

Ventao Partner Newsletter – No. 1

Welcome to the first issue of the ventao partner newsletter! We are planning to publish a partner newsletter every three months from now on to keep you updated about new developments and events in the weltwaerts program.

We would like to start by introducing ourselves and the administrative framework of weltwaerts to you. Who is involved on the German side and what are the roles and responsibilities of the different actors?

Your feedback to this newsletter is most welcome. Please let us know, if there are subjects you would like to know more about. As a rule for communication we would like to propose to always put your German partner in cc.

We hope you find this first newsletter interesting and helpful.

With best regards from Berlin

Jan Wenzel, Nathalie Bambalinkenga and Anette Schwitzke

1. A short Introduction: ventao

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

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

As quality association our main aim is to support our members in developing the quality of their work. The quality associations are part of the weltwaerts quality management and have been introduced to the weltwaerts program based on recommendations of the 2011 evaluation. In the next issue of this newsletter, we will introduce the weltwaerts quality management in greater detail.

Currently there are 6 quality associations representing 180 sending organizations. For sending organizations it is mandatory to join a quality association. ventao has been founded in 2013 and became operational in early 2014.

Our tasks include:

- Providing information, advice and networking opportunities to our members
- Supporting quality management and capacity building of our members
- Representing our members in various committees and on the political level
- Public relations
- Supervising the country contact persons

We organize two meetings of members per year, several workshops according to the needs and interests of our members and provide individual advice over phone/email, as well as through personal visits of our member's organizations.

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 organizes events, writes newsletters and manuals and supports the members with regard to questions of quality management.

Nathalie Bambalinkenga has a mini-job and supports our accounting.

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

2. ventao – Fact & Figures

ventao currently has 34 member organizations, who in 2015 will send around 550 young people abroad. At the same time they are welcoming around 40 volunteers from partner countries in Germany.

Our members are situated all over Germany and vary considerably in terms of size, working culture and topics concerned with. We do e.g. have highly professional organizations sending 100 volunteers per year, as well as very small, yet dedicated organizations, with one or two volunteers per year, working purely on a voluntary basis.

The highest number of volunteers is sent to Latin America (60%), followed by 30% to Africa and 10% to Asia.

Most volunteers will be placed in organizations working in the field of education, nature and environment or working with children and youth.

→ You find a list of our member organizations, incl. partner countries and contact information attached.

3. The weltwaerts Program – Facts & Figures

Working in very specific contexts and dealing with everyday challenges it might still be interesting to get the greater picture about the program. Therefore we would like to present some numbers about the weltwaerts program in total.

weltwaerts was initiated in 2008 by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The overall budget of the program is around 33 million Euro. By the end of 2014 over 23.000 young Germans have been sent abroad. In 2013/14 the first 150 volunteers from Latin America, Asia and Africa arrived in Germany (the so called “North-South component of the program). In 2014/15 250 young people from all over the world will come to Germany for a volunteer service. These numbers will hopefully further increase in the future.

180 German civil society organizations are active as sending organizations implementing the weltwaerts program, sending around 3.500 volunteers per year abroad. We can only guess, how many partner organizations are active in the weltwaerts program, but do not have exact numbers.

The average volunteer is a 19 years old high school graduate, and almost 70% of all volunteers are female.

The assignment locations are distributed as follows: 43 % in Latin America, 36 % in Africa, 19 % in Asia and 2 % in Eastern Europe. The three countries with the highest numbers of volunteers are India, South Africa and Bolivia.

4. weltwaerts Documents

weltwaerts is a complex program, involving a huge number of partners and with a substantial administrative framework. Some of the most important documents have been translated into English, French and Spanish and are available on the weltwaerts homepage:

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

Partner Agreement, <http://www.weltwaerts.de/en/detail.html?id=138>

General Information on the pilot project “North-South Component”,
<http://www.weltwaerts.de/en/detail.html?id=137>

→ **The weltwaerts Guidelines are attached.**

5. An Introduction to the weltwaerts Committees and Structures

One result of the weltwärts evaluation in 2011 has been, that weltwärts came to be understood as a „Gemeinschaftswerk“, which might be translated as ‘joint operation’ or ‘collective achievement’. This means, that the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the sending organizations, who come from German civil society, are jointly responsible for steering and implementing the program. Program design

and development is realized through various committees, which we like to shortly introduce to you. Additionally to BMZ and the sending organizations, representatives from the weltwaerts coordination unit situated at Engagement Global (a governmental organization supporting the work of the BMZ) as well as from associations of former volunteers, are part of the committees.

Program Steering Committee (“Programmsteuerungsausschuss” = PSA)

The PSA is the central forum where all German actors in the weltwaerts program meet and discuss the development of the program. Decisions are made in consensus, not according to majority votes. If no consensus can be found, the BMZ has the right to decide.

Currently the PSA consists of 8 representatives from the associations of sending organizations, 2 representatives of former volunteers, and 5 representatives from the Ministry and the weltwaerts coordination unit at Engagement Global. The PSA started working in April 2013 and meets at least twice a year.

Currently it is discussed, how partners may become involved in the relevant decisions for the development of the program in the near future. There is great interest on the part of civil society and the Federal Ministry, to involve partners in relevant decisions. As one example you can find the attached invitation to participate in the evaluation of the South-North-component.

→ **Please see the attached invitation.**

According to the needs, the PSA may introduce working groups/task groups. They work on specific issues, and advise the PSA accordingly. All groups are co-coordinated by one representative of civil society and one representative of BMZ or weltwaerts coordination unit as representative of the state side.

Currently there are 3 groups:

- **Working Group Quality**
Co-coordinator for German civil society is Nicole Andrée (andree@entwicklungsdienst.de)
- **Working Group Procedures**
Co-coordinator for German civil society is Lourens de Jong (lourens.de.jong@ijgd.de)
- **Task Group South-Nord**
Co-coordinator for German civil society is Jan Wenzel (jan.wenzel@ventao.org)