



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

Generation Europe – Young Democracy in Action

Pilot project on active European Citizenship as an element in international non-formal educational youth work including heterogeneous target groups.

Project duration: 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2020

Project organisation: International Association for Education and Exchange (Internationales Bildungs- und Begegnungswerk e.V.)

Initial situation

In many European countries undemocratic and right-wing populist movements are winning ground. Values like freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights are the foundations of the European Union. However, in political decision-making processes and current media reporting, they are increasingly less present, instead conflicts and crises are moving further into focus. Additionally, the relations between EU countries are increasingly tense and the ideal of solidarity and friendship between the European countries, which for a long time was not even questioned, is beginning to waver. The situation at the external borders of the EU, the arrival of thousands of refugees, and finally the Brexit referendum and the recent elections in the Netherlands and France opened up new perspectives on European values and stimulated discussions about democracy. Especially now, it is important to avoid ignoring the perspectives and opinions of the young generation, as it is them, who have to live with today's decisions the longest.

But not just on the European and national levels nationalist movements are growing. In the societies of Europe (and beyond) as well, a strengthening of right-wing populist and racist attitudes is noticeable. Uncertainty, based on social inequality, economic crises, and large migratory movements, causes polarisation and radicalisation of public discourse. Especially with respect to topics like migration and flight, crossing the boundaries of democratic exchange of opinion is becoming increasingly common, and hate



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

speech, as well as group-based enmity, often dominate over sober and fact-based argumentation. Democratic societies are thus facing special challenges. In order to enable an open and peaceful Europe for the future, with societies understanding diversity as strength, it is important to convey the values of democratic community and a positive understanding of diversity to the coming generation of citizens. Beyond that, the dialogue between young people, and those making political decisions, has to be stimulated to enable an exchange of different perspectives. In this, European and political education can play a decisive role.

Background, experiences, and demand

Background: ewoca³ and Pimp my Europe

Between 2008 and 2017, the International Association for Education and Exchange (IBB) organised the project *ewoca³ – Funding programme for youth work institutions*. The goal of the ewoca³ programme was to excite youths for Europe and a European society. Via personal encounters with young people from other countries, prejudices are reduced and readiness for mobility is increased. ewoca³ did not just want to enable youths to encounter other Europeans, but also targeted the participating youth work organisations, aiming to create a European network.

Trilateral partnerships (consisting of one German and two European youth work organisations each), realising yearly workcamps on the topic of education for sustainable development, were a central part of the ewoca³ programme. Participants of these European encounters were specifically youths, who, on the basis of different disadvantages, often have no access to international programmes.

The participating youth work institutions were supported during the three-year project duration with consulting services and different qualification events, with the aim to sustainably qualify them for working in an international context.



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

Thanks to the approval of the project *ewoca³ (+) - for everyone!* as part of the Innovation Fund of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth in the summer of 2014, IBB succeeded in popularising the *ewoca³* concept in other federal states. Thus, from 2015 on, Thuringia, Schleswig-Holstein, and Brandenburg were able to realise workcamps following the lead of *ewoca³*.

During the final phase of *ewoca³ – Funding programme for youth work institutions* (2015-2017) the participating partners became increasingly interested in further dealing with topics of political (European) education, and introducing elements of political education to the workcamps. Thus, in 2015, a number of organisations from the *ewoca³* network collaborated on the project *Pimp my Europe (PME)*, applying for funding as part of the Structured Dialogue at different National Agencies (erasmus+). The project was granted and realised in Germany (with 5 organisations from the *ewoca³* network) and Italy (with 4 organisations from the *ewoca³* network). In the autumn of 2017, the continuation of this project started as a trilateral project with partners from Hungary, Italy, and Germany under the title *Pimp my Europe - Level Up*. The goal of the project is to make European political education accessible to heterogeneous target groups and to open up a dialogue between so-called disadvantaged youths and political decision-makers. As part of PME, workshops on the topics of democracy, human rights, and European citizenship with youths from different social, economic, and formal education backgrounds, were realised. Subsequently, events featuring discussions with politicians were realised in both countries.

Experiences and Demand

In a globalised world, international contacts, foreign language skills, and experiences abroad are becoming increasingly important for gaining a foothold in the job market. However, especially in Germany, this type of experience of mobility is still mainly restricted to elites. The experience of nine years of *ewoca³* has shown further, that many international programmes are often unknown to so-called disadvantaged youths, respectively the barriers to participation are seen as limiting. We have seen that only by

closely collaborating with youth work organisations locally working with this specific target group, a long-term integration of heterogeneous target groups in international projects can succeed. At the same time, the responses from ewoca³ network member organisations prove the major importance of international encounters with respect to personality development and life planning, especially for disadvantaged youths. The experiences of ewoca³ are validated by science and actors in international youth work. The current interim evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme established participation by youths with less opportunities has fortunately increased to 25-30 percent of participants, though this share is still comparatively low. The report on the mid-term review of the programme thus explicitly says:

„However, there is still a lack of adequately funded low-threshold opportunities for access and participation for youths with less opportunities and special needs, as well as for the growing number of young refugees.“

(Dr. Helle Becker for JUGEND für Europa)¹

The effects of international youth work, both for personality development, as well as for learning new competences and developing new perspectives for professional careers, are mapped out in, among others, the 2006 long term study by Thomas, Chang, and Abt titled „Erlebnisse, die verändern“² or the foundational study by Ilg / Dubiski.³

In the beginning of the project *Pimp my Europe* it became evident many youths, especially those less successful in the formal education system, and often coming from economically less advantaged families, describe themselves as rather non-political and are comparatively hard to excite for projects with political content. At the same time, the topic of Europe and the international character of the project, via the connection to the

¹ The whole article can be found on the website of [Jugend für Europa](#) (German Language). Here, links on the interim evaluation of the programme, and the national mid-term review, can also be found. Recent as of 13/09/2017.

² Thomas, Alexander / Chang, Celine / Abt, Heike: Erlebnisse die verändern. Langzeitwirkungen der Teilnahme an internationalen Jugendbegegnungen. Göttingen 2007.

³ Ilg/Dubiski (Eds): Begegnung schafft Perspektiven – Empirische Einblicke in internationale Jugendbegegnungen. Eine Publikation des DFJW und DPJW. Berlin, Paris Warschau, 2011



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

Italian group, raised interest and finally managed to motivate youths from different backgrounds to participate. During the implementation of the project it became clear that youths, who described themselves as non-political in the beginning, indeed have great interest in political questions. Often, they are also well equipped to voice and argue their opinions in the group. Special interest in political topics was created when youths could directly identify with the problems posed, that is when the topic was about something effecting themselves personally or persons in their direct environment. The 17th Shell Youth Study confirms these impressions.⁴ The Authors find especially unemployed youths, or those aiming for only basic educational qualifications, voice relatively little interest in politics.

„Significant differences between strata and educational positions remain. In 2015, 52% of youths with higher school qualifications [Abitur or FH-Reife], whether attained or aimed for, describe themselves as politically interested. In youths with lower school qualifications [Mittlere Reife or Realschulabschluss], whether attained or aimed for, this is true for 33%, and in youths with only basic school qualifications [Hauptschulabschluss], whether attained or aimed for, this is true for only 24%.“

(Albert et.al., Jugend 2015: 17. Shell Jugendstudie, Frankfurt am Main, 2015; S. 159)

The study further describes, it is especially this group of youths, where satisfaction with society and democracy is lowest.⁵ Young people are most likely to campaign for the interest of their peers or a meaningful organisation of leisure activities for youths.⁶ The thesis that youths are politically engaged especially if topics have a direct connection to their life, formulated from the experiences of the project, is thus also confirmed here.

⁴ Prof. Dr. Mathias Albert, Prof. Dr. Klaus Hurrelmann, Prof. Dr. Gudrun Quenzel, TNS Infratest Sozialforschung: Jugend 2015: 17. Shell Jugendstudie, Frankfurt am Main, 2015, S.153ff

⁵ However, it has to be mentioned, that even in this group satisfaction with democracy is relatively high at 62%.

⁶ Prof. Dr. Mathias Albert, Prof. Dr. Klaus Hurrelmann, Prof. Dr. Gudrun Quenzel, TNS Infratest Sozialforschung: Jugend 2015: 17. Shell Jugendstudie, Frankfurt am Main, 2015, S.194



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

Most worrying are the findings on tendencies of radicalisation, differentiated by social strata. The youth study found especially youths aiming for lower or basic school qualifications (Hauptschule / Realschule) tend to describe themselves as rather right-wing or right wing. At the same time, this group specifically is relatively unsatisfied with democracy in Germany, and 21 percent of this group even believes democracy in general not to be a good form of government.⁷ Participation of youths from this target group in measures of political education is thus especially useful, and should be enabled and supported by low-threshold measures oriented at the lifeworld of these youths.

One of the greatest challenges in projects of international youth work is the creation and maintenance of international partnerships. Especially in sophisticated projects with less tested content and diverse target groups it is of major importance to collaborate with reliable and resilient cooperation partners. During three project phases of ewoca³, IBB has developed a stable international network and can rely on a great number of experienced partners from different backgrounds in diverse European regions.

Many youth work organisations successfully working with so-called disadvantaged youths are often sceptical towards participating in international projects. During the international and regional networking and professional meetings of the ewoca³ project, two reasons were mainly given: First, organisations are often working to capacity in their everyday work and have only a small number of staff; so even with a willingness to implement additional projects, this can only be realised by additional unpaid commitment and labour by employees and volunteers. This is further compounded by the large organisational effort (problems with visa requirements, comprehensive and complicated procedures for application and budgeting, etc.) entailed by international measures. Secondly, many organisations are concerned international measures might be too demanding for the target group they are working with. These concerns often connect to language barriers, short-term cancellations, difficulties of staying in a group for a long

⁷ ebd. S. 168 und S.175



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

time, socially demanding and boundary-crossing behaviour during the measure, etc. Over the course of the *ewoca*³ project duration, the participating organisations repeatedly stressed how important the organisational and pedagogical support by IBB as part of the support and qualification programme of *ewoca*³ was to them, and without the support offered to them, mastering the challenges they faced would have been hardly possible.⁸

In summary, the following should be noted:

- Youth with less opportunities are still participating in measures of international youth work relatively sparingly, at the same time the effect of international activities is of major importance for their personal and career development.
- Youths facing unemployment or with less success in the formal education system show less interest in political commitment and less trust in the democratic system. Measures of political education should thus increasingly aim at this target group.
- Youths from this target group often do not feel addressed by measures in political education, however they can be excited by the use of low-threshold methods and a direct connection to their lifeworld experiences. The connection of European and international topics and political education can be conducive to this end.
- So-called disadvantaged youths are best reached by organisations regularly working with this target group. In order to motivate such organisations to participate in international measures, and here specifically in activities featuring content from political education, offering comprehensive support and consulting services is necessary.

Target groups

⁸ Some statements of participating organisations can be found in the project brochure of the second funding phase, available for [download](#) at the *ewoca* Homepage (www.ewoca.org).



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

Youths

Both measures of political education, as well as those of international youth work are often targeted at youths, which are successful in the formal education system and often also relatively well integrated socially. So-called disadvantaged groups of young people are, especially in Germany, often heavily underrepresented. This is not just problematic with respect to democratic aspects, but also leads to serious risks of radicalisation of these specific groups, which are often facing multiple discriminations and social exclusion, as well as economic disadvantages. With respect to the uncertainties mentioned, they can be especially receptive for this. A holistic, preventative, and diverse political education thus has to address heterogeneous target groups and may not exclude groups. The project, together with partners from different European countries, aims to make the topic of European active citizenship accessible to disadvantaged youths. The mentioned target groups can be reached by collaborating with youth work institutions closely working with them. But it is important youths from the target group mentioned are not the only group participating, but youths from different backgrounds participate as well. The experiences of IBB in the context of projects like ewoca³ (www.ewoca.org) has shown this way to lead to the greatest successes in learning for all participants.

Target groups are:

- Youths
- Youths, less successful in the formal education system
- Youths with experiences of migration and flight
- Youths from rural regions
- Youths from specifically disadvantaged boroughs / regions



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

Organisations

Generation Europe targets youth work organisations with different operators from North Rhine-Westphalia, Thuringia, Schleswig-Holstein and Brandenburg. In selecting the organisations, representing the high diversity of the youth work landscape in the project was a major consideration. Also, institutions from rural, as well as urban regions are represented, with a selection focus on structurally disadvantaged areas.

Goals

Youths

The central goal of the project *Generation Europe – Young Democracy in Action* is to excite youths from different backgrounds, but especially those with less opportunities, for political activity on a local and European level, and to enable or facilitate their access to international activities. For this reason, for the whole duration of the project, a central focus will be on problems identified by youths on a local level, which are then worked on with democratic methods, always with feedback by trilateral partnerships on the European level.

Disadvantaged youths experience their political self-efficacy through their involvement on the local level. The goal is for them to perceive themselves as an (active) part of the democratic process, sustainably stimulating them to political commitment. By working on specific problems related to their lifeworld, „politics“ should be shown to be far more than parliamentarianism and involvement with political parties. However, the connection between the local and European level is especially important for the project.

Through continuous exchange in European groups (digitally via the platform and via personal meetings at youth encounters) the youths should reflect their local situation and recognise the European dimension of the problem. Europe and the European Union thus becomes tangible and connected to their lifeworld.



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

However, the goal of *Generation Europe* also extends beyond creating a political and European consciousness in the next generation. Not only should politics be dealt with theoretically, the youths should also be enabled to participate in political discourses in the public sphere, and especially be able to voice the problems they identified. The project actively seeks to empower young people with respect to their political participation, so they can stand up for human rights, democracy, and acceptance of differences in their daily lives, in interactions with friends and families, and beyond the duration of the project. The participating youths become multipliers for democratic and European values.

In the digital age, a large part of (political) opinion forming processes take place on social media. From a democratic perspective, this has the advantage of everyone with internet access, in principle, being able to participate in the discourse, and a multitude of opinions can enter public perception. On the other hand, we are increasingly confronted with statements exceeding the boundaries of democratic exchange of opinion and even disinformation. In order to categorise such reports and statements, or being able to react to them, a new type of media education, which includes dealing with internet discussions, is needed. *Generation Europe* thus aims at not only presenting youths new portals and tools for digital communication, but also to develop them (further) in collaboration with young people. Beyond that, important competences for communicating via social media should be conveyed.

Concerns and needs of young people are often given less consideration as demands by and for other population groups. This, among other reasons, is related to the effects of demographic change: The group of over-60-year-olds represents more than one third of those eligible to vote, which leads to the interests of youths receiving too little attention. Targeted activities are needed, conveying the political needs, views, and opinions of young people to the public and political representatives on different levels. Appropriate and successful instruments for this are, for example, the Structured Dia-



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

logue on the European level, and the Days of Youth Politics on the national level. Such formats not only offer opportunities for exchange on political topics to young people, but also open up a dialogue between participants and representatives of politics. Unfortunately such events also are rarely perceived by youths from the target group mentioned. Beyond that, the real effects in the political fields often remains unclear. *Generation Europe* positions itself here. The goal is also motivating and enabling youths with lower (or no) educational qualifications and/or from lower social strata to actively participate in public political discourses. This should take place on different levels, on the one hand through their role as multipliers, described above, on the other hand through local public actions, and finally through direct dialogue with political representatives.

Professionals

As part of *ewoca*³ different youth work organisations were further qualified to realise measures of European international youth work, which are primarily geared towards the participation of youths with less opportunities. The goal of *Generation Europe* is to integrate these organisations further into projects of international youth work, but the participating organisation should also be motivated and enabled to work on topics of political democracy education with their target group during their international activities.

The aim is to develop methods making the topics of European citizenship and active citizenship accessible to disadvantaged youths. For this, a toolbox of methods will be developed by European professionals and made available to other professionals and institutions following the completion of the project. The methods will be tested at youth encounters, and subsequently evaluated and further developed, in collaboration with the youths.

Generation Europe integrates substantially different youth work organisations (independent organisations, youth centres, vocational assistance organisations, vocational schools, training facilities, municipalities) and thus holds great potential for further exchange between the different sections of youth (educational) work. The organisations



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

learn from one another, enabling a diverse exchange of experiences. In order to implement local activities in a sustainable fashion, organisations of non-formal youth work are encouraged to cooperate with schools or vocational schools in their neighbourhood, in order to strengthen the exchange between formal and non-formal education in the field of international youth work.

A further important goal of the project is to stimulate professional discourse on the European level and to learn from concepts and experiences from the participating European countries. Especially in the field of political democracy education, and with respect to pedagogical concepts for an active European citizenship, there are quite different developments in the participating European countries. This opens up great opportunities to identify and further develop appropriate concepts and methods of active citizenship for and in Europe, which can be implemented in different European regions and with heterogeneous target groups, by observing and evaluating international best practice examples.

Level of youth politics

The insights and methods created during the implementation of the project should be anchored more securely on the level of youth politics in regional, national, and European contexts. By connecting practical work in projects and elements of youth politics, *Generation Europe* makes a significant contribution to putting the current EU youth strategy into practice, and further sets an example for structuring future collaboration in European youth politics. For this, the project connects actors from the state, federal, and European level, in order to establish a multilateral cooperation, and adapt concepts of European political education to regional needs, and, at the same time, develop methods and strategies, which can be applied and disseminated on the European level. The project aims to further establish an independent youth politics, initiated by the BMFSFJ in 2015 with their strategy „Acting for a youth-appropriate future“, in the field of international youth work in Germany, and make it more accessible for heterogeneous



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

target groups. In order to develop strategies, which can be effective on a regional level as well, different federal states (Brandenburg, Schleswig-Holstein, North Rhine-Westphalia, Thuringia) are actively involved in the process. The aim is to anchor innovative formats, developed and tested by professionals and youths, on the state level, thereby creating incentives for further federal states, municipalities, and regions. This process is coupled with professional exchanges on the European level, aimed at harmonising this strategy with European youth politics, as well as with processes in other European countries. National and regional professional discourses are supplemented by the experiences and discussions of international European actors. This way, the basis for a comprehensive and sustainable concept is created, which then can be further developed and disseminated by a European network of professionals.

Partners

Implementing organisation – International Association for Education and Exchange (IBB e.V.)

Overcoming boundaries – not just between countries, but also in our heads: This is the goal for the work of the International Association for Education and Exchange (IBB e.V.) since its founding in 1986. It organises international encounters, conferences, and educational programmes for all ages, in order to support societal commitment and strengthen networks in civil society. In intercultural education it aids in dismantling prejudices and supports steps to a peaceful and just society.

The IBB offers pupils international school trips, fora, and trainings. For professionals, it organises excursions, intercultural trainings, seminars, and trainings for vocational training and further education, in Germany and abroad. As understanding and reconciliation are based on a critical view on history, encounters at the memorials of the Holocaust and the war of extermination are important parts of the programme. With interna-



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

tional youth encounters and the European workcamp programme ewoca³, IBB contributes towards European understanding. Since 2004 it organises the youth congress as part of the Regional Weimar Triangle, on behalf of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia. Together with numerous partners in the Chernobyl and environmental movements, IBB founded the International Chernobyl Network, and initiated the European action weeks „For a future after Chernobyl and Fukushima“.

IBB has its headquarters in Dortmund and an office in Berlin. Another focus of its work are vibrant relations with Belarus. IBB operates the International Education and Encounter Centre „Johannes Rau“ in Minsk, as well as the History Workshop Minsk. It manages and supports the Belarus support programme on behalf of Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It also publishes „Belarus Perspektiven“. In Kharkiv/Ukraine IBB operates the History Workshop Chernobyl as a place of encounter and remembrance. The IBB is institutionally and politically independent and draws no commercial profits. It is a registered and certified institution for both adult and political education and a registered youth welfare institution.

Youth work organisations

All activities, in which youths participate, are realised by trilateral partnerships. In these, one organisation from the participating federal states enters a partnership with two European youth work organisations and collaborates with them over the duration of the project. By conscious decision the participating youth work organisations from Germany are very diverse:

- Independent organisations
- Youth centres
- Municipalities
- Vocational schools
- Vocational assistance organisations



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

- Educational centres

The European partners are mainly non-governmental organisations, some of which have entered into fixed cooperation with municipalities or schools. The partner most likely will come from the following European countries: Spain, Lithuania, Greece, Portugal, Italy, Belarus, Poland, Hungary, and France.

Youth politics

On the political level, representatives of the state ministries of Schleswig-Holstein, Brandenburg, Thuringia, and North Rhine-Westphalia, as well as the Federal Ministry for Family affairs are integrated. Contacts to the respective departments were made or intensified during the past two years of funding as part of the Innovation Fund by BMFSFJ. In order to further integrate the European perspective and experiences from other EU countries into the project, and disseminate the project results to other regions of Europe, the project strives for close cooperation with the national agencies of the erasmus+ YOUTH in Action programme in Germany and other European countries. Beyond that, during the project European representatives of the participating regions will be contacted and integrated into the different events. Contacts to representatives of the European commissions should be established as well.

Content and Activities

Content

A strong democracy needs an active civil society, thus *Generation Europe* deals with the topic of active European citizenship. The projects sees active citizenship as citizens actively involved in society. This can happen on a local level, on a national or even the European level. Forms of activity could be smaller projects, like clean-up drives in a neighbourhood, artistic activities in public spaces, or larger campaigns and formats, like

organising discussion events with politicians or long-term signature collection, etc. It is important for the concept, that the process of active work is accompanied by more theoretical activities on topics like exclusion, democracy, and human rights. It is only possible to achieve sustainable active citizenship by young people if direct participatory experiences are combined with learning new skills and knowledge. The concept of active citizenship supports democratic discourse and the democratic system in general and is based on accepting human rights and valuing diversity.

In its practical implementation *Generation Europe* follows an international project initiated in the US with youth groups and particularly with schools.

„Project Citizen“⁹ is usually realised by classes of pupils, and always follows these six project steps:

- Step 1: Problem identification
- Step 2: Developing different approaches to solving the problem
- Step 3: Selecting a problem-solving approach
- Step 4: Developing an action plan
- Step 5: Implementing the action plan
- Step 6: Reflecting the process¹⁰

The activities of *Generation Europe* follow the project steps mentioned above. The general concept was adapted to the needs of the target groups and the pedagogical work in the non-formal field. The project is special in that, besides intensive activities on the local level, where youths work in their direct environment, there is always a back reference to the European level. Thus, the European level, which is often perceived as intangible, is connected with the youth's lifeworld and with immediate opportunities of political involvement.

⁹ Further information regarding the project can be found on the homepage of the implementing organization „Center for Civic Education“ <http://www.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen>

¹⁰ Vivid examples for the process of individual projects can be found in the projekt documentation, accessible on Youtube with the title „The world we want“.



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

Activities

Activities take place on three levels: Measures for youths, trainings and congresses for professionals from the participating organisations, and events with representatives from politics. The whole project is also accompanied by a digital platform. For the duration of the project, this platform serves the youths as a connection between the local and European level. In the following, the activities on the three levels are described in closer detail. As an overview, the appendix to the project sketch contains an Excel spreadsheet with all activities.

Activities for youths

A central element of *Generation Europe* are trilateral youth encounters. Each partnership realises one youth encounter each year, so over the duration of the project, three youth encounters take place in each partnership. These are accompanied by local preparatory meetings, together with the youths. The second important element are local activities of youths, which take place in all countries in between the second and third youth encounter, and which are also overseen by the project partners. Beyond that, there are two overarching international activities, coordinated by IBB: After the second youth encounter, and supporting the local activities of youths, an international youth congress takes place. Additionally, at the end of the whole project, the results of local activities of all youth groups are presented decentrally all over Europe during a week of action. All these elements are supported by a digital platform.

Youth encounters

Three youth encounters in the respective countries take place in each trilateral partnership as part of *Generation Europe*. During the first encounter, the approach of active citizenship as well as the topics of human rights and democracy are dealt with. At the second encounter, the problems identified by the youths during local meetings (see below) are analysed, discussed, and compared. In this, first schemes for an action plan



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

can crystallise and the influence of the European level on local problems becomes visible. At the third encounter, after the local action plans have been implemented, the youths in trilateral partnerships reflect their action plans and project experiences. Additionally, (media) products on their local actions are created, which also make visible the European connection of their local involvement.

Preparatory meetings and local activities

Before each encounter, there are meetings with the youths, serving to prepare the organisational matters and the content. In further local meetings, the youths are supported in developing and implementing their local action plans. At a local meeting following the first youth encounter, the youths identify their local problem; in between the second and third youth encounter, they are supported at several meetings in realising the action plans they developed. The implementation of their activities takes place in between the international youth congress and the third youth encounter. During their activities, the youths convey their experiences and insights, made in exchange with their European partners, to the municipal level and assert youth political concerns. After the third youth encounter, planning their presentation as part of the European week of action follows. The local meetings take place in all participating European countries.

Youth congress

During the youth congress, participants learn how to deal with local problems as part of a democratic process. Methods of campaigning, crowdfunding, argumentative techniques, targeted use of social media, and many others are conveyed. As part of this international youth congress in Strasbourg, there will also be an event of discussions with political decision makers and youths. In this way, youths have the direct opportunity to apply the methods they have learned and enter into dialogue.

European week of action



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

The results and products of local activities are presented during the European week of action. It takes place as a decentralised, coordinated action, the international character of which will be made visible in (social) media.

Digital (youth) platform

The project is accompanied by a digital platform for its whole duration. It makes the youth's local action plans visible, but also serves to digitally reproduce democratic processes. In the non-public part of the platform, the youths have the opportunity to introduce proposal and ideas to their local action groups, comment on these, make counter-proposals, and vote. In this way, the development of the local action plans is documented for the youth and serves as a digital memory for the duration of the project. During the action planning phase, the youths are also supported by digital project management tools. They will be given opportunities for planning appointments, processes, and budgets for their local action plans, which are easy to use. Above and beyond their trilateral partnerships, youths can follow the development of all groups in detail and consult and communicate with each other. To simplify their communication, possibilities of automatic translation, as well as cooperations with digital language learning services are being explored. The youths are further supported by a knowledge database in form of a wiki. Especially the contents of workshops during the youth congress on the topic of campaigning will be made available here. The development of the whole project, the local action plans, and the European identity will be visible in the public part. Here, the youths are especially active, reporting on events at their location and their action plans in blogs, and share these on social networks. The platform is further implemented as a mobile app, corresponding to the youth's media usage. This also allows the digital platform to be used everywhere, also in the case of spontaneous ideas and meetings.

Activities for professionals

Both at the beginning and the end of the project an international conference for professionals takes place. To prepare the youth encounters and develop appropriate meth-



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

ods, once each year a training (2018), respectively a method workshop (2019 and 2020) takes place. The method workshops are each preceded by a preparatory meeting.

Generation Europe kick-off

At this event, the national and international project leaders from the participating partner organisations set the starting point for their shared work on *Generation Europe*. During the kick-off, the organisational and administrative framework, but substantially also the pedagogical concept of active citizenship and *Generation Europe* are conveyed. The project partners get to know each other, trilateral partnerships are strengthened, and the development of the international network commences.

Training

The training in the first project year serves to convey methods of political education for working with the target group to youth leaders and professionals from the partner organisations. Additionally the youth leaders have the opportunity to get to know each other in their trilateral partnerships, to establish their partnerships, and begin with detailed planning for their first youth encounter.

Preparatory meeting method workshop

During the preparatory meetings for the workshops, new methods are developed, and already existing ones are adapted to the target group. Here, first concepts for the work in their respective youth encounters and in local meetings are developed. Especially the use of the digital platform is considered, which permanently accompanies the group as a blended learning element.

Method workshop

The method workshop offers space for planning the youth encounters pedagogically. Not only are existing methods taken up and explained, but the concepts which are new-



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

ly developed and specifically adapted to the target group at the preparatory meetings described above are also tested and improved.

Generation Europe final conference

At a final event, the international professionals of *Generation Europe* come together once more, in order to comprehensively reflect the experiences and results of the pilot project. This also requires a differentiated view on the past three years, in order to develop opportunities for future projects in a similar or inspired framework. Materials, which were developed together in the network, are presented, finalised, and subsequently published digitally.

Activities on the level of youth politics

In order to consistently connect the whole project with the level of youth politics, the meetings described in the following will take place. These consist of a meeting of the steering committee taking place each year, as well as international stakeholder meetings attached to the events for international professionals.

Meeting of the steering committee

The members of the steering committee are recruited from representatives of the sponsor of *Generation Europe*. Together, they discuss the working results and the progress of this pilot project. For these meetings, input presentations by actors in youth work from Germany and Europe, representatives of universities for the scientific categorisation of the project, and also talks with job agencies are planned. During sessions, overarching approaches and strategies for the youth political process of *Generation Europe* are discussed and recommended.

International stakeholder meeting

The three planned meetings of international stakeholders are connected to central international project events. Here, representatives of the EU commission, members of



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

parliament, representatives of the different national agencies of Erasmus+, and further decision makers from the educational and youth field come together. Here, they discuss how an independent youth politics can be disseminated and anchored in the participating regions and countries of Europe through concepts like *Generation Europe*. At the connected events, the stakeholders get vivid impressions of the different phases of the pilot project. As part of the kick-off event, they experience the international commencement of *Generation Europe* and enter into exchange with the participating professionals. In the second year, they discuss with youths from the project, and get to know the plans for their local action plans. The final meeting takes place at the final conference, where the project is reflected upon and perspectives for the future are developed. The stakeholder meeting serves to anchor European education and youth politics in different regions of Europe and develop shared strategies.

Youth congress „Youth discusses with politics“

At the youth congress in Strasbourg described above, politicians and youths from all over Europe enter into dialogue. Through this, politicians receive an important insight into the lifeworld and values of youths, and experience them as politically interested and committed European citizens.

Support, public relations work, and visibility

Generation Europe is a complex project, which asks for a large amount of commitment and high willingness to walk new ways from all participating partners. Additionally, international work with the mentioned target group, in combination with an approach to the concept of active citizenship, is a major challenge. Thus, besides the coordination of the whole project, especially the support and consulting of the participating organisation is fundamentally important. This relieves the organisations and guarantees their focus on pedagogical work. Opportunities for consultation are given not only at the events for professionals already described, but also and especially in personal meetings, and on regional networking meetings.

Another important aspect of the support of the project by IBB is intensive public relations work. On the one hand, this aims to increase the visibility of *Generation Europe* in all participating regions, on the other hand, it serves to strengthen international youth work in general in the public eye. Broadly positioned public relations works should further show the commitment of youths and thereby influence the often common image of youths (and especially the target group mentioned) showing little social and political involvement.

Beyond that, for the whole project duration IBB aims to make the project better known in youth work institutions in the participating federal states, as well as in politics and administration, and put the need for, as well as the results of international measures for disadvantaged youths further into consciousness. This is especially relevant to secure a long-term perspective, extending beyond the three project years. Accordingly, further federal states will be made aware of the project, and they are sought out for future cooperation.

Perspectives

Generation Europe wants to initiate a process with effects beyond the project duration. The goal is to anchor measures of political and European education for so-called disadvantaged youths in the participating federal states, and, as far as possible, also in the participating European regions. The participating organisations should be enabled to independently realise international projects in this thematic field after a successful conclusion of the project.

At the same time, the participating federal states should be motivated to locally enshrine similar concepts and support structures. The effect of the project should extend beyond the participating federal states, in order to allow for the participation of further states in a continuation. In *Generation Europe*, North Rhine-Westphalia, Thuringia, Brandenburg, and Schleswig-Holstein thus function as lighthouses for good interna-



IBB

Internationales
Bildungs- und
Begegnungswerk

tional projects with heterogeneous target groups, in order to step-by-step motivate other regions of Germany for similar initiatives. A continuation could then in perspective be organised and financed as a common project of different federal states.

Dortmund, in September of 2017