



FINDINGS OF THE 2016
WELTWÄRTS PROGRAMME
VOLUNTEER SURVEY

Dear reader,

This report presents the findings of the fourth annual volunteer survey. Following the surveys of the 2013 to 2015 returnees, this survey looked at the volunteers who returned from service in 2016. It is thus now possible to compare the findings for four years of the weltwärts programme. We would like to start by highlighting one result in particular, which underlines the past years' findings: as in the previous three surveys, 94% of the respondents were satisfied overall with their voluntary service. This consistently positive result confirms that the weltwärts programme meets the needs of young adults. And it shows how diligently the sending and partner organisations implement the development volunteers' service.

Each year, there are more than 3,300 volunteers in service in around 60 host countries, sent there by approximately 160 different organisations. 1,552 volunteers participated in the survey (which was again conducted by Umfragezentrum Bonn), putting the response rate at 47%. The reason for this being lower than in past two years (when it was 57% and 62% respectively) is very probably the fact that other surveys were conducted at the same time as part of a long-term evaluation of the weltwärts programme.

The volunteer survey is part of the weltwärts quality system introduced in 2013. The quality system comprises the following components:

- quality certification of the German sending organisations by external certification bodies,
- quality development by the sending organisations in quality associations and
- the annual volunteer survey.

The quality criteria for the development volunteers' service are set out in the funding guideline for the weltwärts programme and the weltwärts quality standards.

The findings of the volunteer survey are one building block in a comprehensive quality system, designed to constantly evolve the programme into a development learning and exchange service for the volunteers and the partners in the North and South.

Looking at the findings of this fourth volunteer survey, we can say that they corroborate the previous years' findings for the most part. Once again, the volunteers' overall assessment of the service is good. This is true of each of the individual phases, i.e. preparation, assignment and post-assignment. Since the weltwärts programme is intended to be a development learning service, it is particularly pleasing to see that the overwhelming majority of the volunteers feel that participating in the programme was an enriching experience. They are particularly positive in their assessment of how their voluntary service influenced their openness towards other cultures and people and their own personal development in general, plus how it increased their ability to think and act for themselves. They also feel that their time with weltwärts had a positive influence on their motivation to play an active role in society and they emphasise their increased interest in development-related issues as well as social and political topics.

Having said that, the volunteer survey also highlights areas in which there is room for improvement in the volunteers' view. Where the indicators show that there are prob-

lems, the stakeholders in the weltwärts joint operation analyse the causes and work on improvements.

The topic of support was examined in more detail, using a new threshold value, by also including mentor availability. This produced a more precise picture, enabling the stakeholders in the joint operation to draw conclusions in terms of the targeted improvements needed.

The previous years' surveys also looked at volunteers' satisfaction with their tasks at their place of assignment. Satisfaction with the place of assignment overall has increased slightly from year to year and is now already at 86%. A similar trend can be seen with regard to satisfaction with the post-assignment process overall. The share of satisfied volunteers has risen from 82% in the first survey in 2013 to the current 87%, with the "very satisfied" group now at an all-time high of 44%.

The findings of the latest survey confirm the previous years' positive results, reinforcing our belief that the weltwärts programme is on the right track and that the stakeholders are working hand in hand to further improve the quality and impact of the programme.

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FINDINGS OF THE 2016 WELTWÄRTS PROGRAMME VOLUNTEER SURVEY

Who took part in the survey?

The target group of the latest online survey comprised all weltwärts volunteers who completed their service in 2016. A total of 1,552 volunteers (47%) took part in the survey (see Figure 1). Willingness to participate was therefore still high though slightly lower than in the previous surveys in 2013 to 2015. Several programme-wide surveys, particularly in connection with the evaluation of the weltwärts programme that the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) also carried out in 2016, caused a slight drop in the participation rate in the 2016 weltwärts cohort compared to the previous years. The response rate among the 2015 returnees, for instance, was 57%. However, as this report will show, the findings of the 2016 survey are again largely stable compared to the previous years, and their meaningfulness and comparability are thus ensured.

The volunteers surveyed participated in the weltwärts programme through 144 different sending organisations and worked in 54 different countries. The most common destinations were South Africa, India, Bolivia, Peru and Tanzania. These were also the “top 5” countries in 2015 though in a slightly different order, with India still in first place. All of Germany’s 16 federal states were represented among the volunteers surveyed: most of them came from Baden-Württemberg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria or Lower Saxony. Compared with the individual states’ populations¹, Baden-Württemberg was thus slightly *overrepresented*, Bavaria slightly *underrepresented* and the participant/population ratios for North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony were very balanced.

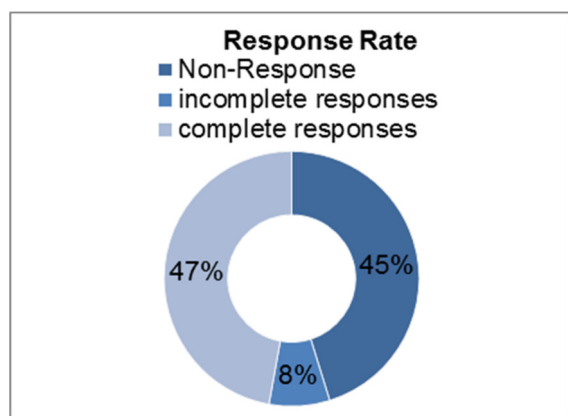


Figure 1: Response Rate

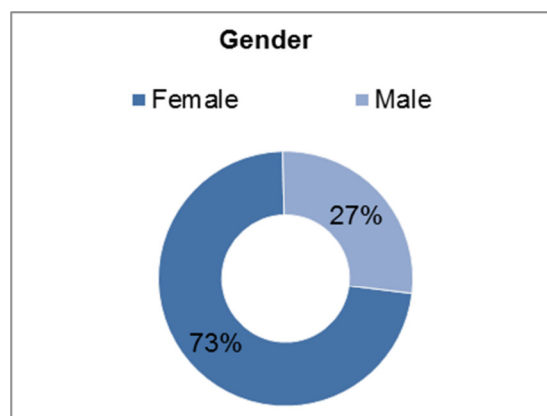


Figure 2: Gender breakdown

¹ Projection for 31.12.2015 in the 2011 census: http://www.statistik-portal.de/Statistik-Portal/de_jbo1_jahrtab1.asp [Accessed on 28.08.2017].

The general tendency is for more women to participate in the weltwärts programme than men. Accordingly, the share of women among the respondents was higher than that of men (see Figure 2). This uneven gender distribution is therefore largely in line with the make-up of the participants in the weltwärts programme though women do tend to be slightly more willing to take part in the survey than men. The volunteers surveyed were between the ages of 18 and 31; the average age being 21. The volunteers' relatively young age reflects the fact that 79% of them took part in the weltwärts programme straight after they finished their schooling. In the majority of cases, they held an "Abitur" school-leaving qualification or a general qualification for university entrance (94%). Since many volunteers join weltwärts straight after school, the number who had already started or finished professional/vocational training is lower (18%). Of those who had, most had graduated from a conventional university or a university of applied sciences; the proportion who had undergone vocational training in the traditional sense was smaller. In terms of the sociodemographic make-up of the respondents, it can only be reiterated that the findings correspond to a high degree with those of the previous years. The figures reported in this paragraph differed by a maximum of two percentage points from those for 2015. One notable aspect, however, is that the 2016 volunteer survey was the first in which there was no weltwärts participant with a qualification from a "Hauptschule" secondary school. Nine of the individuals who participated in the volunteer survey had an officially recognised disability or a certificate of disability (as defined in Volume IX of Germany's Social Code), thus accounting for less than 1% of the respondents. To learn more about the inclusion of persons with a disability in the weltwärts programme, the latest survey also asked the participants to specify whether they had a disability or impairment that was not officially recognised. 24 (1.5%) of them stated that they did. Together then, around 2% of the volunteers surveyed had a disability or impairment of some kind. The question concerning disabilities and impairments that are not officially recognised was posed for the first time in 2015 but there are no significant differences between the 2015 and 2016 surveys. Participation of disabled persons in the weltwärts programme thus remains an important issue for the evolution of the programme.

A total of 12% of the volunteers surveyed had a migrant background.² This percentage has proved to be stable over time, having always been at a very similar level since 2013. By way of comparison, the share of students in Germany with a migrant background³ is 20% and is thus slightly higher than among the volunteers in the 2016 weltwärts cohort. As almost all of the respondents have an "Abitur" school-leaving qualification or a general qualification for university entrance (94%) and 70% of them are already enrolled in higher education, this would appear to be a more fitting reference value than the migrant background figure for the population as a whole. The findings concerning the make-up of the participants in the weltwärts programme largely correspond to those of the previous volunteer surveys between 2013 and 2015. It is therefore now possible to produce a very precise picture of the target group reached through the programme.

² Germany's Federal Statistical Office defines a person with a migrant background as someone who holds foreign citizenship or was born abroad and immigrated to Germany post 1949, or someone who was born in Germany and naturalised or who has a parent who immigrated to Germany, was naturalised or is a foreign national. The 20 % referred to above therefore includes both Germans and foreign nationals, some of whom are immigrants themselves.

³ Middendorff, E., Apolinarski, B., Becker, K., Bornkessel, P., Brandt, T., Heißenberg, S. & Poskowsky, J. (2017). Die wirtschaftliche und soziale Lage der Studierenden in Deutschland 2016. 21. Sozialerhebung des Deutschen Studentenwerks, p. 32. http://www.sozialerhebung.de/download/21/Soz21_hauptbericht.pdf [Accessed 28.09.2017].

Satisfaction

Overall, the volunteers remain extremely satisfied with their time on the weltwärts programme. 70% of the respondents were very satisfied with their voluntary service overall. Taking the volunteers who were “quite satisfied” into account too, 94% were quite satisfied to very satisfied with their time on the programme. Consequently, the findings of the volunteer surveys from 2013 to 2015 show that the volunteers have been almost consistently positive in their assessment of the weltwärts programme. The previous year’s slight increase in the share of very satisfied respondents was maintained this year (see Figure 3).

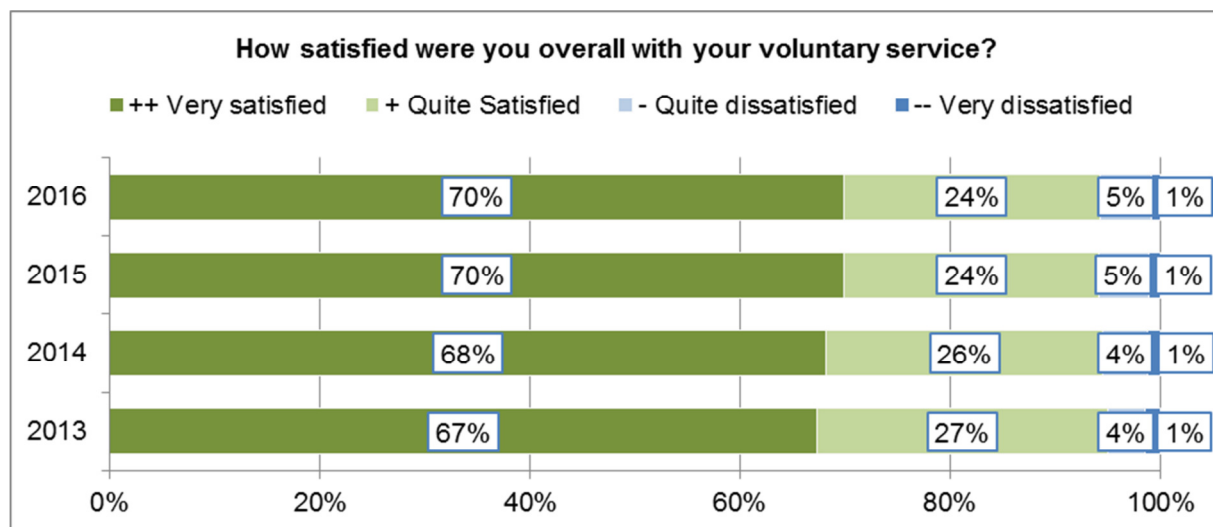


Figure 3: Overall satisfaction with time on weltwärts programme – Comparison of findings from 2013 to 2016

This positive assessment of the respondents’ voluntary service is also reflected in their high degree of willingness to recommend the weltwärts programme to their friends. More than 70% of the respondents considered it very likely⁴ that they would recommend a weltwärts assignment in the country they went to and voluntary service on the weltwärts programme overall to their friends. 63% were very likely to recommend volunteering on the weltwärts programme through their sending organisation. This corresponds to the findings of the 2015 survey. Respondents’ willingness to recommend their own place of assignment (41%) and participation through their host organisation in their host country (39%) was slightly lower (see figure 4). Seen as part of a long-term development, the 2016 cohort’s willingness to recommend participation in the programme overall and the various elements of it again bears out the previous years’ findings.

⁴ 9 and 10 on a value scale from 0=Very unlikely to 10=Very likely.

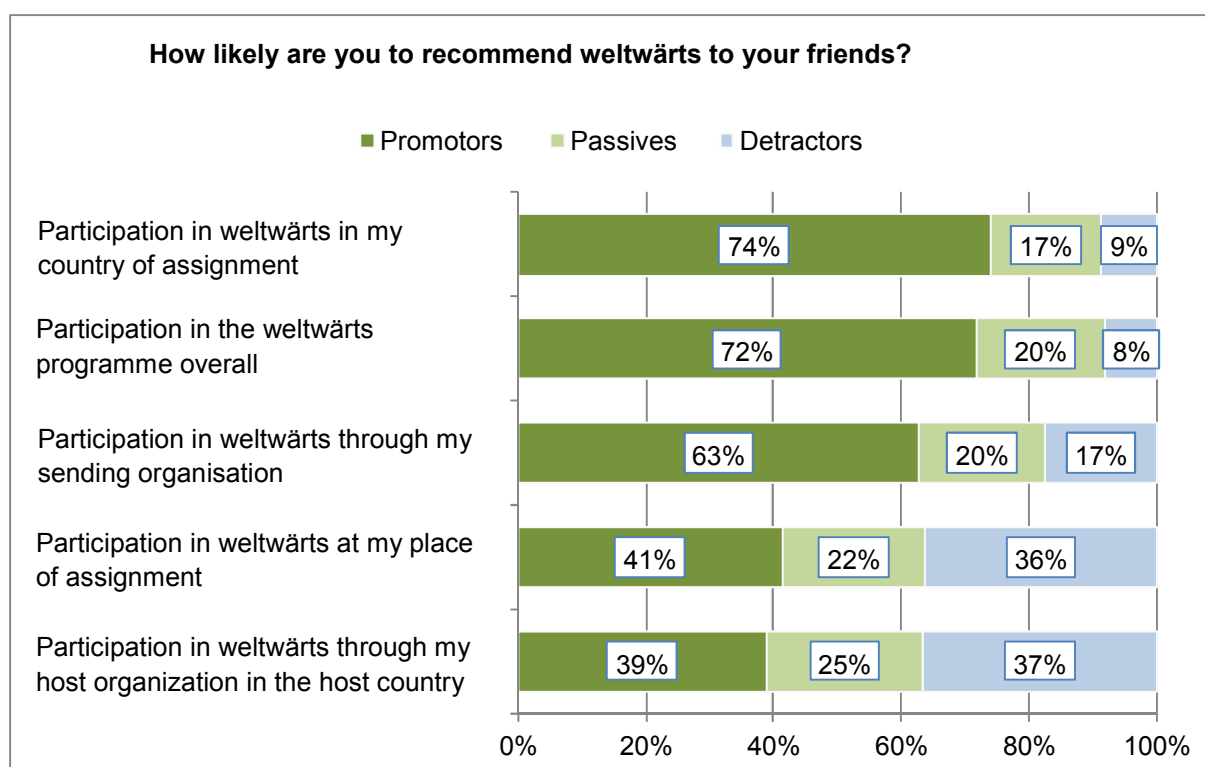


Figure 4: Willingness to recommend the weltwärts programme overall, the country of assignment, sending organisation, host organisation and place of assignment⁵

Preparation for the voluntary service

As in the previous years, the vast majority of the volunteers were extremely positive in their evaluation of how the sending organisations prepared them for their voluntary service. In the latest survey, 94% were very or quite satisfied with the support they received from their sending organisation during the preparation phase. The high values in the previous surveys were confirmed again in this survey.

The volunteers were also very satisfied with the preparation they received from the sending organisations regarding preventive healthcare (e.g. on recommended vaccinations or health insurance during the assignment) and health precautions (e.g. information about drinking water). More than 92% were very or quite satisfied in both areas. Although satisfaction with these aspects was already high in the two previous years, it rose slightly again. The vast majority of the volunteers felt that the sending organisations had supported them well in the preparations for the formal aspects of entry into the respective country (e.g. visas and residence/work permits). 88% were very or quite satisfied with this aspect. The findings of the 2016 survey also show that the volunteers usually had a residence permit or visa throughout their period of service abroad (89%). 10% stated that they did not and 1% were not sure. There was therefore again only a limited number of cases in which the volunteers did not have a residence permit/visa for the duration of their voluntary service.

The preparation given by the sending organisations in terms of safety and security was also viewed positively by the majority. In particular, most of the volunteers (94%) were very satis-

⁵ Willingness to recommend the programme to others was measured on a scale of 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely). The responses were then grouped in the following categories: ratings of 10 and 9 were promoters; ratings of 6 or lower were detractors; and the rest were passives.

fied or quite satisfied with the information concerning and the contact data for the key contact people on the ground (e.g. the emergency cards). Most of them were also satisfied with the information regarding the general security situation in the country of assignment and what to do in the event of an emergency or crisis there. In addition, an improvement on the previous year can be reported here. In the 2015 survey, less than half of the volunteers were very satisfied with the preparation in both areas. As illustrated by 5, this is no longer true in the 2016 returnee cohort, which means that it proved possible to satisfy the volunteers' information requirements even more than before.

Particularly when compared with the high level of volunteer satisfaction overall with the support given by the sending organisations, the volunteers' assessment of the preparation they received for their specific place of assignment and the work to be done there was lower. Only slightly more than half were satisfied with this aspect (see Figure 5), though it did at least prove possible to increase the percentage by four points on the previous year.

It can therefore be stated that the majority of the weltwärts participants are (very) satisfied with the support they receive from the sending organisations in the preparation phase. Slight improvements with regard to the information provided about specific places of assignment and the work to be done there can also be observed. Although, based on the volunteers' opinion, there is room for improvement in terms of the information provided, this year's result was the best since the first volunteer survey.

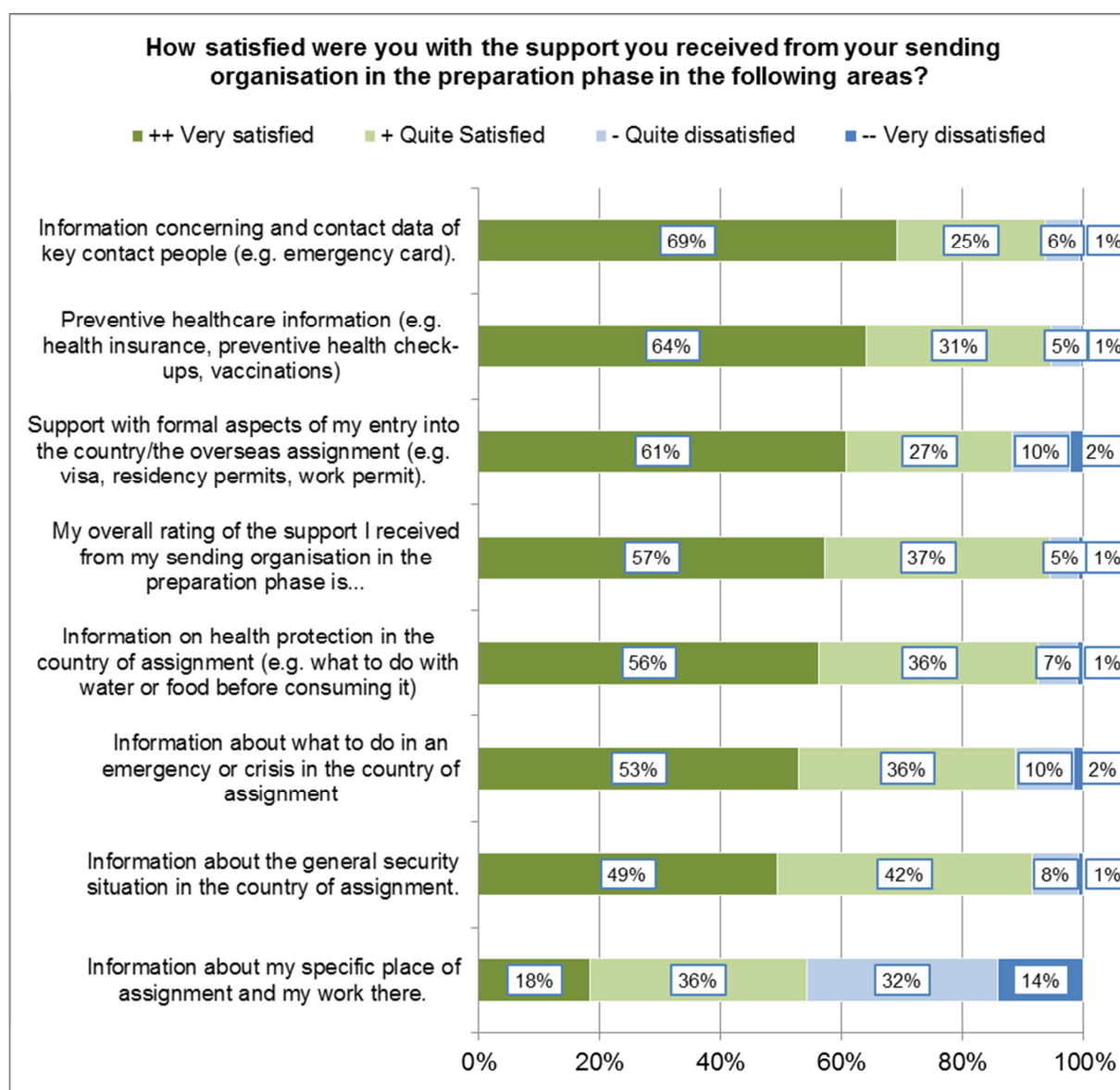


Figure 5: Volunteers' satisfaction with aspects of how they were prepared for their voluntary service

Following on from the previous years' findings, the latest volunteer survey again revealed that almost all the respondents had helped promote the work of the voluntary service before they left for their international assignment. In most cases, this took the form of them drawing their friends' and families' attention to the voluntary service, their place of assignment, host country or development issues (86%). More than one in five informed the general public about the voluntary service by, for example, giving presentations at schools. 4% of the volunteers informed the general public about development/global issues and another 4% promoted the work of the voluntary service in some other form.

Many volunteers also helped promote the work of the voluntary service before their departure by collecting donations or helping to set up fundraising groups (81%). In most cases, the sending organisation offered them support in these efforts (84%). In both of these areas, there was a slight increase compared to the 2015 volunteer survey.

Since collecting donations and helping to set up fundraising groups is not a prerequisite for selection or participation in the weltwärts programme, the survey also asks volunteers whether their sending organisations made the voluntary nature of these activities clear to

them. Most of them felt that the voluntary nature had been conveyed clearly enough, with 75% stating that this was completely or quite true. Compared to the previous years' findings, the latest survey shows that the sending organisations' communication in this area has constantly improved and they are increasingly managing to convey the voluntary nature of this important form of support for the voluntary service on the weltwärts programme (see Figure 6). This is reflected in the fact that the share of respondents who said the voluntary nature was made clear to them increased from two thirds to three quarters in the space of three cohorts⁶.

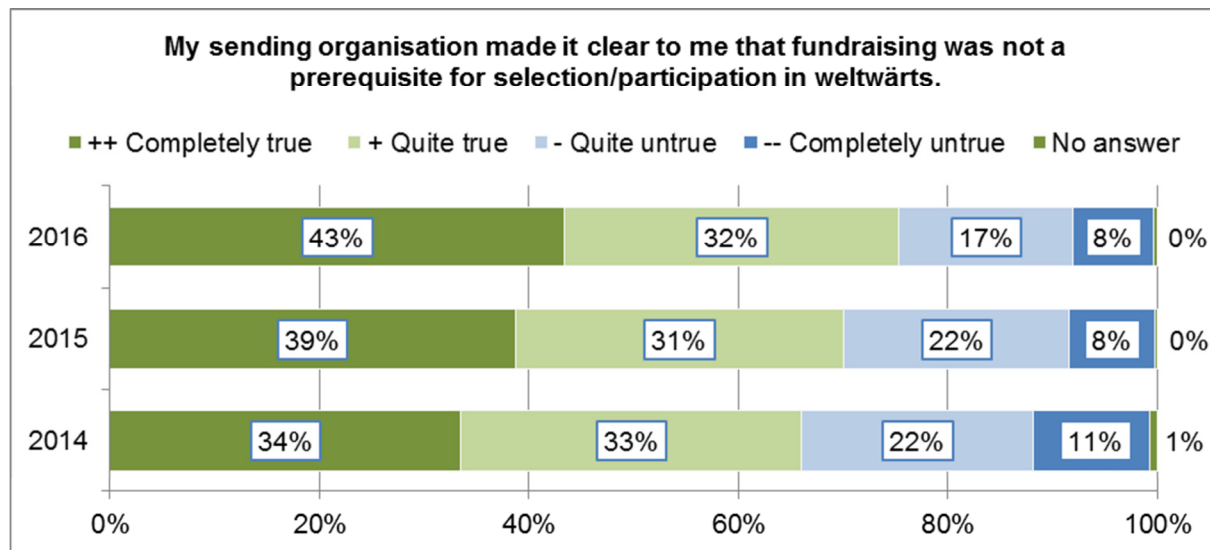


Figure 6: Volunteers' opinions on whether it was made clear to them that donation collection was not a prerequisite for selection – a comparison of the 2014 to 2016 findings

Assignment in the host country

The places of assignment were given a positive rating overall. 86% of the volunteers were very or quite satisfied with their place of assignment overall. The responses in the open comments section concerning the reasons for volunteers being (quite) dissatisfied with their place of assignment overall highlight under-stimulation and lack of integration at the place of assignment as the key causes of dissatisfaction.

On the whole, 84% of the volunteers were (very) satisfied with the way in which they were socially integrated into their place of assignment and 82% with how they were socially integrated outside of the working environment. This assessment was very similar to that of 2015. In addition, 81% were satisfied with the opportunities to make a contribution/get actively involved at their place of assignment. Finally, 77% were positive in their assessment of the work content at their place of assignment. This contrasts, however, with the result for those who were not so satisfied with the work content at their place of assignment, which was almost a quarter of the volunteers surveyed. Further data concerning satisfaction with place of assignment is provided in Figure 7. The findings of the latest volunteer survey bear out those of the previous year.

⁶ Since the question posed in the 2013 pilot study was worded differently than it is now, the 2013 cohort has been omitted in Figure 6: Volunteers' opinions on whether it was made clear to them that donation collection was not a prerequisite for selection – a comparison of the 2014 to 2016 findings, "Volunteers' opinions on whether it was made clear to them that donation collection was not a prerequisite for selection – a comparison of the 2014 to 2016 findings", in order to ensure comparability.

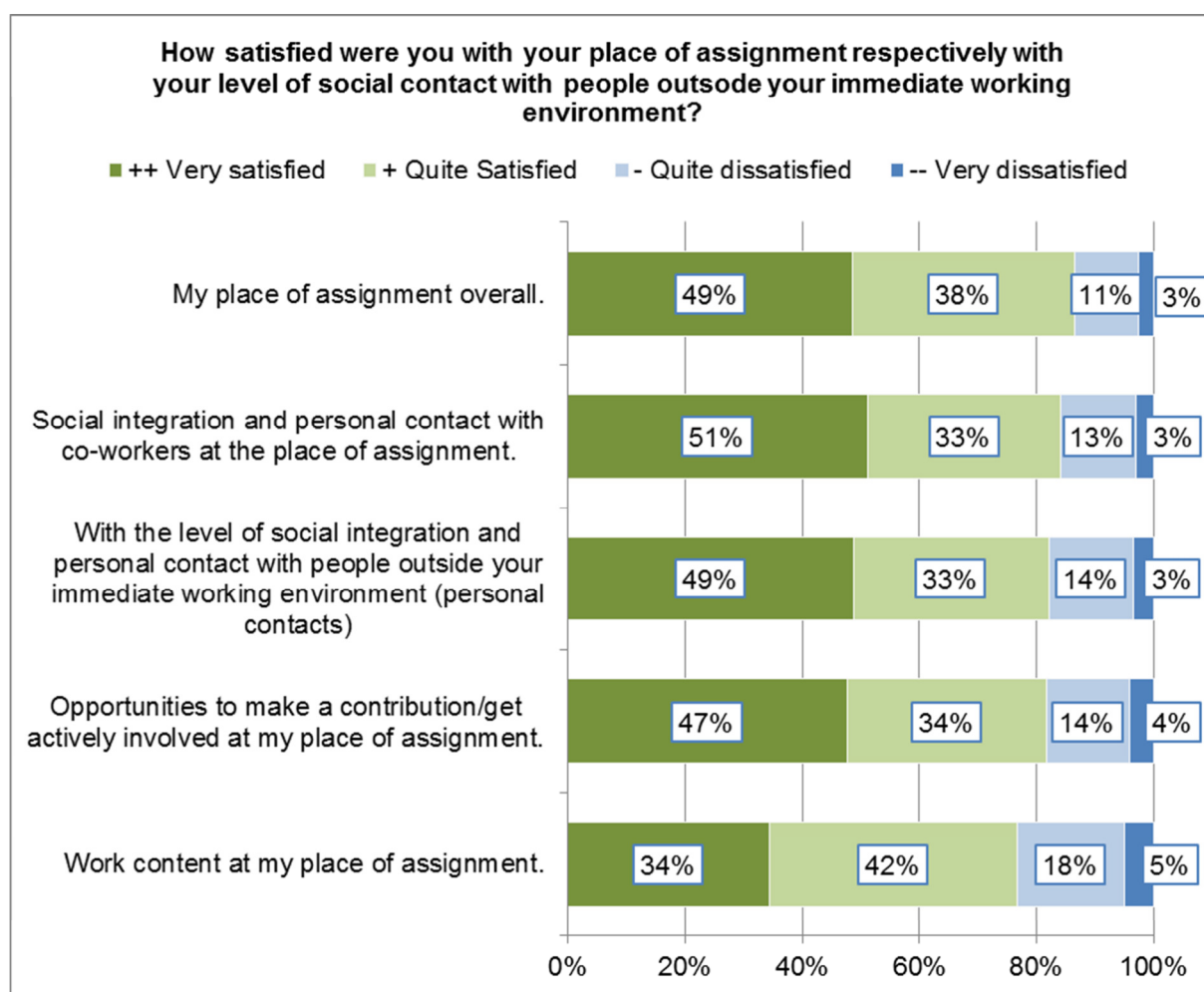


Figure 7: Volunteers' satisfaction with aspects of their place of assignment and their social integration outside of their place of assignment

Looking back at their place of assignment, 74% of the volunteers had the impression that their host organisation in the host country/their place of assignment was (quite) well prepared for their assignment. Roughly one quarter felt that the host organisations and places of assignment were not very well prepared. The respondents' assessment of how well the places of assignment were prepared for the volunteers' assignments has hardly changed since the first volunteer survey in 2013.

The findings concerning the introductory training and instruction given at the place of assignment are also similar to the previous year. 66% of the volunteers had a contact person at their place of assignment to give them instruction throughout their assignment. Roughly one third felt that this was not really or not at all true. The results were similar in relation to satisfaction with the introductory training and instruction given at the place of assignment. 62% were very or quite satisfied with this aspect; 38% were quite or very dissatisfied (see Figure 8). The most common reasons for being dissatisfied with this guidance were the lack of a contact person or the contact person being difficult to reach; both of these aspects were mentioned by 40% of those who were (quite) dissatisfied. Other reasons for dissatisfaction with the introductory training and instruction given at the place of assignment were personal problems with contact persons (23%) and the original contact person being replaced (15%). With regard to this aspect, 20% of the volunteers who were (quite) dissatisfied with the in-

introductory training and instruction reported that they had looked for (new) contact persons themselves in order to receive instruction.

Personal support for the volunteers during their overseas assignments was usually ensured. 78% of them stated that it was completely or quite true that they had a contact person, e.g. a mentor, throughout their voluntary service, whom they could contact for personal support. However, approximately one quarter stated that this was not really true or not true at all in their case. In line with the better findings concerning the availability of contact persons for personal support, compared to those for contact persons for instruction, the findings concerning satisfaction with personal support were more positive than for satisfaction with the instruction given at the place of assignment. More than two thirds (70%) were very or quite satisfied with the personal support; 30% were not so satisfied. Unlike with the instructional support, the dissatisfaction tended not to be caused by a lack of a contact person (35%) but was instead clearly due to the contact person being difficult to reach from the volunteers' point of view (49%). In addition, a good quarter of those dissatisfied with the personal support (27%) cited personal problems with contact persons as the reason. Having to look for a contact person oneself (18%) and the contact person originally planned being replaced (17%) were cited less frequently by the volunteers who were (quite) dissatisfied with the personal support they received.

All in all, the findings concerning personal support during voluntary service therefore correspond to those of the last two surveys. This is particularly true of the reasons for volunteers' dissatisfaction, which have been very similar ever since these reasons were included in the volunteer survey in 2014.

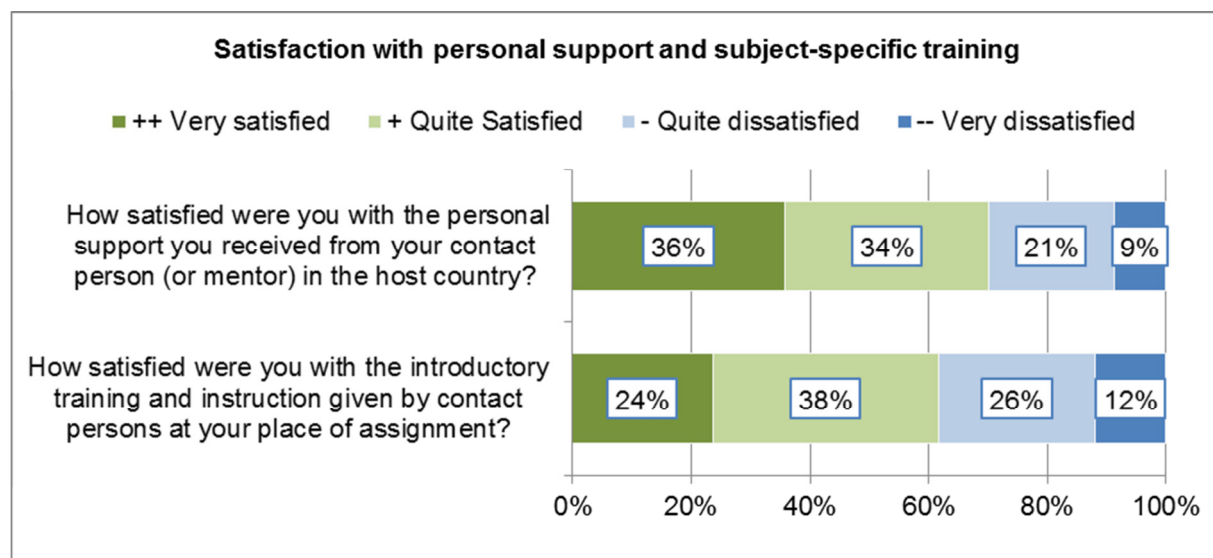


Figure 8: Satisfaction with the personal support provided during voluntary service overseas and the instruction given with regard to tasks at the place of assignment

Ensuring the safety and health of the volunteers during their year abroad is extremely important for the weltwärts programme. As part of the weltwärts programme quality development process, the volunteer surveys are therefore also intended to gather information on whether the volunteers are confronted with situations that are potentially dangerous or perceived as threatening during their overseas assignment. The findings of the latest survey show that 44% did not have any negative safety-related experiences or experience any situations that they considered potentially threatening. This is a negative development compared to the previous year since this year's share of volunteers who had no problems of this kind

during their assignment overseas fell four percentage points from 48% in the previous year. It should be pointed out, however, that this level of change is not of statistical significance.

The situations considered potentially or truly dangerous during voluntary service were mostly situations that were subjectively seen as threatening. 47% reported situations of this type. Cases of volunteers actually being threatened personally are much rarer – 85% of them had not been confronted by such a situation. There were even fewer cases of volunteers experiencing physical violence first hand (5%). Looking back at the findings for the 2014 returnees, a significant improvement in volunteer safety can be seen: the percentage of respondents who reported having experienced physical violence first hand then was 7%.

In total, 18% of the respondents reported having experienced situations in which they felt sexually harassed or threatened during their time abroad. This is significantly higher than in the previous year – both for women and men. Although previous surveys had already shown that women experience these situations much more often than men, the gap widened in 2016. Whilst 17% of the female volunteers in the 2015 survey stated that they had been confronted with sexual harassment, the figure for the male participants was 3%. The current survey revealed an increase to 22% of women and a twofold increase to 6% of men. These findings must therefore continue to be taken seriously, especially when preparing the volunteers for their service. However, it should again be pointed out that they should not be interpreted as a weltwärts-specific problem. Sexual harassment is a common form of sexualised attack or violence, which plays a role throughout society internationally. Indeed, in Germany too, the data from a representative study on violence against women indicates that nearly 60% of the women surveyed had experienced sexual harassment⁷. The finding in the volunteer survey makes it clear that this issue also affects volunteer services (including those overseas). In the discussion of the findings with Engagement Global and representatives of the sending organisations and the volunteers, it was assumed that this result was in part due to the fact that the programme committees had begun actively addressing this topic in 2015 and that the sending organisations had therefore focused on it more. It is not unusual for there to be an increase in the number of victims coming forward whenever a topic such as sexualised violence is discussed in the public domain.

The feedback from the volunteers also confirms the particular importance the German sending organisations and host organisations attach to this specific issue and to the general safety of volunteers when preparing them for and supporting them during their assignments. 92% of the volunteers who were confronted with (potentially) dangerous situations stated that they felt in (quite) good hands – despite the possibility of security issues – due to the preparation and support provided. A positive trend can again be observed here since the share of volunteers who stated that it was completely true that they felt completely safe and in good hands despite the possibility of security issues increased from 57% in 2014 to 61% in 2015 and 60% in 2016. At the same time, the share of respondents who answered “(quite) untrue” was lower than ever before, at 8% compared to 10% in the 2014 and 2015 surveys.

⁷ Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (2005): Lebenssituation, Sicherheit und Gesundheit von Frauen in Deutschland. Eine repräsentative Untersuchung zu Gewalt gegen Frauen in Deutschland <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Service/publikationen,did=20560.html> [accessed on 29 August 2017].

Seminars

The preparatory, mid-term and returnee seminars are compulsory elements of the voluntary service. As in the previous years, the latest survey again shows that it is very rare for volunteers not to attend the seminars. Almost all the volunteers surveyed had attended a preparatory seminar and at least one mid-term seminar during their time overseas. At the time of the survey, the majority of the returnees had already attended a returnee seminar (since 2014, the figure at the time of the survey has consistently been around 92%). Most of those who had not yet done so were scheduled to do so on a date after the survey. There were only a few isolated cases of volunteers not having been offered a returnee seminar.

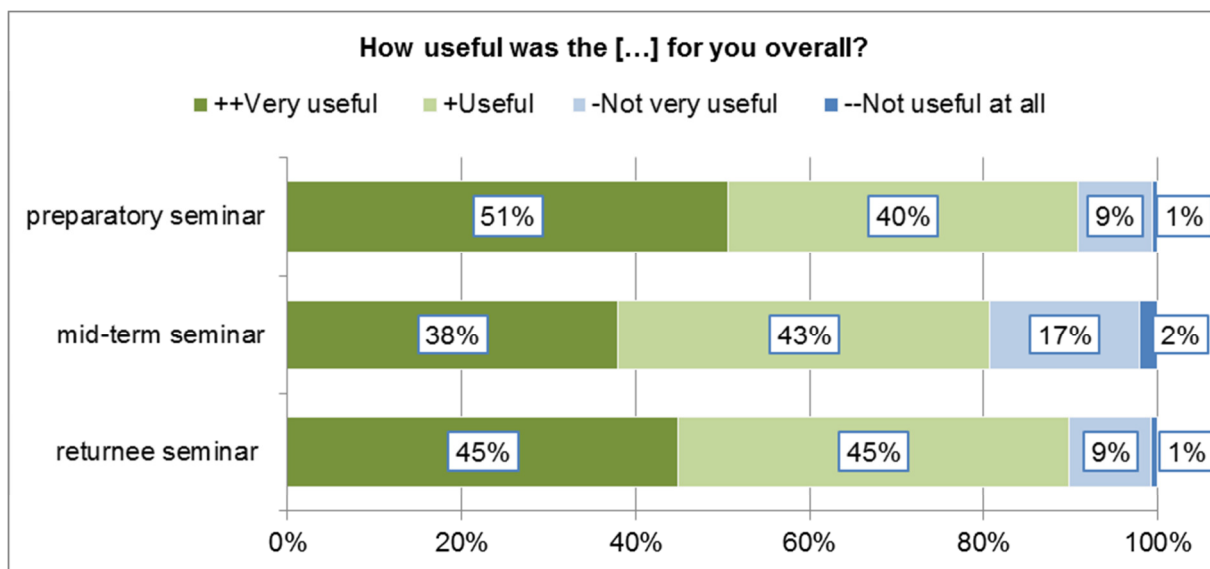


Figure 9: Assessment of the accompanying seminars on the weltwärts programme

The seminars offered by the sending and host organisations to accompany the programme were considered (very) useful overall by the overwhelming majority of the volunteers (see Figure). Increases in the “very useful” share were observed for all three types of seminar in the 2016 returnee cohort. In particular, the percentage who considered the returnee seminars helpful was higher than ever before.

The volunteers thought that the preparatory seminars were extremely beneficial. 91% of the respondents felt that they were (very) useful overall. They also helped them prepare for their work with development issues (89%). 83% said they were (very) useful as a way of preparing for the general requirements of the volunteer service and their own role as volunteers. However, they were felt not to be quite as useful as a means of preparing for everyday life during voluntary service as they were for other aspects of the volunteers’ preparation. Nonetheless, 67% did consider the seminars very or quite useful in this sense. The volunteers’ views on the benefits of the preparatory seminars were similarly positive in the previous years. However, these latest findings show that the seminars managed to prepare participants for work with development issues even better than in the past.

81% of the volunteers felt that the mid-term seminar(s) was/were (very) useful overall. By contrast, 19% of the respondents did not find these seminars particularly beneficial. This corresponds to the findings of the previous year. One particular strength of the mid-term seminars is that they provide an opportunity for volunteers to share their experiences: 96% considered them useful or very useful for this purpose. Most (86%) also felt they were a (very)

useful tool for reflecting on and reviewing what they had experienced so far during their voluntary service. In addition, 74% of the volunteers felt the mid-term seminars were (very) useful in helping them deal with the challenges they faced during their overseas assignment. Conversely, however, 26% did not see any particular benefit in this regard. 62% said that the mid-term seminars helped them learn more about development issues. Since the first volunteer survey in 2013, assessments of the mid-term seminars have developed positively from year to year. It would appear that modifications to the seminar content have gradually helped to ensure that the volunteers have drawn increasing benefit from the mid-term seminars and that the seminars support them, in particular, in terms of enabling them to reflect on and review and, ultimately, to share their experiences.

Post-assignment activities

As with the other seminars, most volunteers felt that the returnee seminars were (very) useful overall (90%). Here too, the opportunity to share experiences with other volunteers was seen as very positive. 98% considered the returnee seminar very or quite useful in this respect. The returnee seminars also help the volunteers maintain the contacts they have established and network with other volunteers on the weltwärts programme (89%). The volunteers were similarly positive in their assessment of the seminars as a means of finding out more about how to get involved in development work after returning to Germany (88%). In addition, the seminars encouraged the volunteers to continue their active involvement in development work after their return: 83% of the respondents stated that the seminars were very or quite useful in this respect.

The majority of the volunteers reported that the seminars were (very) useful as a way of reflecting on and reviewing their personal experiences during their overseas service (87%). The returnee seminars were seen to give much more support in this area than in the first volunteer survey in 2013. Over time, there has been a significant increase in this respect, with the latest result being nine percentage points higher than in 2013.

63% reported that the returnee seminars helped them readjust to life in Germany after their time overseas; they were thus slightly less useful in this respect compared to the other aspects that the returnee seminars aim to support. However, the volunteers have benefited increasingly in this area too since the first survey in 2013. The share of volunteers who felt that the returnee seminars had helped them (re-)adjust to life in Germany was also nine percentage points higher than in the first survey.

Overall satisfaction with the post-assignment activities was high, with 90% of the volunteers stating that they were very or quite satisfied. This figure also increased again compared to the previous years (see Figure 10). Although the share of respondents who stated they were (quite) satisfied with this aspect was again 87%, the percentage of 2016 returnees surveyed who were very satisfied reached an all-time high.

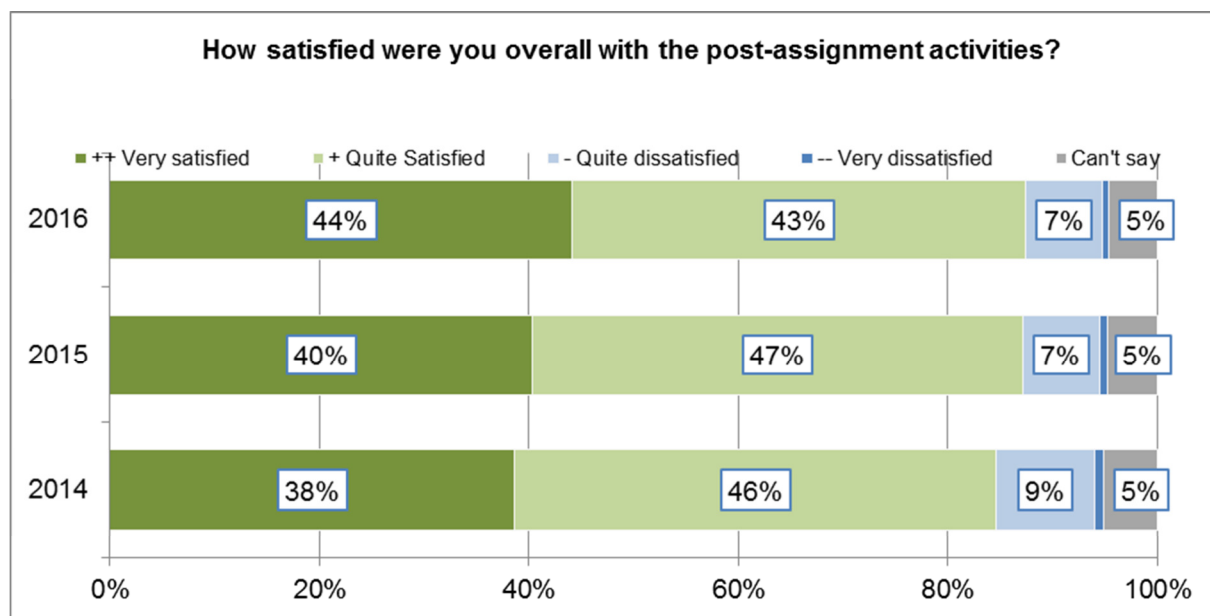


Figure 10: Satisfaction with the post-assignment activities on the volunteer service programme – comparison of the 2014 to 2016 findings⁸

The weltwärts programme as a development learning service

In order to find out more about the effects of participation in the weltwärts programme, especially with regard to global learning, the annual surveys ask volunteers to give an assessment of how they think their voluntary service has influenced various areas of their personal development.

The previous years' and the latest survey's findings reveal that voluntary service on the weltwärts programme is an enriching experience and the participants benefit personally in a variety of ways. On a general note, most of them considered participation in the programme to have had a positive effect on their personal development. Reports of negative effects were few and far between (see Figure 11).

The respondents felt that their voluntary service had had a roughly equal influence on their interest in development issues, their motivation to play an active role in society and their interest in social and political issues. At least 90% stated that they had noticed quite a positive influence, or indeed a very positive influence, in these areas (see Figure 11).

⁸ The "Can't say" answer option was only offered for volunteers who had not (yet) attended a returnee seminar at the time of the survey.

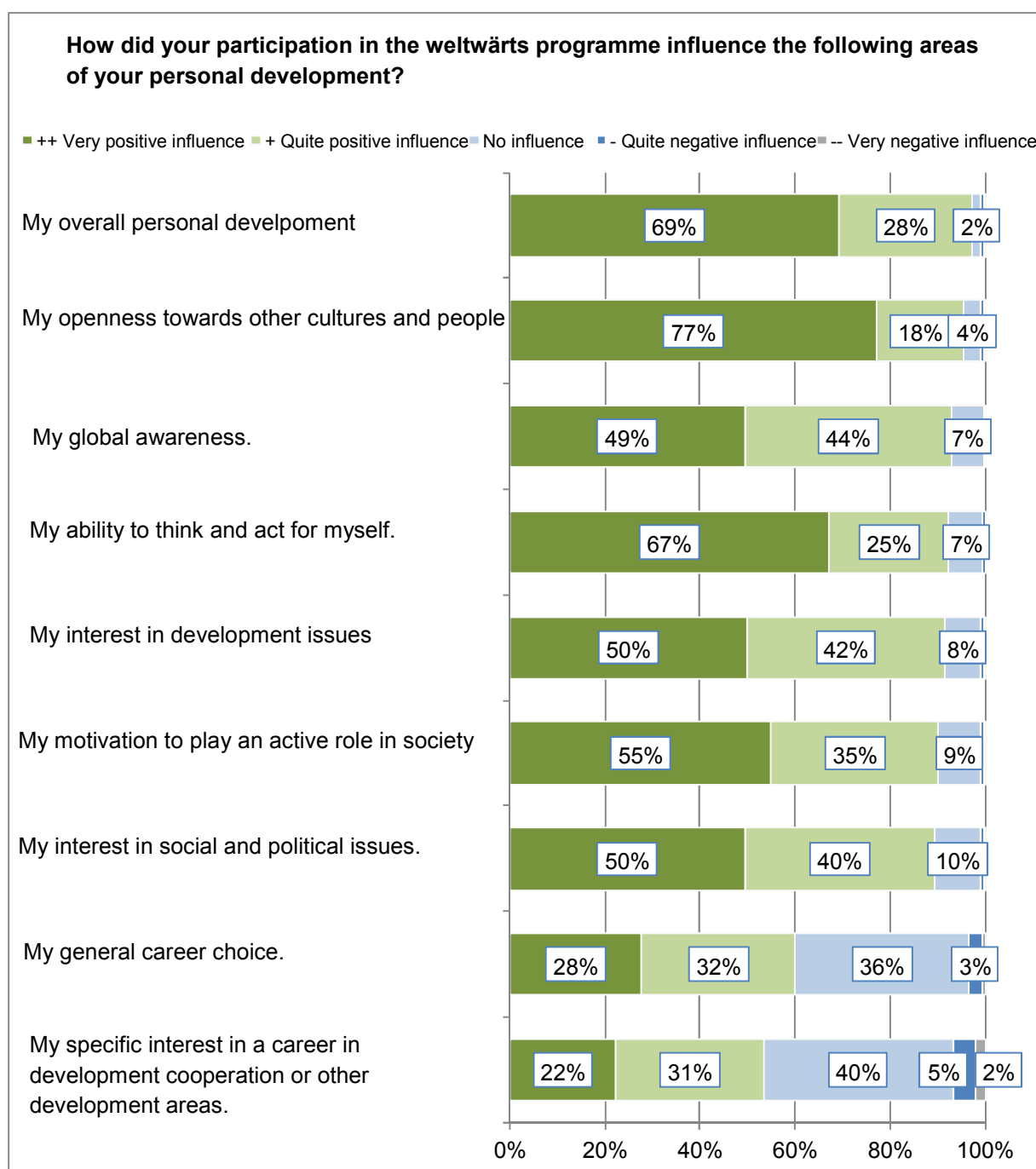


Figure 11: Assessment of how voluntary service on the weltwärts programme influenced various areas of personal development

In the respondents' view, the voluntary service did not have such a positive influence on their general career choice or their specific interest in a career in development cooperation or other development areas. More than a third said that the weltwärts programme did not have any effect in this respect. At least half of the volunteers did see positive effects with regard to their general career choice and their interest in a career in development. However, it is also true that some volunteers (5%) felt that their experiences during their voluntary service had a quite to very negative influence on their desire to seek a career in development cooperation or other development areas (see Figure 11).

The feedback concerning how participation in the weltwärts programme effects personal development corresponds to the positive findings of the previous surveys. Only *global awareness* and *ability to think and act for oneself* have changed places in the ranking of the aspects for which the volunteers saw particularly positive influences through their participation in the programme. For all other aspects, there was no change in the order of the responses and thus no change in the attribution of positive and negative influences on the weltwärts volunteers' personal development.

The previous surveys had also already shown that returning participants are extremely willing to continue volunteering⁹ beyond their weltwärts voluntary service. The findings of the 2016 survey were similarly positive, with 43% of returnees already engaged in post-assignment volunteer work at the time of the survey, i.e. roughly the same as in the previous year (44%). Of the 57% who were not, the overwhelming majority was willing to volunteer in the future. Around half of them (48%) were very certain that they would engage in voluntary work in the future and roughly a third (31%) felt it was at least probable. In total then, 88% of the volunteers were either already engaged in post-assignment voluntary work or likely to be at some time in the future. 10% were unsure about the idea of engaging in further voluntary work in the future. There were only very few returnees who said that they would (definitely) not engage in voluntary work again (see Figure 12). All in all, the 2016 findings are again almost identical to those of the previous years.

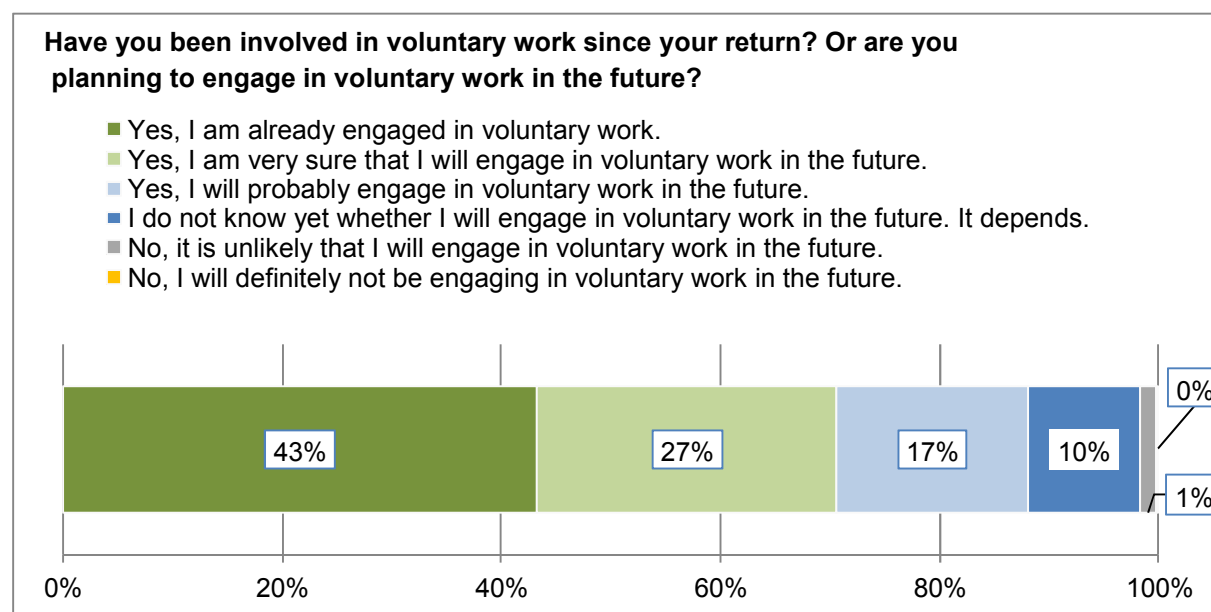


Figure 12: Post-assignment voluntary work

The fields in which returnees were already engaged in voluntary work or showed an interest in volunteering in the future are generally very diverse. One finding, for example was that the *anti-racism, asylum and migration* field remained relevant but it was no longer the top area in which returnees currently volunteer. Whilst 44% of the 2015 returnees mentioned this field, the percentage in the 2016 cohort was only 33%, which is approximately the same as in the 2014 survey. It can thus be seen that the unprecedented focus on this issue in 2015¹⁰ was

⁹ For this question, “voluntary work” was defined as any unpaid activity for the common good – not only in the area of development.

¹⁰ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge / Bundesministerium des Innern (2016): Migrationsbericht 2015, p. 28 ff. https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Migrationsberichte/migrationsbericht-2015.pdf?__blob=publicationFile [Accessed 30.08.2017].

also reflected in the areas in which the weltwärts returnees chose to volunteer. Furthermore, the continuing significance of this field is particularly underlined by those returnees who are not currently engaged in voluntary work, with 67% of them stating that they wish to work in this field in the future. This puts *anti-racism/asylum/migration* very much at the top of the areas in which returnees would be interested in volunteering in the future.

In the 2016 cohort, *work with children and young people* reclaimed top place as the area in which most returnees were currently volunteering. 41% were volunteering in this field. Here too, a large number of the returnees not (yet) engaged in post-assignment voluntary work were interested in volunteering in this field (49%).

More than a third of those already engaged in post-assignment voluntary work were working for their *sending organisation* (36%). The share of volunteers interested in continuing to work for their sending organisation was a little higher (41%). 19% were volunteering in *development education*. However, interest in volunteering in this field in the future is much higher (36%). Similar results were found with regard to volunteering for (former) *host organisations*. 13% of those currently already engaged in voluntary work were volunteering in their (former) host country through their own host organisation. Almost a quarter of those not yet engaged in post-assignment voluntary work were interested in volunteering for their (former) host organisation (25%). There are also significant differences between current volunteering activity and interest in future volunteering activity when it comes to *development cooperation*. Whilst 11% of the returnees were currently volunteering in this field, a high proportion (again up three percentage points) of returnees who were not yet engaged in post-assignment voluntary work could envisage volunteering in this field (48%). Since the first volunteer survey in 2013, there has been a considerable increase in interest in volunteering in development cooperation.¹¹ Apart from the ever greater interest in volunteering in the *development cooperation* field, all other areas mentioned above have remained very stable in this context compared to the previous year.

As in the previous year's survey, there is still a high degree of interest in post-assignment volunteering in the area of *international exchanges/relations* (e.g. *youth exchanges*). 49% of those not yet engaged in post-assignment voluntary work would like to get involved in this area; 19% of returnees engaged in volunteering already work in this field. Indeed, the share of those already active in this field rose five percentage points on 2015.

The level of interest in voluntary work in *environmental protection/conservation/climate protection* is also high (and increasing compared with the previous surveys). 42% were interested in volunteering in this field and 13% were already doing so.

Irrespective of their current volunteering activity, 58% of the volunteers surveyed stated that they would like to have more information about specific post-assignment volunteering options. This corresponds to the desire for more information recorded in the previous year.

With 56% of the 2016 returnees interested in further development-related training (e.g. training for multipliers, seminars on specific subjects or project management), the level of interest was similar to the previous year.

As in the previous years, the volunteers had very diverse interests and suggestions with regard to further training. Some of them would like methodical training, e.g. for team leaders, but considerably more interest was expressed in specific subjects that they would like to ex-

¹¹ In 2013, the share of respondents interested in post-assignment volunteering in this area was 31%.

plore further. Examples include fair trade, environmental and climate protection, inclusion, racism and migration. However, many of the subjects mentioned were directly related to development or critical reflection on development-related issues, demonstrating a significant continued interest among returnees in topics that play a role in the voluntary service on the weltwärts programme. Some of the volunteers also expressed a desire for further training opportunities that would improve their career prospects in development cooperation.