**DIY² Lab – Summary Report**

# Aspects of virtual
# youth exchanges

**IJAB**

January 2022

In March 2021, IJAB launched its new project DIY² Lab: Do-it-Yourself in Digital International Youth Work for experts, project managers and team leaders who want to explore the possibilities afforded by digital international youth work. The DIY² Labs are an opportunity for experts and team leaders to try out digital tools and methods and discuss practical as well as more fundamental issues associated with digital international youth work in the group. The events were all held on Zoom.

The event on 22 April 2021 examined a variety of *aspects associated with virtual youth exchanges*. Using fictitious settings and drawing on experiences made during a multilateral virtual meeting of members of IJAB's **Kommune goes International** network (a project entitled **"Dream your future – Zukunftsträume"**), experts and team leaders formed small groups to simulate phase 1 of project planning, exchange past experiences and reflect these in light of the real-life experiences made by the "Dream your future" coordinators.

## DIY² Lab

From January 2022, further DIY² Labs will take place monthly, one month in English, the next in German.

10 January 2022 (English)
17 February 2022 (German)
20 March 2022 (English)
7 April 2022 (German)

# Programme

## Check-in activity: Speed-dating

Speed-dating in breakout rooms:
Three rounds of 2 minutes each; 2-3 people in each group

1. Where are you right now? Where are you going next?
2. What is your best memory of a digital exchange or event so far? Any positive surprises?
3. What digital tool do you find hard or even impossible to use?

## Group work in four breakout sessions

Four groups in four breakout sessions have 30 minutes to talk about **core aspects** of their concept, using a fictitious setting involving a virtual or hybrid youth exchange. They note down the main aspects, talking points and questions using [www.yopad.eu.](www.yopad.eu) During ths group session, the facilitators deliver "**event cards**" to each breakout room; that is, each group gets a different event card to consider in their discussions.

### Instructions to the groups

You and your international partners are planning a *hybrid* (or digital) youth exchange. You have already agreed on the *subject matter* of the exchange and the *age* of the participants. You as team leaders have already met, and you have already outlined the parameters of your cooperation. Today, you are meeting to discuss the **concept** and **setting** of your intended youth exchange.

**Hybrid, digital, blended?!**
A hybrid format is usually one that involves at least one group (e.g., a national group) attending in person while the other participants attend online. For instance, a Polish group may meet in a youth hostel in Poland and interact online with a German group in a youth centre in Germany; alternatively, the German participants may connect to the meeting individually.

The term "blended" originates in blended learning, meaning a form of learning that combines in-person with online phases. It follows that a blended youth exchange is one that, again, combines in-person and virtual phases.

The following questions can help guide the discussions (note: they do <u>not</u> need to be answered fully):
- What **objective(s)** do you want to reach with your youth exchange?
- What **methods** are suitable for reaching those objectives, taking into consideration your target group?
- What **tools** can help you apply your methods? What functions do they need to offer? What needs to be in place so they can be used?
- What possible **agenda** will your virtual youth exchange have?
- Given the exchange will take place in a digital setting, how will this influence the **interaction** between participants and team leaders (language, informal matters, getting to know each other, conflicts, etc.)?

Please note down the outcome of your discussions, any questions that arise, and any aspects you feel are particularly relevant. You <u>may</u> wish to conside matters such as:

**Discuss**
- Have the groups met before? How, and how often?
- Are interpreters needed? Could there be language comprehension issues?
- How long will the exchange be?

1. Objective(s)
2. **Duration of youth exchange** (overall duration, number of days, hours per day, etc.)
3. Methods
4. **Tools and technical equipment**

## Event cards

These are the four "event cards" (one per group):

**Event card "GDPR"**
You will need a video conferencing tool to provide a virtual space for your exchange. During your meeting, it emerges that a member of the project team only wants to work with tools that comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). How do you proceed?

**Event card "Language/communication"**
Although you are a multilateral project team involving five partner countries, you do not want to limit participation to young people who have a certain command of English. In other words, you want to enable access to young people who have few or no English skills. How does this impact on your planning?

**Event card "Dylexia"**
The registrations are starting to come in. One participant indicates that they have dyslexia and that typing text is difficult for them. How do you respond?

**Event card "Hearing impairment"**
The registrations are starting to come in. You realise that one is from a participant whose hearing is severely impaired. How do you respond?

## Scenarios

The four groups were each assigned to one of the following two scenarios (digital and hybrid):

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|---|---|
| **Title:** | **Dream.Dare.Digitalize** |
| **Topic**: | The youth exchange will focus on the participating young people's dreams and visions for the here and now. They discuss their lives, are encouraged to express their thoughts in various ways, and work together to create a digital product. |
| **Target group:** | Adolescents aged 14 to 18 |
| **Partner:** | Germany, Spain |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title:** | **International Young Street View** |
| **Topic:** | Streetview but diffferent: Young people from five countries come together to share their realities and everyday lives. They use a digital interactive map to illustrate their realities and document the details of their lives in the here and now. |
| **Target group:** | Adolescents aged 18 to 24 |
| **Partner:** | Germany, Japan, Greece, Turkey, France |

## Ideas generated in the breakout sessions on methods and tools

- Interactive map in the style of Google Earth with interactive "destinations" (e.g., market square, cookery class, music band) via Zoom links
- Language Animation using body language/miming (cf. pantomime), creating a relaxed atmosphere, Language Animation with reference to the partner country
- Photo safari of one's personal environment (Augmented Reality)
- Asynchronous sessons with, e.g., photographically illustrated reports
- Padlet
- A video conferencing tool with a document repository such as DINA.International allows for more efficiency
- It is vital to have short sessions with breaks
- Workshop with drama teachers (alternatively, using video equipment): drama education methods – short scenarios played out before the camera
- Gartic-Phone (Chinese Whispers game)
- Gathertown for presenting one's personal environment

## Outcome of the discussion, plus questions and inspiration

- **Duration** of a project: What is the "right" duration of a project? How long should a hybrid or digital project be to ensure a certain educational quality? Frequently, the duration is predetermined by the funding regulations, and/or the decision is based far too much on the typical length of an in-person format. Consider that with digital projects, the line between online and offline elements is blurry and that, unlike with in-person projects, there are synchronous and asynchronous phases. In future, we have to depart from the idea of having classic, offline, continuous youth exchanges and move towards a broader variety of (partly) digital formats, where "duration" acquires a new significance. For instance, five days with 2.5 hrs a day; cf. also the "Dream your future" project, which lasted three days stretched over a weekend with a large number of breaks.
- When it comes to digital projects, non-voice-based systems are the better choice. As to **tools vs. platforms** (definition), when do we speak of tools, when of platforms? You could say that a digital tool is anything that serves a certain purpose of the event; whereas platforms offer digital spaces with a combination of several tools or functions.
- **Hybrid vs. digital**: How do hybrid and purely digital events differ? What needs to be considered?
- How can **participation opportunities** be created for young people?
- How can **interaction** be encouraged or even boosted? How can we create a strong group dynamic?
- How do the young participants choose what they want to share about their lives?
- How can "hybrid" be integrated to allow participants to get together in person if they feel the need?
- How can we draw a line between objectives and methods? What **methodological options** are available to us in the digital space?

**Added comments in light of the experiences made with the "Dream your Future – Zukunftsträume" project (part of Kommune goes International; cf. links below)**

- International exchanges **in the digital space work** and they **are fun**.
- **Creative activities** work very well in digital spaces, producing surprising results.
- Virtual formats help open up **new target groups** and inspire an interest in doing more.
- **Clear agreements** and a **clear distribution of tasks and roles** are crucial.
- **Stable tools** and technical equipment mean a better experience for everyone (data privacy vs. range of functions).
- The closer the rapport with participants and the more support is provided to **individual participants**, the more likely the participants are to be emotionally invested and stick with the programme.

## Check-out activity: 3-2-1 camera off

Starting from the number of participants, e.g., 36, a countdown starts (36, 35, 34…). The participants can be asked to say the next number out loud. If one participant is the only one to say the next correct number, they can switch off their camera/leave the room. However, if the next number is said out loud by two or more participants, they need to keep their cameras on/stay in the room until they are the only one to say it out loud. Note: ensure that participants get to say goodbye to each other before the check-out exercise. This is because during the exercise, the room empties out quickly.

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# Digital Tools

Zoom (video conferencing tool): https://zoom.us

Edkimo (evaluation) www.edkimo.com

# Links / literature

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*Dream your Future - Zukunftsträume:* A digital multilateral youth exchange (article in German) https://ijab.de/projekte/kommune-goes-international/aktuelle-beitraege-zu-kommune-goes- international/eine-multilaterale-jugendbegegnung-digital

The IJAB network Kommune goes International https://ijab.de/en/projects/kommune-goes-international

Organising international youth exchanges: Manual for international youth work practitioners (available in German)

https://ijab.de/projekte/kommune-goes-international/aktuelle-beitraege-zu-kommune-goes-

# Digital Tools

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Godesberger Allee 142-148
53175 Bonn
Germany

**Telefon:** 0228 9506-0
**Fax**: 0228 9506-199
**E-Mail:** info@ijab.de
**Internet:** https://www.ijab.de

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**Responsible:** Marie-Luise Dreber
**Editors:** Julia Hallebach (hallebach@ijab.de), Natali Petala-Weber (petala-weber@ijab.de), Ulrike Werner (werner@ijab.de)
**Translator:** Karin Walker

**Photos:**
Cover: charles deluvio | unspalsh

If you have any questions regarding the project **Internationale Jugendarbeit.digital**, please contact:
digital@ijab.de

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