



Ventao Partner Newsletter – No. 7

Welcome to the seventh issue of the ventao partner newsletter!

Our main topic for this newsletter will be “**Pedagogical Support**” to volunteers in the weltwaerts program. As always, please feel free to get in touch, in case you have any questions or would like to share your experiences.

With best regards from Berlin

Jan Wenzel, Nathalie Bambalinkenga and Anette Schwitzke

A short Introduction: ventao – Who we are and what we do

ventao is a German acronym and stands for “Association of weltwaerts Exchange Organizations in Development Cooperation”. As an association of currently 37 exchange organizations, we have two main fields of action:

1. We are a so-called “quality association”, which means that we are an association for sending organizations, providing services and advice on all issues regarding volunteer services to our member organizations.
2. We are also a shared interest group representing the interests of our member organizations regarding the weltwaerts program towards the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and other political institutions like the German Parliament.

We currently have three staff members:

Jan Wenzel, the managing director with a full-time position, who is responsible for the overall administration of our association and for the political representation.

Anette Schwitzke, the quality management consultant works 30 h/week. She supports the members with regard to questions of quality management, organizes events and writes newsletters and manuals.

Nathalie Bambalinkenga supports our accounting.

You can get in touch with us at info@ventao.org.

1. The requirements and framework conditions of the program

- Weltwaerts is a learning service, comprising non-formal learning in the places of assignment plus pedagogical support and reflection of those learning experiences.
- The pedagogical support consists of two parts: seminars and support provided by mentors, partners in the places of assignment and the sending organizations.

Weltwaerts volunteers receive pedagogical support in the form of seminars before, during and after their service.

As stipulated in the Funding Guidelines,

“the educational measures add up to at least 25 days of compulsory seminars. The orientation and preparation phase should account for at least 12 days, plus 5 days for the mid-term seminar and 5 days for the seminar for returnees. The remaining 3 days can be used flexibly as needed, including for attending seminars or courses in development or other specialist areas over a period of up to six months after the volunteers return to Germany.”

Funding Guideline weltwaerts: <http://www.weltwaerts.de/en/detail.html?id=180>

Each sending organization develops an educational plan covering at least 25 days of seminars, as well as a concept for ongoing support and mentoring during the service. Ideally, this plan is developed in close cooperation with the partner organization.

The required content of the educational measures is elaborated further in the quality standards for the program.

Quality standards for the weltwaerts scheme:

<http://www.weltwaerts.de/en/detail.html?id=136>

Preparatory Seminar

Volunteers receive proper preparation for their development learning service.

Topics to be addressed in the seminar include:

1. Self-reflection,
2. Global awareness/sustainable development and individual responsibility/ways to play a part in addressing global challenges,
3. Civic engagement in development (including as future returnees),
4. Principles of health care, safety and security,
5. Introduction to life and work in the host country and participants' own role as volunteers.

Source: Quality standards

The volunteers are expected to get an additional informal introduction to the local context and instructions for their service from the partner organization and/or place of assignment upon arrival.

Instruction

The partner organization/place of assignment provides instruction to ensure that the volunteer receives proper introductory training and ongoing support at their place of assignment. The sending organization consults with the partner organization on this matter and has overall responsibility for the instruction.

Source: Quality standards

Additionally a mentor, who is ideally not associated with the partner organization, is supposed to provide ongoing support with all personal every-day questions and challenges that might arise, when a young person deals with living and working in a socially and culturally different place far away from home.

Personal Support

Each volunteer is allocated a mentor who has appropriate skills and can easily be contacted by the volunteer. It should be ensured that the mentor does not work in exactly the same part of the organization as the volunteer.

Source: Quality standards

The mid-term seminar is organized by the German sending organization with or without the contribution of the partner organization. It is designed as a space for further learning and reflection of the volunteer's experiences.

Mid-term seminar

A mid-term seminar is held. Topics to be addressed include:

1. Reflection,
2. Review of the service,
3. Civic engagement in development,
4. Global learning and
5. Handling challenges.

Source: Quality standards

2. Responsibilities – who does what?

The German sending organization

As with the overall program, it is the German sending organization, which bears the overall responsibility for the adequate pedagogical support of the volunteers before, during and after their service.

The local partner organization

During the volunteer service the partner organization plays a crucial role in integrating, training and supporting the volunteers. As you have seen, the volunteers will arrive with a preparatory training from Germany. The training is, however, usually not able to cover the specific situation in the host country and place of assignment. It is therefore very important that you as partners and/or places of assignment do share your knowledge of the local context with the volunteers and provide them with guidelines for their service, in consultation with the sending organization.

The mentor

The German sending organization provides a mentor for their volunteers, who ideally is not part of the partner organization. It would, however, be of great benefit, if you as partners were familiar with that person and able to get in contact if necessary.

Good mentoring is a key element of successful pedagogical support, especially if challenges arise. The mentor may also play a mediating role between local partners and their volunteers if necessary. Mentoring is also one of the threshold values defined by the funding Ministry, which is polled in the annual volunteer survey.

As with many other aspects of the weltwaerts program, the details of how responsibilities are shared are up to the individual arrangement between the local organization and their German partners. If you are unsure about what you are expected to provide with regard to pedagogical support of your volunteers please get in touch with your German partner.

3. Supporting material

We as quality association have developed some material intended to support the work of the German sending organizations and their international partners, which we would like to introduce to you.

Ventao Mentoring Guide in four languages (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese).

<http://www.ventao.org/cms/en/partners/weltwaerts-documents>

The guide explains in brief the role of the mentor, as envisaged by the weltwaerts program. It also describes the tasks of a mentor and the aims of mentoring for volunteers in general. It furthermore outlines the steps of a successful mentoring process and lists concrete tasks.

The mentoring guide does not replace a mentoring training or a more substantial consultation with the German partner organization on how to shape a mentoring process, which might take place within the framework of an accompanying measure. It should, however give current and prospective mentors an introduction to the concept of mentoring and an idea about what it means to be a mentor for weltwaerts volunteers.

Volunteer security checklist for weltwärts partner organizations (English and Spanish).

<http://www.weltwaerts.de/en/detail.html?id=221>

This checklist is not about mentoring – but it contains many useful questions partners and mentors might want to ask the volunteers and many reminders, which important information he/she might want to give to the volunteers for orientation.

News

Save the date: partner conferences 2017

The following partner conferences are planned for this year:

Kenya – organized by Children’s Hope – for all partners from Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda – 20. – 23. April (maybe until April 24th)

Chile – organized by Mission Eine Welt – for all partners from Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, 24. – 28. April

Georgia – organized by Brot für die Welt – for all partner from the Souther Caucasus and bordering Eastern European and Central Asian countries – in October

India – organized by Deutsch-Indische Zusammenarbeit/DRK in Hessen Volunta – for Indian and possibly Chinese and Philippine partners – after October

Follow-up process for the evaluation of the South-North component planned

In April 2017 we expect the evaluation of the pilot phase of the South-North component to be published. It will come up with several recommendations, which will equally affect partner organizations, sending organizations and returned volunteers. The recommendations will be discussed with stakeholders in a follow-up process. In this process there will be opportunities for partners to get involved. As the planning of this follow-up is not finished yet, we still cannot give you information that is more precise yet. We do recommend you keep in touch with your German counterpart for upcoming news.