

Green Mobility – Youth participation workshops for the development of environmentally conscious exchange formats

Andreas Rosellen, Nina Festing, Rosaria Picone

Project background and objectives

A critical examination of environmental and climate protection issues is inevitable and long overdue in the field of international youth exchange. This applies both to the content and to the framework conditions of mobility. Young people are increasingly advocating for these issues, demanding consistent rethinking, and aligning their lives accordingly. Thus, for exchange formats to remain attractive and relevant to young people in the future, they should be designed to be more sustainable and environmentally aware.

This project was conceived from the results of the so-called "Access Study"¹. The findings underline the need to adapt formats of international youth exchange more strongly to the lifeworld and interests of young people and call for more flexibility in the design of formats.² The consideration of topics such as sustainability, environmental and climate protection therefore seems absolutely necessary and can lead to gain more target groups for the participation of youth exchanges in the future.

For this reason, the Franco-German Youth Office funded the „Green Mobility“ project, which included a digital Franco-German youth future lab on the topic. The project took place in cooperation between transfer e.V. and CEMEA and was scientifically accompanied by a research team from Germany and France. A total of 10 young people participated in the encounter, which took place on a total of three dates in December 2021.

The young people involved confirmed the context

¹ Becker, Thimmel (2019): Die Zugangsstudie zum internationalen Jugendaustausch. Different English summarizing publications are available here: <https://www.zugangsstudie.de/access-study-3/>

² These findings are also worked on in a further follow-up process that addresses the development of new formats. The overall results can be read in the final report (so far only available in German) on the scientific monitoring of the project "Neue Formate und Wege zur Teilnahme": Petersen, Zick (2022): Abschlussbericht: Zukunftswerkstätten zur Entwicklung neuer Formate und Wege zur Teilnahme an Mobilitätsangeboten für Jugendliche. Dokumentation, Evaluation, Analyse. <https://bit.ly/3tfeiSs>

explained, as they were very committed and had many ideas for a „greener“ youth exchange. Most of them had already gained mobility experience, but demanded significant changes. Thus, for them, environmental and climate protection in the context of youth exchanges represented a condition that, if not met, would discourage them from further mobility. At the same time, it must be considered that the participants are certainly not representative and that this was a group that was very committed to the topic.

Key findings

Through the analysis of the scientists, different aspects can be pointed out. Sandra Petersen and Sebastian Zick (Germany) referred in particular to the pedagogical consequences and were able to derive characteristics for an attractive „green“ mobility that define environmental protection as a goal and subject in the context of the exchange. Criteria of catering and accommodation, waste avoidance and the integration of arrival and departure - ideally by train - into the program were discussed. A climate protection-related examination of these framework conditions could confirm the quality of the offer in this respect. At the same time, additional competencies on the part of the pedagogical staff were also pointed out. These should be able to design appropriate learning spaces in the program design and promote a sustainable lifestyle among the participants. Furthermore, the desire to actively engage in environmental and climate protection issues should be considered. Participants could be enabled to implement their own climate protection projects afterwards. This aspect could be further promoted by visiting local initiatives and exchanging ideas with climate activists at the meeting place.

Alix Badaire and Alban Roblez (France) again confirm a high value-based commitment of the target group



to the topic of „Green Mobility“. As a finding of the observation and a survey of the participants, the researchers conclude that the group of participants question capitalist structures based on different values and thus develop a realistic assessment of environmentally conscious exchange formats that they want to see implemented. Even though both countries are basically comparable, this conviction among the young people from Germany results primarily from moral values, i.e. the commitment to environmental protection is ethically anchored. The participants from France act more out of political conviction and dedicate themselves to the topic in the form of political protest and want to act as opposition.

Conclusion

All in all, it remains to be said that a „green“ design of exchange formats must be implemented at different levels and that different perspectives on the topic should be included in each case. Therefore, a consistently participatory design of the offer is recommended, in which the participants are involved in the planning of framework conditions and content design from the beginning. To this end, however, funding structures must be made more flexible in order to enable an attractive accompanying program that is oriented toward the ideas of the young people. One potential lies in the development of climate protection projects within the framework of a youth encounter, since young people find a space within the framework of encounter formats in which they can transfer their thematic interest into joint thinking and action.

The process support by transfer e.V./FPD as well as the development of the quality criteria was made financially possible by:



The project was funded by the Franco-German Youth Office:

OFAJ
DFJW

FORSCHUNG UND PRAXIS IM DIALOG

Internationale Jugendarbeit

„Research-Practice-Dialogue“ (RPD)

Since its foundation in 1989, Research-Practice-Dialogue (RPD) has contributed significantly to research activities regarding trends and future perspectives of international youth work. Research-Practice-Dialogue encompasses interdisciplinary and cross-organisational exchange between academia and practice in the field of international youth work.

transfer e.V. is the coordinating body of the network

Fact Sheets inform about projects, research (results) and innovative concepts relevant for the further development of International Youth Work and children and youth group travel.



transfer e.V.
Buchheimer Str. 64
51063 Köln
Tel +49 221 959219-0
Fax +49 221 959219-3
www.transfer-ev.de
fpd@transfer-ev.de

Working approach from RPD



Networking and coordination



Cooperation projects



Research and evaluation



Innovative concepts