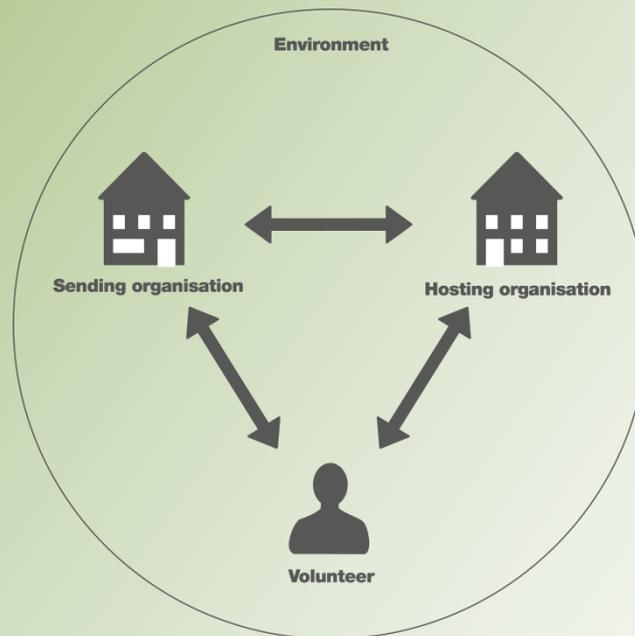


Quality standards for international voluntary services



PROJECT LEAD



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Content

1. Starting point	3
2. Introduction	3
3. Quality standards in detail	5
3.1. Sending organisation and hosting organisation	5
3.2. Hosting organisation and volunteers	6
3.3. Volunteer and sending organisation	8
3.4. Communication with the environment	10

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1. Starting position

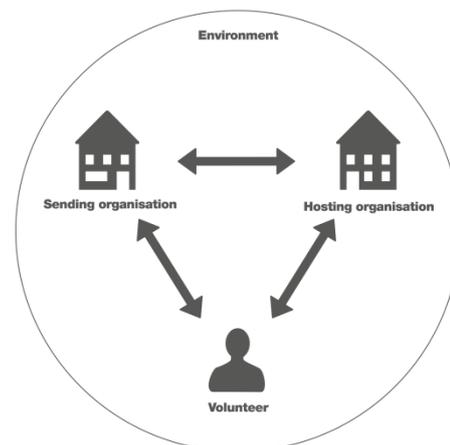
How the quality standards came into beginning.

“Jugend eine Welt“ started with the building of “WeltWegWeiser”, which is a service point for international voluntary services, in summer 2015. “WeltWegWeiser” was being financially supported by the Austrian Development Agency”. “Jugend eine Welt”/“WeltWegWeiser” aimed to (further) develop quality standards for international voluntary services in collaboration with recognized sending organizations. Therefore, a project group was created under the guidance of “Jugend eine Welt”/“WeltWegWeiser” in the beginning of 2016, which contained 10 sending organizations. Former volunteers, hosting organizations respectively deployment sites and extern experts were included into the development by the means of written surveys, personal interviews and exchange meetings. Already existing standards were considered as well (such as voluntary law, quality standards of German sending organizations, child protection standards, ...). The present quality standards were completed at the end of 2016 after five meetings of the project group and different meeting of several small groups and are still to be further developed if necessary.

2. Introduction

The setup: How voluntary services are being perceived.

International voluntary services contain 4 participants in particular: the volunteer himself, the hosting organization, respectively the deployment site, the sending organization and the beneficiaries of the deployment sites. What is more is the environment, which is formed by members of the volunteers, funding bodies, the interested public and media. We understand that it is of uttermost importance, that international voluntary services are consciously designed relations. Volunteers, hosting organization and sending organization revolve around the beneficiary of the deployment site. The present standards should reach out to volunteers, hosting organizations and sending organizations and treat their triangular relation. A successful voluntary service for all participants (volunteer, sending organization and hosting organization) contains a clear framework, structure, responsibility and communication from the beginning as well as necessary flexibility to counteract possible unforeseen issues. The guidance and support before the voluntary service is crucial for a successful voluntary service as well as a solid support during and a follow-up after the voluntary service. The structure of the present quality standards is based upon this triangular relation. Some topics might be treated several times due to this structure, however, they are always being looked at from different relational levels.



The mission: What the quality standards contribute to

The fulfilment of the present standards promotes:

- Meaningful voluntary services for volunteers and hosting organizations, that entail the acquirement of experiences for the volunteer and at the same time contribute to the objectives of the hosting organization

- Best framework and learning experience possible for the volunteers
- A high-quality and cooperative partnership between the volunteer, the hosting organization and the sending organization taking into account the social environment
- Multiplier tasks of volunteers for developmental and intercultural topics in society

Moreover, all standards should be a guideline for the work of the sending organization and the cooperation of all members. All members orientate towards the principles of equality and non-discrimination in their work.

The standards: emphasize the features

The present quality standards are not an encompassing list of criteria for international voluntary services. However, they focus on the following issues:

- The standards are practicable and useful and applicable for all members in their day-to-day work.
- The standards are applicable for many organizations with different personal and financial resources.
- The standards offer the volunteers as well as the organizations a high level of transparency.

Therefore, it is about minimum requirements. All sending organizations that are involved in the development are also responsible for the quality standards. Those standards are classified as minimum standards within these organizations. Other organizations are invited to implement those quality standards as well.

An outlook: further development

The elaboration of the quality standards is completed for the time being. However, the quality management is an ongoing procedure. Therefore, it is important, that the present standards are really being implemented and that they are an important part of the quality assurance of the sending organizations. Regular reflection rounds of the sending organizations, that commit to comply with these quality standards, will contribute to a certain liability. "WeltWegWeiser" and the sending organizations will also deal with the implementation of the present quality standards within the framework of exchange meeting about quality management.

Moreover, an external verification is also possible – within the framework of awarding a seal of quality for international voluntary services that yet has to be made – in order to be helpful by the means of an external view for the implementation for aspired goals and to prevent abuse.

3. Quality standards in detail

3.1. Sending organization and hosting organization

Overview: What it is about

The organizational prerequisites and the cooperation between sending organization and hosting organization are being explained in this section. Sending organizations are institutions in Austria, that are responsible to convey the volunteers to the hosting organizations as well to assume further tasks for the preparation and support. Hosting organizations are institutions outside of Austria, where volunteers can work for a limited time and without a financial compensation within the framework of their own fields of activity respectively organizations, that coordinate the support of volunteers abroad in the deployment sites and look after them.

Sending organization and hosting organization can also be linked to one another organizationally.



Objectives: What the focus is on

The focus is on:

- Clear objectives and procedures, which are being arranged and agreed on together in an egalitarian manner.
- Stable structures of the organizations.
- A cooperation based on openness and trust.
- Positive effects and sustainability of the voluntary services for both volunteers as well as the hosting organization.
- Learning organizations and quality assurance.

The criteria in detail

Organizations

- Sending organization and hosting organization have enunciated visions and objectives, which will be communicated mutually.
- Sending organization and hosting organization are stable institutions (e.g. organizational units), that have clear structures, decision processes and division of competences.
- Sending organization and hosting organization run analyses and evaluations for the further development of the voluntary program, orientate on the results and adapt structures and procedures to the changed frameworks. Sending organization is ultimately responsible for the quality assurance.
- Sending organization and hosting organization have defined how they measure the efficacy of the volunteer assignment.

Cooperation

- The sending organization selects the hosting organization they work with after clear criteria.
- No dependencies are being created between hosting organization and sending organization (as long as they are two different, independent organizations).
- Decisions concerning significant changes of the volunteer program by the sending organization or the hosting organization are only being made with mutual involvement.

Framework of the voluntary services

- Responsibilities between sending organization and hosting organization are clearly clarified.
- Financial and material performance is clearly regulated.
- The duration time of the services is adapted to the specific task.
- Agreements and/or contracts are negotiated and accepted. Necessary adaptations are being agreed upon together by the sending organization and the hosting organization.
- Accommodation and board of the volunteers and their financing is clearly regulated between hosting organization and sending organization.
- Both sending organization and hosting organization feature contact persons with sufficient competence, experience and resources for a qualified support of the volunteers.
- No paid workplaces are being replaced by the service of the volunteers.
- The hosting organization clearly defines the field of work and framework for the voluntary services and reports them to the sending organization.
- The hosting organization describes the requirements for volunteers and reports them to the sending organization.
- The sending organization and the hosting organization discuss feedbacks of volunteers in order to find out, if need for action is necessary, respectively, if ideas for a continuous amelioration of the services are feasible or if misunderstandings have to be cleared up.

Preparation and support of the volunteers

- The selection of the volunteers by the sending organization occurs according to several criteria and requirements that correspond with the needs of the sending organization and the hosting organization. The hosting organization is also included into the decision-making procedure about the admission to the deployment site.
- The hosting organization defines the deployment site as well as the tasks on-site and communicates them to the sending organization.
- The content of the preparation by the sending organization is being agreed upon with the hosting organization. The preparation includes particularities about the project, the country and the organization as well as information about the journey preparation.
- The kind and extent of the introduction and support of the volunteer by the sending organization as well as the admissions criteria are defined.
- The hosting organization makes learning and teaching fields for the volunteers.
- A coordinated framework of crisis management as well as structures for conflict resolution between the sending organization, the hosting organization and the volunteer are available.
- Measures for the protection of vulnerable groups within the beneficiaries of the deployment site – especially of children, teenagers, women and people with disabilities – are taken.

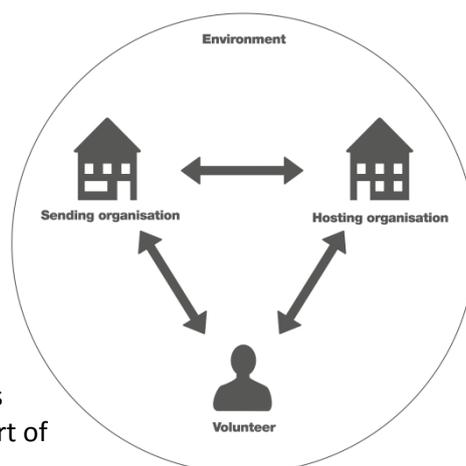
3.2. Hosting organization and volunteer

Overview: What it is about

The following criteria serve as an orientation for meaningful services with the focus on the hosting organization and the volunteer. They are the guideline for the cooperation between the volunteer and the hosting organization and take the societal situation on-site into consideration.

Hosting organizations are institutions outside of Austria, where volunteers can work for a limited time and without a financial compensation within the framework of their own fields of activity respectively organizations, that coordinate the support of volunteers abroad in the deployment sites and look after them.

Volunteers are persons, that work for a limited amount of time freely for a hosting organization and want to further develop personally as well as professionally by the means of the service as well as the preparation and the follow-up-



Objectives: What the focus is on

The focus is on:

- A scope of action as big as possible of the volunteer and the hosting organization.
- The warranty of security of the volunteer and the hosting organization.
- The integration of the volunteer into the work of the hosting organization.
- A common understanding of the role and the tasks of the volunteer.
- An adequate support of the volunteer.
- A positive effect on the beneficiaries of the deployment site.

The criteria in detail

Agreements and contracts

- The volunteer and the hosting organization know all the agreements between the other party and the sending organization that concern the relation between volunteer and hosting organization.
- The frameworks and guidelines for the services of the volunteers at the hosting organization and regulated in a written manner and are known to all members.
- The procedure in case of violations of the specifications and regulations are known to the volunteer, the hosting organization and the sending organization.

Application and selection of the volunteer

- The hosting organization is involved into the selection of the volunteer.

Preparation of the volunteer

- The volunteer is actively preparing for the country and its particularities, language, culture, historical backgrounds, expectations, cultural and social norms and the tasks during his service.
- The hosting organization ensures an adequate preparation on-site. Thereby, the tasks of the volunteer, the rules, behavioral rules and the risk minimization through the preventing measures are being discussed once more between the volunteer and the sending organization.

Role and tasks of the volunteer

- The volunteer is a learner and supports the hosting organization with his tasks. This role is clear to both the hosting organization and the volunteer. It is not foreseen, that the volunteer will use donations in the deployment site. However, if the volunteer plans to do so in the deployment site, it will be discussed in advance with the hosting organization and the sending organization.

Support of the volunteer

- The professional instruction and personal support on-site is assured by a competent contact person in the hosting organization.
- The non-compliance of agreements, guidelines and orders through the hosting organization or the volunteer will be discussed together in order to prevent misunderstandings and to assure a successful voluntary service

Security

- The contact person for volunteers and the hosting organization in crises and emergency situations (medical emergencies, sexual, physical and psychical violence, political/social unrests, natural disasters) are set and communicated.
- The volunteer informs the contact person of the hosting organization and the sending organization immediately in case of crises and emergency situations and vice versa.

3.3. Volunteer and sending organisation

Overview: What it is about

The cooperation between the volunteer and the sending organization, which ranges from the first encounter to the follow-up of the service is being explained in this section.

Objectives: What the focus is on

The focus is on:

- The best information possible of the interested parties
- The clear regulations of the procedures, responsibilities and obligations.
- The support of learning experiences and personal development.
- The fulfilment of the minimum requirement of the service.
- The warranty of the security of the volunteer and the hosting organization.



The criteria in detail

Information, procedures, responsibilities and obligations

- The sending organization informs interested parties and conveys a realistic picture of the service
- The basic requirements of the sending and the hos organization are being communicated by the sending organization towards interested parties.
- The sending organization verifies the fulfilment of the prerequisites for a voluntary service when selecting the volunteer (expectations and requirements towards the volunteers). This verification is made according to a standardized procedure that contains a personal admissions interview as well as obtaining necessary proof, at least a criminal record certificate and child - and youth care – if the volunteer works with children or adolescents.
- The sending organization is responsible for verifiable, clear information about procedures, frameworks and responsibilities for a voluntary service. The procedure and content in the preparation, support and follow-up of the service have to be written down. In contracts the following will be written down:
 - Official designation of sending and hosting organization
 - Tasks description and duration of the service
 - Description of the frameworks of the service (accommodation, board, rules of conduct, assurance, financing, time framework of the tasks per week, exemption, other performances)
 - Mutual responsibilities (obligations, declaration of denunciation, termination of the contractual relationship)
 - Perusal of obtaining further agreements, policies and guidelines (guideline of child protection, security policy, usage of photos, ...)
- The sending organization conveys in case of conflict between the volunteer and the hosting organization. The main focus is on the consensus about the aim and sense of the voluntary service that has been previously established between all 3 members as well as the rules that have been agreed upon. Thereby, the fact, that the service is a special challenge for the volunteer is being taken into consideration.

Learning experiences, personal development and multiplier activities

- The volunteer takes part in the preparation of the sending organization, which supports the success of the service as well as the learning possibilities. Following points are content of the preparation:
 - Information about the project and the living and working situation as a volunteer in the project, cultural and social norms in the country of deployment
 - Learning fields in the service
 - Travel preparations of the volunteer (luggage, visa, assurance, travel registering, method of payment, significant legislations on-site)
 - Information concerning risks and perils for the hosting organization and the volunteer (questions of security, of prevention and of responsible behavior, physical /psychical challenges, questions of sexual, physical and psychical violence, power abuse through volunteers, corruption, crises and emergencies)
 - Guidelines of the hosting organization
 - The reflection of political, social and intercultural perceptions and of important historical facts
 - The appreciative and attentive presentation of people in the countries of deployment in text and picture (inclusive of the obtaining of the agreement) through the volunteer, especially of vulnerable groups (children and adolescents, persons with disabilities, ...)
 - Aspects of reintegration after the return inclusive of the multiplier activities in Austria
- The sending organization offers support during the service and takes measures for the success of the service through regular contact and exchange.
- The volunteer has a follow-up after the return, that contains the following points:
 - A reflection of the service,
 - The role as multiplier of the experience abroad,
 - Discussion of possibilities of further engagement – in Austria or another deployment site.
 - Saving of learning content,
 - Feedback and an evaluation of the service and
 - Individual support for the reintegration if necessary

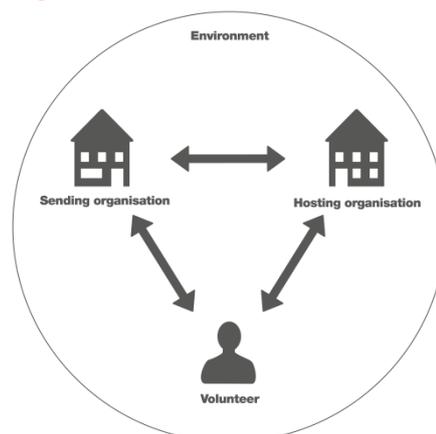
Security

- The preparation is about questions of security, prevention and responsible behavior. Crises and emergency plans are being elaborated with the volunteer. The necessary data is being provided.
- Guidelines of the hosting organizations for the work with vulnerable/marginalized groups, especially with children and adolescents and if necessary guidelines of the sending organization are being brought to the volunteer's attention.

3.4. Communication with the environment

Overview: What it is about

This section is about the outward communication of the sending organization, the hosting organization and the volunteer – especially with sponsoring organizations, funding bodies, members of the volunteers, the interested public and the media.



Objectives: What the focus is on

The focus is on:

- clarity and transparency within the communication
- the diligent, non-discriminatory presentation of people and deployment sites in the target countries
- creating awareness for the peaceful life together of different cultures
- The presentation of voluntary services as versatile and informal educational offer as well as learning opportunity

The criteria in detail

Public relations

- Objectives and values of sponsoring organizations, the sending and the hosting organization are being communicated by the sending and the hosting organization in a clear manner.
- Objectives, values, frameworks and requirements of the services are being communicated by the sending and the hosting organization in a clear manner.
- It is clearly being stated by the sending organization, that it is a learning business and not a communal business.
- The public relations of the sending and the hosting organization crates awareness for the peaceful life and work together of different cultures
- The presentation of people in target countries through text and picture, especially of vulnerable groups happens in a non-discriminatory, respectful and careful way-
- Financing requirements for volunteers and the total costs of the services are being communicated by the sending organization in a transparent manner.

Volunteers as multipliers

- The sending organization promotes the multiplier tasks of the volunteers and makes them more sensible for the objectives of public relations (respectful presentation of people in the target countries, creating awareness for the life and work together of different cultures, the presentation of voluntary services as versatile and informal educational offer as well as learning opportunity).

Crisis and emergency management

- The sending and hosting organization both have clear communication structures and procedures for crises and emergency situations.
- The data and information are being dealt with in a careful manner, especially with regard to crises and emergency situations