



CHRISTLICHE DIENSTE CELEBRATES 25 YEARS VOLUNTARY SERVICE WORLDWIDE



In the Fall of 2011 Christliche Dienste – Mennonite Voluntary Service e.V. (Bammental, Germany) will mark 25 years of service. During this time over 1200 volunteers headed into voluntary service assignments.

The volunteers opened themselves up to new cultures, served and learned life-changing lessons. Largely within Mennonite churches and organizations, they were able to engage in relief work and missionary projects. God showed his love through these volunteers and gave back to them a wealth of experience. They have returned from service changed, their horizons broadened, their faith deepened, continuing to offer their leadership in Christ's church and within society.

The CD staff, board and sister organizations look back on

the last 25 years thankful and amazed. How encouraging and fulfilling it is to be part of God's work worldwide. In this article we would like to share our sense of thankfulness and joy, looking back at how God has been at work at CD and how CD has developed, describing CD's situation today and taking a look forward at what CD could become in the future.

How it all began...

The idea for a voluntary service organization like Christliche Dienste came from the former Mennonite relief organizati-

on, „Mennonitischen Hilfswerk Christenpflicht“ and received a jump start at the 1984 gathering of the Mennonite World Conference.

The following are central ideas, which both then and now are at the heart of our motivation:

Jesus showed us that he was Lord and servant, serving others out of love. He calls his followers to adopt an attitude and lifestyle of service (“diakonein”), a stance which offers healing both to others and oneself. CD seeks to offer service possibilities in line with Jesus' calling and prepa-



CD-Team 2011

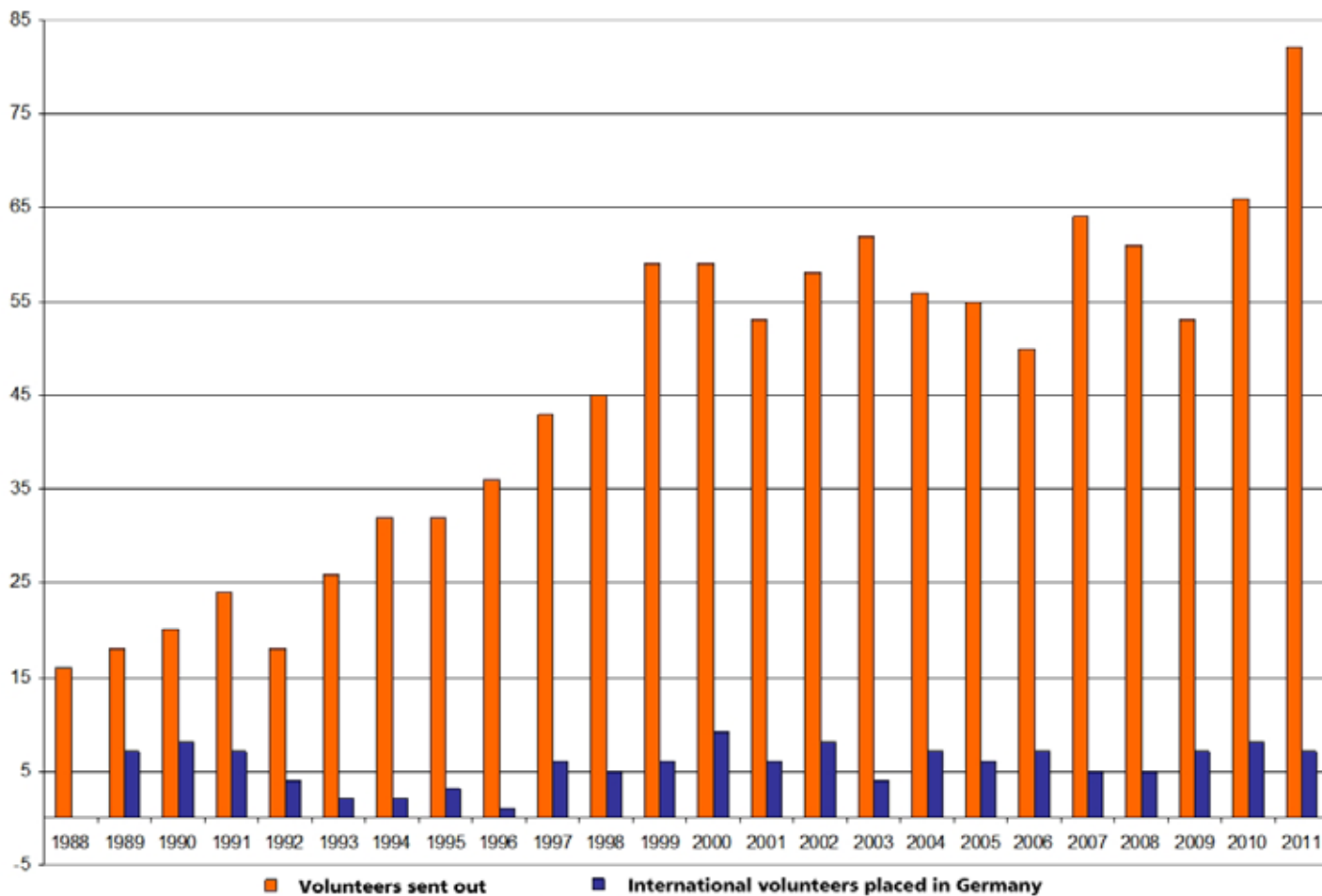
Petra Grund, Elis Dettweiler, Damaris Bosler, Barbara Hege-Galle, Simon Danner, Teresa Zacharias, Andreas Rosenwink, (not on the picture: Megan Rosenwink and Elisabeth Hege)

re volunteers for the service ahead of them. Additionally CD stands with brothers and sisters all over the world, supporting their mission through the work of volunteers. Volunteers both give and receive, serving others and learning from their experience. They give of

themselves in a challenging situation and take with them first hand experiences and better understanding for those living in other economic situations and of the structural problems of our globalized world. The sending churches and society also benefit from the experi-

ences of returned volunteers. A growing number of applicants for service has allowed CD to add to their team of staff. In 2006 CD had the equivalent of 2.45 employees as well as one volunteer serving in the office. Up until 2008 CD depended on donations from churches,

▼ CD-Volunteers per Year



former volunteers and the support of Mennonite “carrying” sister organizations to cover all administrative costs. However, starting in 2008, through the government sponsored program “weltwärts”, CD was able to apply for additional funds. Through this program CD was able to increase the amount of volunteers and the support of partners in the southern hemisphere. For example, in four African countries there are now eight additional service positions. Additionally, funds were made available for holding mid-term seminars in the host countries. For the volunteers, these seminars have become significant settings for reflection and learning. The relationships to partner organizations have also profited greatly through the regular travel of CD staff to host countries.

The government funds have also allowed CD to increase the number of staff positions in our office. Today 9 staff members work at CD filling the equivalent of 4.25 positions and one volunteer position.

Where we stand today

Presently there are 89 volunteers serving in 38 projects in 13 different countries. CD has become one of the larger Christian voluntary service organizations in Germany. Last year, for the first time in our history, we had almost twice as many applicants for the positions available.

The government program „weltwärts“ is presently undergoing an evaluation of its effectiveness as a development



program and certain cutbacks are already clear. We can no longer expect as much financial support through weltwärts. Germany has also eliminated the military draft in the last year and therefore also cut the program for alternative service. However, a new voluntary service program for young people is being started in its place and CD is already a recognized sending organization.

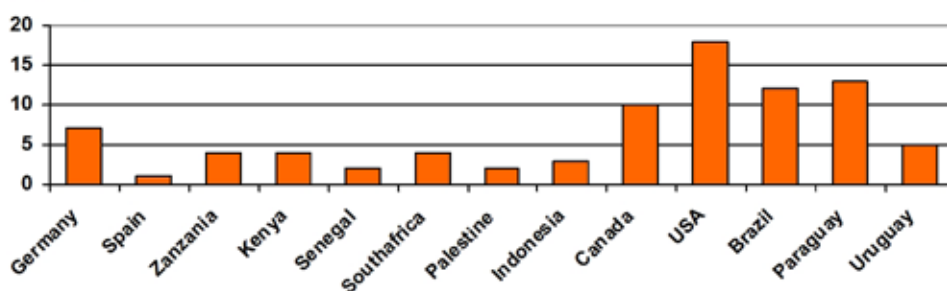
By participating in the present two government programs, CD is able to profit from the additional funds available, however the amount of administrative

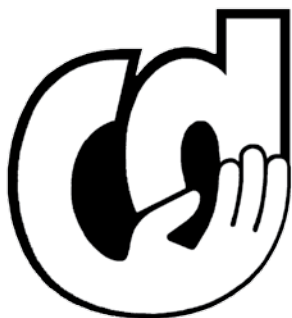
work increases as well. In addition we are forced at times to ask whether the government requirements are having a detrimental effect on CD's own goals and values. At present we are able to deal constructively with this tension, but if this should become impossible at a future time and we can no longer depend on government funds, we trust that the work at CD will be able to continue through the support of our donors and supporting sister organizations as in the 22 years prior to the introduction of the weltwärts program.

▲ *Project locations*

▼ *Volunteers by host country 2011*

Volunteers





*May your deeds be shown to your servants,
your splendor to your children.
May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us.
Establish the work of our hands for us –
yes, establish the work of our hands!
(Ps 90:16-17)*

Where are we headed?

Looking ahead we anticipate continued interest from voluntary service applicants. There is a growing interest among young people to go abroad for a time before beginning schooling or career plans. We are forced to ask ourselves whether we want to continue to grow and whether or not we are prepared to take steps in this direction, both in regards to personnel and organizational planning.

Related to this decision are also the questions of how we want to develop the quality of

services that we offer and what networking efforts make the most sense both within Germany as well as abroad. We are continually receiving requests from prospective partner organizations who would like us to send volunteers to their projects. With additional personnel we would be able to increase both the number of volunteers and assignment locations.

Thank you

In 2011 alone CD volunteers will spend 178,610 hours serving others. Altogether that

equals more than 60 years! We are filled with gratitude towards God who has continually led CD over the years and thankfulness to all those who have supported CD over the past 25 years. We trust that God is present in every one of these hours of service, establishing “the work of our hands”. ■

*Andreas Rosenwink
Christliche Dienste*

Anniversary celebration

We are planning an anniversary celebration „25 Years CD“ between 27th and 29th of april 2012 in Detmold with a volunteer meeting on Saturday, april the 28th.



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Thank your for all your support!
For international donations please
contact our office.