

Who are DLRG Youth?

The DLRG aim to fight drowning by teaching swimming, running education programmes, providing lifeguards, running fitness and competition events and lobbying government.

DLRG Jugend (DLRG Youth) is the youth branch of the DLRG. Like most youth groups within Germany, the DLRG Youth has separate committees, funding, constitution and structure to the parent organisation.

Who went to the seminar?

🇬🇧 Alan Sutherland, secretary of RLSS A&NW

🇬🇧 Dominic Roberton, former chair of BULSCA

🇬🇧 David Fielding, vice-chair of RLSS A&NW

🇩🇪 Kathrin Ripcke, Chair of DLRG Jugend

🇩🇪 Thomas Hain, DLRG international youth worker

🇩🇪 Sibylle Roth, DLRG international youth worker

🇩🇪 Jürgen Liegl, DLRG Bayern youth education

🇩🇪 Robby Harsch, Vice-Chair, DLRG Jugend Bayern

🇮🇸 Otti Sigmarsson, ICE-SAR youth leader

🇮🇸 Ingvar Gudmundsson, ICE-SAR youth leader

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Welcome to the first edition of the International Lifesaving Youth Newsletter! This newsletter is aimed at young people and youth leaders within life saving groups across the UK. If you're interested in setting up youth exchanges with lifesaving groups in other countries, then this is the newsletter for you!

International Contact Making Seminar 22-26 July 2010

Three UK delegates attended an international youth life saving seminar in Germany earlier this month. The aim of the five-day trip, organised by DLRG Youth, was to get to know youth workers from other countries and lay the foundations for future youth exchanges.

The UK delegates joined two Icelanders and five Germans at the seminar in Pleinfeld, near Munich, where we spent the first evening getting to know each other. The following morning, each country gave a presentation about lifesaving in their country. This helped us to understand each others' activities and learn about how youth work is structured in other countries.



The discussions continued long into the afternoon then, after dinner, each country shared some traditional music, food and games with the other delegates. This really brought the group together and provided the perfect opportunity to understand each others' cultures.

On Saturday we headed to the ResQ Cup – an open water lifesaving competition and activity day organised by DLRG Youth for 440 people. As well as meeting DLRG members, we took part in an inflatable boat race and organised some impromptu

games for the young people. We were also treated to a high-speed boat ride in a DLRG rescue boat and completed a 1km Aqua Jog. The ResQ Cup finished with a prize giving and dancing into the night!



The following morning we were back to work – doing some serious planning in preparation for next year's Youth Leader Exchange in Iceland. We also discussed ways of getting young people to volunteer and work together in the future.



I am pleased to report that the seminar exceeded its aims - we now have a clear way forward with future events planned and actions made for each of the representatives.

Read on to find out more about what we learnt and our plans for the future...

Our impressions of DLRG

DLRG is a wide-ranging organisation with something for everyone: whether you're interested in rescue work, swimming, competitions, web authoring, photography or something else entirely they'll find a way for you to contribute to the organisation.

Everyone that we met from DLRG was incredibly enthusiastic – youth workers, volunteers, employed staff and competitors alike.



DLRG rescue clubs get some government support to help purchase rescue boats and vehicles but all other kit must be paid for by the clubs.

The youth section of DLRG is very strong. It has the same aims as the main organisation but really focuses on young people and their development (both as lifesavers and as responsible members of society as a whole). The young people are very proactive – organising events and activities for themselves. DLRG Youth enjoys the full support of everyone at all levels within the parent organisation.

In comparison to youth work in the UK, youth work in Germany is very structured. German volunteers do a standard youth leader qualification in order to gain the Juleica or Youth Leader Card. This is recognised across Germany.



What did we present?

Our presentation to the seminar covered the aims, structure and activities of the four main lifesaving organisations within the UK: RLSS, RNLI, SLSGB and BULSCA. We also

gave an insight into the activities of our own clubs (Keynsham LSC and Bradford-on-Avon LSC) and explained the differences between awards, sport, lifeguarding and open-water lifesaving.

Similarities and differences...

DLRG and ICE-SAR both perform a wide range of rescue work (including lifeguarding, lifeboats, swift water rescue, mountain rescue and disaster recovery).

DLRG teach swimming throughout Germany – this is an excellent way to get people involved with the organisation.

Whilst the DLRG has an established circuit of lifesaving competitions, ICE-SAR doesn't really take part in competitions.

Both DLRG and ICE-SAR invest a lot of time in youth work. Whilst youth work in the UK takes place mainly at a club level, both DLRG and ICE-SAR coordinate their youth activities at a regional and national level. Both organisations use youth work as the main way to recruit the next generation of lifesavers.

What we learnt from the trip

We learnt about the benefit of having a structured youth programme that allows for personal development of young people of all ages. The various lifesaving organisations within the UK could certainly benefit from incorporating elements of DLRG's approach into their youth development strategies.

We picked up some ideas on how to make the UK lifesaving organisations more inclusive and appealing to a wider variety of people.

We learnt some new games and activities that we'll be taking back to our own clubs.



The conclusions of the seminar

The final day of discussions centred on planning ICE-SAR 2011: an international youth leader exchange to Iceland next year. We outlined some topics for discussion during the exchange, agreed on the criteria for selecting delegates and helped complete the application for funding.



We also looked at other opportunities for international youth co-operation: we identified that funding can either be viewed as a barrier to foreign exchanges, or as an opportunity for young people to develop as they work together to raise funds. We agreed to establish a 2-year planning cycle with youth leader meetings in the odd years and youth exchanges in the even years. We identified ways that social networking, e-mails, video conferencing and the postal network could help youth groups start to forge links before an exchange. And finally, we looked at opportunities for youth groups from different countries to collaborate on a project remotely via the internet.

Further details on all these discussions are available on request.

The next steps...

We'll brief the RLSS, RNLI, SLSGB and BULSCA on the outcomes of our trip.

We hope to work with each organisation to introduce further international youth development opportunities into UK lifesaving.

We plan to send a delegation of youth workers from the UK to the ICE-SAR 2011.

If you are a youth leader who is interested in future opportunities for international lifesaving youth work, please get in touch!