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EYWA**
NATIONALE KONTAKTSTELLE
ZUR UMSETZUNG DER EYWA
IN DEUTSCHLAND

Final report reflections on the pilot project: National Contact Point for the European Youth Work Agenda in Germany

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After the 3rd European Youth Work Convention in 2020, the European Youth Work Agenda - EYWA was created as a strategic framework (a short version in German can be found [here](#)). There was incredible excitement about a common European direction, where everyone was trying to find their own footing and wind at their backs, to figure out what is to be done, how we can do it, and whose responsibility it is.

From December 2021 to December 2023, the Transferstelle zur Ausgestaltung der European Youth Work Agenda in Deutschland was established and funded by the Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ) and set up to support the German Bonn Process by strengthening, further developing, and making youth work more visible in Germany. It worked as a transfer and dialogue structure between policy, research, and practice, for example through digital roundtables, open exchange formats, and a dedicated EYWA information platform on the Jugendhilfeportal.

Subsequently, the National Contact Point for the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda was established as a pilot project by JUGEND für Europa, the German National Agency for the EU programmes Erasmus+ Youth, Erasmus+ Sport and European Solidarity Corps (JfE), supported by the BMBFSFJ and funded by Erasmus+ youth means. The new team would not only accompany the process but actively shape it by creating and suggesting a concept for what should be done, when, and how, while relevant institutions would support its implementation. The National Contact Point for the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA) had the task of translating European priorities into local realities. NaturKultur e.V. is a youth organization active in Bremen and Lower Saxony which has developed a strong ecosystem with a variety of authorities, actors and stakeholders, creating concrete synergies and programs that incorporate local, national and European instruments to reach key local and European youth work goals. NaturKultur has been supported by Katharina Teiting, a freelance expert with long-standing experience in European youth work, organisational development, strategic youth policy processes, network-building, and the facilitation of local and European cooperation structures. This highly experienced team submitted a concept with a new approach that would give the EYWA in Germany what it needed - concrete impulses, clear direction, tangible activities, and an understanding of the challenges in the process.

The project was implemented in a demanding context, requiring rapid development, coordination, and a high level of flexibility from all those involved. Despite the short implementation period, the Contact Point succeeded in establishing a visible, credible and concrete process that connected actors across local, national and

European levels. The results presented in this report reflect both the concrete achievements of the project and the strong commitment and passion of the team and partners who made them possible.

From the very beginning, the project required a dynamic and adaptive way of working. Several key processes had to be developed and implemented in parallel, including the establishment of communication structures, the launch of local partnerships, the preparation of events, and the coordination of research activities. This required continuous prioritisation, close cooperation, and a strong focus on ensuring that each activity contributed to the wider goals of the Contact Point.

Despite the demanding implementation context, the Contact Point was able to build structures, initiate collaborations and deliver concrete results that now form a strong foundation for future development. The experience also showed the importance of realistic timelines, clear coordination structures and sufficient space for reflection when developing processes that aim to connect local, national and European dimensions of youth work.

Creating a Recognizable National Actor

One of the most important achievements of the project was the establishment of the Contact Point as a trusted and visible actor within the German youth work landscape. Through active participation in key national and European events, continuous dialogue with stakeholders, and direct support for practitioners and municipalities, the Contact Point gained recognition as a serious and capable coordinator of a complex national process, with people who are passionate about the process, can carry impulses further, and foster synergies among different actors.



With two experts, Darko Mitevski and Katharina Teiting, and NaturKultur as a youth organization rooted in Bremen and Lower Saxony, this also meant a natural presence of people from the field, namely at the 18. Deutscher Kinder- und Jugendhilfetag, Bundeskongress Kinder- und Jugendarbeit in Potsdam, the 4th European Youth Work Convention in Malta, and the Exchange Forums on the European Youth Work Agenda

in Leuven and Skopje. This combination of practical experience and strategic engagement made it easier to connect with different parts of the field.

What became very clear is that visibility alone is not enough. The field needed recognizable people behind the process, practitioners who understand the realities of youth work and can translate strategy into concrete action. Trust was built not through formal positioning, but through presence, dialogue, and follow-up.

This visibility was not only symbolic. It played a crucial role in building trust, encouraging participation, and strengthening the political relevance of the EYWA in Germany.

Strengthening Local Youth Work Ecosystems

At the heart of the project were eight local partnerships across Germany. These partnerships brought together municipalities, youth networks, and practice organizations to jointly develop strategic action plans tailored to their local contexts. Rather than applying a single model, each partnership was encouraged to define its own priorities, reflecting the diversity of the German youth work landscape.



The results demonstrate both the potential and the challenges of this approach. In municipalities such as Hamburg, Nürnberg, Bremen, Oldenburg, Cottbus, Erding, Rhein-Selz, and Dortmund, existing structures could be strengthened and expanded. In other areas, the focus was on building initial cooperation, creating new connections, and developing the first steps towards international youth work.

At the same time, the partnerships revealed very different starting conditions. Some were already strategically advanced, while others were struggling simply to maintain participation due to limited staff capacity. This diversity was not a weakness, but a realistic reflection of the field in Germany.

Across all partnerships, one key insight emerged: meaningful ecosystem development takes time. In many cases, the first phase was not about implementation, but about understanding roles, building trust, and aligning expectations.

Connecting Practice and Policy

A central pillar of the project was the needs analysis, which brought together perspectives from young people, practitioners, and experts. Conducted in cooperation with transfer e.V. and the “Forschung und Praxis im Dialog” network, the process provided valuable insights into how the EYWA is perceived and embedded in youth work in Germany.

The process itself also showed its limits. Due to the delayed start, parts of the research had to be conducted very late in the project cycle, leaving little time for broader discussion and dissemination. Engaging the “middle-level” of the field proved particularly difficult, as many actors are already heavily involved in multiple processes.

The resulting [policy recommendations](#), written by Katharina Teiting, highlight long-standing challenges in the field, including the need for sustainable funding, stronger institutional support, and improved capacity-building structures, clearer communication about the EYWA, and continuing the work on the already solid basis for the definition of youth work. The recommendations have the potential to become a living policy tool, but only if they are actively worked on, translated into discussion formats, and connected to concrete implementation pathways.

Bearing in mind that the recommendations are aligned with the report from the 4th European Youth Work Convention and the Roadmap instructing the European Commission and the Member States to develop some of these similar recommendations, the political weight of the analysis and recommendations becomes even more relevant.

Importantly, these recommendations are not an endpoint, but a starting point. Their value lies in connecting different perspectives and creating a basis for future discussions and decisions.

Engaging the Community of Practice

The project placed strong emphasis on engaging the wider community of practice. This was achieved through a combination of conferences, strategic meetings, and dedicated formats such as EYWA Connect and MatchHub.

EYWA Connect evolved into a space for meaningful discussion and exchange. It only became successful once it moved away from open consultation and towards focused discussions with high-profile guests such as Dr. Howard Williamson, Dr. Andreas Thimmel, Dr. Andreas Karsten, Lucia Andreatta, and others. The discussions, topics, and guests triggered passionate debates, opening up the core issues, looking at them from different perspectives and discussing how the EYWA can be used to address some of the ongoing key issues.



MatchHub, on the other hand, responded to a very practical need: helping organizations find reliable international partners. Despite challenges in coordination at the European level, the format proved effective and led to concrete cooperation ideas and project-development processes.

These experiences show that engagement must go beyond information-sharing. It needs to create spaces for dialogue, inspiration, and practical collaboration — formats that respect the limited time and resources of actors in the field.

Lessons Learned and Future Directions

The project also highlighted several structural learning points for future implementation processes. As a model project with a short implementation timeline and an evolving framework, the Contact Point required a high level of flexibility, rapid orientation, and continuous prioritisation. In this context, the team had to establish structures, build relationships, gather knowledge and develop activities within a limited period of time, while also ensuring that the process remained credible and useful for the field.

Another important learning point concerns the need for clear perspectives beyond the initial project period. For a structure such as the Contact Point to build trust,

support long term planning and create stable expectations among stakeholders, clarity about continuation at both the European and national levels is essential. This does not reduce the value of what was achieved, but underlines the importance of connecting successful model projects to longer-term strategies, mandates, and support structures.

Looking ahead, several priorities are clear. The implementation of the EYWA in Germany requires a long-term strategy, stable structures, and clear role definitions. Local partnerships should be supported over multiple years, and the results of the needs analysis should be actively used.

BAG OKJA will take over the role of facilitating the [German process](#) for the implementation of the EYWA in Germany, with the opportunity to expand the approach and involve more local actors who are interested in engaging with the EYWA.

Equally important is the need to invest in the capacity of the structures supporting the process. Sustainable impact cannot rely on short-term efforts alone.

Conclusion

The National Contact Point has shown that the European Youth Work Agenda can be translated into concrete action in Germany. It has created connections, initiated processes, and demonstrated that cooperation across levels is both possible and valuable.

The continuation of most of the developed activities demonstrates the relevance and impact of the work that this model project did in the past year and a half. The project has created a functioning approach that connects local realities with national and European strategies.

Furthermore, the recently published Roadmap aligns strongly with the national process and the momentum already created, providing clearer roles for the Council of Europe, strengthening the role of the Youth Partnership, and proposing clear actions for the European Commission and Member States to act. This creates a strong basis for the next phase.

Looking back, the project was both demanding and productive. It showed the limits of short-term structures, but also the potential of committed work and strong cooperation.

The EYWA in Germany has continued to evolve, building on the efforts of the past years. It has taken shape in concrete activities, partnerships, and discussions. The challenge now is to build on this — with more time, more clarity, and more stability.