



Programm für  
lebenslanges  
Lernen

# Mosaics of Inclusion Partnership

**Presentation of  
Diakonisches Werk Bremen**

# Germany

- 357.000 sq kilometer
- 82,3 Mio inhabitants
- 16 Regional countries („Bundesländer“), the smallest one: Bremen  
 Cities: Berlin (3,4 Mio), Hamburg (1,7 Mio), Munich (1,3 Mio) ... Bremen (550.000) ... Bremerhaven (115.000)



# National symbols



The German black-red-golden tricolore was first raised in 1833 as symbol for the project of a democratic Germany, official use 1848, 1919-1933 and from 1948 on. Nevertheless it is not very important for everyday life of German individuals or NGOs.

The „Federal Eagle“ uses the same colours

Our national anthem is taken from a 19th century poem and states that unity, justice and freedom are guarantees for happiness. In former times, other verses of the same poem were used as background melody for aggressive policy („Germany above all“, postulation of fictitious natural frontiers). This must not be used today. A third verse, which claims the quality of German wine and the beauty of its women, is mostly forgotten (but still true).



# Germany as a federal state – background of Bremen

- The German Bundesländer (regional countries) play an important role in politics. Some issues as education / school / university / infrastructure are exclusively reserved for them. This includes important parts of social welfare (but excludes the social insurances). There are regional governments and parliaments, elected in direct vote.
- Bremen is one of them (the smallest), with a long tradition as independent unit (medieval Hanse town). Today two cities, Bremen and Bremerhaven form our regional country („Bundesland“) Its economy is in transition, as formerly important industries as shipbuilding or textile industry have been closed or diminished while logistics and aerospace technology are seen as future perspective
- Bremen, traditional social-democratic territory, is now governed by a coalition government of the SPD and the ecologist Green Party.
- The tale for the Bremen Town Musicians is a very popular story. Four animals, considered disabled, old and useless by their owners meet each other on the way to Bremen with intention to join to local Musician Corps (this „Marschmusik“ – band of such a small German city state in 1830 was probably the most ineffective military structure one could imagine). But they find a new and self-organized home in a former robbers' house. They conquered it by standing on each others shoulders by this way creating a surprising and terrifying impression. We consider this story as encouragement for solidarity and creativity



# The „Subsidiarity“ principle / NGOs in the social state structures

- NGOs and their framework associations play an important role in German social politics. Before p.e. a municipality creates a service or an institution, the NGO welfare associations have to be asked about their interest. In social and Health politics, 6 officially established NGO framework associations („Wohlfahrtsverbände“) organize themselves along lines of religious or humanitarian traditions – these are Caritas (catholic church), Red Cross, Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Labour movement), Diakonisches Werk (protestant churches), Jewish welfare and Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband (any other). These associations represent institutions and services which employ about 1.2 mio people full- and part time and about 2.5 million volunteers.
- Diaconia Bremen represents about 40 organizations with 3500 employed persons, offering places in home institutions and open / ambulant services for people with disabilities. youth welfare, care of elderly people, service for people with addiction and a hospital. There are other organizations which do not organize „placement“ but neighbourhood, community or advocacy work.
- The NGOs representing self-help structures or self-organized people p.e. with disabilities have guarantees to be part of parliamentary considerations about their issues.
- Nowadays, a social „market economy“ is evolving in Germany (as before in US and Great Britain) , where more and more for-profit companies offer medical and social services.



**Diakonie**

## Services for disabled persons within the Diaconie Bremen framework

These are the most important service and institution offers of Diakonie Bremen and its member organizations – some of them will be program points of the Bremen meeting or play a role in the videos produced in our project.

- The organisation „Innere Mission Bremen“ offers assisted living institutions for adults with mental (and multiple) disabilities in special accommodation houses or in a system of assisted independent living. There is a Day Centre, too, for productive or leisure time activities.
- A similar system is established by Innere Mission for persons with psychic disabilities. Both assistance systems are organized in community-orientated way, which means that the services in a certain city region are organized by one organisation each (Innere Mission is responsible for the „Middle“ region of Bremen).
- Innere Mission organizes the background of a self-help group for mothers with disabled children (this is part of the Counseling Centre units)
- The Friedehorst Foundation organises assisted living for multiple impaired persons in several assisted home and independent living groups in some North-Western parts of the city and on the central ground of the Foundation, an ancient Airforce Centre (in German once called a „Fliegerhorst“, home of aircrafts, now changed to „Friedehorst“, home of peace). A group of elderly disabled women for instance lives in the old officers club building., but most houses are recently built. „Punkt 5“ the Television and video service, is part of Foundation and its leisure time centre.
- At Friedehorst we find, too, a clinical centre for the rehabilitation of neurological damaged children and young adults.
- Diakonisches Werk itself organizes an German Volunteering Service for Young people, „FSJ“, where some places are connected with individual assistance to disabled children in childcare institutions (see video about Glenda)
- The organisation Projob gives assisted employment to long-term unemployed persons, many of them with some or other disability or impairment. They are going to organize special services for autistic persons.

# Background of Diaconia

## (Greek word for „dirty service“)

- The background of Diaconia is the Christian faith in its „protestant“ (16th Century church reform movement of Luther, Calvin and others) confession . It bases on a more personalized faith without the domination of episcopal especially papal supremacy. In this understanding of faith, it is not possible to „earn“ salvation of a soul by “good deeds“ (some ideas in the time of the great Reform Movement even postulates that you could indeed literally buy your way out of hell) but only through trust in God’s love.
- In Christian understanding, faith (and love) to God and service (and love) to others are deeply connected. A „living faith“ would always generate the determination to serve persons in need . It shrinks and degenerates into bigotry if not connected to these acts of love. Movements to regenerate and reform the churches are therefore always connected with the call for (more) active service, as it was the case in the medieval „poverty movements“ of the Franciscan orders or the 19th century „Awakening Movement“ in Protestant Central Europe which generated the structures of diaconical associations as they exist today.
- Critics state not without some reason: Traditionally, these services were characterized by „well-doing“ which may have kept many excluded persons in a situation of dependence from their „benefactors“ and under their social control. Nevertheless the idea of „inclusion“ could reflect on a high level of connection with basic Christian values and traditions.
- The Hebrew tradition („Old Testament“ of the Bible) stresses the importance of the „rights“ of persons in critical situations. They need „justice, not compassion“ by fair administration and juridical proceedings which do not minimize their rights. The best way to hold a feast is to „free the oppressed ones“. The Bible exemplifies these principles with migrant „strangers“ or overindebted persons who lost their freedom and that of their families to creditors. But many of the sayings about these problems could be reference to the situation of persons with all kind of handicaps.
- Jesus, in the New Testament Bible books showed – in Christian faith - his prophetic and messianic mission by certain wonderful deeds (walking on the water, turning water to wine, prophesying events to come), many of them being healings of sick and disabled (p.e. blind or „possessed“) persons. These healings often show an „inclusive“ spirit as Jesus talks to the sick ones „on eye level“, asks for their wishes before acting and looks after the social circumstances of their lives. He stresses the point that the diseases and impairments are no heavenly punishments for them or their families. The not-impaired are in the same need of God’s „amazing grace“. Persons in a position to help others (even if they are themselves in precarious situation) have the responsibility to „become the next one“ to sisters and brothers in need. If they fail to do this, they risk their community with God, which Jesus himself had restored for all creatures.

## Services for people with disabilities by Diaconia Bremen



# Disability in Germany: Administrative figures and categories

Nearly all German figures on issues of disability show a – sometimes very strange - mixture of medical diagnosis dates, social insurance, social service, juridical countings and (micro)census results. Each of these systems uses own classification criteria and categories

A 2013 federal government report gives this numbers:

- 17 Mio adult persons in Germany live with an impairment and/or a chronic disease
- 7 Mio. persons have the status of recognized Severe Disabled Persons and are entitled to some benefits in the labor market, education, public and individual transport (as special parking space) , sport and culture (free or reduced entrance fees)...., The recognition is an act of administration arranged by means of the medical system via expert opinion.
- 931.000 severe handicapped persons are registered on a workplace within the employment quota system (5% in all companies with more than 19 employees). The real rate is 4,5%, it is higher in the public sector (6,4%), companies who do not fulfill the quota have to pay a fine („Ausgleichsabgabe“) which is used to finance rehabilitation services etc.
- 253.600 persons work in special workshops (WfMBs) for disabled persons. They are recognized as not able to work 3 hours a day on a regular workplace but able to produce „a minimum of economic usable output“ . Companies might reduce the amount of their „Ausgleichsabgabe“ for the employment quota by ordering goods and services by such an WfMB. Employed persons get some compensation for their work, but they do not have full employees rights. As they receive in most cases a pension (next point) or welfare money for living, the work compensation is „reckoned against“ these amounts.
- 1.3 Mio adults younger than 65 get a Pension for Reduced Work Ability (Erwerbsminderungsrente) for they could not work on a regular workplace more than some hours or not at all. After reaching the pensions age, they change to the old age pension scheme, probably with a very low amount
- 206.000 persons live in institutions for clients of „Eingliederungshilfe“ – in theory these should be the most „severe cases“ who could not get successful „rehabilitation“ in typical periods. Some of them might work in a WfMB or have occupational employment in day centres etc.

# 2013 Social categories of „live situations“

The actual government report tries for the first time to typify live situations. Following this, 23% of impaired persons between 18 and 79 years of age (3,3 Mio.) have only small reduction of participation possibilities (Teilhabemöglichkeiten), 54 % a „medium“ reduction and again 23 % a high reduction. These groups are described by these characteristics (note: the noun „Teilhabe“ describes a mixture of active doings and a status):

- Small reduction of „Teilhabe“: these persons have got a diagnosis of some sort of impairment but are otherwise in good health. They have school and / or vocational training, are working on a full or intensive part time job and obtain a regular income from this. Their impairment may be caused by accidents later in life, but due to rehabilitation, benefits etc. they have more or less stabilized their social status. If beyond the pensionist line, they have a regular pension and are not dependent on welfare payments. They live more often than not in family or long-time partnership.. They see themselves as „independent“ and autonomous persons and have similar participation rates in politics, sport, culture ... than not impaired persons.
- Medium reduction: these persons see considerable health problems for themselves, which influences their everyday life, but there are no significant differences to the „mainstream“ regarding social status, education or training. Their income is considerably lower than average and is more often than average rate obtained in the form of pensions or support by partners or family members (they live higher as average with partners).
- Life with severe and multiple reduction is characterized by an income along the „poverty line“ and dependent on welfare transfers. A vast number is unemployed and even full-time employed persons receive only low salaries – following low education and lack of vocational training. They live more often than average alone and see their life as not autonomous.

# Political framework and recent history facts:

- constitutional guarantees against discrimination
- compensation of disadvantages p.e. via employment quota, free or subsidized transport, support in school ...
- medical and vocational rehabilitation system
- basic security system for persons unemployed but able to work (3 hours a day) under conditions of labour market
- basic security system for persons not able to work under condition of labour market.
- higher level of unemployment .

**Notabene:** During Nazi Rule 1933-45 several generations of persons with disabilities were murdered. Only nowadays the „demographic structure“ of people with disabilities begins to look „normal“ again. Up to some years ago, there were very few old people with mental or multiple disabilities. This even led some people to the misunderstanding that disabled persons could not reach high age due to their impairments..

It was long time looked as self-evident that severely impaired persons could only live in institutional care. During the 1950ies and 1960ies more and more parents resented this for their young children and claimed access to „normal“ childcare and school institutions. This was further promoted in the sixties by a pharmacy scandal (sleeping pill „Contergan“) . This caused that a large number of kids with multiple disabilities were born but got a chance to live by the modern medical standards.. This was a strong impulse to reform a system up to then designed mostly for war and traffic mutilation cases. Many parents – contergan was called a „luxury pill“ used by many well-off families with high education standard - did not except non-inclusive treatment of their children in child care and school.

Big institutions with thousand or more placements were (mostly) closed during the 1980ies. In this institutions, persons with mental and psychic disabilities had to live together with p.e. elderly people with dementia, people in security placement after jail or simple homeless persons, without specific promotion. In Bremen, many of them are now cared for in small homes inside the city or by ambulant services in assisted living. The offers of Innere Mission Bremen are a result of such a reform in the city of Bremen.

Today, medical possibilities of perinatal inspection and selection of unborn persons are seen by many people as a new threat against the right of persons with disability to live.

On the other hand, municipalities try to reduce their services for disabled persons beyond the pensionist age because it seems „normal“ to stay at home and not to go to work or occupational employment . Court decisions at Bremen try to stop these developments as against the constitution and the UN charter for disabled persons rights.