

QUESTIONNAIRE

“VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES”

GERMANY



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1. Types of voluntary activities existing in the country for young people,

There is a long and strong tradition of voluntary commitment of young people in Germany.

Volunteering of young people can be found in many areas:

- Community activity
- Participation/self-governance
- Emergency response
- Community peacekeeping
- Social assistance
- Personal assistance
- Children and youth
- Environment
- Human rights, advocacy and politics
- Economic justice
- Development aid
- Humanitarian aid
- Religious volunteering
- Education
- Arts/culture
- Sports
- Recreation
- Consumer protection
- Preservation of historic monuments.

This is matched by an equally long tradition in sponsoring this kind of commitment by the German government, in particular by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Co-operation with the relevant support organisations has been and still is characterised by the subsidiarity principle on the basis of partnership.

According to the 15th Shell youth study carried out in 2006 36% of the young people in Germany between the age of 12 and 25 engage regularly in voluntary activities (ca. 4 million persons) and 42% from time to time (ca. 5 million persons).

Source: 15. Shell Jugendstudie: „Jugend 2006 – Eine pragmatische Generation unter Druck“, www.shell-jugendstudie.de.

2. Which kind of voluntary service exist in your country and how many young people engage in them per year, in totals and by gender.

Statutory Voluntary Services

1a. Voluntary Social Service Year (*Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, FSJ*)

The Voluntary Social Service Year is a fulltime practical community work in non-profit organisations. It can be performed in

- social facilities (i.e. hospitals, homes for the elderly, kindergartens, welfare centres),
- youth works areas (i.e. youth centres, youth clubs, youth organisations),
- the field of culture (i.e. art and music schools, theatres, museums, libraries),
- the field of sports (i.e. in facilities offering sport activities for children and young people),
- the field of preservation of historic monuments.

1b. Voluntary Ecological Service Year (*Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr, FÖJ*)

The Voluntary Ecological Service Year is a fulltime practical community work in the field of nature conservation, environmental protection and education on sustainability. It can be performed i.e. in nature conservation projects, ecology groups, youth organisations focussing on ecological projects or educational establishments.

Participation criteria

Every young person who is under 27 years old and has completed his/her formal education can enrol in a civic service. A minimum age is no longer required. Depending on the federal state the young person lives in minimum school education ends at the age of 15 or 16. Recognised conscientious objectors may also perform a 12-month statutory voluntary service instead of an alternative civilian service. There are no prescriptions regarding the volunteer's nationality.

Duration

Normally the volunteers carry out the service for 12 months. The service time can be reduced to at least 6 months or be extended to maximal 18 months. Under certain conditions an extension to 24 months is possible.

Going Abroad

It is possible to enrol in one of these civic services abroad or to combine an assignment in Germany and in another country.

Statistics

Each year about 24,300 young people enrol in a FSJ/FÖJ. In 2006 among them about 1600 volunteers carried out their FSJ/FÖJ abroad (including 1075 young men performing their alternative civilian service as a civic service abroad). Since the start of the programmes in 1964 400,000 young people took part in one of the two programmes.

Source: Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend: Für mich und für andere. Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr – Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr, Berlin 2008.

>> More information:

- General information on FSJ/FÖJ:
<http://www.bmfsfj.de/Politikbereiche/Freiwilliges-Engagement/fsj-foej.html>
- Voluntary Social Service Year (FSJ): www.pro-fsj.de
- Voluntary Social Service Year in the field of culture (FSJ Kultur):
<http://fsjkultur.bkj.de>
- Voluntary Social Service Year in the field of sports (FSJ im Sport): www.dsj.de
- Voluntary Social Service Year in the field of the preservation of historic monuments (FSJ in der Denkmalpflege): www.ijqd.de
- Voluntary Ecological Service Year (FÖJ): www.foej.de

2. “weltwärts” - the Development Volunteers’ Service

The development volunteers’ service “weltwärts” (world bound) started in January 2008. It aims at promoting young people’s engagement in development cooperation and is an educational programme promoting intercultural learning in development countries.

Possible sectors for assignments are the priority areas and sectors of German development policy (e.g. poverty reduction, education, health, food security/agriculture, environmental and resource protection, water, human rights, promoting democracy, youth employment and sport).

Participation criteria

The volunteers have to be between 18 and 28 years old and must be German citizens or non-German citizens who are permanent residents and have the right of residence in Germany. They must either have completed a vocational training course after graduating from school at 15 or 16; or have graduated from secondary school at 18 or 19; or have a university degree; or they must offer other proof of their suitability for volunteer service, e.g. by experience from doing alternative service. They must have a good basic knowledge of a language spoken in the host country.

Duration

The volunteers perform their service for at least 6 months and at maximum 24 months in the host country. In order to ensure the necessary integration of the volunteers into the structures of the partner organisation, the usual period is 12 to 18 months.

Statistics

Since the start of „weltwärts“ in January 2008 the recognised sending agencies received more than 10,000 applications from young people, 60% of them sent by young women. About two-thirds of the applicants have graduated from secondary school, 10% have passed lower school-leaving examinations or a vocational training.

Until the end of September 2008 1530 volunteers started their service in 57 host countries. By the end of 2008 about 2000 volunteers had left Germany. The “weltwärts” programme aims at sending out about 10,000 volunteers per year.

>> More information: www.weltwaerts.de

Voluntary Services

Beside the three statutory voluntary services other voluntary services exist offered by German NGOs and associations, churches and other institutions. They are not co-funded by the federation. In 2006 about 12,300 young people carried out such a voluntary service funded by the volunteers and their parents themselves, private organisations, associations or third parties (i.e. churches, lottery income, private foundations).

Furthermore the federal government realised a model programme on **intergenerational voluntary services** (*generationsübergreifende Freiwilligendienste*) between 2005 and 2008 encouraging people of all age groups to become volunteers. The aim is to strengthen the cooperation between the generations and to support a new culture of voluntariness. In contrast to the FSJ/FÖJ, this type of service does not necessarily have to be a full-time job, though a minimum number of hours (8 hours) has to be served each week. Thus the intergenerational voluntary services may be provided in parallel with a job, apprenticeship or university course. The areas of service are similar to those of the Voluntary Social Service Year (FSJ). In 2009 the intergenerational voluntary services will become a regular voluntary service which will be realised nationwide.

>> More information:

<http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/generator/BMFSFJ/freiwilliges-engagement,did=118492.html>

3. Financial and legal status of voluntary activities

Financial status

Public Sources

It is not possible to specify the total amount of funds available for voluntary activities as their number and variety is very broad.

By the funding instrument of the Child and Youth Plan the German government ensures the framework for an effective infrastructure of youth organisations, organisations in the field of child and youth services and welfare organisations on the federal level. This well-funded infrastructure mainly fosters voluntary activities of and for young people. Besides the government funds temporary model programmes and specific activities and initiatives in the field of volunteering.

Moreover, specific voluntary activities of young people in the field of technical relief, environmental protection, agriculture, alimentation and consumer protection are funded by the Federal Ministries for Home Affairs, for Environment and for Agriculture.

On the regional level the federal states have similar child and youth plans to fund youth work. The most important public sources of funding lay in the hands of the 680 local youth welfare offices (Jugendämter).

The civic services Voluntary Social Service Year and Voluntary Ecological Service Year are funded by the host organisations/associations, the German federal states, third-parties and federal funds. In 2008 the federal government supported both services with about 19.23 million Euros. One million Euros of this sum were explicitly dedicated to the integration of disadvantaged young people into these services.

In 2008 the civic service “weltwärts” was funded with 25 million Euros by the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation. For 2009 the budgets provides 30 million Euros.

Non-public voluntary services are funded by the volunteers and their parents themselves, private organisations/associations or third parties (i.e. churches, lottery income, private foundations).

Source: *Bundeshaushalt 2008 (Budget 2008 of the Federation)*:

<http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/099/1609900.pdf>, pp. 2412 and 2540.

Private sources

Non-public sources supporting voluntary activities of young people are charities, enterprises and foundations.

Foundations focussing on children and youth issues:

- Aktion Mensch, www.action-mensch.de
- Bertelsmann Stiftung, www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de

- Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung, www.dkjs.de
- Heinz Nixdorf Stiftung, Arbeitsstelle “Bürgerschaftliche Initiative – freiwilliges Engagement – Ehrenamt”, www.heinz-nixdorf-stiftung.de
- Körber-Stiftung, www.stiftung.koerber.de
- Robert-Bosch-Stiftung, www.bosch-stiftung.de
- Stiftung Bürger für Bürger, www.buerger-fuer-buerger.de
- Stiftung Deutsche Jugendmarke, www.jugendmarke.de
- Stiftung Mitarbeit, www.mitarbeit.de

Legal status

Voluntary activities & Voluntary services

There is no specific legal status for volunteers in Germany. Volunteers have to act along the general legal conditions which partly regulate voluntary work in the aim to protect volunteers from specific risks, to compensate [financial] disadvantages resulting from volunteering, to promote volunteering through qualification or counselling, to create individual incentives for volunteers and to make volunteering possible.

Statutory Voluntary Services

- The **Voluntary Social Service Year** and the **Voluntary Ecological Service Year** are regulated by law. In June 2008 the two acts on the promotion of both services were merged into a uniform legislative basis – the **Act on the Promotion of Youth Voluntary Services** (*Jugendfreiwilligendienstegesetz*) – in order to simplify the legislation. The new act enhances the educational character of the voluntary services and makes them more flexible. The law regulates the possibilities of deployment, pedagogical support and observation, includes provisions on the host organisations working in the field and fixes age-limits as well as the allowance for and social security of the volunteers.

Text of the Act at: <http://www.bundesrecht.juris.de/bundesrecht/jfdg/gesamt.pdf> (in German).

- The framework of the **development volunteers’ service “weltwärts”** is based on a guideline regulating the profile of and the support for the volunteers, the sending organisations and the partner projects in the host countries as well as the legal and financial arrangements and the administrative procedures and processes.

English version of the guideline at: <http://www.weltwaerts.de/service/wwrichtlinie-en.pdf>.

Others

- According to sec 14 of the **Law on the Civilian Service** (*Zivildienstgesetz*) young men can carry out a civic service (Voluntary Social Service Year/Voluntary Ecological Service Year) instead of a civilian service under certain conditions.
- The **Law on Strengthening Voluntary Commitment** (*Gesetz zur weiteren Stärkung des bürgerschaftlichen Engagements*) supports volunteering by tax reductions. Since 1st January 2007 persons who volunteer and who receive a small allowance for their commitment do not have to pay taxes up to an amount of 500 Euros per year. Furthermore, the tax-exempt amount for trainers was raised to 2100 Euros.
- Tax exemptions for non-profit organisations do exist.

4. Main actors of voluntary activities of young people on national, regional and local level in your country

Ministries or other governmental actors:

- Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend
(Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)
Abteilung 2, Unterabteilung 21, Referat 211
Rochusstr. 8-10, 53123 Bonn, Germany, e-mail: poststelle[at]bmfsfj.de, www.bmfsfj.de
- Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
(Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
Weltwärts-Sekretariat
Postfach 12 06 19, 53048 Bonn, Germany, e-mail: sekretariat[at]weltwaerts.de, www.bmz.de

Non-governmental actors:

Organisations (selection)

- Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Workers' Welfare), fsj[at]awo.org, www.awo.org
- Deutscher Bundesjugendring (German Federal Youth Council), info[at]dbjr.de, www.dbjr.de
- Deutscher Caritasverband (German Caritas Society), info[at]caritas.de, www.caritas.de
- Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband (German Non-Denominational Welfare Association), info[at]paritaet.org, www.paritaet.org
- Deutsches Rotes Kreuz (German Red Cross Society), www.drk.de
- Evangelische Freiwilligendienste für junge Menschen, info[at]ev-freiwilligendienste.de, www.ev-freiwilligendienste.de

- Internationaler Bund (International Federation): www.internationaler-bund.de
- Katholische Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft für Freiwilligendienste (Catholic Federal Working Committee for Voluntary Services), bdkj[at]freiwilliges-jahr.de, <http://www.freiwilliges-jahr.de>

Networks (selection)

- Arbeitskreis “Lernen und Helfen in Übersee” (Association „Learning and Helping Overseas“), aklhue[at]entwicklungsdienst.de, www.entwicklungsdienst.de
- Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege (Federal Association of Volunteering Agencies), info[at]bag-wohlfahrt.de, www.bagfw.de
- Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen (Association of Volunteering Agencies), bagfa[at]bagfa.de, www.bagfa.de
- Bundesarbeitskreis FSJ (Federal Association of FSJ), info[at]pro-fsj.de, www.pro-fsj.de
- Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (Federal Network for Civic Engagement), info[at]b-b-e.de, www.freiwillig.de
- Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung (German Union of Federal Associations for Cultural Youth Education), info[at]bkj.de, www.bkj.de
- Evangelisches Forum entwicklungspolitischer Freiwilligendienst (Protestant Forum Civic Service in the field of development politics), info[at]efef-weltwaerts.de, <http://www.efef-weltwaerts.de>
- Verbund der Freiwilligen-Zentren im Deutschen Caritasverband (Network of Volunteering Centres of German Caritas Association, info[at]caritas.de, www.caritas.de/14765.html
- Welt-Freiwilligendienst – Der entwicklungspolitische Freiwilligendienst für junge Menschen in katholischer Trägerschaft (World Voluntary Service – The catholic network for voluntary services in the field of development policy), info[at]welt-freiwilligendienst.de, <http://www.welt-freiwilligendienst.de>
- Welt-Offen Verbund („World Open“ (Cosmopolitan) Network), <http://www.weltoffen-verbund.org>

Information centres on specific statutory voluntary services (selection)

- *Voluntary Ecological Service Year*: Bundesarbeitskreis FÖJ (Federal Working Committee Voluntary Ecological Year), FÖJ-Betreuungsstelle, c/o Jugendpfarramt der Nordelbischen Kirche, goos[at]oeko-jahr.de, www.foej.de
- *Voluntary Social Service Year in the field of culture*: Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung (German Union of Federal Associations for Cultural Youth Education), fsjkultur[at]bkj.de, <http://fsjkultur.bkj.de>
- *Voluntary Social Service Year in the field of sports*: Deutsche Sportjugend (German Sports Youth),

dsj[at]dsj.de, www.dsj.de

- *Voluntary Social Service Year in the field of the preservation of historic monuments*: Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste (International Youth Community Services), [ijgd\[at\]ijgd.de](mailto:ijgd[at]ijgd.de), www.ijgd.de

5. What is the social protection of young volunteers in your country and are voluntary activities compatible with social benefits ?

Voluntary Activities

Most of the people engaging in voluntary activities have an accident insurance and a casualty insurance which is paid by the organisation/association they are volunteering for. In cases in which such insurances do not exist the insurance coverage is covered by special insurances provided by the federal states.

Statutory Voluntary Services

In particular with regard to social security, young people who sign up for a statutory voluntary service are more or less on par with other young people who are doing vocational training. The host organisations provide pocket money, accommodation, meals, working clothes or can pay a lump sum to cover these expenses. Volunteers have complete social security coverage (statutory pension, accident, health care, long-term nursing care and unemployment insurance). Their parents receive family benefits and the volunteers are given travel cost reductions on the German Railways and on public transport. The Voluntary Social Service Year and the Voluntary Ecological Service Year are both recognised by the Central Office for the Allocation of Places in Higher Education as waiting time for such a university place. For participants who carry out their service abroad the sending organisations are obliged to take care of the necessary social insurances.

Voluntary Service

Volunteers who carry out a voluntary service have to care about their insurances themselves. Often the organisations offering the places help to conclude the necessary insurances.

Voluntary Services abroad

For those people carrying out a voluntary service abroad additional insurances and measures for social security are necessary depending on the host country's conditions.

Legal situation of unemployed Young people participating in voluntary activities

According to sec 119 subsec 2 Social Code Volume II unemployed people can participate in voluntary activities up to 15 hours per week without having disadvantages in respect to their earnings-related benefits.

6 Programmes and plans in the country on volunteering

National level

Public (selection)

- *Model programme on intergenerational voluntary services* (generationsübergreifende Freiwilligendienste): Between 2005 and 2008 the federal government has realised a model programme on intergenerational voluntary services encouraging people of all age groups to become volunteers. The aim is to strengthen the cooperation between the generations and to support a new culture of voluntariness. The programme will be continued in the coming years in the aim to develop a regular voluntary service in this field. >> More information: <http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/generator/Kategorien/aktuelles.did=57936.html>
- Fostering civic engagement in Germany is one of the government's priorities. That is why the *Initiative CivicEngagement "Together – For each other"* (Initiative ZivilEngagement "Miteinander – Füreinander") was launched in 2007. The initiative pools projects, actions and ideas in the broad field of volunteering in order to strengthen civic engagement of citizens, organisations and enterprises. >> More information: <http://www.initiative-zivilengagement.de>
- One of the government's top priorities is to *encourage disadvantaged young people* to take part in voluntary activities. That is why in the budget of the Federation in 2008 one million Euros were explicitly dedicated to the *integration of disadvantaged young men and women* into one of the civic services. Moreover the German National Agency for the EU programme "Youth in Action" together launched a project in order to open the European Voluntary Service for young people with a migrant background. >> More information: <http://www.jive-international.de/en>
- In 2009 the German Foreign Office will launch a new voluntary service called "kulturweit" (culture-wide). Target group will be young people between the age of 18 and 26 who like to enrol in a voluntary service abroad (duration: 6 to 12 months). The voluntary service will be based on the Act on the Promotion of Youth Voluntary Services (*Jugendfreiwilligendienstegesetz*). >> More information: <http://kulturweit.de>

Non-public (selection)

- The *Civic Academy* is a Qualification Programme for young people between the age of 18 and 27. Experts in the fields of civic engagement and economics share their know-how and methods for

the successful realisation of ideas and projects.

>> More information: <http://www.civil-academy.de/index.html>

- The *Action Week on Volunteering* is an action week on voluntary activities aiming at promoting volunteering in society coordinated by the Federal Network for Civic Engagement. >> More information: <http://www.engagement-macht-stark.de>.
- *Advanced Training Programme for Young Volunteers* (Freiwilligenkolleg): The Robert Bosch Foundation invites young volunteers who showed either excellent skills or extraordinary commitment to this training programme. The training focuses on practical skills which prepare participants for responsibilities in both their future professional lives and further civic involvement. >> More information: www.freiwilligenkolleg.de.

Regional level

There is a large number of programmes and plans at regional level. Due to this reason only the internet addresses of the regional platforms promoting voluntary activities can be listed here below.

- Baden-Württemberg: www.ehrenamt-bw.de, www.buergerengagement.de
- Bavaria: www.wir-fuer-uns.net, www.wir-fuer-uns.bayern.de
- Berlin: www.berlin.de/buergeraktiv, www.aktiv-in-berlin.info
- Brandenburg: www.ehrenamt.brandenburg.de
- Bremen: www.buergerengagement.bremen.de, www.buergerstiftung-bremen.de
- Hamburg: www.engagement.hamburg.de, www.aktivoli.de
- Hessen: www.gemeinsam-aktiv.de
- Mecklenburg-Western-Pomerania: www.netzwerk-mv.net
- Lower Saxony: www.freiwilligenserver.de
- North Rhine Westphalia: www.engagiert-in-nrw.de
- Rhineland-Palatine: www.wir-tun-was.de
- Saarland: www.pro-ehrenamt.de
- Saxony: www.wir-fuer-sachsen.de
- Saxony-Anhalt: www.engagiert-in-sachsen-anhalt.de, www.freistil-lsa.de
- Schleswig-Holstein: www.ehrenamt-sh.de
- Thuringia: www.thueringer-ehrenamtsstiftung.de

Local level

Most of all, voluntary activities take place at local level. There is a big variety of initiatives encouraging (young) people to volunteer and a wide range of local organisations promotes voluntary activities.

More information on local activities are available at the websites of the federal states (see information on regional programmes) or of the communities in question (www.nameofthecity.de). An internet platform providing information on voluntary activities in Germany can be found at www.buergergesellschaft.de.

7. Does a strategy (plan) or specific measures for the development of voluntary activities of young people exist in your country?

Voluntary activities of young people (as well as older ones) are one of the priorities of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Therefore, developing the conditions for volunteering is integral part of the government's youth policy.

Promoting volunteering and participation is one of the main objectives of youth organisations in Germany. The importance of youth organisations for promoting political and civic commitment is thus always emphasised by the Federal Government, both at national and European level. Over more than five decades, the Child and Youth Plan of the Federation, which is the government's funding instrument in the field of non-formal education, has created suitable overall conditions for the nationwide youth organisations which ensure their funding and thus the funding of young people's voluntary activities on a sustained and sustainable basis.

The statutory voluntary services of a Voluntary Social Service Year (Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr) and a Voluntary Ecological Service Year (Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr) are of special importance. The last step for developing these services was the Act on the Promotion of Youth Voluntary Services (Jugendfreiwilligendienstgesetz) which came into force in June 2008. The new Act extended the fields of application for these services and made them more flexible in order to better meet the needs of young people and the organisations offering places (for more information see chapter 3).

Currently the government's special focus is on promoting volunteering among disadvantaged young people. Therefore, a special budget of one million Euros is allocated to different national projects and initiatives aiming at this target group. Moreover organisations active in the field of youth service and youth work are encouraged to involve this target group in their voluntary work.

8. Obstacles to volunteering of young people existing in the country and measures to remove them

Obstacles (selection)

- Although the budget for the statutory voluntary services was raised in the last years there are still not enough places for all young people being interested in carrying out such a service. Every year the number of applicants is much higher than the number of places. In average, there are about twice as much interested young people as there are places in available.
- Young people who would like to carry out a voluntary service outside the statutory voluntary services (no financial support) often cannot afford the costs.
- Potential organisations/associations which would like to offer places for volunteers (statutory voluntary services) cannot afford the monthly costs for the young persons.
- Legal conditions have become more restrictive (reduction of the maximum duration for family benefits, introduction of tuition fees in some federal states) which has obstructive effects on the voluntary activities.
- Lack of financial resources for projects and initiatives (i.e. lack of basic funding).
- Socially disadvantaged young people who would like to become active, cannot afford the costs for travelling and for participation or membership fees.
- Long lead times: Young people cannot apply on short-notice for statutory voluntary services or voluntary services abroad although it could be helpful in order to bridge waiting time (i.e. between graduation and vocational training or university).
- The status of volunteers going abroad is often unclear. Sometimes they are seen as employees which causes a lot of problems.
- A lot of employers still see voluntary commitment as a disadvantage. They fear special leaves.

Source: Report of the Federal Republic of Germany to the European Commission on Voluntary Activities of Young People 2006.

Measures to remove the obstacles (selection)

- With the Act on the Promotion of Youth Voluntary Services which came into force in June 2008 the federal government aimed at removing some of the obstacles to volunteering of young people. For example the time structure of the voluntary services was made more flexible. Instead of a fixed 12-months-service-time the voluntary service can now vary between six and 24 months. Furthermore a combined service in Germany and abroad helps to better meet the interests of the young volunteers and the volunteering organisations.

- The new development volunteers' service "weltwärts" which started in 2008 considerably raised the number of places for young people interested in carrying out a voluntary service abroad. The budget provides funding for about 10,000 young volunteers each year.
- More and more projects and programmes focus in particular on promoting volunteering among disadvantaged young people (for examples see chapter 9).

9. How are voluntary activities of young people promoted in your country, particularly among young people with fewer opportunities?

Information channels promoting voluntary activities among young people (selection)

Young people are encouraged to become a volunteer through various information channels as well as by projects or actions programmes. To inform young people about the numerous possibilities of volunteering the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the bodies of statutory and voluntary youth services and youth welfare as well as the federal states developed a considerable information and advice network.

Institutions/organisations/networks (selection)

- *Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth*: provides information on the statutory voluntary service programmes and the model project on intergenerational voluntary services. In 2008 a brochure with detailed information on all the statutory voluntary services was published. >> More information: www.bmfsfj.de, Download of the brochure: <http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/generator/Kategorien/Service/themen-lotse.did=3598.html>
- *Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation*: provides information on the development volunteers' service "weltwärts". >> More information: www.weltwaerts.de
- *Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement* (Federal Network for Civic Engagement): gives practical impulses for the promotion of volunteering and civic engagement, supports good practice and exchange of experience. >> More information: www.freiwillig.de
- *Eurodesk*: German part of the European information platform provides in particular information on voluntary activities abroad. >> More information: www.eurodesk.de
- *German Federal Youth Council* (Deutscher Bundesjugendring) and its member organisations (youth organisations, regional youth councils) promote volunteering of young people and advocate better conditions for young volunteers. >> More information: www.dbjr.de

Internet portals (selection)

- www.foej.de – detailed information on the Voluntary Ecological Service Year

- www.foej.net – internet platform for young people who are carrying out a Voluntary Ecological Service Year and those having done one
- www.fsj-adia.de – information for young people interested in carrying out a voluntary service abroad
- www.fsj-web.org – detailed information on the Voluntary Social Service Year
- www.fsjkultur.de - detailed information on the Voluntary Social Service Year in the field of culture
- www.rausvonzuhause.de – information on voluntary activities and services abroad, database on international youth mobility programmes
- www.pro-fsj.de - detailed information on the Voluntary Social Service Year including organisations offerings places

Other examples are the internet portal on volunteering of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg (www.ehrenamt-bw.de) and the homepage of the Germany Caritas Society (<http://www.caritas-ehrenamt.de>).

Initiatives to promote voluntary activities among young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (examples)

- *Foster the European Voluntary Service among young migrants*: In the framework of the project “JiVE. Youth Work International – Experiencing Diversity” funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the European Union a sub-project run by the German National Agency for the Youth in Action programme focusses on increasing the share of young people with a migrant background in projects of the European Voluntary Service. As a supplement, a flanking academic support for 20 model projects of the European Voluntary Service (10 secondments and 10 intakes) is expected to indicate how the participation of young people with migrant background in international and national Voluntary Services can be strengthened. >> More Information: <http://www.jive-international.de/en/sub-projects/european-voluntary-service>
- *Award “Involvement and integration of migrants through civic engagement”*: The foundation “Citizens for citizens” (Bürger für Bürger) awards a yearly prize for projects and ideas on voluntary activities realised by and for migrants. In 2008 the first prize was awarded to a youth club in Celle (Lower-Saxony) built up and run by young migrants. >> More information: www.buerger-fuer-buerger.de
- *National Programme “Voluntary services qualify”* (Freiwilligendienste machen kompetent): In September 2007 the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth launched this programme focussing in particular on disadvantaged young people. The programme

facilitates the access to voluntary engagement in the Voluntary Social Service Year and the Voluntary Ecological Service Year. The aim is to encourage in particular disadvantaged young people to become active in society and to improve their training and job opportunities by doing such a service. >> More information: <http://www.bmfsfj.de/Politikbereiche/freiwilliges-engagement,did=98194.html>

10. Explain how voluntary activities of young people are recognised in your country.

Certificates

- *Jugendleiter/in-Card (Juleica)*: Among the different certificates in Germany the Juleica is one of the most important ones. The card rewards the commitment and the qualification of young volunteers and gives various discounts for community services, cultural offers etc. It is issued after a special qualification training of 40 hours. The Juleica is the most common certificate for young volunteers in Germany. About 3000 cards are issued each month. Currently the German Federal Youth Council runs a project on further developing the Juleica and to make it even more attractive. >> More information: www.juleica.net
- Some federal states have an own form of certifying qualifications. In Baden-Württemberg the “Qualipass” documents practical experiences and competences of young people between the age of 12 and 25 acquired by voluntary commitment but also by traineeships, stays abroad etc. (www.qualipass.info). Other federal states have similar forms of documenting voluntary commitment of young people (i.e. Hamburger Nachweis, Berliner FreiwilligenPass, EhrenamtsCard in Hessen).
- Young people who carried out a Voluntary Social Service Year or a Voluntary Ecological Service Year have a right to receive a certificate informing about the form and the duration of their commitment. The certificate can also include a performance rating and the vocational qualifications the young people acquired during their service.
- Since 2006 voluntary activities of young people in international contexts are recognised by “*International Certificates*” (Nachweise International). These certificates document young people's extracurricular engagement and their personal commitment as members or leaders of a team in an international youth project. There are three kinds of certificates indicating three different stages of commitment: the International Commitment Certificate, the International Participation Certificate and the International Competence Certificate. >> More information: www.open-the-world.net.

Competitions and awards 2008 (selection)

- Citizens Award “*für mich, für uns, für alle*” (for me, for us, for all) honours citizens who showed an extraordinary commitment in the field of voluntary work. It is one of the most important awards for voluntary commitment in Germany. The category “JUNIOR” awards young people until the age of 21. In 2008 the main focus of the award was on people and projects aiming to improve the situation of children and young people. >> More information: www.buerger-engagement.de/1_initiative/index.php.
- Every two years the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the German Federal Youth Council award the *Heinz-Westphal-Preis* to young people doing extraordinary voluntary work. The prize money amounts to 15,000 Euros. The last time the prize was awarded in 2007. >> More information: <http://heinz-westphal-preis.de>.
- Groups, associations and single persons who are voluntarily active in Baden-Württemberg can participate in the competition “*Echt gut!*” (Really Good) – Voluntary Commitment in Baden-Württemberg”. In 2008 the prize was awarded in six different categories, one of them for “young makers”. >> More information: www.echt-gut-bw.de.
- Since 2003 the Federal Association of Volunteering Agencies (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen) awards an prize to innovative project ideas of volunteers’ agencies aiming at solving social problems by voluntary commitment. In 2008 the motto of the award was “Jugend@Engagement” (youth@engagement). >> More information: www.bagfa.de
- In 2008 the Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung (German Union of Federal Associations for Cultural Youth Education) in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth ran a competition called “PlusPunkt KULTUR – Wettbewerb für junge Engagement in der Kultur” (Competition for young commitment in culture) aiming at young people between the age of 14 and 30 and organisations in the field of culture and youth work. >> More information: www.plus-punkt-kultur.de

Societal recognition

Since 2004 the Federal Network of Civic Engagement organises each year the Week of Civic Engagement (Woche des bürgerschaftlichen Engagements). Under the slogan „Engagement makes you strong” many young people participate in numerous projects at local and regional level. The Week of Civic Engagement can be seen as an image campaign for volunteers and helps to draw the attention of public and media on voluntary activities. >> More information: www.engagement-macht-stark.de.

11. Which co-operations, networks and exchange programmes do exist in your country for supporting voluntary activities of young people?

Cooperations and networks

National level (selection)

- *Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege* (Federation Association of Non-statutory Welfare) - working group of the national umbrella organisations of voluntary social welfare services in Germany fulfilling a consultative and coordinating role on all issues of voluntary social welfare services. >> More information: www.bagfw.de
- *Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen* (Federal Association of Volunteering Agencies) - network organisation of local and regional volunteering agencies which aims at promoting societal acceptance of voluntary work. >> More information: www.bagfa.de
- *Bundesarbeitskreis Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr* (Federal Working Committee Voluntary Ecological Year) - unites 46 of 52 organisations recognised to offer places for the Voluntary Ecological Year. The committee aims at representing common interests, organising information and experience exchanges as well as at strengthening the importance of the Voluntary Ecological Year in society. >> More information: www.foej.de
- *Bundesarbeitskreis Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr der bundeszentralen Trägerverbände und Zentralstellen* (Federal Working Committee Voluntary Social Year) - unites the central federal voluntary and statutory bodies as well as the organisations/associations offering places for the Voluntary Social Service Year. The committee coordinates and further develops the Voluntary Social Service Year services. >> More information: www.pro-fsj.de
- *Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement* (Federal Network of Civic Engagement) - unites 190 civil society organisations and aims at the sustainable promotion and development of civic and voluntary engagement. >> More information: www.freiwillig.de
- *Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung* (German Union of Federal Associations for Cultural Youth Education) - unites 48 specialised organisations and federal associations active in cultural education for young people which have joined forces to work towards a common goal: the promotion and advancement of out-of-school cultural education for children and young people. It is one of the government's partners for the intergenerational voluntary service. >> More information: www.bkj.de, www.kek-projekt.de
- *Deutscher Bundesjugendring* (German Federal Youth Council) - working committee of 45 national youth organisations and regional youth councils. It promotes voluntary activities of young people at all levels and represents the interests of young people active in youth organisations towards government, parliament and public. >> More information: www.dbjr.de

- *Verbund der Freiwilligen-Zentren im Deutschen Caritasverband* (Network of Volunteering Centres of German Caritas Association) - network of volunteering centres in the German Caritas Society.
>> More information: www.caritas.de/14765.html

Regional level

Similar to the work of the German Federal Youth Council at national level the 16 Regional Youth Councils promote voluntary activities of young people at regional and local level.

>> More information: www.dbjr.de/index.php?m=1&id=22&type=LJR&

For more information on cooperations and networks at regional level see the link list to regional platforms promoting volunteering in chapter 6.

European level

Eurodesk is a European network of information services providing access to European information for young people and for those who work with them. The German Eurodesk network unites more than 40 local information relays. >> More information: www.eurodesk.de, www.rausvonzuhause.de

International level (selection)

- *Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden* (Action Committee Service for Peace) - umbrella organisation of 35 organisations and institutions, all of which provide peace services focussing on various work areas and programmes in Germany and abroad. Their peace services are open to everyone. >> More information: www.friedensdienst.de
- *Arbeitskreis "Lernen und Helfen in Übersee"* (Association „Learning and Helping Overseas“) is a nonprofit association with 27 member organisations being active in the field of development cooperation, international voluntary services and education in development countries. The association provides information for those who would like to work abroad in a social area, organises professional postings of experts as well as short or long term involvement of young people and adults in voluntary and social peace services. >> More information: www.entwicklungsdienst.de
- *Evangelisches Forum entwicklungspolitischer Freiwilligendienst* (Protestant Forum Civic Service in the field of development politics) - network of protestant organisations active in voluntary services in the field of development policy. >> More information: <http://www.efef-weltwaerts.de>
- *IJAB – Fachstelle für Internationale Jugendarbeit* (International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany) - central specialist agency for international youth policy, international youth work and youth information. Its 29 member organisations represent the broad variety of German

child and youth services. Its task is to promote international youth work and the cooperation in the field of youth policy to increase mutual understanding between young people from different countries and cultural backgrounds, to consolidate their relationships and to overcome prejudices. >> More information: www.ijab.de

- *Welt-Freiwilligendienst – Der entwicklungspolitische Freiwilligendienst für junge Menschen in katholischer Trägerschaft* (World Voluntary Service - The catholic network for voluntary services in the field of development policy) - network of catholic organisations active in voluntary services in the field of development policy. >> More information: <http://www.welt-freiwilligendienst.de>
- *Welt-Offen Verbund* („World Open“ (Cosmopolitan) Network) - network of non-confessional organisations active in the field of voluntary services in the field of development policy. >> More information: <http://www.weltoffen-verbund.org>

Exchange opportunities for young volunteers

In general events and meetings (i.e. general assemblies) at national level offer a lot of face-to-face opportunities for young volunteers to exchange experiences. For all volunteers carrying out a Voluntary Social Service Year/Voluntary Ecological Service Year regular seminars are integral part of the programme. These seminars provide a space where young volunteers meet to share and reflect their experiences as well as to broaden their knowledge on issues related to their service.

Moreover volunteers communicate via internet platforms/forums. Examples for these kind of online forums are:

- www.foej.net – A platform where young volunteers who are carrying out a Voluntary Ecological Service Year can exchange information and experience.
- www.fsj-adia.de - Young volunteers having done their service abroad can upload an experience report in order to inform others interested in doing such a service. An online forum provides space for direct exchange and a “job fair” helps to find a place in an organisation/association receiving volunteers abroad.

12 Do collective volunteering projects exist in your country?

- 8th July 2008: **Social Day (Sozialer Tag) 2008** - Several hundred thousand pupils in Germany went to work for one day in an enterprise instead of going to school and donated their wages to education projects for young people in South Eastern Europe. The action day was supported by several prime presidents of the federal states and the Federal President Horst Köhler. The aim of the action was to encourage young people to get engaged in voluntary activities and to learn about

social responsibility. The next Social Day is scheduled for 18th June 2009. >> More information: www.sozialertag.de.

- 21st - 25th May 2008: The **97th Congress of the German Catholic Church (Deutscher Katholikentag)** in Osnabrück gathered several ten thousand people, among them a big number of young volunteers. >> More information: www.katholikentag.de.
- 30th July - 3rd August 2008: The **15th World Baptist Youth Conference** in Leipzig gathered several thousand young people from all over the world. >> More information: <http://dive-deeper.org>.
- 19th - 28th September 2008: **4th Week of Civic Engagement** - Under the slogan “Engagement makes you strong” (Engagement macht stark) volunteers all over Germany presented their projects, initiatives, programmes etc. to draw public attention on voluntary activities. The next Week of Civic Engagement is scheduled for 2nd-11th October 2009. >> More information: <http://www.engagement-macht-stark.de>.

13 Which recent survey or research has been carried out on the topic of voluntary activities?

Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (Ed.): Evaluation des freiwilligen sozialen Jahres und des freiwilligen ökologischen Jahres, Wiesbaden 2008.
Evaluation of the Voluntary Social Service Year and the Voluntary Ecological Service Year

Düx, Wiebken; Sasse, Erich; Prein, Gerald; Tully, Claus J.: Kompetenzerwerb im freiwilligen Engagement. Eine empirische Studie zum informellen Lernen im Jugendalter, Wiesbaden 2009 (The study was carried out in 2008).
Empirical study on voluntary activities and informal learning in adolescence

Hansen, Stefan: Lernen durch freiwilliges Engagement. Eine empirische Studie zu Lernprozessen in Vereinen, Wiesbaden 2008.
Empirical study on learning processes in voluntary organisations

Institut für Stadtteilentwicklung, Sozialraumorientierte Arbeit und Beratung (ISSAB) der Universität Duisburg-Essen (Ed.): Engagementförderung bei Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund - Grundlagen, Praxiserfahrungen, Empfehlungen, mitarbeiten.skript, Bonn 2008.
Study on promoting voluntary activities among young people with a migrant background

Prognos: Engagement-Atlas 2009 – Daten. Hintergründe. Volkswirtschaftlicher Nutzen, Aachen 2008.

Download: [http://zukunftsfonds.generalideutschland.de/internet/csr/csr_inter.nsf/ContentByKey/MPLZ-7L3EHX-DE-p/\\$FILE/Engagementatlas%202009_PDF_Version.pdf](http://zukunftsfonds.generalideutschland.de/internet/csr/csr_inter.nsf/ContentByKey/MPLZ-7L3EHX-DE-p/$FILE/Engagementatlas%202009_PDF_Version.pdf)

Survey on the geographical distribution of civic commitment in Germany

Universität Duisburg-Essen, Fachbereich Bildungswissenschaften, Labor für

Organisationsentwicklung: Engagementförderung in Nordrhein-Westfalen – Infrastruktur und Perspektiven, 2008.

Download: http://www.buergergesellschaft.de/fileadmin/pdf/studie_EFNW_0808.pdf

Survey on the promotion of voluntary activities in Northrhine-Westfalia