

# MISSION STATEMENT

**IJAB – International Youth Service  
of the Federal Republic of Germany**



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*Adopted by the IJAB members' assembly on 13 December 2023 in Bonn*

IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany is an association of independent and public-sector organisations providing child and youth services in Germany. As a network with a national scope, we facilitate dialogue and enable partnerships in the youth field across Europe and around the world. This strong network is composed of our member organisations and our office. Together, we are IJAB.

*We are committed to ensuring peaceful coexistence in a diverse and tolerant world in which young people can develop as independent individuals. We believe that international dialogue contributes to global understanding, providing young people with access to educational opportunities and new pathways into the future. We help make this happen by facilitating dialogue and enabling partnerships around the world.*



## Our values

*The work of IJAB is value-based. It is founded upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the free democratic basic order of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany.*

We help build democratic, open and diverse societies in which all individuals – regardless of their gender, age, social or ethnic background, faith or sexual orientation – enjoy the same rights. We stand for peaceful coexistence and solidarity in the world, and for a united Europe. The preservation of our natural habitats is of major importance to us. We work to ensure that young people experience the world as a place they can help shape and in which they can make a difference. We help create the necessary preconditions.

The hallmarks of our cooperation with partners in Germany, Europe and around the world are dialogue and equality. We consistently review our actions and are mindful of changes in society and the emergence of new challenges. We expressly reject the marginalisation of people through words and actions, antidemocratic movements, violence, hate and efforts to divide society. We remain committed to these values both within and outside of IJAB.



# What drives us

*We are committed to enabling all young people to gain new learning and life experiences through international exchanges and encounters, to advancing international youth work and youth policy in a sustainable way through mutual learning, to strengthening international cooperation and partnerships in the youth sector, and to helping to build a stronger international profile for child and youth services in Germany through cross-border expert dialogue.*

To this end, our work takes place in four dimensions:

1

As a **network** of independent and public-sector organisations for child and youth services, we adopt clear positions in the interest of the field of international youth work. We actively leverage the network to promote dialogue, cooperation and further development across the community of practice.

2

The **IJAB office** offers members, young people and all stakeholders in the youth field advisory services, technical support and continued professional training to facilitate their international activities. The office is a gateway to the expertise and knowledge held by the entire network and provides inspiration through its innovative approaches and model projects.

3

As a partner of the **Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth**, we support initiatives run by the Ministry in the area of international youth work and youth policy, implement these, and offer the Ministry our advice and expertise. We also offer programmes within the framework of the Federal Government's international youth policy relations.

4

We are committed to an open, social Europe. IJAB is the **legal entity behind JUGEND für Europa**, Germany's National Agency for the EU programmes Erasmus+ Youth and Erasmus+ Sport and the European Solidarity Corps. We work to make the European Union and Europe as a whole accessible for young people and experts so they can experience European engagement and participation, and support the continued development of youth work across Europe.

# What we do

## *Dialogue and cooperation is at the heart of everything we do*

In the context of youth policy cooperation and the foreign cultural and educational policy of the German Federal Government, IJAB promotes international exchange and dialogue in the youth sector. In doing so, we contribute towards mutual understanding across national borders. IJAB brings together a range of civil-society and public-sector stakeholders and creates lasting relationships. IJAB keeps the channels of communication open even in challenging social or political situations. We offer a space for discourse and moderate processes that help stakeholders learn from each other and that inspire the professional and youth policy debate.

As a network, we promote european and international dialogue on current issues and provide Inspiration to the child and youth services sector in Germany for their international activities.

- We identify relevant issues together with our members and international partners.
- Our events for professions provide organisations, stakeholders and other interested parties with a space for learning, dialogue and debate.
- Through our international networks, we implement multilateral, thematic event formats and translate the outcomes into recommendations for the community of practice.

As an office, we provide access to international experience and expertise and encourage mutual learning across the youth sector.

- We observe and document youth policy developments around the world.
- We contribute our national points of view to European and international professional communities and pick up on incoming impulses.
- We contextualise international knowledge and document relevant insights so they are understood by specific target audiences.

As a partner to the federal ministry, we help strengthen international cooperation in the youth field.

- We give visibility to international youth policy processes, respond to impulses and prepare these for use by the community of practice.
- We build and maintain equitable, long-term partnerships.
- Our approaches are in line with recognised professional standards and ensure high-quality dialogue and exchange.
- We promote participatory approaches in the context of international youth policy cooperation.

## *As an international youth work network with a national scope, we enable global exchanges and encounters*

In its capacity as a network and office for international youth work in Germany, IJAB helps implement the Federal Government's Child and Youth Plan by contributing towards the development and advancement of child and youth services in both theory and practice. We assist organisations and providers working in the field of child and youth services in making good use of international youth work formats and methods and apply these also to new target groups and for new purposes. We play an active role in advancing youth policy in professional contexts and run projects of national, European and international significance. IJAB's office and its members participate in international debates, design concepts to create, maintain and improve needs-oriented services and activities, and try out and evaluate innovative international youth work approaches and methods.

We reach out to young people and inform and advise them on mobility opportunities in Europe and worldwide.

- We provide young people with access to international experiences.
- We inspire, inform and advise in a youth-appropriate manner.
- We create accessible information for all young people.
- We enable and encourage young people's participation.
- We coordinate and expand a network of advisory offices.

We enable experts and organisations working in the youth sector to create more international opportunities for young people.

- We provide needs-oriented advice on all aspects of international youth work.
- We provide training to individuals working in the youth field.
- We offer exchange programmes for experts.
- We provide advice and training designed to promote inclusion in international youth work.
- We support sustainable thoughts and actions in international youth work and promote digital transformation.
- We give visibility to good practices in international youth work.

We strengthen the visibility and the public and political recognition of international youth work as an expression of non-formal learning.

- We create clarity concerning the wide range of different initiatives and activities, structures and institutions, and formats and methods to enable coordinated action and leverage synergies.
- We initiate and reflect on developments in professional and social contexts to help advance international youth work together.
- We give visibility to international youth work as a key element of non-formal education and informal learning through our campaigns and public relations work.
- We represent the specific youth policy interests of the international youth work field at the political level, advocating for improved frameworks as well as lower barriers to access for young people who wish to take part in an international exchange.
- We contribute towards national and international networks in the youth field.

We design hands-on services and activities and contribute our expertise when it comes to advancing international youth work.

- We provide input on current issues and developments through our training courses, workshops and other schemes.
- We design activities to promote foreign language skills, improve methods and raise quality in international youth work.
- We contribute towards consistently raising the quality bar across the sector.
- We cooperate with academia and the research community and offer a space for hands-on dialogue and reflection.
- We consistently evaluate data and information and present the output in a coherent manner.



## How we work

We are an agile network and a living organisation. Together with partners in Germany, Europe and around the world, we learn from our experiences and have our sights trained on the future. In other words, we are open to new developments, are ready to adopt new perspectives, enjoy experimenting, and share an enthusiasm for enriching international exchanges and encounters.

Transparency, fairness and reliability form the bedrock of the relationships within our network and of those we maintain with others. We believe that change is only possible in cooperation with a multitude of partners –young people, civil society groups, policymakers, administrators and the research community. Advancing cooperation within our partnerships and networks is a key element of the philosophy shared by all members and staff of IJAB. We are committed to effective international youth policy cooperation across Europe and around the world. We maintain a dialogue with policymakers and youth policy stakeholders to advance the interests of the international youth work field.

We stand in solidarity with partners who come under pressure in their countries due to their advocacy for young people, for democracy, for peaceful coexistence, for a diverse and open society, and for human and civil rights. We remain their allies for as long as they wish and can accommodate a partnership.

We invite young people to make their voices heard on current affairs and emerging developments and to contribute to the political process. This includes encouraging them to speak to the actions of IJAB's partners and its office.

Trust and partnership, mutual respect, fairness and an appreciation of diversity are the hallmarks of cooperation as understood by IJAB. They determine our actions both within and outside our organisation. Our work is shaped by the ongoing advancement of quality and professionalism.





The international youth work field is home to individuals from all over the world, each with their own personal viewpoints, talents and skills that they contribute to the international dialogue. We believe this diversity to be the source of all that enriches and improves our work. Through our actions, we help create an active culture of diversity.

We are committed to the equitable and inclusive participation of all of our full- and part-time employees and volunteers, which to us is the only way to give space for each individual to develop their personal potential to the fullest.

We are committed to sustainability. Our office works according to the guidelines on sustainable action of IJAB and JUGEND für Europa (work in progress), which are subject to a constant evolution.

We maintain a professional and fair atmosphere in the workplace, where every individual is treated with dignity and respect, free of discrimination, bullying, psychological or physical violence or sexual harassment. Our [Code of Conduct](#) contains principles for sound cooperation within the IJAB office.

## Contact

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