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Evaluation of ``Europawärts``

by Tim Grosse

``Europawärts``

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I. What is ``Europawärts``?

``Europawärts`` is a Youth Leadership-Program in the pilot phase, which was conducted by the South African NGO LoveLife in cooperation with the MHIV program of the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) in South Africa and Weltwärts with GIZ in South Africa. It is designed as an exchange program and sends young South Africans who have worked together as possible with German Weltwärts volunteers in South Africa, as volunteers to Germany. The volunteer service is completed in different NGOs under the motto ``Learning through active support``. Here, the volunteers will use and share their skills in a German context; additionally they will strengthen their cultural competence and develop their professional orientation. Then the newly acquired skills and abilities of the volunteers are supposed to benefit their communities. The program can be divided into four phases: selection of volunteers, preparation, implementation and evaluation.

a) Selection of volunteers

The selection of volunteers is done by Love Life as the South African sending organization. ``Europawärts`` is aimed at young people between 18 and 28 years who play an active part in HIV / AIDS prevention and / or youth work in South Africa. In addition, applicants must present the South African ``Matric`` and should prove that they are interested in youth work and that they have gained skills in this field. It is of advantage if the applicants have experiences in organizing and conducting workshops and in community work. Candidates should also be open and interested in other cultures, as well as motivated and willing to learn. The ability to communicate fluently in the English language and the willingness to learn German has to be present.

Those interested could apply to early October 2012 for one of the six places in the ``Europawärts``-Program. The application documents had to include a curriculum vitae, a picture of the candidate and a letter of application in which the motivation of participation and the plans for the time after the exchange program should be presented as well as how they think, that their experiences of Germany could be useful incorporated in their future work. End of October 2012, the six best candidates were selected in an interview with GIZ and the Love-Life National Manager of the Department of Youth Leadership Development. After that, the preparation phase followed, which was from November 2012 until January 2013.

b) Preparation phase

The preparation phase consisted of a five-week course in South Africa and a week-long course after arriving in Germany. The five-week course in South Africa includes two modules. The first module was held from 05.11-09.11.2012. The roles of volunteers as well as some country differences between South Africa and Germany were discussed. It also came to a meeting between the South African and the German ``Weltwärts''-volunteers, who have completed their volunteer service in South Africa at that time. The second module was held from 12.11-07.12.2012. The participants of the ``Europawärts''-Program received a one-month intensive German language course at the Goethe Institute in Johannesburg / South Africa with the intention to prepare the participants for the live and work in Germany. The course not only provided basic language skills, but also pursued an intercultural approach to bring the volunteers the German culture closer, so that they are capable of dealing with the German culture and society during their stay in Germany. The intensive course ended with a presentation by the student and a final examination. At least the level A1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* had to be achieved.

On 13.01.2013, the South African volunteers arrived in Dresden - in the city, which would become the new home for the next six months. The introduction week began on the next day until 18.01.2013. It was carried out by the AIDS-Hilfe Dresden, the receiving organization. The aim of the introduction week was to give program participants an insight and information about living in Dresden, to perform common administrative procedures and to provide a common acquaintance between the program directors, mentors and volunteers. In addition, learning tandems with students and the South African volunteers were formed to facilitate the getting in and make initial contacts.

c) Implementation phase

The ``Europawärts'' volunteers worked at various partner organizations in Dresden during the six-month stay in Germany. The AIDS-Hilfe Dresden acts as a local coordinator for the volunteers and for the partner organizations. In addition, the AIDS-Hilfe Dresden is the connection point for sending organization Love Life and its partner GIZ and Weltwärts in South Africa, as well as the organizer of two training seminars, which have to be attended by the volunteers during the ``Europawärts''-Program. The first training seminar was held after about 3 weeks and was a cultural journey through various German cities and led from Berlin via Weimar, where also the Buchenwald concentration camp was visited, to Leipzig. The second

seminar included a preparation for the leaving of Germany with a final farewell feast, to which all program partners were invited. During the implementation period, the volunteers also participate in a variety of appointments outside of their partner organizations. These appointments included, among other things, reflection meetings, which were held every two weeks and were associated with project visits, trainings on HIV/AIDS, conducting or participating in various workshops; recordings for the ``Europawärts'' film or participation on the Christopher Street Day in Dresden. The constellation of volunteers (single, multiple, or all volunteers) differed from appointment to appointment.

Several newspaper articles about the ``Europawärts''-Program and the South African volunteers were published in the area of Dresden. In addition, program participants also reached about 1,000 people in workshops. A ``Europawärts'' film is also planned.

d) Evaluation phase

The final phase contains the evaluation of the ``Europawärts''-Program. The results are based on different data. Firstly, the program participants wrote monthly reports. The monthly reports were written in the context of questionnaires, which were created by using the online tool ``SurveyMonkey''. The questions had to be answered partly with a rating scale and partly as open answers. In addition, the volunteers had each a separate questionnaire at the beginning and end of the implementation phase complete. The questions contained in it had to be answered by rating scale, to make the development of volunteers in different areas (general, individual & partner country) measurable. Furthermore, the partner organizations and host families answered open questions regarding their experiences with the volunteers. In addition to these SurveyMonkey data, results from the debriefing and individual interviews with the volunteers flow into the evaluation.

II. Evaluation of the ``Europawärts''-Program

The following section includes the evaluation of the ``Europawärts''-Program. Initially, changes and developments of program participants in different fields are examined. Then interesting aspects and problem areas are picked up and discussed in detail. Based on the results recommendations to maintain and/or modificate the program design in the various program phases of ``Europawärts'' will be given.

a) Development of program participants during the implementation phase of "Europawärts"

The development of program participants will be examined in the dimensions "partner country", "General" and "Individually". The procedure is that questions from the "Towards Europe-Surveys" will be assigned to one of the three dimensions (some topics / questions cannot be clearly assigned to one dimension. The assignment will still take place to only one dimension, so that the examination has a better structure). The development of the "Europawärts" participants can be examined by comparing the responses of the "Towards Europe-Survey I" and "Towards Europe-Survey II". However, the two surveys are not identical. The first survey included 26 questions; the second survey includes 43 questions. Questions that were asked in the first survey were queried in a similar manner in the second survey, which was also supplemented by additional questions that could not be answered in the first survey. The questions in the "Towards Europe-Survey I" could be answered with the following different response options: "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree", "Don't know/ no answer". For simplicity, "Strongly agree" and "Agree" will be graded as consent in the following evaluation, "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" as a rejection and "Do not know / no answer" as an abstention. The reason for the simplification is that the reasons for the gradations within the agreement and disagreement are not known, since no personal comments of the respondents could be added. However, personal comments could be added in the "Towards Europe-Survey II". Nevertheless, the answers will only be categorized as approval, disapproval and abstention, because despite comments the individual reasons for the differentiation of the response options are not apparent and the result of the evaluation will not be distorted by handling it in this way.

i) Dimension: General

The dimension "General" contains the topics global issues, partner organization and alcohol consumption.

Under the heading "Global Issues" the volunteers were asked to what extent they are interested in global relationships and whether an understanding of global contexts already exists. At the beginning of the program, all volunteers reported that they know what key terms such as Globalization, international trade, industrialized Countries / developing countries stand for and all respondents said that they are interested in global contexts. Five out of six respondents said that they have a good understanding of global Contexts. This includes an understanding

of social, economic and ecological relationships in a globalized world. The exchange program has contributed that almost all volunteers (five of six) have increased their interest as well as understanding of global contexts and that the above mentioned key words have filled with additional content. The statement "I have a good understanding of the position of South Africa in the international community" was affirmed by all at the beginning. The results for Germany's position in the international community were somewhat weaker. At the time of the second survey, however, both the understanding of the position of South Africa as well as understanding about Germany's position in the international community has improved and deepened.

The topic "Partner organization" includes questions about communication between "Europawärts" volunteers and partner organizations during the preparatory phase (before arriving in Germany) and about incorporation, integration, and support within the partner organization during the implementation phase. From the information provided by respondents it was indicated that four out of five people had already contact prior to its partner organization in Germany. These four individuals were also informed as much as possible about their future tasks and duties within the partner organization. [Note: All program participants were given a description of their future workplace and they had the opportunity to contact the partner organization before their arrival in Germany!] Upon arrival, the volunteers have been incorporated appropriately in their partner organization, according to the respondents, and the partner organizations have communicated their expectations regarding the performance of the work. A person did not agree with regard to the Communication from the expectations from the partner organization, but it is apparent from the accompanying comment that the question was therefore denied because the partner organization has sometimes provided no tasks (perspective of the respondent). For this reason, the rejection was taken as consent. The integration process into the organization, which also includes the communication between volunteers and colleagues, went smoothly in all cases according to their own statements. This could be due to the good care of the volunteers by their mentors, which were provided by the partner organization. Nevertheless, partner organizations stated that due to the language barrier complications have arisen. This will be discussed in Section II. In the last question in the subject area, "Partner organization" the participants were asked whether they would recommend their partner organizations for future exchange programs. Four out of six would recommend their organization, one person abstained and one person would not recommend its partner organization. The reason for this could be found in the comments to the question. The partner organization was a school. The volunteer is of the opinion that it is difficult to start a sustainable

HIV/AIDS- Program at a school. The volunteer gave the recommendation that an organization which carries out HIV/AIDS workshops at various schools would be appropriate.

The last topic in the dimension "General" is "Alcohol consumption". The questions deal with the perception of alcohol consumption. Thus, the program participants were interviewed at the beginning of the implementation phase, if they are of the opinion that alcohol can be a risk for an individual and for society as a whole. All respondents indicated that alcohol can be dangerous for an individual, and four out of five said that alcohol can be dangerous for a society. Furthermore, all respondents selected the answer option "Strongly agree" when the question "Is there a different cultural perception and use of alcohol in Germany and South Africa" came up. In the second survey, the South African volunteers were asked to indicate to what extent their own alcohol consumption has changed during the stay in Germany. Some reported that their alcohol consumption behavior has not changed, while others stated that their alcohol consumption has risen slightly. However, this must be relatively speaking; all families have reported that the volunteers drinking behavior was responsibly. The question whether the approach has changed to alcohol during the exchange program was affirmed by three people and denied by three people. The comments are quite interesting. One person wrote that the use of alcohol in Germany is done responsibly and consumption is lower than in South Africa, which means that alcohol consumption in South Africa is a problem. Another person wrote that the approach regarding alcohol and its dangers has not changed since alcohol induces young people to risky sexual behavior also in Germany.

ii) Dimension: Individually

The dimension "individually" includes the topics independence, empathy and dealing with foreign languages. The point "Independence" deals with the independently work at the workplace and to what extent the "Europawärts"- Program has enabled the volunteers to work plan and act independently in their work environment. In the first survey, three out of five people indicated, that they have acted independently in their working environment in South Africa before the exchange program. In the second survey, five out of six people said, that they had to do more activities independently in their partner organization in Germany than before in South Africa. This meant that five out of six people are strengthened in taking over self-reliant plans and carry out activities on their own.

The point "Empathy" deals with the capacity of the program participants to respect lifestyles and ideas of other people, which differ from their own views and lifestyle, and whether the

respondent is able to empathize in the position of an opposing person during a conflict situation. In the first survey, the volunteers affirmed that they are able to respect other lifestyles/ideas and that they can empathize in other people's position during a conflict situation. The second survey showed that participation in the exchange program "Europawärts" led to a greater awareness and interest regarding to different norms, thoughts and lifestyles. Furthermore, five out of six people indicated, that they can empathize more in the situation of a person during a conflict situation since the "Europawärts" participation.

To the topic "Dealing with foreign languages" the South African volunteers were asked at the beginning, how high the personal hurdle is to communicate in a foreign language. The respondents indicated that this is not a problem for them. Four out of five respondents said that they have no direct fear of contact regarding to the German language in particular. In the second survey at the end of the implementation phase, all volunteers indicated that the ability to speak German has improved a lot and the openness towards foreign languages has increased. Also the host families and host organizations confirmed that the volunteers have improved their German knowledge, but there were differences in terms of learning progress among the "Europawärts" participants.

iii) Dimension: Partner country

The dimension "Partner country" includes different aspects of the partner country and of the stay in Germany. Following topics are included in this dimension: racism/discrimination; feeling of alienation; gender role; German mentality. The questions in this dimension allow the volunteers to write down their experiences and observations to the respective points. In the "Towards Europe-Survey I" the "Europawärts" participants were asked whether they have encountered conflicts in their home country of South Africa, where it came to racism and/or discrimination. Three out of five participants answered yes. In the second "Towards Europe-Survey" the South African volunteers were asked whether they have encountered racism and/or discrimination in Germany, and if so, what kind of situation it was, and whether the volunteer was able to handle the situation. Four out of six stated that they had an experience regarding racism/discrimination in Germany. One of these incidents was particularly critical. Here the person was addressed in an abusive manner by "soccer hooligans", and it came "almost to a fight" (statement of the affected volunteer). However, it did not take place because the respondent could control himself and defused the situation. Other experiences occurred mainly in public transport in Dresden. However, there is a presumption that it is mainly a problem of the language barrier, which set off the inconvenience in public transport rather

than by the color or the origin of the affected person. The challenges regarding to racism/discrimination, if any, could be managed by five of the six participants. One person stated, however, that she would like to return to South Africa in some moments. In the intensive interview this person testified that she felt uncomfortable when she was going out in Dresden unaccompanied. One reason for this was that she felt disturbed by the looks she pulled up because of her black skin. Other questions dealt with the feeling of alienation within a closed community. This feeling may occur e.g. as a foreigner abroad or a stranger in another ethnic group. Three out of five respondents said that they have experienced this feeling before their stay in Germany. In the second survey, the question was asked whether the volunteers have felt within German society as strangers. This was denied by five people, while a person was abstained. The comments on the question, however, show that all volunteers felt integrated and that they were welcomed openly. One person stated that they felt a little strange, but this is normal to some degree. The questionnaires also contained the topic "gender role". Shortly after arriving in Germany the volunteers were asked whether they have a certain idea about the role of women and men within the family and society as a whole. Three out of five respondents said that they have a certain idea of the gender role. The questions in the "Towards Europe-Survey II" were about how the perspective of the roles of men and women in the family and society as a whole changed during the stay in Germany. Here, six out of six volunteers stated that it led to a change of perspective. The "Europawärts" participants explained in the accompanying commentary how something has changed or what observations they have made regarding to gender role. One person wrote: *"To see that in Germany traditionally women and men are equal in all aspects of life (family, work, household duties) as opposed to the traditional set of rules for men and women in South African traditions had a really large impact and changed my mind set a little"*.

The last point in the dimension "Partner country" focuses on the German mentality. At the beginning of the implementation phase, four out of five respondents indicated that they know what is meant by the German mentality. At the end of the stay, the question came up, if the participants were able to gain a better understanding of the differences between the South African and German mentality. Six out of six confirmed this. The comments included subjects such as punctuality, neatness and gender role. However, one program participant commented on the question in a different way and went a level deeper: *"One thing I can say it's the same, both countries have their own stereotypic thinking....there are a lot of different forms of "mentalities"."*

iv) Result to the development of program participants during the implementation phase of ``Europawärts``

The evaluation of the development of program participants during the implementation phase of ``Europawärts`` shows that the participants have developed positively in all three dimensions and their sub-categories. The exchange program contributed to the development of intercultural and social competences, as well as to personal qualifications of the participants, such as in the area of foreign language or independent work. Thus, ``Europawärts`` fulfills its function as a Youth-Leadership-Program. It contributes to the development of social potential of the young program participants by promoting a self-confident and self-reliant and simultaneously self-reflexive and self-critical behavior. The ``Europawärts`` participants are empowered by their gained experiences and skills, so that they can creatively participate in society and pass on their learned skills and abilities to their environment.

b) Evaluation of monthly reports and the reports of partner organizations and host families

In the following section, the acquired skills and social skills of the ``Europawärts`` participants will be considered in more detail, areas of tension will be worked out and finally it will be shown how the program had an impact on the other actors within the exchange program, so partner organizations and host families. Subsequently, on the basis of these results, recommendations for further development of the program design and implementation will be given. Data base for the subsequent investigation are the monthly reports of the volunteers, the final reports of the partner organizations and host families and the intensive individual interview, which was conducted after the return of the South African volunteers.

i) Development of skills and social skills of program participants during the implementation phase of ``Europawärts``

As part of the participation in the ``Europawärts`` program, the volunteers could develop hard and soft skills. The hard skills include the communication in a foreign language, knowledge of methods and techniques for teaching specific content or knowledge in a specific field of activity. It is about professional competence. The term ``soft skills`` is understood as social competence.

Social competence refers to the ability to achieve its own goals in social interactions and to satisfy needs while taking into account the objectives and needs of others.¹ However, the term “soft skills” also incorporates other personality traits, such as Independence or the capacity for self-reflection or criticism.

Hard skills

The participants developed skills and abilities in different areas, which they can use profitably for their social environment as part of their future engagements. During the preparation phase, the volunteers completed a one-month intensive German course at the Goethe Institute in Johannesburg. Through the acquisition of basic knowledge (level A1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*) and first insights and explanations to the German culture, “Europawärts” participants should be prepared for their imminent deployment. Participation in the intensive language course was described as extremely helpful. One person reported: “*I enjoyed our teacher (EDDA HOLL) because she made us understand a lot of things about Germany and Germans and the fact that you get convinced that you can speak „Deutsch”*”. During the stay, the volunteers were able to develop their knowledge of German. However, the degree of progress was different from person to person. A host family reported that the German language was developed only very rudimentary at the beginning, but during the stay in Germany, it has developed well enough. Another host family wrote: “The exchange student did not speak German within the family – sometimes a word, that `s it, but still learned a lot I think, but not shown and used-pity!” [Note: The term “exchange student” is not used to refer to the participants of the “Europawärts” program] Also, the host organizations commented on the development of German language skills of the volunteers:

- “*The German skills were low at the start, but developed well because she could only speak German with some of the staff.*”
- “*I, as a mentor, made the mistake of talking too little German with him. I wanted to make sure that he has understood everything and it ran much faster like this. Therefore I can see no development of the German language.*”

Here it is clear that there are differences as to the need to speak German. Program participants whose colleagues speak English feel less pressure to expand their knowledge of German, as if this is not the case. One respondent made in terms of language acquisition, an interesting

¹ Perren et al. (2008): Selbst- und fremdbezogene soziale Kompetenzen: Auswirkungen auf das emotionale Befinden. In: T. Malti & S. Perren (Hrsg.): Soziale Kompetenz bei Kindern und Jugendlichen. Entwicklungsprozesse und Fördermöglichkeiten. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer. p. 89

statement: *“Well my German is really improving at the kindergarten, because the kids cannot speak English”*. Another participant made a similar statement during the intensive interviews. It was said that it was easier to talk in German with small children than with adults. In general it can be said that all volunteers have made progress in the mastery of the German language. This is also said by the partner organizations, host families and volunteers themselves (see section a) of the evaluation to the development of program participants). Nevertheless, the aspect of language is an element in the area of conflict, which has emerged during the implementation of the *“Europawärts”* program. On the question of whether the volunteer was well-prepared, one host family answered: *“Yes I think so, Linguistically NO, because the inclusion and working with non-English speaker was hardly possible – (in the kindergarten) project designing was difficult”*. This quote illustrates that the language barrier is not a single isolated problem, but extends to other areas within the program. This point is illustrated in section ii) when the elements of the problem area of the *“Europawärts”* program will be explored.

In addition to the language skills, the volunteers also acquired methods and techniques to teach specific topics/contents.

- *“I have once been to a National office (AIDS Hilfe) in Berlin where they presented their organisation what they do and what people they target the most and why? For me the method that they used there it’s somehow interesting and helpful and also unusual. If I can take that method to any LoveLife centre in SA definitely it would succeed and may be make a difference and change the way people stigmatise people living with HIV and Homosexual people and Women who have been abused sexually, physically and emotionally. I will tell or show the method in detail when I get to SA.”*
- *“developing a model as the one that is had here and adapt it to my organisations holiday program.”*
- *“I have learned a new method of teaching teachers or child workers about sexuality for young boy and girls. I have also learn about the prostitute policy that Dresden has, very interesting types of HIV/AIDS materials/pamphlets you can use for the public.”*

The participants observed and learned new methods and techniques which they can use for their future community involvement in South Africa. In the third quote, the volunteer men-

tioned that he had met a new method, with which teachers and professionals, who work together with children and young adults, can be trained about ‘‘Young People’s Sexuality’’. This is a hot topic in South Africa. As a result, the volunteer has the opportunity to implement the new acquired instruments in the South African context. In addition to these special methods, participants also learned how to plan, organize and carry out workshops. The volunteers performed about 70 workshops alone or in cooperation and thereby reached an audience of about 1000 people. The ability of organizing workshops is a great addition to the individual person as workshops provide a platform for their future commitment. In addition, some volunteers were also given insight into specific areas of activity. One volunteer reported: ‘‘*My office administration skills have developed so much and I now start to think like a professional man*’’. Insights of this type also have a careers guidance function. ‘‘*When I get to South Africa, I would really like to study Teaching and one day become a professional Primary teacher or have my own business. I have noticed that I am good with teaching the youngsters and they also enjoy the way I teach them so that makes them enjoy English lessons. Teaching is now my passion*’’. After returning from Germany the author of this commentary reported in the intensive interview that several applications for a teaching degree were submitted to various South African universities. Thus, the goal ‘‘professional orientation’’, of the ‘‘Europawärts’’ program, which was named in the introduction, is reached.

Soft skills

However, the focus of ‘‘Europawärts’’ lies in the provision of soft skills. Participants will gain strong social skills. The volunteers will be able to creatively intervene in the community through the social skills, because they have developed a certain intercultural competence, empathy, self-reflection and self-reliance. The social interaction with the environment is strengthened, so that the person is able to influence the actions or the setting of a group.

‘‘Europawärts’’ took the participants out of their usual spatial and social environment. This requires a strong adaptability and is often associated with challenges and complications. The step is necessary, however, to confront the participants with the new and unfamiliar. This results in the learning process. The South African volunteers had to deal with the German culture, the role of men and women within the German family and society in general and the diversity of life. Part a) of the evaluation showed that four out of five respondents indicated at the beginning of the implementation phase, that they know what the ‘‘German mentality’’ stands for. This view changed over time. When asked what has changed in the impression and

the opinion about the German culture, one of the respondents answered as follows: *“That all Germans are not the same like in any other cultures”*. Thinking in stereotypes has been broken here. This happened even more in the area of gender role. The roles of men and women in the German family and in companies concerned the South African volunteers enormously. *“I’m still fascinated about Gender roles here in Germany most men enjoy cooking (mind you they are very good at it) while women enjoy doing things outside. Love it!”*. The comments to the gender role in Germany were almost only to the division of household tasks between men and women, because the volunteers could see this every day in their host families. One volunteer was not just watching it, but made himself experiences regarding the roles of men and women in Germany. *“Well, at the kindergarten the men working there as teachers too and to me that is not usual, in SA I don’t think you find a man working as a kindergarten teacher with kids of two years”*. The male volunteer worked for three months in a kindergarten with babies and small children during the *“Europawärts”* program. This was unusual for him at first, as this is a typical *“women’s profession”* in his home. On his return to South Africa this person stated in the intensive interview that he could imagine now, to work in kindergarten in South Africa. The volunteer was confronted with the new and unusual (for him) and could break his own thought patterns through self-reflection. The volunteers also learned to respect the diversity of life and put themselves in the position of another person. One person wrote in one of the monthly reports: *“I got a chance to attend a workshop at Gerede e.V. where lesbians, transgender, bisexual women come together every Thursday and talk about issues that they face in the society and just be themselves. It was quite interesting for me to hear about their challenges (which are the same as homosexual people face in South Africa.)”*. This quote illustrates that respect and understanding of other ways of life was applied and the person has dealt with the challenges and concerns of other persons, has therefore empathized into other people’s situations. One participant expanded the concept of diversity of life and related also other environmental aspects with the *“diversity of life”* and not only human life. *“Germans more than anything value and respect life. They understand that in the universe plants, animals and human need each other. So they treat every living thing with respect”*. Environmental awareness in Germany made a strong impression on the participants. In the intensive interview two volunteers reported that they now started composting in South Africa and that they would also like to separate garbage, but this is not feasible in practice because appropriate structures are absent. The fact that the *“Europawärts”* participants could make all these experiences and observations, a intercultural competence and empathy developed. By sharing and reporting of experiences and adventures through the volunteers, enters a multiplier effect.

Another component of social competence is self-reliance. Self-reliance is closely linked with initiative, which in turn builds on a certain motivation. In part a) of the evaluation of the development of program participants, five out of six respondents reported that they had to work more independently than before in South Africa. After reviewing the final reports of the partner organizations and host families, it became clear that a conflict is present regarding to independence, initiative and motivation.

ii) Area of conflict: Language and self-reliance

The parts of language and self-reliance are closely linked. The last quote in the section, which has treated the language, was the answer of a host family on the question of whether the volunteer was well prepared or not.

- ``Yes I think so, Linguistically NO, because the inclusion and working with non-English speaker was hardly possible – (in the kindergarten) project designing was difficult’’

The real problem here is not the lack of knowledge of German, but the influence of activity in the workplace through the language barrier. A volunteer reported: ``*It is sometimes difficult when I'm alone at the office and can't speak fluently German, which means I don't do telephone consulting work*’’. The language barrier can also lead to misunderstandings. Some situations in public transport were perceived as racist and / or discriminatory by the South African volunteers. ``*I have witnessed Racism from the bus driver, he was so rude to us and impatient*’’. At this point, however, it must be made clear that it is only a presumption that it was a misunderstanding, which was caused by the language barrier. The cause of this assumption is because the volunteers could not exactly explain in the intensive interviews why the situation has been a racist/discriminatory situation. The impression was that the bus driver has acted only impatient, as described in the comment above. This is another example that the language barrier is not an isolated problem, but overlaps in many different areas. In section a) of the evaluation, five out of six respondents said, that they have worked more independently during ``Europawärts’’ than before in South Africa. But comments in the final reports of the partner organizations and host families show that the independence of most of the volunteers did not meet the expectations. Some families reported that little initiative on the part of the volunteers regarding the development of coexistence and/or recreational activities was noticeable.

- ``*In the family recreational activities always started from us. Wishes and suggestions on what we can do together came not from her side. She met the other volunteers on weekends and carried out joint undertakings.*’’

The lack of development of initiative regarding the design of living and recreational activities has several reasons, but must be seen relatively. All host families stressed that the South African volunteers were able to integrate into the family and became part of the family for a certain time. The importance of successful integration stands over the importance of distinct initiative, because the integration into the family is the fundament, of which the initiative can arise in the first place. The reasons for the low self-initiative in the design of living together and recreational activities are conditioned by institutional backgrounds and the age of the participants. The intensive interviews revealed that the desired initiative by the host was unfamiliar and partially unknown to the volunteers. In their South African families, the number of weekend activities is much lower and actually uncommon. In addition, the low self-initiative is culturally determined. In families, much emphasis is placed on obedience and executing instructions while it is less pronounced in Germany and the promotion of independence and initiative has a higher priority. Besides these institutional reasons the age of the program participants does play an essential role. The host families accommodate young adults, who pursue their age-appropriate interests and would like to meet up with friends. However, all families stressed that integration took place, why the problem "Initiative within the host family" has to be qualified. More problematic is the problem of self-initiative and self-reliance in the work context. Four out of five partner organizations reported that the volunteer has not developed initiative or only a little bit. As mentioned motivation is a prerequisite for initiative. One participant reported in the intensive interview that additional tasks were offered to him often. However, these were not executed because it was only said that he could do the tasks. Another participant worked at a school and said in the intensive interview that the fixed tasks, which are listed in the timetable were ran and that this would be sufficient. It is thus clear that self-reliance working, based on its own initiative, working for some of the participants are new. It is thus clear that this scale of self-reliant work is new and unfamiliar for some of the participants. A host family wrote the following statement: "*Initiative and developing of own ideas were often requested at the partner organizations, but it happened little. A more structured framework with a rather fixed task corridor or development corridor would have helped in circumstances*". Here it is similar to family life regarding initiative and independence. The cultural differences, which are instilled, cannot be degraded fast. Program participants are familiar with executing instructions, but the demand for more initiative and independence without being prompted to a particular act is unfamiliar. However, there was also a volunteer who could develop initiative and who brought in own ideas according to the organization.

- *“The volunteer developed initiative after a short time and brought independently ideas in the counseling center, which could be implemented in part. Towards the end of the half year the volunteer was able to organize and conduct its operations independently. Meanwhile, there was also a short hangover, which cause was less work, but rather a “homesick” ‘.*

The age and experiences of the volunteer were proved to be an advantage according to the partner. *“Our organization was ideally suited, as the volunteer has already dealt with similar tasks in South Africa. Also his age (27) was of great advantage, since we are a counseling center and deal with (some) difficult issues. It also expects some life experience that the volunteer has brought”*. In addition, his strong interest in the German language was mentioned: *“The German was rudimentary. The interest in the German language was great, but it proved difficult to enforce consistently the German language in communication. An increase in the knowledge of German was clearly noted at the end - both speaking and comprehension (listening)”*. The volunteer reported in the intensive interview that communication within the partner organization was good, because many of his colleagues were able to speak English well and he also always tried to improve his German. These aspects make clear that a smooth communication can foster individual initiative and independence. Another program participant told during intensive interviews that his motivation has plummeted since a barrier-free communication with the target group (in this case young people) was not possible and that a cultural difference in the conception of appropriate behavior in dealing with each other existed. Ultimately cannot say one hundred percent, what are the reasons for the low development of the initiative of most participants. Possible reasons are cultural differences in terms of attitudes to work, the young age of the participants, inexperience of the participants or the language barrier, which can lead to demotivation and/or slow down the implementation of their own ideas. Ultimately, it may also be that the period of adjustment to the environment takes longer than expected and a development of personal skills cannot take place.

iii) Effect of “Europawärts” on partner organizations and host families

Despite the area of conflict shown above, the conclusion of the partner organizations and host families is very positive. Not only the “Europawärts” volunteers, but also the partner organizations and host families have benefited from participation in the program:

- *“Since many of our staff have hardly international experience outside of an annual vacation abroad, it was important to enable them once the “the bigger picture”, because for our employees, there is much to learn what concerns overcoming language barriers,*

getting to know and working with people foreign cultures, overcoming inhibitions, etc.''

[Partner organization]

- *''She brought the children and mentors close to their home country. It aroused curiosity To learn more and relativized the "German worries".''* [Partner organization]
- *''We learned a lot about South Africa, the people there, life as a teenager. The Problems that occur here, we were not thinking of (hair care and skin). The Children learned to have the courage to communicate in a foreign language and to communicate with a few words and hands and feet. I met a nice man to know. This Experience - I do not want to miss it.''* [Host family]
- *''Experience and empathy with the different culture, different culture techniques. This can only be experienced and demonstrated by direct contact.''* [Host family]

These quotes illustrate what a partner organization wrote in its final report, namely, that participation at the ''Europawärts'' program leads to a win-win situation for all stakeholders. All partner organizations and host families stressed that they would resume a volunteer. A partner organization answered the question of whether they would resume a volunteer as follows:

''Of Course. It was a good experience and with this experience, the operation site will be able to be better prepared for the next volunteer.'' Another partner organization said yes, but combined this with conditions: *'' We would take a volunteer under certain conditions: - better knowledge of German - more time for an employee for the practical guidance and instructions - early information about the time when the person comes - with the option to reject if it does not work for us - Intensive support in reflection groups for practice companion before, during and after the project - a volunteer for a practice site for the 6 months without extensive permanent other projects running at the same time.''* Here the partner organization criticized, among other things, that the program participant was often involved in other projects outside of the partner organization. This is certainly to confirm, but also has the positive aspect that the ''Europawärts'' program is visible for the public and moreover positive side effects can arise for the individual partner organizations.

- *''F. was a guest on a radio program and designed an evening for International Women's Day, where they reported about the role of women in South Africa.''*

- *“ J. and the project have enabled contact between us and the AIDS Hilfe and we supported us well during that time.”*

The effect of “Europawärts” to the partner organizations and host families is therefore quite positive. The different actors learn from each other and thereby expand their horizons. In addition, the “Europawärts” program enables participating organizations to establish new contacts and more appearing in public.

III. Recommendations for the further development of “Europawärts”

In the following section recommendations for modification of the program design and program implementation of “Europawärts” will be issued. The recommendations are based on the evaluation report of the “Europawärts” program. Improvement opportunities were discovered in the fields of “Selection process”, “Contract”, “Host families”, “Duration of volunteer service” and “Pedagogical support”.

a) Selection process

The group of applicants should be limited to alumni groundbreaker of LoveLife, which are still active, i.e. people who are all actively involved in their community or who have realized their own ideas and plans, e.g. in form of a start-up company. Candidates should not be younger than 21 and not older than 28 years at the time of application and have to be in possession of a criminal record and a valid passport (at least valid for six months beyond the period of use). It is also useful if the applicant comes from an urban area in which he was confronted intercultural before (within South Africa, this applies in particular to the metropolises). The reason for this is that the adaptive difficulties of the Participant in a German city and to the German culture are expected to be lower, and thus the success of the exchange is more likely. Additional volunteering in the community is desirable and can be specified in the application along with the naming of two reference persons. In addition, the application form should be attached by a letter of motivation, including the details about what the applicants envision themselves for the time after the stay in Germany, what they want to give back to their community and how they will use their future new knowledge and skills. After reviewing the application documents more people should be invited to attend an assessment day, as places are available within the “Europawärts”-program. The assessment day intends that the

persons who are in charge for the selection get to know the candidates better through different methods and approaches to gain an insight view into the personalities. These recommendations are based on the fact that many partner organizations reported a lack of independence and motivation of program participants. There was merely one exception. Here, the motivation of the participant was praised and it was noted that his age and experience were very helpful. Similar observations could also be made at the ``Weltwärts'' program. Older participants more stable in their personality than younger participants and can therefore better accomplish specific (stress-) situations.

b) Contract

Obligations, which arise from program participation, should be clarified in the contract between the sending organization and the volunteers, so that those ones are binding for the volunteers. Firstly, the successful completion of the four-week intensive German language course (at least level A1 of the Common European Framework of References for Languages) at the Goethe Institute in Johannesburg should be a prerequisite for the departure to Germany. In addition to the final examination, the volunteers must also attend the weekly tests. A home-ward journey on the weekends during the course is not scheduled. So that the participants strive to increase their knowledge of German during the implementation phase, the requirement to file one or more German texts about their lives and experiences in Germany should be contractually assured. In addition, regular language courses should be organized in Germany to give a structure to the learning process. As a result, the tension could be mitigated with regard to the language.

It would also be useful if the contract obliges the volunteers to write and send a letter to their communities. This could lead to an intensive dealing with the experiences and to an increase of interest within the community. Furthermore, the ``Europawärts'' participants could analyse a project within its partner organization, formulate findings and recommendations and present them within its community (or Love Life) after the return to South Africa. Here also the letter to the community is beneficial, since a larger audience can be expected for presentation by an increased interest in the ``Europawärts'' volunteers. Dealing with a long-term project during the implementation phase could promote the independence and one's own initiative of the volunteers at their place of employ in Germany.

c) Host families

The in-depth interviews revealed that the host families are particularly helpful in the integration of volunteers in their new environment. Host families form a support for the program participants. Because of this important role, host families should not be changed frequently during the stay, so that a relationship between the host family and the ``Europawärts'' volunteer can develop. Nevertheless, it should be possible to change the host family if necessary.

Receiving organizations are responsible for the selection and attendance of host families.

In addition to the host families, the families of origin in South Africa should be included. It is advisable to inform the families of origin about the program and stay in Germany and explain to them the importance of the program for their son or their daughter. This can enhance the support of the family of origin, and strengthen the will of the volunteers to hold out in difficult situations.

d) Duration of volunteer service

The duration of the implementation phase in Germany is six months. This was considered to be appropriate by many. In some cases, 12 months has been proposed as an alternative.

e) Pedagogical support by the AIDS-Hilfe Dresden

The pedagogical support by the AIDS-Hilfe Dresden consists of the following subsections:

- Preparation and support of the host parents and host organizations
- Learning tandems with ``Europawärts'' volunteers and students from Dresden
- Support for volunteers by mentors
- Interim seminar in Germany and reflection meetings with project visits every 14 days
- Debriefing in Germany

The pedagogical support by the AIDS-Hilfe Dresden is an important part of the ``Europawärts''-program. Due to this, these elements should be maintained. It was found, that there was a desire from host organizations and host families that the preparation should be intensified. Here, especially the expectations of the various parties to the ``Europawärts''-program and to the volunteers should be clarified in particular. Here, the elements of the area of conflict (language barrier, independence and one's own initiative) should be discussed. Furthermore, the preparation should also provide specific information to South Africa, especially in terms of cultural differences, as this was required in some reports by the host organi-

zations and host families. In addition, a stronger networking between the host parents and mentors should be sought, as this was required by those. The increased connectivity could be achieved by regular meetings (e.g. once a month).

f) Pedagogical support by LoveLife

Part of the pedagogical support by LoveLife is the preparation and follow-up in South Africa. During the preparation in South Africa, a multi-day seminar, which was organized and conducted by active ``Weltwärts'' volunteers, proved to be very helpful. This peer-learning method allows active volunteers to share their experiences and challenges with future volunteers.

As part of the follow-up, it should be considered how the volunteers can give something back to their communities. The Volunteers commit in the course of the ``Europawärts'' participation to implement a specific project in their community. If necessary, LoveLife should provide space for the community-project implementation. The meeting with ``Weltwärts'' participants during the follow-up should also be maintained, as this North-South exchange of experiences is extremely interesting and allows new views on different aspects for participants of both programs.