

PARTNER CONFERENCE

weltwärts South-North component
IN BERLIN, GERMANY

9TH – 14TH of MAY 2016



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BFD –	Federal Voluntary Service (German: Bundesfreiwilligendienst)
BMZ –	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (German: Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung)
PSA –	Programme Steering Committee (Programmsteuerungsausschuss)
ww –	<i>weltwärts</i>
HO –	Host Organisation
HP –	Host Project
SO –	Sending Organisation
N-S component –	North-South component
S-N component –	South-North component
SDG –	UN Sustainable Development Goals
MFA –	Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs

INTRODUCTION

In May 2016 the first partner conference of the South- North component of the *weltwärts* programme was held in Berlin. Around 60 representatives from the different stakeholders met with the aim to discuss first experiences, obstacles, opportunities and benefits of the new South-North component of the *weltwärts* programme. Beyond the retrospective view the conference enabled the participants to also reflect on the future and to give concrete recommendations for the further development of the programme. The meeting of members of Sending Organisation in the Global South in Latin-American, Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe with German Hosting Organisation and representatives of Host Projects as well with representatives of the BMZ and the steering group was very fruitful and highlighted the importance of a global partnership and cooperation.

With the idea to integrate the perspective and experience of the southern partners in the future of the programme one of the main objectives of the conference to have an active dialogue between the different actors who are running the programme was achieved. After four days of intense discussions and exchange concrete recommendations could be presented.

Mutual exchange, open discussions and learning from each other was possible thanks to the openness of the different participants no matter from which stakeholder group they came from.

With this documentation of the conference we would like to present its results in order to be able to follow up on the findings and to put into action some of the very concrete ideas and recommendations.

ICJA-Conference-Team



CONFERENCE PLAN

Mon, 09/05	Tue, 10/05 State of affairs and exchange of experiences	Wed, 11/05 Networking and dialoguing with partners	Thu, 12/05 Future and quality development	Fri, 13/05 Final results and recommendations	Sat, 14/05
Arrival	Opening and welcome Presentation of the <i>weltwärts</i> programme and the component SN Presentation of the evaluation	Best practice presentation Networking and dialogue between partners: World Café on 9 topics such as implementation, cooperation, dialogue Final plenary meeting	Dialogue on the recommendations concerning the future cooperation and quality requirements to ww SN: WG on selection / preparation, WG on support for volunteers, WG on partner participation, WG on cooperation between SO, HO+HP; WG on working with returnees, WG on HP Plenary discussion	Open Space Compilation of the results and elaborated recommendations: WG to elaborate concrete recommendations on: quality assurance, partner participation, integration of returnees, visa, host projects, transparency, training and support, aims of the programme	Departure
Lunch					
Arrival: informal get-together	Concept and reality of the component South-North of the <i>weltwärts</i> programme: opportunities and challenges of the implementation from the point of view of SO, HO and HP: working groups (WG) for SO in Africa, Asia, LA, Eastern Europe WG for HO and WG for HP in Germany Presentation and discussion in plenary	Discussion with Members of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Panel discussion with official representatives of BMZ and embassies Mid-term evaluation	Visit of <i>weltwärts</i> Host Projects in Berlin	Discussion and evaluation of the recommendations from the perspective of the different actors Handing over of the recommendations to representatives of steering group of ww / BMZ Evaluation Official closing	
Dinner					
Informal reception	Marketplace	Free	Intercultural city tour in Kreuzberg	Farewell evening	

MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE

DAY ONE

Tuesday, 10 May: Opening, State of Affairs and Exchange of Experiences

After a first welcoming and an informal get-together on the arrival day, the conference was kicked-off on the second day, dedicating the morning sessions to the introduction of the conference programme, the exchange of participants' expectations and a general introduction to the *weltwärts* programme, followed by an afternoon session for a first working group session on the experiences and realities of the South-North component.

WELCOMING

On behalf of the hosting organisation of the conference – ICJA – Freiwilligenaustausch weltweit – Ms Simone Kleinekathöfer officially opened the conference and welcomed the participants from 27 countries. Highlighting the multi-stakeholder character of the conference, she encouraged all the partners, former volunteers, state representatives, government officials and researchers alike to openly share thoughts, questions and doubts about the *weltwärts* programme, and lively discuss their experiences, obstacles and recommendations for the enhancement and extension of the *weltwärts* South-North component.

Following the words of welcome by Ms Kleinekathöfer, her fellow members of the moderation

*Ms Kerubo Nyaribo, Mr Gustavo Lopera Betancur, Mr Ravinder Singh
and Mr Benjamin Haas*

introduced themselves and welcomed the participants, reflecting the international composition of the participants as well as of the facilitator team.

Conference programme and participants' expectations

Following the official words of welcome, the moderation team introduced the conference programme and presented the participants' expectations which the participants already mentioned in their application form for the conference clustered into ten topics.

Participants' expectations for the conference:

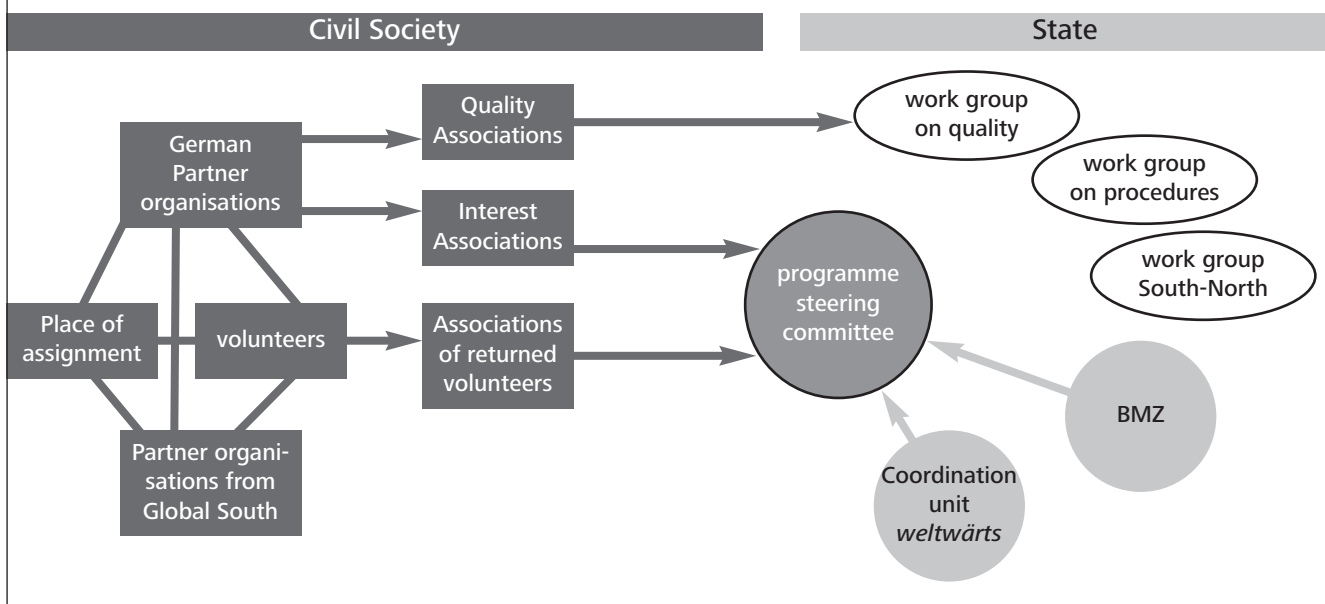
1. Exchange of experiences and perspectives
2. Information gathering
3. Partner dialogue
4. Clarification of roles and responsibilities as well as quality standards
5. Networking & cooperation
6. Evaluation
7. Development and the future of the South-North component
8. Intercultural learning
9. Social and political topics
10. Conference atmosphere

PRESENTATION OF THE *WELTWÄRTS* PROGRAMME

As a kick-off, Gabriele Zöller (BMZ) and Jan Wenzel (Ventao), both members of the programme steering committee, gave a short presentation of the *weltwärts* (ww) programme, its history and structure as well as its current development, including the South-North (S-N) component.

The considerable development of *weltwärts* starting in 2007 as an unidirectional programme, wherein more

weltwärts programme Joint Operation Structure



than 25,000 German volunteers have been sent abroad so far, is worth highlighting. The pilot phase of the South-North component started in 2013 as the result of long-standing demands for reciprocity expressed by German organisations and partners from the Global South. Starting with 150 volunteers and 36 German host organisations in 2013/14, the programme aims at hosting about 800 volunteers from the Global South in 2016 with the help of currently 66 host organisations. The main focus of the South-North component is to complement the North-South component and facilitate the development of cooperation between German organisations and organisation of the Global South with the underlying idea of mutual exchange and equal partnership. It goes in line with the German commitment to the overarching vision of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to build global partnerships for sustainable development.

The South-North component is expected to be continued after the end of the pilot phase in 2016. The evaluation process started in December 2015. An official evaluation report is expected in 2017.

See attachment 'Introduction of the weltwärts programme' 📄

The presentation was followed by a Question & Answer session in which the participants emphasised the value of and their appreciation for the South-North component, stressed the importance of further extension and addressed the first questions and challenges.



PRESENTATION OF THE OFFICIAL EVALUATION OF *WELTWÄRTS* SOUTH-NORTH COMPONENT, MID-TERM RESULTS, BY THE EVALUATION TEAM OF SYSPONS

Following the introduction into the *weltwärts* programme, Hanna Hielscher and Oliver Scheller (Syspons GmbH), offered insight into the current official evaluation process of the South-North component and provided an overview of first preliminary results of the data gathered so far. The evaluation of the South-North component pilot phase shall serve the accountability and further development of the programme. The final report is due in June 2017.

The following results are worth highlighting:

- The presented results are based on the data gathered so far, mostly via online surveys.
- Until now, the response rate has been quite high among the volunteers and returnees, but the participation of Sending Organisations needs to be improved.
- Most volunteers work in the social/educational sector.
- Volunteers are overall satisfied with the programme and the data shows that the satisfaction increases with the duration of the stay.
- Volunteers rate the Host Projects, social inclusion and selection criteria particularly high.
- However, work assignments and follow-up activities after return are rated lower.
- After the voluntary service, only 20% have no contact with their Sending Organisation while 50% have monthly or more contact.
- While 80% of Sending Organisations try to stay in contact with volunteers, only half of them offer concrete possibilities for engagement.

Audience and evaluators alike stressed the importance to gather long-term information, especially regarding the re-engagement of volunteers. Both parties are looking forward to the final results.

For the full information, please see: Attachment 'Syspons – Evaluation Results' 

CONCEPT AND REALITY OF THE SOUTH-NORTH COMPONENT

In the afternoon of the second day, the different stakeholders of Sending Organisation, of Hosting Organisation and of Host Project elaborated in separate working groups on the opportunities, experiences, challenges and possible future of the *weltwärts* South-North component from the different perspectives.



Opportunities and motivation for participation

Sending organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Facilitate the personal development of the volunteer through the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ Exposure to a new culture and environment ▷ Opportunity to learn and practice a new language ▷ Opportunity to enhance the CV ▷ Opportunity to gain new experiences → Provide opportunities to the less privileged → Strengthen organisational partnerships between Global South and North → Develop global volunteer networks → Promote the spirit of volunteerism → Promote the culture of the home country in Germany → Create a better intercultural understanding and fight negative stereotypes → Integrate returnees as mentors and multipliers → Build capacities in home country
Host organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones → Promote the concept of volunteerism globally → Fight stereotypes on both sides → Create mutual understanding of partner organisations in terms of learning what it means to host a volunteer → Facilitate intercultural exchange → Provide reciprocity and equality in the <i>weltwärts</i> programme → Provide opportunities for people with less privileged backgrounds → Avoid the reproduction of colonial stereotypes, i.e. German volunteers help and teach people from the Global South → International volunteers benefit German society particularly in times of declining numbers of volunteers in Germany → Integrate Host Project and host families as new actors in the framework of development and global learning
Host Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Gain intercultural experience and change the perspective → Facilitate global exchange and partnership → Integrate perspectives from Global South into own work

Host Project's experiences with volunteers

- Volunteers involve themselves and participate actively
- Overall, very positive feedback is given by all the stakeholders concerning international volunteers
- Intensive guidance/mentorship is needed particularly in the beginning
- Willingness to learn German and to communicate compensates for the language barrier

Challenges

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Sending organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Different age restrictions and required level of German Visa procedures and requirements → 25% own contribution → Gathering the necessary funds in the Global South is a huge challenge → Prospective volunteers fear visa refusal → Selection process → Motivation of the applicant needs to be in accordance with the idea of volunteerism → Applicants need to have realistic expectations → The risk that volunteers do not return |
|----------------------|---|

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Security of the volunteer → Timing of the voluntary service → Time frame does not consider a Global South perspective where e.g. schools finish in the beginning of the year → Late placement confirmations provide challenges for preparation and visa procedures
Host organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Coordination of different Sending Organisations' procedures → Quality of work assignment → Pedagogical support in the face of different individual needs, cultural backgrounds and expectations → Visa process and fear of visa refusal → Full-time work prevents volunteers from participating in language courses → Bureaucratic procedures hamper dynamic and individual solutions → Integrating international <i>weltwärts</i> volunteers into the BFD framework creates huge workload → Financing host families → Language barrier reduces number of assignment opportunities → Language requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ Excludes the programme for applicants with less privileged backgrounds ▷ Are not standardised → Racism, the volunteer could face
Host Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Financing the hosting of volunteers → Communication between Host Projects and Hosting Organisation about roles and responsibilities → Communication with Sending Organisation → Different expectations of Hosting Organisation, Host Projects and volunteer about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ Role and duties of the volunteer ▷ Working assignments → Language courses conflict with the working hours

Future of the South-North component

Sending organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → South-North component depends on the political will of the German government to approve funding, which is why opportunities to raise money and make the programme sustainable should be found → Sufficient funding for the support of youth with less privileged backgrounds needs to be secured → Enhance the transparency concerning funding, budgeting, visa procedures and structure of partnerships → Raise more awareness about the concept of volunteering and the <i>weltwärts</i> programme → Build regional networks among Sending Organisation → The South-North component should be extended equally, addressing existing regional disparities with regards to e.g. number of volunteers, number of Sending and Hosting Organisations → In accordance with the SDGs, participation in the programme should not depend on the economic status of countries from Global South → Standardise the language and age requirements
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Host organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The South-North component should grow to the proportions of the North-South component to achieve a partnership on equal terms → Raise the quality of the programme → Develop a global understanding of volunteerism → Facilitate the engagement of returnees → Develop a cooperation of Hosting Organisation → The partnership networks should be expanded → Tailor pedagogical support to the individual needs of volunteers → Volunteers should be prepared to face racism in Germany
Host Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Host Projects should be more involved in the selection process and placement in terms of e.g. selecting criteria for volunteers, participation in interviews and gaining background information on volunteer → 'Work shadowing' (spending a day or week in the Host Projects to get to know the daily routines and work) would be an idea to check whether volunteer and Host Projects are a good match → Host Projects should be more visible as one of the actors in the Sending-Hosting Organisation partnership → Improve communication between all the stakeholders → Improve networking of international volunteers in Germany → Improve possibilities to prolong voluntary service → Enhance transparency of visa process → Offer empowerment trainings for the staff and volunteers on dealing with and addressing the diverse forms of racism in Germany

DAY TWO

Wednesday, 11 May: Networking and Dialogue with Partners

SENDING ORGANISATIONS PRESENT BEST PRACTICES

The third conference day started with short presentations of best practices by the representatives of sending organisations from different continents. While Kerubo Nyaribo from ICYE Kenia focused on the recruitment, selection and preparation of volunteers, Ravinder Singh from India (ICDE) spoke about the issue of working with returnees and Barbara Schütz and Marleny Hernández from Welthaus Bielefeld/ADESCO (El Salvador) presented their insights concerning partner involvement.



WORLD CAFÉ ON IMPLEMENTATION, PARTNERSHIP AND DIALOGUE

During the World Café, the participants discussed the implementation, partnership and first possible solutions to enhance the quality of the South-North component. The topics ranged from challenges during the recruitment, selection and preparation processes, and questions about the roles, responsibilities and support opportunities for all the stakeholders of the programme, to the integration of returnees, and monitoring strategies.

Highlights of the results of the discussed topics:

Recruitment, Selection and Preparation



- Need for criteria for the selection and preparation
- German language requirements vary between Host Projects
- High German language requirements and the own financial contribution of 25% discriminate against less privileged people
- Preparation should include conflict/crisis management (e.g. cultural shock, racism), information about the host country and language training

Integration of returnees



- Returnees may be a resource
 - ▷ for the selection and preparation of future volunteers
 - ▷ as co-workers and for training co-workers
- Returnees can challenge the hierarchical structure within the organisation

Support for Sending Organisations



- For the selection and preparation process it is necessary to
 - ▷ standardise the criteria
 - ▷ bring all stakeholders on the same page throughout the whole process
- Call for participation in the South-North component should be opened up and made more flexible with regards to requirements and procedures in order to take into account different Global South contexts
- Hosting Organisations could support Sending Organisations with visa challenges and communication with embassies
- Concerning language preparation, Sending Organisations may seek partnerships with foreign institutions/organisations in home country (e.g. Goethe Institute, German corporations)

Roles and responsibilities of different actors



- Clarify and harmonise every actor's role and responsibilities for all the partnerships
- Facilitate constant communication among all stakeholders
- Consider one mentoring programme within and one outside the workplace (e.g. a person of trust)
- Sending Organisation could send a representative during the service (particular during mid-term evaluation)
- Regarding the volunteer's reporting
 - ▷ Sending Organisation must have access to the information gained from the reports to be able to enhance the re-integration of returnees
 - ▷ Controversy: how to ensure the quality of the reports?



Impact of the South-North component

TOPIC 5

- The component has an impact on participants, Sending and Hosting Organisation and society by
 - ▷ reducing stereotypes
 - ▷ promoting peace, development and equality
 - ▷ changing of the perception of development cooperation
 - ▷ leading to a better acceptance of the entire *weltwärts* programme
 - ▷ long lasting impacts on individuals
- Returnees are very motivated (resource) and may facilitate change through their future positions in institutions

Ideal partnerships

TOPIC 6

- General remark: no ideal context (e.g. global inequalities) makes ideal partnerships difficult to achieve
- It should include
 - ▷ fair and equal distribution of money and other resources
 - ▷ transparency, openness and confidence
 - ▷ communication, personal meetings and written agreements
- Ideas that go beyond Sending-Hosting Organisation cooperation but involves all stakeholders: to facilitate
 - ▷ a better matching of volunteers and projects
 - ▷ direct communication between Sending Organisation and Host Projects and on the project level
 - ▷ more time to be dedicated to South-North dialogue

Ongoing support in Germany (incl. racism, crisis)



- Overcoming crisis (e.g. with food, weather conditions, loneliness and homesickness, misunderstandings, workload, facing racism, incidents at home etc.) can be important for personal development. Therefore, providing support to the volunteer during the service is crucial and the responsibility of
 - ▷ the host family
 - ▷ (external) mentors
 - ▷ peers/group of volunteers in same areas
 - ▷ the Hosting Organisation
 - ▷ the Sending Organisation with a greater role in Germany; its presence at the mid-term seminar
- Regular contacts (or visits), seminars, language course and eventually the use of the native language are all important
- Good preparation is important to prevent a crisis.

Tools and strategies of monitoring and evaluation



- Remark: Monitoring is a process and not a one-time event!
- Recommendations:
 - ▷ Hold regular meetings to facilitate exchange as well as evaluation and implementation of results
 - ▷ Consider evaluation as a multi-stakeholder process and be sensible to cultural difference and language barriers to facilitate open exchange of opinions
 - ▷ Common quality criteria need to be developed
 - ▷ A follow-up of the results is important
 - ▷ Monitoring should include formal and informal instruments

Ideal South-North component (table of Syspons/evaluation team)



- Ideas and wishes:
 - ▷ South-South cooperation (e.g. triangle cooperation with German organisations; funding opportunities?)
 - ▷ enhanced communication and transparency
 - ▷ support and strengthen global partnerships (regular meetings)
 - ▷ adapt framework (*weltwärts*-BFD) to be more flexible
 - ▷ improvement of the preparation and support of volunteers
 - ▷ idea of the extension of the *weltwärts* South-North programme on a European level (the questions of funding and competition with other European voluntary programmes remain)
 - ▷ the diversity of Global South contexts is important and must be respected when e.g. drafting guidelines, quality standards etc.



DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GERMAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON VISA ISSUES

In the afternoon of the third day, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the conference to answer the questions of the participants regarding visa regulations for international *weltwärts* volunteers. Sebastian Kleve and Kornett Jesse of the Directorate-General for Culture and Communication, Alicia Krentz of the Directorate-General for International Order, the United Nations and Arms Control as well as Alexandra Consten of the Legal Directorate-General discussed issues ranging from the overall procedures and required documents to the documentation of the financial background of visa applicants, which have all been mentioned as major concerns in the South-North component.

List of basic documents required for visa application:

- contract/agreement with partner organisation
- letter of motivation (touching upon topics such as professional perspectives, reason for stay, plans after return)
- CV
- passport (at least valid for six more months)
- passport picture
- the mission may ask for further documents in individual cases.

The most important preconditions for a successful visa application are to book an appointment with the mission on time and to gather complete documentation. The circumstances in the country are to be taken into account.

Critical remark:

Experience shows that the visa is often issued for only three months and needs to be extended, which creates a larger workload and level of uncertainty.

The local German immigration department needs to be involved in the visa application process and gives its approval if the applicant has been in Germany for a long-term stay before (e.g. studies), which must be stated clearly in the application form. In general, visas for the *weltwärts* programme can be issued for up to 12 months. In some cases, visas will only be issued for three months and require an extension from the immigration department in Germany.

Support options to visa applicants:

A major issue in the visa application process is incomplete documentation. The partner organisations should, therefore, ensure that the applicant gathers all the required documents in time. Letters of endorsement in support of an applicant issued by partner organisations are not required.

Willingness to return as a precondition:

The purpose of *weltwärts* is a temporary stay. Therefore, the residence permit is only temporary and does not allow for permanent residence. The applicant has to prove his/her willingness to return after his or her *weltwärts* voluntary service. The mission will ask specific questions during the interview about the applicant's overall career plans and individual situation as well as roots to the home country and family situation. A mere idea of a possible continuation of his stay after the programme should not be to the applicant's detriment and be per se considered as an unwillingness not to return after the expiration of his/her visa or residence permit.

Critical discussion with the conference participants:

Abstract rules do not fit the reality of the programme. Young volunteers hardly have a clear professional perspective. Work assignments in Host Projects are not always clear before departure. Proof of sufficient funding is very hard to accomplish and particularly disadvantages applicants with less privileged backgrounds. Experience shows that proof of sufficient funding is required in spite of the fact that the contract entails all the necessary information regarding finance.

If the applicant cannot give clear information about his/her *weltwärts* assignment, the visa will be denied. However, the applicant does not have to present detailed career plans. It is important to see the applicant's concrete motivation to participate in the *weltwärts* programme and how it fits their career plans after returning to their home countries. If the contract for the voluntary service clearly indicates that all the expenses in Germany are covered and by whom, no proof of financial background is necessary.

Critical remarks by the audience concerning the formal challenges of visa applications:

*Although *weltwärts* programme is privileged in visa issues, there is still a lack of information on the programme in some missions. Booking appointments in time at the mission via the online portal is often very difficult: There are only few appointment dates which are booked out shortly after they are announced. Appointments are not allowed earlier than three months prior to departure. Not everyone has access to the Internet, which is why missions should have more public opening hours. The level of German required for a visa can be higher than the requirements by Host Projects and Hosting Organisation. Visa costs particularly disadvantage applicants with less privileged backgrounds. There is no transparent rule on who has to pay which amount of visa fees. Statistics about the countries of origin of people who were denied a visa would be interesting.*

Response to critical remarks:

Visa staff has access to extensive information material about volunteer services and clear instructions on the required documents and how to process applications. Missions in general have limited public opening hours, since time must be dedicated to processing the applications.

The applicants should have basic knowledge of the German language. A supporting letter by the partner organisation stating that German is not a prerequisite for participation in their *weltwärts*





programme and that language courses are offered can be helpful. Statistics about the countries of origin of people who were denied a visa are not publicly accessible. Visa fees have to be paid and there are only a few exceptions for fee waivers, but a visa for the *weltwärts* programme does not fall under these exceptions.

PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH-NORTH COMPONENT FOR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS AND GERMAN SOCIETY

The third day concluded with a panel discussion on the role of the South-North component for global partnerships and German society. The panel consisted of Dr Bernhard Felmberg, Deputy Head of the Department for Civil Society, Churches and Economic Cooperation of the BMZ, Horst Heinrich Brammer, Chargé d’Affaires a.i. of the Republic of South Africa, Jacob Betmou, volunteer from Cameroon, in Berlin with Bread for the World, Meena Bedarkar from India and Gustavo Lopera Betancur from Colombia, representatives of Sending Organisations, and Barbara Reutelsterz, representative of the Hosting Organisation Bistum Limburg.


Dr Felmberg opened the panel discussion with a speech on the societal benefit of the *weltwärts* programme. He emphasised that the South-North component is an important pillar of the programme, particularly with regards to Germany’s commitment to the SDGs and the overarching vision to strengthen global partnerships. The goal of the South-North component, therefore, is to facilitate global learning, intercultural understanding and empowerment of civil society organisations. The key aspect in this respect is a partnership on equal terms. Recalling the milestones achieved in the pilot phase, Dr Felmberg finished his speech with ensuring the strong political will to continue and extent the South-North component of the *weltwärts* programme, although a phase of consolidation after rapid growth in the first years might be necessary.

The panel summarised and discussed the key issues elaborated on during the conference so far, particularly focusing on the benefits of the programme for global partnerships and the German Society with questions such as: *Why are these exchange and encounter programmes between Germany and the global South politically important? What is the motivation for engaging with the South–North component for the different actors? Which societal contribution can volunteers from the South make in Germany beyond their own learning? What is expected from returnees?*

The lively discussion can be summarised by the following points:

- ➔ In a globalised world, only global partnerships can address global challenges
- ➔ German society sincerely benefits from diversity in terms of overcoming negative stereotypes and prejudices

- A change of roles in the existing partnerships facilitates a better mutual understanding
- Returnees become multipliers and actors of change in their home societies
- Promote intercultural learning and understanding in order to facilitate peaceful relations
- Provide volunteers with the opportunity to gain life changing experiences

See Attachment speech of Dr. Bernhard Felmberg 

DAY THREE

Thursday, 12 May: Future and Quality Development

DIALOGUE ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND THE QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMME

The fourth conference day was dedicated to a discussion about the future cooperation and the improvement of the South-North component. According to the challenges and questions touched upon in previous discussions, the participants split up into six different working groups to elaborate on solutions to overcome the challenges identified in the different phases of the voluntary service.

Results

1. Selection and preparation

- Selection process should be adapted to the different contexts in the Global South
- Selection criteria should be transparent
- Age restriction does not reflect the realities of the Global South and should be lifted up to 30 years of age
- Volunteers should be experienced in community work prior to their voluntary service
- High motivation to learn a new language is a basic requirement
- Preparation should include
 - Language
 - History, culture and society of Germany
 - Technicalities such as transportation and finance
 - Intercultural exchange and open-mindedness
 - Crisis management Learning and empowerment
 - Daily life routines in Germany (e.g. cooking, garbage collection, recycling etc.)
- Information needed prior to sending volunteers
 - Facts about Germany
 - Clear description of Host Projects and work assignment
- Preparation should already be used to connect South-North and North-South volunteers
- Sound preparation needs to be based on proper financing



- Sending Organisations should contact external partners for language preparation, such as Goethe Institute
- Sending Organisations must be involved in preparing the time schedule in order to adapt it to Global South realities
- Sending Organisations needs planning security for future years
- All stakeholders need to improve their communication and must define common standards and guidelines

2. Working with returnees

- Returnee engagement in the Global South is different from the Global North and requires new concepts and approaches
- Sending and Hosting Organisations have to support the returnee and must, therefore, improve their communication on this issue
- International volunteer meetings in Germany could discuss developmental issues and ideas to implement own experience back home
- Networks between North-South and South-North volunteers could facilitate long-lasting partnerships
- Returnees are valuable for the preparation process
- Certificates for international voluntary service should be awarded with a higher reputation
- Sending Organisation should listen to the volunteers and support their ideas to develop the programme and realise own visions



3. Support for volunteers

- Provide transparent and sufficient information about all the placement opportunities of the Hosting Organisation and let volunteers decide on the project he or she will work in.
- Pre-arrival preparation is crucial and must include:
 - Legal requirements such as insurance and financial issues
 - 'Do's and Don'ts' of the Hosting Organisation and Host Projects
- Obligatory airport pick-up is necessary, particularly since some of the volunteers will be travelling for the first time (outside their continent).
- Hosting-, Sending Organizations, Host Projects and mentor communicate continuously and share information about the volunteer
- Use information technology, particularly Social Media, to facilitate communication
- Draft common guidelines and memorandum of understanding
- Study visits by Sending Organisation (e.g. send participants to mid-term seminars)
- Host family must demonstrate intercultural sensitivity and should adjust to the needs, interests and demands of the volunteers
- Train the mentor and co-workers prior to the arrival of volunteers about the *weltwärts* programme and the background of the volunteer
- Visa issues should be addressed by both the Sending and Hosting Organisations
- Crisis management is the responsibility of all the stakeholders involved
- Volunteers should also be involved in planning and organising the voluntary service he or she is doing



4. Partner participation for the development of the *weltwärts* programme

Main goals

- Include the partners of the Global South in the programme structure
- Increase the numbers of volunteers
- Transparency of information particularly for partners in the Global South

Measures

- Strengthen the position of partners in the decision-making process
- Use the existing regional networks to
 - ▷ establish quality standards for the region
 - ▷ elect regional representatives who will serve as a contact person and delegate of the region in the steering committee in Germany
 - ▷ build regional quality associations.
- Evaluate the S-N components from the perspective of the Global South
- The Sending Organisation should communicate directly with the steering committee (e.g. through representatives) and the steering committee should provide the Sending Organisation with access to all the documents

Critical remark

- Increased information traffic between the steering committee and Sending Organisation creates workload (e.g. translation) and bureaucratic procedures that need to be funded



5. Strengthening the cooperation between Sending-, Hosting Organisation, Host Project

- Improve communication among all the stakeholders through
 - ▷ a joint toolkit
 - ▷ global guidelines (start with drafting South-North guidelines and integrate them afterwards with existing North-South guidelines)
 - ▷ document templates for South-North agreements (use existing documents in North-South component as a point of departure)
 - ▷ Conferences that bring together the South-North and North-South stakeholders
 - ▷ Conferences on national and regional level in the Global South
- Improve transparency through
 - ▷ Making the overall budget plan accessible to all the stakeholders
 - ▷ Making all the documents that circulate within the *weltwärts* programme accessible to all the stakeholders e.g. By uploading them on the website
 - ▷ Drafting a joint budget planning
- Host Projects should report directly to the Sending Organisation
- The Sending Organisation should be represented in the steering committee to empower the voices of the Global South
- The Sending Organisation develop quality standards from the Global South perspective and catalogues are translated into the languages of all the participating countries
- Plan project visits by Sending Organisation



Discussion:

- Should there be an open database of all the Sending Organisations participating in the South-North component?
 - ▷ Pro: Increases transparency and facilitates development of regional networks
 - ▷ Contra: Violates privacy and autonomy of Sending Organisation and Host Projects
- Should there be an official translator installed at *weltwärts* who is accessible for all Sending Organisations with their demands for translations?
 - ▷ Pro: Enhances transparency
 - ▷ Contra: Causes new costs

6. Host Projects

Controversy:

- Should a public database listing all the Hosting Organisations and Host Projects be installed and accessible to the Sending Organisations?
 - ▷ Pro: Guarantees a better partner matching
 - ▷ Contra: Undermines the autonomy of partnerships and Host Projects' privacy
- Consensus was reached that the database should not be installed, but the role of Host Projects must be strengthened
 - ▷ Involve Host Projects in conferences and trainings of the Hosting Organisation and quality associations (e.g. on the issue of antiracism, global learning etc.)
 - ▷ Involve Host Projects in the recruitment, selection and preparation of volunteers
 - ▷ Strengthen the partnership between the Host Projects and Hosting Organisation
- Volunteer should receive detailed information about work assignments
- Promote and encourage an exchange between volunteer and Host Projects prior to arrival
- Increase the awareness about *weltwärts* and the programme's background among Host Projects
- Conduct regular meetings between Host Projects and host families



PROJECT VISITS

In the afternoon of day four, the conference participants had the opportunity to visit one out of four Host Projects which currently host volunteers within the realm of the S-N component:

- Kinderbauernhof der Ufa-Fabrik – Children Animal Farm
- Kinder- und Familienzentrum Upsala – Centre for Children and Families
- Jugendkulturzentrum M24 – Youth Club
- Slow Food (Project for sustainable development and agriculture)





DAY FOUR

Friday, 13 May: Final Results and Recommendations

OPEN SPACE DISCUSSION

Before the participants started working out the final results and recommendations of the four days of lively exchange and intensive discussions, the participants used an open space discussion to deal with five particular topics which they felt needed further debate. These topics were: South-South cooperation, the future of BFD – *weltwärts*, the connection of North-South and South-North volunteers, 25% own contribution and the specificities of the *weltwärts* programme:

Specificity of the *weltwärts* programme (compared to other German voluntary services)

- *weltwärts* demands no specific profile of volunteers and the criteria are less rigid in terms of e.g. age restrictions and preparation
- Overall rules are
 - ▷ volunteers have to return to their home countries
 - ▷ facilitation of the home countries development
- Open point for discussion: a better/common understanding of the concept of 'development'

South-South cooperation

- Different options are imaginable
 - ▷ Regional networks
 - ▷ Staff and student exchanges (cooperation agreements would then be necessary)
- Funding possibilities
 - ▷ Funding schemes within *weltwärts* programme
 - ▷ Seek funding possibilities through strengthened communication with home government and other relevant institutions
 - ▷ Use the budget of own organisations
- Use social media (e.g. WhatsApp and email groups) for close communication

Connection of North-South and South-North volunteers

- Bring together volunteers of both components during e.g. seminars/camps and other common activities
- Connecting both volunteers already during the preparation phase
- Proposal: workshops on how to better connect the volunteer groups could be given by the quality association

25% own contribution

- No general rule as to how to cover these costs
- Common that Host Projects cover it, but need support
- Recommendations for supporting the Host Project:
 - ▷ town partnerships
 - ▷ private sponsorship
 - ▷ governments and other political institutions and/or foundations
- All the stakeholders involved should commit themselves to finding a common solution!

Future of BFD-*weltwärts*

- Main issue: difficulty of matching *weltwärts* South-North and BFD
- Possible solution following the example of the BFD programme for refugees: BFD rules and practices should be more flexible to adapt to the reality of *weltwärts* volunteers (e.g. regarding working hours, language classes, seminar days etc.)
- South-North volunteers should get a reimbursement of the social insurance contributions they paid during their service

FORMULATION, DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The next session on the fifth day was dedicated to the most important and final activity, the participants had been working towards for the entire conference: the formulation, discussion and presentation of concrete recommendations for enhancing the South-North component. One working group compiled a collection of quality ideas which were gathered during the conference:

Collection of quality ideas	
All stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Enhance transparency in the selection and preparation of volunteers→ Provide pedagogical guidance→ Improve crisis management and communication→ Consider evaluation as a multi-stakeholder process and be sensible to cultural difference and language barriers to facilitate an open exchange of opinions
Sending Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Application criteria:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▷ Focus on motivation and free will▷ Provide opportunities to youth with less privileged background→ Support volunteers after their return→ Be aware of<ul style="list-style-type: none">▷ The project profile of the Host Organisation▷ The work assignment of volunteers→ Preparation should include<ul style="list-style-type: none">▷ Language courses (e.g. tandem between N-S and S-N volunteers, cooperation with German Language Institutes)▷ Crisis management▷ Intercultural learning and empowerment▷ Technicalities▷ Foster an open mind in the volunteer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ Information about Host Organisation and Host Project ▷ The cultural and societal backgrounds of Germany → Preparation should involve returnees and N-S volunteers
Host Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Pick up volunteers from the airport → Orientation seminar should include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▷ Public transport and logistics ▷ Legal requirements ▷ Language requirements ▷ Crisis management ▷ Do's and Don'ts ▷ Empowerment of volunteers → Prepare volunteers for their return → Ensure that staff working with volunteers adopts an intercultural perspective (e.g. recruit People of Colour) → Support Sending Organisation (e.g. visa issues)
Host Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Provide a detailed description of the project and work assignments for the preparation and selection process → Appoint a co-worker as a mentor for volunteers assisting him/her in all project-related issues
Host family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop transparent criteria for selecting host families → Facilitate information sharing with all the stakeholders
Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → HO should train and prepare mentors
Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Age requirements should be lifted up to 18–30 years → Volunteers should be already engaged in social and community work → Volunteer needs to show a strong willingness to learn a new language

The proposals for recommendations were presented by different working groups and subsequently discussed and put to vote in plenary. A final list of official recommendations was handed over to the representatives of the programme steering committee, Gabriele Zöller (BMZ) and Jan Wenzel (Ventao), who emphasised the importance of the partners' input and ensured to take the recommendations into account during the programme evaluation as well as for the enhancement of the South-North component.

The official recommendations, as presented to the steering committee are listed in the following. Controversies and discussion points that remained open for further discussion have been added subsequently to each recommendation.

Quality assurance

There is a need to develop a quality-criteria-catalogue for the S-N component. It should not be adapted from the N-S catalogue of quality criteria, but should be developed by all the stakeholders with a leading participation from the South.

Therefore, we recommend

- 1) Collecting existing quality standard documents in the South
- 2) Conducting workshops with all the stakeholders to evaluate and develop a catalogue of quality criteria based on the existing documents. This will improve the quality performance of organisations through self-evaluation
- 3) External evaluations of quality criteria are led by countries from the Global South

These recommendations are addressed to the steering committee, organisations in the Global South and quality associations in Germany.

Partner participation

We recommend

- 1) Establishing regional networks of SO (partner organisations) in order to strengthen their voice in the S-N component, improving the quality of the programme, and strengthening a more equal partnership
- 2) Reviewing the current *weltwärts* structure to ensure and facilitate direct communication of the south network within the *weltwärts* steering committee
- 3) Considering funding for networks via accompanying measures, as seen in the funding of the German quality associations
- 4) Finding creative measures to share data of SO within countries, taking into account the national privacy laws
- 5) Holding regional, language specific conferences to address specific issues, such as visa challenges and finance etc. These conferences address S-N & N-S agendas and could be hosted co-jointly

These recommendations are addressed to all stakeholders.

Integration of returnees

In order to acknowledge the value of knowledge and experiences gained by the volunteers and to encourage and guide them to implement these into society, we recommend

- 1) Integrating the elements during the voluntary service in Germany (i.e. seminar, mentoring, vocational training, discussion) to facilitate integration after the volunteers' return to their home countries
- 2) That SO are reminded that a returnee seminar should be incorporated into the programme
- 3) That volunteers should be involved in drafting the returnees' programme in order to meet their demands

These recommendations are addressed to all the stakeholders.

Discussion on the integration of returnees:

- about the role of regional networks with regards to the re-engagement of returnees.
- as no agreement was reached during the discussion, regional networks were not included in the recommendations.

Discussion about the recommendation "Partner participation":

- Creating new representation structures leads to more bureaucracy and less resources for the exchange programme
- Current procedure: there is a contact person for organisations from the Global South. There are as well evaluations on their needs, but their voice is not directly represented within the committee
- Controversy remaining: should a voice from the Global South be integrated into the steering committee?

Visa

We recommend

- 1) Making sure all the documents are complete and clear
- 2) Informing the volunteer and give detailed instructions on how to apply
- 3) Making sure the volunteer made an appointment with the embassy and applied

These recommendations are addressed to the sending organisations.

- 4) Contacting the embassy in the sending country if helpful
- 5) Preparing a correct and full package of documents

These recommendations are addressed to the hosting organisations.

- 6) Clearly providing full information about the application process for volunteer visa (incl. documents and timelines)
- 7) Giving open feedback and provide a personalised approach

These recommendations are addressed to the Foreign Ministry and the embassies.

Discussion on visas:

- about how to formulate clear and general recommendations on the backdrop of rather individual and context specific problems with the visa process
- considering recommendation No. 4: discussion about in which situation directly contacting the embassy by HO might helpful
- about the usefulness of a contact person for visa issues in every country. There was no agreement on that point – the experiences and expectations differ a lot among the different partners.

Host Project

We recommend

- 1) Providing trainings for the staff of HP

This recommendation is addressed to the quality associations.

- 2) Considering exchange visits

This recommendation is addressed to the weltwärts steering committee.

- 3) Facilitating exchange meetings for HP (and host families)

- 4) Informing HP about the political profile of ww

These recommendations are addressed to HO.

- 5) Drafting common guidelines for all partners

This recommendation is addressed to HO, SO and HP.

Remark: Recommendation No. 1 and No. 5 should be considered as strongly linked to each other

Transparency

We recommend

- 1) A joint budget planning by the HO and SO should be made accessible to offer a clear picture to all the parties involved.

This recommendation is addressed to HO and SO.

- 2) (Basic guidelines are provided to all stakeholders about the selection process as well as the detailed documentation of the whole selections process of the volunteers.)

This recommendation is addressed to the steering committee and SO.

- 3) Financing the face to face meeting between the SO and HO in order to provide transparency and a better communication among all actors
- 4) Creating an online portal where SO and HO in the same country or region can upload their respective contact information

These recommendations are addressed to the steering committee.

Discussion on Transparency:

- recommendation No. 2 controversially discussed: aims at a greater transparency of the selection process; nevertheless, steering committee should not influence the selection process; furthermore: common guidelines do already exist; more guidelines would lead to more bureaucracy and workload; no final agreement reached and, therefore, shown in brackets
- there should not be greater control of HO about SO; preserve the SO's autonomy in the selection process



BFD – *weltwärts* future

We recommend

- 1) Developing flexible rules for the S-N component within the BFD (as is already the case for BFD-with-refugee-background) e.g. in the following aspects:
 - a. Working hours
 - b. Language course
 - c. Seminar days
- 2) Reviewing the social security contribution for S-N volunteers

These recommendations are addressed to the steering committee/coordination office.

25% own financial contribution

We recommend that

- 1) All partners should guarantee that the participants from underprivileged backgrounds can also take part in the programme
- 1) HP, HO, SO and volunteers should search for common solutions/sponsors to cover the missing 25% of funds

These recommendations are addressed to all stakeholders.

Training and support for SO & HO

We recommend

- 1) Developing a toolkit “how to best run a voluntary service” which takes into account the diversity of the processes in the different countries

This toolkit could cover topics such as:

- a. Responsibilities of different actors
- b. Selection and preparation
- c. Returnee seminars
- d. Pedagogical accompaniment
- e. Questionnaires

This recommendation is addressed to the steering committee and the coordination office.

- 2) Having a document template for contracts/agreements between SO and volunteers

This recommendation is addressed to the coordination office.

- 3) Offering trainings to:
 - a. People in charge of the volunteer (e.g. contact persons in the placement/HO)
 - b. HO, especially on crisis management

This recommendation is addressed to the quality associations.

Aims and objectives of the programme

In reference to Goal 3 in the *weltwärts* concept, which is ‘To strengthen civil society and especially the partner organisations in the south which benefit as returnees tell others about their experience and continue to be active in civil society’, we conclude that

- 1) The goal is somehow copy-pasted from the N-S component
- 2) There is too much focus on the role of the volunteer
- 3) There is less focus on the organisations and partnerships

Therefore, we recommend

- 1) Reviewing goal 3 regarding the focus on volunteers
- 2) Putting more emphasis on partnerships as well as on the needs and capacities of the organisations
- 3) As an additional goal, the programme should
 - a. Promote new partnerships
 - b. Be open and accessible (e.g. to other organisations)

These recommendations are addressed to all stakeholders.

The conference then officially closed by thanking the moderation team, the organisers, the BMZ and all participating persons for their support to make this a successful conference. The participation certificates are handed over by the moderation team.

EVALUATION OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference is evaluated with the distribution and the filling in of the conference evaluation questionnaire. In general, the participants gave a very positive feedback upon the moderation, organisation and the conference itself. They were also invited to mention their ideas on how to include the partner's perspective in the future, the biggest successes as well as to give concrete proposals on how to improve the *weltwärts* South-North component:

For me, the biggest successes of the *weltwärts* programme South North Component are:

- That the *weltwärts* programme is becoming a real exchange
- Opportunity for youth (with less resources) from the countries of the global south to gain an intercultural experience in Germany and vice versa
- The return of volunteers with a wide and open vision of the world and motivation
- Financial funding of German government
- The importance of partner organisations: to give both sides (HO+SO) the chance to appreciate each other's efforts, hurdles and success
- Step towards more global justice as it contributes to create a more balanced partnership in S+N
- Global learning and intercultural understanding: contributes to peace (respect, tolerance) and development

The most important aspects that I think must be improved in the *weltwärts* programme South-North are:

- Communication system (e.g. more regular information, more meetings between different actors)
- Transparency for all stakeholders (finances, selection)
- Avoid visa rejection esp. in Africa
- Partner organisations development (SO)
- Qualified preparation of South participants (incl. language)
- Find ways to connect N-S and S-N volunteers
- Realise that 75% funds are much less than 75% costs in reality – Funding of 25%
- Better financing for the whole component to improve its quality
- Strengthening support for returnees and integration
- More focus on global issues (programme, volunteers, seminars)
- To think in the German way à think interculturally
- More flexible regulations in the BFD framework (language classes, working hours, administrative work load, change of projects in case of problems)

My concrete proposals for improving the *weltwärts* programme South-North are:

- Lifting age limit: 18–30 years
- Increasing number of projects in Germany
- Improve communication with SO-HO
- Other sources to learn German: Deutsche Schule, German speaking communities, Co-workers of German companies etc.
- SO keep on giving support to their volunteers after sending (e.g. in mid-term camps)
- Development of guidelines/tool-kit for relations between SO, HO, volunteers, HP and the implementation
- Enabling and financing cooperation – webpages, meetings, regional
- More, regular conferences, e.g. to repeat a similar conference after 3 years or regional (SO/HO/HP)

- Create a returnee fund
- Implementation of conference recommendations (an agenda how to implement findings)
- Visa fees should be waved off
- Looking for funding option to become more independent from the ministry (private foundation?)
- The intercultural work in Germany: more intercultural presence on Kww/government level
- More space for individual development and learning, such as internships in a future job (architecture, construction)

Ideas how to include the Partner's Perspective in the future:

- More and constant communication, e.g. jour fixe with partner, discuss concept and changes from the beginning on, information emails concerning specific topics (either in form of questionnaire or asking for recommendations)
- Supporting each other and to work together: fair division of roles and responsibility
- Send the documentation of this conference also to organisation that could not participate
- Annual/regular conferences
- More networking e.g. on the regional level in the south (e.g. common website as a project on regional level, send representatives in the steering committee)
- Job shadowing
- To include the different time schedule in the diverse countries
- Give SO space to develop their visions and methods to realise them

Conference: I was not satisfied with/I missed:

- Session on Visa: no accurate and reasonable responses from the delegates of MFA to visa issues; missing more compromises by the delegates of the government, more clarity and realism
- The political meeting rounds – the outcome was not high
- That there was no official Spanish translator
- To work half a day in workshops/trainings on political topics e.g. racism
- More teambuilding on the first day

Conference: I particularly liked:

- International, intercultural, competent moderation team
- Content and methods
- Intercultural and professional exchange
- To elaborate and reach the recommendations
- The group/atmosphere
- Possibility to meet partners

PARTICIPANTS LIST

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MEMORIES



Marketplace



Handing out the certificates



Barbecue Evening



Mid-Term-Evaluation



Moderation Team



Translation

DANKE

We would like to thank all the participants: Thank you for your active, constructive participation and the fruitful discussions we had. With your motivation and energy you actively took part in the future development of the *weltwärts* South-North component. It was a truly, inspiring and enriching conference! DANKE!

Presentations that have been held on the conference are marked with a special symbol.
They can be distributed on request: icja@icja.de 📄

IMPRINT

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