

3 partners\_ 3 workcamps\_ 3 countries\_

ewoca<sup>3</sup> - european workcamps 2015-2017  
Funding programme for youth work organisations

# Impressions and Perspectives



STIFTUNG  
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Ministerium für Familie, Kinder,  
Jugend, Kultur und Sport  
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## The Minister-President of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia



At a time, where public perception sees the European Union staggering from one crisis to the next and in many countries so-called „Euro critics“ are celebrating one political success after another, to see the European idea being as attractive and lively as ever is exceptionally good. And for this, ewoca<sup>3</sup> is a particularly lovely example. Here, partner organisations and young people from now 17 European countries campaign for a united, peaceful and social Europe. This project has, since its beginning, developed splendidly and now launches into the next phase, and I am delighted that it is also funded by the Federal Republic. Under the title „ewoca<sup>3</sup>(+) – for everyone!“ it is now young people from not only North Rhine-Westphalia, but also from Brandenburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia, who will, together with new partners from France, Greece, Ukraine, Denmark and Belarus, show what Europe needs most urgently these days: Idealism and drive, public spirit and solidarity. In this way, Europe has a sound future.

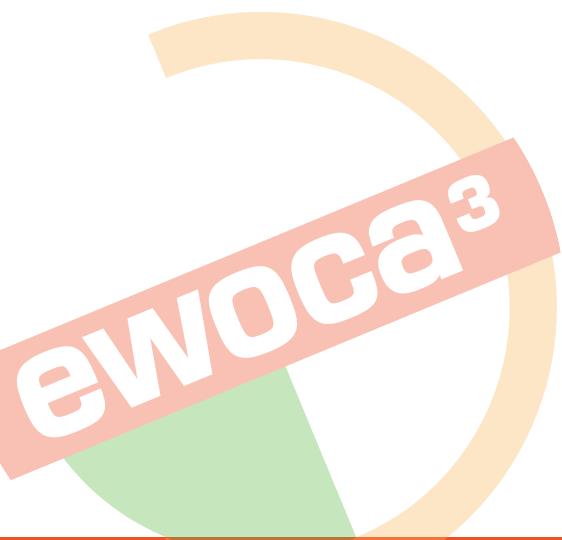
As official patron and Minister-President I am proud, that, until 2017, Stiftung Mercator and the State of North Rhine-Westphalia will fund no less than 36 workcamps with participation by youth work organisations from our State. Here, young people are active in, for example, environmental protection, care for refugees and are taking a stand against discrimination and racism. In this way, they show in their very personal, very likable and very persuasive way, how strong Europe can be – because it is them, who make Europe stronger. For this, I thank them most cordially.

I also want to thank the International Association for Education and Exchange (IBB e.V.) in Dortmund for their constructive and successful realisation of the project, and also Stiftung Mercator for their manifold support. I wish all participants lots of success for the future and enjoyment with and at ewoca<sup>3</sup>.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannelore Kraft". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hannelore Kraft

Minister-President  
of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia



## Michael Schwarz, Executive Director of Stiftung Mercator

Europe is in a deep crisis of confidence and of meaning. The matter is not just about the continuation of the Euro or the stabilisation of financial markets anymore. The European idea itself is at stake. That, at least, is the impression one gets after looking at the results of last year's European election. Anti-European forces were able to improve their position all over Europe and now form a not so insignificant group in the European Parliament.

Looking at this atmosphere of criticism of Europe, the achievements of European integration sometimes fade into the background. But especially for young people, Europe brings numerous benefits, from freedom to travel, and numerous possibilities of European exchange for pupils, students or young employees, to cheap telephone calls within Europe. But besides these practical benefits, Europe is also and especially a community of values. And even though peace is not a matter of course, as can be seen in Ukraine at the moment, large parts of the continent are a space of security and democracy.

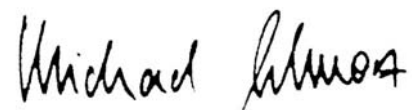
For these positive aspects to return into public consciousness, the active participation of energetic people is needed. And for exactly this reason, Stiftung Mercator supports the ewoca<sup>3</sup> project. Irrespective of origin, religion and cultural roots, partner organisations and young people from 17 European countries come together, to experience the European idea in a practical way. From renovation of a youth centre, creation of a garden, or building a playground, to cleaning up a riverbank: The collaborative projects are an articulate symbol for a cosmopolitan and tolerant togetherness.

The ewoca<sup>3</sup> project was jointly created six years ago by IBB and Stiftung Mercator. In the meantime ewoca<sup>3</sup> has developed. We are happy, for the programme „ewoca<sup>3</sup>(+) - for everyone!“ to reach beyond the borders of North Rhine-Westphalia and target young people from Brandenburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia. We see this as validation for the important commitment of IBB to expand European youth work and enable exchange experiences for the greatest number of participants.



Photo: David Ausserhofe, Rights: Stiftung Mercator

It is important for youths to experience Europe. The goal has to be a young European public, which, with mutual respect, is able to exchange views on questions on the future of our continent. We need a European youth, which lives the idea of Europe, and carries it further. For their work at the actual projects, I wish IBB and the participating youths and professionals great success – but most of all a lot of enjoyment in experiencing and shaping Europe together.



Michael Schwarz



### What is ewoca³?

ewoca<sup>3</sup> is a funding programme for youth work institutions, supporting and enabling international youth encounters. The concept follows the idea of invitation and return invitation: Youths from three countries realise three international workcamps in three years – one in each country. The youth work institutions from Germany enter into partnerships, each with two other European countries. From Turkey to Italy, from Poland to Belarus, from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Hungary, a network for young people develops.

#### European exchange at the summercamp

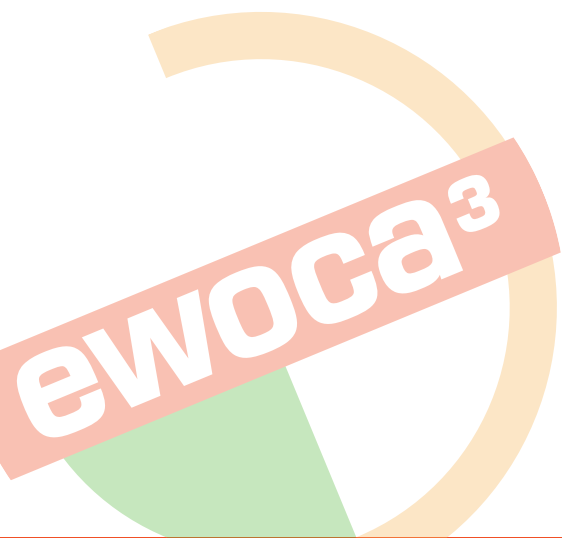
In their content the projects are oriented on the European topic of “Education for Sustainable Development”. This could be hands-on jobs, like building a health centre for Chernobyl resettlers in Belarus. Or the collaboration with an environmental protection organisation in Estonia, where youths could develop their ecological awareness while cleaning a riverine landscape.

In addition to physical work, workshops create a transcultural dialogue on the difficult aspects of the regions. Youths discuss with politicians and inhabitants at the location – for example at a meeting in Bochum, where they talked about possibilities of active political participation in shaping the Ruhr area.



#### Supporting international youth work

The funding phase 2012 to 2014 brought youths in 12 different project groups together – in three successive summers, in a total of 36 camps. Young people from 14 countries, aged 16 to 24, took part. In the years between 2012 and 2014 about 850 youths participated in the project. Each workcamp is funded with up to 15 000 Euro. The trilateral partnerships together additionally have to match this amount. Not only the youths themselves, but also the initiatives become part of a cooperation overcoming boundaries.







## More than just a funding programme!

ewoca<sup>3</sup> is more than just funding youth encounters – it also targets the implementing organisations themselves. The comprehensive support and qualification programme is primarily geared towards new actors in European youth work. Organisations with little experience in the international field are specifically encouraged to take part in the projects. Beyond that, initiatives characterised by voluntary work are able to professionalise themselves. An additional goal of ewoca<sup>3</sup> is to support small youth work organisations, to raise their local profile, and to sustainably motivate them for working on an international level.

### Strengthening the structures of international youth work

The 3-year duration of ewoca<sup>3</sup> projects strengthens the collaboration of the participating organisations. A European network is created, where information and competences can be exchanged. Looking towards future projects, this helps in finding new partners and stabilising existing relationships.

Each year commences with a project planning congress, gathering representatives of all international partner organisations.

The focus is on further qualification for project managers: Each congress offers further education and workshops regarding one principal topic.

### A professional qualification programme

Further educating the ewoca<sup>3</sup> workcamp team members is specifically valued. Each partner organisation from each country sends a person to participate in the respective seminar. This forms the basis for collaboration on an equal footing within the international partnerships and a common standard for all ewoca<sup>3</sup> projects. After three years in the summercamps, some of the youths identify so much with the project, that they decide to train for becoming a workcamp team member themselves. Participants become team members – a particularly beautiful detail of the ewoca<sup>3</sup> success story.







## The youth of ewoca<sup>3</sup>

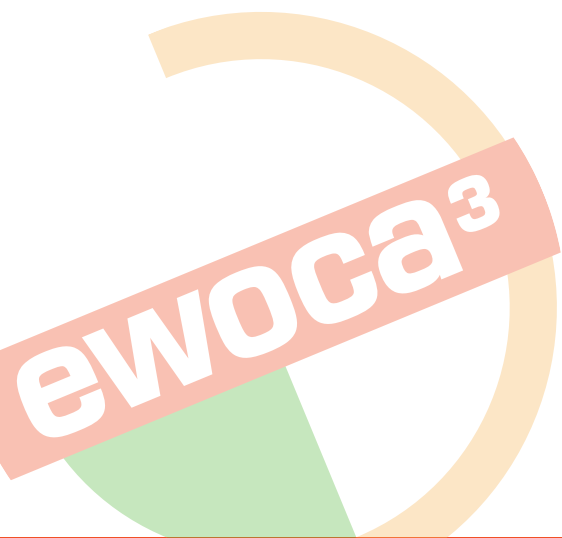
Practical experience, as well as survey results regarding international youth exchanges show, that until now about 80 percent of participants in such programmes are members of the educated strata of society. Youths from schools preparing for vocational training, from special schools, or youths with a migrant background only rarely participate. One of the goals of ewoca<sup>3</sup> and ewoca<sup>3</sup>(+) is to counter this development. Young people, which for cultural, social, economic, physical or geographic reasons only have impeded access to projects of international youth work, are a primary target.

### Participation and Inclusion

However, ewoca<sup>3</sup> and ewoca<sup>3</sup>(+) are not explicitly focused on the disadvantaged. It is important for youths from different social milieus to participate in the workcamps together. Youths, which usually are barred from encounter projects, meet youths with less educational disadvantage – and vice versa. The exchange allows for mutual learning. A major goal is the social inclusion of all participants.

### A Europe of diversity

Working with such a diversified target group necessitates specific training for the pedagogical teams. Project managers responsible for planning, in their role as team members, have to be able to adapt to the different backgrounds of participants at all times. Therefore, within the frame of the ewoca<sup>3</sup> support programme, methods and strategies particularly appropriate for youths in international workcamps are conveyed and discussed. Diversity in Europe is not just something one can encounter – it is our strength.







## ewoca<sup>3</sup> partnerships 2015 - 2017

### Leverkusen – Finland – Italy

SJD - Die Falken Leverkusen (Leverkusen / Germany)  
 Oulun Nuoret Kotkat Piirijärjestö ry (Oulu / Finland)  
 META Società Cooperativa Sociale ONLUS (Rome / Italy)

### Steinfurt – Lithuania – Spain

Mediencooperative Steinfurt e.V. (Steinfurt / Germany)  
 Jugendzentrum Telsiai (Telsiai / Lithuania)  
 Asociación Opendoors (Quart de Poblet / Spain)

### Bochum – Italy – Poland

Bochumer Bildungschancen e.V. (Bochum / Germany)  
 Risorsa Europa (Latina / Italy)  
 Fundacja Krzyżowa (Grodziszczce / Poland)

### Cologne – France – Turkey

Jugendamt der Stadt Köln (Cologne / Germany)  
 Association YAN (Marseille / France)  
 Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality (Gaziantep / Turkey)

### Dortmund – Belarus – Italy

GrünBau (Dortmund / Germany)  
 Nash Sled (Minsk / Belarus)  
 Esplora (Itri / Italy)

### Bornheim – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Hungary

Jugendakademie Walberberg (Bornheim / Germany)  
 Udruzenje gradana "Putevi mira"  
 (Kozarska Dubica / Bosnia and Herzegovina)  
 Szubjektív (Budapest / Hungary)

### Hagen – Turkey – Poland

SJD - Die Falken Hagen (Hagen / Germany)  
 Mugla Gençlik Merkezi (Mugla / Turkey)  
 Fundacja Borussia (Olsztyn / Poland)

### Cologne – Italy – Lithuania

Roots'n'Routes Cologne e.V. (Cologne / Germany)  
 Centro di Creazione e Cultura (Florence / Italy)  
 Viesoji istaiga Kauno ivairiu tautu kulturu centras (Kaunas / Lithuania)

### Oberhausen – Estonia – Romania

Kinder- und Jugendtreff ParkHaus (Oberhausen / Germany)  
 MTÜ Noored Toredate Mõtetega (Tartu / Estonia)  
 Outward Bound Romania (Tigrul Mures / Romania)

### Bonn – France – Poland

Gustav-Stresemann-Institut (Bonn / Germany)  
 Centre d'Education et de Formation Interculturel Rencontre(CEFIR)  
 (Dunkerque / France)  
 Instytut Regionalny w Katowicach (Katowice / Poland)

### Bochum – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Turkey

Jugendamt Bochum (Bochum / Germany)  
 DVOC Youth Organization (Donji Vakuf / Bosnia and Herzegovina)  
 Green Çivril Youth Group (Çivril / Turkey)

### Cologne – Russia – Ukraine

Natur bewegt e.V. (Cologne / Germany)  
 INTERRA (Krasnoyarsk / Russia)  
 Green Cross Society (Lviv / Ukraine)



## Why do we do international youth work?

International encounters have a positive effect on the development of both the personality and the competences of youths. Our globalised world presents considerable demands – which young people, if they are appropriately supported, can face with confidence. For many youths European workcamps are their very first experience abroad. The mobility across borders, which for programme participants becomes a normality, does not infrequently lead to a successful career start.

### Education without borders

The international context supports youths in relating themselves to others. Specifically important is the particular format of the ewoca<sup>3</sup> camps, where the boundaries between education, work, encounter and leisure are overcome.

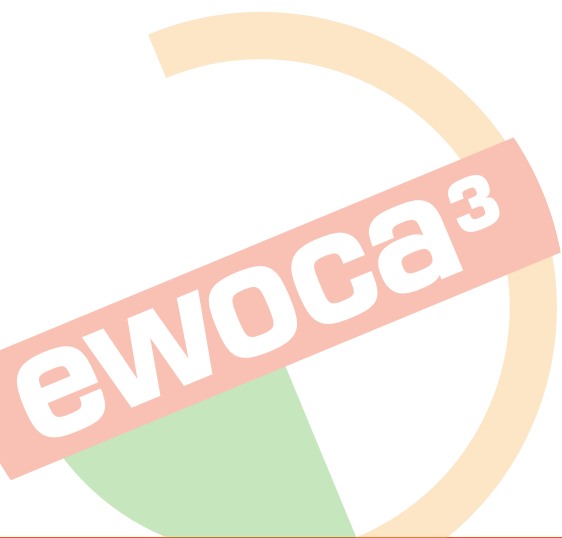
The non-formal approach of a transcultural encounter supports their acquiring socially, democratically, personally and economically relevant skills. It is thus an important supplement to schooling.



### Stemming the tide

In their practical work during the projects youths experience their own strengths and learn about the chances of shaping society. Participants draw new motivation from this experience – many learn a foreign language or start volunteering. Last but not least, support of international youth work should also be understood as a statement.

In Germany, since 1992, the expenditures in this field are constantly falling. Many municipalities pulled out of international youth work, independent organisations often lack the necessary funds for their work. It is time to counter this trend!







## Strengthen the European idea especially in times of crisis!

For many people in many different countries, the continuing Euro crisis leads to feelings of uncertainty. The search for someone to blame is a quick reaction – someone has to be responsible for the crisis. In the following, our neighbours in other European countries become targets in a political manipulation of opinion. Enmity towards foreigners, distrust and finally racism develops. The parties at the fringes of the political spectrum get more popular, the media profits from polarisation. Over this, the European project begins to falter.

### Friendship across borders

Here, international youth work offers a chance to counter the approaching feelings of enmity and skepticism. It supports the positive and social characteristics of young people.

Additionally, international youth work strengthens an awareness for Europe and the European identity.



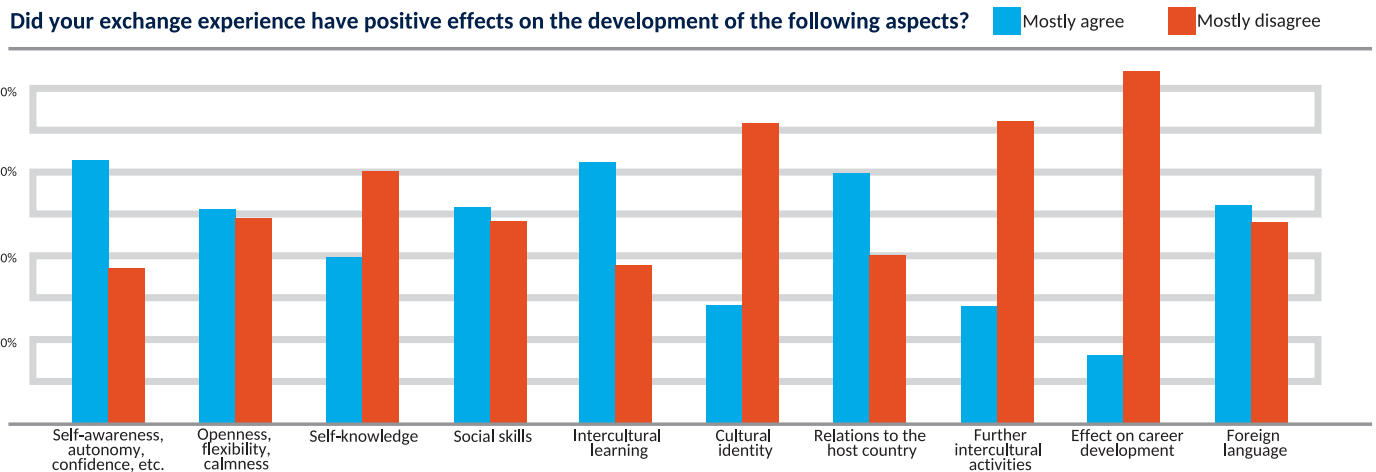
Dealing with peers from other regions stimulates the youth's confidence. Encounters abroad broaden the horizon in not just a geographical sense: Once interested in other cultures, it becomes easier to approach others, even at home.

### Tomorrow's Europe

Among the most-discussed effects of the European crisis is the "disenchantment with politics" among youths. Dissatisfaction and a feeling of powerlessness often lead to a complete lack of interest in political topics. The powers that be do what they want anyway – it is often heard. International youth work encourages interest in political topics.

Encounters abroad create an awareness for the problems and questions of others and inspire an appetite for participation. Europe needs a responsible youth – especially in times of crisis!

## International youth work works: Essential findings at a glance



The four most frequently used youth exchange formats were explored exemplarily: student exchange, youth group exchange, project-oriented cultural youth encounter, multinational workcamp. Besides a comprehensive literature and programme analysis, 17 expert interviews and 93 interviews with former participants from Germany and 40 from abroad were conducted. Additionally 532 questionnaires in total were evaluated. Strengthening different competences.

### Enhanced self-assuredness and social competencies

- // 48 % of the respondents have better capacities to cope with situations unknown to them,
- // 50 % are more open towards strangers, and
- // 50 % have also learned to play an active part in a group.

### Enhanced intercultural competencies

- // 61 % have positive feelings towards the partner nation as a result of the youth exchange,
- // 57 % could deepen their knowledge about different cultures, and
- // 51 % of the respondents are more at ease today when it comes to understand different cultures.

### Enhanced language competencies

- // 61 % have overcome barriers to communicate in a foreign language,
- // 55 % have improved their language skills and
- // 23 % were motivated to study another foreign language.

### The youth exchange experience in the context of the overall biography

- // 31 % of the respondents stated that the youth exchange initiated a chain of further activities and decisions within their lives,
- // 53 % confirmed that the youth exchange motivated them to take part in further exchange programmes,
- // 26 % spent a longer period abroad encouraged by the short-term youth exchange.

Source:

Thomas, A.; Chang, C.; Abt, H.: Erlebnisse, die verändern – Langzeitwirkungen der Teilnahme an internationalen Jugendbegegnungen. Göttingen 2006

Cited from: IJAB: Ergebnisse der Studie Langzeitwirkungen internationaler Jugendbegegnungen, Orientierungshilfe für die Praxis. Köln 2013





## The effect of ewoca<sup>3</sup>: Statements of the youth work organisations

### Kevin Ewe, Agricola e.V. in Dortmund, Germany

Through our participation in ewoca<sup>3</sup>, international youth work became a much stronger focus of Agricola. The valuable contacts with other organisations and the exchange with pedagogues from other countries motivate us, and we take on new perspectives and methods for our everyday work. You learn a certain calmness: Financial resources and time are, how could it be otherwise, scarce in other countries as well.

Our youths are proud to have been part of ewoca<sup>3</sup> for three years, which created a strong bond between them and the organisation. Our participants had much stronger intercultural skills than we expected.

### Neldijana Rujanac, DVOC Youth organisation, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Since our organisation got involved with ewoca<sup>3</sup>, things improved for us. Every year more and more youths from our local community are interested in being involved in our activities. Our commitment to ewoca<sup>3</sup> was also recognized by our local authorities; we now receive much better support.

Being part of ewoca<sup>3</sup> helped us reaching some target groups that we had difficulties in working with before. Another very important achievement is the individual improvement of our trainers. The trainings and the practical experience from the camps helped a lot to improve their skills.

### Silvia Ligi and Amandine Forner, YAN organisation, France

ewoca<sup>3</sup> was a great experience for YAN. The support programme of ewoca<sup>3</sup> gave us the possibility to improve our knowledge concerning financial and legal aspects as well as on pedagogical aspects. Starting from the beginning, we always had the feeling to be completely supported, which is very important for a small organisation doing its first steps in the field of international exchanges.

The most important thing is that we could give some youths the chance to be part of a project that considers them to be agents of something positive and sustainable. They had great moments and opened their minds to others and also to confidence.





## The effect of ewoca<sup>3</sup>: Voices of the youths

*This way of collaboration is just great and it changes and improves us in the best way. All these activities, getting to know each other, living together, all of this brings us closer together.*

*Ayumi, 18 years old, from Rome, participated in a workcamp in Cantalupo, Italy, together with youths from Dortmund and Belarus.*

*I am very happy to have taken part in ewoca<sup>3</sup>. We collaborated very well, and along the way my English became a lot better.*

*At first, I was unable to speak, but then suddenly got the hang of it.*

*Maurice from Oberhausen about his experiences at the workcamp in Sovata, Romania.*

*At ewoca<sup>3</sup> I learned that, even though we come from so many different countries, we are all the same. We are all young people, and we worked together in teams. Even though we spoke different languages, we understood one another.*

*Emil from Gutersloh reports from an ewoca<sup>3</sup> workcamp in Belarus.*

*At home, I had never worked with wood before. But on the workcamp in France we, for example, hammered poles into the ground. I did not know that I was that strong. And I did not expect myself to be able to work so hard.*

*Sharon from Cologne was at a camp in Dunkerque in Northern France, together with Polish, German, and French youths.*



*The work was exhausting, but also a great experience. Before I did know virtually nothing about the difficult political situation in Cyprus. In the divided capital Nicosia, we visited a place where people from both sides met. Cooperation is important to overcome this feeling of fear.*

*Alla from Russia was a participant at an ewoca<sup>3</sup> workcamps in Cyprus.*

*I particularly liked that we dealt with stereotypes in the workshops. Before we came here, we all had some ideas about the other countries, but now we realise that some things just aren't true.*

*Marve from Çivril / Turkey was a participant at a workcamp in Bochum.*







## ewoca<sup>3</sup>(+) – The network continues to develop

The past few years have shown great potential for ewoca<sup>3</sup> to grow further. Even though until now only youth work institutions from North Rhine-Westphalia and their international partners could participate, organisations from other Federal States repeatedly have voiced their interest. For they as well have demand for a stable network for international youth work and supporting structures.

### New ways of cooperation

Thanks to funding from the Innovation fund of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) youth work institutions from Brandenburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia can now, for the first time, become part of the ewoca<sup>3</sup> network. In the years 2015 to 2017, and together with two European partners each, they will conceive and realise innovative workcamp projects.

Within the framework of the ewoca<sup>3</sup>(+) – for everyone! programme they continue to develop existing practice in non-formal education through new forms of communication and cooperation. This new programme as well is targeted towards those youths, which usually have little chances of participating in international projects.

For ewoca<sup>3</sup>(+) – for everyone! organisations were chosen, which work closely with young people and which are well connected in their respective Federal States. Together with these partners, concepts are developed which fit the youths and the specific demands of the region.

### Sustainability needs funding

Such an exemplary and comprehensive funding programme is dependent on sound financing. We are working on making the opportunities of ewoca<sup>3</sup> and ewoca<sup>3</sup>(+) - for everyone! available beyond the current funding phase and to other Federal States as well. The support staff at IBB and the qualification programme for youth work professionals make important contributions towards the professionalisation of international youth work.

Through close collaboration with very diverse organisations, new target groups, usually remote from exchanges, are included. Now is the time to secure the successful programme for the future and sustainably strengthen international youth work in all Federal States. The youths taking part in ewoca<sup>3</sup> today, are the Europe of tomorrow.



## The funding partners

### Stiftung Mercator

Stiftung Mercator is a private foundation which fosters science and the humanities, education and international understanding. It specifically initiates, develops and funds projects and partner organizations in the thematic fields to which it is committed: it wants to strengthen Europe, improve integration through equal educational opportunities for everyone, drive forward the energy transition as a trigger for global climate change mitigation and firmly anchor cultural education in schools.

Stiftung Mercator feels a strong sense of loyalty to the Ruhr region, the home of the founding family and the foundation's headquarters.

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### The Ministry for Family, Children, Youth, Culture and Sport of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

The Ministry is funding the ewoca<sup>3</sup> project with funds from the Support Plan for Children and Youth since 2012. ewoca<sup>3</sup> makes an important contribution to international collaboration in youth politics and to European integration. With support from the Federal State, until now 36 projects in 14 European countries could be realised. To support these youth encounters in NRW and Europe is of great importance. They decisively contribute to durable understanding between the peoples, they strengthen European identity and help to save the peace.

I very much welcome this sustainable extension of an international youth network.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ute Schäfer".

Ute Schäfer

Minister for Family, Children, Youth, Culture and Sport  
of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia





## The International Association for Education and Exchange (IBB)

Overcoming boundaries – the International Association for Education and Exchange (IBB) is working towards this goal since its founding in 1986. It organises international encounters, conferences, and educational opportunities for all age groups, in order to support social commitment and strengthening networks in civil society. Using intercultural education, it contributes to dismantling discrimination and supports steps towards a peaceful and just society.

For pupils, the IBB offers international school trips, forums and trainings. For professionals, IBB organises excursions, seminars and trainings in occupational further education. Trips to the memorial places of the Holocaust and the war of extermination are an important part of the programme.

With international youth encounters IBB contributes towards European understanding. Together with a number of partners, IBB founded the International Chernobyl Network. The IBB has its main offices in Dortmund, with a branch in Berlin.

Additionally, it runs the International Centre for Education and Exchange „Johannes Rau“ in Minsk and the history workshop Minsk. In Kharkiv/Ukraine, IBB runs the history workshop Chernobyl as a place of remembrance and encounter.

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.

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