

Bridging Diversity

An Early Years Programme

das netz

Senatsverwaltung
für Bildung, Jugend
und Familie

be  **Berlin**

BeKi Berliner Kita-Institut
für Qualitätsentwicklung

Quality:

A systemic, participatory and multi-layered approach focusing on

*self-evaluation

*counselling

*monitoring

in support of leadership at the setting

The case of Berlin ---
implemented by the Berlin Early Years Institute for
Quality Development (BeKi)

Henriette Heimgaertner & Milena Lauer

BeKi – About us

- The Berlin Early Years Institute for Quality Development, one of 9 institutes of the International Academy Berlin (INA Berlin gGmbH)
- An independent research institute, involving practitioners in research & analysis
- Monitoring, support & on-going meta-evaluation of quality development in Berlin ECEC centres

Henriette Heimgaertner, M.A. co-founder of BeKi in 2008

Milena Lauer, M.Ed. member of the BeKi management team since 2020

Content

- 1. Early Years System in Germany & Berlin**
- 2. Berlin Early Years Programme: Bridging Diversity**
- 3. Quality – the responsibility of all actors**
- 4. Internal Evaluation**
- 5. External Evaluation**
- 6. Counselling**
- 7. Leadership: Responsibility of the Principal**

Early Years System in Germany & Berlin

Early Years System in Germany

16 federal states with regional responsibility for:

- ECEC laws and regulations
- ECEC programmes (curricula)
- Regulations for parental fees
- Training and professional requirements

Harmonisation of two very different systems with the unification of Germany in 1990

Federal level:

- Social Code - law framework (SGB VIII) – state responsibility for ECEC in June 1990
- **Legal right** to ECEC since August 2013 (for one-year old children)
- **Federal funding** for ECEC as of 2019 (Gute-Kita Gesetz)

Integrated Services: Care – Socialisation – *Education*

Care: -- to support & supplement the child's upbringing in the family & to assist the parents in better reconciling employment & child rearing

-- to educate & care for the child, relating to the child's social, emotional, physical and mental development

Socialisation: -- to encourage the child's development into a responsible and autonomous member of the community

-- Encourage child to education & *Bildung*

Education : (Bildung) -- involves ›appropriation‹ – a person creating an image of the world and contributing responsibly to shaping it & thus, experiencing self-efficacy

-- *Bildung* is a process that takes place over the course of a person's entire life.

- More than 180.000 children aged 1 – 6 years in ECEC (both centre-based and child-minding)
- 2.845 ECEC centres (2023)
- 1.199 providers, 984 providers responsible for 1-2 ECEC centres
- **Access Berlin (2022, Bertelsmann Stiftung):**
- 1 – 3 year olds: 69,2 %
- 3 – 6 year olds: 92,2%
- Waving of parental fees regardless of income since August 2018
- Shortage of qualified staff

Berlin Early Years Programme: *Bridging Diversity*

- **drafts in 2003 & 2013** – developed by practitioners, academia, providers & policy makers – coordinated by the International Academy Berlin
- Participatory process, included workshops & questionnaires with practitioners (principals, counsellors, trainers etc.)
- Editing of draft – acceptance of draft by **regional ministry of education & umbrella organisations** of ECEC providers in 2004 & 2014
- **Second update in process** – publication planned 2025

The Core of *Bridging Diversity*

- Holistic understanding of *Bildung/education*: children's rights in the centre
- *Bildung* is an active, sensory, social & enjoyable process
- Starting point: building upon the interests of the child
- Frame for pedagogical tasks of professionals to strengthen & empower the potentials of each child & her/his families
- Respect for diversity based on a shared responsibility for human/children's rights & the natural & cultural environment

Objectives: Strengthening Competences in Children

Self-competence to develop a positive self-concept

Social competence to develop social relationships & interact with respect

Knowledge competence to appropriate the diversities of the world in the context of social networks

Learning competence to develop a basic understanding of themselves as learners, of what they learn & how they learn

Bridging Diversity as a Tool for Self-Reflection & Reflection in Teams

- Awareness about the rights of each child - participation/ prevention/ provision
- Respecting the right of belonging for each child to his/her family & social community
- Recognition of agency & resources of each child to develop a strong concept of his/her Self
- Being aware of interactions between children and adults – with awareness for possible discrimination
- Focus on process quality: quality of the relationships & interaction, sense of identity, belonging, pedagogy & the role of the professional reflective adult

Quality

– the responsibility of all actors

Berlin Policy Framework on Quality (QVTag)

- Strategy for implementing *Bridging Diversity* – negotiations involved policy makers, practitioners, provider associations, trade unions, academia (focus on shared responsibility)
- **Berlin Policy Framework on Quality** signed in 2005 – binding as of 2006
- A permanent working group steers the implementation of the Policy Framework

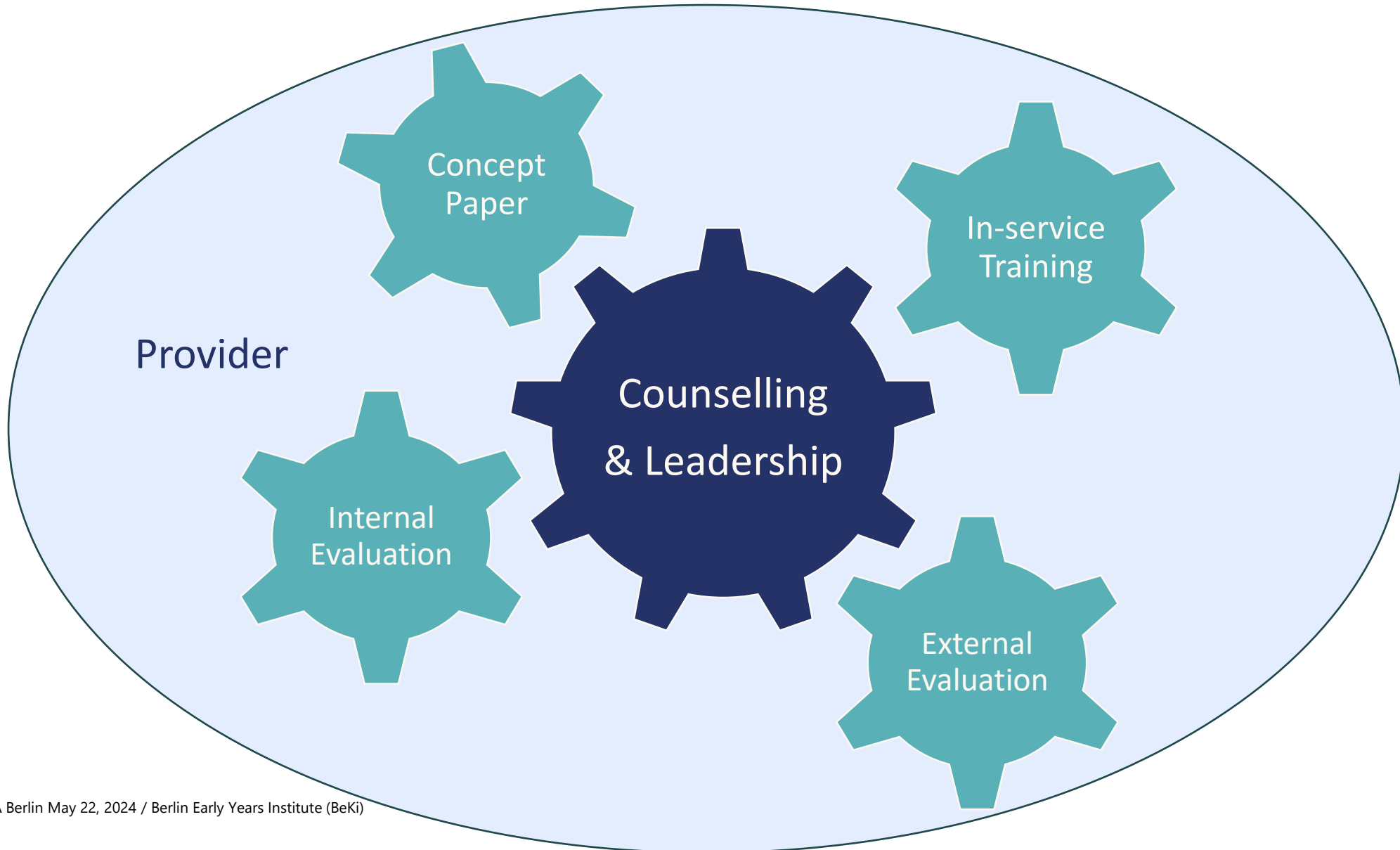
Quality development step by step

- 2006: draft/development of in-house educational concept paper, based on *Bridging Diversity*
- **2008: internal evaluation**, based on *Bridging Diversity*
- **2010: external evaluation**, based on *Bridging Diversity*
- 2020: counselling

BeKi founded in 2008

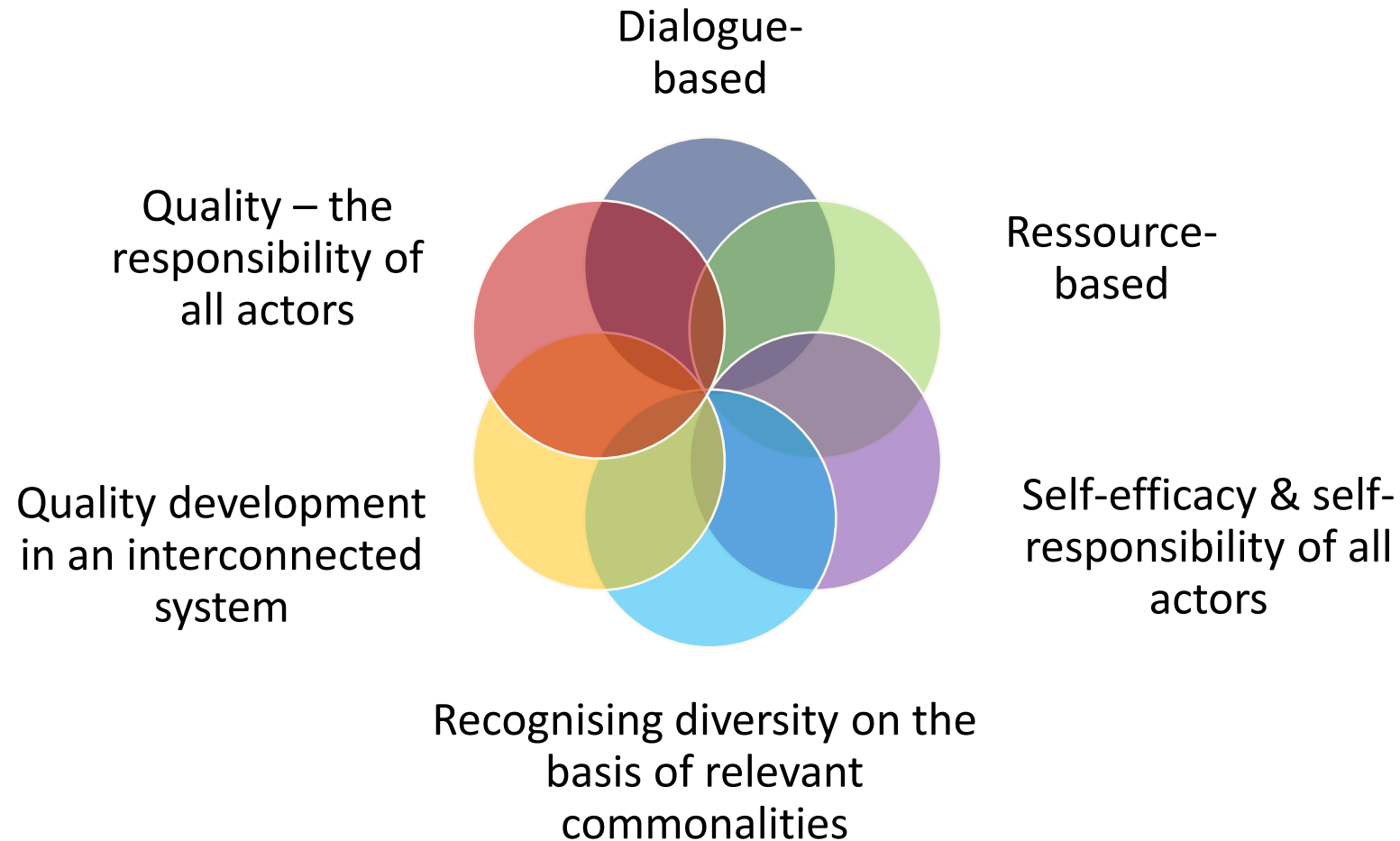
- **Task:** monitoring of quality development in ECEC centres

Quality development in an interconnected system



Quality Development – Conceptual Cornerstones

- Berlin Principles -



Internal Evaluation

Principles of Internal Evaluation

- Systemic approach to assessment based on pedagogical practice
- Quality requirements & criteria *Bridging Diversity*
- Quality is a dynamic concept
- Recognition of contextual factors & conditions
- Focusing on practitioners (not outcomes of children)
- objective: **to understand quality as a continuous process**
 - Valuing/appreciating achievements
 - + strategies for further quality development
 - + implementation based on context/diversity of ECEC centre

Internal evaluation, based on *Bridging Diversity*

Part I – Orientation quality

Part II – Process (task) quality

Part III – Co-operation quality

Internal evaluation, based on *Bridging Diversity*

Part I – Orientation quality

- The holistic understanding of *Bildung* (care, socialisation, education)
- The objectives: strengthening competences, understood as objectives for professional practice
- The professional self-understanding

Internal evaluation, based on *Bridging Diversity*

Part II – process (task) quality

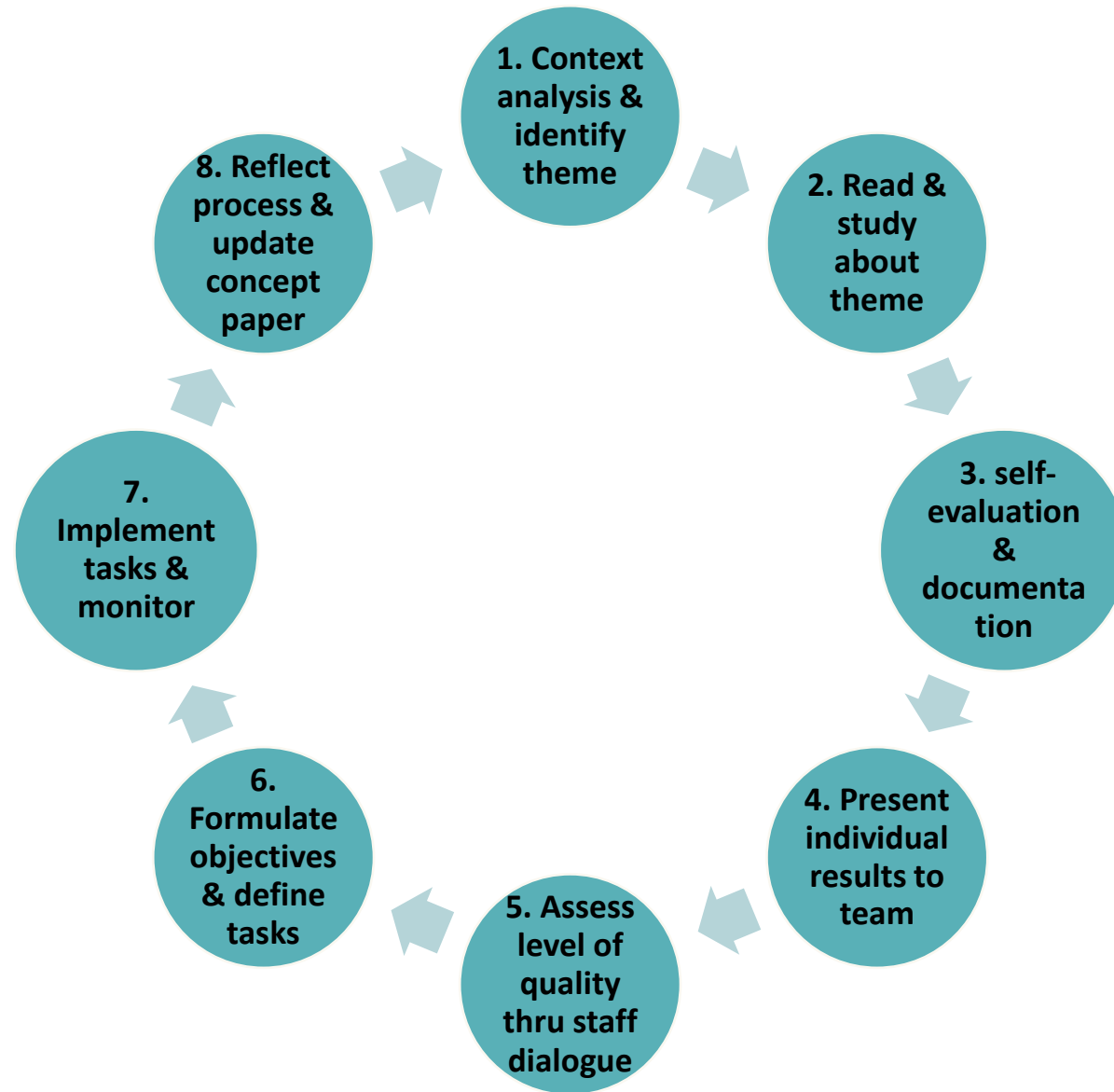
- **Observation & documentation** – individualised portfolios/ teaching and learning stories
- **Structuring everyday life** – participation of children
- **Inspiring play** – importance of self-initiated play for learning
- **Working on educational projects** – *sustained shared thinking*
- **Structuring spaces, educational materials** – representing diversity
- **Integration of children with special needs** – one of the tasks in developing an inclusive educational system
- **Accompanying transitions** – fostering resilience in children

Internal evaluation, based on *Bridging Diversity*

Part III – Co-operation Quality

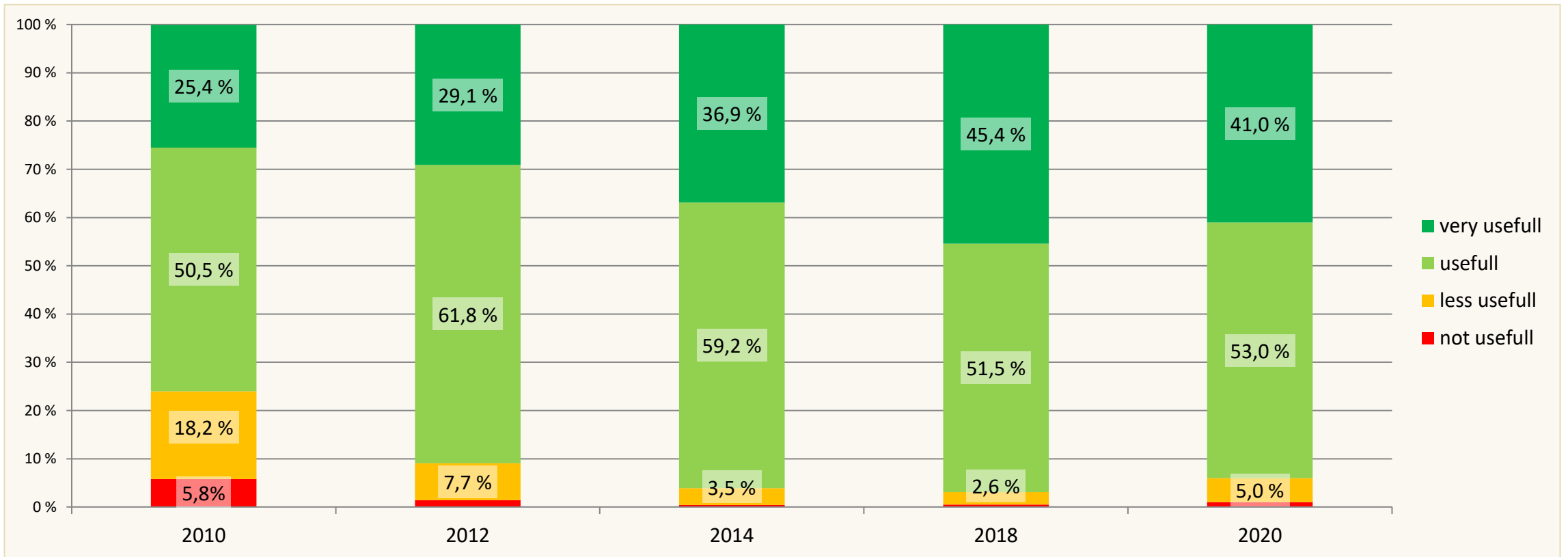
- **Educational partnership with parents** – respecting the diversity of their experiences, aspirations & competencies
- **Democratic participation** – co-operation & communication in the team
Tasks & responsibilities of principals

Internal evaluation cycle



Benefits of internal evaluation

(answers by principals)



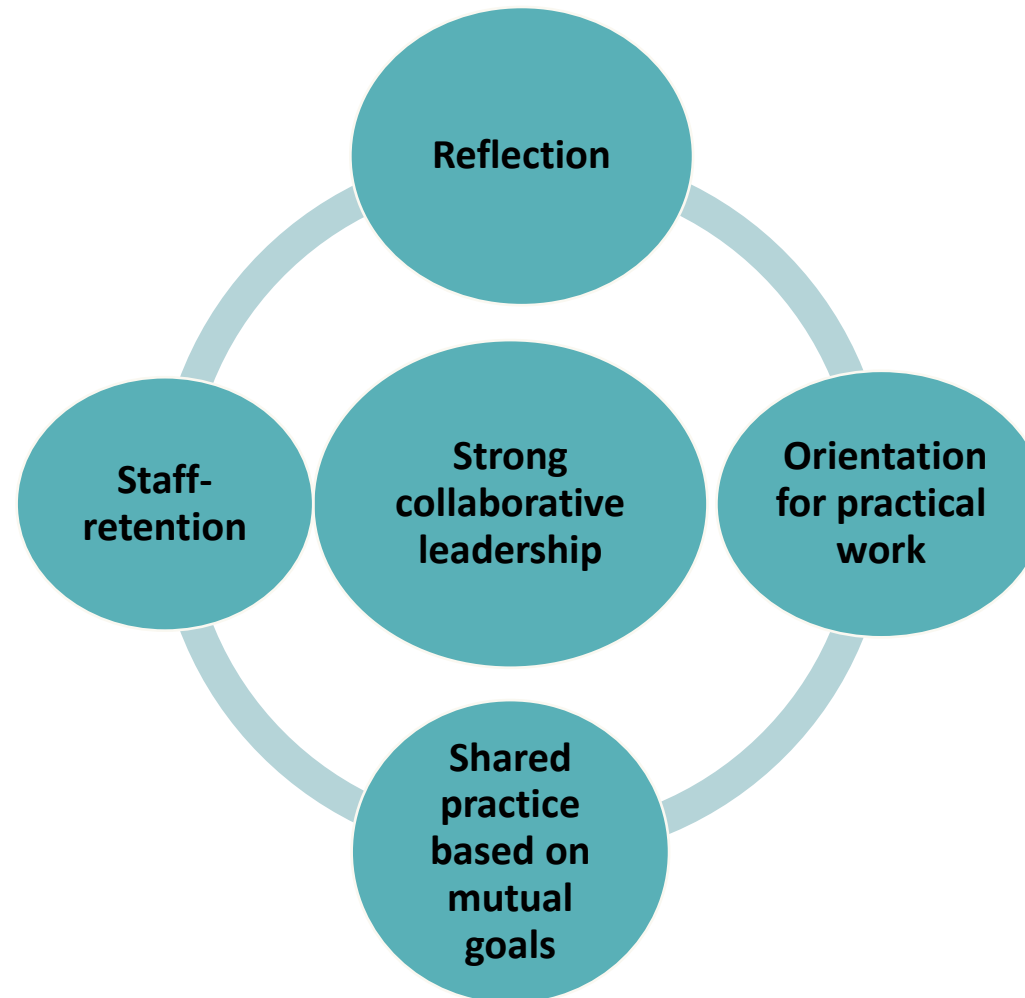
Effects of internal evaluation: results from a study 2017

- Framework & orientation for internal evaluation
- Openness for qualitative development
(individual & whole team)
- Structure & confidence while following up results of internal evaluation
- Sustainability of quality development processes

Challenges

1. Given the diversity of providers – materials for Internal Evaluation published by the regional ministry are not compulsory
2. Providers are allowed to use own materials provided they carry the principles of *Bridging Diversity*
- 3. Time constraints** to implement Internal Evaluation and resulting changes
4. Staffing situation & staff shortages
5. Staff fluctuation

In a nutshell: effects of internal evaluation



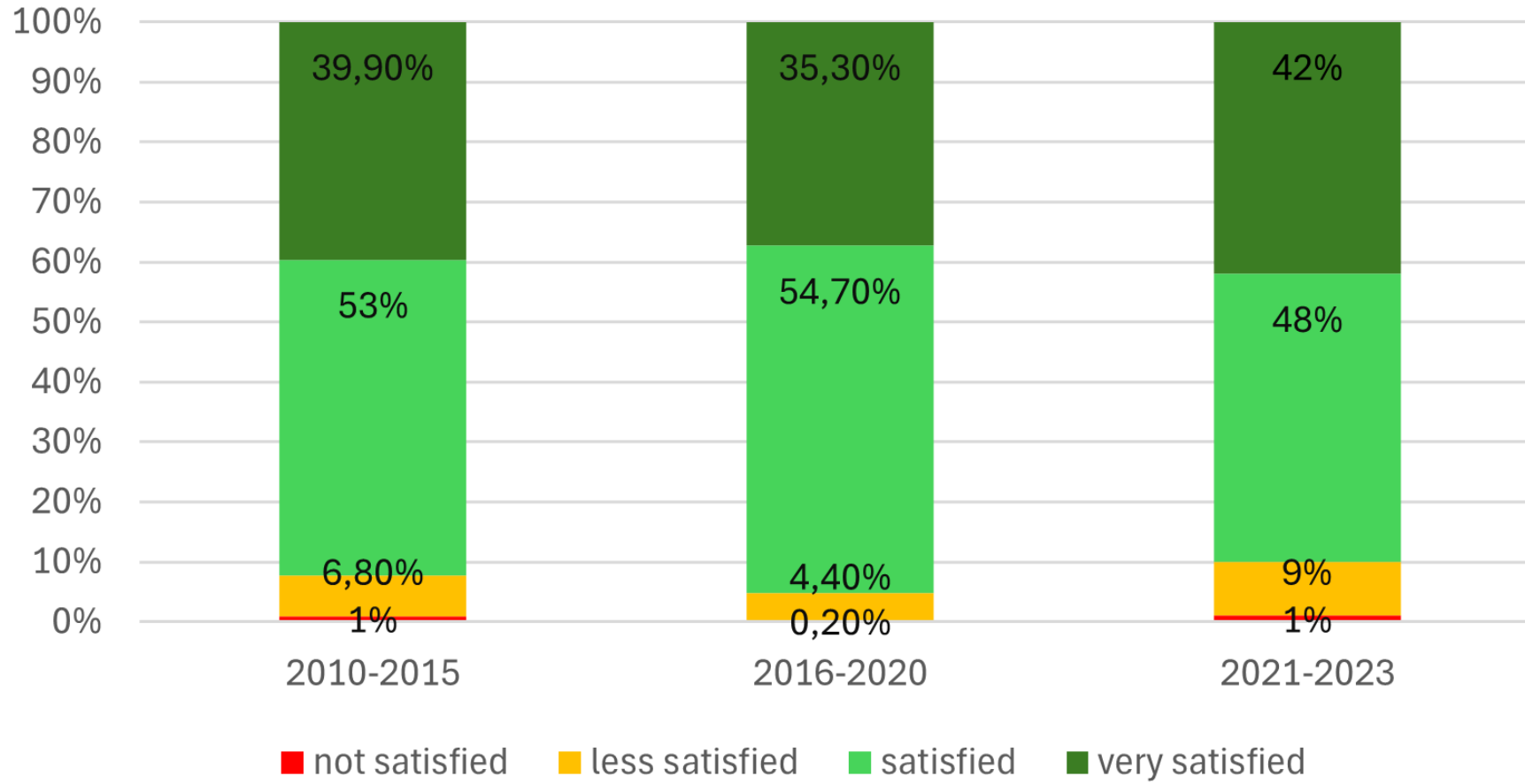
External Evaluation

The confidence in the system of external evaluation needed nurturing and strengthening over the years, in order to develop intended and desired results.

in: Lambrecht, 2022

Benefits of External Evaluation

Principals ECEC



Principles of External Evaluation

external evaluation as a tool for development of quality on the basis of ***Bridging Diversity***,
complementing internal evaluation

=

valuing/appreciating achievements of each centre

+

constructive-critical assessment of necessary changes based on the central goals of the
Bridging Diversity

+

concrete (tailor-made) **recommendations** for further development of quality taking into
account the context/diversity of each centre

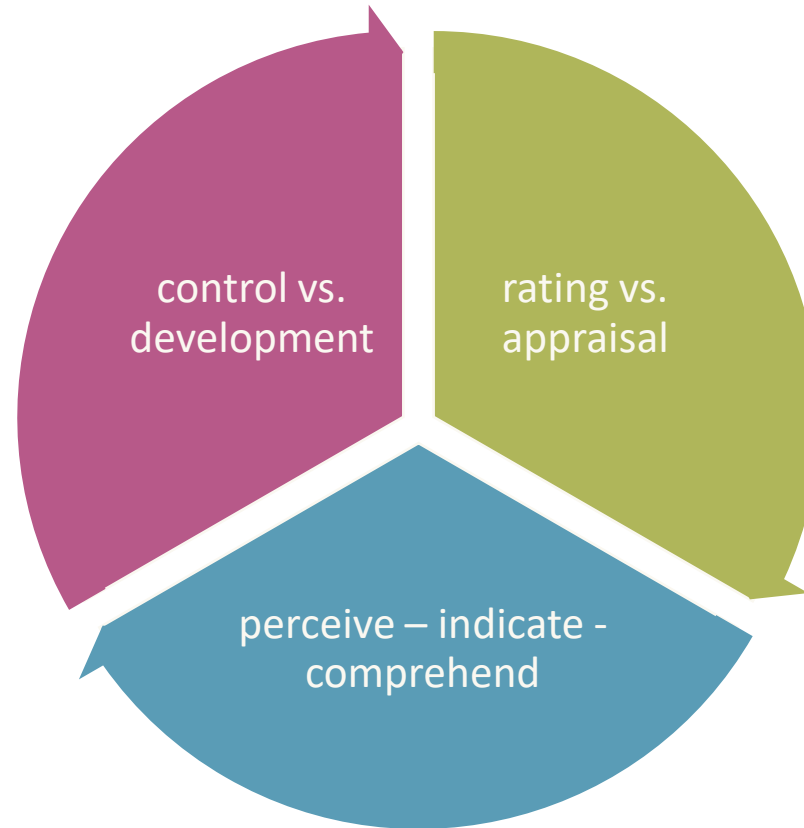
External Evaluation : regulations

- Internal & External Evaluation are complementary
- Internal Evaluation twice/year
- **External Evaluation once in 5 years/**involving all staff, parents & providers; (children)
- Focus on quality development rather than measurement
- A variety of providing agencies, each approved by the regional ministry
- Costs included in statutory funding (depending on size of the ECEC centre covering costs)
- Results of last External Evaluation to be taken into account; responsibility of the provider

Effects of External Evaluation are not a matter of course

- At the end of the **first cycle 2015 - 98,8%** (of 1.950) ECEC centres had concluded an external evaluation
- At the end of the **second cycle 2020 - 87,4 %** (of 2.422) ECEC centres had concluded an external evaluation– difference largely due to Covid - 19
- questionnaire (experiences, results, impact) return rate ~ 80 %
- no „Window Dressing“
- Findings, as well as external process leads to changes (Alkin & King, 2016)
- Participation of practitioners, parents and providers increases use of evaluation results (Roseland, Lawrenz & Thao, 2014)

Interplay



Challenges

- Acceptance of & confidence in the process as a pre-condition for change & development
- Profile & professional qualification of evaluators (diverse profiles and long-standing practical experiences are key)
- Challenge for small ECEC centres and providers (financial, time investment, etc.)

EQF – Berlin Quality System: commonalities

European Quality Framework 2011 - 2014	Berlin Principles 2005 - 2006
Dialogue between research, practice & policy makers	Dialogue-based involving all actors
Recognition & inclusion of cultural & social contexts	Resource-based
Principle of subsidiarity fosters agency & self-responsibility	Self-efficacy & self-responsibility of all actors
Coherence of a system that is multi-level & multi-layered	Recognising diversity on the basis of relevant commonalities
Process of negotiation & consensus building	Quality as an interconnected system
Creation of & support to a competent systems of all actors	Quality – the responsibility of all actors

Counselling

Quality requires shared responsibility: central role of counselling services

- Analysis of societal developments and innovative research & its consequences for pedagogical practice
- Hands-on support for practitioners in a context of increasing & expanding tasks
- Objective: focus on pedagogical practice & development of a competent ECEC system
- Should not include responsibility for performance of ECEC staff and leaders

- **Central role of counselling has long been under-estimated – increased focus for the past decade**

in: Preissing/Herrmann, 2018

Counselling in Berlin: survey snapshot

- Since 2019 considerable federal funding in support of quality development
- Cornerstone in building a competent ECEC system
- 70 % of ECEC centres had access to counselling (weekly & monthly)
- 76% of ECEC centres had sufficient counselling support
- Activity areas of counselling guided by needs of practitioners
- High rating of counselling professionals by practitioners and principals
- Caveat: counsellors rarely involved in different steps of Internal Evaluation according to survey

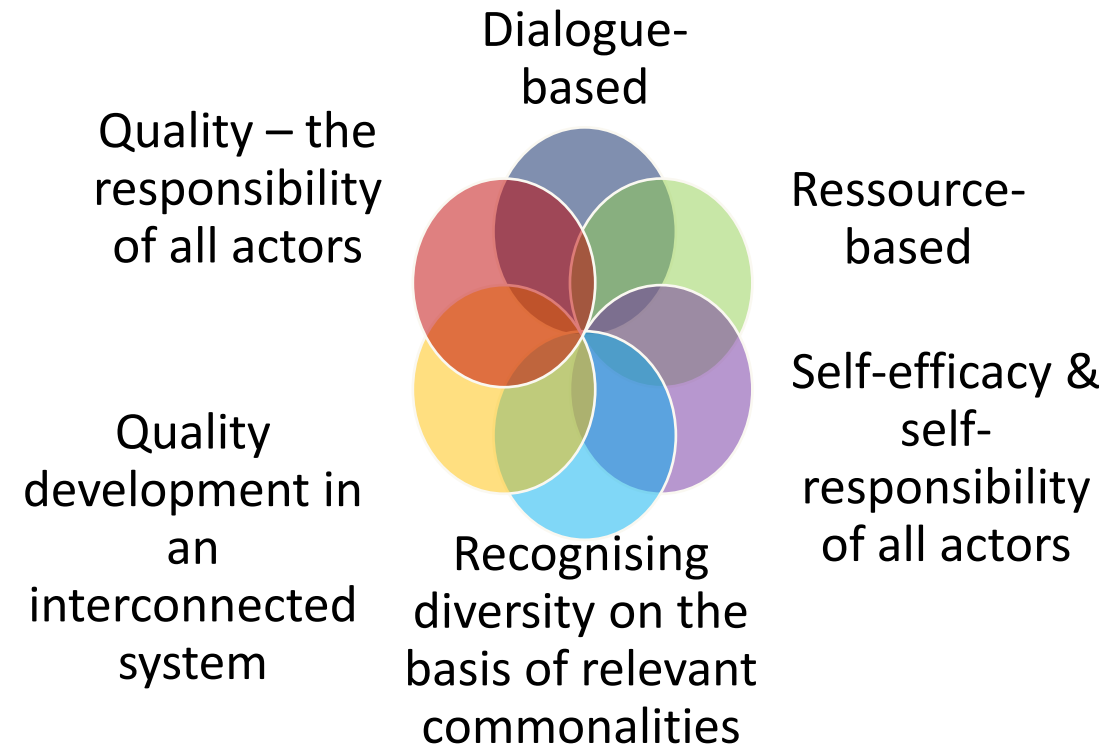
Leadership: Responsibility of the Principal

Leadership – activities of BeKi

- Definition of role & function in quality development system
- In-service training regarding role & function for principals of ECEC centres
- Quality requirements & criteria for principals
- Principals involved in innovative projects (as participants, resource persons, respondents)
- Development of hands-on materials for principals

Leadership: responsibility for implementing *Bridging Diversity*

- Responsibility for quality with some leeway
- Assessment of recommendations (vs. obligation): recognising diversity
- In charge of realisation of concrete changes: accountability
- Focus on dialogue & resources strengthens staff retention
- Provider to support principal & steers/supports



- **Alkin/King (2016):** *The Historical Development of Evaluation Use. American Journal of Evaluation, 37(4), 568–579.*
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1098214016665164>
- **Bertelsmann Stiftung (2022):** [basisdaten_be.pdf \(laendermonitor.de\)](#)
- **Bridging Diversity (2019):** *Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family; publisher: Verlag das netz ISBN: 978-3-86892-160-1*
- **Bridging Diversity (2020):** https://beki-qualitaet.de/media/pages/materialien-und-forschungsberichte-uebersicht/materialien-und-forschungsberichte/066a92b248-1627461292/ie-material_engl_internal-evaluation_bridging_diversity_web_version_sept_2020.pdf
- **Hiller/Heimgaertner (2017):** *Interne Evaluation zum Berliner Bildungsprogramm. Ergebnisse einer qualitativen Studie zu Prozessen und Wirkungen der internen Evaluation in Berliner Kitas. (Hrsg.): BeKi [beki abschlussbericht_qie_webseite.pdf \(beki-qualitaet.de\)](#)*
- **Lambrecht (2022):** *Qualitative Studie zur Wirkung externer Evaluation zum BBP. (Hrsg.): BeKi [abschlussbericht_qualitative-studie-zur-wirkung-der-ee.pdf \(beki-qualitaet.de\)](#)*
- **Preissing, C./Herrmann, K. (2018):** Fachberatung als zentraler Schlüssel zur Qualitätsentwicklung. Aktuelle Verortung, Bedeutung und Perspektiven. In: Alsago, Elke/Karsten, Maria-Eleonora/May, Michael/Preissing, Christa; Niedersächsisches Institut für frühkindliche Bildung und Entwicklung (nifbe) (Hrsg.): *Fachberatung im Aufbruch. Verortung, Herausforderungen, Empfehlungen.* Freiburg, S.13–25
- **Roseland/Lawrenz/Thao (2014).** *The Relationship between Involvement in and Use of Evaluation in Multi-Site Evaluations. Evaluation and Program Planning, 48, 75-82.* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2014.10.003>

Contact:

Management Team:

Prof. Dr. Karin Garske

garske@beki-qualitaet.de

Milena Lauer, M. Ed.

lauer@beki-qualitaet.de

Andriana Noack, B.A.

noack@beki-qualitaet.de

Co-Founder: Henriette Heimgaertner, M.A. heimgaertner@beki-qualitaet.de



www.beki-qualitaet.de



Berliner Kita-Institut
für Qualitätsentwicklung



[berliner_kita_instiut](https://www.instagram.com/berliner_kita_instiut)