

South African German Network

- SAGE Net -

Policy for the weltwärts programme

1	INTENTION OF POLICY
2	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF SAGENET
3	APPLICATION
4	WORKING CONDITIONS
5	HOLIDAYS
6	SELECTION
7	SEMINARS
8	LOGISTICS
9	ROLE PLAYERS
10	COMMUNICATION
11	FINANCES
12	CONFIDENTIALITY
13	INSURANCE
14	INCAPACITY ASSESSEMENT
15	GRIEVANCE
16	DISCIPLINARY
17	FINCANCIAL SUPPORT TO PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

1. INTENTION OF THE POLICY

- To ensure that the placement of Weltwärts volunteers is satisfactory to all role players involved
- To ensure that there are guidelines for all provinces in SA to handle the placement of volunteers in a uniform manner
- To ensure the safety of the volunteers
- To fulfil on the objectives of the Weltwärts programme and to stay within the procedural guidelines given by the German government
- To ensure the volunteers experience their placement as an opportunity and leave the country with a wealth of new knowledge
- For members of SAGE Net G and SAGE Net SA to have a common understanding of the Weltwärts programme

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF SAGE NET

Our Vision

The vision of SAGE Net is to create stable and flexible partnerships within a coordinated network of organizations and individuals to **facilitate intercultural learning, personal growth and professional exchange.**

The Network supports programmes in the fields of education, youth, tourism, social issues/health, conflict resolution, arts and culture as well as science through national and bilateral structures and communication.

Our Mission

SAGE Net facilitates intercultural learning, personal growth, professional exchange and sustainable development. We aim to share learning that broadens and strengthens individual members and organisations in their vision to build **democratic societies** on the basis of **equitable partnerships** through

- providing network opportunities (by providing information, conferences, open days, newsletters and a website)
- providing access to resources
- providing support for long-term contact and exchanges between SA and Germany

Our Values / code of conduct

Our activities are based on the following values:

- Sustainable development (including social and economical development as well as environmental protection)
- Transparency and information
- Accountability and good governance
- Integrity and ethics
- Identity and autonomy

- Free will and initiative
- Participation and dynamics
- All exchanges are based on an equal partnerships
- Open and clear communication with two-way dialogue
- Constructive co-operation
- Pick up on synergies / openness / respect diversity

The Weltwärts Programme in SAGE Net

SAGE Net is a sending organisation for volunteers participating in the German governmentally funded Programme weltwärts. Through weltwärts SAGE Net aims to promote the goals of the above mentioned vision: intercultural learning, personal growth and professional exchange on an individual and organizational level.

3. APPLICATION FOR PLACEMENT

A young person interested in applying for a placement through SAGE Net has to follow the following procedure: Complete the application form and send with CV and motivational letter to SAGE Net in Berlin within a certain time frame.

Short listed applicants must submit references.

The Hosting organisations must be involved during the selecting process by maintaining an inside into the application papers.

4 WORKING CONDITIONS

SAGE Net SA will provide specific job specs including what kind of person with which kind of skills would be suitable for the individual host projects.

The duration of each placement is exactly 1 year, 365 days. In addition the volunteer is obliged to attend the preparation seminar in GER, the orientation days in SA, the midyear seminar and the returnee seminar. Volunteers are expected to work 40 hours per week for 5 days per week. They will have leave available according to the leave arrangements of their projects, rules that apply for staff that work at their project.

5. HOLIDAYS

Volunteers have to apply for holidays and arrange with their supervisor at work. If the supervisor agrees the volunteer has to inform his/her mentor with the "holiday application form" and inform their mentor about the following aspects of the volunteer's holidays:

- date and duration of your trip
- destination of your trip
- contact details and accommodation during your trip
- company during your trip
- means of travel
- planned activities during your trip

The mentor has the right to disagree, voice concern or not approve the volunteer's plans. Before travelling, the volunteer has to receive a confirmation of his supervisor.

6. SELECTION

The office in Berlin receives applications and then arranges (telephonic) preliminary interviews to determine personal motivation and expectation. Suitable applicants according to personal and professional skills are invited to come to a selection day. The aim of selection days is to find the most suited person for each placement. SAGE Net G will conduct structured interviews and workshops / group work in which the volunteer has to engage.

The criteria that determines selection is as follows:

- Professional skills;
- Social & personal skills;
- Motivation for voluntary service;
- Fundraising Concept;
- Interest & knowledge of South Africa;

Once SAGE Net G has preselected a volunteer they will place the volunteer at a certain project in cooperation with SAGE Net SA. SAGE Net SA will include the South African partner projects as much as possible in the placement process. SAGE Net G will include the German partner projects as much as possible in the placement process. The partner organisations should provide SAGE Net Germany with needed skills. The skills demanded by the South African partner projects will be considered in the selection process.

7. SEMINARS

7.1 THE PREPARATION SEMINAR

All selected volunteers have to attend a preparation seminar during the month of June/July. The aim of the seminar is to prepare the young people for their stay as thoroughly as possible. Important topics that will be covered at the seminar are:

- Overview of SAGE Net, SAGE Net goals and policies, responsibilities and contact persons
- Personal motivation/expectations/aims
- General regulations and conditions of the programme (finances, flight, visa,)
- Safety in SA and conflict management
- Specific characteristic of SA (historical, political, health, diverse culture)
- Cultural differences and intercultural learning
- Sustainability of the volunteer service and meaning for partner organisation and in a global context
- Understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the volunteer, partner organisation, sending organisation and mentors in South Africa
- Developing a personal question for "my volunteer year"
- Completion and collation of all documentation relating to dates, visa application, flights and insurance. The volunteers will receive a list of all required documents prior to the seminar to assist with the completion of the latter.

SAGE Net G reserves the right to exclude a volunteer from the sending process should they be deemed unsuitable.

Note: A representative from SAGE Net SA attends this seminar

7.1.1 PROJECT-SPECIFIC PREPARATION

Before the send off, the volunteer will meet the German Partner organisation in order to prepare for the actual work at the project (background information about the project and fields of work). If the project has no German Partner organisation the specific preparation has to be done in accordance with SAGE Net. SAGE Net in general will not consider the attendance of previous seminars which had been attended prior to the selection of the volunteers.

7.2 ORIENTATION

Orientation takes place in South Africa and begins with the moment of arrival in SA. Mentors or representatives of the partner organisation will meet the volunteers at the airport; each region will convene in depth orientation meetings with a follow-up session within the first weeks.

Important topics include:

- Safety
- Review and deepen the topics discussed at the preparation seminar
- Reflection of the first experiences
- Reflection of roles in interaction between mentor and volunteer

7.3 INTERMEDIATE SEMINAR

- Reflection of personal processes and progress made by each volunteer as well as of their work in the project
- Exchange of experiences (personal and project situation) with the other volunteers
- Reflection on challenging situations (reasons and how to deal with them)
- Analysis of personal experiences through reflection and meta-communication
- Reflection of roles in interaction between mentor and volunteer
- Reflection and review of the volunteer's personal learning goal
- Aims & tasks for the second half

Note: A representative from SAGE Net G attends this seminar

7.4 RETURNEE SEMINAR

- Exchange of experiences among the volunteers
- Reflection of personal process (successes and challenges) during the volunteer year
- Reflection on the volunteer's personal learning goal
- Analyzing of challenging situations to understand the reasons and learning possibilities
- Reflection on the impact and sustainability of the volunteer service.
- Personal completion the voluntary year in SA.
- Transformation of the returnee's energies after their return (positive or negative) into energy and motivation to contribute to (SAGE Net's) Weltwärts activities.

- Looking at further possibilities to engage and communicate the experience with the German society.

7.5 ALUMNI

- Exploring the personal opinion and contribution pertaining to volunteer service in relation to development work
- Involvement in development related topics
- Networking and personal exchange
- Exchange of possibilities of communicating the volunteer experiences (methods of public relations)

8 LOGISTICS

8.1 VISA

The Visa Application will be completed in the course of the preparation seminar. Therefore, the volunteer as well as SAGE Net have to ensure that all necessary documentation will be available at this point. As an integral part of the Visa application procedure at the South African consulate in Germany, the Volunteer agrees to pay a security deposit as part of the application to the South African Embassy. After the assignment period has expired and after the Volunteer's return to Germany the security deposit will be paid back by the South African embassy.

The following documents need to be attached to the application:

- Letter of request for the service of the volunteer by the SA partner project
- SAGE Net G letter explaining the status of the volunteer and his support by the BMZ
- Insurance certificate
- Copy of flight particulars
- Polizeiliches Führungszeugnis (engl: certificate of conduct)
- Doctors certificate, TBC statement by doctor or clinic
- Security deposit, application fee, application form filled out in black ink in block letters, passport,
- Photo

8.2 CONTRACTS

SAGE Net G and SAGE Net SA has a contract with each partner organisation in South Africa.

Each volunteer has to sign a contract with SAGE Net G the volunteer.

8.3 FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

The date of departure will be determined by the receiving organisation and SAGE Net SA. Usual departure is between mid August and mid September. Tickets are booked SAGE Net G, Berlin office. Tickets are issued for a maximum of 365 days (12 months) and include a return trip that is required by the SA consulate in Germany. The date of the return trip is usually exactly 12 months after the first flight. Exceptions to this arrangement usually incur rebooking fees, which need to be borne by the individual volunteer. Individual arrangements can only be accepted as exception; usually a group ticket will be used for the flight arrangements. They need to be planned and communicated well in advance between all role players, especially between project, SAGE Net SA, SAGE Net G and travel agent. The communication hub is the Berlin office.

Boarding passes need to be kept and presented to Sage Net G after final return to Germany. Any failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the costs of the flight ticket and can lead to costs having to be borne by the volunteer.

Onward and return travel arrangements (airport to project or vice versa) will be made by Sage Net SA.

If the volunteer already has to fly back home before the end of 12 months and due to external conditions, this must be discussed with the hosting organization. If they agree, the volunteer is allowed to terminate his volunteer service up to 13 days before the 12 months are completed.

IN this case the volunteer must present an authorization of the hosting organisation.

8.4 **ACCOMMODATION**

Mentors undertake to secure appropriate accommodation for each volunteer coming to SA, whereby accessibility and opportunities for an intercultural experience will be considered. Volunteers will be living in various scenarios, e.g. with a host family, in the township, in a communal house, in a hostel. Mentors will highlight the issues around the different housing options. Volunteers need to be prepared to share a room with another person.

The volunteers will be liable for the costs of any destruction of property.

Moving to another place will only be allowed in instances where there is severe and irresolvable conflict. However, costs will be incurred by the volunteer. Mentors will assess and give approval / decline requests to move.

Replacement of tenancy is not allowed.

8.5 **TRANSPORT**

The Weltwärts regulations are not in favour of volunteers driving vehicles and therefore recommend that volunteers travel on public transport to their place of work. If possible, it is advisable for volunteers to live within walking distance of their work place. Volunteers using minibus taxis should be advised of safety measures, routes and destinations by either the supervisor or local person. It is further not allowed to use minibus taxis after dark.

If volunteers can afford and choose to buy a car, it is their responsibility to maintain and insure the vehicle.

Only reputable bus companies should be considered for overland travel. Minibus taxis are not allowed.

SAGE Net does not allow hitch hiking.

9 **ROLE PLAYERS**

9.1 **ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER**

- The role of the volunteer is to work within a South African NGO environment and governmental schools, similar to an intern.
- The volunteer has to fulfil the duties identified by the immediate supervisor and to report to this person. The volunteer is obliged to fulfil the duties which are identified by the supervisor of the partner organisation even if these duties differ from the originally envisioned duties.

- The volunteer is a representative of his/her country.
- Volunteers are expected to raise a certain percentage of their cost as determined by SAGE Net Germany
- Volunteers are required to form a funder circle and to stay in touch with their donors.
- Volunteers agree to send a short report after every 3 months and a lengthy report at the end of the placement, ideally in both languages – preferred in English.
- It is required that volunteer become part of the Ning group and post a small blog report approx. every 2 months. The blog should be written in English and follows central questions developed by SAGE Net.
- According to the allocations in the budget spent funds must be reported on.

9.2 **ROLE OF THE HOSTING PROJECT**

The host project provides the volunteer with an opportunity to work at their project. The volunteer will know exactly what his/her tasks are and they will be introduced to their supervisor. The staff at the project will know how to contact SAGE Net should any problems arise. They will report unusual incidences to SAGE Net when called for.

9.3 **ROLE OF THE MENTOR**

The mentor is available to support the volunteers with matters beyond the work place and with problems that may arise. Mentors will introduce the volunteers to their places of work and will ensure that an orientation programme has been prepared for the volunteers.

The mentor facilitates all communications between SAGE Net Germany and the volunteer. The mentor also keeps a leave record for each volunteer. The mentors of the different provinces together plan and run the orientation days and the mid-year seminar.

Mentors also coach the project staff in hosting volunteers and are available for cultural translation.

The mentor is not from within a partner organisation.

9.4 **ROLE OF SAGE NET GERMANY (SAGE Net G)**

SAGE Net G is the sending organisation and responsible for the smooth running of the programme. SAGE Net also is the conduit for funding and accountable for allocations of funds. SAGE Net facilitates the selection process and the preparation and returnee seminar. SAGE Net G is accountable to BMZ.

SAGE Net G is also a consortium of partners that acts as a conduit for the programme. German partner organisations are all members of SAGE Net G. They are involved with the selection of volunteers and influence to a varying extent the running of the receiving organization in SA. Volunteers are expected to be in contact with these partners.

9.5 ROLE OF SAGE NET SOUTH AFRICA (SAGE Net SA)

SAGE Net SA is the partner organisation of SAGE Net Germany. It is responsible for the implementation of the programme on the ground and for communicating with the hosting organisations in SA. The SA mentors report to the board of SAGE Net SA.

9.6 ROLE OF THE WELTWÄRTS OFFICE (SEKRETARIAT)

The secretary is tasked with the implementation of the programme by the ministry. All activities within the context of the programme are based on the “Guideline for the development volunteer service weltwärts”. All changes of placements and other relevant information needs to be communicated to the Sekretariat as soon as possible.

9.7 ROLE OF MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (BMZ)

The Ministry provides the funding for the programme. The Ministry will assist with unusual incidents or in special circumstances. They are ultimately responsible for accreditation of the sending organisation, hosting organisations as well as the individual placement sites.

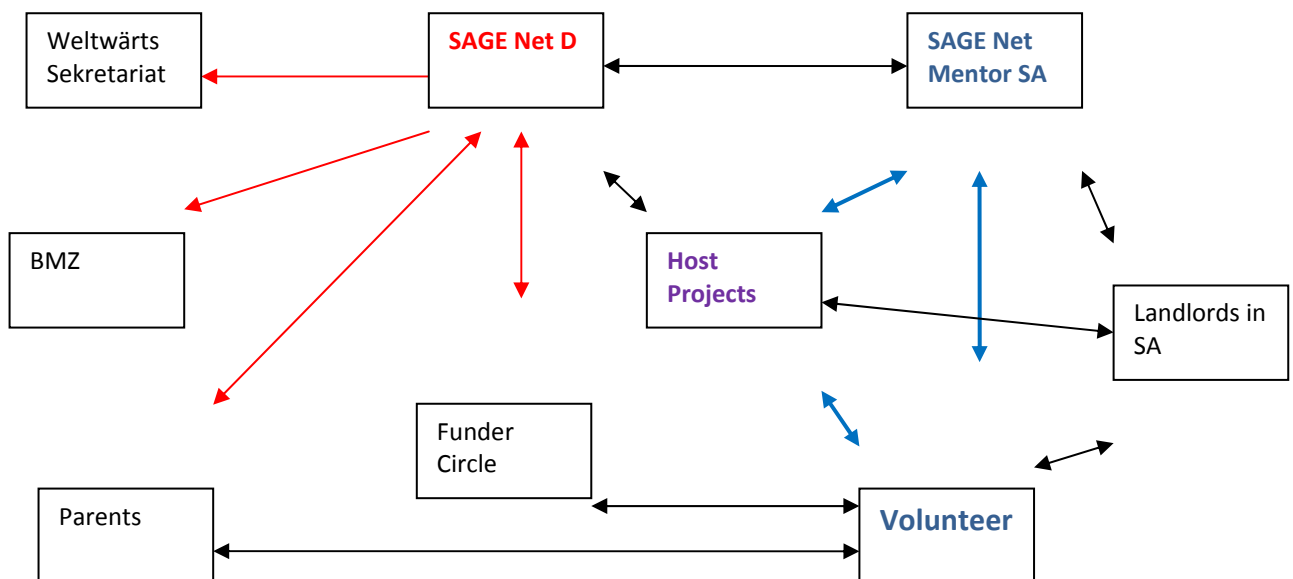
9.8 ROLE OF PARENTS/SUPPORT GROUP

Parents play an important part in the volunteer service. They remain in contact with their children during their time in SA and thereby have a supportive role.

Similarly the funder circle also supports the volunteers through financial means.

10. COMMUNICATION

Who communicates with whom?



To note:

- Only SAGE Net G communicates with BMZ and Weltwärts Sekretariat.

- While in Germany, volunteers communicate with SAGE Net G, office Berlin.
- While in SA, volunteers communicate with SAGE Net through SA Mentors.
- SAGE Net SA normally has no communication with parents or with funder circle.
- Email communication with volunteers or project partners must always have the mentor in CC. All other correspondence must be forwarded to the mentors.
- Volunteers should acknowledge receipt of emails from SAGE Net.
- The addressee SAGE Net team member should acknowledge receipt of email from SAGE Net team members.
- Every meeting between SAGE Net SA and SAGE Net G must be announced in the team as official meeting after approval of being an official meeting by the chairpersons via email prior to the meeting. Minutes must be kept and distributed to all relevant team members.

Note: Please refer to the “Roles and Responsibilities” spreadsheet to identify the appropriate communication partner.

11. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers receive a monthly allowance for food, transport, electricity and pocket money. The allowance is enough for a very basic living standard only. For any further needs the volunteer will have to pay her/himself.

Rentals are paid through the SAGE Net office in SA.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

The activities of the volunteers have direct bearing on the work of the different hosting projects. Some of their activities are client related so confidentiality is important. Each volunteer must sign the contract, which includes a confidentiality oath/contract.

13. INSURANCE

The insurance covers accident and illness as well as liability. The insurance for volunteers is brokered by Dr. Walter GmbH in Germany. All claims are to be paid by the volunteers and will be reimbursed upon submission of the costs to the insurance.

The booklet “Informationen zum Versicherungsschutz für Teilnehmer an Freiwilligenprogrammen”, „Information on insurance coverage for participants in volunteer programs” gives precise recommendations in German and English in case of an accident, illness or liability.

The volunteers should ensure before she/he leaves the country, that they have sufficient funds (e.g. paid up credit card) to cover immediate medical costs in case of an emergency which will be refunded by the insurance (recommended backup 2000,00 Euro).

The insurances do not cover theft. SAGE Net recommends a traveller's baggage insurance, e.g. via Dr. Walter GmbH.

14. INCAPACITY ASSESSEMENT

Incapacity is when the volunteer performs below standard e.g. SAGE Net has the right to require each volunteer to perform his/her duties according to a standard required by the host project. The mentor and supervisor shall make every reasonable attempt to assist volunteers. As far as possible the volunteer will be supported, supervised or transferred to another department or other options discussed and agreed upon before a dismissal takes place. No volunteer will be dismissed on grounds of poor performance without an opportunity to prove him/herself and state his/her case.

Medical incapacity should be certified by a medical doctor. BMZ regulations will apply.

15. GRIEVANCE

Grievance procedure is necessary and healthy for conflict resolution. Grievance procedure enables volunteers to express their dissatisfaction and allow SAGE Net to deal with grievances in a fair and consistent manner and resolve it.

STAGE 1 – The grievance should, if at all possible, be resolved directly and informally with the person or people against whom the grievance is raised. This should be done informally and directly with the Immediate Supervisor

STAGE 2 – If the grievance is not resolved then the Project Manager must be informed and try to resolve the grievance.

STAGE 3 - If the grievance is still not resolved the mentor should be informed. The parties should each submit written grievances and through interviews with both parties, try and resolve the grievance.

An outcome/decision must be reached by the mentor and this must be communicated to both parties and a record must be kept. All events are also reported to SAGE Net G.

16. DISCIPLINARY

When a volunteer breaches his/ her contract, code of conduct he/she must receive a system of warnings (either verbally or written) before a disciplinary enquiry. A disciplinary enquiry is conducted with mentor, supervisor and project manager. Volunteer has the right to defend his/herself and have a witness present. Suspension of services is necessary when investigation is underway. The necessary forms should be completed. The mentor shall reach a verdict in close consultation with SAGE NET G as well as the German partner Organisation.

Especially the following issues will lead to an immediate termination of the placement:

- Use of illegal substances
- Conflict with South African Law
- Unapproved holiday
- Unapproved leaving of the country

The following clause, which is part of the service contract with the volunteer, needs special attention in case of disciplinary issues:

In signing the volunteer contract, the volunteer has made a commitment to carry out the “weltwärts” service until the contractually agreed end date. Early termination should only take place after all other options have been exhausted (including as appropriate: expanding the range of tasks, changing accommodation, changing project, moving to another partner organisation, etc.).

The mentors and both the partner and the sending organisation must give the volunteer special care and assistance in the case of early termination and provide an occasion for joint reflection and debriefing after return. Even if volunteers have terminated their voluntary service early, they should still participate in the planned seminars for returnees. The returnee seminar can be adapted as appropriate.

The volunteer undertakes to leave the host country and return to Germany within two weeks of any early termination of their placement. The sending organisation will make all the necessary arrangements (consulting with the partner organisation, organising a return flight, etc.).

Where the volunteer is responsible for the early termination of their placement, they shall undertake to bear the following costs that have accrued up to that point: costs of foreign travel including return trip (i.e. journey to the placement location and return to Germany), costs for board and lodging in the placement country. The sending organisation shall require the volunteer to repay the costs if the early termination is clearly due to the conduct or actions of the volunteer (e.g. drug consumption, termination of the placement without reasonable grounds, etc.). There is no requirement for the volunteer to pay a deposit or provide security before being sent abroad so as to ensure that any repayment claims are met.

If a volunteer is thinking about terminating their placement, then they are required to involve the partner organisation and the sending organisation in these deliberations and seek with them possibilities for avoiding early termination. The sending organisations shall inform the BMZ at an early stage about – potential – early terminations (in particular about the reasons and who is responsible for the termination, the costs of the volunteer placement and, if applicable, the amount that the sending organisation believes the volunteer can be reasonably expected to repay) and shall agree with the BMZ on how to proceed.

Further relevant information on changes, prolongation and shortening of stay:

As is clearly stated in the above document, the Weltwärts Sekretariat must be informed and involved in any steps in this regard at an early stage. It is therefore imperative, that any intentions on change within the program or in shortening the stay due to grievances or mishaps on site need the full cooperation and acceptance of the relevant stakeholders. This includes explicitly: SAGE Net SA, SAGE Net G as a first stage, Sekretariat at a later stage.

All correspondence and conversations between the individual role players need to be documented, so that the Sekretariat and the Ministry can, if need be, follow the steps and understand the decisions in SA and D in the individual case. Failure to do this can result in quality aspects being criticized, with the ultimate possibility of losing the accreditation as sending organization.

In case of the wish to extend the stay over an initial 12 months, SAGE Net G needs a document by the volunteer, stating his reasons for extending the stay. The receiving organisation also needs to request this extension. The text of the partner project should outline the activities of the volunteer up to date and give an indication of the activities planned for the requested time in the organisation. Preferably, these documents should be in a PDF format, signed and dated, in the case of the partner project written on a letterhead of the organisation.

17. Financial Support to Partner Organisations

SAGE Net cannot be used as a conduit to transfer money to South African NGO's within the weltwärts programme.

SAGE Net South Africa and SAGE Net Germany November 2012