

JiVE

Youth Work International –
Experiencing Diversity



International
Youth Work:
Participation. Diversity.
Intercultural Awareness.



International Youth Service of the
Federal Republic of Germany



JUGEND für Europa
Deutsche Agentur
für das EU-Programm
JUGEND IN AKTION

Contents

International youth work: Promoting integration and social participation	4
The research component	5
Main outcomes of the JiVE project.....	6
New perspectives for young people.....	6
New perspectives for child and youth services organisations	7
New perspectives for experts working in child and youth services	8
Conclusions and recommendations	8
Immigrant community membership – a social stigma?	12
What now?	13
Promotion and support	14



The participation in society of young people from the immigrant community and greater intercultural awareness in the field of child and youth services are crucial elements of a viable German society and an issue of European relevance. International youth work is a highly effective way for young people to develop the skills they urgently need to master these challenges.

International youth work: Promoting integration and social participation



The project **JiVE. Youth Work International – Experiencing Diversity**, which has both a practical and a research component, has shown that the concepts and methods of international youth work are capable of supporting young members of the immigrant community in participating in society. International youth work is a particularly effective instrument that contributes in its own specific way to help the young members of this community to integrate, and to raise greater awareness of intercultural issues among institutions and organisations.

JiVE (2008-2010) consisted of three sub-projects, **InterKulturell on Tour (IKT)**, the **European Voluntary Service (EVS)** and **expert programmes with Spain and Turkey**. This was the first time that three different international youth work formats – youth exchanges, European voluntary programmes and expert programmes – were brought together as one project that focused specifically on immigration and participation.

JiVE aimed to give young members of the immigrant community greater access to international youth work, and to use international youth work as a medium to create greater intercultural awareness. To this end, the project brought together international youth work, youth social work – especially youth migration services – and immigrant community groups.

Young people, experts and multipliers with and without an immigration background took part in the various JiVE projects, which were organised by independent and public-sector international youth work organisations, youth social work institutions and immigrant community groups



The research component

A team of researchers from Cologne University of Applied Sciences accompanied the JiVE project. They succeeded in gaining detailed insights into the potential of international youth exchanges to facilitate the integration and participation of young immigrant community members and enhance intercultural awareness in the field of child and youth services. In the context of the European Voluntary Service, the team looked specifically at the role of young people's citizenship activities. Finally, they also examined the capacity of the expert programmes to improve training for experts working in this field.

The team employed qualitative research methods such as surveys, participant observation and document analysis. For instance, they interviewed the young participants and the participating organisations' representatives in writing and face-to-face, and liaised closely with the exchange programmes.

In addition, the project availed itself of the expertise of researchers and practitioners working in international youth work, youth social work and immigrant community organisations.

Main outcomes of the JiVE project



New perspectives for young people

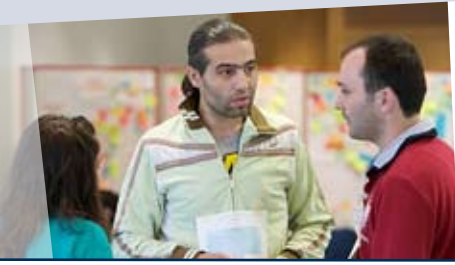
Identity: International youth work challenges participants to reflect on their identity and history. When they are away from home, the young people are recognised and appreciated as “ambassadors” of their city or country – a new and unfamiliar role for them.

Valuable new skills: Participants are encouraged and challenged to develop language, intercultural and social skills. The European Voluntary Service is a particularly effective vehicle for developing life skills since volunteers are immersed in daily life in the host countries.

New opportunities: With greater mobility young people develop new personal and career perspectives. This is an opportunity to profoundly change their lives for the better. Experiencing life in a different country provides participants with guidance as they move from adolescence to adulthood.

Immigrant community membership: Young people prefer to decide on their own whether and when the fact they are members of the immigrant community is relevant or not. In the context of the youth exchanges, many of them felt that age, gender and shared interests were more relevant.

Germany as an immigration country: During international youth exchanges or the European Voluntary Services young people, whether they are from the immigrant community or not, are confronted with national stereotypes with which they frequently do not identify. This leads them to reflect on what it means to be part of a diverse society in Germany. Young people who are not members of the immigrant community develop an awareness of the fact that they, too, can make a valuable contribution to building a multicultural society.



Citizenship: Young people's willingness to become involved in citizenship activities is strengthened. Their active citizenship is a valuable personal experience for them.

European awareness: European exchange programmes inspire an interest among young people in what it means to be Europeans. Meeting different people from across the continent gives Europe a human face and a personal dimension.

New perspectives for child and youth services organisations

Intercultural awareness: Child and youth services institutions and immigrant community associations participated in the JiVE project in teams of two equal partners, known as tandems. This hands-on form of cooperation enables the organisations to develop stronger intercultural awareness.

Participation: Working in close cooperation with international youth work institutions, the immigrant community associations and young immigrants' organisations gain direct access to child and youth services structures.

Networking and knowledge transfer: Experts working in child and youth services take part in international and European exchanges, which promotes an exchange of experiences and knowledge between the organisations at the national and international level.



New perspectives for experts working in child and youth services

Learning from others: The exchanges help experts working in child and youth services to enhance their expertise and intercultural skills. They acquire knowledge and insights that are a valuable contribution to their activities as professionals both in theory and practice. Great potential lies in exploring differences and similarities in terms of circumstances, concepts, working methods, responsibilities and structures, especially since it allows the experts to reflect on their own practices.

Expert exchanges with the parents' countries of origin: In most cases German experts know very little about the young people's families' countries of origin. Working with their colleagues from these countries gives them a new outlook on their target group, changes the way they work and eliminates preconceptions.

Conclusions and recommendations

Enable access: International youth work lets participants experience mobility across national borders and is an important platform for non-formal education for all young people, whether they are from the immigrant community or not. They acquire skills that are valuable to their personal and career development, so giving them access to international youth work measures is vital. This is particularly important in the case of local authorities, youth social work institutions and immigrant community groups.

Lower barriers: International youth work helps to create equal opportunities for young people. Studies have shown that young members



of the immigrant community are disproportionately underrepresented in these activities and programmes, many of which fail to attract their interest. This can be addressed by creating low-threshold access to information on international youth work, and by adjusting funding criteria to reflect the needs of the target group.

Provide support: International youth work activities may not be treated as stand-alone events; rather, they must be seen as part of a long-term educational approach. They should be closely monitored and supported by experts. The measures require thorough preparation and careful debriefing.

Avoid stigmatisation: Attributes such as “from the immigrant community” should be used with care. These terms are often perceived as stigmatising and fail to account for the fact that the immigrant community does not constitute a socio-culturally homogeneous group.

Recognise diversity: “Integration” is a term that is often appropriated one-sidedly by German mainstream society. Youth work should encourage diversity by recognising its value and appreciating the fact that culture and ethnicity are not the only aspects that shape young people’s identities.

Respect diversity: In cases where it makes sense, for funding reasons, to single out young members of the immigrant community, this should be done with care. The fact that diversity goes beyond the boundaries of culture and ethnicity ought to be recognised and respected.



Create partnerships: An effective way to reach out to young people from the immigrant community is to create partnerships with organisations that already work with this target group and to involve experts who are themselves members of the immigrant community. Working together hand in hand opens up new opportunities for raising intercultural awareness.

Encourage cooperation: Cooperation between child and youth services institutions and immigrant community associations helps to create greater intercultural awareness. There should hence be a stronger dialogue between the partners especially at the local level.

Reward self-organisation: Young people from the immigrant community organise a wide range of activities themselves, which helps them to participate in mainstream society. These organisations must be given greater financial stability. They need full-time staff, access to information, as well as access to child and youth services.

Reduce red tape: International youth work is an attractive option for immigrant community organisations. However, the associated formal and logistical hurdles are often too high for organisations that rely heavily on volunteers. Bureaucratic funding processes should to be simplified in order to attract new target groups, and targeted advisory services offered.

Undergo training: International expert programmes are valuable training opportunities for experts working in child and youth services. The experts should take these opportunities seriously and make use of them wherever possible. For expert programmes to be fully effective



they must be integrated conceptually into the experts' working environments. The outcomes of the programmes and the insights gained should directly feed back into the experts' day-to-day work.

Make use of insights: Experts working in child and youth services acquire valuable skills when they participate in international expert exchanges. This type of training is most effective when the participants' experiences and insights are documented effectively and fed back to the organisations in question.

Maintain contact: International networks are valuable tools for experts and organisations, who should stay in touch beyond the actual exchanges and events.

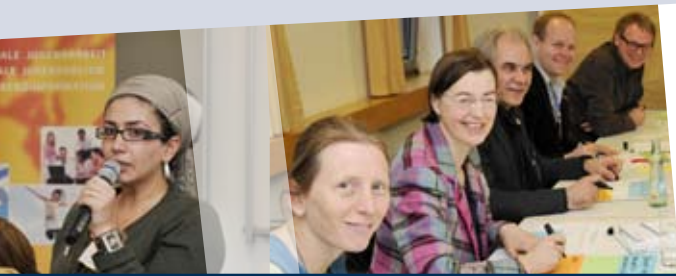
Offer information and training: International youth work is a valuable educational instrument for youth social work organisations, too. Those working at the local level, in particular, should be offered dedicated information and training.

Immigrant community membership – a social stigma?

One of the declared goals of the JiVE project was to identify how international youth work can help to integrate young people from the immigrant community into society. The designation “from the immigrant community” emerged as a difficult issue from the very beginning. To many project participants, even apparently neutral terms such as “second-generation immigrants” or “from an immigrant family” signalled exclusion and stigmatisation rather than equal access and diversity. Indeed, these terms need to be used with care so as not to produce any unwanted effects. The main criticism is that they mark out a certain group of young people as “different”. Also, they fail to account for the fact that the immigrant community in Germany is by no means a homogenous socio-cultural group.

Young members of the immigrant community experience discrimination and lack of opportunity on a daily basis. Also, studies undertaken by international youth work organisations have shown that they are disproportionately underrepresented when it comes to taking part in international youth work activities. The project organisers and the research team accompanying JiVE hence concluded that the obstacles preventing them from enjoying access to international youth work had to be overcome. Also, they wanted to demonstrate how international youth work can make a positive contribution to the integration debate in theory, and to actual integration in practice. It followed that, for the purposes of this project, a measure of temporary “positive discrimination” was acceptable. However, great care was taken to ensure that the young members of the immigrant community would not be singled out permanently, and that they could decide at any point whether their cultural and/or ethnic background was relevant to them or not.



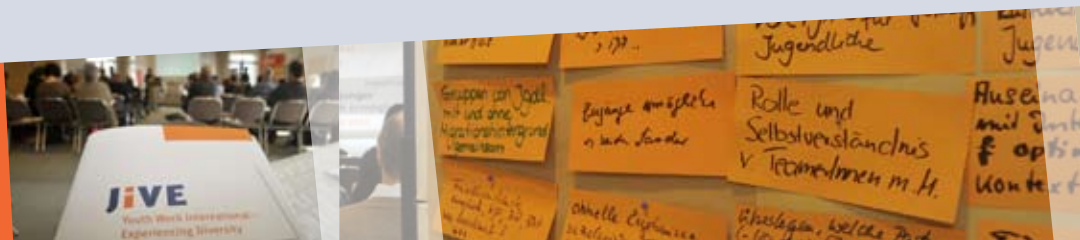


What now?

The JiVE project has evolved into a broad-based youth policy initiative aimed at improving participation, training and mobility for disadvantaged young people and for young members of the immigrant community. From 2011 to 2014 partnerships between child and youth services organisations, particularly at the local level, will be encouraged and supported so more disadvantaged adolescents and young adults from the immigrant community can participate in non-formal learning activities offered by international youth work organisations. JiVE follows an approach that is sensitive to and respectful of cultural diversity. Its aim is to create an equal playing field especially for disadvantaged young people and young members of the immigrant community.

Among the participating organisations are the Association of Local Authorities; the Kooperationsverbund Jugendsozialarbeit, an umbrella organisation for youth social work; youth migration service organisations; transfer e.V.; immigrant community organisations; and the German Federal Youth Council.

For more information, go to www.jive-international.de



Promotion and support

The German Federal Government and the European Union operate two centralised programmes dedicated to promoting international youth work:

- Child and Youth Plan of the Federal Government
www.bmfsfj.de
- The EU's Youth in Action programme
www.jugend-in-aktion.de

Other central support organisations with bilateral programmes:

- Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) www.dfjw.org
- German-Polish Youth Office www.dpjw.org
- ConAct – Coordination Centre for German-Israeli Youth Exchange
www.conact-org.de
- Tandem – Coordination Centre for German-Czech Youth Exchange
www.tandem-org.de
- Foundation for German-Russian Youth Exchange
www.stiftung-drja.de

Information and advice on funding-related issues are available e.g. from

- Eurodesk Germany www.eurodesk.de
- The expert portal for child and youth services
www.jugendhilfeportal.de
- The international youth work database www.dija.de

The JiVE studies (Thimmel, A.; Chehata, Y.; Riß, K., 2010) are available for download at

www.jive-international.de



Legal notice

Responsible for content:

Marie-Luise Dreber (IJAB)

Hans-Georg Wicke (JUGEND für Europa)

Editorial team:

Christian Herrmann

Christof Kriege

Frank Peil

Claudia Mierzowski

Layout and design:

www.blickpunktX.de

Photographs:

IJAB, JUGEND für Europa

Translation:

Karin Walker

JIVE. Youth Work International – Experiencing Diversity is run by



International Youth Service of the
Federal Republic of Germany



JUGEND für Europa
Deutsche Agentur
für das EU-Programm
JUGEND IN AKTION

living europe

The sub-project InterKulturell on Tour is run by transfer e.V. in cooperation with German Young Naturefriends, German Sports Youth, VIA e.V., IJAB and Youth for Europe.

With financial assistance from



Bundesministerium
für Familie, Senioren, Frauen
und Jugend



GD Bildung und Kultur
Programm „Jugend in Aktion“

This project received financial assistance from the European Union under the Youth in Action programme. It does not necessarily reflect the position of the European Union and assumes no liability in that respect.