



Marion Sodemann with certificate for the award in the competition 'Growing together: Good ideas for integration in the labour market 2025'

## Review 2025

### Praise from the Federal President – Awards

"For several decades, the Senior Expert Service (SES) has been a flagship for volunteering in Germany and around the world. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the sponsors and, above all, to the more than 14,000 volunteers who share their experiences with great dedication." Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany

**R**ecognition from the highest authority! Since March 2025, we have been able to quote our head of state with these words, and we do so with considerable pride.

Until the middle of the year, there were further highlights in the form of positive evaluations. Our international projects, the African-German Youth Office (AGYO) including the Team works! programme line we run, and our VerAplus initiative were all assessed. And these are the most important statements:

- 'eligible for funding' (assignments abroad)
- 'proven relevance and effectiveness' (AGYO)
- 'valuable piece of the puzzle for securing skilled workers' (VerAplus)

This was followed by a small series of awards. In October and November, VerAplus received a startsocial scholarship and the Unterallgäu Social Prize. In December, the SES, with its integration mentoring programme, was one of the winners in the competition 'Growing together: Good ideas for integration in the labour market 2025'.

**Our conclusion:** 2025 was a good year! But we also worked hard to achieve this. You can see just how hard in the summary of the first eleven months of 2025 on page 2 of this issue of SES today.

#### Dear readers,

as I write these lines, I am at the event location Berliner Freiheit. In a few minutes, I will receive the certificate you see on the left. But right now I still have a moment, and I want to share it with you.

This place is impressive. The names of those who will soon be honouring us and several other organisations are illustrious: Germany – Land of Ideas as the initiator of the competition, the Bertelsmann Foundation, the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and the Mercator Foundation as those who make it possible.

A large networking event took place in the afternoon. Now, however, things have calmed down a bit, and I am looking back on the year that is coming to an end.

In summary: it was intense, successful and full of new ideas and contacts. The latter was particularly due to the change of many contact persons after the early federal elections in Germany.

This offered us a great opportunity: I presented the SES in political Berlin again and again and found myself preaching to the converted. Let's hope it continues like this.

Happy holidays and a happy New Year!

Kind regards

Marion Sodemann  
Executive Director SES gGmbH

## Review in figures



### Register: Almost 14,500 volunteers

REGISTER	*2025	2024
Experts	14,442	13,771
Weltdienst 30+ specialists	2,004	1,881
Experts AGYO**	203	241
Registrations	1,359	1,266
Goodbyes	718	859
Average age	68	70
Proportion of women (%)	27.4	26.5
German Senior Experts (GSE)		
Experts GSE	1,326	700

\* as of 1 December 2025

\*\* African-German Youth Office (AGYO)

**W**e are becoming younger, more female and more numerous: between January and November 2025, our register grew by around 670 entries in net terms, while the separate database of the German Senior Experts (GSE) has almost doubled in size and now contains over 1,300 names. At the same time, the average age of our experts has fallen and the proportion of women has risen – wonderful!

### Abroad: Number of assignments increased

ASSIGNMENTS ABROAD	*2025	2024
Africa/MENA**	***417	***379
Asia/Central Asia	320	264
Europe/Caucasus	82	87
Latin America/Caribbean	83	81
Online assignments	75	37
Follow-up assignments (%)	24.8	29.4
German Senior Experts (GSE)		
Further Education and Teaching	10	6
Management Consulting	10	10

\* as of 1 December 2025

\*\* Middle East and North Africa

\*\*\*77 (2025) and 70 (2024) of these assignments in the Team works! division of the African-German Youth Office (AGYO).

**A**round 100 more than in 2024: that's our number of assignments abroad in the first eleven months of this year. Particularly encouraging is the significant increase in demand from the Africa/MENA region and the doubling of assignments that could be carried out online. By the way: we also had a milestone to celebrate – our 1,000th assignment in Mexico. Felicidades!

### Germany: Strong results thanks to VerAplus

ASSIGNMENTS IN GERMANY	*2025	2024
Initiative VerAplus	4,577 **2,227	4,170 **1,965
Schools programme	250 **170	243 **169
German Senior Experts (GSE)		
Integration Mentoring	21 **0	15 **0
Management Consulting	36 **15	33 **4

\* as of 1 December 2025

\*\* of which continue from the previous year(s)

**T**op as usual: with almost 5,000 assignments already one month before the end of the year, the results of our programmes in Germany are once again excellent. By far the largest share of this is attributable to our VerAplus initiative – a mentoring programme for young people in training and our most successful individual offer for many years.

# Sponsors' Association

The SES Sponsors' Association has been firmly at our side for over 40 years. It promotes the SES concept to the public, encourages networking among our experts and subsidises individual assignments or entire series of assignments that would not be possible without its support.

BALANCE SHEET	*2025	2024
Contributions	10,500 €	13,600 €
Donations	21,883 €	33,880 €
Subsidies	20,990 €	51,591 €
Members	317	311
Chairman	Otmar Greiff	
Executive Director	Ursula Roth	

\* as of 1 December 2025

In 2025, we again benefited greatly from the association's donations. A five-figure sum was allocated to missions in countries in the Global South. A further €15,000 was made available for us to use as we saw fit for our international assignment programme, and part of the costs associated with our regional conferences were also covered. Thank you very much!

The SES Sponsors' Association works on a voluntary basis and with minimal administrative costs. Membership fees and donations are used exclusively and directly for charitable purposes. Join us, become a member! The membership fee is 50 euros per year.

## Donation account

Verein zur Förderung des Senior Experten Service e.V.  
(Association for the Promotion of the Senior Expert Service)

Volksbank Köln Bonn eG  
IBAN: DE50 3806 0186 2005 8200 17  
BIC: GENODE33BRS

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[www.ses-bonn.de/en](http://www.ses-bonn.de/en) > Sponsors' Association

# Parliamentary Lunch



At the Parliamentary Lunch on 5 November in Berlin: Dr Christiane Schenderlein at the lectern, panel discussion with Marion Sodemann (SES), Edzard Bennmann (SIGNAL IDUNA Group), Sascha Vogt (BMZ), Kofi Peter Desmond Yeboah Korang (trainee at Aldo Gebäudetechnik), his mentor Thomas Greve and moderator Rahel Klein (from left to right).

One of the regular events we organise each year is the Parliamentary Lunch in Berlin. Our foundation has been hosting this gathering since 2003, traditionally at the German Parliamentary Society.

There, we offer members of the German Bundestag, diplomats and guests from federal ministries and associations the opportunity for informal exchange, introduce them to some of our experts and report on current topics.

In 2025, we were able to secure former Member of the Bundestag Volkmar Klein as patron and Dr Christiane Schenderlein, the first German Minister of State for Sport and Volunteering, for the welcoming address.

The event focused on our integration mentoring programme, using the example of a pilot project for young people from Ghana who want to gain a foothold in the local training and labour market. We are already active in the home countries of those interested, where we provide support in preparation for their move in cooperation with partner organisations. Here in Germany, we provide individual support.

There was a panel discussion on this topic with a trainee electrician for energy and building technology, his mentor and a representative of the SIGNAL IDUNA Group, which made this project possible with donations. Our managing director Marion Sodemann and Sascha Vogt from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) also took part in the discussion.

# Miscellaneous

## Donations

So that voluntary work can make a difference!



'After 25 years with SES and assignments on every continent, I am becoming more and more of a fan. Why? Of course, I enjoy passing on my knowledge. But I also learn from every person I meet along the way. That's what makes SES so valuable to me. Giving and taking, exchanging ideas on an equal footing – worldwide. I think that's worth every donation.'

Dr Ralf P. Schaab

Your support is what counts. **Thank you very much!**

### Donation account

Senior Expert Service (SES) gGmbH  
Sparkasse KölnBonn  
IBAN: DE97 3705 0198 1902 0065 82



## Very good media coverage

In the first eleven months of 2025, the media reported on SES 1,043 times. This corresponds to around 95 publications per month and is an excellent result. Once again this year, operations abroad and training support as part of our VerAplus initiative attracted the most media interest.

Particularly pleasing: so far this year, 489 experts have registered because they heard about us in the press, on the radio or via online channels. This makes the media the second-best 'advertising medium'. Only the experts who are already registered have a stronger multiplier effect. We owe 648 new registrations in 2025 to their reports among friends and colleagues.

## Thanks

As the year draws to a close, it is time to say thank you. Of course, our thanks go in particular to our experts and to all those who work for us on a full-time or voluntary basis. But they also go to all those who are connected to us through friendship and support.

Representing many private and public institutions, we would like to mention our sponsors – the leading associations of

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## Representatives in Germany

With 16 representatives, numerous regional officers and around 80 VerAplus regional coordinators, we maintain a nationwide network of contact points. A total of 119 people are employed there – all on a voluntary basis. In 2025, we were able to recruit a number of new contact persons.

### New contacts – 2025

#### Representatives and regional officers

Peter Blau, Head of Representative Office Erfurt  
Karlo Feischen, Paderborn/East Westphalia  
Jörg Hanebutte, Saarland  
Hans-Jürgen Hess, Constance/Lake Constance  
Astrid Hornoff, Leipzig  
Gabriele Spörl, Dresden  
Michael Torka, Ulm

#### Regional coordinators VerAplus

Birgit Augustin, Neubrandenburg  
Andrea Bassen, Lüneburg  
Lutz Diekjobst, Detmold/Bielefeld  
Friedrich Halbrodt, Frankfurt am Main  
Rita Kranz, Frankfurt am Main  
Gisbert Kurlfinke, Aachen  
Angela Leymannek, Schwerin  
Brigitte Morof-Windhorst, Leipzig  
Ute Pfeifer, Neckar-Alb  
Margarete Winkens, Middle Lower Rhine  
Ulrich Ziegler, Rhine-Neckar-Odenwald

#### All contacts:

ses-bonn.de/kontakt/deutschland  
vera.ses-bonn.de/ansprechpersonen

German industry – and our most important financial backers: the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Federal Ministry of Education, Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ).



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