



Returnee Association VUGA e.V. - Mission Statement – 2021

This mission statement represents an open summary of our beliefs. Every member of the association has the right to put new points to the vote.

Violation of any of the below stated points is sufficient reason for a revocation of membership in the association.

- **Self-conception**

As a voluntary association that advocates for equal exchange between the Global South and the Global North, we position ourselves against any form of ascribed unequal treatment and stand up against everyday racism. We are convinced that especially shared knowledge and an awareness of things in common help to reduce prejudices and disadvantages.

We are a volunteer association run by former and current German and Ugandan weltwärts-volunteers and honorary members. This requires constant cooperation and involvement of new volunteers. By its very nature, the association depends on the regular input of these new volunteers.

To ensure this, at least one position of the board of directors shall be filled with a new member every second year. Additionally, volunteers of the youngest volunteer generation shall be integrated into the board work.

Furthermore, each current volunteer generation has the right to fill at least one seat of the board of assessors.

- **Method of operation**

We believe that in the field of development cooperation trust is crucial. In order to be able to establish this trust, we commit ourselves to a work attitude that is responsible, open to criticism and comprehensible.

All information about the work of the association shall be openly accessible to all interested parties.

We commit ourselves to the establishment and maintenance of a common communication forum (internet forum), in which experiences and information can be exchanged and an overview of all relevant, project-related dates is created.

Access to the association's email account is open to the board of directors and, upon request to the board, to other active members.

All members commit to an ongoing and transparent accounting of all expenses.



When possible, existing resources of association members shall be utilized instead of making new purchases.

For the purpose of an effective transfer of funds to partner projects, our general principle is to save as many costs as possible.

We are committed to the principle of mutual responsibility. This means that every member of the association has the right and the duty to draw attention to omissions and necessary urgencies.

There is a running list of all costs, which can be viewed by all members in a timely manner. In addition, a statement of accounts is prepared each year and shall be prominently posted on the association's website.

We commit ourselves to concluding comprehensible contracts about regular financial services and services exceeding 100€, which are exchanged between the association and its partner. These are made accessible to all association members.

- **Project managers for internal association projects**

We adhere to the principle of subsidiarity. Accordingly, we assume that decisions can best be made by those who are also directly affected by these. Guidelines are set by the board and the general assembly, which must be adhered to during implementation. All other decisions are made by those responsible for the project and represented to the general assembly and the board. All decisions made are subject to the obligatory passing on of information to the active members of the association.

For each project implemented or supported by VUGA, usually one or two persons are appointed responsible by the board. These persons must present a reasonable concept for the project and are accountable to the board and the general assembly.

Since most of the projects are based on German-Ugandan cooperation, it is desirable to find one German and one Ugandan person responsible for each project. If this is not possible, the case must be justified in writing.

- **Decision on acceptance and support of projects**

In principle, the treasurer in accord to the board has to decide on available funds.

For each project, a concept must be submitted - usually by the person responsible for the project - and uploaded on the internet forum of the association.

After receiving the concept and releasing the funds, the board and the assessors decide on the acceptance of the project.



Both the board and the board of assessors decide by simple majority. A tie vote is considered a rejection.

The board of directors is limited to a maximum of three members, the board of assessors may consist of a maximum of seven people. The board of directors and the board of assessors are elected by the general meeting.

Both the board and the board of assessors must actively approve or reject projects. A failure to vote can neither be considered as approval nor as rejection and is therefore to be considered invalid. The voting behaviour is documented in the internet forum.

In the case of votes involving the entire association, there shall be a voting period of ten days. The period begins with the request for a vote from the chairperson of the association. If a member does not vote within this period, the vote shall be considered an abstention.

A repetition of votes is possible.

According to the same voting principle, projects and project leaders can be terminated/dismissed by the board and the assessors.

For projects that are implemented within the weltwärts program as volunteer projects, the volunteer and a responsible person of the respective partner organization are to be considered responsible for the project. The latter is to be determined by the partner organization - often this will be the supervisor of the volunteer.

For internal projects and partner projects supported by VUGA without the weltwärts framework, a member of the association on the German or Ugandan side must be appointed as project manager by approval of the board. The project manager has to report to the board regularly- the frequency of reporting will be agreed upon in advance.

- **Focus on content**

We are committed to an anti-racist attitude. This includes our honest and self-critical examination of manifested, global injustices.

We commit ourselves to confront volunteers with the topics of global dependencies, criticism of power and racism, as well as a critical examination of development policy goals during their preparation seminars.

We commit ourselves to a critical examination of colonization and postcolonial structures.

We commit ourselves to the principle of non-interference. This means that decisions of our partners are accepted by us as such. Support is not linked to influence.

We commit ourselves to confidently represent and stand up for our position in all association-related activities.

- **Public presentation**

We commit ourselves to refrain from the production and reproduction of racist images in the public presentation of our activities. In particular, this includes refraining from the depiction of dependency relationships, which are produced, for example, by the image of the "helper" (*white savior*).

We commit ourselves to a regular presentation of our activities, both on our website and in social media.

- **Our understanding of the weltwärts volunteer exchange**

We understand the weltwärts volunteer service as an opportunity for exchange and mutual learning about global interrelations in areas of (development) policy, economy and environment, i.e. as a developmental learning service. Therefore, we commit ourselves to an implementation of the seminars of high quality. This includes in particular the examination of sustainability and the global responsibility aspects by each individual. Through a diverse range of seminars, covering among others the topics of racism (criticism), postcolonialism and consumption, volunteers are to be continuously encouraged to reflect on their role within their weltwärts service and beyond, before as well as during and after their voluntary service. These seminars shall be implemented by qualified members of the association or by external experts, especially in the field of anti-racism.

As volunteers of the Global North, we usually benefit one-sidedly from the possibility of this exchange. We regard this as something that needs to be changed.

As an association of former volunteers, we therefore advocate in particular for the possibilities of a South-North exchange.

- **Goals of the volunteer service and implementation**

Significance of volunteer activity for the organization: Both the partnership of the partner organization and the association, and their institutional structures shall be strengthened through the activity of volunteers who directly link both entities. To achieve this, joint implementation of projects relevant to the respective partner organization among others is seen crucial. Through reflected communication of the activities to the outside, the circle of supporters on the German side grows, both for VUGA itself and for the partner organizations

Goals of the volunteer activity: Given the above, the following goals are to be mentioned: By integrating the volunteers within the partner organization and based on their skills, the partner organizations shall be supported in their daily work. If possible, joint projects in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals shall be implemented. In this context, mutual respect and coordination based on partnership are indispensable.

Furthermore, reducing prejudices and misconceptions about Uganda as a country of the Global South by adequately passing on experiences in the German environment of the

volunteers is a crucial aim. This is achieved through direct communication of the volunteers with their contacts in Germany, as well as through the quarterly VUGA newsletter sent to association members and supporters. The latter shall include perspectives of volunteers, Ugandan partner organizations and host families, as well as Ugandan and German association members.

Significance for the volunteer's personal development: The volunteer service shall, strengthen volunteers in their personal development. VUGA strives to raise awareness for global injustices. In this, young adults shall be encouraged to reflect on and align their actions with the Sustainable Development Goals. It is desirable that after their volunteer service these young people continue to engage in development policy issues (within or outside the association) and to work for a fairer world according to the credo "*think global - act local*". To support this, relevant topics shall be dealt with in preparation/intermediate/return seminars. VUGA attaches great importance to integration in Uganda. For this reason, volunteers must commit to a local language course and accommodation with a Ugandan host family of the middle class.

Other implementation criteria: We are convinced that the key to successful implementation of volunteer services lies not only in the preparation but also in the selection of volunteers. We consider the following characteristics when selecting volunteers:

- Willingness to learn
- Self-confidence and openness
- Tolerance
- Personal maturity
- High level of self- responsibility
- Language skills
- Manual skills
- Vocational qualifications

Towards our Ugandan partners, we commit ourselves to disclose any information related to the volunteer service and our association activities upon request. The Ugandan project coordination serves as a contact point in Uganda and as a direct link to the association in Germany. Furthermore, our Ugandan project coordinator is responsible for the communication with partner organizations and host families, as well as the direct support of the volunteers during their stay in Uganda. On the German side, the members of the board of directors serve as contact persons for the volunteers.

In the context of weltwärts, active volunteers in tandem with at least one local partner are eligible to apply for available funding in the partner country.

The decision about the volunteer's placement is made at local level in Uganda. The German association board has the right to object the decision only in case of sufficiently justified doubts concerning the quality of the offered position.



VUGA e.V. – Verein für ugandischen Austausch

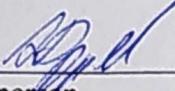
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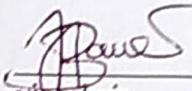
Acceptance by the general meeting

(Provisional adoption until the next general meeting by circulation procedure)

Leipzig, 12th february 2021



chairperson
Anna Dippel



vicechair
Jara M. Bauer

Approved by circulation procedure during the voting period from 02.02.21 to 12.02.21