



ijAB

Self-Conception



International Youth Service of the
Federal Republic of Germany

Self-Conception

Role and Function

IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany (IJAB – Fachstelle für Internationale Jugendarbeit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland e.V.) is involved in international youth work, international youth policy and youth information sectors.

IJAB is a non-profit association liaising between organisations working internationally in the field of voluntary and statutory child and youth services.

IJAB has a contractual agreement with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMFSFJ) and on this basis carries out specialist tasks in the international cooperation in the field of youth policy and youth information. On behalf of the BMFSFJ, IJAB provides support at national level for international youth work and youth information and promotes youth policy cooperation at international level. A Europe that is growing together in all sectors means that European youth policy is of particular importance.

IJAB acts as a specialist agency and mediator in international dialogue by providing information, advice and other services and through the professional support of political processes. As an association, IJAB offers a platform for the exchange in the field of youth policy and acts as an interface with national and European issues in youth work.

Objectives

Cooperation in the field of international youth policy and international youth work helps to strengthen social peace, security and stability. By promoting exchange and contacts, IJAB seeks to further understanding, intercultural learning and greater participation, and to overcome xenophobia, racism and violence. Its objective is to improve mutual understanding between young people from different countries and cultural backgrounds by discussion of youth-related issues and to foster greater tolerance.

With the challenges of an increasing Europeanisation and internationalisation facing society, the International Youth Service provides opportunities to promote the acquisition of cross-cultural skills. Getting fit for Europe as well as openness to and understanding of foreigners are criteria for qualification for cross-border cooperation and for meeting people from other countries and cultures in a national context.

With its specialist experience gained by its work with partners in over 30 countries, IJAB seeks to inject new impetus to strengthen national child and youth services and help further its development. In return international exchange means that knowledge of the German child and youth services can be passed on to the partners abroad. In this way, IJAB is striving to develop a comprehensive network of all the organisations involved at home and abroad to support continuity in partner relations and achieve the best sustainable results in the programmes.

Information and advice for young people play an increasingly important role in an ever more complex society. Providing specific information and advice helps young people to realise their professional and individual goals and promotes their participation in society as responsible citizens. Information should also increase the prospects of young people, promote the realisation of their independence, facilitate their mobility and bring them nearer to Europe in their everyday life. Respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms implies the right of all young people to have access to comprehensible and reliable information that gives them a wide range of options without discrimination and with no ideological or any other influence in all the questions and needs they have expressed (ERYICA, Youth Information Charter).

IJAB is committed to these objectives recognised throughout Europe and gives its support to achieving these objectives within the framework of

project-based work. IJAB works with its members as an active partner in a network that aims to strengthen youth information in Germany and Europe.

Cooperation and Networks

Member structure

The special member structure of IJAB which covers all areas of international youth work is an essential resource for its work as a specialist agency and forms with the General Assembly an important youth policy forum in this field. IJAB supports members in their international work by providing a variety of services and programmes; in return, members bring their specific skills to the specialist work of IJAB. Programmes and projects initiated by the International Youth Service are undertaken in agreement and in cooperation with members working in the corresponding fields. This promotes quality and in political terms facilitates a broad involvement in the organisation of youth policy cooperation.

BMFSFJ, European Commission and Council of Europe

IJAB works on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMFSFJ) and the European Commission. It provides advice and support for the BMFSFJ in the implementation of the Ministry's youth policy objectives, mainly in the area of international youth policy cooperation. In the field of activity of the European Commission, IJAB is involved in working groups and networks dealing with specific issues. Cooperation agreements with the Council of Europe are in place for information projects.

IJAB recognises and supports the autonomous youth policy representation of the member organisations vis-à-vis the BMFSFJ and European bodies.

YOUTH for Europe

The German national agency YOUTH for Europe has been attached to IJAB since 1989. It implements the European programme YOUTH IN ACTION for the Federal Republic of Germany. The close cooperation with YOUTH for Europe creates important synergies in international youth work and strengthens the character of a specialist agency.

Partners in international cooperation

IJAB works closely with its foreign partners in organising various specialist programmes.

IJAB provides a continuous specialist exchange with the binational Youth Offices and bilateral Coordination Centres and with the Baltic Sea Secretariat for Youth Affairs. Together with other partners operating in the field of international cooperation regarding student exchange, academic exchange and the professional education sector, IJAB provides information for young people on the various possibilities to stay abroad.

On request, IJAB also works for other partners besides the BMFSFJ. As a specialist agency, IJAB provides advice for interested organisations at home and abroad and offers specific services to promote quality development in international youth work. IJAB organises specific activities to develop networks for exchanging experience in cooperation with certain countries or regions.

At European level, IJAB is a member of the youth information networks ERYICA (European Youth Information and Counselling Agency) and Eurodesk.

At national level, IJAB is a member of the Association "Learning and Helping Overseas".

Services

To meet the objectives described above, IJAB organises qualified exchange programmes and language courses for specialists in child and youth services as part of the bi- and multilateral youth policy relations of the Federal Republic of Germany. It also offers information and advice as well as cross-agency further education and training for specialists.

Specialist programmes

As part of the bilateral agreements with other countries, IJAB provides international programmes for specialists in child and youth services on behalf of BMFSFJ. The spectrum of activities includes study programmes, seminars and job shadowing visits in specific vocational areas of child and youth services by means of partner exchanges and agency conferences, contact-making seminars and conferences for bodies responsible for child and youth services, as well as specialist conferences on youth policy-related issues.

In this way, German bodies for child and youth services have the opportunity to exchange specialist information on youth policy issues with partners abroad and discuss relevant developments by foreign partners with a view to using this for German child and youth services. There is also the opportunity to obtain information on issues at an international level, make new contacts and reinforce existing relations. This also applies for involving the German bodies in the corresponding specialist programmes for foreign delegations in Germany.

IJAB runs the exchange on a specialist and organisational level. By supporting international networking of the bodies, the International Youth Service strengthens the continuity in cooperation and supports systematically the transfer and dissemination of results by qualified evaluations, regular information and current country reviews and by this the sustainability of the exchange programmes.

Close cooperation with the members of the association enables IJAB to incorporate the specialist skills of the child and youth services in the exchange with partners abroad and to make the experience gained accessible and beneficial to the voluntary and statutory bodies in Germany, specifically for the further development of the child and youth services.

When implementing its programmes, IJAB often cooperates with cultural institutions and organisations dealing run by migrants living in

Germany to help provide better integration into the society using the experience of intercultural learning and international exchange.

Language service

In international work, communication is of prime importance. IJAB's Language Service makes a major contribution to this. On behalf of the BMFSFJ, it organises international training seminars for foreign specialists that provide both the study of the German language and insights into the child and youth services. IJAB also provides advice on questions of specialist terminology and compiles foreign-language glossaries on child and youth services. Moreover, the Language Service helps to find interpreters and provides advice on matters of interpreter services and technical equipment. As part of the bilateral relationships, foreign partners offer foreign-language courses for members of IJAB.

Qualification

The basis for successful intercultural learning processes is appropriate education and training of the professional and voluntary staff involved. IJAB therefore promotes the qualification of specialists by providing training and advice and supports processes for quality development in all areas of international youth work. This covers international meetings, work camps, voluntary services, specialist exchange schemes, job shadowing, practical placements, student exchange and au pair stays.

Cooperation Youth and Development International

Together with transfer e.V. and the German Society for Technical Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH), IJAB is involved in the Cooperation Youth and Development International project which aims to provide networking for players responsible for projects and supporting them in organising exchanges. A joint database offers information on projects in around 120 countries to players in international youth work and development work and also gives an overview of the various organisations involved in these sectors.

Information for specialists

Publications

With the Forum Youth Work International (Forum Jugendarbeit International), the European Journal on Youth Policy Forum²¹ and other specialist publications, IJAB reports on current issues, news and information on youth policy-related developments worldwide for specialists in youth work and youth policy facilities at home and abroad.

Database on International Youth Work

With the „Database on International Youth Work“ (Datenbank für internationale Jugendarbeit – DIJA), IJAB provides support for specialists in planning international activities and projects. The on-line database contains information on countries and youth policy in over 100 countries and is a central information system for all those involved in international youth policy cooperation. The Intercultural Learning module offers information and practical advice on how to organise an international meeting. Check lists, a method box, references to further reading and ,may other things help in the initial stages, but also give experienced specialists new ideas for organising their programmes.

Information System on Child and Youth Services in Germany

The multimedia Information System on Child and Youth Services in Germany sets out the general conditions, structures and principles of the child and youth (services) policy in Germany and with its database gives an overview of all associations and institutions active in this field nationwide.

Portal for Specialists in Child and Youth Services

Together with the Child and Youth Welfare Association (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – AGJ), IJAB is involved in providing the German Portal for Specialists in Child and Youth Services. As a project of organisations in voluntary child and youth services and of the Federation and the Supreme Youth Authorities of the Länder, it is an information, communication and cooperation platform focussing on the issues and concerns of child and youth services. A central conceptual focus of this community project with the AGJ is the active coproduction and involvement of the structures of the child and youth services.

European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

The setting up of a European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy has been agreed as part of the partnership contract between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The on-line platform was launched throughout Europe in June 2005. IJAB is involved in cooperation with the members in collecting and maintaining data from Germany. This creates useful collaboration in specialist information at national and European level which progresses the exchange of knowledge and experience.

Youth Information

IJAB has been involved in youth information since 1985. The International Youth Service is one of the first organisations at national level to

create an internet-supported service for youth information. In this way IJAB contributes towards the development of a cross-border and cross-culture media literacy in the information society and supports the development and implementation of conceptional principles in youth information in Germany and Europe. The aspects of participation, networking and decentralisation are thereby regarded as a condition for successful youth information at all levels.

In close cooperation with the members, IJAB supports young people so that they can access a wide range of possibilities to participate in the shaping of information. The International Youth Service sets up suitable events, enables young people to have access to all the information relevant to them, supports statements on youth-related contributions, promotes surveys and much more. IJAB is a partner of national youth information organisations and at the same time a member of the European networks for youth information ERYICA and Eurodesk. Through networking, IJAB is able to put national platforms in touch with corresponding European offers.

Youth Online

As part of the Youth Online project, IJAB operates the interactive youth portal „netzcheckers.de“ providing information aimed at young people and enhancing the media skills of young people. The website links learning, advice, information and entertainment opportunities for young people all over Germany. Young people can take an active part in designing this internet facility and in their on-line community.

Eurodesk

Eurodesk, the German Coordination Office of the European Youth Information Network, has been attached to IJAB since 1996. The on-line information network answers young people's questions on issues such as mobility, education and training in Europe. IJAB provides information brochures on these subjects and offers free unbiased advice to young people on opportunities abroad. The website www.rausvonzuhaus.de gives a broad overview of services and organisations available to young people. Eurodesk also provides information for young people and multipliers on funding programmes in the EU and complementary national funding.

Bonn, 13.12.2006
Decision of the General Assembly

Note:

In May 2007, following a decision by the General Assembly of 13.12.2006, IJAB changed its name after official entry in the Register of Associations from „International Youth Exchange and Visitors' Service of the Federal Republic of Germany (IJAB)“ to „IJAB –International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany“. 2007 therefore saw a language rebranding of the association's self-conception.