

# ZUGVÖGEL - NEWS

## Content

News & Events .....	1
The Volunteers .....	1
News from the Organization.....	3
Updates from the cooperation countries .....	5
Donations and Possibilities to support us.....	6
Impressum .....	6

## News and Events

1. Three (now not so new Zugvögel) are in Germany since August: Marthe and Nass from Rwanda and Yogesh from Nepal
2. From the 31<sup>st</sup> of October until the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November we celebrated our fifth reunion of all members in Berlin.
3. By now our organization has reached an impressive number of 291 members.

## The Volunteers

Already in the middle of August the third generation of volunteers of the Zugvögel organization arrived in Germany: Full of joy were UWABABYEY Marthe, MUSEMAKWETI Nass from Rwanda and Yogesh Kumar Jhawere from Nepal welcomed to Leipzig.

The three freshly flown in Zugvögel spent one week preparing for the time they were to spend in Germany. They did so within a seminar prepared by the regional group Leipzig.

At the same time there were still plenty of opportunities to explore the city and the region. So the volunteers had enough time to get to know their guides and the volunteers of the second Zugvögel generation.

After the end of the seminar the three of them started out for the places where they would spend the grand part of their time in the coming year.

Marthes working place is the youth museum in Schöneberg in Berlin, Nass lives in Mainz and works with the Sports youth Rheinland-Pfalz, while Yogesh works in the daycare center in the Kaiserstuhl in Freiburg.

A few words from Yogesh: *“I am Yogesh from Nepal. The introduction seminar at the beginning was great: It was very informative and interesting and we had the opportunity to get to know the other volunteers.*

*Now my working place is the daycare center at the Kaiserstuhl, a center for elderly people! Some people there teach me speaking in the regional dialect, we often play games together and we sing together.*

*I feel very much at home in my host family and I get a lot of great support from the regional group in Freiburg. Some time ago we went to the “Weinfest”. I liked that very much. Apart from that I love the food here in Germany, the punctuality and I love to go dancing.”*



Initially three more volunteers were supposed to start their service in August. For various reasons this was not possible, despite all efforts from our partner organizations and our organization here in Germany. This year, for the first time, we had been planning to receive two volunteers from Uganda. The possibility for them to travel here, however, was made impossible due to the Visa procedure by the German embassy in Uganda.

Already in September the two volunteers, selected and prepared by our Ugandan partner organization VSO International, were supposed to be welcomed to Germany by us. For a long time – also after the planned date of travel – it was unclear whether the German embassy would give their consent to the visa. Hoping to get the visa after the agreed date, both volunteers had previously rejected job offers in Uganda and continued to attend a language course.

Despite a positive notice by the German foreigners office, both visas were rejected officially in November. Among other reasons the office voiced doubts as to whether the two Ugandans would actually return to their homecountry after finishing their voluntary service in Germany. In the end both of them were denied the opportunity to travel to Germany to start their voluntary service. Because both of the volunteers desired us to do so, the Zugvögel are currently remonstrating against the rejection of the visa.

We have not drawn our conclusions from these events, inconvenient to all the involved: An evaluation team will closely analyze the process of acquiring visa so as to identify factors which lead to the rejection of the visa. The working group for Uganda will document the experiences and concentrate more on political actions in the future so as to draw attention to the process of acquiring visa. Lastly, we will for now not accept any other volunteers from Uganda.

We thoroughly regret that it will not be possible for the two to absolve a voluntary

service in Germany as part of the Zugvögel program.

Even though we had been hoping for a different result of all the efforts put into this process, we want to thank all the involved for their patience, endurance and support! We hope that the decisive processes will work out much more smoothly for the fourth generation of volunteers arriving in 2014.

Detailed information, also on the behavior of the German embassy in Uganda can be found on our homepage [www.zugvoegel.org](http://www.zugvoegel.org).

Problems of another kind occurred with another of our volunteers from Nepal. BEYOND, our partner organization there had selected Santosh Gharti Chhetri as a volunteer and planned to send him to Germany in August together with Yogesh.

Due to Discrepancies between Santosh and BEYOND, which arose mainly due to Santosh's attitude towards the organization and issues about his participation in preparation seminars, we dissolved the contract with Santosh in accordance with BEYOND in July. The costs, which had been caused during the selection and preparation process for Santosh were covered by us.

Background of our decision to dissolve the contract were mainly two reasons. First the basic principle of eye-to-eye decision making of us together with our partner organizations, which involves a trust from our side in the evaluations of our partner organizations concerning the volunteers they selected themselves. On the other hand, the concept of our volunteer program encompasses

Zum anderen eine thorough preparation for the one year voluntary service in Germany, which is conducted by our partner organization in the sending countries. As an organization we cannot take the responsibility to receive a volunteer who has been classified as not prepared by the partner organization.

All the while there are very good news from the second generation of volunteers. At the start of August Azucena, Andrés,

Walid and Shaban participated in their intermediate seminar in Münster. The four days gave them the opportunity to treat the topics at heart of Zugvögel very intensively. For example, among others, there was an Empowerment Workshop for the volunteers, which looked at the topic of racism on a global scale as well as in everyday life.

But there is also a lot going on in the residences of the Zugvögel. Walid had changed his host family and Andrés has held a presentation on his voluntary service in the frame of the Latinamerika-Forum in Berlin.

## News of the Organization

Already the fifth reunion of all members took place from the 31<sup>st</sup> of October until the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November in the KuBiZ Wallenberg in Berlin Weißensee.

About 85 Zugvögel took the opportunity to come together, discuss, make decisions and also simply to spend some time together.

Because the regional groups had already done valuable preparation work, discussions were rather fruitful. Especially enriching were the contributions of our volunteers and NIYOYITA Marie-Claire, a representative of our Rwandan partner organization Akanyoni Kaguruka.

There was a variety of topics we dealt with. Among others we talked about the principle of eye-to-eye decision making and communications, about the self-perception and definition of our organization and about accompanying our process racism critically. But also organizational aspects like the coordination of the accompanying seminars and the distribution of the pocket money of the volunteers were debated.

In the frame of the closing votes we have reached a series of decisions. Among others we agreed that the Zugvögel from now on are going to aim at participating as

their proper “Träger” within the federal voluntary service.

By this we hope to achieve simplifying the organizational work in cooperation with the working places of the volunteers. We would also like to strengthen our political activities in the sectors connected to our work as an organization.

Full of motivation and new ideas, the Zugvögel all went their ways after four successful days, already looking forward to the next reunion of the members in half a year.

As during the three days of our member's reunion mostly room and time is lacking to discuss substantive matters referring to our work as an organization; the idea came up to create a space specifically designed to do just that. Together with a group of about 20 people, volunteers and members of the Zugvögel we spent a couple of wonderful intensive and inspiring days at the start of October with the first forum of ideas of the Zugvögel.

Inspired through workshops of external and internal referents on the topics of structural racism, culture as well as development and eye-to-eye communication in the development cooperation, we developed a couple of very interesting new ideas and approaches which we have now begun to transfer into the structures of our organization. For example we developed the idea to work on our self-definition and to start a campaign on the occasion of the rejection of the visa of our two Ugandan volunteers.

The forum of ideas has truly lived up to its name: it has encouraged us on a personal level as well as on an organizational one. It has made our heads boil, our thoughts swirl it has connected us on a personal level and most of all enlightened us greatly.

In 2014, we are planning another forum of ideas to further develop the ideas initiated during the first one as well as to encounter new approaches.

The federal ministry for economic cooperation and development (BMZ) has introduced a south-north component into the weltwärts program in November this year.

Within this program 150 volunteers from the cooperation countries of the weltwärts-program are going to come to Germany next year as volunteers of the federal voluntary service, just as is already happening within the Zugvögel program.

The BMZ is taking over 75% of all costs. The responsibility, however, still rests at the German receiving organizations and the sending organizations in the southern hemisphere.

One member of the Zugvögel represented us during the process of establishing the substantive and financial concept of the weltwärts south-north program. The Zugvögel have successfully applied to participate in the pilotphase of the project.

In summer 2014 four volunteers of the Zugvögel will come to Germany within the frame of this program. This will most probably reduce the self-inflicted costs of our organization drastically. In turn we cannot yet estimate whether the organizational work for us will increase.

As announced in the last version of Zugvögel-News, we now dispose of a detailed evaluation of our work as an organization. Within this evaluation we sent three different questionnaires: One to former volunteers, one to our partner organizations and one to the members of our organization. One of the volunteers of our first generation filled out the questionnaire.

The answers were mostly positive: The preparation in Ecuador and Germany were appreciated as well as the accompanying work of the organization and concept of living in a host family. The work in the projects was also perceived as a very enriching experience.

In general there was a wish for more support when learning the German language: There was the suggestion of

conducting a continuous support based on the language course. Additionally, further and detailed information as to the range of tasks in the project would at times have been desirable.

The answers of the members of our partner organizations were relative heterogeneous concerning many questions. For example, some of them regarded the financial support supplied by the Zugvögel as sufficient while others did not agree at all. On the other hand, there was an overall unity as to the timely workload of the volunteer program, which seemed unproblematic to most of them. Suggestions to improve the work included a clearer distribution of responsibilities and enhancing transparency.

Among the members of our organization there was an especial emphasis put on optimizing our communication structures. This refers to the communication between the different regional groups as well as to the communication within the groups working with the countries and our partner organizations. Much to our joy the biggest part of the people answering the questionnaire were convinced that they had the opportunity to contribute well to the work of our organization.

## Activities of our Regional groups

Since the last Zugvögel-News a new regional group was founded in Cologne, the regional group in Jena has enlarged their territory to the whole of Thüringen and a new “everywhere” group is open to all of those who want to contribute to our organization but do not live near a regional group.

Right now, all regional groups are actively searching for potential projects and host families for the volunteers coming in August 2014 (more on that issue on the last page under “looking for”). We can already speak of our first successes.

Members of different regional groups have taken over the guidance of one volunteer

each. They support the volunteers in overcoming challenges in everyday life, in the project and in the host family; but also simply spend time with them and their host families.

During the course of two weekend seminars in Münster former guides established an orientation document for their task, which is truly not to be underestimated.

In the reunion of all members in October we agreed that the organization is going to position itself more decidedly on political aspects concerning our work as an organization in the future. A concrete concept is currently being established.

In the past months a number of regional groups have been conducting educational political events: Among others, there was a workshop in Münster led by Claudia Lohrenscheidt of the Institute for Human Rights, which questioned the universality of educational concepts. In Mannheim the regional group showed the film “Blood on the Mobile” and invited interested people to take part in a discussion on the movie.

We have also received an invitation to inform people about our organization during the “German-Rwandan Youth Meeting” in Berlin at the end of August.

The Soli-parties celebrated by so many of our regional groups always prove to be a guarantee for good mood and impressive amounts of donations to our organization. During the last party in Berlin the volunteer Walid and the Zugvogel Kyrel were especially lifting the mood with performing a little rap for the guests.

We were also very active during Straßenfesten in the summer. For example the regional group Rhein-Main has done a Tombola on the Folkore-Festival in Wiesbaden, the regional group of Lüneburg supplied the guests of a street festival with Empanadas and the Mannheim group could get a lot of attention by projecting a video installation on African cities during the “Nachtwandel” (a festival of the city).

Right now, members of our organization are on their feet on Christmas markets everywhere in Germany to draw people's attention to the work we are doing.

## Updates from our cooperation countries

### Ecuador

Mauro Brito, Zugvogel of the first generation of volunteers is currently building up a new partner organization in Ecuador. The application phase for the sending in August 2014 is already over.

He has received a number of very promising applications. During a seminar suitable volunteers will now soon be selected.

### Nepal

After the abovementioned complications it was now time to start an evaluation of the previous volunteer cycles together with our partner organization. As of now the evaluation is over and it has shown a very positive result: BEYOND and the Zugvögel are going to further cooperate in the future. BEYOND is going to select two volunteers for the sending in August 2014 and is going to prepare them for their time in Germany. The application phase has already started in Nepal.

### Rwanda

A lot is on the move in our Rwandan partner organization Akanyoni Kaguruka. In October they held an information meeting, where they were able to gain a couple of new members. In addition to that Akanyoni has written a statement in which they clarify their position towards our organization: They emphasize that although they are financially dependent on our organization they see themselves as an equal and close partner of the Zugvögel, who wants to stand on his own two feet as soon as possible. Among other things they suggested to write a *Memorandum of understanding* together with our organization.

NIYOYITA Marie-Claire from Akanyoni did not only enrich the reunion of all members in Berlin, but arranged a meeting with NKULIKIYINKA Christine from the Rwandan embassy in Germany. She liked the idea of both associations and offered to welcome future volunteers in the embassy after their arrival.

## Donations and possibilities to support us

Mentioned should be here that we are very grateful to all people who provide Zugvoegel financial support.

Whether they support us frequently or give generous donations collected by specific events, e.g. from their own birthday parties – all this helps us to conduct our voluntary program successfully. A stable financial situation is important to make sure that our voluntary program is highly qualified. This is needed to develop the program according to actual needs of the volunteers without limitations due to financial constraints.

One further possibility to support Zugvögel without financial input is the following: Who is shopping online can (for Christmas or in any other time of the year) order online shop products using the website **boost**. The process is quite simple. You can use the following link. [https://www.boost-project.com/de/shops?charity\\_id=380&tag=bl](https://www.boost-project.com/de/shops?charity_id=380&tag=bl)

After your buy you can decide that the Zugvögel receive the provision of the concrete online shop the product is from.



## In search of:

Shortly after the arrival of the third Zugvögel generation in Germany, we already have to prepare August 2014, when we will welcome our new volunteers. At the moment we are searching for new projects as well as for host families. In case that you have a recommendation for a proper project or you can imagine to host one of our volunteers – or know someone who would like to – please write an email to:

[info@zugvoegel.de](mailto:info@zugvoegel.de)

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