/7 contact number and 24/7 response capability with, for example, evacuation flights and cover notes. The only time that these emergency assistance packages are not used is if the sending organisation has a special organisational structure that enables it to offer these core services itself. The 24/7 contact number/emergency assistance number is known to all relevant stakeholders and can be documented on, for example, an emergency card. The 24/7 emergency contact details of the German embassy in the country of assignment are also provided. This enables the embassies to trigger the notification chain (see chart below) when they are informed of an emergency.



In certain exceptional circumstances, the country contact person (in those countries in which a country contact person is currently deployed<sup>4</sup>) can trigger the notification chains too and take action in accordance with their “emergency option” role. For example, they can provide an additional form of support in exceptional crisis and emergency situations in line with the role assigned to them in the implementation plan for the country contact person system<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> The country contact person system is currently in the pilot phase (from October 2013 to December 2016) in 18 countries.

<sup>5</sup> Extract from the implementation plan for the “Country Contact Person” system in the weltwärts programme (as at 17.11.2014): *“In exceptional cases, the Country Contact Person shall contact volunteers, on the initiative of a quality association, an SO or a German Embassy, to provide them with support in extraordinary emergency situations (e.g. natural disasters or political unrest). Where the existing security structures prove ineffective, the Country Contact Person can also interact directly with volunteers in exceptional crisis or conflict situations (emergency option). Responsibility for crisis management remains with the SOs though. The Country Contact Person’s role as an emergency option must be communicated in a way that ensures that the SOs’ existing security structures are not circumvented or weakened.”*

#### **d) Observance of security advice and restrictions issued by the Federal Foreign Office and the BMZ**

The security information and travel warnings issued by the Federal Foreign Office plus the additional information<sup>6</sup> from and restrictions<sup>7</sup> specified by the BMZ determine whether weltwärts volunteers can be sent to a specific country.

It is recommended that sending organisations and volunteers keep themselves up to date with the security situation on the ground and the travel and security advice provided by the Foreign Office.

If they have not done so before, upon arrival in their country of assignment the volunteers must register themselves on the list of German nationals resident in the relevant consular district. This must be done using the German Foreign Office's "ELEFAND" system for registering Germans abroad.

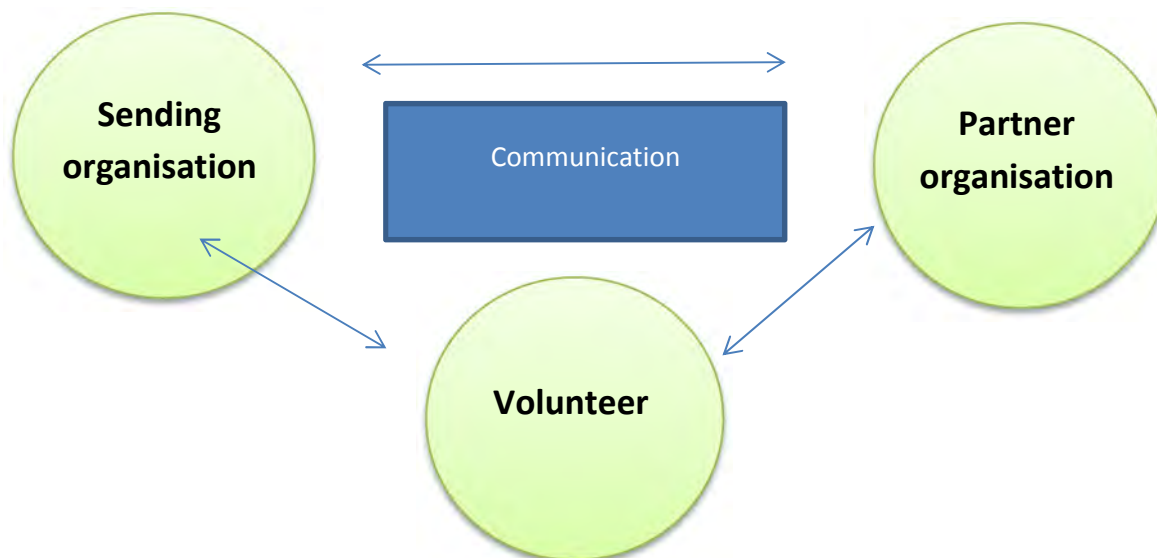
Should the general security situation deteriorate (e.g. due to a natural disaster or political unrest), the embassies can then use the ELEFAND list to contact the volunteers

(<https://service.diplo.de/elefandextern/home/registration!form.action>).

### **3. Quality assurance of crisis and emergency systems on the weltwärts funding programme**

#### **a) Quality assurance at the implementation level**

At the implementation level of the weltwärts funding programme, the volunteer service consists of three main actors: 1.) the volunteer; 2.) the partner organisation in the country of assignment; and 3.) the sending organisation.



<sup>6</sup> Information and security assessments to be considered when sending volunteers on assignment can be found here: <http://www.weltwärts.de/de/sicherheitshinweise.html>

<sup>7</sup> A list of the restrictions is available here: <http://www.weltwärts.de/de/wohin-geht-es-mit-weltwaerts.html>

Using the channels defined for general communication purposes between the above-mentioned actors, the sending organisation, partner organisation and volunteer

- regularly communicate with one another about crisis and emergency management,
- forward any necessary information concerning crisis and emergency management to each other (e.g. the possible courses of action in a crisis or emergency, holiday cover, change in staff, new security assessments, etc.) and
- share information with one another whenever there is an acute need for action.

In order to support communication relating to crisis and emergency management, the information can be presented and/or visualised in, for example, the lingua franca or a shared working language (e.g. in the form of an emergency card, sticker, information sheets or workflow chart).

This ensures that there is a permanent flow of communication between the sending organisation, partner organisation and volunteers and that the crisis and emergency system can be implemented and enhanced in line with what is needed.

## **b) Quality assurance at the programme level**

At the programme level, crisis and emergency management are embedded in the quality system of the weltwärts funding programme.

### **i. Certification by external institutes**

Compliance with the requirements described in Section 2 with regard to the crisis and emergency system on the weltwärts funding programme are certified by two external bodies: Quifd - Agentur für Qualität in Freiwilligendiensten and RAL Gütegemeinschaft. In this mandatory certification of the sending organisations, they use various systems and their indicators to examine relevant quality aspects of the sending organisations' crisis and emergency systems. The following certification systems are used:

- Quifd certification for sending organisations incl. additional criteria for weltwärts (see [http://quifd.de/123\\_Qualitaetsstandards.htm](http://quifd.de/123_Qualitaetsstandards.htm))
- Ausführungsbestimmungen der Gütegemeinschaft Internationale Freiwilligendienste (see <http://ral-freiwilligendienst.de/>)
- Evangelische Freiwilligendienste gGmbH handbook on "Quality development and quality management für volunteers abroad" (see [http://www.ev-freiwilligendienste.de/index.php?eID=tx\\_nawsecured1&u=0&g=0&t=1461851257&hash=813b83be556f7b926d944178a6c5cc1a03e2a2fd&file=fileadmin/01-Ev-Freiwillige-Inland/91-Website-Elemente/Freiwilligendienste\\_im\\_Ausland\\_QM\\_Handbuch\\_english.pdf](http://www.ev-freiwilligendienste.de/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecured1&u=0&g=0&t=1461851257&hash=813b83be556f7b926d944178a6c5cc1a03e2a2fd&file=fileadmin/01-Ev-Freiwillige-Inland/91-Website-Elemente/Freiwilligendienste_im_Ausland_QM_Handbuch_english.pdf))

## **ii. Support provided by quality associations for sending organisations' internal quality development**

Sending organisations on the weltwärts funding programme are obliged to join a quality association. This gives them access to support and guidance geared to their specific needs, e.g. in the form of individual advice, and enables them to participate in training courses and workshops so that they can enhance their own organisation's crisis and emergency management in an effective manner. The quality associations also enable

- the sending organisations to share with each other on a regular basis the crisis and emergency management lessons they have learned,
- the sending organisations' employees to participate in training courses dealing with crisis and emergency management and
- the sending organisations to engage in a dialogue, where required, with insurers and/or emergency assistance providers
  - about, for example, existing tasks and procedures related to crises and emergencies, and
  - to help modify existing insurance products so as to reflect the real needs of the sending organisations.

The sending organisation and quality association work together to continuously enhance the crisis and emergency management system, for example, by developing and agreeing on criteria and indicators. This enables the relevant actors in the crisis and emergency system to respond flexibly and effectively to the situation at hand and to make any necessary adjustments.

## **iii. Quality work group**

The heads of the quality associations regularly share ideas and knowledge about relevant quality issues. They pass on to the Quality work group and any other relevant bodies the lessons learned in their work with the sending organisations and on the implementation of to the programme.

The Quality work group is composed of representatives of the quality associations, the BMZ, Engagement Global's weltwärts Coordination Unit, volunteer representatives and representatives of large and small sending organisations. The Quality work group works at programme level to constantly assure and develop quality.

With regard to the crisis and emergency system on the weltwärts programme, the task of the Quality work group is to jointly monitor and support the needs-driven enhancement of the system, as well as regularly reviewing the quality requirements for the system.

It is also possible to bring in external expertise for the Quality work group's discussion of these matters and to provide support.

**The framework illustrated here for crisis and emergency management on the weltwärts programme is intended to empower the actors involved in crisis and emergency management to identify room for improvement and make the necessary improvements themselves.**

## Annex 1<sup>8</sup>: Checklist – Minimum requirements for international health insurance

BENEFIT	WHAT IS COVERED?	
Outpatient medical treatment	Does the insurer pay the full cost of treatment and transport to initial treatment in the event of an accident/emergency?	
Medicines and dressings	Does the insurer pay the costs in full?	
In-patient medical treatment	Does the insurer pay the costs of accommodation and care in a hospital in full?	
Medical aids	Does the insurer pay the full cost of aids used to fix parts of the body in place and crutches prescribed by a doctor? How much of the cost of other remedies and aids does the insurer pay? E.g. up to 675 EUR for wheelchairs	
Corrective lenses	How much of the cost of corrective lenses does the insurer pay? - E.g. up to 150 EUR every 2 years of cover	
Dental treatment	Does the insurer pay the full cost of pain-relieving dental treatment and simple fillings?	
Dentures	How much of the cost of dentures required due to an accident and any type of inlay or crown required due to an accident, including the dentist's fee, does the insurer pay? – E.g. 80% and up to a maximum of 2,500 EUR per claim -	
Return transportation	Does the insurer pay the full cost of return transportation required for medical reasons – including mental health complaints?	
Rehabilitation	Does the insurance include rehabilitation measures (follow-up treatment) required for medical reasons?	
Preventive health check-ups	Are usually not included. This is also true of pre-travel and post-travel examinations to establish whether the person is fit to work in the tropics	
Vaccinations	Are usually not included	
Pregnancy/childbirth	No. But the insurer pays the full costs in the event of an acutely abnormal pregnancy and/or abnormal delivery <i>or</i> When does the insurer pay the full cost of treatment required due to pregnancy? (E.g. after the new insured person has been with the insurer for 8 months)	
Suicide and attempted suicide	100 %	
Pre-existing illnesses	Treatment costs for pre-existing illnesses are usually not included.	
Excess	Is there an excess or out-of-pocket payment? This is usually not the case.	
Medical treatment of mental health complaints	The costs of medication for or medically necessary in-patient treatment of acute mental illnesses are reimbursable in full for a period of, for example, 30 days.	
Outpatient psychotherapy or psychological counselling	The costs of outpatient psychotherapy are usually not reimbursable. However, first outpatient diagnosis or treatment of an acute mental health complaint is insured up to, for example, 2,000 EUR	
Free choice of doctor	Is the insured person free to choose their doctor? Usually, yes.	
Funeral costs	The insurer pays the costs in full, maximum of, for example, 10,000 EUR	
Repatriation costs (in the event of death)	The insurer pays the costs in full, maximum of, for example, 25,000 EUR	

<sup>8</sup> Dr Peter Schmitz (2015): Review report, "Beschreibung von Krisen- und Notfallsystemen im weltwärts-Programm" (Description of crisis and emergency systems on the weltwärts programme)



This document was produced by the Quality work group on behalf of the weltwärts joint operation.

