

Competence center for inclusion of volunteers with impairment/disability at Disability and Development Cooperation (*bezev*)

Background

According to the UN-convention, young persons with impairment/disability have a right to participation in international voluntary services. Therefore, also the weltwärts (worldwards) program has declared volunteers with impairment/disability as specific target group within a “concept for diversifying the target groups within the weltwärts program. In order to foster better acquisition and successful sending of this target group, the program has decided the establishment of a responsible competence center. The “competence center for inclusion of volunteers with impairment/disability is based at *bezev* since July 2015.

Since 2008, *bezev* is weltwärts sending organization and mainly sends volunteers into projects with and from persons with impairment/disability. Every year *bezev* sends 15 to 30 volunteers with and without impairment/disability. In the frame of the pilot project “weltwärts alle inclusive!” (English: “worldwards for everyone!”), which *bezev* implemented from 2012 – 2014, many experiences have been made with inclusive sending. *bezev* has built up a network of sending and partner organizations which are open for volunteers with impairment/disability. Furthermore, *bezev* has, in the frame of the pilot project contributed significantly to structural adaptations within the weltwärts program: Special successes were, for example ensuring the funding of higher costs of volunteers with impairment/disability as well as the raising of the age limit for volunteers with impairment/disability. Furthermore, a handbook has been published for the inclusive sending of volunteers in English, Spanish, French and German. The collected experiences and gained competences will now be made available for all sending and partner organizations.

Tasks of the Competence Center

The competence center for inclusion of volunteers with impairment/disability overtakes, amongst others, following tasks:

- **For young adults with impairment/disability:** We address young adults with impairment/disability directly through relevant places and networks and consult them if they want to make a voluntary service abroad. This consultation takes place in cross-organizational manners. We bring together applicants with impairment/disability and all open sending organizations that we know.
- **For sending and partner organizations:** We consult and accompany sending and partner organizations individually regarding their inclusive implementation of the voluntary service. We bring together interested sending and partner organizations and also offer consultation in cross-organizational meetings. Regarding questions related to additional costs, we function as connecting point between the BMZ/weltwärts program and the sending organizations. Furthermore we evaluate the experiences of different weltwärts volunteers with impairment/disability as well as their sending and partner organizations in the frame of expert talks and questionnaire-based interviews. We publish these experiences in concepts and guidelines in different languages, which are made available to all interested persons of the weltwärts program.

Offers of the Competence Center

All weltwärts sending organizations are invited, to take part in inclusive sendings of volunteers! You can, amongst others, use following offers of the competence center for inclusion of volunteers with impairment/disability. For example...

...regarding questions related to additional needs: If you want to send volunteers with impairment/disability and would like to clarify questions related to their additional needs, the competence center will consult you (e.g. regarding sign language interpreters for deaf volunteers or mobility assistance for blind and walking restricted volunteers).

...regarding questions related to additional costs: You can report questions regarding additional costs (as soon as possible) to the competence center. We maintain the overview over the total costs for sending of volunteers with impairment/disability in the weltwärts program and coordinate with the BMZ/weltwärts-program if these can/will be financed. This shall allow you to have financial security as soon as possible for the inclusive sending.

...in case of interest in a training: If you would like to get a training regarding inclusive implementation of the weltwärts program within your organization, we can consult you individually via email or phone or come to your organization for a training. These trainings can, depending on the interest, take place for single persons, whole departments or for the whole organization. They can, depending on your need, contain different topics (see leaflet in according section of this webpage). Furthermore, group training will be offered on the cross-organizational conference of the weltwärts-program ("Offene Trägertagung"), taking place regularly.

...regarding imparting of suitable volunteers: If a German sending organization has partner organizations/project posts, that are interested in receiving volunteers with impairment/disability, it can inform us, so that we can consider this interest in our consultation of young adults with impairment/disability. We name the sending organizations to the young adults, so that they can inform themselves and apply directly at the organizations they would like to apply at.

... regarding imparting of suitable project posts: If you receive applications of persons with impairment/disability and have no suitable project post, you can tell the applicant about the competence center, so that they can also contact us. We consult applicants about alternatives.

...regarding interest in networking: If you would like to be informed timely about news regarding the inclusive voluntary service, you can be added to a distribution list of interested organizations.

...regarding evaluation of experiences: If you have already sent volunteers with impairment/disability, kindly share your experiences with us. This allows us to make the challenges and solutions available for all sending organizations (and for the weltwärts-program as such) in the frame of future publications and our consultation services. We have specially designed questionnaires for organizations and volunteers for that purpose. With pleasure, we send them to you on request.

Furthermore, we are always interested in receiving feedback regarding our work as competence center, in order to improve it continuously.

Do you have further wishes or questions for the competence center? Kindly tell them anytime. Just approach us!

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