

Integrated Guidelines for the UEM volunteer programmes

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**in cooperation with the Regional Departments
and the
Programme Officers in the Regional Offices**

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Introduction

This document has been revised in joint effort by the Officers for the North–South and South–North volunteer programmes and the Programme Officers in the Regional Offices. Especially for the North–South and South–North volunteer programmes, it is based on the quality standards for international volunteer programmes by ‘weltwärts’ (German Ministry for Economic Cooperation, by efef¹ and by UEM itself.

The paper provides the institutional and practical framework of the UEM volunteer programmes, namely the North–South programme, the South–North programme, and the South–South programme. It describes the background, aims & objectives, details of programme implementation and roles and responsibilities of all involved parties, as well as financial and insurance matters. The aim is to provide all people involved in the implementation of the volunteer programmes, be it as professionals, mentors, receiving Members² or other. There also are reference frameworks and guidelines for action.

UEM strives to continuously develop and increase the quality of all three volunteer programmes. Through acknowledging differences between the involved regions, and placements, practical implications and details in implementation, the quality standard of all three programmes shall be equalised and thereby comparable. This is why an integrated approach to this policy was chosen.

The respective responsible officers for the volunteer programmes are³:

North–South: the Officer for the North–South Volunteer Programme, based in the UEM Office in Wuppertal/Germany.

South–North: the Officer for the South–North Volunteer Programme, based in the UEM Office in Wuppertal/Germany.

South–South: the Programme Officers, based in the UEM Regional Offices in Pematangiantar/North Sumatra/Indonesia and Dar es Salaam/Tanzania.

¹ Council of Protestant organisations receiving ‘weltwärts’ funds.

² Hosting institutions and churches will be referred to as ‘Members’ throughout the document.

³ For reasons of simplicity all mentioned positions will be referred to as ‘respective Officers’ throughout the document.

1. Genesis of the volunteer programmes

United Evangelical Mission (UEM) is a community of 39 Protestant churches in Africa, Asia and Germany, and the diaconic institutions of Bethel/Germany. It works in the framework of an integrated understanding of mission, and believes in the additional value and mutual learning effect of joint projects, training programmes and exchange of professional staff in different areas of work.

UEM looks back on over 30 years of experience in sending volunteers to its member churches. In the nineteen seventies, UEM was receiving an increasing number of inquiries from young people in Germany, who were looking for opportunities to work in projects in Africa and Asia. In addition to the interest in project and development work frequent motives for such inquiries, then as now, were: the desire to get to know other cultures, the opportunity to encounter spiritual and church life in a foreign cultural context, and the chance to be exposed to and work in an environment different from one's own. UEM wanted to respond to this, and has since then offered placements for volunteers.

In more than three decades around 400 youth from different parts of Germany have participated in the *North-South programme*. The numbers of volunteers sent per year increased over time, up to a max. capacity of 21. Additionally, two cooperation started within Germany: together with the Norddeutsche Mission (Bremen Mission) in Germany, UEM sends four volunteers to Ghana and Togo. Together with Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche in Leer, UEM sends two volunteers to South Africa.

In 2002 the *South-North programme* started with an annual number of 1-2 volunteers in April 2012 it was decided that from 2013 onwards the number of annual placements should be increased to 8. In 2017, it was decided to again increase the number of volunteers in Germany up to 15 annually. Since 2002, more than sixty youth from UEM's member churches have had the chance to spend one year in Germany.

UEM's cooperation with Norddeutsche Mission is also part of the South-North programme. Both organizations co-operate in giving pedagogical seminars throughout the year.

The South-South programme was founded in 2008 to intensify the exchange of youth between UEM member churches in Africa and Asia. In April 2012 it was decided that from 2013 onwards the number of placements should be increased to 6 annually.

As UEM also offers an internship programme and a senior expert programme for short-term placements, cooperation on overlapping issues is desired and striven for wherever possible among the involved departments.

2. The importance of the volunteer programmes for UEM

Over the past three years all three UEM volunteer programmes have grown significantly in number and importance. UEM views its volunteer programmes as an integral part of its work, especially in the areas of intercultural learning, training and empowerment. While the North–South and South–North volunteer programmes are integrated in the department Training and Empowerment, the South–South volunteer programmes are integrated in respective regional offices in Dar es Salaam and Pematangsiantar.

The volunteers shall provide assistance to social institutions of the hosting member church, where support is desired and needed. This shall include the areas of education, sports, healthcare, environmentalism, culture or human rights. Promotion of global learning, engagement in development issues and international solidarity are core aims of the UEM volunteer service based on the United Nations Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals: the programme empowers and encourages the young generation to take action for a socio–ecological transformation in their communities. The focus is on learning from each other and developing global awareness by providing equitable intercultural exchange in partnership. This is what UEM endorses under the concept of [Global Learning in Ecumenical Perspective](#). Volunteers have the chance to grow personally in an informal learning process during their one–year voluntary service, establish cross–cultural competence and intercultural leadership skills by working alongside those with a different background and viewpoints. They can learn about and contribute to existing partnerships, build up new ones and gain an understanding of what development cooperation is. After their voluntary service, returnees can share what they have learned during their services with their own communities and networks at home. Host institutions in the three regions get the chance to receive highly motivated volunteers that may bring in a new, different understanding, perspectives and insights.

Moreover, the volunteer programmes form one of the major gateways through which young people become aware of UEM’s mission and activities, and develop a relationship to the organisation that often lasts over many years beyond the volunteer service. A majority of the volunteers will be joining the Network of Youth in other regions, such as North–South volunteers for instance join UEM’s Network of Young Adults right after their return to Germany. The same is now being envisaged and discussed for Youth returning to Asia and Africa.

In addition, UEM views the volunteer programmes as a mean to strengthen existing partnerships and fill them with life through mutual exchange and sharing of experiences (SDG 17). However, volunteers normally are not placed within partnership contexts. This is due to unpleasant experiences in the past. If congregations or organizations are inter–

ested in hosting a volunteer, they are welcome to apply. UEM then tries to send a volunteer from the same country but a different Member Church to the placement.

As UEM volunteer programmes offer international and ecumenical learning experience for youth from all three regions, all UEM Members shall bear responsibility for the active promotion, the quality and continuous improvement of these programmes among their youth and potential cooperating partners and institutions.

3. Aims and Objectives

Consequently, the aim of the volunteer programmes, in contrary to the objectives of the Personnel Exchange Programme, is not so much the completion of specific tasks, but exposure, learning intercultural and ecumenical experiences.

In particular, the volunteers shall get opportunities to

- Establish cross-cultural competences by working alongside those with very different backgrounds and viewpoints;
- Gain intercultural knowledge on sustainability and global responsibility
- Develop and strengthen personal and language skills;
- Contribute to the work of social and diaconic institutions of UEM member churches in all three regions;
- Get insights in the commitment of the Members to strive for justice, peace and the integrity of creation;
- Experience different forms of spirituality and religious expression;
- Learn about and contribute to existing partnerships;
- Share their gained experiences with their own communities and networks back home.

In order to reach these aims, volunteers are encouraged to also establish contacts outside their place of work in order to get to know life and culture in their hosting country and within the activities of the Member. By this exposure, volunteers can act as multipliers of sustainable development: their enthusiasm and commitment may enrich not only their own lives, but also the lives around them. They take their new insights back to their home churches and communities, relatives and friends to spur them on to greater understanding and support for UEM's work across Africa, Asia and Germany.

4. Quality Standards

UEM is aware of the fact that all local contexts differ and flexibility and preparedness for unforeseen events and changes are important assets in implementing volunteer programmes. All involved parties should strive for the implementation of the quality standards defined in this document at any time. Difficulties in implementation that cannot be handled at local level between the receiving Member, the mentor and volunteer itself, should be reported to the respective Officer.

4.1 General Standards

A UEM volunteer service in any of the three programmes lasts 12 months counting from the date of departure. An extension of the stay beyond this period is not possible. An earlier return is only possible in particular cases such as family emergencies, unforeseen events or work/study related obligations. All exceptions are to be discussed with Member churches, the placement and the respective Officer, who takes the final decision.

The UEM Code of Conduct on Corruption and UEM Code of Conduct on Sexual Harassment apply fully to all three UEM volunteer programmes.

In cases of serious misconduct which makes a continuation of the stay and contract impossible, the Officers for Volunteer Programmes or the Programme Officers in the UEM Regional Offices responsible for the South–South volunteer programme can order an earlier return on the basis of termination of contract.

All cases of serious misconduct should be reported immediately to the responsible Officer for volunteer programmes or to the Programme Officers in the UEM Regional Offices responsible for the South–South volunteer programme.⁴

4.2 Standards for Placements

The nature and kind of a volunteer placement may vary significantly according to local conditions and the work areas of the respective UEM members. However, all volunteer placements should be defined and selected along the following criteria:

- The work area(s) is/are clearly defined following the criteria mentioned above in Point 2 (e.g. in youth centres, in schools, in kindergartens or in organizations with a focus on people with disabilities, adult education, working with elderly people or

⁴ Details are outlined in the volunteer contract and the 'Freiwilligen-Ordnung' for participants in the North–South programme.

refugees, within civil society organizations doing secular community based work, sustainable and environmental initiatives);

- The orientation of the activities of the volunteers in the field should not serve to convey a certain worldview, but to enrich the different perspectives and enable them to develop their own point of view, based on global learning.
- The nature of the placement / the work the volunteer will do is conducive to a common weal and overall social good, following the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- The volunteer shall be of added value to the institution(s), where he/she is expected to work; i.e. the deployment of volunteers in this placement does not interfere with the local job market.
- The workload to be carried out by the volunteer shall not be more than 40 hours per week and is of regular nature (e.g. daily or weekly repeating tasks). Thus, neither an overload nor an underload of work is expected for the volunteer. Specific requirements to the volunteer will be clearly be stated. Volunteers are entitled to 20 days' vacation per year.
- The receiving institution wants to involve a volunteer in its activities for a specific period of time.
- The total number of volunteers per placement is in an appropriate balance to total number of employees in the project (placement).
- The volunteer is appropriately being accompanied personally, e.g. by a mentor, and also professionally, e.g. by a supervisor or an instructor to enable smooth adaptation in her/his duties. Guidelines for this work are provided by UEM.

All proposals for placements need to be discussed with and approved by the respective Officer. In the definition and selection of all volunteer placements, the respective Member plays an important advisory role.

In order to enable a learning process for all institutions and parties involved a placement should be selected and used for ideally 2–3 years in a row. Exceptions are possible and sometimes required, for instance because of a significant change of quality in terms of Mentorship, care for the volunteer, changes in leadership, or other unforeseen events. Also, receiving Members can abstain from receiving more volunteers at any time. The placements should undergo a periodic review regarding its suitability of above mentioned criteria.

4.3 Standards for the Selection of Volunteers

UEM volunteers should fulfil the following criteria in order to qualify for participation in the volunteer programmes:

- Be an active member of society by contributing to community life or other social activities, depending on the context of origin;
- Have a high level of flexibility and willingness for adaptation to another cultural surrounding and to work with diverse teams;
- Openness to other cultures and forms of religious expression;
- Advanced knowledge in at least one widely spoken foreign language, as e.g. English or French;
- Willingness to learn another foreign language;
- Willingness to work under challenging conditions (mostly social and diaconic work);
- Be proactive in given work field;
- Readiness to perform as Ambassador of the culture of origin;
- Proven mental and physical ability to spend a year in a foreign (in some cases tropical) country;
- Experience in one of the work areas of the volunteer programme is an added value.

5. Target Group

The target group of all volunteer programmes are youth between 18–28 years of age, except for the Africa and Asia region which is 18–30 years of age. UEM strives for equal opportunities for youth from various cultural, social and educational backgrounds. The applications from people with disabilities are also highly encouraged. The applicants should ideally be engaged in any activities of the sending member church and for the South–North and South–South programmes applicants need the full support of respective member church and congregation.

5.1 Gender

In all three programmes gender balance should be aimed at, which means that the available placements should be distributed equally among male and female candidates. Also, the list of candidates suggested by UEM members for participation in the South–North and the South–South programme should consist equally of male and female candidates. Only in case of a proven lack of qualified participants of one sex, exceptions are possible.

5.2 Volunteers from the German Region

For the North–South programme the main target group are youth in Germany who have finished at least their secondary education or any vocational training. Active membership in any Church or one of the German Member Churches is well received, but not obligatory. The program is open to members of all faiths and also applicants who do not feel be-

longing to any belief community. In addition, candidates should provide a reference that proves civic engagement, e.g. as active youth leaders, in sports clubs, in Church-based youth activities or other.

5.3 Volunteers from the African and Asian Region

For the South–North and the South–South programme the main target group are African and Asian youth who have finished their secondary education or their tertiary education. Practice shows that some work experience can also be of high benefit to a smooth adaptation process and the work itself. The youth should be active in at least one area of activity of the sending church (e.g. youth work, Sunday school or other) and should have the full support of their sending Member and congregation, proven through a document of reference by a pastor or another church leader, and the submission of the application by the sending church's leadership/head office.

6. Selection of Participants

The selection of candidates for all three programmes should be based on the criteria for selection as defined in this document. Also, the specific requirements of the respective placement should be taken into account (e.g. with regard to required age, specific knowledge and skills, language abilities etc.). Moreover, a system of rotation should be obeyed to ensure that over the years all Members can benefit from the programmes.

6.1 North–South Programme

The deadline for applications is 15th of October of any year for a volunteer service in the following year. An online description of the program, deadlines as well as information about the placements in Asia and Afrika can be found on the weltwärts website as well as on ein-jahr.freiwillig.de. The application forms can be downloaded from the UEM webpage. The screening of written applications is carried out by the respective Officer, and colleagues called upon. Sometime in the second half of November an assessment centre takes place; around 30 candidates are invited to inform themselves about the volunteer programme as well as possible placements for the next year, and also to perform a variety of individual and group activities in order to present themselves. Of those, 15 will be pre-selected and suggested a placement (respectively 21 together with volunteers for the German cooperation partners). We invite Members as well as former volunteers to support us in the information- and selection process. Candidates apply for participation in the programme and not for specific placements. However, wishes and priorities may be expressed and should be considered if possible. The receiving members of the pro-

gramme will be informed about the pre-selection within two–three weeks after the assessment centre. After their approval the candidate is being informed.

6.2 South–North Programme

In June or July of each year a call for application is distributed to all Members' Head Offices and other key persons. The call for applications includes a description of the programme and possible placements, as well as the relevant application forms. UEM Members are asked to search for appropriate candidates among their youth, and to submit the applications of two to three candidates, based on gender balance, to the respective Officer until September 30th. The final selection will be taken by the respective Officer, and colleagues called upon. The participants and the sending Members will be informed about the selection within two weeks after the selection.

6.3 South–South Programme

The South–South Volunteer Programme will be announced among Members in Asia and Africa each year in March. Information will be distributed regularly via Social Media and electronic newsletters, including the application documents. The Members will be asked to suggest two–three candidates for selection, based on gender balance. The screening of written applications and the final selection will be carried out by the respective Officer until the end of June. The participants and Members will be informed within two weeks after the selection. The respective Officer is in charge of finding placements within UEM Member Churches and building up cooperation with them.

7. Contracts

Every UEM Member that participates in one of the volunteer programmes signs a partnership agreement⁵. Also, every participating Member signs a declaration of 'labour market neutrality'. Every volunteer placement is legally embedded by a volunteer contract that defines all rights and duties of the volunteer, and UEM as the sending institution, signed by both parties.

In addition, every South–North placement is legally embedded by a volunteer contract that defines all rights and duties of the volunteer, UEM as the sending institution, and the hosting congregation/placement signed by all three parties.

⁵ All mentioned documents are based on the legal standards of the 'weltwärts' funding scheme; copies are included in the Appendix to this document.

8. Division of Tasks

The tasks that need to be carried out in order to ensure the smooth organisation and implementation of a volunteer year are numerous and diverse. Some matters need to be decided on an individual case-to-case basis depending on the specifics of the placement and context. In the following an overview of the division of the major tasks is provided:

In particular, the UEM Office in Wuppertal is responsible for:

- Organisation and implementation of the North-South and the South-North programme;
- Financing the placement, coverage of all major expenses and pocket money;
- Visa and insurance;
- Flights to and from the placement;
- Emergency management;
- Coordinate & guide mentors for South-North and North-South volunteers;
- Providing all relevant practical information to the volunteer and the hosting church/placement;
- Providing support and advise to the hosting churches and mentors;
- Providing a pedagogical framework in the form of seminars for North-South and South-North volunteers;
- Bringing relevant UEM events in the region to the attention of the volunteers;
- Public relations and media work.

The Programme Officers in the Regional Offices are responsible for:

- Organisation and implementation of the South-South programme;
- Providing a pedagogical framework in the form of seminars for South-South volunteers;
- Coordinating and guiding mentors for South-South volunteers;
- Helping the Head Office staff to connect with the hosting churches, e.g. by forwarding information;
- Assisting in visa matters;
- Assisting in organising travel;
- Introducing themselves to the volunteers in their region (if possible offer a visit throughout the term);
- Organizing an in-country introduction day if possible;
- Bring relevant UEM events in the region to the attention of the volunteers.

The Members are responsible for:

- Providing suitable placements for volunteers;
- Providing a support structure consisting of a member of the church leadership and a suitable mentor;
- Providing accommodation and food and, if possible, contribute to cover these costs;
- Selecting and suggesting suitable candidates for the South–North/and South–South volunteer programme and make these opportunities known among the youth of the respective member church.
- Striving as far as possible to enable the returning volunteers to share their gained experiences with their churches/congregations and networks.

9. Pedagogical Guidance

For the success of a volunteer programme the pedagogical support and guidance provided to every volunteer is of utmost importance. The pedagogical support structure consists of two major components: the seminar programme, and the mentoring through a local mentor and the volunteer desk in the head office in Wuppertal or respective Programme Officers in the Regional Offices. Additional to this, former north–south volunteers and new ones are connected following a tandem system to exchange their experiences from peer to peer.

9.1 Definition of Roles

Each counterpart involved in the implementation of any of the volunteer programmes has a specific role to perform, which in some areas may overlap, naturally.

UEM bears the contractual responsibility for every volunteer as defined in the volunteer contract.

The Role of the respective Officers

The Officers for three Volunteer Programmes are responsible for the preparation of every volunteer, and for pedagogical guidance of all volunteers. He/She liaises with the relevant partners, communicates all relevant information to the volunteer and provides mental empowerment and support prior to the volunteer's departure. During the volunteer's stay abroad the volunteer desk can be contacted in case of major problems, questions or crisis, when all local means of support (e.g. mentor) could not provide the required help. Also, the Officer can mediate in case of conflict between the hosts and the volunteer.

The Role of the Member

The hosting UEM member makes sure that the local support structure functions, i.e. by selecting, preparing and briefing a suitable mentor, by welcoming the volunteer and introducing him/her to all relevant stakeholders and by functioning as a reference point for serious problems, such as visa issues, travel permits, security issues, medical treatment and emergencies etc.

The hosting church bears the major practical responsibility for the practical, physical and mental well-being of the volunteer. This includes the monitoring of the placement, liaising with the mentor on a regular basis and – ideally – a brief mid- and end-term evaluation. It is appreciated if the hosting member church is open to feedback expressed by the volunteer, and helps him/her to create a mutual benefit within their volunteer year for themselves as well as the hosting institution/church.

The Role of the Mentor

For every volunteer the receiving Member should appoint a Mentor, whose name and contact details shall be forwarded to the respective Officer for further distribution prior to departure, according to the following criteria:

- Mature personality;
- If possible of the same sex as the volunteer;
- Familiar with the context the volunteer is supposed to live and work in;
- Be in close contact with the volunteer, dedicated and impartial;
- Not a direct colleague and/or superior, (preferably not be a member of the respective church governing bodies);
- If possible familiar with the situation of travelling/living abroad through personal experience;
- Fluent in at least one of the languages that the volunteer speaks.

The respective Officer bears the right to accept or oppose the suggested Mentor in close communication with the Member according to the mentioned criteria.

The mentor supports the adaptation process of the volunteer, functions as a reference point for any needed information, assistance and mental support during the duration of the volunteers stay. Ideally, regular meetings should take place to provide support to the volunteer in his/her individual reflection processes.

Each nominated Mentor will receive a copy of the mentorship manual. Prior to arrival, after the first half of the volunteer's stay and prior to departure, the mentor shall be con-

tacted by the respective Officer to exchange information on the performance of the volunteer and arising concerns, problems etc.

Each Mentor in Africa, Asia and Germany is entitled to an allowance of 25 Euro per month, and reimbursement of travel expenses for meetings etc. The allowance and reimbursements can be claimed at the volunteer desk in the UEM Office in Wuppertal, or via the respective Regional Offices.

9.2 Seminars

UEM feels responsible for appropriate pedagogical guidance and support of all volunteers during their service, as well as their preparation and in provision of opportunities for reflection after their return. The details of seminars in terms of length, location and content may vary according to context, available infrastructure and geographic condition. The following main topics are usually covered: racism, post-colonialism, critical whiteness, socio-political issues (global poverty and inequality), culture shock and adaptation, sustainability, crisis management, sexuality, biographical work. Along with this, UEM covers the subjects of formalia and funding, contracts, language courses, Visa, flights, pocket money and health insurance.

However, all seminar activities should follow the following principles:

- Provide the volunteer with relevant information about the hosting country/context as well as tools and strategies to sort out challenges;
- Stimulate personal reflection on the volunteer-role, the cultural setting and differences, culture shock;
- Encourage global learning, sustainability and social engagement;
- Support the development of personal skills such as constructive conflict resolution, intercultural competences and race- and gender-sensitivity.

North-South Programme

According to the standards of the 'weltwärts' funding scheme all volunteers are entitled to at least 25 seminar days during their service, including the period of preparation and debriefing. 14 days should be dedicated to the preparation of the volunteer.

Currently UEM provides the following seminars:

- 2 days selection seminar;
- 1 day practical matters in the Mission House in Wuppertal;
- 3 days sensitisation for development issues in a global context;

- 10 days preparation course;
- 5 days mid-term reflection;
- 5 days final reflection;
- Individual language preparation.
- Additionally: 1 day information-seminar for parents or relatives.
- Additionally: exchange seminar for mentors, host families and placements.

South-North Programme

Currently, UEM provides the following seminars to South-North volunteers based in Germany, also according to the 'weltwärts' and 'Bundesfreiwilligendienst' standards:

- Intensive German course;
- 5 days introduction seminar;
- 5 days mid-term reflection seminar;
- 5 days final reflection seminar;
- 5 days political education seminar;
- 3 days development political seminar;
- 2 days UEM Young Adult's seminar.
- Additionally: exchange seminar for mentors, host families and placements.

South-South Programme

From 2013 onwards the respective UEM Regional Office will provide the following seminars to South-South volunteers based in Asia or Africa:

- Individual language preparation
- Additional seminar days depending on geographic distance from the respective Regional Office.

All seminars are closed by an evaluation, the results of which are documented and saved for future seminars.

10. Quality Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

Volunteers as well as mentors and Members are encouraged to provide open feedback to any aspect of organisation and implementation. In the end of every volunteer term, an evaluation form will be send to the receiving partner. The mentor will also be invited to provide feedback. In the end of each volunteer's stay, an individual interview of evaluative nature is conducted, and an evaluation form filled out. On this basis, feedback can be

forwarded to the receiving partner. Besides this, every receiving member is free to conduct individual forms of evaluation with the volunteer prior to his/her departure. The evaluation process should include following criteria:

- Reports of partner organizations and mentors should include information on greater needs, challenges and solutions (which is important for the ongoing evaluation and development of the program).
- UEM should put the final reports of the volunteers at the disposal of partner organizations (which is important for the next volunteer). This also includes the four newsletters that volunteers have to produce during their service.
- After the volunteer service, all participating actors (sending and partner organizations, volunteers etc.) should evaluate each other and themselves.

11. Insurance

All volunteers are insured by UEM through the respective Officer for Visa and Insurance matters for the length of their stay, if possible. If insurances cannot be paid for, incurred expenses can be refunded by UEM after health costs were covered by the hosting institution. The insurance covers health and accident insurance, as well as damage insurance. Insurance protection will start at the date of departure and will automatically end at the date of arrival in the volunteer's home country. The volunteer can ask for a copy of all relevant insurance policy documents. No additional notification will be given prior to the end of the insurance period.

12. Visa

All volunteers are obliged to have a valid visa for the duration of their stay. Tourist visa are not appropriate. Visa regulations of the respective country are to be adhered under all circumstances. The responsible Officer for Insurance and Visa matters and the Assistant of the Volunteer Programme desk help the volunteers to obtain their visa in cooperation with the respective UEM regional office and the receiving church. The leadership of the receiving church should provide any required support in order to smooth the procedures in the hosting country. Any visa related difficulties should be reported immediately to the Officer for Volunteer Programmes.

13. Emergencies and Crisis Situations

UEM selects both volunteers and placements with care and tries to ensure a good match between both sides. Close communication and cooperation between all counterparts, including the volunteer himself/herself, institutions of placement, leadership of the hosting

UEM member, mentor and regional offices as well as supporting institutions are also an integral part of quality management. However, even with the best possible preparation emergencies and crisis situations of different kind cannot be fully avoided.

The volunteer programmes fall under the conditions of the official UEM crisis plan, as long as no other agreements are made.

13.1 Political Emergencies

In case of serious political crisis and eventual evacuation, the hosting church shall take all required decisions in close communication with the respective Officer.

In the beginning of the volunteer service, German volunteers shall report to the German Embassy and subscribe to the ELEFAND list, which collects the dates of all German nationals present in the respective country. The German Embassy takes care of their evacuation, if required.

South–North and South–South volunteers are also encouraged to report to their respective Embassies in the host country, if one is available.

13.2 Medical Emergencies

Prior to departure every volunteer is obliged to get a full medical check–up and to provide a signed clarification by any registered medical doctor that states an excellent physical and mental condition.

In case of medical emergency the volunteer shall report to the mentor immediately, who in cooperation with the hosting church helps the volunteer to get the required medical care. If local health care facilities do not suffice, the volunteer can be brought to the next bigger town or the capital. Only in cases where local and national health care facilities are not in state of providing sufficient care, an emergency return to the country of origin can be considered.

All medical emergencies should be reported immediately to the respective Officer, who will then liaise with the insurance company concerned.

13.3 Personal Emergencies

Naturally, personal crisis situations can cover a broad range of symptoms, such as culture shock, home sickness and stress symptoms such as sleeping problems, anxiousness and mood instability, as well as severe sicknesses such as eating disorders, depressions and

panic attacks. All psychological disorders should be taken seriously, and closely monitored.

The first person for the volunteer to contact in case of personal crisis situations should be the local mentor. Also, the volunteer can contact the responsible Officer for Volunteer Programmes in the UEM head office if the mentor is not in state to provide the required support. During periods of psychological crisis the guidance of the volunteer should be increased through personal meetings with the mentor, telephone calls and emails by the responsible officer etc. In order to ensure transparent communication also the contact between the responsible officer and the local mentor should be increased during crisis situations.

13.4 Earlier return in Crisis Situations

A break of contract at an earlier point of time than stated in the volunteer contract is the last mean for solving a crisis situation and shall only be considered in cases where all other means of support have not shown any signs of improvement over an extended period of time, or in cases where the mental state of the volunteer is so severe, that a longer stay in the hosting country would be irresponsible.

14. Finances and Funding

Generally, UEM covers all expenses for the volunteer programmes, including:

- Flight;
- Insurances;
- Visa costs;
- Pocket money;⁶
- Language preparation;
- Seminar participation;
- Food.

The number of available placements in all three programmes is based on a fixed annual budget. Though UEM considers the volunteer programmes as a substantial and important component of its mission and programmes, and therefore consequently invests a substantial amount of its annual overall budget, there is a need for additional sources of funding. These include contributions through government funding as well as the growing

⁶ Details are outlined in the respective volunteer contract form of each programme.

need for contributions by the receiving churches, e.g. in the form of free accommodation and food.

14.1 North–South Programme

Currently, UEM receives a co–funding of up to 75%⁷ to all expenses in the framework of the North–South volunteer programme.

All hosting congregations/institutions are asked to contribute to the programme by covering the costs for accommodation, usually by providing a host family or any form of suitable accommodation for the volunteers. If the hosting congregations cannot afford to do so, UEM can reimburse them for costs arising regarding accommodation.

14.2 South–North Programme

Currently, UEM receives a co–funding of up to 75%⁸ to all expenses in the framework of the South–North volunteer programme.

All hosting congregations/institutions are asked to contribute to the programme by covering the costs for accommodation, food, a ticket for public transport. Furthermore, a language course during the first months of the volunteer’s stay is financed.

14.3 South–South programme

The costs for South–South volunteer placements are covered by UEM. The hosting churches are also asked to participate in supporting this programme by giving a contribution by providing accommodation.

14.4 Network of Supporters

Within the North–South volunteer programme, the volunteers are asked to build up a network of supporters that contribute to UEM volunteer programmes in general for the period of the volunteer’s term. Ideally, each volunteer finds up to ten supporters who contribute about ten Euros a month. The volunteers in turn right quarterly reports or circulars on their life and work during the service. Though, it is stressed beforehand that the contributions are neither intended to financial support the individual volunteer him or herself nor for their respective placement but for the UEM volunteer programmes in general.

15. Cooperation Partners

⁷ Percentage of contribution depending on actual expenses.

⁸ Percentage of contribution depending on actual expenses.

In order to ensure the quality of its programmes, to use and contribute synergy effects and mutual learning, as well as joint advocacy for volunteer programme concerns on governmental level, UEM is a member of a network of German Mission societies. Besides, UEM is a member of the association of Protestant volunteer services (KEF), and the association of Protestant organisations receiving 'weltwärts' funds.

Since 2010, UEM is cooperating with Norddeutsche Mission (NM) in the framework of their North-South and South-North volunteer programmes. It is contracted in a cooperation agreement that UEM is responsible for the administration of four German volunteers annually for NM. The same has been done in 2014 through a cooperation agreement with Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche (ERK); UEM takes responsibility for the administration of two volunteers annually for ERK.