

Conference documentation

“Encounters. Change. Renewal.
Challenges and opportunities for international
youth work in a globalised world”

BERLIN, 18 MAY 2017



50
YEARS
ijAB

International Youth Service of the
Federal Republic of Germany



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Godesberger Allee 142-148
53175 Bonn, Germany
Tel.: +49 (0)228-95 06-0
Fax: +49 (0)228-95 06-199
E-Mail: info@ijab.de
Internet: www.ijab.de

Responsible for publication:
Marie-Luise Dreber

Editorial team:
Stephanie Bindzus,
Claudia Mierzowski

Design:
blickpunkt x, Cologne

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Bettina Ausserhofer/IJAB;
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Introduction

IJAB is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2017 with a series of events. One of the highlights of the year was the conference “Encounters. Change. Renewal. Challenges and opportunities for international youth work in a globalised world” and the subsequent evening celebrations, which took place on 18 May in Berlin. Around 160 participants travelled to the capital to discuss the challenges faced by the international youth work community at a time when nationalism, anti-European popu-

lism and international tensions are on the rise. The conference highlighted the role of IJAB and its partners as strong advocates for ensuring that young people can grow up as Europeans and global citizens. This publication outlines the agenda and outcomes of the conference. It contains links to the contributions and presentations, which can also be downloaded from > https://www.ijab.de/Inputs_FaKO_Berlin.

PROGRAMM

10:30 am

Opening address

Steffen Hebestreit, Head of the Representation Office of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg in Berlin

Welcome address

Lothar Harles, Chairman of IJAB

10:45 am

Keynote address

Looking back and ahead: 50 years of partnership with the international youth work community

Caren Marks, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

11:05 am

Lecture plus Q&A session

The world in ten years' time:

Developments, challenges, future tasks

Prof. Dr. Dr. Dr. h.c. Franz-Josef Radermacher, Professor at the University of Ulm and Director of the Research Institute for Applied Knowledge Processing (FAW/n)

11:45 am

Break

Midday

Video clip from the youth conference

“We move tomorrow's world”

12:05 pm

Keynote address

„Generation what?“ – On the situation of young people in Europe

Maximilian von Schwartz, SINUS-Institut

12:25 pm

Post-lecture discussion with young people and general audience

*Emmanuelle Charginoff, France
Célia Chenin, France
Ria Jalonen, Finland
Mio Kuschnick, Germany*

1:00 pm

Lunch

2:00 pm

Workshops

4:45 pm

Break

5:30 pm

Panel with audience participation

Discussion of workshop recommendations with

*Markus Koob (CDU)
Fritz Felgentreu (SPD)
Beate Walter-Rosenheimer (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen)
Norbert Müller (Die Linke)
Uwe Finke-Timpe (Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)
Ina Bielenberg (IJAB member, Association of German Educational Organizations)*

6:25 pm

Conclusion and outlook

Marie-Luise Dreber, Director of IJAB

6:30 pm

End of conference

EVENING RECEPTION

7:00 pm

Opening address

*Lothar Harles, Chairman of IJAB,
Marie-Luise Dreber, Director of IJAB*

7:05 pm

Video trailer “50 years of IJAB”

7:10 pm

Ceremonial address

*Samar Mezghanni, author und
UN Young Leader*

7:25 pm

Welcome address

*Oleksandr Yarema, Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine*

7:30 pm

Musical performance

*Mathis Rathke, Julian “Jay-Q” Rathke
and Frederike Merz*

7:40 pm

“Encounters. Change. Renewal – 50 years of IJAB seen through a personal lens”: Panel discussion with eyewitnesses of five decades of international youth policy cooperation

8:45 pm

Reception

*Buffet, musical entertainment and
opportunities for socialising*

11:00 pm

End of event

Host: Dr. Nkechi Madubuko (Ms)

1967
2017

50 years of IJAB – Look ahead and claim the future!

BY CHRISTIAN HERRMANN

IJAB chose to hold the conference and ceremony to mark its fifth decade in prestigious surroundings, although the location, as head of the Hamburg state representation office Steffen Hebestreit put it in his welcome speech, is „not only the most beautiful, but also the most modest,” in the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. Alluding to Russia and Turkey, Hebestreit talked about the uncertainties faced in modern-day international relations – a topic that IJAB Chairman Lothar Harles also picked up on in his opening words. In light of growing isolationism and military conflict, he said, it was becoming ever more difficult to „equip young people with the tools they need to be citizens of the world, citizens of Europe.”

This year marks 50 years since the former Federal Youth Ministry launched IJAB, so it was fitting that Caren Marks, the Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, opened the conference. Marks praised IJAB for its work in international youth exchange and reiterated the importance of youth exchange as a cornerstone of European cohesion and peaceful co-existence: „For 50 years, IJAB has helped to make European borders something that no longer divide us, but which unite us.”

„It is with growing concern that we watch the decisions being made in other countries in Europe in response to increasingly violent attacks on European unity while

anti-European parties and initiatives gain ground. Events like this IJAB conference demonstrate that there is still a strong, tight-knit network of dialogue, contact and exchange that holds Europe together. This is good, because Europe needs rational actions. Here, today, we will talk about what is needed in youth work to keep Europe united,” said the Parliamentary State Secretary.

Future challenges

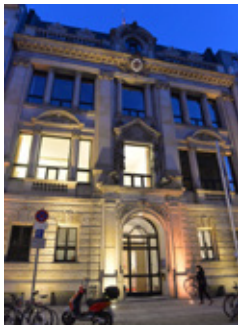
Anyone planning to develop international youth work prospects in the coming years was advised to listen to the experts who dealt with the future in their work, said Harles, explaining the aim of the conference. Prof. Franz Josef Radermacher is one such expert. As the director of the Research Institute for Applied Knowledge Processing at Ulm University, sustainability strategies are one of his specialist fields. Radermacher didn't give a particularly rosy outlook, saying that every international agreement to avert climate change and promote sustainable economic activity had failed so far. „It's like us all agreeing to make a big pizza together and then only bringing enough ingredients for a small pizza and hoping that nobody notices.” But the picture was not completely bleak. Towards the end of his talk, Radermacher called urgently for what he termed „education of the heart.” On its own, he said, more education would not save the world – after all, it was the best-educated minds who had brought the world to the brink of ruin with the massive redistribution of wealth and power,

bank bail-outs, national debt and austerity measures. This was where formal education reached its limits, he continued, saying that „global empathy” was needed to change the world. Radermacher received spontaneous applause from the active supporters of international youth work.

Europe's youth has little faith in institutions

After Radermacher's speech, the facts and figures presented by Maximilian von Schwartz from the SINUS-Institut came as no surprise. In a first Europe-wide study of its kind – Generation what? – the institute looked into attitudes among young people. The researchers found falling levels of confidence in all institutions, from politics to media and the church. Europe also fared badly in the study – but only a small number would actually like to leave the EU. Europe stood for mobility and peace, but trust in European institutions was low, said von Schwartz. „Europe is useful, but not dear to their hearts,” he concluded.

Young guests Emanuelle and Célia from France, Ria from Finland and Mio from Germany took to the stage to discuss the study and were also unsurprised by the results. „Politics are scary, politicians are scary,” said Ria. These people looked down on young people and expected to be looked up to, she added. Young people want to have friends in other countries. They would like to see additional events that allow them to understand more about other people and the realities of their lives, as well as more



Impressions from the conference: View of the participants – around 160 guests took part (above); Steffen Hebestreit from the Representation Office of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg in Berlin welcoming guests; Closing remarks by IJAB-director Marie-Luise Dreber (below, left to right)

organisations that make this possible. And they want all young people, with no exceptions, to be able to make use of the opportunity to come into contact with people of the same age from other countries.

Needs for the next decade

Far from being a place to sit back and listen, the conference was all about getting actively involved. Participants split up into groups to discuss how international youth work can be made fit for the future and what is needed to achieve this goal. International youth work must adopt a more youth-friendly style of communication; the topic of Europe must be more closely integrated into day-to-day international youth work; region-specific mobility advisors with all relevant information from a single source are needed; and more support for youth work and more financial security are essential. A comprehensive list of needs

was drawn up in just a few hours. The list will be published as part of the conference documentation and will be included in talks with the Federal Youth Ministry and decision-makers over the coming weeks and months.

The issue of financial security for international youth work was tackled briefly in a panel discussion after the workshops, during which representatives from international work organisations discussed the topic with decision-makers from the Youth Ministry and the political arena. They asked: Is the 39-million-euro budget provided by the Youth Ministry for international affairs a little or a lot? „Hamburg is an ‚arrival city‘,” said Dr Herbert Wiedermann from the labour, social affairs, family and integration office of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, „and more young people means, of course, more money.” Introdu-

cing more initiatives for young people who have not yet been reached by international schemes is a priority for Uwe Finke-Timpe, divisional head at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Two hearts beat in the chest of German Bundestag MP Markus Koob – one for youth policy and one for finance policy. „We are all in agreement that funding is necessary, but the money must be used wisely,” said Koob. He appealed directly to the audience: „Instead of sending paperwork, get in touch with us – your MPs – directly so that we can get a much better sense of your work.”

Opening

Perspectives for international youth work

LOTHAR HARLES, CHAIRMAN OF IJAB

Madam State Secretary Marks,
Mr Hebestreit,
ladies and gentlemen,
friends of the international youth work community,
speakers,
As Chairman of IJAB, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the conference "Encounters. Change. Renewal. Challenges and opportunities for international youth work in a globalised world".

IJAB was founded in 1967 as a national specialist organisation for international contacts in youth work and youth policy. This year, we celebrate our 50th anniversary under the heading "courage for change". All year round, events such as meetings, conferences and symposia will be held in various places to assist us in developing perspectives for the future for the international youth work community.

Naturally, this also calls for a look back at what has made us what we are today. IJAB's founders were very much motivated by the experiences of World War II – which gave them a desire for



Lothar Harles, Chairman of IJAB

reconciliation and understanding, but also curiosity, a willingness to explore the unfamiliar, and expand horizons. Five decades later, we are facing new challenges, however without having completely resolved the old ones. On the one hand, we are living in a globalised world where real and "virtual" borders are disappearing. On the other, we are observing the return of nationalism and isolationism in some countries. Respect for human rights and for democracy as a form of government can no longer be taken for granted. Instead, tensions, violence and military conflicts abound.

This conference is designed to explore the full range of challenges that international youth work faces today. We ask you – the international youth work community – to join us in developing suggestions that will empower the young generation to succeed in the world of tomorrow. For international youth work helps them to take an active role in shaping their lives and growing up as Europeans and global citizens.

Thank you for joining us on this important journey. I wish you a fruitful and productive day!

Keynote address

For a promising future: 50 years of international youth work partnership

CAREN MARKS, PARLIAMENTARY STATE SECRETARY
AT THE FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR FAMILY AFFAIRS,
SENIOR CITIZENS, WOMEN AND YOUTH

The Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Caren Marks, opened the conference with a vote of confidence for international youth exchanges as strong drivers of European cohesion and peace, and acknowledged the role of IJAB. "For 50 years now, IJAB has been instrumental in ensuring that borders in Europe no longer divide us, but rather connect us," she said. "We are increasingly concerned about the attacks on European unity that we see in other European countries, as well as about the rise in popularity of



Caren Marks, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Youth Ministry

anti-European parties and initiatives. However, events such as this IJAB conference show how strong and close-knit the fabric of dialogue, encounter and exchange is that connects Europe today. This is a good thing, for Europe needs calm and collected action. Today in Berlin, we will discuss what needs to be done to hold Europe together through the medium of youth work."

Caren Marks' full speech is available on > [youtube/IJABev](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJABev)

Lecture plus

The world in ten years' time: Developments, challenges, future tasks

PROF. DR. DR. DR. H. C. FRANZ-JOSEF RADERMACHER IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED KNOWLEDGE PROCESSING AT ULM UNIVERSITY

Prof. Franz-Josef Radermacher is the director of the Research Institute for Applied Knowledge Processing at Ulm University. Sustainability strategies are one of his specialist fields. Radermacher didn't give a particularly rosy outlook, saying that every international agreement to avert climate change and promote sustainable economic activity had failed so far. „It's like us all agreeing to make a big pizza together and then only bringing enough ingredients for a small pizza and hoping that nobody notices.“ But the picture was not completely bleak. Towards the end of his talk, Radermacher called urgently for what he termed „education of the heart.“ On its own, he said, more education would not save the world – after all, it was the best-educated minds who had brought the world to the brink of ruin with the massive redistribution of wealth and power, bank bail-outs, national debt and austerity measures. This was where formal education reached its limits, he continued, saying that „global empathy“ was needed to change the world. Radermacher received spontaneous applause from the active supporters of international youth work.

Prof. Dr. Dr. Dr. h.c. Franz-Josef Radermachers full speech is available on > [youtube/IJABev](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJABev).



Prof. Dr. Dr. Dr. h.c. Franz-Josef Radermacher

Lecture and discussion

"Generation what?" – On the situation of young people in Europe

MAXIMILIAN VON SCHWARTZ, SINUS-INSTITUT
EMMANUELLE CHARGHINOFF
CÉLIA CHENIN
RIA JALONEN
MIO KUSCHICK

Maximilian von Schwartz from SINUS-Institut gave an overview of the results of the study "Generation what?" (2016/17), the first survey of this kind to examine young Europeans' attitudes. Almost one million young people aged 18 to 24 from 35 European countries took part in "Generation what?". Their responses paint a picture of a young generation that is concerned about social inequalities, yet does not trust in the ability of politicians and other institutions to resolve society's problems. Young people demonstrate a highly pragmatic attitude towards the European project. While they have little confidence in Europe and much prefer to identify with their own country or region, fewer than one in six respondents wants their country to leave the European Union.



Maximilian von Schwartz from SINUS-Institut

[Click here > to download the PowerPoint slides.](#)



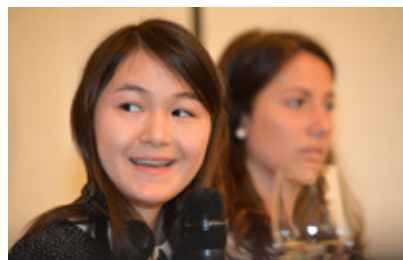
Asked to comment on these results, Emmanuelle Charginoff and Célia Chenin from France, Ria Jalonen from Finland and Mio Kuschick from Germany all confirmed the lack of young people's confidence in institutions and politicians and the lack of communication between them and young people. They also urged to give all young people an opportunity to interact with their peers from other countries. [Click here > to hear the discussion](#)

„Bring politics closer to youngsters. Politics is so remote ...we should make politics more normal and a part of every youngster's life ...“

(Ria Jalonen)

„We have deep knowledge of the economy ... but we don't know how to apply it to our everyday life and we don't know how to make it correspond to our relationship with other people ...“

(Célia Chenin)



“There has to be a dialogue. Institutions have to reach out to young people and talk to them in an open, respectful way. Something has to be done and action taken, together with young people...”

(Mio Kuschik)

The young panellists commenting on the "Generation what?" study

Recommendations from the workshops: An overview

WORKSHOP //

Giving social justice an international profile

Access to full participation is not fairly distributed, neither within Germany nor in comparison with other countries. Many young people are at risk of unemployment; others have reduced opportunities for participation owing to a disability or an unfavourable social or economic background. Another major challenge for society is the rise in migration among (unaccompanied)

minor refugees. How can youth policy-makers and the (international) youth work community make a stronger contribution to resolving social justice issues and enabling more participation internationally, for instance through the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals or the EU Youth Strategy? What impact is the rise in migration having on youth work?

How can currently disadvantaged young people be given access to non-formal education opportunities? How can financial obstacles be removed for young people? And what structural financial changes are necessary to make it possible to work with partners in other countries?

FACILITATOR:

Julia Motta

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Basic and advanced training for practitioners

To promote international cooperation and exchange, these issues must be included in the curricula for basic and advanced training for social workers and teachers (creating knowledge and empathy).

2. Financial structures: Simple – flexible – multi-source

To ensure that international activities are sustainable and effective, institutional support must be made available for long-term projects, the application process simplified and flexibilised, and more funding provided. International youth work is already achieving remarkable results on a tight budget, so imagine what more ambitious strategies and policies could do...

3. Lower intellectual barriers

Young people with fewer opportunities need easier access to (exchange) programmes. In this context, simplified language and additional forms of communication are necessary. Organisations, including small ones, must be taught this language and empowered to use it effectively.



WORKSHOP //

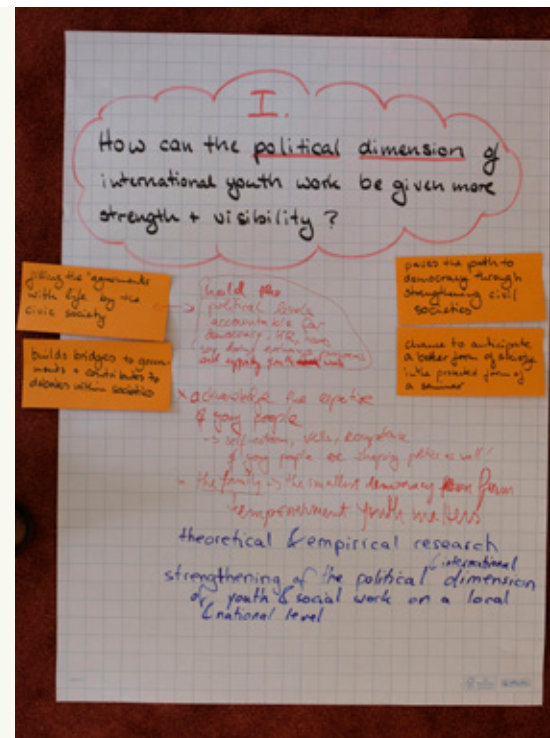
Strengthening democracy, promoting diversity

Thanks to the financial crisis, isolationist tendencies and most recently the UK's decision to exit the EU, the future of the European Union is more fragile than ever. Right-wing populism, xenophobia and racism are threatening social cohesion in Germany and beyond. Democracy as a social model is being thrown into question. These developments require a more clearly defined political profile and objectives when it comes to international youth work and youth policy cooperation. How can the political dimension of international youth work be given more strength and visibility? How can international youth work encourage more active citizenship and European/global awareness? How can it combat the radicalisation of young people and highlight the value of diversity? How can democratic structures and civil society groups benefit from international cooperation in the youth field?

FACILITATOR: Jochen Butt-Posnik

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. International youth work is returning to its roots: as a provider of opportunities for peaceful dialogue between young citizens of countries that do not necessarily maintain friendly relations.
2. Combating radicalism: The basis here is better access to education, jobs and participation. International youth work is a framework for exploring social and political issues without emphasising their cultural or religious connotations and alleged solutions, as radical "translators" sometimes do.
3. Not just international youth work, but the entire world of social work is called upon to define its political dimensions and attitudes. This needs time and reflection!



WORKSHOP //

Dialogue and exchange in a digital world

Digital media and technologies have long since been a permanent feature in youth work and international cooperation. They are used for collaborative projects, to build networks, and to communicate with foreign partners before, during and after shared projects. Social media are typically the method of choice for young people to stay in touch after an exchange. Online participation tools are also gaining importance among the younger generation. What role do internet-based technologies play when it comes to reshaping international youth work activities, e.g. designing new

exchange or training formats? How can youth participation be encouraged through digital participation methods? What challenges are there in regard to media literacy among young people and experts?

Workshop participants will also discuss the availability of international youth work-related data and new methods to gather and process data.

FACILITATOR: Daniel Poli

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Digitalisation is changing the way we live. International youth work has to adapt to this, for instance by launching an alliance for digital international youth work.
2. International youth work formats must speak the language of their target groups.
3. Digital transformation should be put on the agenda in international exchanges.





AKTIONSBÜNDNIS
ANERKENNUNG
INTERNATIONAL

WORKSHOP //

Creating value: Recognising and appreciating international youth work

Young people who participate in international youth work activities acquire new skills and undergo valuable personal development. Similarly, special exchange formats for experts allows them to benefit in a professional capacity. How can the added value of international youth work be communicated more clearly so it becomes visible? How can society be encouraged to attach greater value to informal and non-formal learning achievements, aside from any employability considerations? How can we strengthen the significance of mobility-related experience when it comes to life-long learning? How can the non-formal and formal education spheres be better integrated?

FACILITATOR: Anne Sorge

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. At the administrative level, the added value of international youth work can be given greater visibility by providing information and advice on exchange programmes through public channels, such as mobility advisors who gather information on all activities in a given region.
2. Greater visibility can also be achieved by maintaining personal contacts with politicians who can liaise with the relevant subcommittees and/or submit so-called "minor interpellations" or parliamentary questions.
3. To enhance the visibility of the magic and personal benefits of international youth exchanges, returnees should act as ambassadors who – even years after an exchange – can tell their personal stories to demonstrate what difference these exchanges have made in their lives.

WORKSHOP //

Youth work between transformation and globalisation

Increasing interculturalism, internationalisation and Europeanisation are currently presenting the child and youth services community with challenges. In this atmosphere of constant change, organisations and institutions must find ways to adapt and transform. How can they create a stronger international/European profile and sustain it in the long term? How can they build international and European networks and use them to help develop their own organisations? How can experts make

better use of cross-border activities, and how can such activities help when working with young people? What professional training needs to be offered in the light of these challenges?

FACILITATOR: Rolf Witte

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Introduce foundation courses for international youth work and integrate "in-

ternational" modules in all youth work-related training courses.

2. At the local and regional level:

- _ Structural support for organisations to engage in international activities
- _ Offer of advice and support on developing an "international" organisation

3. More courage to engage in international/organisational development!

WORKSHOP //

Perspectives for youth policy cooperation



To assist young people in shaping their lives successfully, youth policy-makers need to pursue a common approach at the European and international level. They must act in partnership and face up to youth policy challenges together. What input is required in order to create effective structures for cross-border youth policy cooperation? How can approaches towards bi- and multilateral cooperation be promoted and employed? What is the role of European and international networks? How can it be strengthened? How can European and in-

ternational strategies in the youth field be made more powerful?

FACILITATOR: Anneli Starzinger

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. International youth policy cooperation at all levels must be participatory.

2. International youth policy cooperation is necessary. It requires a strong youth policy backing and adequate funding.



WORKSHOP //

Is Europe really lost?

There is cause for real concern about the future of Europe. How can we stop the continent from regressing back to nationalism? How can the fundamental principles and values that govern European cooperation be salvaged? We need a renewal of the European ideal. This workshop explores how child and youth services and youth policy can help create a new and workable European narrative.

FACILITATOR: Anneli Starzinger

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Everyone must be given an opportunity to experience Europe! We demand the right to learning mobility for all young people!
2. International youth work is a bridge-builder. This function must be strengthened and expanded so international youth work can continue to help maintain the

civil society fabric and international relations.

3. A positive narrative for Europe: "Europe" as a subject must be more visible in the day-to-day processes in (international) youth work.

Panel discussion

Discussion of of workshop recommendations

MARKUS KOOB (CDU)

SUSANN MANDEL (SOCIOCULTURAL CENTRE "DIE VILLA")

ROLF WITTE (BUNDESVEREINIGUNG KULTURELLE KINDER- UND JUGENDBILDUNG, BKJ)

HERBERT WIEDERMANN (LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS, FAMILY AND INTEGRATION AUTHORITY, CITY OF HAMBURG)

UWE FINKE-TIMPE (FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR FAMILY AFFAIRS, SENIOR CITIZENS, WOMEN AND YOUTH (BMFSFJ))

INA BIELENBERG (ASSOCIATION OF GERMAN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, ADB)

The recommendations drawn up in the workshops were the topic of discussion in the subsequent panel debate. On the panel were the MP Markus Koob (CDU), Susann Mandel from the sociocultural centre "Die VILLA", Rolf Witte from the federal association for cultural child and youth education BKJ, Herbert Wiedermann from the Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Integration Authority in Hamburg, Uwe Finke-Timpe from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, and Ina Bielenberg from the Association of German Educational Organizations. The original panel of youth policy officers from the parliamentary groups plus an IJAB member representative had to be changed at short notice owing to a vote taking place simultaneously in the upper house of parliament. [For an audio recording of the discussion, click here >](#)

The panel began with a discussion of the financial foundation of international youth work. The Federal Youth Ministry has earmarked EUR 39 million for international activities. Is that a lot? Or is it not enough? "Hamburg is a city of arrivals," commented Herbert Wiedermann from the Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Integration Authority in Hamburg. "Of course, more young people means a greater need for funding." For Uwe Finke-Timpe, head of division at

the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, there need to be more initiatives for young people who still don't have access to international activities. Markus Koob, member of the German parliament, feels caught between youth policy and financial policy. "There is a cross-party consensus that we want to support young people – but the money needs to be well spent," he said. Susann Mandel from the sociocultural centre "Die VILLA" contributed a local perspective, pointing out that effective international youth work needs a reliable, strong youth work framework to begin with. Additional personnel and financial resources as well as more time are necessary when dealing with young people with fewer opportunities, she said, and called for better institutional support. Rolf Witte from the federal association for cultural child and youth education BKJ started off the discussion by clarifying that the call for more funding did not mean replacing volunteers with paid employees. On the contrary, in international youth work, both volunteers and full-time workers have to work hand in hand. The entire panel agreed that international youth work is a factor that creates stability in a politically unstable world, which led Ina Bielenberg from the Association of German Educational Organizations to the following conclusion: "If that's the case and the po-

liticians know it, then 39 million euros is surely peanuts."

In the final round, the panellists identified what they believe to be the most important drivers of viable international youth work. Rolf Witte felt that organisations at all levels urgently need a more European and international outlook. Susann Mandel agreed, adding that short-term projects need to be replaced by international projects with a longer horizon plus more institutional support. Herbert Wiedermann had the following calls to action:

1. Policymakers and youth workers need to adapt to diverse cities and regions; and by "diverse", he also meant the young people's differing economic backgrounds.
2. The legal framework for international youth work needs to be strengthened; for instance, he called for a legal entitlement to international youth work activities. He also demanded better communication between young people and politicians ("Young people's voices need to be heard loud and clear"), for which legal structures should be established.
3. Existing mechanisms should be expanded.
4. The European Solidarity Corps must be supported.



Facilitator Nkechi Madubuko and panellists Uwe Finke-Timpe (BMFSFJ), Ina Bielenberg (AdB), Herbert Wiedermann (City of Hamburg), Susann Mannel (Die VILLA), Rolf Witte (BKJ) and MP Markus Koob (CDU) (from left)



The panellists in action

Ina Bielenberg urged to direct the spotlight at the political dimension of youth work and to close the "ambition gap" between wanting to give all young people access to international youth work activities and providing the required funds and opportunities. She also suggested inviting politicians to visit international youth exchanges to see for themselves how important these exchanges are. Uwe Finke-Timpe agreed, adding that in order to enable all young people to engage in an international ac-

tivity, much more resources are necessary. He also felt that there needs to be a stronger link between international and national youth work, meaning that international activities should not be considered the "icing on the cake", but instead a completely normal part of the youth work process. The panel was joined at short notice by Hetav Tek from the German Federal Youth Council (DBJR). She called for a society and a political process that put young people at the centre and invites them to become invol-

ved. Obstacles for organisations and participants had to be removed, she said; to this end, organisations and youth associations could provide assistance which, however, required greater appreciation.

Evening reception

Celebrating 50 years of IJAB with partners

IJAB INVITED ITS PARTNERS TO JOIN THEM IN BERLIN ON 18 MAY TO CELEBRATE HALF A CENTURY OF HISTORY. IT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK BACK, BUT ABOVE ALL AN OCCASION TO LOOK AHEAD AT THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE.

BY CHRISTIAN HERRMANN

50 YEARS What better reason could there be but IJAB's 50th anniversary to meet up with partners past and present to look ahead to the future, but also to reflect the history of the organisation? Director Marie-Luise Dreber and Chairman Lothar Harles opened the day's proceedings by asking "What was IJAB all about over the last few years?" The answers came via an anniversary video > [youtube/IJABev](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJABev)) and some audio clips, but also from a number of IJAB's contemporaries over the years. The first input came from writer and UN Young Leader Samar Mezghanni and the Ukrainian Vice-Minister for Youth and Sport, Oleksandr Yarema. (*watch Samar's speech on youtube: > [youtube/IJABev](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJABev)*).

Mezghanni's address was probably the most emotional one given that day – she reminded the audience of how important it is for humanity to take a stand against racism and nationalism. Yarema highlighted the role that youth work plays in this regard.

Down memory lane

IJAB was established in 1967, so finding contemporaries who were around during its first ten years was all but impossible. Sybille von Stocki, in the 1970s a desk officer and later head of the department of European Youth Policy in the Federal Youth Ministry, and Olli Saarela, a long-standing IJAB partner in the Finnish youth ministry,

had travelled to Berlin to reminisce about the late 1970s and early 1980s. Von Stocki remembered how strongly youth policy was influenced those days by the western integration of the Federal Republic of Germany – right up until Willy Brandt's new Ostpolitik. The process that followed had an impact on neutral countries, too. In the wake of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Finland had established contacts to both states on either side of the German border. "I remember it all, but I won't tell you everything," said Saarela, but then proceeded to tell the audience a great deal – for instance, that Finland was so impressed by Germany's science competition for young researchers, Jugend forscht, that



"Encounters. Change. Renewal – 50 years of IJAB seen through a personal lens": Panellists Niels Meggers, Arunas Kucikas and Manfred von Hebel (left). Ukrainian Vice-Minister of Youth and Sports, Oleksandr Yarema gave a welcome address (right).



Samar Mezghanni, author und UN Young Leader, giving the ceremonial address

it decided to create its own ([> download Olli Saarela's speech here, PDF](#)).

In 1991 Niels Meggers, head of department at IJAB for 25 years, was travelling through Eastern Europe to drum up interest in a German-Soviet youth exchange. "Our trip was supposed to begin in the Baltic states, but we were told that this could be difficult," recalled Meggers. That same year the Soviet Union collapsed, resulting in new perspectives for cooperation with its successor states. Arunas Kucikas was an advisor to the Lithuanian president in the early 1990s and closely involved in developing youth work structures during that time. "What we appreciated about IJAB was the way they talked to us. We were considered equal partners – a completely new experience for us, having come from another world," commented Kucikas. And another development set in during the late 1980s. With the Youth for Europe programme, the European Community opened a new chapter in the history of youth policy. In the years that followed, European unity took shape. The German programme office "Jugend für Europa" was set up as part of IJAB in 1988. "Our affiliation with the youth work scene and our day-to-day work with our colleagues at IJAB are very important for us," explained Manfred von Hebel, deputy head of the German national agency for the EU's youth programme.

Barbara Wurster, a head of department in the Federal Youth Ministry in the early 2000s, also vividly remembered this dynamic period of European development. "Standards were set during that time, especially through the White Paper process. It called for young people to be involved in decision-making, and for that we needed IJAB's expertise," she recalled.

For IJAB, the 2000s brought much change. Bilateral exchanges were replaced by thematic cooperation that, it was hoped, would add an international dimension to child and youth services in Germany. "We had to deal with completely new issues and challenges," reported Marie-Luise Dreber, who was appointed director during this period and continues to manage IJAB to this day. "Digitalising youth work remains an important issue for us. Quality development, training, recognition of international youth work, a more international perspective for local administrations – these were all new areas of activity. And China became a new partner for youth exchanges."

Looking ahead to the future

"50 years of IJAB" works both ways – backwards and forwards. "International youth work has to respond to the real world," stated IJAB Chairman Lothar Harles during the final round of discussions. "We have to embrace digitalisation and globalisation as opportunities. We need to give children and

adolescents the best possible chances. But as everywhere in life, we can't do that without proper funding."

Lisi Maier, who incidentally was celebrating a birthday too that day, had come to Berlin to represent an IJAB member organisation, the German Federal Youth Council. "IJAB is important for us because it's a strong international partner," she said. However, IJAB's members have never been known to keep their criticisms to themselves. Lisi Maier, for one, would like to see members have a stronger voice. Uwe Finke-Timpe from the Federal Youth Ministry is familiar with the special relationship between IJAB's members, the Ministry, and IJAB as an organisation and service provider in international youth policy. To him, international youth policy is by its very nature closely connected to national youth policy and should play an even stronger role in the child and youth services system. "We need to pay more attention to disadvantaged young people. Also, given the conflicts in today's world, the term 'international understanding' has gained a new sense of urgency," he concluded.

It was a conference, it was a celebration – and it was a long day for all those who had come to Berlin to attend both. But the day ended on a relaxed note, with plenty of time to raise a glass to IJAB, have a friendly chat and exchange memories.



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IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany works on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the IJAB member organisations, the European Commission and other central bodies responsible for youth work. Its task is to strengthen and further develop international youth work and the cooperation in the field of youth policy – with countries in Europe as well as worldwide. Since 1989, the German Agency "YOUTH for Europe" has been attached to IJAB. YOUTH for Europe implements the EU Programme "Erasmus+ YOUTH IN ACTION (2014–2020)" in Germany.

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