

**German Federal Ministry for  
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth**

**Guideline**

**for the Implementation of the "International Youth Volunteer Service"  
(*"Internationaler Jugendfreiwilligendienst"*)**

**of 20 December 2010, amended on 17 April 2014**

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## **I. International Youth Volunteer Service**

The 'International Youth Volunteer Service' programme enables young people to gather intercultural, social-political and personal experiences in a different culture, by volunteering abroad.

The International Youth Volunteer Service is a learning and educational programme that is notable for its diversity.

First, it affords participants an opportunity to reach out to other people and other societies. At the same time, the International Youth Volunteer Service helps the volunteers to enrich and cultivate their own personalities through the informal learning experiences that come with the chosen field of activity and the seminars offered as part of the programme. The young volunteers learn to get along in a new and unfamiliar environment, acquiring social and intercultural skills as they go that will continue to benefit them long after their return to Germany.

Moreover, the International Youth Volunteer Service also provides vocational guidance, since the volunteers gain insights into their specific field of choice and can discover skills and competencies they never knew they had. The International Youth Volunteer Service is equally accessible to young women and men irrespective of their schooling, ethnicity or income.

The conclusion of an agreement to complete the International Youth Volunteer Service may not be made conditional on the volunteer making indirect or direct donations to the placement agency. However, it cannot be excluded that a proportionate financial contribution will be expected of the volunteer.

The International Youth Volunteer Service fosters the understanding of other cultures and intercultural dialogue in a globalised world. It may not conflict with the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany.

This youth voluntary service abroad is provided for the public good and on a full-time basis as predominantly practical assistance over a period of several consecutive months. Assignments can be worldwide and may not affect the local labour market.

The volunteers in the International Youth Volunteer Service will be motivated and ready to take responsibility for themselves and others and to engage with a different culture.

## **II. Framework conditions for the International Youth Volunteer Service**

### **1. Volunteers**

The volunteers in the International Youth Volunteer Service are persons who

- a) are undertaking full-time, non-profit voluntary work outside of vocational training,
- b) have committed to undertaking this voluntary service for a period of usually 12 months, but for not less than six months and not more than 18 months on the basis of an agreement,
- c) in return for their work, may receive only free board, lodging and work clothes, as well as reasonable pocket money and travel expenses, or appropriate expenses to pay for board, lodging and work clothes; pocket money is reasonable if it does not exceed the amount of 350 euros,
- d) while having completed their full-time compulsory education before starting their term of service abroad, will not complete the age of 27 years before it is concluded,
- e) have been ordinarily resident in Germany before starting service.

### **2. Education and guidance**

The International Youth Volunteer Service includes education and ongoing guidance as set out in Nos. 1 to 3:

1. Education and guidance including the seminars shall be reliably provided by the placement agencies accredited for the International Youth Volunteer Service.
2. Education and guidance take the form of, *inter alia*, training programmes (seminars or learning events) that are prepared and implemented with active input from the volunteers.

In addition, education and guidance include technical induction at the place of assignment and individual mentoring and support from both the staff at the place of assignment and educational staff with the placement agency.

3. For assignments of six months, an educational programme adding up to at least 15 days shall be provided, for assignments of 12 months at least 25 days (other than foreign-language training). For assignments between eight and eleven months, the minimum educational programme shall be extended by two days each.

If assignments are concluded or extended beyond a period of 12 months, at least one additional seminar day shall be provided for each month of extension.

Educational measures can take place within five months ahead of, during and within six months after the assignment abroad. Overall, two blocks of seminars of at least five consecutive days each shall be provided. If an outstanding educational concept is submitted ahead of the introductory programme, a reasonable extension of the pre-departure period may be allowed in coordination with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth or an entity commissioned by the latter and involving the competent central agency.

Education and guidance shall comprise preparatory events and follow-up events. If the agency is able to provide some training elements abroad, these will be counted towards the overall duration of educational measures. Participation in the educational measures is to be offered to the volunteers free of charge, counts as service time and is compulsory.

Pre-departure events serve to inform and induct new volunteers and address relevant questions. Participants in the pre-departure events have already opted for the measure addressed and were chosen by the placement agency.

Follow-up events serve to reflect on, process and evaluate experiences made during the voluntary service. With the term of voluntary service over, these events offer a framework in which to discuss potential future perspectives.

### **3. Placement agencies and places of assignment**

Accreditation as placement agencies for the International Youth Volunteer Service within the meaning of this Guideline shall be granted to legal persons that:

- a) carry out measures pursuant to this Guideline, prepare and send volunteers to do voluntary service abroad and provide ongoing support to them,
- b) guarantee that they permanently fulfil their tasks by dint of their proven experience abroad and meet the obligations incumbent on them pursuant to this Guideline,
- c) exclusively and directly serve tax-privileged purposes within the meaning of sections 51 to 68 of the German Fiscal Code (*Abgabenordnung*),
- d) are domiciled in the Federal Republic of Germany, and
- e) can furnish proof of their educational master concept and quality standards.

Placement agencies accredited for the International Youth Volunteer Service join a nation-wide central quality management body.

Candidate agencies for the International Youth Volunteer Service will be audited and accredited by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth after filing a written application including a full set of documentary evidence.

Accreditation confers the right to operate the International Youth Volunteer Service. It does not imply a right to public support.

When examining the application, existing accreditations for other volunteer services abroad (Voluntary Social Year - FSJ or Voluntary Ecological Year - FÖJ abroad, *weltwärts*) will be taken into consideration.

The placement agencies for the International Youth Volunteer Service take part in evaluations or statistical surveys commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, especially volunteer exit surveys. The placement agencies are required to properly inform the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth on request about the service's current state and development.

Places of assignment are institutions that serve the public good, especially,

- in social settings, specifically working with the elderly, ill and disabled, with children and youth,
- in culture, sports and heritage protection,
- in ecology, especially environmental protection, environmental education institutions or sustainable development,
- in the education sector and

- fostering peace, reconciliation and democracy<sup>1</sup>.

Volunteers in the International Youth Volunteer Service may only be sent to places of assignment that have been accredited by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth or a body commissioned by it.

For the service abroad to succeed, the placement agency and the place of assignment must cooperate as partners. Corresponding framework conditions for co-operation and the shared education and support of the volunteer shall be laid down in writing. The placement agencies bear the overall responsibility for the organisation and lawful implementation of the International Youth Volunteer Service.

#### **4. Agreement, certificate and reference**

The placement agency accredited for the International Youth Volunteer Service and the volunteer shall conclude a written agreement ahead of the term of service. The agreement shall specify:

- a) The volunteer's first name and surname, date of birth and address,
- b) The name of the placement agency and that of the place of assignment,
- c) The period of service to which the volunteer commits and terms governing the early termination of service,
- d) The declaration that the Guideline for the International Youth Volunteer Service must be observed during the service,
- e) The agency's notice of accreditation ,
- f) The type and amount of the benefits in cash and in kind for board, lodging, travel, work clothes and pocket money,
- g) The number of leave days,
- h) The objectives of the service and the key measures implemented to achieve those objectives and
- i) Information about insurance coverage.

An appropriate number of days off work shall be granted. Their minimum number shall depend on the local statutory provisions. For 12-month placements, no less than 20 days of leave shall be granted; for placements of shorter or longer duration, the number of leave days shall be adjusted proportionately.

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<sup>1</sup> The prohibition of supporting political parties must be observed.

When the term of service is completed, the agency shall issue the volunteer with a certificate. This certificate must include the agency's notice of accreditation and the dates of the term of service.

On completion of the International Youth Volunteer Service, the volunteer can request the agency to write a reference stating the type and duration of their assignment. In this case, the agency shall ensure that the place of assignment draws up a reference in the German or English language or does so itself. On request, the reference shall also cover the volunteer's performance and conduct during the assignment. Specifically, vocational qualifying features of this International Youth Volunteer Service shall be included into the reference.

## **5. Volunteers' insurance coverage**

The placement agencies are obliged to insure the volunteers for the duration of their service abroad. This insurance cover shall include at least international health insurance, accident insurance covering invalidity and death, civil liability insurance and medical repatriation insurance.

The minimum accident insurance cover shall be 200,000 euros in case of invalidity with a multiplying factor of 225 % and 15,350 euros in case of death.

During their term of service, the volunteers are mandatorily covered, at home and abroad, by the statutory accident insurance in line with section 2(3) No. 2c of Social Code Book VII (SGB VII). The agencies are required to register the volunteers with their statutory accident insurance carrier in Germany.

The agencies are also obliged to take out civil liability and accident insurance for the volunteers covering seminars at home.

The volunteers themselves are responsible for maintaining their domestic health and long-term care insurance coverage. The agencies can assume these costs.

The agencies inform the volunteers about the insurance aspects involved before the agreement is concluded. They make sure that the volunteers take out proper domestic coverage in good time.

## **6. Completing the International Youth Volunteer Service as Other Service Abroad**

The International Youth Volunteer Service can simultaneously be completed as Other Service Abroad (*Anderer Dienst im Ausland*) pursuant to section 5 of the Federal Voluntary Services Act (*Bundesfreiwilligendienstgesetz - BFDG*) in conjunction with section 14 b of the Civilian Alternative Service Act (*Zivildienstgesetz - ZDG*) if, ahead of the assignment, both the agency and the place of assignment have been separately recognised as agency and place of assignment for the Other Service Abroad.

## **7. Data protection**

The International Youth Volunteer Service agency may collect and process personal data as set out in No. 4 where this is necessary for implementation, support and evaluation purposes. The data shall be deleted upon conclusion of the assignment.

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