



# » Incredibly Inclusive! «

Inclusive Guidance of Participants  
in (International) Volunteer Services



# Foreword

Dear reader,

10 years of work and guidance of participants in inclusive volunteer services – It is about time to reflect on the experiences and share the concept with others interested.

**bezev** has years of experience with inclusive guidance and support of volunteers with impairments / disabilities who have spent time abroad with **bezev**. The network of inclusive organisations with which **bezev** cooperates in the **weltwärts programme** has also contributed its experience to the evaluation of volunteer services that **bezev** carries out regularly.

Volunteers with impairments / disabilities who participated in **bezev**'s returnee activities and volunteer service evaluation after their volunteer service have repeatedly reported difficulties related to their impairments / disabilities. They had numerous ideas on how these barriers could be reduced in the future. They shared their suggestions on what the volunteers with impairments and their organisations can contribute.

In recent years, many agencies, e.g. sending and partner organisations, have asked **bezev** for ideas on how to make their guidance and support more inclusive. To allow people with impairments / disabilities to do volunteer services with them. And also, to ensure that the interaction in inclusive groups of volunteers with and without impairments / disabilities can be successful.

The experiences of volunteers and organisations have only partly been incorporated into past publications by **bezev** - e.g. in relation to inclusive games / energizers in the book » Let's Play! « or in chapters of **bezev**'s publication » Just do it now! «. Furthermore, there is a need for ideas and examples of » good practice « for inclusive guidance.

With this handbook » Inspiring Inclusion! « on inclusive guidance, we would like to share previous experiences of volunteers and organisations working (inclusively) in a concise but comprehensive way. We hope that this handbook will provide numerous suggestions for good inclusive practice in the guidance of volunteers with impairments / disabilities and inclusive groups.

We would like to thank the volunteers with disabilities and the sending and partner organisations for the many testimonies that have made this book possible. Especially the returnee group » People for Inclusion « which was particularly involved in the editorial work!

We wish you much inspiration while reading this book.

The **bezev** Team

Note on accessibility: In this publication, attention has been paid to accessibility and a low-barrier layout. No captions were used, as the photos are not directly related to the contents of the publication.



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# Structure

The **first chapter** reviews introductory topics. First, we reflect on what inclusion and inclusive work in volunteer service means. This is followed by an explanation of what educational support in volunteer service involves. Furthermore, an introduction is given to the question of models and definitions of impairments and disabilities and possible related needs of support, together with an indication of what accessibility and appropriate precautions in guidance can include.

The **second chapter** deals with the central question of how, when and with whom communication takes place in the context of guidance. Here, specific needs for barrier-free communication are presented.

In the **third chapter**, all steps and aspects of guidance in volunteer services are dealt with individually. Many topics and examples of » good practice « of inclusive guidance are cross-cutting. This chapter therefore first provides general information on inclusive educational guidance. Afterwards, each aspect of guidance will be reviewed individually, and additional advice will be given. Aspects that are considered here are for example the » peer-to-peer concept «, the communication between and preparation of volunteers, sending and partner organisations, as well as the involvement of tutors, mentors, parents, legal support, tandem volunteers etc. Last but not least, this chapter provides information on the topic of leisure time, evaluation and reporting forms, as well as further training for and financing of guidance.

In the **fourth chapter**, suggestions are made for adapting selected methods of guidance in groups (e.g. presentations, written and oral communication, feedback methods, videos, group work, exchange rounds, energizers / games, fishbowl or exercises that promote an inclusive attitude). In addition, further exercises and ideas for workshops will be carried out.

The **fifth and final chapter** summarises the main messages of this handbook and provides guiding questions to assess inclusive cultures in your organisations.





# Chapter 1

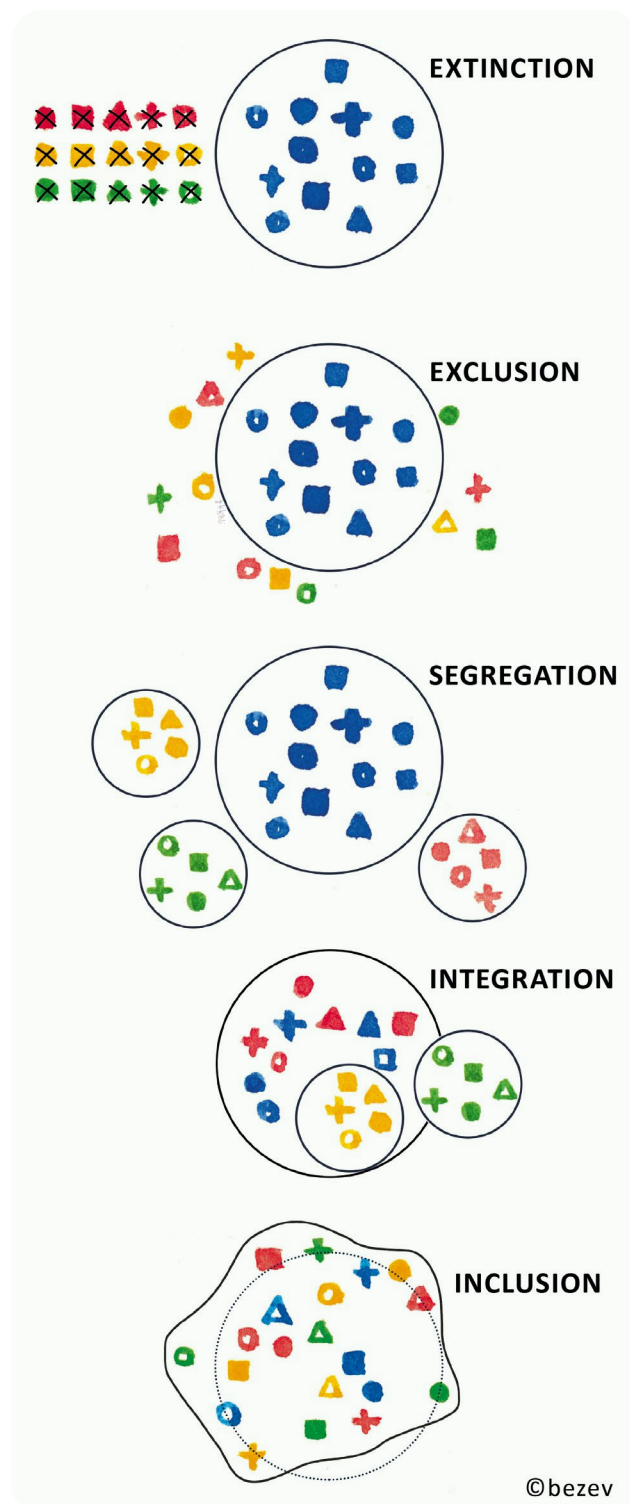
## Introduction

### 1

#### WHAT IS INCLUSION? WHAT DOES INCLUSIVE GUIDANCE MEAN?

Inclusion goes beyond integration. In our understanding it is a model and vision of the full and effective participation of all people in all areas of human life. The following image of humanity and understanding of normality defines inclusion: All people are different and characterized by very diverse characteristics (including experiences, perceptions, and their own life stories). Furthermore, some people consider things » normal « which others perceive as » abnormal «. This strongly relativizes the concept of normality.

As the colours and shapes in the picture indicate, there is an equal number of characteristics that separate people from each other as there are connecting characteristics between each and every individual. Heterogeneity and diversity of people is therefore the only thing that is » normal «. Individual aspects of identity do not define one's identity as a whole. This makes it even more unacceptable to label people as » abnormal « according to individual characteristics (e.g. » migrants «, » disabled «, » homosexuals « etc.) and thus reduce them to a single characteristic. Furthermore, the graph clearly shows that, in line with the spirit of inclusion, the usual form of society or volunteer services will also change. It is necessary to think outside the box and be more creative than before.



**bezev** takes a human rights approach to disability and inclusion. People with impairments / disabilities have the right to full and effective participation in all areas of human life on equal terms as people without impairments / disabilities. The concept of inclusion, however, must also be extended to other social groups facing discrimination and not be reduced to people with impairments / disabilities in the sense of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Starting from the basic assumption that all people are different and yet equal, they are guaranteed equal rights. When we speak of full and effective participation of » all «, we are referring to more than mere participation in the sense of attendance. It is about real benefits and participation in volunteer services. This understanding of inclusion requires that all people with impairments / disabilities are taken into consideration from the outset and that structures of the volunteer service system are adapted to their needs - including the structures and practices of guidance. It is also about creating choices for people with impairments / disabili-

ties and not about an obligation to participate. People with impairments / disabilities, as well as those without, should be able to decide for themselves whether and in which programme formats they want to participate.

Inclusive guidance in volunteer services therefore requires first and foremost a reflection of one's own image of humanity as well as an understanding of society and normality on part of the staff working in guidance. In a further step, there is a need for competence in the respective didactic approaches, methodology and content of support. If we are self-critically aware of our own excluding, separating and / or discriminating ways of thinking and behaving (as well as our choice of language) towards certain people and / or characteristics of people, we can work to gradually break down the barriers in our minds and attitudes. With the aim of creating an inclusive attitude among the staff and shape inclusive cultures in the respective organisation. Talking to people, rather than about them, can be an essential first step towards creating inclusive attitudes.



## 2 WHAT DOES GUIDANCE IN VOLUNTEER SERVICES INVOLVE?

Guidance is provided during the entire volunteer service: During preparation, completion, and post-assignment. The organisation and realisation depends both on the implementing organisations themselves and on the requirements of the particular funding programme they are working with.

The pre-departure pedagogical preparation of the volunteers often includes preparation workshops as well as individual consultations (in person, by phone or via email). Preparation workshops and other consultations offer the opportunity to develop a common understanding of the assignment and the conditions of the assignment abroad as well as of the specific project. The volunteers can thus be prepared for living and working in the host country. In addition, the first steps towards qualification and sensitisation of the volunteers for continuing their commitment after their service can be initiated right at the beginning, provided this is an aim of the programme. During the preparation of the volunteers' departure, one or more contact persons should be available for organisational questions and guidance or emotional topics. In addition, the contact persons abroad (e.g. tutor, mentor, supervisor in the project etc.) who are responsible for the organisational tasks and the guidance during the volunteer's placement should be prepared. Before the departure, contact persons abroad for

cases of crises and emergencies are chosen and usually a written agreement about the volunteer service is made between the sending-/ host-/ and partner organisation and the volunteer.

For volunteers with impairments / disabilities it is important to prepare (educational) staff and, if applicable, tandem volunteers for the assignment and the needs regarding possible impairment-specific questions and issues (e.g. how to deal with impairments / disabilities abroad).

During this preparation phase it may be difficult for sending organisations to distinguish between needs based on personal preferences on the one hand and needs due to the volunteer's impairment on the other.



The guidance of volunteers during the volunteer service usually includes the availability of mentors, support by tutors, assistance by pedagogical staff from the sending organisation as well as preparation, midterm, and post-assignment workshops.

In any case, it is important that there are people at the hosting organisation or in the direct working environment who are responsible for daily guidance (e.g. tutors). They ensure the provision of guidance during the induction and employment of volunteers. In addition, it is important that there are people in charge of the professional and educational guidance of the volunteers outside of the direct working environment (usually mentors). These persons can, for example, be involved in solving problems that require mediation. The guidance and distribution of tasks of mentors and tutors is handled differently depending on the sending and partner organisations. Furthermore, there are workshops organised and carried out by sending organisations. These are sometimes held in cooperation with various sending organisations. Midterm workshops can aim to promote the volunteers' own responsibility and initiative at their place of work, to raise awareness of the volunteer learning cycle by looking back at past and future project phases, to raise awareness of their own role in volunteering and to enable reflection and resolution of conflicts.

Sometimes there is also an orientation workshop at the beginning of the volunteer service in the country of assignment, e.g. to learn the local language and cultural manners.

The post-assignment process is also a crucial part of the guidance of volunteers. Post-assignment workshops and further coaching (in person, by telephone, in writing) are possible. Depending on the sending organisation and the support programme, one or more workshops are conducted. The workshop can serve as a follow-up and processing of the personal learning processes and experiences that have been stimulated.

A further goal can be to provide motivation and methodological training for further political, development and civic engagement within the country of origin and to encourage own ideas for personal engagement. Usually, the obligatory documentation and evaluation of the volunteer service by the volunteers and sending organisations forms part of the post-assignment process. Documentation and evaluation by the partner organisations can also be very helpful. Documentation and evaluation are usually carried out on an ongoing basis during the volunteer placement, e.g. through regular interim reports and a final report by the volunteer. However, it can also be carried out in form of surveys of all actors involved. In addition, the sending organisation prepares its own factual reports for donors and / or internal knowledge management, which can evaluate the experiences and challenges of the sending organisation and placement sites / partner organisation as well. All these aspects of guidance can be arranged in such a way that it becomes an inclusive guidance. In this handbook the meaning of inclusive guidance is explained in the most practical way.



3

WHAT IS IMPAIRMENT / DISABILITY?  
WHAT ARE NEEDS OF SUPPORT?

A sensitive approach to the topic of disability and impairment and the corresponding use of language should be a given. But how exactly should this look like and what do these terms mean? *bezev* advocates for the social and especially the human rights model of disability, which has also been used to define disability in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

According to the convention, » disability is an evolving concept and results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. « (UN 2006, Article 1). Therefore *bezev* differentiates clearly between impairment and disability, in line with the UNCRPD.

An impairment (e.g. a physical impairment such as missing arms and corresponding limitations of activity in various areas of life) only becomes a disability if social barriers and other contextual conditions permanently restrict the participation of the person with an impairment (e.g. limitation of participation caused by social norms that exclude a person without arms from participating in certain areas of everyday life and society) and thus make him or her a person with a disability. What causes disability and ultimately discrimination, as well as what is seen as impairment, is strongly context-dependent, since notions of normality are shaped by history, situations,

culture, etc. Consequently, there is no internationally binding definition of impairment and disability. Even in legislation and science several different definitions are used. In our opinion, the UNCRPD model of impairment / disability described above provides good impulses and helps to move away from the medical view: The focus is placed on the environmental and attitudinal barriers that create disability - but can also be removed actively.

» Impairment « and » disability « are the terms most widely used and recognized internationally. Nevertheless, *bezev* refers, wherever possible, to existing needs of support (instead of specific impairments or disabilities). Nor do we speak of » disabled « or » impaired «, but of » persons with disabilities « or » persons with impairments «, to focus on the whole person and not to reduce one to a certain characteristic.

The needs of support can be as diverse as the people / volunteers. Therefore, we suggest, that inclusive guidance should focus on the needs of all volunteers and group members rather than on impairment or disability. *bezev* distinguishes the following needs of support regarding hearing, seeing, motor skills, learning, mental health, medical and other. A person may have needs in one or more of these areas. Explanations of the concrete needs of support in context with guidance are provided in the next chapter. This is not a comprehensive, exhaustive presentation of all potential needs, but a summary.

Further information is provided in *Chapter 2*. (page 20). In addition, the evaluation forms of the *bezev* publication » Just do it now! « which is available in English, Spanish, French and German contain further details on needs. To avoid reservations and fears, a basic knowledge of the types of support requirements is useful. This can help to assess the individual needs of a person.

NEED OF SUPPORT : HEARING

The group of people in need of support in the area of hearing includes d/Deaf people and people with a hearing impairment and residual hearing capacities with residual hearing capacities.

Communication with **d/Deaf people** is possible in many different ways, depending on the individual. Generally, sign language should be considered the mother tongue. Any spoken and written language is a foreign language for d/Deaf persons because sign languages are grammatically differently structured than spoken languages. Deaf people might therefore have difficulties in understanding complex grammatical sentences when reading. People who have become d/Deaf in the course of their lives, after learning a spoken and written language tend to find this easier. Moreover, they might also be able to pronounce words. The culture of d/Deaf people is sometimes differently developed and includes more than only sign language. A sensitive choice of words is necessary: For example, the term » deaf-mute « is considered an insult by many people, since » mute « implies that the person cannot express

himself or herself or communicate - which is not true. When talking to d/Deaf people, some specific rules should be considered.

The abilities and needs in terms of communication vary greatly among **people with hearing impairments and residual hearing capacities**. They can usually communicate in spoken language. If they speak sign language, it is a foreign language for them just as it is for a person with regular hearing ability. Their hearing ability may be stronger or weaker, some wear hearing aids or cochlear implants to enable them to hear. Additional needs of d/Deaf or people with hearing impairment in the context of volunteer work include sign language interpreters, special conversation rules, batteries for the hearing aid or a replacement hearing aid. Examples in the context of guidance could be: Tapping on the shoulder when wanting to say something to a person with a hearing impairment in a noisy group, using light signals instead of sounds as a signal or getting to know the deaf culture and discussing needs in the group.



NEED OF SUPPORT : VISION

The group of people who need support in the field of vision includes very diverse people: A person may be blind or have a visual impairment with residual vision. There are many differences when it comes to a visual impairment. Some people can (only) perceive reflections of light. Others can read large letters and texts with high contrast. Some people cannot see colours or cannot distinguish the colours red and green. One person may not be able to recognise the facial expressions of others, which can be a challenge when combined with mimic variations based on cultural differences. Additional needs in the context of volunteer services are, for example, a mobility support at the beginning of the assignment. In the context of guidance, needs may include: The preparation of all relevant information (for workshops) in barrier-free

formats, including information that is sent in advance of workshops, a reference to the name



of the person speaking at the beginning, or verbal descriptions of pictures and movements in videos.

NEED OF SUPPORT : MOTOR SKILLS

The group of people who need support in the area of motor functions comprises many different impairments. Some people sit in an electric wheelchair, others in a manual wheelchair. Some can walk but require other aids or walking aids such as a walking frame or » crutches «, forearm walking prostheses or (battery-powered) forearm orthoses. Some people can walk or climb some steps even though they are in a wheelchair, others cannot. Some people have a spasticity or deformation of one hand, which allows them to just work with one side / hand. Others do not need any aids at all, but are dependent on shorter distances, longer breaks and a slower pace when walking. Some people with medical needs also have a need of support in the area

of motor functions, e.g. in the event of heart failure and corresponding reduction in physical capacity. Additional needs in the context of volunteer services are, for example, personal assistance, care services or physiotherapy. Examples in the context of guidance include: Adapting energizers /games at workshops so that physical games do not lead to exclusion or physical risk (through excessive demands or injury) for the volunteers. A slower pace or more breaks, or the sensitive selection of reflection methods, i. e. offering alternatives to a walk to reflect on volunteering experiences that apply to everyone - so that volunteers with motor impairments are not excluded from this method.

NEED OF SUPPORT : LEARNING

The group of people with learning needs of support includes a wide range of people with different cognitive abilities and limitations. Some people have learning difficulties, some have intellectual impairments, and some are highly gifted. Some people are more dependent on support from others and some less. There are people who have a school-leaving certificate and a regular job and those who are dependent on support (to varying degrees). For all their diversity, there are some common needs. Examples of additional needs in the context of volunteer services and guidance for people with learning difficulties or with intellectual impairment are, for example, clearly structured tasks, a close trusted person who has an appreciative attitude and also considers people with

learning disabilities as an equal part of society, or the use of easy language in written and oral communication. On the other hand, people who are highly gifted often feel easily unchallenged. For this reason, it is important during volunteer services to find out what the volunteers' expectations of the placement are and to organise the work situation abroad in the best possible way. As far as needs in the context of guidance are concerned, communication in workshops is also an important point to consider when working in inclusive groups. Highly gifted volunteers may be involved in designing the workshop, so that the workshop situation can also be enriching for highly gifted volunteers.





NEED OF SUPPORT : MENTAL HEALTH

The group of people in need of psychological support includes a broad spectrum of people with different impairments. In principle, it is important to note that **bezev** would never send people who are in an acute phase of a mental health disorder or who are in ongoing treatment due to this acute condition. Thus, when we talk about the need of support in the area of mental health, we are referring to (1) needs that may arise from previous mental health problems that have already been treated or believed to have been treated and are now reoccur during the volunteer service or (2) needs that arise for the first time while abroad. Many volunteers experience mental stress during their volunteer service, some to a greater and others to a lesser extent. Sometimes, but not always, the need for psychological support arises from such stressful experiences. Many of the experiences **bezev** has gathered in the field of mental health have been

with people with depression, eating disorders, phobias, or psychoses. People with depression, for example, more often have adjustment difficulties abroad, which can manifest themselves with symptoms such as mood changes, sleep disorders and hair loss. There are too many kinds of mental health problems to summarise symptoms in a few words. However, basic needs can be identified. In the area of mental health, it is particularly important to build a relationship of trust between volunteers and the sending / partner organisation to offer volunteers the opportunity to address pre-existing conditions without shame. Examples of additional needs in the context of the volunteer service can be a therapist and / or a psychologically experienced or trusted person at the placement site and furthermore the option of accessing a safe space of retreat.

Further information are available in the information sheet mental health on **bezev's** publication » Just do it now! « available in four languages.

NEED OF SUPPORT : MEDICAL

The group of people with a need of support in the medical field covers a broad spectrum of chronic diseases, impairments and needs, such as those arising from haemophilia, diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, Crohn's disease, rheumatism or allergies (house dust, pollen, food, etc.). The possible additional needs within the scope of volunteer services are manifold. However, there are often commonalities, such as taking specific utensils with you, storing and cooling medicines properly or necessary visits to the

doctor. In our experience, these groups generally do not have any special needs in terms of guidance - but rather in terms of organisational issues and emergency plans. However, all sending and host organisations should be aware of the added responsibility of volunteers with a need for medication abroad when this medication needs to be cooled permanently. Even though volunteers in their home country may already be used to this kind of responsibility, it can be a burden in situations such as travel

(e.g. flying) or preparing for an optimal supply of medication. Volunteers should therefore not

be left alone with this - neither emotionally nor organisationally.

NEED OF SUPPORT IN OTHER AREAS

Other need of support areas, where some sending, host and partner organisations already have experience with, include Asperger syndrome (of the Autism Spectrum), Albinism, Dyscalculia, and Dyslexia. People with these types of ascribed impairments / disabilities have broadly varying needs. In the following, these are not presented comprehensively, but indications of frequent needs in volunteer service will be demonstrated.

**Asperger syndrome** is not only associated with impairments, but often also with strengths. Since people with Asperger often have difficulties recognising the facial expressions and gestures of other people in social interactions, it is crucial that everyone expresses everything verbally in communication. Some people with Asperger Syndrome find it difficult to communicate joy and interest in topics or to socialise with peers. With the consent of the volunteer, the environment can be informed of these circumstances so they can adapt their behaviour accordingly. An additional need for guidance can be to prepare the environment for this characteristic in interpersonal interaction, to ensure a respectful and appreciative cooperation is possible, without

fundamental misunderstandings. There are various kinds of limitations for people with **Albinism**. They often have highly sun-sensitive skin and hair. Therefore they have to protect themselves sufficiently from the sun in the country of assignment by wearing appropriate clothing and sunscreen. Some people with Albinism also have impaired vision because their eyes are very sensitive to light (see also the support requirements in the area of vision).

People with **Dyscalculia or Dyslexia** have difficulties with calculating or writing. Possible additional needs in the context of volunteer services arise mainly regarding an increased support by the sending / partner organisation in the organisational preparation and implementation, e.g. when filling in forms. It may also be necessary to provide alternative application forms (e.g. by video, telephone) for people with Dyscalculia or in particular Dyslexia, or to offer more support in the application process. Regarding guidance, this may also require an appropriate adaptation of workshop methods or necessary reporting forms (fewer figures or written text).



# 4

## ACCESSIBILITY AND ADEQUATE ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING GUIDANCE

In the sense of the aforementioned model of impairment / disability, **bezev** dedicates its work to the reduction and removal of barriers, with the aim of effective and unrestricted participation / inclusion of people with impairment / disability in all areas of human life, especially in the context of international cooperation. Preventing experiences of disablement in volunteer services should be aspired. This can be achieved by structurally anchoring accessibility on the one hand, and by taking adequate precautions in individual cases on the other.

When designing accessibility in volunteer services, it is important to create structures within volunteer services, which are accessible to all people with impairments / disabilities. Furthermore, »adequate arrangements« must be made for individual cases. Such case-specific adequate arrangements should be considered as practices, which enable an individual to carry out a volunteer service under the same conditions. Their purpose is to create accessibility for individual persons before and during the volunteer service, and in some cases they go beyond the standards of accessibility provided for the entire group of people with a (specific) impairment or disability (cf. United Nations Human Rights, 2014). If it is not possible to ensure accessibility from the

outset and / or in all steps, it is necessary to speak openly with the volunteers to jointly agree on possible coping strategies and compromise solutions. Volunteers must be aware that all parties involved are in a learning process and should be asked to have some tolerance for mistakes. At the same time, this should not prevent the removal of barriers wherever it is possible. Creating accessibility is a joint project involving all programme actors and can only succeed if those involved take their responsibilities seriously.

According to these concepts, an equal treatment of all volunteers can therefore not be »equitable«.

To compensate the disadvantage volunteers in need of support might experiences due to their impairment / disability in connection with environmental barriers, it is rather a matter of allowing necessary »positive discrimination« in the spirit of equity. Only then do volunteers with different abilities have a square chance to start.

Further information on the meaning of accessibility in practice can be found in the information sheet »Standards« accompanying bezev's publication »Just do it now!« which is available in four languages. Adequate arrangements for individual cases have already been discussed in [Chapter 1. in this publication »What is Impairment / Disability? What are Needs of Support?«](#) (page 12) and is also described in [Chapter 4. »Inclusive Guidance in \(Workshop\) Groups«](#) (page 40).





# Chapter 2

## Communication

### 1

#### DURING ALL PHASES OF THE VOLUNTEER SERVICES AND WITH ALL PEOPLE INVOLVED

The bare essential of guidance is communication. It takes place between all those involved. Between sending-, host-, and partner organisation and placement site, volunteers, mentors, tutors, volunteer colleagues and, last but not least, at times with parents. More information on this topic and on adapting all steps of the guidance is provided in [Chapter 3](#). (page 28). For volunteers with needs of support, the same rules for good communication apply as for all other volunteers. However, there are some specific guidelines that may need to be followed based on the person's actual need of support. These guidelines are presented below. Furthermore, there are some questions about how, when and with whom the impairment / disability and additional needs

should be discussed. These questions are also discussed within this chapter.



### 2

#### GUIDELINES FOR BARRIER FREE / LOW BARRIER WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATION

Depending on the needs of support, individual rules of communication can be developed. If these rules are respected, one can speak of low-barrier or barrier-free communication. This way of communicating should always be the goal in line with an inclusive way of working.

To understand these rules of communication, you should read the explanations on disability / impairment in [Chapter 1. » Accessibility and Adequate Arrangements Regarding Guidance «](#) (page 18).

#### GENERAL NOTES

In communication, it is important to always pay attention to a **sensitive choice of words** regarding the topic of disability. This may include talking to volunteers about their preferences. For deaf people, for example, it is important to make sure to speak of sign **language** interpreters and not sign interpreters. This is a language in its own and not gesture / gesticulation, or » dancing hands «, as it is sometimes referred to. The term » deaf-mute « or » mute « should not be used either, as already explained: Deaf people are not mute, they are well able to communicate in their language. An insensitive choice of language on a website can be a reason for some people not to apply at all. It is essential to talk about such terminology with the respective group of people, and to develop a sensitive, non-discriminatory language together.

Specific guidelines for communication can also be put in place for **application procedures** and regulations for (interim and final) **reports**, see

[Chapter 3. » Evaluation, Knowledge Management, and Reporting «](#) (page 36).

For additional needs of support, it has proven to be very helpful to establish a central point of contact (e.g. on flyers and websites) for barrier-free communication. This contact person can be consulted for questions regarding accessibility and / or needs of support. It is important to sensitise these contact persons to different needs and to inclusive working. Oftentimes there are **overlapping needs of support**. If, for example, people with hearing and people with seeing-related needs are present in inclusive groups (e.g. d/Deaf and blind people), it is important to pay equal attention to the verbal and visual presentation of content. This is in any case valuable for all group members, allowing for a better learning via two or more sensory channels. In the following, we provide examples of how communication can be adapted for groups of people with different needs of support.

#### VISION

Possible adjustments in communication with people with a need of support in the area of vision include the following: Speaking clearly and one after the other is always helpful. To make clear who is speaking in a large group, the person speaking should be named, before any content is discussed. In addition, relevant activities of others that can only be perceived visually (including videos) should be described verbally. All relevant pictures and drawings (e.g.

in presentations) should also be described. For this reason, graphics for the presentation of complex facts should be avoided - or a detailed description must be added. When communicating with persons with a visual impairment, it is important to face them to make clear that they are being talked to. Text documents and other written communication should be designed barrier-free, to enable people in need to read these either in Braille or with a screen reader.

To find out more about the details and how barrier-free documents can be created one can read the information sheet accompanying [bezev's publication » Just do it now! «](#).



LEARNING

Communication can be made barrier-free for people with needs of support in the area of learning, by following the rules of » easy language«. Easy language is a separate language with fixed rules for both written and spoken communication, e.g. on content and formatting. Easy language is not baby talk! It is rather a less complex language, with shorter sentences and

concise choice of words. It can be equally helpful for people with learning difficulties, for people with difficulties in reading as well as for people whose mother tongue is not English. More time is needed when speaking and more space is needed when writing to present texts / content in easy language.

Further information about the rules of easy language and helpful tips on how to use it is available in the information sheet published alongside » Just do it now! « and can be requested from *bezev*.

HEARING

Some possible needs in personal conversations and / or especially in workshops are, for example, the use of sign language interpreters for the written language (especially for people with a hearing impairment) or spoken language (especially for d/Deaf people).

In workshops, it is also necessary to stand in the centre and in front of the audience, with sufficient lighting to ensure that the sign language interpreters can be seen and it is possible to read the lips of the person speaking. Furthermore, one has to ensure the possibility of eye contact. In addition, speaking clearly and one after the other (not jumbled) is important too. Background noises and echoing rooms (especially for hearing impaired people) should be avoided. If sign and written language interpreters are involved, it is also advisable to speak a little slower so they can follow the discussion well and translate it completely. Alternative forms of communication help in communicating with deaf people, for example in the absence of sign

language interpreters. Such alternatives include writing aspects down and using meaningful facial expressions and gestures. Pictures can be useful to support the content in presentations.

Depending on the » writing style « of the d/Deaf person it can be helpful to write less complex and shorter sentences. When communicating with a d/Deaf person, we recommend to follow the writing and speaking style of your counterpart. Last but not least more time should be allocated for communication. Workshops with d/Deaf people usually need up to 1/4 more time due to interpretation. Inquiries should also be welcomed, e.g. to explain mistakes in the translation and / or for a better understanding of difficult texts.

In general, professional sign language translation and interpretation should be used for essential, sensitive, and complex topics / occasions. Non / semi-professional translation might also be helpful in certain settings. There might be sign language interpreters organised through

networks or a national association of sign language interpreters in your country of work.

There are many **technical communication aids**. For deaf people, for example, services such as » Tess«, » Verbavoice«, a » Hand-Talk-App«, or the » Mimix3D Sign Language Translator« can be used. » Tess« is a German telephone interpreting service in sound and German sign language. » Verbavoice« also uses live video to connect German or other nation’s sign language interpreters. The » Hand-Talk-App« is a technology that translates text and audio to Brazilian Sign

Language (Libras) through artificial Intelligence and the » Mimix3D Sign Language Translator« is also a mobile app, which interprets spoken and written English into sign language using a 3D avatar. You can find references to the websites of the respective service providers in the bibliography. Certainly, there are other helpful technologies for d/Deaf people (in development). For hearing impaired people, wireless systems for speech transmission as well as induction loops (with micro), e.g. in workshops, can be used. In addition, volunteers usually have their own aids such as hearing aids, cochlear implants etc.

Further helpful tips for the communication with people with need of support regarding hearing abilities is available in the information sheet of *bezev*’s publication » Just do it now! «.

3

COMMUNICATING IMPAIRMENT / DISABILITY  
AND NEEDS OF SUPPORT – WHEN, WITH WHOM AND HOW?

First, it should be noted that discussions about impairments / disabilities and support / requirements sometimes contain very personal topics and must be dealt with the appropri-

ate sensitivity and respect. Nevertheless, it is essential for a successful volunteer service to talk about the impairment and especially about the need of support.

ADDRESSING THE IMPAIRMENT / DISABILITY  
AND NEEDS OF SUPPORT

**At various points throughout the process**, applicants and volunteers should be given the opportunity to highlight impairment / disability and needs of support. *bezev* decided to use indirect questions in the application form. One of these questions in the application form is: » What are the things we have to consider when you are going to work abroad with us? « This open

question aims to avoid discrimination, since it does not specifically ask about a potential impairment / disability. All people are encouraged to express their needs. A note could be added that this information serves the optimal individual preparation of the volunteer service and is not a selection criterion. Many applicants mention their impairment or disability and partly already



individual needs of support as a result of this wording on their application form. Other volunteers only mention their impairment or disability in the further application process (e.g. during the personal interview, in selection workshops), in the preparation workshop (for topics such as dealing with impairment or disability abroad) or in the further preparation process (e.g. during the search for a placement and the organisational preparation). Communicating the impairment or disability also includes communicating the associated support / additional needs **at an early stage**. This is crucial to ensure that this is considered throughout the entire process and that the services offered are as free of barriers as possible and that appropriate precautions can be taken. For partner-/

host organisations and placement sites, it can be important to know in advance if adjustments to accessibility or adequate arrangements need to be made on site and / or employees need to be prepared. Some of the organisations would appreciate to be informed about additional needs and impairments / disabilities directly in the application form. For others, it is sufficient to provide information shortly before the arrival of the volunteer with an impairment / disability. The wishes and needs of partner-/ host organisations should be checked and clarified as soon as possible. Applicants and volunteers should be specifically encouraged to think about their needs and to express them as early and openly as possible.

There are various possibilities for recording the actual additional requirements. These are described in the » Assessment Forms « that *bezev* has developed for various needs of support. They are attached to *bezev*'s publication » Just do it now! « which is available in four languages.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES

The survey of previous volunteers with impairments / disabilities revealed the following: If the additional needs of the volunteers were not addressed, this was perceived as negative, as the volunteers felt left alone with their problems while abroad and not sufficiently prepared. For these reasons, any issue that may arise and the strategies for solving them should be appropriately addressed, especially regarding impairment / disability. The discussion of the individual needs and the impairment / disa-

bility of the volunteers was received positive by the volunteers, especially in the context of **selection interviews and preparation workshops**. By broaching these issues, problems that may arise abroad can be addressed in advance and solution strategies can be developed together. In addition, » fellow volunteers « are further sensitised to the topic, which also adds value for them. If the impairment / disability was not addressed in the preparatory workshop, this was perceived as negative in retrospect: » When

I now while being abroad, reflect on it, the topic [living in a foreign country with my impairment] would have been very essential «. In contrast to the preparation workshop, the volunteers in the mid-term workshop did not necessarily experienced it as negative, if their impairment / disability was not addressed. This is probably due to the fact, that the volunteers have already gained self-confidence in dealing with their impairment / disability abroad and have found their own approach of dealing with the issue. If their disability was discussed at the mid-term workshop, this was also perceived to be positive. Presence of sign language interpreters at the mid-term workshop is in any way essential for d/Deaf volunteers.

These results of the volunteer survey also indicated that different volunteers

deal with the topic **in different ways** and have different needs for dealing with communicating impairment / disability. It is therefore essential to have an individual approach to each volunteer and to respect their perspective. Summary: In principle, it is important to explain the impairment / disability and the corresponding needs of support to all persons who are in regular contact with the volunteers with impairment / disability in a respectful and appreciative way. No matter in which context the impairment / disability is discussed or inquired about, it is vital to give the volunteers an opportunity to explain their experiences. Moreover, to communicate that the impairment / disability is not an exclusion criterion and every person with any impairment / disability and any need of support is welcome, should be emphasised.



HANDLING IMPAIRMENTS BY OTHER PARTICIPANTS (VOLUNTEERS)

The survey of volunteers with impairments / disabilities also showed that most of them had positive experiences during the preparatory stage, when dealing with other volunteers. Other participants and workshop leaders were perceived as open and understanding. However, some volunteers would have wished for more preparation of the other participants (volunteers), as some volunteers had less understanding of impairment / disability. This situation can be counteracted by a specific preparation of the group by the workshop leaders. Volunteers with and without impairments /

disabilities often meet for the first time in preparatory workshops. It should be taken into consideration that the group dynamics are shaped and support is provided by the team leaders. This inclusive setting can also be used as an opportunity for the group. By the individual participants paying attention to each other, it can lead to more cohesion. Volunteers encounter diversity and the unknown when they are abroad. The inclusive workshops can be a good preparation. The focus should always be on the strengths of the persons, not on a perceived weakness (the impairment).

HANDLING IMPAIRMENT BY OTHER PERSONS (ABROAD)

Not only for organisational but also for educational preparation, the topic of impairment / disability plays an important role. It is not only about physical, economic, communication and other barriers, but also about social inclusion and mutual understanding. On the one hand, all important **contact persons** or all persons with whom the volunteers have regular contact with should know that the volunteers have an impairment or disability and what the needs are in terms of interacting with each other (e.g. rules of communication, need of support during certain activities). It is essential to never lose sight of the person as a whole and that an appreciative attitude is in the centre of attention on all sides. On the other hand, the question of how **impairment / disabilities are dealt with and perceived in the context of foreign countries** must be addressed. All over the world, people with impairments / disabilities are exposed to

discrimination in many different ways - this takes different forms in different regions or contexts. Volunteers can thus encounter exclusionary and discriminatory treatment towards people with impairments / disabilities. Likewise, a charitable attitude and behaviour motivated by a sense of pity can be shown. In the end, both often lead to discrimination. Therefore, the expected situation abroad cannot be generalised during the preparation; it depends on the individual project, its environment, the impairment / disability of the volunteer and many other factors. However, previous volunteers with impairments reported negative and positive discriminatory reactions to their impairments and appreciated the reflection on these (and religious, cultural, and other contextual backgrounds). This reflection can take place in preparatory, mid-term and post-assignment workshops as well as in personal discussions with guidance (tutor,

mentor, reference person of the sending – and host organisation) and of course in the personal

preparation by the volunteers themselves.

DEALING WITH ONE'S OWN IMPAIRMENT / DISABILITY OR SUPPORT / ADDITIONAL NEEDS

In extreme situations and completely unfamiliar environments during a volunteer service, volunteers with impairments / disabilities are often especially challenged. Not only do they have to deal with the culture shock, but also with the experience of their own impairments / disabilities and (unfamiliar) barriers in new ways. A frequently stated problem on arrival in the host country is the foreign language and the orientation in a foreign setting. This problem is often intensified by an impairment / disability, as different countries present different barriers compared to those volunteers are familiar with from living in their home countries. Other challenges such as homesickness or the increased attention received from the environment are aspects that volunteers with and without impairments / disabilities experience. They are part of the process of finding their way in a foreign country. It can also initiate personal development processes of the volunteers, which may initially seem overwhelming. Often, the volunteers' way of dealing with their own impairment changes. Many accepted that they could not participate equally in all aspects (e.g. communication or certain activities). However, the best possible solutions were always sought together.

Even the best communication of needs and the greatest understanding of the impairment / disability does not automatically lead to social inclusion and accessibility. Flexibility and creativity, willingness to compromise and acceptance of »imperfection« were important prerequisites for the emotional balance of the volunteers. This should be communicated in advance to enable the volunteers to make an informed decision whether to accept the challenge. If there was any contact (before or during the volunteer service) to people with similar impairments / disabilities, this was consistently perceived as positive. For this reason, sending-partner- and host organisations should support such exchanges and, if desired, establish contact with networks or groups. Summary: Not all needs can be known in advance. Therefore, in order to avoid major frustrations, it is important to (1) know potential barriers and specific needs abroad as well as possible and (2) remain flexible not to be overwhelmed in case of deviations from expectations. Organisations should accompany volunteers through this process with understanding - without thinking they know what is »best« for them. Empathy and regular opportunities for discussion, even in crisis situations, are the key element.



# Chapter 3

## How Can All Aspects of Guidance Be Made Inclusive?

Inclusive guidance does not necessarily require specific methods, but in particular an adaptation of existing methods and steps to the different (support) needs of volunteers. In addition, certain general principles and specific contents can be helpful for inclusive cooperation and inclusive guidance. These will be explained in the following.

### 1

#### PEER-TO-PEER APPROACH

Former volunteers and other people with disabilities should be involved as peers in all steps of the volunteer service, including as part of guidance. Former volunteers with impairments or disabilities can be invited to selection workshops / interviews of future volunteers (with impairments or disabilities). They can also be involved in solving individual questions regarding the matching / fitting with partner organisations and the placement site in general and accessibility issues in particular. Especially when empathy for the individual situation of a volunteer with disabilities is required, this peer-to-peer approach can be crucial. Raising awareness of all volunteers to all issues concerning inclusion and impairment / disability, people with impairments / disabilities themselves should always

be valued as partners in the educational work of sending-, host- and partner organisations and beyond. Peer-to-peer counselling is also offered by » People for Inclusion«, a group of former volunteer with impairments / disabilities, based at **bezev**.

In addition, self-representative organisations of people with impairments / disabilities (Disabled Peoples Organisations, acronym: DPOs) abroad should be consulted. They can help volunteers, for example, to be mobile in their free time, get to know people with (a similar) impairment / disability, e.g. from self-help groups, for a personal exchange, find aids and assistants, etc. In the spirit of empowerment, this can be very valuable.

### 2

#### SUPPORTING THE PREPARATION OF VOLUNTEERS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS OF SUPPORT

Many different topics need to be considered, during the preparation of the volunteer service. Besides the general organisational preparation for the volunteer service and covering relevant topics (e.g. racism, visa regulations and vaccination issues or country-specific topics), for volunteers with an impairment it is important to discuss support / additional needs and specific questions in addition. Individual discussions with the educational staff of the sending-, host-, and partner organisation, the preparatory workshops (e.g. in exchange with other volunteers and returnees), as well as the individual preparation of the volunteers themselves contribute to this. Ensuring sufficient time and space for the

specific preparation with adequate guidance is crucial. The topics of this preparation vary considerably depending on the support / additional needs and the impairment / disability. They can include, for example, questions on how to deal with the volunteers' individual impairment / disability or questions on accessibility in the host country / location. To support this preparation, the exchange of volunteers with the same or a similar type of needs for support is particularly important. This can be facilitated at selection and preparation workshops, where future and former volunteers with impairment / disability can exchange their experiences.



### 3 PREPARATION OF VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR PLACEMENT

If volunteers with impairments / disabilities are deployed in a project in which the staff members have no previous experience with inclusion and impairments / disabilities, volunteers with (additional) needs of support must be informed about this fact. For example, a d/Deaf person needs to be made aware of the fact, if only hearing or no sign language speaking people will be present at their place of work. This requires a different mental attitude of the volunteers towards the volunteer placement compared to

placements with other sign language speakers. The decision for an assignment where there are no sign language speakers should therefore be a conscious decision of the d/Deaf volunteers. In the same way as hearing volunteers should make a conscious decision for an assignment where there are mainly d/Deaf people, as this requires them to learn the local sign language. Regarding other areas of support and barriers, volunteers should be able to make an informed choice for a placement and be well prepared for it.

### 4 COMMUNICATION OF / WITH THE SENDING ORGANISATION

For the sending organisation to get the best possible picture of the strengths and interests as well as the needs of support of applicants with disabilities, a meaningful resume (CV) and letter of motivation as well as assessment forms can be helpful. Templates for assessment forms are available in the information sheet of *bezev*'s publication » Just do it now! « They are available in four languages, as Word and PDF, as well as in easy language for various needs of support (e.g. seeing, hearing, motor skills, mental health, learning and general needs). With the information from application documents and assessment forms, sending organisations should start looking for open and suitable positions as early as possible. The organisational preparation of an inclusive assignment as well as the matching between volunteers with disabilities and a suitable placement often requires consid-

erably more time. Employees in the sending-/ host-/ and partner organisation should be made aware of the possible specific need for different working hours (e.g. part-time work if required), adapted break arrangements (e.g. more frequent or longer breaks) or other leave arrangements (if possible). The actual requirements due to an impairment / disability need to be taken into account adequately. It can be assumed that people with impairments / disabilities are well aware of their needs, can express them well-grounded and won't inappropriately exploit their impairment / disability for special accommodation. Discrimination through **equal** treatment of all volunteers under different starting conditions (e.g. higher basic effort / burden for a certain impairment) must therefore always be prevented. When in doubt, experts can be consulted to decide what an equitable and adequate solution is.

### 5 COMMUNICATION OF / WITH THE PARTNER-/ OR HOST ORGANISATION AND PLACEMENT SITE

The aim of inclusive deployment activities should be to open up all placement opportunities for volunteers with disabilities - not just those projects that already involve people with disabilities (i.e. living / learning / working, etc.). To submit an initial request for new projects, initial application forms can be requested from *bezev* in three different languages. These ask about the basic openness for and previous experiences of the organisation with inclusive work in volunteer services. If there is a need for training of employees, *bezev* is also happy to offer its expertise.

In general, **Skype- or other video conversations** with the partner / host organisation and the place of work can be helpful for preparation. In addition, the resume and a letter of motivation (to show strengths and interests) as well as the mentioned assessment forms (to assess the person's support / additional needs) can help to get a better impression of the needs of the volunteer with disability. Assessment forms should be filled in the national language of the host organisation or in another language that is easily understood by the host organisation. This helps to avoid misunderstandings from the outset. Video conversations can be conducted with sign language interpreters. If they take place in advance, the placement organisation is able to get a picture and impression of the volunteer - and vice versa.

**Photos** can also help to familiarise the volunteers with their placement organisation. If the

impairment or the need of support is e.g. of a physical nature, photos can be used to discuss possible practical aids and to point out potential barriers at the workplace, at home or during leisure time.

However, during video conversations with the placement organisation, care should be taken not to demand too much of **people with learning disabilities** in particular, by asking them to describe their own abilities and needs in a foreign language. Nonetheless it is important that the placement organisation gets a realistic picture of the volunteer. In the past, there were some cases where volunteers were overburdened. This can quickly lead to misinterpretations in both directions (e.g. over- or underestimating the skills of volunteers with learning difficulties) and thus neither side wins. It is better to have a meaningful resume and letter of motivation, which describes the volunteer's strengths and interests as clearly as possible. Together with an assessment form that has been filled out in advance, calmly and, if necessary, with support, it is easier to obtain the information necessary to define tasks and make adequate arrangements. A video conversation can help create a complementary picture by looking at the strengths and interests on a more personal level than via an assessment form and resume.

For **d/Deaf people** the communication with people who speak sign language in the placement organisation should be ensured. At least for important conversations and tasks this must be guaranteed. Either d/Deaf people living



on site or sign language interpreters who are engaged accordingly can ensure this need. Under certain circumstances, it is also possible that hearing volunteers who speak sign language well do the translation work for the d/Deaf tandem volunteer(s) as an (essential) part of their volunteer service (see notes under 8. » Tandem Volunteers « (page 33)). If none of these options is possible, it is necessary to clarify this beforehand with the d/Deaf volunteers and to find out their attitude towards it. It is important that the d/Deaf volunteers properly assess the situation,

if they cannot communicate in sign language with anyone at the placement site. Under certain circumstances the nature of the activity may give this possibility, especially if it is an activity that can be carried out by the volunteers with little language (e.g. when working in nature or with people who also do not have spoken language). If this second option is chosen, the involvement of sign language speakers is nevertheless essential for important / sensitive issues - especially for crisis and evaluation meetings or for important agreements concerning the work of d/Deaf volunteers.

This tends to be easier in places where employees have already been sensitized to inclusion and people with impairments / disabilities. The assessment forms described in the previous chapter can help to motivate and train staff who have not been sensitised to the issues of inclusion, impairment / disability and the

needs of individual volunteers yet. Their content - communicated with appropriate sensitivity - provide an important guide to the essential points for local staff. Finally, workshops and training sessions can be useful for employees. **bezev** is happy to advise and / or support you with adequate training concepts.

The publication » Just do it now! « in German, English, Spanish or French can also serve as support.

## 6 MENTORING, TUTORING AND GUIDANCE IN THE PROJECT

Mentors, tutors, and supervisors in the daily work must also be open to inclusive work and sensitive to the specific needs of volunteers with disabilities. Mentors and tutors who are well sensitised to inclusion and disability issues can assist the host and sending organisations in the matching process with a placement as well as in the organisational preparation, if necessary, with their knowledge of the country and project.



## 7 WORKING WITH PARENTS AND LEGAL GUARDIANS

As volunteers without disabilities / impairments, volunteers with disabilities / impairments sometimes have concerned and / or interested parents. Working with parents is generally the same for both volunteers with and without impairment / disabilities. In individual cases however, it may be useful to clarify the parents' specific questions regarding needs of support, accessibility and support during the volunteer service. Whether this is wanted must be clarified with the volunteers themselves. In the past, some volunteers with impairments / disabilities

explicitly wished for their parents to be informed and sensitised to these specific questions, as they hoped for their parents' approval and trust in the project abroad. In individual cases, non-sensitised parents could be a barrier for the volunteers. The same applies to possible legal guardians of people with so-called intellectual disabilities. Whether such carers exist must be clarified not only for guidance reasons but also regarding questions of representation and decision-making.

## 8 TANDEM VOLUNTEERS

In many cases two volunteers are working at the same placement organisation. It is possible for one volunteer to take on a kind of assistance function for the other volunteer with disability / impairment, a so called tandem volunteer. In a few volunteer service programmes, is some

initial experience of tandem volunteers taking over assistance tasks for fellow volunteers with disabilities (especially for blind volunteers, volunteers in wheelchairs and volunteers with learning difficulties). These volunteers provided e.g. mobility assistance during spare time or



travel from the placement site to their accommodation or were assistants for certain activities at the placement organisation and during spare time.

The assistance provided should be officially credited as working time to the co-volunteers providing the assistance in consultation with the placement site, to recognise their performance. At the same time, in such arrangements the meaning and extent of the assistance work should be clarified: The tandem volunteer is a »service person« for the person with disability / impairment and is therefore »obliged«.

In assistance situations the tandem volunteer cannot be in the same role as a regular co-volunteer.

This can - depending on the volunteers and their personal relationship – lead to a certain hierarchy between the volunteers, which does not need to be negative if clarified in advance. It is important that the assisting tandem volunteers and volunteers with impairments / disabilities are willing to take on this »role reversal« for the time of the assistance provision. In any case it is important to avoid the assisting tandem volunteer being put into a "superior position" compared to the fellow volunteer with impairment / disability. It is equally important to avoid overburdening the two volunteers by this type of assistance relationship. Sensitive and personal

services for the person with disability (such as care services) for example, are only possible if both volunteers agree to this solution for meeting the needs of assistance.

Reverse tandem functions are also possible: There are numerous examples of d/Deaf or blind volunteers who would have liked to teach hearing

or sighted co-volunteers sign language or Braille, so that they can communicate better in their local project (in the cases mentioned, schools for d/Deaf or blind).

Unfortunately, this kind of language assistance (by d/Deaf volunteers for their hearing or non-signing co-volunteers and blind volunteers for sighted co-volunteers who do not know Braille) has not yet been officially

used by sending / host and partner organisations and has particularly not been recognised as working time. It is therefore even more crucial to consider this type of tandem support by volunteers with impairments / disabilities in the future, if they teach co-volunteers their skills. In cases like the above mentioned, very positive synergy effects can be generated - which can also benefit the place of assignment or the quality of the volunteers' work without impairment / disability (e.g. if, in the above mentioned case, the volunteers without impairment / disability can communicate better with the project's target group).



Further information on needs of assistance and their provision (by professionals) is available in the information sheet accompanying *bezev's* publication »Just do it now!«.

## 9

### SPARE TIME

Guidance should also continue during spare time unless the volunteer with a disability / impairment specifically requests it to pause. By spare time we mean both the free time at workshops, as well as spare time during the volunteer service such as evenings and weekends, as well as vacation days / weeks during the stay abroad. People with impairments / disabilities usually have the same needs in their free time and during breaks as they do during their working hours / workshop attendance. It is therefore important to consider together with the volunteers with disabilities / impairments, how these periods can be designed as inclusive as possible, so that social inclusion does not end when the volunteer leaves the office or workshop room.

During **workshops**, the entire group is encouraged to engage (creatively) with each other during their free time. If, for example, sign language interpreters are no longer available for such as evening free time, participants without sign language skills and d/Deaf volunteers can try to communicate with one another. The same applies to volunteers with other needs of support. If both sides are

sensitive and understanding for each other's different situation, the basis for an enriching interaction and exciting recreational experiences is given. Workshop leaders should point out, that inclusive togetherness does not end when the workshop sessions are over, before the end of the respective workshop day. If necessary, helpful objects can even be brought along, such as books for learning sign language or certain



games that can be played by everyone. The handbook »Let's Play!« published by *bezev* can



also provide helpful suggestions for inclusive games and energizer during the workshop. During **free times and holidays** during the stay abroad, the additional needs of volunteers with impairments / disabilities are too often not fully considered. For example, it may be necessary to provide mobility assistance for certain trips / leisure activities. It is important to note that

volunteers with disabilities / impairments are of course entitled to the same valuable leisure and holiday experience as other volunteers. Social inclusion seems to work particularly well during leisure activities. Therefore, the importance of free time should not be underestimated when preparing and clarifying accessibility.

10

EVALUATION,  
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, AND REPORTING

The importance of evaluation and knowledge management for inclusive work should not be underestimated. Networking and exchange of experience between different inclusive sending and hosting organisations is useful for the preparation of inclusive volunteer services. Organisations can jointly evaluate their experiences, connect their former and future volunteers with the same needs of support, for a context specific preparation. In addition, staff from different sending, host and partner organisations sharing the experience is necessary for context specific preparation, as they can learn from one another. With the aim of evaluating experiences, **bezev** has developed online ques-

tionnaires for volunteers, sending and partner organisations as well as guidelines for interviews with staff from organisations. These can be requested from **bezev** for your own evaluation. It is highly recommended to evaluate the experiences made with one's own inclusive work. On the one hand, to learn from them, and on the other hand, to make this knowledge available to future employees of the organisation and also to external persons. Thanks to the many people and organizations who have shared their knowledge and experience, **bezev** has collected and evaluated data over the past ten years. This have been incorporated into this handbook and into **bezev's** publication » Just do it now! «.

11

APPLICATION AND REPORTING BY VOLUNTEERS

Helpful tips on inclusive adaptation for application / reporting forms of the volunteers themselves are in this following section. Guidelines for reports (as well as for applications) of the volunteers should be made more flexible regard-

ing their form. For example, for d/Deaf people the medium film is sometimes more suitable than a written application or a report about the volunteer service. Foreign written language is usually even a » double foreign language « for

d/Deaf people (see Chapter 1. » Accessibility and Adequate Arrangements Regarding Guidance «). A variety of options should therefore be offered for application and reporting forms. If applications or reports are requested in written language, people close to the d/Deaf volunteer might end up writing or correcting the texts. This can lead to misconceptions and misunderstandings: (a) In application procedures of the sending, host and partner organisation the actual written language expression of the applicant(s) is not clear and / or (b) in written reports the d/Deaf volunteers do not report freely and openly about their actual experiences, because they are more concerned about grammar issues than about the content. Therefore, it might be helpful to offer the option, for example, that volunteers can make videos in sign language for application / motivation letters

or reports. These tend to give d/Deaf people more chances to express themselves openly and freely and talk about what they feel, think, and know. These videos are usually composed in sign language only, as few applicants / volunteers will be able to edit films with subtitles in written language. In order to understand these videos, sending, host and partner organisations can either (a) ask the d/Deaf applicants to have the sign language translated into written language by someone in their environment and send this translation along the video and / or (b) ask / use sign language interpreters via video call, phone or in person to translate the videos in real time. The same instructions apply to other volunteers. In the past, videos have also been very helpful for many other needs of support (e.g. physical skills or autism).

Further references to reports can be found in the information sheet accompanying **bezev's** publication » Just do it now! «.

12

FINANCING INCLUSIVE GUIDANCE

When working with a support programme for inclusive commitment abroad, it is possible to draw on the existing financing possibilities for inclusive educational work. In Germany, the **weltwärts programme** and the **International Youth Volunteer Service** offer the possibility of settling the costs of additional personnel for volunteers' guidance. It is advisable to take a close look at the funding guidelines and - if

available - regulations for additional costs of the programmes with which you are working. Of course, it is important that the inclusive work is not perceived as a disproportionate additional expense. If you would like more detailed information on funding options for inclusive guidance, you can always request the latest status of the funding programmes from the programmes themselves and / or from **bezev**.



# 13

## CONTINUOUS TRAINING FOR INCLUSIVE GUIDANCE

Are you interested in further information and / or training for inclusive educational work? There are helpful method books - besides this one - which can be used in the context of inclusive educational work. The bibliography can provide an overview of some publications on that matter. If you are interested in a training course for inclusive work, **bezev** is at your disposal. A training flyer with possible contents of this training can be requested from **bezev**. In addition, all the

contents of this handbook can be incorporated into a training course, with adequate adaptations to the content and methodological elaboration according to the specific needs.





# Chapter 4

## Inclusive Guidance in (Workshop) Groups

» I was the only wheelchair user in my cohort; sometimes the workshop leaders themselves did not know how to interact with me. «

This quote from a former volunteer shows impressively how important it is for workshop leaders and other people at workshops to know how to work in an inclusive way in group situations. To keep barriers and insecurities as low as possible, the following chapter will provide some advice for workshops with mixed groups.

## 1 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TEACHING METHODS

First, it is important to note: There are no inherently accessible and inclusive methods. All methods used in workshops (e.g. presentations, energizers, games, discussions) must be adapted to the needs of a group. This is a matter of inclusive education and teaching methods. There are some methodological manuals (e.g. exercises, games) that help to create an inclusive learning environment. They contain, for example, exercises to raise awareness and appreciation

of diversity, to stimulate democratic action, to identify commonalities in diversity, etc. These, however, often provide no indication of how exercises can be implemented in diverse groups including people with different needs. In the following we will start by providing general suggestions for the adaptation to different needs. Subsequently, we will present methods which can help to promote an inclusive mind-set at workshops.

## 2

## GENERAL NOTES ON THE ADAPTATION OF WORKSHOP METHODS

Where needs of support (in diverse groups) are overlapping, the question arises how workshop methods can be adapted. For this purpose, typical needs of support in oral presentations (with visualisation, e.g. by Prezi and / or PowerPoint)

will be shown first, including the needs of three general support areas. The following table shows the typical needs regarding hearing, vision and learning that exist during a presentation:

	Hearing	Vision	Learning
<b>Spoken language</b>	Do not communicate too much in spoken language	Communicate mainly through spoken language	Communicate in <i>Easy Language</i>
<b>Written language</b>	Written communication is helpful	Written content in oral presentation is complicated	Written language can be difficult
<b>Image</b>	Using pictograms and pictures is beneficial	Pictures, graphs, and pictograms can be difficult	Using pictograms and pictures is beneficial

At first glance, some of these needs seem incompatible. However, the following adjustments can make it possible for everyone in a diverse group to benefit from the presented situation.

The following adjustments are possible:

	Hearing / Vision / Learning
<b>Spoken language</b>	Write aspects down and verbalise them in easy / accessible language
<b>Written language</b>	Communicate through sign language and spoken language in easy / accessible language
<b>Image</b>	Include pictograms and pictures in presentations and describe them verbally

This type of adjustment can also be applied to other methods. The following chapter offers some ideas for adjustments. Certainly, it will take some time of practice before this kind of multiple inclusive adaptation becomes a routine. But over time it will become a habit to address multiple sensory channels and to adapt the complexity of language to the needs of diverse groups. Such a wide range of offerings will in turn benefit all people. Because different learning needs are quite normal, all participants can benefit from

it. Participants can also profit from inclusive workshops in many other ways. For example, it is common that volunteers cannot directly communicate perfectly with their environment while abroad, especially at the beginning - as locals will speak their native language. In this respect, including workshops for hearing people (who use spoken language) and d/Deaf people (who use sign language) can also help to already learn strategies for overcoming communication barriers during the preparation phase. Or tandems

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## PRESENTATIONS

Chapter 4. » General Notes on the Adaptation of Workshop Methods « (page 41) already provided some advice on how presentations can be adapted to groups of people with different needs of support.

colour contrasts and suitable colours for people with visual impairments. For example, red and green as colours should be avoided. The font size should also be adapted to requirements and, if necessary, a handout in large print should be provided. The exact font size of the large print is best discussed with the volunteers.

The variety of methods that are used in the volunteer service workshops is also reflected in their names: Apart from the classic presentations (e.g. Prezi, PowerPoint, oral etc.), handouts and videos, there are a number of interactive meth-

ods such as voting methods (e.g. Vote by feet), World Café, Open Space, written conversation, Open Mic, feedback methods, group discussion, games and energizers, Fishbowl etc.. Methods like theatre inspired and photography are also frequently offered in workshops. In the following, we will offer some advice on how these methods can be adapted for the use in diverse groups. In addition, the instructions for communication regarding different needs, as described in *Chapter 2. » Guidelines for Barrier Free / Low Barrier Written and Oral Communication «* (page 20) apply.

In general, volunteers with visual impairments should be sent the presentations (PowerPoint or similar) in advance of the workshop in a barrier-free format, which is readable by screen readers. If the volunteers are visually impaired and need large print, all information should be sent in large print in advance. If possible, the complexity of the sentences (grammar, and possibly also content) should be reduced to the necessary minimum. At the same time, this will also enable people with hearing impairments and learning difficulties to understand them well. For written content, it is important to select high

In addition, the following applies to people with visual impairments: Everything that is only visually noticeable in presentations and is not expressed verbally should be described verbally (e.g. important photos, pictograms on presentation slides, etc.). In case of queries, the speaker should always first say who is speaking and then state the content. In addition, it is important to speak clearly and understandably.

If the presentation makes use of indications such as » here « and » there «, concrete details such as » left of ... « / » right of ... « or » at the window « should be given instead.



HANDOUTS

Written inputs at workshops often take the form of handouts. For example, for group work or to support a presentation. The following should be noted: Complex handouts should - as already mentioned in the presentations - be sent to the volunteer with visual impairment in advance in a barrier-free format (readable for screen readers). For independent reading of these handouts, it is recommended that blind and visually impaired people be al-

lowed to use a computer for reading. This allows them to adjust the handout to a readable size or have it read aloud by their screen reader. For volunteers with hearing impairment or with learning difficulties, the content of the handouts should be formulated in easy / accessible language. This includes grammar and the choice of words. Other rules of easy language can also be applied, e.g. to illustrate texts with pictograms.

For more information on the rules of easy language, see the information sheet of the *bezev* publication » Just do it now! «.

FEEDBACK AND DECISION MAKING METHODS

Voting methods such as » Vote by feet « or voting with hands are often not suitable for people with motor impairments, e.g. if they cannot raise their hand or stamp their feet. Voting by shouting is in turn not suitable for d/Deaf and hearing impaired people - on the one hand because sometimes no sounds can be made, on the other hand because high volume can be unpleasant for hearing impaired people with a hearing aid. Therefore, it is important to consider the needs and possibilities of the group before choosing appropriate methods. For example, voting with shapes has proven to be positive, as these can be experienced by all people. These have also proven to be helpful as feedback methods. Instead of choosing colours for the evaluation of satisfaction with the workshop, shapes can be used to provide feedback.

Alternative methods for feedback have also proven to be useful for certain groups and persons, such as a reflection walk - however, if this is » very far and goes uphill and downhill « (quote from a former volunteer), then it might not be accessible for people with motor impairments or chronic illnesses (e.g. asthma, cardiac insufficiency etc.) or impedes serious reflection because the walk itself is too tiring. A good solution or compromise would be to give alternatives, so the group can divide and those who like to walk, talk during a walk and all others walk a short distance or choose other feedback methods. A former volunteer commented on this: » I don't want everyone to have to make compromises because of me, but I also don't want to be excluded. «

VIDEOS

Videos can be adapted to different needs of support. For d/Deaf people sign language interpreters are recommended for the translation. It would certainly be even better if the video had this translation directly integrated. Captions can be integrated for people with hearing impairments - optimally, these are also available in easy language(s). Alternatively, parallel written interpretation in » real time « could help people

with hearing impairments to follow the video. An audio version of the videos is helpful for visually impaired and especially blind people. This is a version integrated into the video which describes all relevant actions of the video which can only be perceived visually. Alternatively, another person could describe the content of videos for blind people and then explain the actions in parallel / quasi-synchronous mode.

Information about how technical adjustments can be made to create accessible videos and what needs to be taken into account when shooting a video is available in the information sheet of the *bezev* publication » Just do it now! «.

GROUP WORK

For group work (e.g. world cafés, group discussions, etc.) the same instructions apply as for presentations and communication in groups. Special methods that have proven to be helpful for group work are the » Speaker's Stone « and a large sign in the room that says » Stop - Speak one after the other please! « Both of these have proven necessary to prevent everyone in a group from talking at the same time. A situation that is particularly difficult for people with hearing impairment, since neither the person speaking can be identified (and consequently lip reading is impossible), nor can sentences be filtered out of

the general noise mix. It is therefore important to develop a certain » speaking discipline « - which also helps sign language interpreters to translate what is said and vice versa. Even people who, for different reasons, do not usually get involved in discussions, may feel encouraged to get involved in such slightly slower communication. Open Space as a possible form of group work should be encouraged at this point. It is very well suited for the introduction of one's own, e.g. impairment-specific, topics and thus possibly per se more inclusive than many other given methods and contents.

ENERGIZER / GAMES

Even when looking at energizers and games, it turns out that the same exercises do not all lead to a positive experience and sense of community. Therefore, making adjustments to the usual energizers and games for inclusive settings and choosing those that are suitable for everyone is important.

You will find numerous helpful suggestions for adjustment of introduction materials, games and energizers for inclusive workshops in the *bezev* publication » Let's Play! «.



4

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE CULTURES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

GENERAL NOTES

Promoting an inclusive atmosphere / culture in workshops with volunteers with and without impairments / disabilities means enabling everyone to interact with one another with respect and consideration. For this inclusive culture to emerge, it is necessary to sensitise the participants at the beginning when people with and without impairments / disabilities come together as a group. Who is guiding this process depends on the specific situation. Depending on the group situation, the process is led by, for example, a workshop leader at a workshop, a team leader of the placement site in a team discussion, or the volunteers themselves. In inclusive groups or in individual contact, people without disabilities may have needs of support as they often have not had any contact with the topic disability in the past, or don't know sign language. In inclusive groups or in individual contact with people with impairments

or disabilities, this often causes reservations, communication barriers or even discriminatory behaviour by the volunteers and staff without impairments or disabilities. It is important to take this into account and to offer appropriate awareness-raising and support to those without disabilities. They need preparation for the work in inclusive groups, so they do not show discriminatory and / or exclusionary behaviour because they are overwhelmed by the situation. The concept of needs of support is a relative one. Depending on the perspective, people without impairment / disability in inclusive groups or in individual contact with people with impairment / disability often have one or more such needs of support in social, inclusive interaction. The educational task is thus to convey the diversity in social interaction as » normality « and to share joy in the common, creative, equally considerate and barrier-free interaction.

PRACTICAL EXERCISES

For raising awareness of needs in groups:

At the beginning of each team-building phase (e.g. in teams, at workshops) the following statement can be made: » Here we are a group of people with different needs. This is quite normal. Every person has certain needs, this is not related to an impairment / disability. For example, I as a group leader have the need that we speak one after the other and that we let each other speak. It is very important that we

take each other's needs into consideration and treat each other with respect. «

In small groups, the additional remark can be made: » Please share your needs for cooperation in this group. « (Alternatively, this can be checked beforehand and then read out (anonymously) if there are persons with impairments / disabilities who have communicated there needs in advance - preferably on request of workshop leaders - and do not want to name their needs themselves



or only want to share them anonymously.)  
In large groups, the following information can be added: » In advance we asked which needs exist among the participants of this group. It is especially important that we ... « → And then add the needs that should be considered. (→ Compare the various notes on different needs

of support in *Chapter 1. » Needs of Support «* (page 12) and *Chapter 4. » Group Settings «* (page 42)).  
To promote inclusive culture in the group, awareness raising exercises / games or simple introductions are possible.

In addition, for the promotion of an inclusive mindset, we recommend reading *Chapter 1.* (page 8) of the present publication as well as Part 2. » Creating Inclusive Cultures « of the *bezev* publication » Just do it now! «.

However, we want to mention one method for sensitization explicitly at this point, as it was adapted by *bezev* itself for inclusive work. **Fish-bowl** is a well-known method for discussions.  
You can read about its adaptation for raising awareness of inclusion in » Just do it now! «. In this *bezev* publication, you will find role descriptions for conducting a fishbowl discussion on the topic of inclusion. It is always great fun for everyone involved!



5

WORKSHOP CONTENT

In addition to topics such as racism and machismo, the topic of ableism could and should also become a common theme at workshops - regardless of the specific composition of a year's volunteer group.  
At all workshops, the volunteers with disabilities should also have the opportunity to communi-

cate their disabilities and related issues / needs to the workshop leader and / or workshop group. The workshop leader could, for example, ask the volunteers with disabilities in a preliminary meeting: » When or in what context and how would you like to talk about this? «. Should, for example, a unit on disability and ableism be planned in

the workshop, in order to sensitise the volunteer group to the topic, the following can be offered: » Today we will discuss the topic of disability should we / do you want to talk about your impairment / disability in this context? «. It can also be clarified in advance whether volunteers

themselves would like to make an input on the topic at the workshops and prepare it accordingly (see further information on this topic under *Chapter 2. » Communicating Impairment / Disability and Needs of Support «* (page 23)).

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FURTHER NOTES FOR INCLUSIVE WORKSHOPS

For inclusive workshops to be successful, it is necessary to take organisational matters into account as well as educational aspects. Even though this book focuses on guidance (and not on organisational issues), it is intended to provide some initial pointers at what needs to be considered in inclusive workshops and where further information on these organisational

issues can be found.  
Organisational questions arise around the (informative-communicative and physical) accessibility and includes the condition of buildings and workshop rooms, appropriate access routes, means of transportation used, catering, etc. It also includes organisational questions concerning leisure activities at workshops.

Useful information on this topic are provided in the information sheets » Buildings «, » Standards «, » Mobility «, » Assistance «, and » Events / Workshops « in » Just do it now! « *bezev's* publication that is available in four languages.





# Chapter 5

## Summary: Creating Inclusive Cultures, Structures and Practices of Inclusive Guidance

We hope this method book provides you with a good basis to develop inclusive cultures, structures, and practices of guidance in volunteer services. Now examine yourself and your organisation to see if cultures, structures, and practices are already inclusive. Regarding guidance the following questions should be asked:

### 1 IS THERE A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF DISABILITY AND INCLUSION AND A COMMON COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE ACTION?

- Is there a common understanding of impairment / disability and needs of support? Is there a common awareness that disability only arises when people with disabilities and needs of support meet social and other barriers in their environment?
- Is there openness and appreciation towards people with different needs and abilities - on the same level as for all other volunteers?
- Is there a common understanding of inclusion (and exclusion) and the meaning of inclusive guidance?
- Is there a common commitment to inclusive action and inclusive guidance? Is this seen as a goal by all?
- Are inclusion, diversity and also failure seen as a learning opportunity and not as a problem? Is inclusion understood as a process in which everyone is simultaneously » teacher « and » learner «?
- Are all those involved in guidance (on the part of the host and sending organisations) equally open and mutually informed?
- Is there a basic understanding of all those involved that any form of discriminatory behaviour / communication in the context of guidance is unacceptable?
- Are (entrenched) opinions and behaviour patterns constantly questioned? Are persons with a difficult placement conditions (in relation to a volunteer service) or those for whom volunteering may not be an option also treated in a respectful manner? Are they given adequate time and are alternatives shown to them?

## 2

### ARE ALL STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES INCLUSIVE?

- Are all involved in the guidance sufficiently trained on the topic?
- Do all those involved (host, sending and partner organisations, mentors, volunteers and co-volunteers, volunteer service programmes, etc.) work together openly and willingly in a spirit of inclusive guidance?
- Do you cooperate with experts in your own field (Disabled Peoples Organisations, peers, etc.)? Are they included as (external) experts in the framework of the guidance?
- Are there guidelines for inclusive guidance work during the whole process in the organisation?
- Are all processes of guidance inclusive (i.e. barrier-free, accessible, and needs-based for all)? Are all dimensions of accessibility taken into account (especially social, economic, physical, informative, communicative)?





## Additional Notes

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Sign Language interpreters in Germany: [www.kestner.de/n/dolmetschen/dolmetschen-liste.html](http://www.kestner.de/n/dolmetschen/dolmetschen-liste.html)  
or Federal Association of German Sign Language Interpreters: <http://bgsd.de>

Tess: (German only) Telephone interpreting services in sign language and written language.  
Online: <https://www.tess-relay-dienste.de>

Verbavoice: Location-independent connection of speech-to-text reporters and sign language interpreters. Available at: <https://www.verbavoice.de/english>

Hand Talk-App: Online translation tool which translates both written and spoken web content into sign language. Available at: <https://handtalk.me/en>

Mimix3D Sign Language Translator: A mobile app, that interprets spoken and written English into sign language. Available at: App Store, Google Play Store.

## FURTHER READING

Kreisau- Initiative e.V.: Perspective: Inclusion. Language and communication in international inclusive education. Methods-Guidelines-Impulses.  
Available at: [https://www.kreisau.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/170713\\_KI\\_PUB\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.kreisau.de/fileadmin/user_upload/170713_KI_PUB_ENG.pdf)

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