

Volunteer services Incoming with a focus on partnerships

1 Foreword

Since the end of the 1940s, many towns and municipalities in Lower Saxony have been running city partnerships around the world. In particular, the partnership-based contacts to other European countries, which were launched as a peace campaign after the Second World War, have meanwhile become established.

The purpose of town twinning is the voluntary gathering of people across national borders:

"The exchange, mutual acquaintance, learning of each other's languages and friendly relations over the past decades have made a major contribution to the success of European integration. Because if you know someone well, speak their language and perhaps feel a friendly connection with them, then you will treat their culture and country with respect and not with weapons". (www.alumniportal-deutschland.org, 2018)

In order to establish international friendly relations as early as possible, youth exchanges often form a part of the partnership. The participants work on joint projects, discuss (global) problems and gain an awareness of the European idea during the exchange. Active town twinning therefore contributes significantly to a common Europe.

You can now expand your existing town twinning(s) via a medium that is equally popular and appreciated all over the world - sport. Below you will find an introduction to **volunteering in sport for young volunteers from European twinned towns** to complement to your previous activities.

2 What are voluntary services in sport?

The term "voluntary services" (FWD) in sport covers the voluntary youth services "**Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr**" (FSJ) and "**Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr**" (FÖJ) as well as the "**Bundesfreiwilligendienst**" (BFD), which is open to the public.

Voluntary service may take place in public welfare-oriented institutions throughout Germany. The volunteers mainly take on practical help and support activities in various areas such as the social sector, sport, the environment or culture.

The ASC Göttingen, in cooperation with Sportjugend Niedersachsen e.V., is responsible for volunteer services in sport in Lower Saxony. In the FSJ the sponsor of the Center for German Sports Youth is affiliated. For the Federal Voluntary Service, the ASC Göttingen is the central office operating throughout Germany and cooperates with the **Federal Office for Family and Civil Society Affairs (BAFzA)**.

The sports field (EST) is made up of sports clubs, professional associations and sports organizations (e.g. district, regional and city sports associations), as well as schools, day-care centres and other public welfare institutions with a sports profile. In Lower Saxony, the ASC Göttingen recognizes more than 1,000 places. Each placement provides the volunteer with a personal contact (mentor).

The volunteers (FW), who enter from other European countries, perform a so-called FWD Incoming at the sports centres in Lower Saxony. The prerequisite for participation is that the applicants have not lived in Germany for more than 6 consecutive months in the last 5 years.

3 Focus on cultural exchange

Culture is a broad term that includes values and norms, but also language and general patterns of communication. If two cultures now find each other, the difference to one's own culture often only becomes visible - because communication with people from other cultures inevitably leads to a reflection of one's own actions and thoughts. This dialogue leads to new knowledge about cultures and expands understanding as well as tolerance and respect - important principles of modern coexistence.

Transferred to the FWD in sport, this means that volunteers from European partner countries bring their culture in Lower Saxony and at the same time experience the values lived in Germany. Religious festivals, for example, are widespread in every European country, but the rites and customs associated with them are sometimes very different. The meeting of different cultures within the framework of the Incoming Voluntary Service is therefore an opportunity to further develop the volunteers themselves, the participants of the host organization (EST) and town twinning!

4 Fields of activity for international volunteers

Activities in the sports field (EST) in Lower Saxony are determined by two essential factors: on the one hand, the EST have a certain need for support and, on the other hand, the volunteers have different interests and abilities which they would like to contribute. The planning of the activities is therefore a matter of finding a common balance that satisfies both and leads to a productive working atmosphere.

The fields the volunteers are active in are assisting and are designed to be labour market neutral. The volunteers assist and support sporting activities. Below are some typical activities:

sports club	Work with children and adolescents, adults and/or seniors and special target groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of exercise leaders in training and competition operations • Supporting cooperation of club parties, trips and tournaments • Clubs offers and lunchtime supervision at schools
sport organization	Work for children and adolescents, adults and/or senior citizens and special target groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in the administration of the organization • Planning and design of projects and new activities • Organization of events, tournaments etc. • Sports activities in affiliated clubs and/or schools
school	Work with students of different ages (6 to 18 years)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting and hospitation in physical education classes • Implementation of sporty / eventful break offers • Additional accompaniment and support for swimming lessons • Assistance and support in the organization and supervision of the lunch break • Support on the organization of school festivals and championships • Support and assistance on camps and excursions
kindergarten	Work with children between 1 and 6 years of age
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting the staff in the crèche, nursery and preschool classes with the children • Preparing and carrying out activities for the children • Becoming involved in the organization and staging of events and open days • Household and domestic help in the establishments (mealtimes, sweeping) • Supporting the staff in the classroom (arranging, tidying, laundry) • Being there for the children (listening, playing, laughing)

5 General conditions FWD Incoming

The young people from the various European twin towns live for twelve months in Lower Saxony twin town and get involved in one of the places mentioned under point 2. By the daily contact with the people they meet in the place of work and in everyday life, they contribute to a strengthening of the European feeling. The twin cities cooperate with each other as well as with the ASC Göttingen and the mission sites.

The volunteers receive a monthly pocket money of 300 € for their commitment. The payment of the pocket money and other benefits (social insurance, health insurance) is basically made by the employer, i.e. the place of employment. The processing and payment of these points will be transferred by the EST to the sponsor, so that the volunteers receive the pocket money from the ASC Göttingen.

The volunteer office pays a monthly instalment to the ASC Göttingen. The monthly instalment covers a large part of the costs for pocket money, social security and health insurance contributions, seminar work, educational staff and administration. The shortfall is covered by various grants. The places in sports clubs are promoted by the LandesSportBund are therefore cheaper.

For international volunteers, accommodation must of course be available. Accommodation is a point, at which the employment of volunteers from abroad in the Lower Saxony employment places has so far failed. Partner cities can get involved by the sending and receiving partner cities contributing to the securing of the accommodation - as long as the host city cannot afford this itself. This security can take the form of monetary support, but also by providing suitable accommodation. It is ideal if volunteers are accommodated in shared flats (e.g. with students) or in a host family.

6 Mentoring of international volunteers

A mentor is appointed as part of the legally prescribed pedagogical support, who takes care of the volunteer's interests at the placement. "Communication is key" is the guiding principle for the pedagogical support of international volunteers, because a common language is the basis for communicative cooperation. As a rule, this is English. When selecting a mentor, the EST make sure that he or she can communicate well with the volunteers. However, no one expects a linguistically correct mentoring because most of the volunteers are not native English speakers.

In order to insure a good start in voluntary service, close supervision is particularly important in the initial phase, because the mentor is not only the most important contact person in everyday work but also in the private environment. As the responsible body, we support the placement centers by clarifying the most important points together and providing advice before the start of the service.

Due to the often long-lasting cooperation between the project-executing agency and the operational agencies, the processes are clearly structured in advance (e.g. preparation of contracts). Therefore, this manual deals with the tasks that are different in the area of incoming volunteers from the deployment of domestic volunteers.

Area of operation

- Provision and financing of accommodation for the volunteer
- Provision of a bicycle, in winter also a ticket for local transport if necessary
- Presentation of the site and the sports system in Germany
- Personal introduction to the most important contact persons in the EST
- Introduction to the different task areas (incl. creation of timetable)
- Support for the development and implementation of the FWD project

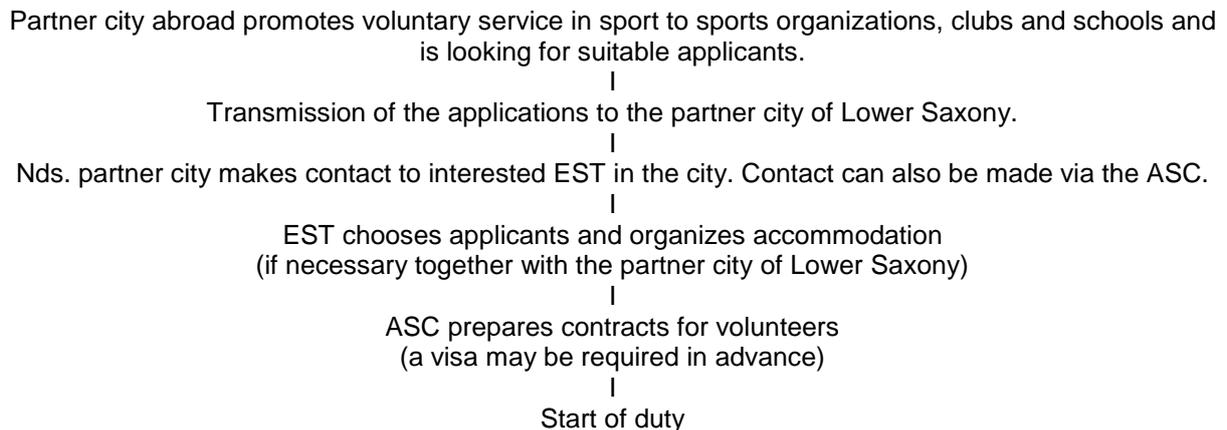
Mentor

- Link between other volunteers and full-time employees
- Support in settling in at home (getting to know the surroundings, showing the way to the emergency centre, showing the supermarket, finding doctors)
- Explain life in Germany (e.g. waste separation, deposit system)
- Organize an language course
- Participation in the design of the timetable and support in planning seminar days
- Regular feedback meetings

7 Involvement of partner cities

We are convinced that both partner cities will benefit from the programme because the partnership will be intensified in the field of youth education. The city of Lower Saxony can present itself as a good host and the volunteers of the foreign twin cities act as representatives of their home city and their country. For the success of the programme, it is desirable that the representatives of the partner cities actively support the matching of applicants and placement centres (EST).

Process



8 Seminar concept for incoming volunteers

The experience of the sponsor ASC Göttingen so far shows that the educational support provided by the sponsor in the incoming area is more time-consuming and labour-intensive than that provided by the German volunteers in sport. We are therefore expecting a 1:20 ratio, so that one pedagogical expert of the sponsor will take care of 20 volunteers.

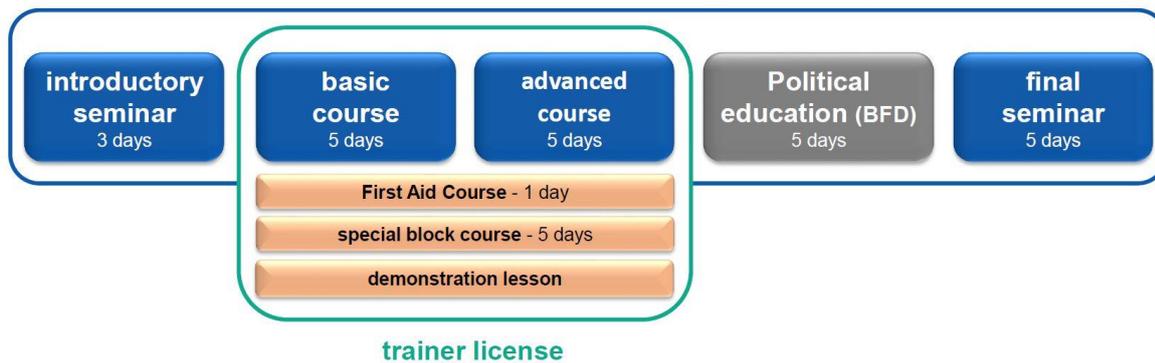
In the FWD im Sport, volunteers up to the age of 26 take part in a total of 25 seminar days at 12 months, for the older ones aged 27 and over (BFD Ü27) it is 12 days. In the Incoming, all volunteers, regardless of age, complete (at least) 25 seminar days at 12 months FWD. Thus the carrier follows one of its most important tasks, i.e. a comprehensive educational company of the volunteers from the most diverse countries.

The seminars and their contents are also adapted to the needs and experiences of the Incomer. The seminars promote personality development and vocational orientation of the volunteers, make social, intercultural and political education possible and support learning of participation and participation.

The seminar concept follows a holistic-emancipatory approach: the volunteers are seen in their concrete situation from which they can relate with all their abilities to other people and their environment. Volunteers from other countries find themselves in a phase of orientation, especially in the first few months. In the special seminars for Incomers, the participants discuss and reflect on the experiences they have had in everyday situations and in practical activities.

Volunteers usually work in the mornings and afternoons, sometimes in the evenings. During the free time there is the possibility for creative activities or sports activities. Through the references on site, value is placed on the active participation of the volunteers. The participants are supported and encouraged in their abilities. In addition, they are encouraged and challenged to act responsibly and to participate together with others.

Seminar structure Focus on partnerships



The introductory seminar (3 days) approaches topics for the introduction into the reality of life and work in Germany as well as to cultural differences. Further contents are:

- Clarification of the basic procedure of a voluntary service year
- History of Germany and Relations between the Cooperating Countries
- Objectives, expectations and requirements of the participants, the hosting organizations and the partner cities
- Getting to know the structures of organized sport in Germany
- Joint development and implementation of additional educational needs (e.g. language course)
- problem-solving strategies

In the basic and advanced training course (10 days in total) the volunteers are trained bilingually. In order to acquire competence in the field of sport, the volunteers will complete the contents of the Training Instructor C Mass Sports Training in both courses. These courses are an integral part of the FWD program and have inserted successfully for years in the training of domestic volunteers.

For the completion of the license a hospitation, a probationary lesson, the participation in a special block training course and a first aid course are necessary.

In the following further contents, which are developed in addition to the license training in the two seminars:

- communication models
- Project Planning - Theory and Tasks for the FWD Project
- Role and tasks as a volunteer in the assignment center
- Reflection on one's own actions in the EST and in everyday life
- Reflection on cultural differences/communities
- Evaluation of hospitations

The **seminar "Political Education" (5 days)** is held in a federal training center. When booking the seminar, the organizer will point out the different nationalities, so that bilingual work will also take place in this seminar. The content of the seminar week will be worked out by the participants and the local pedagogical staff. The participants can choose suitable topics from various suggestions. Examples: "Democratic coexistence", "Migration and integration (using Germany & Europe as an example)", "Energy production, mobility, environment and climate change", "Food", "Globalization and the global economy".

The final seminar (5 days) will focus on reflection on voluntary service. The overarching topic is the formulation of experiences and personal development during the stay in Germany. In addition, the FWD project, which was carried out at the placement, will be presented and reflected upon.

For volunteers it is important to acquire a good knowledge of German. Participation in one or more **German courses** is therefore supported by the sponsor, also financially. These courses serve to impart basic knowledge, but also to continuously develop knowledge that has already been acquired. They can take the form of intensive courses and accompanying evening courses. A German course can be credited with 5 seminar days.