Quality Standards and Indicators for International Youth Work

Preamble

The Working Group, „Quality Standards in International Youth Work", composed of representatives of German youth organizations as well as their umbrella organizations and coordinated by IJAB e.V., formulates quality criteria for international youth work.

The aim of these standards is the enhancement and safeguarding of the quality of international youth work, keeping in mind the pluralistic structures of the responsible bodies and the specifics of the organizations which work for and with young people, as well as the cooperative work between public and independent bodies, legally anchored in Paragraph 4 of the KJHG (Children and Youth Service Law).

These standards[1] can, on the one hand, serve as orientation for these bodies; on the other hand they can be drawn upon for the development of standards[2], against which the quality of individual measures can be evaluated. In evaluating implementation, the specific structures of the body involved and the variety of possible measures should be considered. However assessment and weighting of the measures based on these standards should not be conducted rigidly.

The assessment must allow for both high level and broad-based programs. The significance and the respective scope of voluntary involvement should also be considered.

In addition to the quality standards described in what follows (a) reflection on and implementation of gender mainstreaming and (b) the involvement of young people will be applied as general principles for the entire process of project implementation.

In formulating quality standards, the indicators which are in the appendix should be used. Depending on the specifics of the measures different indicators are appropriate and possible. They (may) stand alone as an alternative or as a complement to other standards and make no claim to the responsible body that they entirely fulfill the indicators mentioned.

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[1] Within the framework of our work we orient ourselves to the following definitions:

A **quality standard** is a distinguishing characteristic, against which products and achievements can be qualitatively evaluated, i.e. allowing for a differentiation between good or bad.

Criteria which are not directly observable, must be made accessible by selecting appropriate **indicators** of an evaluation or measurement = operationalizing (Source: QS-Kompendium, Heft 24, S. 75, BMFSFJ).

[2] **Quality standards**: Quality standards are fixed degree of expression of quality requirements for products and services. Standards determine the scope, the intensity and the way in which quality indicators should be designed in order to be recognized professionally.

Partner Organizations	
Quality criteria	Indicators
The partner organizations are on an equal, collegial basis with each other.	There is communication about and consideration of the respective concerns of the partners throughout the entire project. This may take place in the form of emails, telephone calls, discussions, meetings or evaluation questionnaires.
Target groups and responsible bodies should fit together within the framework of the agreed-upon concept.	There is a designated contact person for each partner There is, in the application, a short description of the activities of the partners or reference to their homepage. The partners introduce their organizations to each other. Mutual presentation of the partner organizations via Web presence, prior meeting etc.
The goals of the project are mutually agreed upon.	Exchange of experience and a clear outline of the joint work in verbal or written form, i.e. in a preparatory meeting.

Program structure	
Quality criteria	Indicators
The goals of the program are written down and are reflected in the activities.	The **goals of the program** are written down and are reflected in the programs: • Goals for the responsible bodies • Goals for the projects • Goals going beyond these specific measures (youth policy focal points)
There is background preparation for the participants	**Background preparation** can be: • organized as a centralized or decentralized meeting • offered in person or virtually in written form.
The interests, expectations and abilities of the participants are considered.	Queries about these interests, expectations and abilities will be made before the start of the project The participants will choose the project in which they wish to take part, in accordance with their interests, expectations and abilities. The responsible body will advise and inform participants about this.
The program offers possibilities for participation to those taking part.	At the beginning of the project ideas for the program structure are shared with the participants in partner countries. The program (*within the framework of the goals for the project*) offers space throughout for participants to structure parts of it themselves. The young people themselves structure different program points. • Development of rules by the participants (decision structures, behavior code)

Participants	
Quality criteria	Indicators
The age range of the participants and the size of the group correspond to the goals and the program for the activity undertaken .	**Composition** The composition of the participants reflects the goal and the program for the activity undertaken • Age range • Size
The participants will be prepared for the activity appropriately	**Background preparation** can be: • Organized as a centralized or decentralized meeting • In person or virtual • Offered in written form • Conducted by former or current participants and former or current leaders or full time staff who inform the [future] participants • A variety of methods
The responsible body ensures the best possible participation of those involved	**Participation of those involved** Possibilities for participation are available during the • Preparatory phase • Span of the project itself • Evaluation phase (see point 2).
Gender Mainstreaming receives particular attention, i.e. in the form of speech, the composition of the participants and by considering gender-specific needs and interests in structuring the program.	**Gender** Gender Mainstreaming receives particular attention through: • Form of speech • Composition of the group • Consideration of gender specific needs and interests (in structuring the program)
The responsible body develops offerings to enable participation by disadvantaged youth	**Disadvantaged Youth** Creation of offerings/conditions for the participation of disadvantaged youth

IJAB

Leadership team *Composition, Preparation, Conducting the Action, Evaluation*	
Quality criteria	Indicators

The leadership team is assembled in accordance with the specific requirements of the action.	**Composition**
	The leadership team is assembled in accordance with the specific requirements of the action:
	  o Size
	  o Preparation
	  o Education/Qualification
	  o Selection
	  o Countries
	  o Gender Mainstreaming

The leadership team is of an appropriate size.	See above
The leadership team is prepared and qualified in accordance with [the requirements] of the action.	See above

During the action there is an internal team evaluation.	**Preparation and Carrying Out [of the action]**
	  • Participant oriented
	  • Transparent division of tasks
	  • Evaluation during the action

The leadership team works in a participant-oriented way.	See above

The leadership team contributes to the evaluation.	**Evaluation**
	  • Team Evaluation
	  • Evaluation of the action
	  • Sharing of experience
	  • Evaluation Group/Administrative Team

There is a functioning sharing of experience and an evaluation [of the action].	See above
There is a transparent division of labor in the team.	See above

Communication	
Quality criteria	Indicators
The responsible body ensures communication among all the participants.	**Language** • Availability of a common working language • Availability of a language animation element in bilateral programs. • Availability of interpreters or translators. • Language resources within the framework of the group process • Existence of selection criteria for the participants in specialist projects (active and passive knowledge of the working language(s)) • Encouragement of individual initiative among the participants to learn the language of the partner. **Background/ culture/ way of life/ life circumstances/ realities of both one's own country and the partner country** • Sharing of country background information during the preparatory phase • Existence of program elements that transmit and reflect country background information • Promotion of individual study by the German participants about the situation in Germany and/or in their own milieu. **Forms of non-verbal communication** • Use of pictograms • Employment of appropriate exercises/ games/methods
The form of communication is adapted to volunteers.	See point: "Specific to the responsible body", complementary criteria!

Finances	
Quality criteria	Indicators
The body in charge ensures responsible use of means thus meeting the requirement for planning security.	**Financial Transparency** • Explanation of the costs to the partners (i.e. participants, donors, foreign partners) (and/or) • Consideration of the necessary costs, which cannot be accounted for in the budget in accordance with to the law (Richtlinie, Kinder- und Jugendplan des Bundes) **Planning security** • Guaranteeing financing at least 3 months before the program begins • Timely return of unused funds **Personal resources** • Consideration of the economic situation of the participants or their parents in determining the amount of the participant fee • Availability of a participant contract for all participants. "There's no free lunch". **Budget principle** • Goal-oriented, thrifty, economical use of means • Consideration of the federal budgetary rules

Sustainability	
Quality criteria	Indicators
An evaluation takes place.	**Preparation and evaluation** • Availability of binding preparation and evaluation meetings for participants and for the directors • Availability of discussion fora for participants and team members (Internet platform, jour fixe, newsletter…) • Consideration during preparation of the results of the evaluation of the previous year • Implementation of the knowledge gleaned from the analyzed questionnaires
Programs and measures will be evaluated, experiences documented and put into useable form for further development of international youth work.	**Provision of publicly available documentation** • For (potential) participants • For donors • For the actors involved in sharing the experience and its further development **Publicity** • Publishing press releases • Availability of a Web presence **Sharing experience** • Participation in at least one professional gathering designed for the responsible team to reflect on and share the experience
Efforts will be made to have follow-up measures.	**Follow-up measures** • Mention of possible follow-up measures in the concept and the report • Existence of program elements that encourage and motivate follow-up measures
Participation in the program enhances motivation for voluntary involvement.	**Mentoring the next generation** • There should be at least one participant available who makes his/her commitment to continued cooperation clear or increases it.

Specific to the responsible body	
Quality criteria	Indicators
The responsible body selects qualified leadership teams and makes available an infrastructure for securing and supporting the program.	**Selection of the Leadership Team** • Proof of continuing education by the team members in the area of international youth work • International staffing of the overall team • **Infrastructure for stabilizing and supporting [the project]** • Setting-up a crisis hotline during all phases of the project • Existence of crisis intervention mechanisms at all stages of the project
Further qualification measures are supported by the responsible body.	**Further qualification measures** • Availability of an internal further qualification system • Sharing of information on continuing education with paid staff and voluntary workers • Active support of voluntary and paid staff in their continuing education efforts [reimbursement of expenses, travel costs, participant fees, etc.)
The responsible body ensures that participants can take part.	• Cooperation at all levels • Involvement in different formats of international youth work
The responsible body makes space available for voluntary activities.	• Focus on voluntary work in the agency's concept • Formulation of concrete offerings for voluntary work within the organization

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Contact for further information:

Kerstin Giebel
Project Manager
Qualification and Further Development of International Youth Work
Phone: +49 (228) 9506-223
E-mail: giebel@ijab.de