

# Documentation

## 1st digital RPD-Netzwerk Event

### 2024

19.04.2024 | 2:00 pm – 5:00pm |  
Zoom

Network “Research and Practice in Dialogue – International Youth  
Work” (RPD)  
Coordination Office: transfer e.V.

- I. Welcome and brief introduction to FPD and Contextualization of the Event
- II. Who is here?
- III. RPD Project “International Narratives of IYW” - Project background and key findings *Dr. Benjamin Bunk - Justus Liebig University Giessen*
- IV. Thematic Exchange in Small Groups
- V. Consolidation of Small Group Discussions in Plenary
- VI. Conclusion and Outlook



# I. Welcome, Brief Introduction to RPD, Contextualization of the Event

# The Network “Research and Practice in Dialogue – International Youth Work”



**Dialogue  
between  
research and  
practice**

- ❖ Impulse character
- ❖ Small scale projects
- ❖ non-institutionalized



**Cooperative  
projects**



**Research and  
evaluation**



**Innovative  
concepts**

- ❖ Since 1989
- ❖ Interdisciplinary
- ❖ Cross-organizational

# Today's Network Event

Until the end of 2020: annual consultation meetings

09/2021: FPD strategy meeting

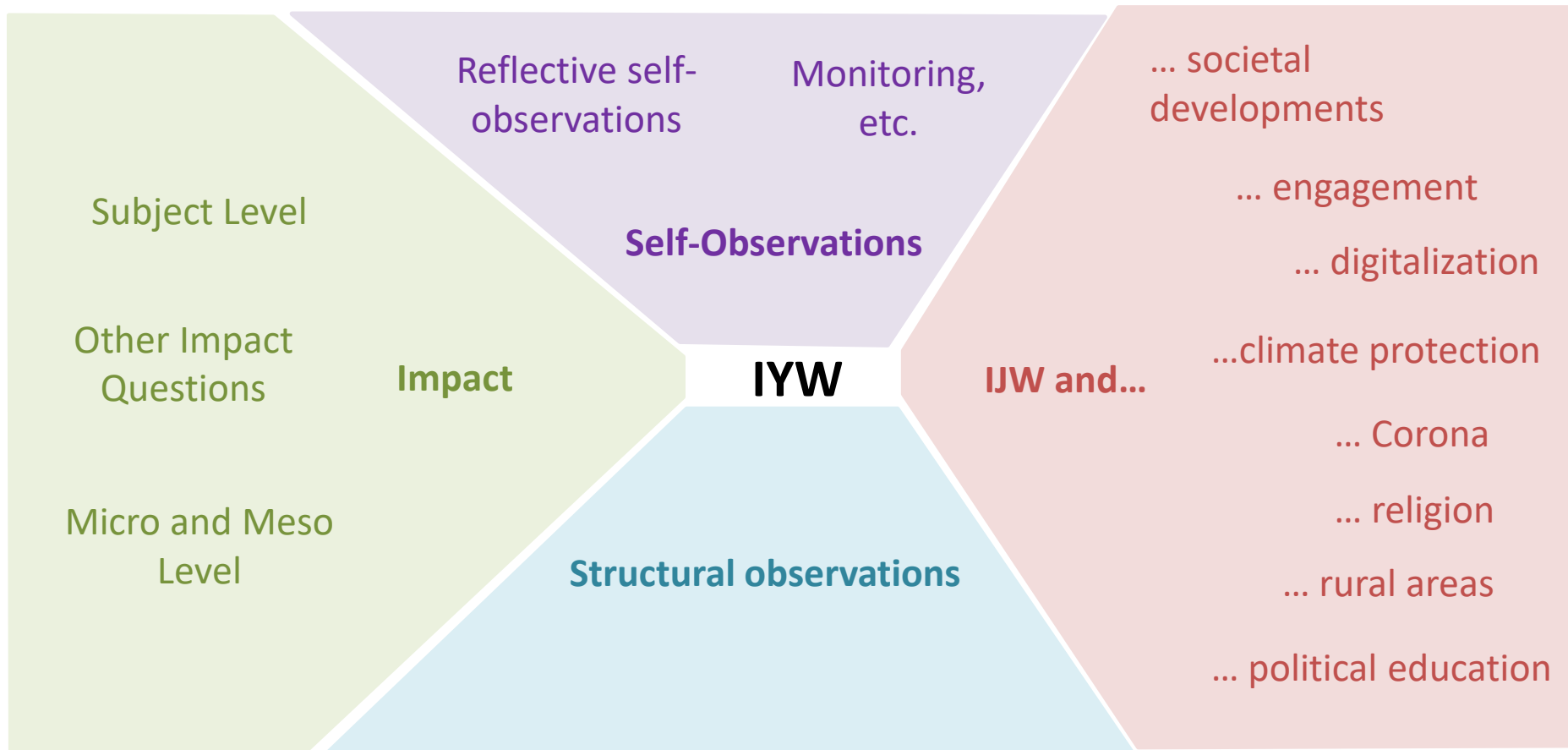
Since 11/2021:  
Digital RPD-Network Events twice a year

In person Project Workshop once a year

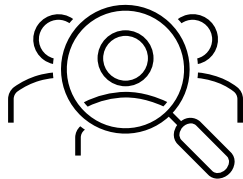
**04/2024: 1st International Digital RPD-Networking Event in English**



- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Research input
- ✓ Identifying further needs for practice and/or research



## II. Who is Here?



*# Name*

*# Organisation*

*# What am I working on at the moment?  
What is of interest/importance to me  
right now? What do I enjoy at the  
moment?*

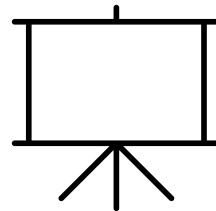


# III. RPD-Projekt

## „International Narratives of International Youth Work“

### Project Background and Key Findings

*Dr. Benjamin Bunk – Justus Liebig Universität  
Gießen*



## **1. Starting point: Process titled “Systemic Effects of IYA” with Expertise und Analyses**

- Data situation on effects at a non-individual level, i.e., the meso or macro level, still shows significant gaps.

## **2. 2022: Application of the RPD-Project „Internationale Narratives of IYW“**

- Research challenges and difficulties for civil society actors in Europe (Turkey, Poland, USA)
- Adopt an internationally comparative perspective to make structures and action logics of IYA in Germany visible and discussable

## **3. 2023: Continuation in the FPD project “IBI - International Justification Narratives for IYW”**

- Research challenges and difficulties for civil society actors in Portugal and Tanzania

## *„Since I remember I was a very participative creature ...“*

Narratives of international youth work (2022-2023), or:  
the ‘local’ professionalization of European (global) norms

Dr. Benjamin Bunk  
Postdoctoral researcher

Chair for Educational Science and Youth Studies, JLU Gießen |  
DFG-Projekt, Social Work in Migration Societies

Exploratory study conducted on behalf of transfer e.V. | Research and Practice in Dialogue (FPD)  
Funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), Germany

# Narratives of international youth work

1. Introduction & Research Question
  - 1.1 On the necessity of an internationally comparative approach
  - 1.2 The question of professionalization
2. Research Design: Exploratory Study "International Narratives"
3. Summary of Results: Professionalization of European/global Norms
  - 3.1 Legitimation patterns and the *embeddedness in societal (macrosocial) contexts*
  - 3.2 Paths into the profession and *the constitutive structural logic of professional action*
  - 3.3 Challenges and *contradictory professional requirements*
4. Summary and outlook: The local pedagogization of European/global norms

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# 1. Introduction & Research Question

- 1.1 On the necessity of an internationally comparative approach
- 1.2 The question of professionalization

## *Corestructures of professional action*

- legitimization patterns and the *embeddedness in societal (macrosocial) contexts*
- Paths into the profession and the *constitutive structural logic of professional action*
- Challenges and *contradictory professional requirements*

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## 2. Research Design: Exploratory Study "International Narratives"(2022-2023)

contrastive country comparison: Turkey, the USA, Poland, Portugal, and Tanzania

- Interviewee: longstanding expertise/practicioners (no represenativity)
- In written form: 2 (9)
- Online face-to-face (1,5-2,5 h)
- Turkey 3(3); US 2(3); Poland 3(3); Portugal 2 (2); Tanzania 2 (2)
- transcripts in total 6

### data collection/survey method

- 1st part: oral narratives (life stories) related to actual professional position
- 2nd part: open questions along seven dimensions of the pedagogical, political, and socio-cultural embedding of international youth work in the respective countries

### interpretive methods

- narrative analysis (Schütze 1983)
- content analisis (Mayring 2015) and hermeneutical-systematic analysis (Klafki 1971)

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## 2. Research Design: Exploratory Study "International Narratives"(2022-2023)

### Part A:

*"Please tell me the story of your life. What brought you to 'international youth work' and the place you're now?"*

### Part B:

- 1. In Germany, there are different traditions, justifications, and aims. Why does "international youth work" exist in your country? And furthermore, have these reasons changed in the light of current challenges?*
- 2. What role does international youth work play for young people growing up? And from the point of view of the young people, what is it about?*
- 3. What are your expectations, what should young people learn, or what experiences should be made possible through "international youth work"?*
- 4. We apply a very broad understanding of "international youth work", being aware of the quite different circumstances in each country. Which kind of "international youth work" are you involved in, and what other "ways" or "forms" do you see in your country? How is it founded?*
- 5. To be pragmatic: What challenges do you see? If you could change something about "international youth work", how should it look like?*
- 6. And rather general: To what extent is mobility of adolescents and young adults discussed beyond the field of work "international youth work"? What other debates are involved?*
- 7. Towards the end, a perhaps curious question: Where do you see international youth work in 30 years?*

# Narratives of international youth work

## 1. Introduction & Research Question

1.1 On the necessity of an internationally comparative approach

1.2 The question of professionalization

## 2. Research Design: Exploratory Study "International Narratives"

## 3. **Summary of Results: Professionalisation of European/Global Norms**

3.1 Legitimation patterns and the embeddedness in societal (macrosocial) contexts

3.2 Paths into the profession and the constitutive structural logic of professional action

3.3 Challenges and contradictory professional requirements

## 4. Summary and outlook: The local pedagogization of european/global norms

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## 3.1 Summary: Legitimation patterns and the embeddedness in societal (macrosocial) contexts

### International Understanding and Societal Change in the Context of Global Inequalities

*„I do think that the, the motivations for exchanges, in many ways grow out of, you know, World War Two, as well in the United States. That's, in the nineteen fifties, that's when high school exchange programs the the, you know, if you want to call them the original programs, the first programs, really began with an idea that we need to repair our relationships.“ [NU: 358]*

*“...sharing what we know, there's definitely a, you know, sort of a, one could always call it, you know, patriarchal mindset that we have skills and ideas that we want to bring to your country //Mhh// and what can we do to help with the skills that we have.“ [NU: 407]*

*"We were very curious about all which comes from the West. Inspired by all non-formal education formats and activities." [MPi: F2]*

*"So, in Turkey, we have international youth work because somehow, we became the part of Erasmus plus program, actually." [CT:373].*

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## 3.1 Summary: Legitimation patterns and the embeddedness in societal (macrosocial) contexts

### International Understanding and Societal Change in the Context of Global Inequalities

*"(...) when I was a child, in my primary school process, which is early nineties, what I knew the, the meaning of the world, geopolitical importance of the country, which was in the first grade. Can you imagine that? Bec- we have the enemy in the West, the enemy in the east. So, we have raised like that. So, we just thought that everybody wants to kill us." [CT: 446]*

*"So, I think it's quite new, this idea of interculturality because Portugal is still it's a very, it's a very poor country, you know like that's it. Everyone, the most, most of the people that are now in big cities, all their grandfathers and fathers came from villages like this one. So, like the, the social context is changed very much in a very fast movement. (...) before only like the wealthy, wealthiest people could think about this." [AP:562]*

*„Wir waren immer ängstlich, dass die Deutschen nach Polen kommen und unsere Grundstücke kaufen. Aber es hat sich herausgestellt, dass die Mehrheit von Polen nach Deutschland umgesiedelt ist und dort Grundstücke gekauft hat und Häuser bewohnt. Und in diesen Grenzregionen, in den kleinen Orten, da sind fast die Hälfte Polen, die dort entweder leben und in Polen arbeiten oder hier leben und dort arbeiten.“ [PPi:44]*

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## 3.1 Summary: Legitimation patterns and the embeddedness in societal (macrosocial) contexts

### Youth in the Context of New Learning Formats, Educational Critique, and Social Pedagogy

*"Young people should expect to learn more about themselves and how they can affect change in the world around them." [CU: F2]*

*"Sie wollen entdecken, wie die Anderen leben. Wie die Anderen arbeiten, was für eine Musik sie hören, wie Konzerte aussehen. Also die Neugier bleibt. Und ich glaube, unsere Rolle ist diese Dinge einfach zu ermöglichen und sowas zu machen oder entdecken." [PPi:728]*

*"I have a fourteen year old brother and, but I think that's an answer that could only come from a from a younger young person. But what I see, normally, it's a very big eagerness to travel." [SP: 468]*

*"(...) this desire to, to travel and see, see other countries, knowing that we were not going to do it alone." [SP: 478]*

*"So, I see it's very connected to self-esteem to increase confidence in because I I don't think anyone is ever completely comfortable when they are many of us not even comfortable at home. As young people, we always, there's always something about ourselves that's not good enough. And I think when you go abroad, everyone, regardless of where, but either you don't think you speak good enough English or you don't fit with the group or this or that. There's always these fears. And once you are abroad and you actually experience things and you are able to conquer these fears or see that you could do it." [SP: 510]*

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## 3.1 Summary: Legitimation patterns and the embeddedness in societal (macrosocial) contexts

### Youth in the Context of New Learning Formats, Educational Critique, and Social Pedagogy

*"No, we do not have institutions that are specifically dedicated to international exchange or that. (...) We don't have such things in XXX. The [individual] participants have the freedom of choice (...). With us, yes, they register as a fixed group." [PPi: 516]*

*"(...) because (XXX) schools want the students to finish this particular academic track, to strengthen their chances to go, to be accepted into university and, which I think is a shame, and I think it's a trend that may change, but that (was a) frustration for me, seeing how my children and their peers... in some ways it's easier to be accepted into an exchange program these days, than it was in the nineteen, you know, seventies and eighties, but it's also more challenging to step away from t- the very vigorous and very predictable academic track that the you- that the (XXX) schools are setting for the students. It's harder to step away from that and say, I'm going to do something different." [YU: 69]*

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## 3.2 Summary: Paths into the profession and the constitutive structural logic of professional action

### **Social commitment**

*"Since I remember I was a very participative creature, active already in the village and in the primary school either by supporting other students or representing us in different 'school bodies'" [MPi: F1]*

### **(In)-Justice**

*And for me it's very clear that the lack of opportunities that I experienced as a teenager." [SP: 172]*

*"I felt a strong need to shape the reality around me, be active, engaged and have an impact on my life and the life of others, especially of those who had a more challenging start in life." [MPi: F1]*

*"So I was very interested in this kind of things since I was born, let's say, because I was also very interested in intercultural learning, discovering different cultures, discovering different languages, so I had lots of friends from different countries, I was always, let's say, an international person." [CT: 16]*

### **Intercultural encounters and the personal experience between cultures**

*"It really started with my parents when I was about twelve years old. My parents decided to host an exchange student, and that began a long series of many different exchange students who, you know, entered our family as family members." [YU: 3]*

*"So well, when I was five, I moved to Spain, so when I moved to Spain with my parents and then I only, I was in Mallorca and then in Galicia. And when I was thirteen, I moved back to Portugal with my parents..." [AP: 58]*

## 3.2 Summary: Paths into the profession and the constitutive structural logic of professional action

### **Cultural organization and youthful togetherness**

*"So, I started getting involved in all these, you know, like cultural movement and cultural organization." [AP: 102]*

*"It was so extraordinary to sit in the circle, to have all energizers, to meet people from all over the world and to feel a part of a bigger and highly motivated community. To create projects together." [MPi: F2]*

### **New forms of learning and the joy of language and other ways of working**

*"I was a teacher but I was not a teacher and I got to use non-formal education methods to work with young people on skills and more than the skills, maybe the life hacks and the trust that they needed to have on themselves to engage in such experiences." [SP: 49]*



## 3.2 Summary: Paths into the profession and the constitutive structural logic of professional action

### Ability to create and self-realization

*"I am very satisfied with it. I am a teacher by profession. I taught for five years at high school, but it was Polish language. I am Polish. But I had two passions in addition. One of them is sports, and the other was the German language. And there was an opportunity to further educate myself, and I acquired German language skills. And then it was just chance. It was suggested to me to work in the organization. I had no knowledge about international youth cooperation. About structures at all. I only had language skills, and that was 20 years ago, 23 years ago." [PPi: 6]*

*"I was working for a market research company and started a volunteer initiative for the company and found that I really wanted to work in the nonprofit sector." [DU: F1]*

*"So, I went to see the international relations and very soon I found out that the kind of international cooperation that I was interested in was not the one that happens in the private secret rooms of people in positions of power. But I was really more interested in the human aspect of it." [SP: 12]*

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## 3.3 Summary: Challenges and contradictory professional requirements

Ultimately, there are *challenges* shared in this field of work, despite different forms and contexts.

These refer to tensions, contradictions and paradoxes inherent to the field under varying conditions. They must be dealt with or endured professionally.

- a) Inclusion in an unequal world
- b) Recognition and distinction from formal education
- c) Competition with other opportunities for young people to individuate themselves (leisure, sport, media)
- d) Funding deficit and organizational surplus for international mobility
- e) Shaping of society vs. bureaucratization
- f) Funding structures vs. learning organizations
- g) Discrepancy between strategic intervention (e.g. youth policy) and lifeworld;
- h) Complexity of practices vs. fragile conditions to succeed (networks structures by NGOs; biographies of participants)
- i) Opportunities and risks of pedagogization.

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## 4. outlook: The local pedagogization of European/global norms

*"I cannot imagine. (..) Yeah, yeah. I cannot imagine two years from now in this country. @(. )@ (...) Anything can happen. Thirty years from now, if this country would still exist, @(. )@ @we can still talk about, if we can still talk about international youth work in the country@. Well, actually, that's a very very tough question, really, because latest development of the country, I mean, latest ( ) of the country is very tense." [CT.: 844]*

*"So what I what I've seen and this is also being very analytical in the I'd say the past at least for the past five years I've been looking very closely at what kind of discussions are promoted around actually and people in general, youth policies, youth participation, youth exchange, whatever. And what I see is that the the dialogues are very it's again the bubble. You know we have people who do youth work. Talking to the people who want to promote youth work or promote want to promote youth work might be a strong a strong image." [SP:755].*

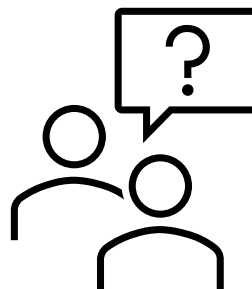
*You know, I don't, I don't have a clear vision of that and I think, because of sort of, you know, where we are now, as I said, I think both figuring out what does it mean, what (has) the pandemic done to our educational system? Is it going to make us more open to different opportunities, different ways to learn, moving forward, is it going to push us back to no, there's only one way to do it." [YU: 928]*

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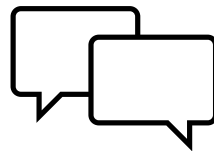
*„Since I remember I was a very participative creature ...“*

Narratives of international youth work (2022-2023), or:  
the professionalisation of european (global) norms

Thank you for your attention!



# IV. Discussion and Thematic Exchange



Professional Understanding: Why do I (!) like working in the field of work?

Reflective level: Considering the perspectives presented from other countries: What blind spots am I currently discovering in my own practice? What have I learnt today about myself and my work?

Outlook: How do I incorporate these understandings into my own practice?

## Breakout Session 2

### Why Do I (!) like working in the field of work?

- New perspectives on familiar surroundings
- Enthusiasm about dynamics in the groups
- Directly observable positive effects on young people
- It is exciting to work as a researcher in a multilingual context and thus gain new perspectives and experiences
- Mutual inspiration and learning from each other
- Great fun in planning and implementing the measures

### Reflective level: Considering the perspectives presented from other countries

- Recurring surprises in practice (especially with things that are already part of everyday life for locals in the respective host country)
- Specific ideas and goals for promotion in exchanges with European countries compared to other regions (e.g. foreign policy or participation only through and because of Erasmus+)

### What have I learned today about myself and my work? Outlook: How do I incorporate these understandings into my practice?

- Reflections on my own research project (how can I continue my own work)
- Theory and practice transfer is helpful and enriching for my work
- Global youth exchange brings diverse perspectives to the concept of international youth work and the goals, challenges, etc.
- Great potential for the own professionalization

## Breakout Session 3

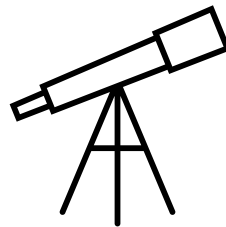
### 1) Why Do I like working?

1) new perspectives, 2) high potential for development, 3) inclusion, multi-faceted

**Blind spots: youth work practice experiences sometimes don't match to funding rules and regulations**

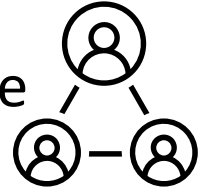
could be seen as blind spots at youth policy level and funding organisations

# VI. Conclusion and Outlook





- ✓ Make yourself, your work, and current topics visible on the padlet world map



*(PW: Netzwerk FPD 2022)*

- ✓ In case of specific needs/research questions: Coordination talks with the RPD team



**Thank You for Your  
Participation and for Bringing  
Diverse Expertise!**

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