

transfer

INFORMATION FOR REPATRIATING PROFESSIONALS

Returning to Europe



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NEW: *transfer* now bilingual



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Dear Reader,

The German Development Workers Act (EhFG) allows for the secondment of experts who are citizens of an EU Member State. Most seconded experts are in fact German. But about 23% of them are citizens of another country. This is often a special challenge for them: Many of them are not familiar with the German institutions of development cooperation. And if they return to a country other than Germany after their term of development service, it can often be difficult for them to explain what they were doing during their service.

In this issue of **transfer** returnees recount their experiences after undertaking development service and returning to Ireland, Spain, Austria, Switzerland or the Netherlands, for example. We have also collected together information and tips on “returning to Europe” and are presenting all this in two languages once again: There is a German and also an English edition.

Returning to Europe presents a variety of questions: Do I have a right to unemployment allowances according to the German EhFG, even if I am not living in Germany after my service? How can I claim the allowances I'm entitled to? Where can I get help with looking for work? Are there any specialist centres where I can get advice? German returnees who want to settle elsewhere in Europe, i.e. outside Germany, face similar questions.



In AGdD's Reintegration Programme, we have given increased attention to the issue of returning to Europe, so that we can give better advice and support to professionals and their families. Unfortunately, there are no straight-forward general answers to such specific questions, because the situation is very different for each particular person and varies from country to country as well. And yet the experiences which we have gathered together here – of professionals returning to various countries – may serve as a source of help and inspiration for other returnees.

Alongside the stories of professionals on this key topic, we have once again given space to experts as well: Professor Dr. Sven Laumer of the Friedrich Alexander University of Erlangen and Nuremberg reports on current trends in recruiting.

Dr. Anna Kreuzer works as a coach, trainer and adviser for individuals and international organisations. In an interview, she answers questions about the procedures for applying to UN organisations and offers some valuable tips about the special features which candidates should pay attention to.

I hope you enjoy reading this fascinating issue. All the best!

Silke Wesemann

Silke Wesemann

Editorial



Eva Dürr with her family at their send-off in Colombia.

“It was like starting from scratch!”

From Colombia back to Austria

I am Austrian. And for many years I worked in Austria for development NGOs which support partner organisations in the South. During all those years it was clear to me that I wanted to work in the South myself. I didn't want to be just a pen-pusher; I wanted to be working – and learning – out there in the field. After a long application process and a long wait, I obtained a job in Colombia through Dienste in Übersee (Service Overseas).

The programme aimed to help the inhabitants of rural districts promote their ideas for development at the local government level. My main task was to strengthen the participation of women and youth in three rural districts and to raise awareness of the international context of local problems.

RETURNING AT SHORT NOTICE

My return was full of bureaucratic challenges. I went out on my own and came back with a Colombian husband and our child. The Austrian authorities were altogether unable to cope with this situation.

For a long time we had hoped that I would get a new contract in Colombia. Unfortunately, only three weeks before my service contract came to an end, it finally became clear that the new contract with the local partner organisation was not going to work out after all. So we just about had time to up sticks and leave Colombia.

But it was too late to prepare properly for our return to Austria.

UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCES

The first major problem turned out to be establishing my entitlement to unemployment allowances. In Austria you have to go to the Job Market Service, “AMS” for short. When I went there to register myself as unemployed after returning to Austria, they told me that the AMS was not responsible for me, because I hadn't had any paid employment in Austria during the previous two years. It made no difference that I had been sent out as a development worker by a German sending agency and was therefore entitled to unemployment allowances in Germany. There was only one option: For me to become entitled to allowances from the AMS, someone in Austria had to employ me, officially, and pay all the social insurance contributions, etc. – even if only for one day. Fortunately, my former employer, the Evangelische Frauenarbeit in Österreich (Austrian Protestant Women's Association), was willing to employ me for two weeks as an archivist. This meant that I was then a “genuine” unemployed person and the AMS was responsible for me. After two months I finally received unemployment allowances, and it was calculated on the basis of the monetary allowances and benefits of the development worker's contract.

HEALTH INSURANCE

The second major challenge was health insurance. I was helped by a friendly adviser, whom I happened upon quite by chance in the customer service centre. He helped me more than anything in all this time. He listened to our story and then went through the whole bureaucratic process with us. That wasn't so difficult for me and my daughter, because we are Austrian citizens. He ought really to have had my registration certificate with the AMS, but he dealt with our application anyway and we were able to hand in the AMS certificate later. After we presented an official translation of our Colombian marriage certificate, it was even possible for my husband to have health insurance as well. So, after about two months, we all had our health insurance cards. I had originally paid for a 1-month extension to the insurance (covering me and my daughter, but not my husband) which all development workers had. I never guessed that there would be so much to do and that it would all take so long. Fortunately none of us became ill in the meantime.

RESIDENCE PERMIT

The biggest challenge, though, was obtaining a residence permit for my husband. I obtained advice from several different sources. In Vienna, there is "Helping Hands", an advice centre run by the Austrian Students Union which offers free advice (donations are voluntary). My legal protection insurance also paid for a consultation with a lawyer who knows about migration issues. And I visited "migrant.at", another organisation in Vienna, as well.

All these people and organisations agreed that my husband was entitled to reside in Austria as a member of the family according to EU law, because by accepting a contract with a German organisation, I had made use of my right to move freely within the EU to take up employment. My husband was therefore entitled to a residence permit for five years, which is much longer than Austrian legislation allows, as residence permits are only granted for one year and then have to be extended. The whole process took a long time and unfortunately it finally turned out that the EU regulation was not applicable in our case. So Jairo was only given the standard 1-year residence permit in accordance with Austrian law. And we are therefore now applying for an extension.

LOOKING FOR WORK

Getting back into work was difficult too. I was looking for work for eleven months and I sent off three, four, or five applications every week. I was often told "Great CV, great experience", and I sensed a lot of interest in my work in Colombia, but it seemed to be jinxed; I never received a positive response. At first I applied for jobs which fitted my profile very well, but eventually I became less and less picky. I felt pressured to find a job – if only to be able to assure the authorities that I could support my husband financially.

In the end I found a job in fundraising – with the Association of Blind and Visually Impaired People in Vienna, Lower Austria, and Burgenland. This work doesn't have much to do with what I did in Colombia. And I can't make use of the experience which I gained during my time there.

CONCLUSION

In retrospect, what made all this official business so difficult was that nobody could tell me what to do and which order to do things in or which agencies are responsible for each of the various matters. You end up having to go from one place to another to collect all the documents for the various applications. It's all extraordinarily complicated. Dienste in Übersee were fantastic during those months after my return – and whilst I was working in Colombia as well. The staff always had a listening ear for me and answered and dealt with all my questions. However, I already noticed during the preparation course that the situation is very different for German people going abroad compared with the situation for Austrians. In answer to a lot of questions, I was told: "You'll have to find out about that in Austria."

But in Austria there are no special counselling centres for returnees from development service. And in Austria few people know about development cooperation or professional people working abroad. We (Austrians) seem to me to be somewhat "underdeveloped" ourselves. In Austria, the typical attitude is: "Well, if you're so stupid as to imagine that you have to go and do that kind of work and go abroad to do it, then it's up to you to work out how to get on now." It was helpful to have contact with another returnee in Austria, whom I had already met during the preparation course. So I would like to see better networking amongst returnees from and into the various non-EU countries. I'm sure that would be very helpful and supportive.

This article is based on a conversation between Eva Dürr and Rebecca Hackstein (for the Returnees Committee of Brot für die Welt), and was written up by Rebecca Hackstein.



Finally Jairo's Austrian residence permit in his hands – Eva Dürr, her husband Jairo Ariza Delgado, and their daughter Lena.

Eva Dürr
2014 - 2017:
Colombia, DÜ



Virginie Poyetton leading an advanced training course in Bolivia

Six years in Bolivia

Reverse culture shock upon returning to Switzerland

In 2011 I went to Bolivia with my husband Serge and our two children, Noam, then three years old, and Ivanoé, who was just six months old. We wanted to leave Europe to go and work in international development for a while. And we wanted to go a long way from Europe so that our children could get a different view of the world and discover new ways of looking at things.

So we left Geneva to work for the Swiss development organisation COMUNDO in La Paz. My husband and I both worked part-time (60%) for partner organisations. Serge worked as a social education worker in an urban agriculture project for women, while I worked as a journalist and researcher for a local organisation, UNIR, which specialises in conflict transformation and building a culture of peace.

I had had very little contact with German development cooperation before going to Bolivia, and came into contact with German development professionals there only once, when working in cooperation with GIZ on some of UNIR's projects. It was only when my contract with COMUNDO came to an end and I applied for a job with GIZ – as a development worker in the field of “media and conflict-sensitive communication” – that I became more aware of German development cooperation.

In October 2014 GIZ invited me to a job interview in Bonn, and I have especially good memories of that. I was really impressed by the interesting and competent expert staff whom I met there. Soon afterwards, I took up a placement with GIZ in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. My husband did not have a contract at that time.

A few months later, I had the opportunity to work in La

Paz as a gender and diversity officer and also as project manager of the ComVoMujer programme, which combats violence against women. So I found myself in the exciting – and challenging – situation of working at both the macro level and the micro level at the same time, so that in the morning I could be sitting in a meeting with bilateral and multilateral international donors and that same afternoon I could be in a school working with children to raise their awareness of the problem of violence against women.

Now, when I look back at that time, I always think to myself that German development cooperation enabled me to develop a lot of new skills in a short space of time – in the fields of mediation and conflict transformation, for example.

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

Two and a half years later we decided to return to Switzerland because Serge wanted to work again. And our family had grown in the meantime: we went out in 2011 as a family of four and came back in the summer of 2017 with one more.

Returning after more than six years was rather difficult for me: I was hit by “reverse culture shock” in a big way. Fortunately we received support from German organisations such as AGdD and Engagement Global. As far as I know, there is no comparable support available from Swiss agencies. Among other things it was important to learn that we needed to give ourselves time, because reintegration after such a long time living abroad can take more than a year.

By far the biggest problem has been getting used to society in our small Swiss village. I had met so many committed and open-minded people in GIZ, but here in Switzerland our neighbours, friends, and relatives had virtually no experience of other countries and often had no interest in our work for international development. Furthermore, we often found our role as parents very demanding during this time. Our older son had made a lot of friends during the six years in Bolivia, so it was especially difficult for him to get used to a new class at school, to the language, and to the different way of life. He suffered a lot in this new situation and often blamed us for it. Swiss social customs – punctuality, cleanliness, and orderliness, for example – are very different from those in Bolivia. The social atmosphere is different, too. Most people in Bolivia have developed a great deal of resilience in life. Whatever happens, they seem to be more content and to smile much more often. And of course, in addition to these problems of acclimatisation, we had to deal with all the usual tasks such as sorting out insurance, finding somewhere to live, arranging schooling, and so on.

OUR EXPERIENCE WITH GERMAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Today, when I take stock, I must say that I learned a great deal during my work with GIZ. I had the good fortune to work with two very professional managers, the country director and the coordinator of the ComVoMujer programme in Bolivia. I learned a lot from them about the management of development cooperation programmes and all about gender and diversity. In my experience, the German development agencies provide a great many tools and methods, especially in the area of conflict transformation. And I feel privileged to have been able, as a Swiss person, to serve with a German development agency.

Before I started my new job, I was able to gain both knowledge and skills during more than five weeks of training and preparation in Bonn. This proved to be extremely valuable during my ensuing work. Before we left Germany a member of the board of GIZ told us: "We will need you later in Germany as well – with your experience of development cooperation." And she explained that returnees have an important role to play in Germany – as cultural mediators, for example. That remark has often recurred to me and prompted the thought that I've never heard anyone say anything like that in Switzerland. It seems to me that people in Germany are more aware that we live in a global world.

GETTING BACK INTO WORK

I was very lucky when I was looking for work in Switzerland: After only three months, I was offered a job as communications manager at COMUNDO, so I was able to continue working in the field of development cooperation. And after a few months had the opportunity to take over the management of COMUNDO's franco-



Virginie Poyetton
with her family in
La Paz

2015 - 2017:
Bolivia, GIZ

phone office. I also worked as a freelance journalist during this time.

Now, in October, I have started work as a peace policy programme officer at cfd – Christian Peace Service. So I am back in the field of gender mainstreaming and conflict transformation, which makes me very happy. However, I have also experienced first hand the inability of many employers to understand the value of having worked in the Global South and the experience and skills one acquires, such as adaptability, intercultural skills, teamwork skills and various specialist competencies.

Even though life as returnees has not always been easy for us, I do think the time spent abroad was a very important time, a very special phase in our lives. We were given many opportunities to reflect on what we wanted out of life, what our goals were, and – with our new experiences and new view of the world – to develop new ways of looking at things when we returned home.



Alberto Eisman-Torres worked in Uganda as the director of a community radio station.

After our return: a new departure

From Uganda to Germany via Spain

For 20 years, from 1995 to 2015, I enjoyed the privilege of living and working in Africa. In my last deployment, I worked under the auspices of AGEH for six years as director of a community radio station in Northern Uganda. Towards the end of this time, it became clear to me that things were changing rapidly back “at home”. My elderly mother, already in her 90s, started showing clear signs of dementia, so I felt the urge to return home, especially bearing in mind that I had been away from my country for two decades.

I was happy that my Ugandan wife agreed to come to Spain (my home country) and help me take care of my mother. Despite the challenging situation of looking after an old person with a failing mind with our limited experience in that field, we also had very happy moments, such as welcoming our first child. He brought – and still brings! – lots of joy and excitement into our life. And when interacting with my mother, he was like balsam to her mental ailments. Almost everything was in place; the only missing factor was a proper job.

UNSUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH IN SPAIN

On that score, I naively thought that the Spanish economy would have recovered enough to be able to accommodate someone like me in the job market. After all, Spain had managed to get through the worst years of the global financial crisis without a financial

bailout. My assumption was completely wrong. Spain was not ready for the local workforce, let alone for new “returnees” from development work. Contrary to what happens in many other European countries, international work experience (particularly in the field of global development) is hardly valued or appreciated at all by Spanish companies or employers. Although I was able to produce a CV with good academic qualifications, a wealth of useful competencies, unique experiences, and good knowledge of several languages (6 in total!), no firm was ready to employ me with such an unusual work record. Furthermore, I was already in my 50s! I also sent my CV to digital work platforms, but the best job offers available were those of sales representative for cosmetics or insurance. I could sense that most of the employers did not know what to do with a profile like mine. My feelings could be summed up in a Spanish expression, namely “to feel like an antique china vase”: I felt admired, and yet... I was too bulky or too expensive to be placed in the corridor of an average apartment.

The only work I could perform was some voluntary service with the local Caritas and a handful of talks about Africa and development in a couple of schools. The struggle went on for one and half years and we began to lose hope. We were living off our meagre savings throughout that whole period, so we already began to feel the pinch and to see red flags on the horizon; we could not continue jobless for much longer. It became

a question of financial survival for our family, so now was the time to make a move and look for “greener pastures”.

RE-ORIENTING OURSELVES ONCE AGAIN

I already knew German from when I studied in Austria (1989-1994). And I was aware that there could be good job opportunities in German-speaking countries for someone with my experience, so I talked to my wife again about the possibility of looking for work there. Once again, she showed huge amounts of flexibility and a bold readiness to face new challenges and set sail through uncharted waters in a new environment. Despite understandable fears and worries, she finally encouraged me to go ahead. During all this time, she is the person who has made the greatest sacrifice. Having got used to the Mediterranean character and learned the Spanish language, she now had to give up everything she had achieved with so much effort, including her dream of becoming a legal counsellor for refugees or immigrants in a local NGO (she is a lawyer by profession). She was ready to start again from scratch, adjust to another culture, and learn another new language. I really cannot stress enough the fact that most of the things we have achieved so far would not have been possible without her support, her generosity, and her great ability to adapt to new circumstances.

JOB OFFER FROM GERMANY

So I started looking online for job openings in Germany. At that time, I was not very familiar with German CV-etiquette, nor with proper or effective ways of writing accompanying letters. I just translated a simple tabular CV into German and off I went, sending applications here and there. In a matter of weeks, I already had several invitations to job interviews, which to my mind was a considerable success, especially given the fact that I had prepared my documents in a very simple way without any external assistance from HR specialists who knew the German job market. I flew to Germany and visited several cities, sometimes travelling from north to south and then north again in order to keep up with the appointments I had. It was a big investment, but it paid off in the end. After going through all these interviews, I eventually got a job offer in Bonn.

The die was cast... Things were getting serious and we had to make the actual move. My new employer was extremely supportive when it came to the process of moving to a new country, which is always challenging. As a whole, we felt warmly welcomed by the organisation and by my new work colleagues. We had some challenges ahead of us, like the search for an apartment or for a place in a nursery school for our child, but – surprisingly – we were all settled in record time. Indeed, we felt extremely blessed, since everything was falling into place and we could start this new period with most of our needs fully met.



Alberto
Eisman-Torres
2009 - 2015:
Uganda, AGEH

SUMMARY

Looking back at this time since I left Africa, I can't help feeling gloomy when I think that, when I finally decided to return home, my own country was not able to offer me a good reason to stay – apart of course from the physical presence of my family and relatives. After experiencing so much frustration and feeling so undervalued, I saw myself forced to set off for another place where we could have a future as family. It was the right decision, although it was a painful one.

The most bizarre aspect of this new situation is the fact that now I have to deal with two kinds of homesickness: the old, well-known nostalgia for the colours and flavours of my home country on the one hand, and the more recent feeling of missing Africa, its people and its landscapes on the other. Despite this inner turmoil, I do feel comforted by the fact that we have managed to “pitch our tent” in a welcoming land, and in a place where there are plenty of opportunities for our small family. Despite all the challenges of having to adapt again, we give thanks to God that we are part of a dynamic multicultural society in this great country, which we have now begun to call “home”.

Home ultimately means community

A return marked with obstacles

I had already been working in the Occupied Palestinian Territories for almost two years when I was given the opportunity to work with the German development service through the Weltfriedensdienst e.V. (WFD, World Peace Service). Before that, I had worked for many years in Asia and North Africa. I am glad that I had gained experience with different organisations before I began working with the WFD and the German development service. Working in international development enabled me to learn a lot about the values and working cultures not only of the host countries where I worked, but also of the development agencies in various different countries.

The WFD had a unique approach to working with local partners: The professional support given both to me and to local staff during the three years that I worked with the WFD was honestly the best I have ever had in my working life in international development. I have worked for teams around the world and I can say that very few take the professional development and personal well-being of staff as seriously as the German development service does. In my opinion, it is something they should be very proud of, and I have often

used those experiences in the years since as a yardstick for how challenging issues can be approached and resolved.

As for myself, I wanted to explore more of the working world of international development, so I decided to move to Myanmar before returning to the Middle East. I finally decided to return to Europe after almost ten years.

BACK TO IRELAND INITIALLY

Being Irish, I wanted to return to my home country to use my skills to work with community groups there. Ireland has a very active civil society and I hoped to contribute to work with asylum seekers in particular. I felt that I had a lot of skills which I could put to use in working for social justice in my own country. The timing seemed good, job advertisements were appearing again, and the worst of the economic crash seemed to be over.

I had kept in touch with Comhlámh, the Irish Association for Development Workers and Volunteers, for years and knew that I would find people there who had similar experiences of working abroad and could relate to me. It's not always easy to talk about your work, or your experiences of working in the field of international development. Actually, it can be very difficult to talk about almost any aspect of the work and your life experiences as an international development worker, so groups like these are really important.

UNSOLVABLE HOUSING PROBLEMS

I was lucky to have such a good support system, but I was warned that my dream of living and working in Ireland again might not be possible. The reason: uncontrolled rents which were leading to a full-scale housing crisis which is now playing out. I began seeing ads for single beds in the kitchens of shared houses in Dublin for 400 euro a month. Lines of people were – and still are – queuing to view any available room that seems half decent. Competition even for ridiculously overpriced accommodation was – and still is – fierce. There are now more homeless people on the streets of the cities of Ireland than we had in the 1930s.

All the educated, highly capable professionals I know in Dublin were starting to panic. People are already simply working to live. Quality of life is an idea that very few people can afford to think or talk about. There is work,

Jenny Boylan
during a workshop
in Palestine



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but contracts are short term and so devoid of benefits that university lecturers are on social welfare during the summer months.

I had wanted to leave international development so that I could use the skills I had learned to work for better rights for people in my home country. But the policies and practices which currently undermine the right to housing in Ireland meant that I could not stay there. It shakes up your perceptions of your rights, your privileges, your sense of worth, and your sense of home.

EXPERIENCES HARD TO COMMUNICATE

For most returnee development workers, fitting back into the society you come from is a difficult process. Many people you know and love just don't know how to talk about almost any aspect of your experiences abroad. International development is a way of working which cannot be explained to most people. It is too far removed – politically, socially, and culturally – from what is familiar. I often found that people would say to me, "Oh, that's so interesting!", and wait for me to follow up with tales of remarkable and amazing adventures of landing in villages with helicopters or food aid. Or they feel intimidated by something which they don't know how to talk about. I usually joke about the number of office hours I did, but that can confuse people, given the popular image of development work! I do not feel comfortable with either of the reactions I have described here, so I personally try to avoid talking about what is now almost ten years of my life.

My father is a farmer and my mother is a nurse. They are very grounded in practical jobs which are recognisable to society. It has been a peculiar experience to try to explain to them things which they very much want to know, but which are also very coloured by media reports of the places where I have lived and by the image of the (white) saviour-humanitarian which exists in the popular imagination. I am sure they still have no idea what I do for a living!

CONTINUING TO GREECE

I am currently in Greece working with an organisation which supports refugee and asylum-seeking children and youth. I knew of the organisation through a friend who was working with them for quite some time and I decided to come. I had wanted to work in Greece in 2015/16 but was working abroad in those years, so I was delighted to finally have the opportunity to do that. It is also an opportunity which gives me time to adjust to Europe again and to better assess what to do from here.

I am genuinely and deeply engaged in the work, but every time someone at the refugee camp receives an invitation to go to Ireland to complete the immigration process, I wish I were there working to improve Irish systems and procedures.

On the plus side, the work and the context here in Greece is much easier to communicate to family and friends who have never engaged in international devel-

opment work. It is a more directly political issue which impacts Ireland and all EU member states, so my work draws more concrete questions, and also more criticism. I welcome this as a chance to start talking about issues which I deeply care about.

Over the years I have often been asked why I don't work on social issues in my own country. The truth is that I did for quite some time; it is where I learned about social and environmental justice. I taught English at community centres, volunteered at a Women's Aid centre, campaigned for environmental and economic justice with the Irish organisation Shell to Sea, and worked with other activists to set up the group Ireland Says Welcome in 2016 at the height of the refugee crisis in Europe. At the same time, I have always really wanted to see, work in, and understand completely different contexts besides those which I grew up with. I believe this inclination is something which is either in you or it isn't. It is probably another factor which makes the settling back process as difficult as it is for so many of us.

ABOUT A YEAR

I have been told by many good friends who have returned home after years away doing development work, that it takes a year before you start to feel normal. I believe that what "normal" means in this context, is that you stop actively physically missing the places that allowed you to call them home. It also means that it takes this long to really reconnect with family and old friends, and to make new ones. It takes a year to get into and used to European bureaucracy and get settled into a home and work. It takes a year for you to reconfigure who you are when your work, which is so bound up with identity, changes. For me, staying or becoming involved with the issues you care about helps the most. Advocating, from within the EU, social and economic justice for people in other countries around the world can be powerful and effective. It connects you to your values and to people and communities who share those values and the commitment to political, social, and environmental justice. The meaning of home, ultimately, is community. If you've worked in international development, the chances are you are lucky to have communities in many places. Keep working with them. All our struggles are connected.



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Jenny Boylan
2011 - 2014: Palestine, WFD

Interview:

Applying to UN Organisations



Dr. Anna Kreuzer works as a coach, trainer and adviser. Her focuses are career counseling and management development. She advises individuals, companies and international organisations.

Previously, she worked for many years as an ethnologist for the GTZ/GIZ in African countries and the Russian Federation.

She serves as a trainer and speaker for AGdD seminars on the topic "Applying to international organisations".

www.kreuzer-one.de

Ms. Kreuzer, when professional workers have completed a term of development service, many of them think of working for a UN agency or a so-called "international organisation". What exactly are these "international organisations"?

International organisations are organisations which are funded by two or more states. And their finances are always regulated by an appropriate treaty or agreement, which is how they differ from NGOs or businesses which operate internationally. Classic international organisations include the EU, regional development banks such as the African Development Bank, and, of course, the UN and its many agencies, whose offices are spread all over the world.

Besides its headquarters in New York, the UN has three other official seats: in Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi.

There are a lot of other cities in Europe which host UN organisations, so-called UN agencies, as well: Paris, with UNESCO and the OECD; Rome, with the World Food Programme (WFP); The Hague, with the International Court of Justice; and Bonn, with the UN Volunteers, the European Regional Office of the WHO, and a lot more agencies besides.

This means that there are a lot of different opportunities to work for the UN in Europe. And many of the agencies not only have a headquarter; they also have so-called field offices. In the case of the WFP, for example, some of these are in countries in the Global South.

So what do you have to pay attention to, if you want to get a job in a UN agency? Are there career profiles which are particularly in demand?

UN agencies are especially looking for staff who have experience in international work and, preferably – and this is the crux of the matter for those who are starting off – some experience of working for the UN as well, or at least working in cooperation with a UN agency in one way or another.

The range of jobs is huge. I can't really think of a field of work which doesn't feature somewhere in the UN or in

one of its agencies. The distribution of particular kinds of jobs depends, of course, on what each individual UN agency does. So in the Climate Change secretariat, for example, they tend to be looking for different kinds of professionals from those which the World Food Programme is looking for.

The lack of a complete overview of all the UN agencies, with all their various locations, or a central UN job pool, presents a challenge. A lot of the agencies are well known, like UNICEF and UNESCO. But there are so many others that you can hardly keep track of them. So a lot of hard work has to be done to search out all the employment opportunities and job vacancies.

It is important to note that you can only work for a UN agency, if you are a citizen of a country which is a member of the organisation and contributes funding to it. Not all countries are members of all the agencies. There are also country quotas, which means that the jobs in a UN agency are allocated to the various member countries according to a quota system. Germans can obtain information about this from the BFIO (Büro Führungskräfte zu Internationalen Organisationen – Office of Executive Recruitment for International Organisations). There are similar institutions in other countries.

What do you do, if you've identified a UN employer which interests you? Do you send an unsolicited application or do you have to wait for a suitable vacancy to be advertised?

There is an incredibly large number of people around the world who would like a job at the UN. The flood of unsolicited applications would be totally unmanageable. So it is not even technically possible to submit an unsolicited application. Most UN agencies advertise specific posts, which you can then apply for.

There are just a few exceptions, such as the United Nations Volunteers, UNV, which is certainly an interesting option for experts returning from abroad. At UNV you register to go on the so-called roster, a pool where the details of interested persons are stored. When a volunteer post needs to be filled, UNV looks to see who could be suitable, and gets in touch with those people.

When a job has been advertised, what do you have to do to apply?

If you find an interesting job advert, you have to study the ad very carefully – however mundane this may seem – and begin by checking what the essential requirements are. A typical essential requirement would be experience in a very specific field of work, for example. If they are looking for someone with at least five years experience of emergency aid in a particular region and you don't fulfil that requirement, there's really no point in giving any more attention to the job. Even if you have four

years and ten months experience and a profile which is otherwise “spot-on”, your application will be automatically rejected.

If you fulfil all the essential requirements, the first thing to do is to enter your profile online. They want to know all the details of your work experience, what results you have delivered at work, and much else besides. When this online profile has been sent digitally, then the application lands in a kind of black box – all you can do is wait and see what happens. Apart from a brief acknowledgment of receipt of the application, you probably won't hear anything for a while. On the other hand, you might be contacted at very short notice. But sometimes you won't get any response at all. I've known things to take anything from three weeks to a whole year. And there is no contact person, whom you could ask where your application has got to.

If you manage to overcome this first hurdle, how does the selection process work?

If you are contacted, then you are already through to the next round. The UN attaches great importance to treating all candidates equally, so the interviews which follow are always conducted by phone, or Skype, or a similar medium. Even if you live in Bonn and are applying for a position at the UN in Bonn, you will not normally be invited for an in-person interview, because this option is not open to candidates from other parts of the world. The telephone interviews usually focus on an assessment of competences, so it is essential to prepare for the interview very thoroughly. You can find out about how these interviews are structured and how they are conducted in the UN career portal (see box for link). I can only recommend preparing very thoroughly for an interview, so that you can respond well and give sound answers to whatever questions you might be asked. It isn't rocket science. It's something which you can practise quite easily. One thing you could do, for example, is prepare yourself for the interview process by taking part in a relevant AGdD seminar.

Whatever happens, you will also have to name three referees, who will then be contacted. This means that the information given in your application will be checked thoroughly to establish whether it is factually accurate.

Is it a good idea to apply to several UN agencies at the same time? Or might that be interpreted negatively?

One great advantage of the UN application system is that you can apply for as many jobs as you like. There is no disadvantage in doing that. This means that you can apply to different agencies, or even for different posts within the same agency, all at the same time. Each application will be considered separately.

Why is it that jobs in UN agencies are so very much sought after? Aren't there any downsides?

One special attraction of nearly all UN jobs is that you are working in a very international environment. People who work in the UN are always telling me that this is a particularly positive factor. Then many jobs involve interesting official trips abroad – depending on the actual

field of work, of course. There are also back-office jobs which are tied to a specific location.

The salaries, too, are usually described as attractive. Of course, it depends on what position you hold, and also on the location and whether or not you are married and have a family. The UN is very transparent in this respect: You can find out quite easily on the internet, how much the salary is for each post. And the feedback which I usually get is that the pay situation is seen as attractive.

Some see it as a downside that most UN jobs are temporary – usually limited to between one and four years. On the other hand, once you have worked in the UN system, the chances of getting another UN job are very good – because work experience at the UN is so highly valued and because you are already familiar with the application process.

Anyone who wants to work long-term in one place will struggle to do so at the UN. Of course, you can try to find another job within the same agency, but the career profile of UN staff usually involves willingness to move to a different location.

Sometimes UN staff complain about all the complex procedures with a lot of rules and regulations and a large amount of bureaucracy. People who come from development cooperation, in particular, tend to feel at first that this is cumbersome and takes some getting used to.

Is it good to have development service as part of your professional background when applying for a job with the UN?

Professional development workers come with a lot of experience and competences which can be useful when working at the UN: international work experience; the ability to work in difficult and unfamiliar environments; and experience of working together with a wide variety of stakeholders and organisations at the local level. Some people have already had contact with UN agencies during their development service, and this is definitely an advantage, if you're putting in an application. In addition to this, you are likely to have acquired language and intercultural competences. These are all important attributes for working in an international organisation.

Do you have one last tip for anyone who's applying for a job in the UN?

If you're applying for a job at the UN, then you should definitely check out whether your own country can support your application. This can be very helpful, so I can only strongly advise people to do that. Germans should contact the BFIO, which I've already mentioned. Other countries can support people in much the same way.

Ms. Kreuzer, thank you very much for talking to us.

AGDD SEMINAR

Our seminar “Applying Successfully for a Job in English” from 15 to 17 March 2019 in Königswinter provides helpful tips on how to create a resumé and cover letter in English. Experienced personnel managers will speak about application processes and recruitment procedures. The seminar also offers an opportunity to participate in an interview simulation. The workshop will be held in English.

Further information:
www.agdd.de/seminare

Interview:
Dieter Kroppenberg

INTERESTING LINKS

- Apply to the EU:
<https://epso.europa.eu>
- Apply to the UN:
<https://careers.un.org/lbw/Home.aspx>
- UN Volunteers:
<https://www.unv.org>
- UN competencies:
https://careers.un.org/lbw/attachments/competencies_booklet_en.pdf

Dutch with a German accent

From Ecuador to the Netherlands

When the time came to leave Ecuador after three and a half years as a development worker, my wife and I faced a lot of open and exciting questions: Where did we want to go to? Should we try to make a new start in Germany (my home country) or Switzerland? A few job advertisements prompted my wife and me to consider this option. But in the end we decided to return to the Netherlands, where we had lived before and where our children felt at home as well. We decided to move to a city in the middle of the country because we have good family connections here. And there are good train connections as well, which makes it easier to commute in various directions.

My Dutch wife and I met in 2004 when we were taking part in emergency aid missions in Afghanistan. After that we both worked as project managers in the offices of international NGOs (CARE, Oxfam, and Cordaid) in The Hague. While we were away in Ecuador, however, there was a big shake-up in NGOs in the Netherlands – in other words, huge job cuts. And we had changed

tack professionally in the meantime. My wife decided to become a nurse, and I wanted to move into a different field of work as well. I had worked mostly for civil society organisations previously, but my work in development cooperation was as an adviser to local government. I wanted to go on working in this field in the future.

So I decided to obtain a relevant qualification. A colleague in Ecuador had told me about the AGdD's Reintegration Programme, so I applied for a student loan, which fortunately was granted. This support enabled me to do a Master's degree in Public Management at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. As a 40-year-old, I was not used

to sharing school benches – or, rather, chairs in a lecture theatre – with fellow students who were half my age. But I learnt a lot from the experience. And I learnt a lot about the subject matter of the course as well.

ACADEMIC CAREER

After completing my Master's I set off on a career as an adviser and obtained a consultancy contract with the foreign affairs department of the Dutch local government association. Eventually, though, the academic environment appealed to me most. I began work in my free time on a PhD thesis on a topic which I had already thought a lot about during my service in Ecuador: the measurement and publication of sustainability trends in Latin American and European cities – done by NGOs on the one hand or by local authorities on the other. In addition to this, I also found an interesting post as a

lecturer. Since 2016 I have been teaching public management at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. My practical professional experience was crucial to the success of my application for the post – along with possession of appropriate academic qualifications and fluency in several languages. In fact, when I'm teaching, I often use practical examples from my work in development cooperation. The environment at the University of Applied Sciences is multicultural – with students and colleagues from all over the world. And it is so exciting, that I can well imagine staying on in this profession.

LIVING AND WORKING IN THE NETHERLANDS

What else might be worth knowing for other returnees who are thinking of living in the Netherlands? For one thing, it can be quite difficult to find affordable accommodation. In comparison with Germany, there are far fewer apartments available for rent and rents are higher. There is social housing for people on low incomes, but there is usually a waiting list and accommodation is not always available to people who have recently arrived from abroad. So people on higher incomes often take out a mortgage to buy a house or an apartment. In our case, we faced yet another problem when we returned. The private landlord of an apartment which we were looking at demanded an employment contract, but we couldn't produce one at the time. He wouldn't even accept a deposit.

The job market, on the other hand, is buoyant and very international – a lot of Dutch people work abroad temporarily. And a lot of expats, who only speak English at work, live in the so-called "G4" – i.e. the four largest cities, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. As regards the recognition of foreign qualification, I'm not aware, personally, of this being a frequent problem.

Where language is concerned, I was at an advantage in the Netherlands. For Germans, nothing is easier to learn than Dutch. The close similarity between the two languages has just one disadvantage, though: Many people – including me – end up at some point speaking Dutch with a German accent and German with a funny Dutch one.



Ludger Niemann
2011 - 2014:
Ecuador, GIZ

Peace prize for Eirene

Congratulations!

EIRENE International Christian Service for Peace has been awarded the Friedrich Sigmund-Schultze Prize of the Protestant Association for Peace and Conscientious Objection to Military Service (EAK). This year the award was referred to as the "Protestant Peace Prize" for the first time. The award honours nonviolent action and is supported by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) as part of the activities to commemorate the end of the First World War 100 years ago. EIRENE volunteers and experts have been working



together with partner organisations around the world for a culture of nonviolence, social justice, and environmental conservation since 1957.

The award was presented by human rights activist Peter Steudtner on 9 October 2018 in Berlin.

The Academy for Conflict Transformation within the forumZFD

2019 programme of courses and events



Dr. Ljubinka Petrovic-Ziemer is Director of the Academy for Conflict Transformation within the forumZFD. Before joining the Academy in 2017, she taught – as a scholar of literature and culture – at the University of Sarajevo and other institutions and undertook research at the Berghof Foundation for Peace and Conflict Research in Berlin.

The aim of our training is to foster personal development, self-confidence and assertiveness, responsibility, and the ability to take appropriate action in conflict situations. International and intercultural exchange and participative learning are key strengths of our courses and seminars. The specific objectives of our courses are for participants to gain:

- good knowledge of theories of conflict and nuanced understanding of models of conflict transformation;
- inner strength, critical self-awareness, understanding of their own role, and the ability to practise methods of peace action and conflict resolution with confidence.

The Academy for Conflict Transformation within the forumZFD in Cologne is a centre for education and training of professionals in the field of international peace and conflict. We train experts in civil conflict management. Our training is based on the conviction that nonviolent, constructive conflict management can be taught and learnt. People who complete courses at the Academy go on to make important contributions to the development of a society which manages conflict nonviolently. They work in various areas of peace and conflict management in different parts of the world.

We aim to give experts – who are (or seek to be) working internationally in peacebuilding or in conflict-sensitive development cooperation – the tools which will enable them to contribute to the building of lasting peace. We believe that it is crucially important for experts to be able to work together with local partners who are building peace in their own country and winning other groups over to the cause of peace.

The programme of the Academy for Conflict Transformation includes a wide variety of courses and events:

- a 10-week full-time training course, "Peace and Conflict Management", which is run twice a year in English;
- in-service training in German in a "blended learning" format (combining on-line learning and classroom teaching), which runs from February to November each year;
- on-line seminars which enable experts to specialise in cross-cutting aspects of peace and conflict. In a virtual classroom with a flexible timetable we transmit the knowledge required and offer opportunities to apply it in practice;
- in-house seminars and advice on the design of training courses.
- We also organise three informational events each year, which provide insights into the activities and possibilities for deployment of peace and conflict advisers by the Civil Peace Service.

You can find further information and the seminar programme at: www.forumzfd-akademie.de

Niger, France – and back

Just a stopover at home

Pushed by a desire to work in the field of international development, I first left France in 2007 to work as a French volunteer for AFVP (Association Française des Volontaires du Progrès), in Maradi, Niger. I worked at the French cultural centre there for two years.

Before that I had worked in France for various associations which support marginalised people. Some of the people were migrants or refugees and I felt that it was crucial to work in developing countries in order to help them make a living in their own country.

Most people leave their country out of fear or hunger. Some people face violence, which may be physical, structural, or even cultural. Gender violence, violation of children's rights, and a lack of access to the necessities of life are some of the forms of violence which drive people to leave the South to escape the situation at home.

husband is Nigerien.

As I had already worked in France before going to Niger, my reintegration into the French job market wasn't too difficult. I had built a strong professional network and sent applications directly from Niger to France. In the end, I only had to leave my family in Niger for one month to attend an interview and arrange our return to France. We stayed in France for three and a half years. It was a positive experience which allowed me, my husband, and our children to reconnect with my side of the family. On the professional level, working in France was much harder for my husband than it was for me, but my experience wasn't a piece of cake either. The field of social organisations had deteriorated since I left France in 2007: public funding had been cut, repressive policies and immigration control made it harder for social workers to provide for marginalised people's well-being. I was not comfortable working in a context where I had to inform the police about the person I was helping. On the other hand, my husband faced many obstacles finding a job in banking. Being a foreigner didn't help. He is qualified to work in banking, but very few black people, if any, are employed in French banks. And the banks are cutting back on jobs now. Nor did it help that we were living in a town, rather than a large city, where there would have been many more opportunities and a lot of black people. My husband could only manage to get short-term contracts in his field. After many rejections, he had to give up banking to work in wine production.

© privat

IN NIGER FOR EIRENE

I was very enthusiastic to work in a civil peace service programme of the German development service EIRENE, since we shared the same values. So I went out in 2009 to work for the GENOVICO Programme, which promotes nonviolent conflict management.

This programme supported local civil society organisations in Niger, Mali, and Burkina-Faso, in improving their capacities to defend their rights through active nonviolence. Enhancing the capacities of local organisations at technical and organisational levels wasn't easy in Niger. Poor levels of education, a lack of good governance, corruption, and a lack of civic engagement in this programme were some of the many difficulties I faced. Some of my frustration was also due to the framework of development cooperation and

the structures of NGOs which aggravate inequality in these countries.

BACK TO FRANCE

This is one of the reasons which led me to return to France after 7 years spent in Niger. The climate and growing insecurity also prompted this decision. I also knew I would come back to Niger eventually, because my

AND BACK TO NIGER AGAIN

We came back to Niger because not having a stable job was very difficult for him. I decided to work with the German Civil Peace Service again. Despite the imperfect situation in the field of development, which I mentioned earlier, this position offered me the opportunity to develop creative thinking about the strategy for helping those in need on the ground. Development workers in NGOs such as the EIRENE are free to develop their own tools to improve the impact of the organisation, and I appreciated this freedom very much.

I would advise other professionals to keep in touch with their professional networks. I think it is a lot easier if you have worked in France before leaving. But if this isn't the case, be full of hope. Work in order to do some more training or obtain qualifications. Move to do something even if it is not exactly what you want to do and believe in. It will be okay; it might just take a little bit of time.



Emilie Courtabessie
Tankora
2009 - 2013;
2017 - today:
Niger, EIRENE

Filipinos in the diaspora challenged “to engage to end the killings!”

From 2006 to 2012, I worked for the Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (Protestant Development Service, EED) as a social scientist on the southern island of Mindanao in the Philippines. This was followed by four years of work as a Civil Peace Service expert for Bread for the World and Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst (Forum ZFD – Forum Civil Peace Service) – until 2017.

When I left for the Philippines in 2006, I had been involved in various migrant organisations and initiatives in Cologne and elsewhere in Germany for about three years. However, it was during the last two years of my stay in the Philippines that I was exposed to how social media, especially Facebook, not only dominate the daily lives of ordinary Filipinos, but have also been weaponised by the state and the political opposition.

I am now working to promote dialogue among Filipinos in the diaspora in Germany with the aim of strengthening democracy and respect for human rights in the Philippines. Filipinos who live in Europe have a role to play in stopping the killings which have been perpetrated in the Philippines since the start of the Duterte government’s “war on drugs”.

As a member of the organising committee of the Ecumenical Philippine Conference (ÖPK) and the Philippinenbüro (Philippine Information Centre) in Asienhaus (Asia House), I helped organise two events in October 2018: the 34th ÖPK Conference, “Philippine Media: In a Crossfire of Information, Entertainment and Deception”, in Bonn, and “Bahaghari: An Evening of Images, Music and Stories from the Philippines”, in Cologne.

Both events featured Raffy Lerma, a veteran Filipino photojournalist, and Janine Quintana, a singer and artist. Both had been invited to Germany by Misereor and the ÖPK.

Lerma said, “We have to solve the drugs problem, but not through killings”, and cited poverty as the root cause of the problem. Most of the victims are poor. He urged Filipino migrants to “engage, even in small conversations at home, ... to end these senseless killings and give justice to the victims.”

According to official figures, 5,000 people have been killed since the start of the “war on drugs”. But human rights groups such as Amnesty International believe that the true figure could be as high as 20,000. Most of the killings have been extrajudicial and perpetrated by vigilante groups with links to the police.

Lerma was asked whether he experiences nightmares after two years of covering the “war on drugs”. He said,

“No”, but admitted that he has received threats – that’s part of a journalist’s work. Threats are a psychological weapon which the regime uses to silence its critics. He regards talking with the public and with Filipinos living overseas as a form of therapy.

Each of Quintana’s songs carried a message. She explained how social media, especially Facebook, have fostered a culture of hatred and violence by spreading fake news. The government uses social media to de-



monise its critics. Filipinos in the diaspora should read critically, fact-check everything, and “read behind the headlines.” “Check the links, engage. But do not hate”, she said.

About 80,000 Filipinos live in Germany and about half of them are undocumented. They came in three waves. Most of them are nurses, caregivers, seamen, and Filipinas married to Germans. In 2008 there were 4,517 Filipino migrants living in North Rhine-Westphalia.

Lerma’s photo-documentation of Duterte’s “war on drugs” was presented at several events in Bonn, Cologne, Bochum, and Berlin.

Daniel Ong
(front row 2nd from right) with participants from the event “Bahaghari: An Evening of Images, Music and Stories from the Philippines” in Cologne

Daniel Ong
2006 - 2012:
Philippines, EED
2013 - 2014:
Philippines, DÜ/BfdW
2015 - 2017:
Philippines, forumZFD



Recruiting 2020

Current trends and tips for applicants

Professor Dr. Sven Laumer holds a degree in business information systems and was appointed to the Schöller Endowed Professorship for Information Systems (Digitalisation in Business and Society) at the Friedrich Alexander University of Erlangen and Nuremberg in 2018. His research focuses on digital life and work. He is co-author of two series of studies, „Trends in Recruiting“ and „Applying for Jobs“ – published by the Centre of Human Resources Information Systems (CHRIS) at the University of Bamberg – which were the fruit of cooperation with the career portal Monster. The studies focus on the 1,000 biggest German companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, and IT companies. Here, for *transfer*, he sheds light on current trends in recruiting.

In recent years companies have had to come to terms with some major developments: digitalisation and the Internet in particular; demographic change; and a lack of skilled workers in many fields. These developments have also led to changes in the field of recruitment. Both companies and applicants can now look for applicants/jobs in new ways which are already being increasingly used by both parties. It is possible to distinguish between two main approaches to recruiting which are used not only by large companies, but also by many small and medium-sized enterprises and by the public sector: recruiting and active sourcing.

RECRUITING

The first of these two approaches is the traditional process of recruitment. Companies publish job advertisements. And applicants look out for ads and put in applications. Companies then select suitable candidates for their vacancies from the applications which they receive. This traditional method is still being used successfully in 2018. The particular channels and methods have changed, however.

The top 1,000 companies in Germany advertise a high proportion of their vacancies, 88.9 %, on their own websites. More than two-thirds of the vacancies are posted on online job exchanges, such as monster.de. 46.3 % of vacancies are reported to the Agentur für Arbeit (Job Centre). Almost a quarter of the vacancies are advertised on career networks, such as Xing or LinkedIn. This

is followed by staff recommendation schemes (22.5 % of vacancies), whereby employers ask their employees to recommend people to be taken on as new colleagues. Only 13.8 % of all vacancies are publicised in print media. This change from offline to online media is also evident in the recruiting behaviour of small and medium-sized enterprises and public sector employers. Where applicants are concerned, more than half consider online job exchanges to be the most promising means of finding a job. Over the past five years the dominance of the two channels, online job exchanges and company websites, has been evident. Online job exchanges offer applicants a good overview of the job vacancies of a variety of companies, whereas company websites can provide detailed information about particular vacancies and the companies themselves. As a consequence, companies fill most new vacancies through these channels.

MOBILE RECRUITING

There is a strong trend in modern personnel recruitment towards mobile recruiting, i.e. the use of mobile devices, such as smartphones, to search for job ads and apply for jobs. Many adverts are now optimised for mobile devices, so that applicants are increasingly using smartphones or tablets to search for job ads. Or they have apps which they can use. It is no longer necessary to have a PC.

It is not only the channels for advertising jobs which have changed. The application process and companies' selection procedures have changed as well. In principle, applications can be sent to companies through a variety of channels. This includes paper-based applications, e-mail applications, and the use of application forms. The options open to the applicant depend on the requirements of the company, however. 67.6 % of the top 1,000 companies prefer applications to be made using an application form; 23.8 % prefer e-mail applications; and 6.7 % prefer other means. Only 1.9 % want applications on paper. It is clear that the majority of top 1,000 companies prefer applications to be made using an (online) application form.

One new way of applying for jobs, which is being discussed in relation to mobile recruiting in particular, is the so-called "one-click application". This enables people to upload their current profile from a career network or a CV database onto the database of a potential employer, or to send it by e-mail, with just one click.

This results in a standardised and quicker application procedure which works without many of the traditional elements, such as a covering letter. The idea is that you can easily apply to work for a company using a mobile terminal. This procedure is currently being explored by large businesses especially. Both companies and applicants are still trying it out.

Where the application process is concerned, applicants have to work with standardised ways of submitting applications. From a business point of view, the advantages are obvious: The (semi-) automated processing is particularly important to big companies who have to deal with large numbers of applications. They can process applications more quickly using standardised procedures and can also give applicants a prompt response.

For applicants, this means that it is essential to use the right keywords in application documents and when filling in application forms, because the companies use these keywords to assess the extent to which an application matches their job vacancy. This procedure is entirely automated. The keywords may include the terms which a company uses in its job advertisement to describe the job or the person they are looking for. Applicants should use this vocabulary in their applications in order to match themselves to the vacancies.

ACTIVE SOURCING

The second approach to recruiting is active sourcing. This is especially used for vacancies, for which a company does not expect many applications: Companies themselves look for potential applicants who have published their profile on career networks, such as Xing or LinkedIn, or on the CV databases^{*)} of internet job portals. This approach is not only used by large companies. It also enables smaller companies and public bodies to reach potential candidates, who have not shown an active interest in the company or the particular job. The top 1,000 companies fill 26.3 % of job vacancies by

approaching potential candidates directly. And 4.0 % of vacancies are filled using active sourcing only. Where candidates are concerned, more than half prefer to be approached by a company rather than having to submit an application themselves.

Among the top 1,000 companies, career events for students and/or graduates and careers fairs are the most commonly used channels for identifying and speaking to potential candidates. And about two out of ten of these companies often use personal networks, career networks, or their own talent pool for this purpose. Candidates believe that they have a good chance of being found by companies above all via their profile on a CV database or an internet job exchange, via their profile on a career network such as Xing or LinkedIn, through being recommended by someone who knows them, or via their profile on the CV database of a company or an employment agency.

When companies trawl through the Internet for potential candidates, they look primarily at qualifications, work experience, and details of relevant training. Then they look at references and skills, language skills, details under the headings "I'm looking for..." and "What I have to offer", and the completeness of the profile. Companies are less interested in the number of contacts, membership of groups, or moderation of groups. It is therefore important for candidates to keep the relevant information in their online profiles up to date and to use – in their profiles – the various terms which companies use when they are searching for good candidates.

However, candidates should be aware that online channels are not the first place where companies actively look for people. It is important for them to build up their own contacts with companies and their recruitment managers and employees at an early stage in order to give themselves a chance of being approached. This means not only visiting fairs and congresses, in order to be able to make new contacts, but also maintaining existing relationships. Many candidates report that there are good chances of finding a new job through being recommended by someone who knows you or through one's own networks. This is therefore an important long-term strategy for success in the search for an employer.



Professor Dr. Sven Laumer, Schöller Endowed Professorship for Information Systems (Digitalisation in Business and Society) at the Friedrich Alexander University of Erlangen and Nuremberg

FURTHER INFORMATION

Details of the studies and options for downloading can be found here:

<https://arbeitgeber.monster.de/recruiting/studien.aspx>

*) Many online job databases offer resumé or CV databases, where applicants can upload their resumé. Some companies first look in these databases before publishing the job posting.

Working in Europe: International placement of workers through ZAV and the EURES network

The International and Specialized Services (Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung, ZAV) are a service agency within the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Federal Employment Agency). ZAV runs a Virtual Welcome Centre (VWC) which offers advice to workers from abroad who want to work in Germany.

ZAV also operates internationally and helps workers find jobs or placements in other countries. Inside the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA^{*)}, and Switzerland, ZAV works closely together with partner agencies in EURES, a cooperative network of public employment agencies.

VIRTUAL WELCOME CENTRE

This is of interest to professionals who have worked in development service with a German sending agency and who want to live and work after returning in Germany or in another country in the EU or the EEA. Information about suitable opportunities can be found in the Virtual Welcome Centre. Alternatively, it is possible to ask to be put in touch with EURES advisers in preferred countries. And anyone who needs information about – or support with – transferring their entitlements to unemployment and pension allowances into another country in the EU or the EEA, can contact EURES for advice.

ZAV has a head office in Bonn, and another 18 offices in other locations.

The VWC advisers can be contacted between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday to Friday, via telephone or e-mail. It is possible to ask questions using text chat on www.make-it-in-germany.com between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.; and in-depth consultations can be conducted via Skype (video chat). Advice is provided in German and English – or in other languages in individual cases.

^{*)} The EEA includes the EU member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

THE VIRTUAL WELCOME CENTRE

The Virtual Welcome Centre can be contacted by

- phone: +49-228-7131313,
- e-mail: zav@arbeitsagentur.de,
- www.make-it-in-germany.com.

Applying for unemployment allowance in EU countries

Terms of service as a development worker can be used to count towards fulfilment of the qualifying period for unemployment allowance in an EU country other than Germany. Anyone who returns from their period of service to another EU country besides Germany, must contact the unemployment authority in that particular country. They must also submit an application to the Agentur für Arbeit (employment agency) in Germany for a PD U1 (certificate of German periods of employment) to be issued. A certificate of service from the sending organisation must be attached to this application. This application has to be made so that the Agentur für Arbeit can provide the relevant authority in the other European country with certification that the development worker is entitled to ALG1 (unemployment/job-seeker's allowances) in Germany.

The form for applying for a PD U1 to be issued is obtainable from the Agentur für Arbeit.

Returnees who receive ALG1 in Germany can transfer their claim to another European country when they go there to seek work.

Further information is provided by the Agentur für Arbeit's Fact Sheet 20 "Arbeitslosengeld und Auslandsbeschäftigung". The fact sheet is available as a free download on the Agentur für Arbeit website. It can be found by using the search function.

More information, including important information regarding the termination of an employment contract, can be found at

www.agdd.de/vertragsende

Transferring pension claims to the home country

Within the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA), claims acquired under social security in Germany are not lost. After reaching the pension age of any EU or EEA member state in which they have worked, employees can be paid a pension in accordance with the respective requirements. The same applies to Switzerland. In respect of a German pension, the German regulations

concerning the retirement age will however continue to apply, not those of the home country.

www.make-it-in-germany.com/fileadmin/content/make-it-in-germany/PDF/Ratgeber-Arbeiten-in-Deutschland_dt.pdf

„Your Europe“

The European Commission's "Your Europe" portal informs citizens of EU countries and their families about living and working in the EU.

Under the heading "Finding a job abroad" there is useful information on "Transferring unemployment allowances", for example.

The platform provides comprehensive information and tips on other issues as well, e.g. registering one's place of residence, health, education, and travel.

The website is available in several languages.

https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/index_de.htm

Figures on the European Labour Market

In its brochure "Der europäische Arbeitsmarkt im Vergleich", the Federal Employment Agency presents current figures and developments.

The brochure, in German, can be downloaded free of charge from the Agency's website. It can be found using the search function via:

<https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/>



Tips for finding a job in Europe

NETHERLANDS

UWV (Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen) is the social insurance institution for employees in the Netherlands and is responsible for the payment of unemployment allowances and sickness and disability benefits: www.uwv.nl

Looking for work:

www.werk.nl/werk_nl/werknemer/eu/arbeiten-niederlanden

ACCESS (Administrative Committee to Coordinate English Speaking Services) supports expats who live in the Netherlands by providing helpful information on issues such as housing, work, and the health system, and on many other matters as well: <https://access-nl.org/>

Anyone who wants to work in the field of development cooperation, can find information on Partos, the platform for civil social organisations in the Netherlands:

www.partos.nl

FRANCE

People who want to work in France after returning from abroad can find out about job opportunities on the website of the French employment agency, Pôle emploi.

www.pole.emploi.fr

The French NGO platform „Coordination Sud – Solidarité Urgence Développement“ provides a search function for finding job vacancies in the fields of emergency aid and development cooperation: www.coordinationsud.org

On the website <http://retour-en-france.simplicite.fr> returnees can get an overview of the steps which they have to take and the official business which they have to attend to when returning to France. The tool on the website should be used before the planned return, so that all the necessary preparations can be made in good time.

AUSTRIA

The Austrian Labour Market Agency (AMS), besides advertising job vacancies, also offers information and advice on looking for work, training, and financial support: www.ams.at

SWITZERLAND

On the website of the Swiss labour market authority information can be found about looking for work, unemployment, and the Swiss labour market:

www.arbeit.swiss

The job exchange of the Swiss organisation Cinfo provides information about jobs in development cooperation: www.cinfo.ch

IRELAND

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection also acts as an employment agency:

www.jobsireland.ie

The Irish organisation Comhlámh offers information for (returned) professionals and volunteers:

www.comhlamh.org

SPAIN

The Spanish state employment agency (Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal, SEPE) provides job exchanges and advice and also offers training courses: www.sepe.es

The individual Spanish regions also run their own employment agencies (Servicios Públicos de Empleo). Together with SEPE they form the Sistema Nacional de Empleo: www.sistemanacionalempleo.es

Development Service in pictures



© pavel_shishkin - stock.adobe.com

In 2019, the German Development Workers Act will be 50 years old. We would like to mark this occasion, so we are planning to launch a photography competition during the anniversary year.

More than 50 years of development service – we are looking for the most beautiful memories: of situations from your work as a professional development worker; of interesting encounters during your period of service; or of particular projects. Further information will be posted on our website.

Data protection in AGdD



In AGdD's Reintegration Programme we work with personal data every day, so we take the issue of data protection very seriously.

Following the introduction of the new EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into force in May 2018, we too are reviewing our processes.

As an advice and information centre for (returning) professionals in development service/ Civil Peace Service, it is important for us to collect contact information, so that we can access our target group and inform them about our free services. We also maintain our contacts, because the network which we have built up over the years is central to our work.

AGdD will not transfer personal data to third parties, except by prior arrangement and with the consent of the person concerned.

You can read about what happens with your personal data when you use our online services in our data privacy statement at www.agdd.de/datenschutz. We will not process your personal data without your consent.

The protection of your data is also very important to us off-line and in our day-to-day work. We ensure that our employees handle personal data sensitively by providing internal training and obtaining help and advice from an external consultant. And the guidelines which are applicable to the AGdD are laid down in a Data Processing Manual.

If you have any questions regarding the processing of your personal data, please write to us at: datenschutz@agdd.de

Internship with AGdD



AGdD intern Radia Al Ghaddioui (left) at the AGdD's information stand in Berlin.

When I saw the advertisement of an internship at AGdD, I didn't have to think about it for very long and applied straight away. I was not disappointed. Right from the start I was part of the team and was allowed to take on exciting tasks – in two fields of work especially: seminars and advising. I gained some deep insights into the world of professional development workers and working with them.

In my first big project, I was involved in organising a workshop on psychosocial accompaniment for professionals. We worked together with staff of sending agencies and other experts to discern what professionals need in terms of psychosocial accompaniment. It was an exciting exchange, from which I learned a lot. And it was not only instructive for me; it also enabled us to come up with practical recommendations for action in the continuing work with professionals.

I was also involved in organising and facilitating the "Profile PASS Workshops: What training or qualifications do you gain through service as a development worker?" Returnees talked about the competences and interests which they had acquired or developed further during their development service. It was very interesting to see how diverse and varied the competences are, which professionals acquire in the course of their development service. I am particularly proud that I was able to help professionals dig deeper and rediscover long-forgotten skills.

I did some of the day-to-day work in the office as well. I researched various topics, was responsible for planning the information stand in the "marketplace" during the BMZ Open Day (BMZ = Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation), and was able to take part in in-house workshops and to do a lot of other things as well.

All-in-all, the internship was a new and challenging experience for me, with great colleagues and the right level of oversight – I learned a lot and felt valued.

Radia Al Ghaddioui

Interns wanted

We regularly offer internships in our office. The work in our small team is varied and enables interns to gain insights into issues in "development service" and "returning". Please let us know if you are interested by sending an e-mail to info@agdd.de.

Further information is available on our website: www.agdd.de/stellen-ausschreibungen

Human resource management: trade fair 2019



We aim to support you in your job search and career development as much as we can by letting you know what's on offer. So we keep ourselves constantly informed about

trends and developments in recruitment and the job market. Sabine Maier, our career development consultant, gained an overview of current issues at the "Zukunft Personal Europe 2018" trade fair in Cologne and came back with some new ideas for our work.

One of the important topics was the search for suitable employees; this is becoming an increasingly significant issue in view of the shortage of skilled labour and the positive

trend in the labour market which is presenting a challenge to employers. The number of job exchanges is growing. And so-called "matching" – which aims to ensure that a candidate's profile and the requirements of a company match as closely as possible – plays a specially important role in people's job searches.

In addition to this, two major trends could be seen at the HR fair: Companies are paying more and more attention to the subject of "employees' health", so that they can improve their attractiveness as an employer and also foster the performance of their staff.

And in the field of education and training digitalisation is becoming increasingly important; more and more use is being made of course formats such as blended learning and massive open online courses.

Links to various job exchanges can be found here:

www.agdd.de/stellensuche-bewerbung

New seminar programme AGdD events in 2019

During the jubilee year, 2019, we will look back on 50 years of the German Development Workers Act. And some of our member organisations will be celebrating a major anniversary as well. Several of our events will be related to these anniversaries. All the events are really about you, though. Our seminars, webinars, and discussion forums provide opportunities for you to reflect, together with other returnees, on your time in development service, to talk about your own particular experiences with us, and to pick up ideas for your further personal and professional development. Experts will guide you through the process, give you plenty of tips, and provide up-to-date information on the development cooperation sector.

Our events focus on the time after you have returned from service and the associated personal and professional (re-)orientation. During our weekend seminars you can assess your skills, discover interesting fields of work, and develop ideas for the next steps on your life journey. One-hour webinars on issues around returning, networking, and finding work complete our programme and can be used worldwide and even during your period of service. A new feature is exchange forums for selected target groups, which explore the process of (re-)arrival from various points of view.

Download the full seminar leaflet at:

www.agdd.de/seminare

FEBRUARY

KOMPETENZBILANZ: BERUFLICHE ENTWICKLUNGSMÖGLICHKEITEN ERKENNEN

22.-24.02.2019 in Heppenheim

MARCH

APPLYING SUCCESSFULLY FOR A JOB (IN ENGLISH)

15.-17.03.2019 in Königswinter

APRIL

ALS CONSULTANT UND BERATER*IN IN DER EZ

05.-07.04.2019 in Siegburg

MAY

INTEGRATIONSARBEIT ALS BERUFLICHE OPTION

10.-12.05.2019 in Siegburg

JUNE

KOMPETENZBILANZ: BERUFLICHE ENTWICKLUNGSMÖGLICHKEITEN ERKENNEN

28.-30.06.2019 in Königswinter

AUGUST

AUSTAUSCHFORUM FÜR MIT-GEREISTE PARTNER*INNEN

31.08.2019 in Bonn

SEPTEMBER

KOMPETENZEN ENTDECKEN MIT DEM PROFILPASS

13.-15.09.2019 in Königswinter

OCTOBER

GUT VERNETZT IST HALB GEWONNEN: NETZWERKE SINNVOLL NUTZEN

11.-13.10.2019 in Bonn

NOVEMBER

ÜBERGÄNGE GESTALTEN: GELINGENDES (WIEDER-)ANKOMMEN

15.-17.11.2019 in Heppenheim

AUSTAUSCHFORUM FÜR FRIEDENSFACHKRÄFTE

November 2019 in Berlin

Our member organisations:



Dienste in Übersee

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For further information:

www.agdd.de

www.agdd.de/en

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