The Mentoring Guide
The main points in a nutshell

Imprint

*T*his Mentoring Guide is supposed to provide current and future mentors in the weltwaerts program with a quick introduction into the task of mentoring. The guide is not a substitute for a substantial training, and may have to be adapted to your organizational context or supplemented by specific agreements. It aims at answering the most important questions with regard to mentoring. We hope to clarify:

1. What the term mentor comprises – and what not
2. What the aims of mentoring are
3. What qualifications a mentor needs
4. What the requirements for a good mentoring process are
5. The timeline and responsibilities of an ideal mentoring process

1. Context: The mentor as in the official weltwaerts documents

The mentor is an important part of the weltwaerts voluntary program. Let us start with a look into official weltwaerts documents, to find out, what they say about mentoring.

Catalogue of weltwaerts Quality Standards[1] :

Standard 3.5 Personal Support
The sending organization allocates a mentor / supervisor to the volunteers to ensure proper support.

Weltwaerts Funding Guideline: (p. 6)

In order to guarantee comprehensive support as well as induction and instruction in their work, each volunteer is allocated a qualified mentor, who is responsible for them and can be easily reached. It should be noted that the mentors are not members of staff working directly with the volunteer.

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1 Looked up on the official webpage of the weltwaerts funding scheme 11/02/2015, http://www.weltwaerts. de/en/detail.html?id=136&file=files/_media/content/ Dokumente/3_EO/Infomaterial-EO/Qualitaetsanforde-rungskatalog_final_ENGLISCH.pdf.

2. Defining the term: What is a mentor expected to do? And what not?

What does it mean "to ensure proper support"? Mentors' roles may fall into four categories:

➔ Providing professional support (e.g. on work-related issues)
➔ Providing pedagogic support (e.g. motivation and help for adjusting, as well as learning experiences)
➔ Providing emotional support (e.g. in case of homesickness, stress or illness)
➔ Providing social experiences (e.g. by providing encounters with locals)

Other common terms for a mentor might be:
➔ Coach
➔ Guide
➔ Role Model
➔ Tutor
➔ Friend

In reality many people may be involved in the mentoring process and share the responsibilities of mentoring: a national coordinator, a mentor, a co-worker/colleague in the assignment location, an individual in charge in the hosting organization, the host family, the community. The responsibilities might be assigned to different people in different settings.

According to the weltwaerts guidelines, however, two different persons should take on the responsibility of providing support to the volunteer. One person, typically a staff member of the hosting organization or assignment location is providing the instruction, induction and support to the volunteer at his/her place of work (professional support).
This short mentoring guide deals mainly with the other three categories of support, which fall into the responsibility of the mentor, as understood by the weltwaerts guidelines.

In any case it is helpful to clarify responsibilities in advance. No matter who does what, the essence of

mentoring is the human relationship between the mentor and the volunteer/s.

What mentors are **not**:
There is no expectation that mentors will take on the roles of parent, professional counselor or social worker. A mentor is not expected to solve all problems for the volunteer. It is important, that the volunteer gets actively and directly involved as far as the challenges are concerned that come with life in a new country. The role of the mentor is merely to advice, guide and support the volunteer.

3. Aims of mentoring

First and foremost, the provision of personal support does make it possible for the volunteer to feel safe in the new environment. Thereby he/she can do his/her best to bring competences, qualifications and commitment to the project, learn the language, familiarize himself/herself with the culture and politics of the host country and develop an understanding of the context. This is especially important, as most volunteers are young high school graduates, who may never have been to Latin America, Africa or Asia and might feel overwhelmed by all the new impressions.

4. Qualifications for mentoring

What is a "qualified mentor" as mentioned in the funding guidelines?

No formal training is required to become a mentor, but the following skills and requirements are essential for a good mentor:

➔ The ability to communicate well with the volunteer/s, the sending organization and the hosting organization

➔ Sensitivity with regard to cultural and gender issues; the mentor should be aware of cultural differences and able to explain them to the volunteer/s

➔ The time to have regular communication with all stakeholders involved

➔ The ability to listen and show empathy

➔ Familiarity with the rules and regulations of the hosting organization

➔ Being within reach, that means the volunteer should be able to contact the mentor directly or by phone within a reasonable time frame

5. Requirements for a successful mentoring process

Mentoring requires time and does mean additional work. However it will provide valuable experiences and learning opportunities not only for the volunteers, but also for the mentor.

Consider the following points for a successful process:

Understanding of the mentoring role and contractual provisions

➔ Hosting organization, sending organization and mentor should have a common understanding of the role and specific tasks of the mentor

➔ A contract should be concluded between mentor and hosting organization/sending organization

Personality of the mentor

➔ The mentor should have enough time for this task

➔ He/she should be communicative and open-minded, have a positive attitude towards volunteers and feel comfortable being around them

Skills of the mentor

➔ The mentor should be prepared and supported by workshops and/or trainings, provided by the sending organization and hosting organization

Financial remuneration

➔ Partners should agree on who covers the expenses arising during the mentoring process (telecommunication, travel, etc.).

➔ Ideally the mentor should receive a small allowance/wage.

6. The mentoring process: timeline and responsibilities

The following timeline with the respective responsibilities is supposed to give you an idea of the different steps of a mentoring process. It is not a list that you need to complete, but wants to give you an idea of relevant issues and questions.

1. Initial contact

➔ Arrange accommodation for the volunteer

➔ First contact with the hosting organization (before arrival of the volunteer)

➔ First contact with the volunteer (Some mentors contact the volunteers before arrival by phone or email. Others have the first contact with the volunteers, when picking them up at the airport or at an introductory meeting. This depends on the preference of your German sending organization.)

➔ Picking up from the airport

2. First orientation

➔ Host country introduction seminar for the volunteers. If the seminar is offered by the host organization, it is still a good idea for the mentor to attend as well or at least to present her-/himself to the volunteers at the seminar.

➔ Introduction to the host family or accommodation assigned (clarify living conditions: water, food, electricity etc.), explain rules and regulations of the house as well as security issues)

➔ Introduction to the host organization and the work place

➔ Basic training on the job (if necessary and not provided by hosting organization)

➔ Specific language starter course if necessary

3. Regular contact

➔ Communication is key! Keep regular contact with the volunteer/s, sending and hosting organization. A good orientation is to have at least one short contact per month.

➔ Help the volunteer cope with culture shocks, give him/her the opportunity to talk about challenges, be empathic and help them to understand local culture and customs.

Some questions for meetings and feedback could be:

Questions related to work

➔ Please describe the work you do.

➔ How do you feel at the work place? Is there too much/too little to do?

➔ How is the relationship with co-workers and target group?

➔ Do you get enough feedback within the organization?

Language questions

➔ How is your language improving?

➔ Do you need further support and if so, what kind?

Social interaction/network

➔ How easy/hard is it for you to get in touch with other people?

➔ How well integrated do you feel?

➔ How well are you able to communicate with family and friends back home?

Practical arrangement

➔ How comfortable are you with your living arrangements?

➔ How well do you manage your finances?

➔ Do you need any support with regard to food, medical care etc.?

➔ Do you feel safe?

Feedback from the mentor

➔ I am satisfied with…/ I would like you to…

➔ My observation about your relationship with your co-workers/the target group is…

➔ My observation regarding your skills is…

➔ I could offer you…

Especially in the beginning regular contact between all stakeholders prevents misunderstandings and the duplication of work. It is also helpful to conduct a midterm evaluation and a final evaluation.

4. Crisis and emergency management

As crisis situations can never be completely ruled out, the development of a well-structured emergency management is of great importance. It provides helpful instructions to all stakeholders in crisis situations such as physical or mental problems, accidents, assaults, natural disasters, civil disturbances etc. It is recommendable to include all stakeholders into the information chain.
In case of any crisis, please get in touch with the contact person at the hosting organization and if necessary with the German sending organization. Prepare a contact list with dates of the main stakeholders for emergency situations.

5. Whom to contact?

War, danger of civil wars or violent riots

➔ contact the embassy of volunteer's home country

Natural disasters

➔ contact the embassy of volunteer's home country

➔

Legal aid in case of criminal prosecution

➔ contact the embassy of volunteer's home country

Life-threatening illness

➔ If you can't reach the sending organization, contact the 24/7 hotline of volunteer's insurance.

6. Check list for emergency management

➔ Provide information on important safety issues in the host country for the sending organization before departure (if not done by the hosting organization)

➔ Get information on the volunteers' insurance conditions

➔ Who will provide information on safety rules and emergency prevention in the host country?

➔ Get copies of the emergency booklets of the volunteers

➔ A complete contact list is provided for all stakeholders and is updated regularly

7. Global learning

"Global learning" is a central aim of the weltwaerts program and can be defined as a pedagogic response to the ongoing globalization process. The objective of global learning is the creation of a deep understanding of global interdependencies, of topics such as poverty, healthcare, war, racism and environmental issues.

How can a mentor facilitate global learning? You may e.g. get volunteers in contact with local people, other non-governmental organizations, businesses, religious or political institutions or cultural activities that could help them to better understand the social, political or cultural reality of the host country.

Some examples:

➔ Organize informal meetings between volunteers and local experts/professionals

➔ Visit other projects in the country with the volunteers

➔ Visit plantations, factories and other places where export products are made

➔ If the volunteers live in a city, organize a stay in a village for a few days

➔ Take the volunteers to cultural, political or religious events

8. Evaluation and goodbye

A final evaluation is recommended and should take place 2 to 3 weeks before the departure of the volunteer and is a confidential meeting between the volunteer and the mentor (and in some cases the host project and/or host family). It may include the following areas of the volunteer's service: accommodation, work, support and guidance, organizational issues, reflection of the development of the volunteer during the service, re-entry into Germany and modifications for the next volunteer.

Even though the evaluation is confidential, it would be good to give a short summary with the main points and recommendations to the sending and hosting organization.

We hope that this short introduction is of any help to you. If you have further questions on mentoring, please get in touch with your German sending organization.

We wish you a beneficial mentoring experience and like to thank you for your contribution to a successful weltwaerts volunteering experience! For any comments or recommendations with regard to this guide please get contact with us directly at info@ventao.org.

With best regards

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