

REPORT BY „GEMEINSAM LEBEN & LERNEN IN EUROPA E.V.“

1. SHORT INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE ROLE AND SITUATION OF VOLUNTEERING IN GERMANY

1.1 Legal framework ¹

There is no specific legal framework for volunteering in Germany and therefore no particular institutional responsibility for the volunteering sector. However, there is a “**law on strengthening volunteering**”, indicating that volunteering is increasingly considered as a policy area. The law was made in 2013, aiming at the improvement of the basic conditions in the Third Sector and at strengthening the appreciation of voluntary activities. The most important trends that can be deducted are:

- 1) fostering elements of monetary control: the government of Germany is intensely using monetary elements like tax exemptions, expense allowances, “mini-jobs” in non-profit organizations
- 2) gradually including voluntary activities in the legislation process of policy areas such as care, health care reform, employment market, freedom of information, legal advice
- 3) the introduction of the “new voluntary services” is supporting highly structured and formal voluntary activities and additionally supporting new areas of social services (care, family, school)

1.2 Definition of volunteering ^{2 3}

In Germany there exist three different terms to describe voluntary activities. They are often used synonymously, although representing different traditions and concepts. Therefore, we do not have an official or even consistent definition of volunteering. The most traditional and still most frequently used term to describe volunteering is the term “Ehrenamt”, meaning an honorary appointment. The more modern term “freiwilliges Engagement” is used to describe any kind of non-paid activities, contributing to the common welfare. Whereas the term “bürgerschaftliches Engagement” (civil engagement) is usually used in scientific research or official political statements.

However, there is an agreement on the definition of volunteering as being:

- voluntary
- not profit oriented
- contributing to the common welfare
- public and open for everyone

Volunteering is seen as the core of civil society, as it is strengthening the democracy, ensuring social integration and supporting the formation of values etc..

¹ Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB) 2009: Bericht zur Lage und zu den Perspektiven des bürgerschaftlichen Engagements in Deutschland, S. 12 f.; S. 152. Projektgruppe Zivilengagement.

² vgl. <http://www.buergergesellschaft.de/mitgestalten/grundlagen-leitlinien/begriffe/107733/> [zuletzt aufgerufen am 08.12.2014]

³ vgl. Han-Broich 2012: S. 65

1.3 Trends in volunteer engagement: overview^{4 5 6}

In the last years we could observe a „boom“ in the Third Sector in Germany, as there is a continuously growing number of organisations active in the volunteering sector, as well as people committing themselves voluntarily. The Survey of Volunteering that has been conducted in 1999, 2004 and 2009 states: *“The fact that the level of volunteering has nevertheless been successfully maintained since 2004 is evidence of the strength of the trend towards the development of civil society, even under difficult societal conditions.”* (p. 19)

In Germany, belonging to an organization is the typical way of volunteering: about 17,5 Mio. are part of an organization, whereas they estimate a number of 23 Mio. to be committing themselves voluntarily at all. The volunteering rate equates to 36 % (2009) of all the inhabitants of Germany over the age of 14. Currently the growing number of active seniors is compensating the effects of the demographic shift, resulting in an remainingly unchanged percentage. Though lots of Germans are engaged in voluntary activities already, more and more people can imagine taking on voluntary commitments: in 2009 a group of 11% was „definitely willing“ and a group of 26% „possibly willing“ to engage in voluntary activities.

1.4 Trends in volunteer engagement: demographic groups⁷

People of all ages volunteer, but the highest rates of volunteering can be found in the age group between 30 and 59 (around 39% actively volunteering). However, compared to the younger respondents between 14 and 24 there is a small difference and a slightly decline in the percentage of volunteers (from 37% in 1999 to 35% in 2009). On the contrary, we can observe a remarkable increase of elderly people from 1999 to 2009: Only 23% of the over-65s were committing themselves to volunteering activities, in 2009 28%.

The differences between men and women still persist. Following the Survey on Volunteering 2009, it is still the case that far more men (40%) engage in voluntary activities than women (32%). Additionally, there are important differences considering the fields of volunteering: the majority of women is active in the social fields of society, whereas most of the men are volunteering in the field of sports and exercise, fire brigade or rescue services – and they are over-represented in the positions as chairman, board etc.

Low education, living in the eastern part of Germany (former GDR), having a small income, having migrant background or being unemployed are factors that significantly **reduce** the probability of being voluntarily active in Germany. Whereas a high number of volunteers in the social environment is a strong predictor for the probability that someone starts volunteering himself/herself.

⁴ vgl. WZB 2009: S. 10

⁵ ziviz 2012: S. 37

⁶ Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2010: Monitor voluntary activities. Issue No. 2 “Volunteering in Germany 1999 – 2004 – 2009”. Summary of the 3rd Survey on Volunteering.

⁷ Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2010: Monitor voluntary activities. Issue No. 2 “Volunteering in Germany 1999 – 2004 – 2009”. Summary of the 3rd Survey on Volunteering.



1.5 Trends in volunteer engagement: types of activities and projects⁸

As exists a wide diversity of individual activities, the fields of volunteering reflect the enormous variety of topics in our society. Sport (10%) is continuously the most important type of activity in the volunteering sector. Religion and church (7%), leisure (5%), culture (5%) and the social field (kindergarten & school (7%), social welfare (5%)) are other predominant fields of volunteering.

Furthermore, volunteering can be more or less formalized: being connected to an organization is obviously high formalized, whereas self-help groups or helping neighborhoods are less formalized.

Motives of volunteers are becoming more specific. People primarily commit themselves voluntarily because they want to do something for other people. Volunteers want to contribute their knowledge and experiences to the common welfare, they want to feel responsible. Furthermore, volunteering is a good opportunity for networking. They are willing to invest many time or even money – but they expect something in return, the so-called personal “return on engagement”. E.g., they want to have fun, to meet other people and build friendships, they want to contribute and feel appreciated. As the importance of life-long-learning increases, the importance of volunteering as a learning field is becoming more important as well: volunteering is a great opportunity to acquire professional skills.

1.6 Trends in volunteer engagement: duration

As the Survey of Volunteering 2009 shows, on average people have been performing their voluntary activities for 10 years, 32% even for more than 10 years. A majority practises their voluntary activity with great regularity, 90% of the volunteers at least once a month and 56% once a week.

In general, it is becoming more common to volunteer in short-term, but intense projects than a life-long membership in one organization.

1.7 Actors supporting volunteering

Firstly, institutional support of volunteering is up to each federal state (Bundesland) of Germany. For example, the responsible governments can support volunteering by establishing jobs for the coordination. Secondly, institutional support of volunteering depends notably on the local authorities (Kommunen). For example, the local authorities setup infrastructure facilities in many places or actively support volunteering within schools and the political participation of all citizens (WZB 2009: S. 13).

In 1999 the „Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen (bagfa) e.V.“ was founded. It is the German umbrella organization for voluntary agencies and currently has about 172 members. Its mission is to support the strategic and qualitative development of voluntary agencies in Germany and build a sustainable network. On the level of the federal states (Länderebene) the voluntary agencies are organized in “Landesarbeitsgemeinschaften” (lagfa). In summary, there exists only one “bagfa e.V.” in Germany, bringing together all voluntary agencies of our country. And there exist about 16 “lagfa e.V.”, one in each federal state, bringing together all voluntary agencies in this particular state: for example the “lagfa Bayern e.V.” for Bavaria. 9

⁸ Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2010: Monitor voluntary activities. Issue No. 2 “Volunteering in Germany 1999 – 2004 – 2009”. Summary of the 3rd Survey on Volunteering.

⁹ <http://www.bagfa.de/ueber-uns.html> [zuletzt aufgerufen: 09.02.2015]

1.8 Relevant documents

An important document is the „charta of volunteering“ published by „Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband“ in 2001. This document contributes a joint definition of volunteering, information about the societal impact that volunteering has and its characteristics. What could be easily adopted by other organizations and institutions working with volunteers are the “10 requirements on institutions working with volunteers“:

1. define and support the cooperation between voluntary staff and paid staff
2. the appreciation and development of diverse motives
3. create and offer fields of voluntary activities
4. enable the contribution of volunteers
5. define the frame-work for your volunteers
6. offer introductory events and trainings
7. appoint a contact person for voluntary activities within your organization
8. reimburse financial expenditures
9. ensure the insurance for your volunteers
10. prepare a qualified reference letter for your volunteers

A need for action is seen in supporting activities for the infrastructure, financial support, appreciation and cooperation with education and vocational training institutions, the economy, science and research.¹⁰

Another important document is the „Augsburger Statement“ (Augsburger Erklärung) that was a result of the 19th annual conference of the bagfa e.V. and the foundation “Mitarbeit”. The „Augsburger Statement“ encourages further development of civil engagement and specifies needs for action that were seen by representatives of voluntary agencies, politics, administration, foundations and economy.¹¹

A very detailed report about the future of civil engagement is the „Bericht der Enquete-Kommission“ – consisting of 432 pages (2002).¹²

¹⁰ <http://www.ehrenamtsbibliothek.de/literatur/Freiwilligenchart%20des%20PARTAETISCHEN.pdf> [zuletzt aufgerufen: 09.02.2015]

¹¹ http://www.bagfa.de/fileadmin/Materialien/Augsburger_Erklaerung_19._Jahrestagung.pdf [zuletzt aufgerufen: 09.02.2015]

¹² Enquete-Kommission (2002): Die Zukunft des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements. Bürgerschaftliches Engagement: auf dem Weg in eine zukunftsfähige Bürgergesellschaft.

1.9 Sources of funding ¹³

The most up-to-date study on volunteering, the „Generali Engagementatlas 2015“, provides information on the predominant sources of funding within the Third Sector. The collected data show that most of the institutions or organizations highly depend on financial support of their local authorities (64% saying that these source of funding is “very important” to them). In contrast support by companies is not very much common in Germany, only 12% saying that this kind of funding is “very important” to them.

Most of the actors in the Third Sector are struggling with financial shortages and do not have any financial long-term security. Additionally, many of are not able to expand their incomes via donations or paid services due to the lack of personal resources needed to establish these capacities.

The following figure shows the overall budget the institutions/ organizations of the Third Sector are working with in a year (2013). It is indicating that there do not exist sufficient sources of funding, at least for the majority of voluntary organizations:

overall budget of the previous year



(generali Engagementatlas 2015: Monitor 06, p. 8)

¹³ Generali Engagementatlas 2015 (2014): Monitor 06 - vom Wildwuchs zu Engagementlandschaften. Generali Zukunftsfonds, Köln.

2. TRAININGS FOR VOLUNTEERS

a) Description of existing training programmes offered by our organisation

Training for „voluntary language mentors for refugees“:

The overall aim of this training is to prepare our volunteers by providing them some basic knowledge regarding different topics relevant when working with refugees. A “language mentor” should support one refugee with focus on enhancing his/ her communicative competences.

The training consists of five working sessions, each with a duration of 2,5 – 3 hours. As we have a very diverse target group within this project we deliver the training once a week during the afternoon (starting at 6 pm). The *first working session* is about our organization, the project concept, the specific role as a “voluntary language mentor” and expectations. The *second training session* is an information session about the target group “refugees” – there are many political regulations people are often not aware of. We work together with local organizations or national experts, explaining the asylum procedure within the EU and Germany and giving them facts about topics like money, health care, living and working. We continue with the *third part*, an intercultural training, focusing on raising awareness on diversity: diversity of experiencing, understanding and responding to social situations. The *fourth working session* is about “barriers”. Our volunteers should know their own limits to protect their motivation and resources, but also they have to respect the barriers of their future language partner, e.g. talking about their flight. Last but not least, we *complete the training* with pedagogical and didactic input. As many of our volunteers do not have any prior experience in teaching their mother tongue we provide them with materials developed by ourselves and show them some strategies how to support the everyday communicative skills of the learners.

GLL organized this training in 2014 and 2015, in each year we trained a group of 18 volunteers. Our volunteers especially appreciate the wide range of topics covered by our training.

Training for “voluntary language mentors for children”:

The first training for voluntary language mentors for children was held in 2013, in September 2015 the 8th training course was completed. This training consists of three working sessions: 1) organizational matters and the role as a voluntary language mentor, 2) intercultural training and 3) pedagogical and didactic input.

b) Please briefly describe (goals of the training, themes of the working sessions, duration of the training, main results of training implemented in the past, etc.) the existing training programmes/opportunities provided by other organisations or public institutions in your country.

In Germany exists a wide range of training courses for volunteers and it will not be possible to give an overview covering all of the existing training opportunities.

We thought it would be more useful to give an overview of the existing possibilities:

Almost every larger organization working with volunteers (Caritas, Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, sports clubs etc.) provides its own trainings. On the other hand, many of the foundations (like Bertelsmann Stiftung, Körber-Stiftung, Bosch-Stiftung, Hertie-Stiftung or Freudenberg Stiftung) even develop their own concepts to support their beneficiaries. In addition, there exist organizations like the „academy for volunteering“ offering opportunities for qualification especially for volunteers. (WZB 2009: S. 164)

Existing possibilities within Bavaria:

FöBE („Förderung Bürgerschaftliches Engagement“), München

- advanced training with focus on management of volunteers
- http://www.foebe-muenchen.de/?MAIN_ID=1&NAV_ID=14&SUBNAV_ID=5

(using their search you can divide between a) trainings for professionals and b) trainings for volunteers)

IBPro („Beratung im Sozialmanagement“), München

- <http://www.ibpro.de/index.php>
- non-profit services and counselling for NGO's
- development, qualification and professionalization of NGO's and their staff

LBE („Landesnetzwerk bürgerschaftliches Engagement“), Bayern

- <http://www.lbe.bayern.de/service/fortbildung/index.php>
- trainings with focus on the question: „How to work professionally with volunteers?“, covering lots of different single aspects (fundraising; cooperation; coordination of volunteers; etc.)

other opportunities:

- *Bayerischer Landessportverband e.V.*
- *Caritas Landesverband Bayern*
- *FÖBE München*
- *IBPro Beratung im Sozialmanagement*
- *Johanniter Landesverband Bayern*
- *Landesgeschäftsstelle BRK*
- *Volkshochschule Bayern*
- *Bildungszentrum Burg Schwaneck*
- *Bundesweite Angebote*
- *Akademie für Ehrenamtlichkeit Deutschland*
- *Civil Academy*
- *Virtuelle Freiwilligen Akademie Bremen*
- *Gemeinsam aktiv - Bürgerengagement in Hessen*
- *Freiwilligenakademie Niedersachsen*
- *Bildungsnetz für bürgerschaftlich Engagierte Thüringen*

Existing opportunities in Germany:

„Akademie für Ehrenamtlichkeit Deutschland“ (academy for volunteering)

- http://www.ehrenamt.de/1489_Aktuelle_Seminare.htm
- covering different topics like „coordinating volunteers“, „management of volunteers“, „quality of voluntary services“

Bildungszentrum Burg Schwaneck

- <http://www.naturerlebniszentrum.org/fort-weiterbildung/freiwilligen-manager.html>
- „strategic management of volunteers“

**Hochschulkooperation Ehrenamt „Professionelles Management von Ehrenamtlichen“
(cooperation with an university for „professional management of volunteers“)**

- <http://hochschul-kooperation-ehrenamt.de/home/>
- extra-occupational course (duration: 10 months)

3. PLEASE IDENTIFY ANY CONCRETE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THE FINAL RESULTS OF OUR PROJECT, IN YOUR NATIONAL CONTEXT

The curriculum of the training will be freely available. We will offer this training for volunteers and volunteer coordinators, if additional funding will be provided. We will also transfer the training to other European countries, e.g. to Slovakia and Austria in 2016-2018.