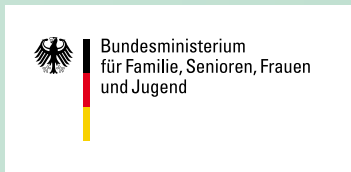


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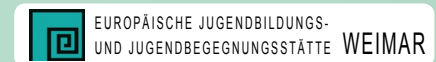


Pilot Study „Intercultural Competences through International Child Exchange Programmes“

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Format: **Pilot study**

Forscher - Praktiker
} **D i a l o g** {
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www.forscher-praktiker-dialog.de



The German Youth Institute carried out an exploratory pilot study on the subject “Intercultural Competences through International Child Exchange Programmes”. The study is integrated in an extensive discussion on this subject which was initiated by “Forscher-Praktiker-Dialog Internationale Jugendarbeit” (Researcher’s-Practitioner’s-Dialogue International Youth Work) in 2006.

An inventory of existing child exchange programmes for children aged 8 – 12 was the pilot study’s primary goal. Following questions were considered in particular:

- Which relevance does intercultural learning and imparting intercultural competences have in international child exchange programmes?
- How capable are children aged 8 – 12 of participating in international child exchange programmes according to programme managers and field workers experiences?
- Which experiences were gained during the implementation of the exchange programmes?
- Which aspects were beneficial and which were counter productive for realising international child exchange programmes?

Some study results:

- From a field worker’s point of view, international child exchange programmes make a considerable contribution towards cultural sensitivity and a better understanding among nations. They contribute towards tolerance and respect for others as well as towards the prevention of xenophobia. Especially children aged 8 – 12 are said to show particular age specific competences and characteristics (e.g. open mindedness, curiosity and inquisitiveness towards children from other countries) that not only contribute to successful exchange programmes but also support their consolidation and development.
- Missing funds or funds that are difficult to access hamper the establishment and the propagation of international child exchange programmes at the moment.
- In comparison to a large amount of well established international youth exchange programmes there are less international child exchange programmes for children aged 8 – 12, but still more than expected. Some organisations have been carrying out child programmes only during the last couple of years while others have been organising such programmes for decades.

- The duration of international child exchange programmes vary according to their underlying concepts. Some "compact" programmes last between two to four weeks, others take between three to five days, some last only one day. Additionally there are programmes that offer a combination of recurrent one-day events followed by a multi-day encounter later on.
- The internationality of child exchange programmes is achieved in various ways. There are bi-national projects (e.g. German-Polish) as well as tri- and multi-national measures. Geographically, European countries are covered as well as other countries worldwide.
- Intercultural learning is part of all projects even though there are differences regarding its status. In some exchanges intercultural learning is a programmatic and main objective while in others intercultural learning takes over a rather implicit status.

The results of this study provide first insights into a little explored area of practice. In order to get more profound information on international child exchange programmes and their influence and sustainability regarding the development of intercultural competences, further in depth research focusing on the children themselves is necessary. This research has been made possible by a funding of Stiftung Deutsche Jugendmarke e.V. The survey is being carried out between 1 February 2009 and 31 July 2010 (www.dji.de/internationale-kinderbegegnung).

Core of the study is the question of potentials for international child exchange programmes with regards to intercultural learning and the development of intercultural competences among German children aged 8 to 12. It is the study's objective, to find out to what extent and under what circumstances international child exchange programmes can support intercultural learning among children aged 8 - 12. The study is expected to provide further information on developments and quality assurance as well as on dissemination and use of successful programmes and formats.

The pilot study was carried out from 1 September 2007 – 29 February 2008. The project was funded by the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ).

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