

## **Reiner Becker, Coordinator of the Hessian Consulting Network**

### **How was the ITS incorporated into the Hessian Consulting Network pool of experts?**

The educational and research offerings of the ITS are unparalleled, and not only in Hesse. After our first joint project with the ITS in 2012, it was clear that the technical know-how of colleagues from Bad Arolsen could make an important contribution to the development of the Hessian Consulting Network.

### **In your view, which projects are good examples of the contributions the ITS has made to the Hessian Consulting Network?**

Together with our network partner “Red Line – Help to Exit before Entering,” we organized two joint workshops with the ITS team. The workshops demonstrated how positive and meaningful it is to work not only on current forms of right-wing extremism, but also to be able to highlight historical continuities not simply in abstract terms, but with the support of archival and documentary work. In another project, “The Forgotten Stories of Oberscheld,” organized by JAKOb e.V. (also a member of the Hessian Consulting Network), we reconstructed, with a group of young people, the history of the village of Oberscheld during the Third Reich based on archival material from the ITS in Bad Arolsen and with the help of interviews. The project generated numerous positive reactions across the country. We were able to develop a kind of blueprint for how one works with youth but also with older people in a village in order to break through at least partly the local “spirals of silence” about the National Socialist era.

### **What role does the ITS play in cooperating with different institutions?**

The ITS brings to the Hessian Consulting Network important expertise on historic and political education. For the further development of our programs, it is important to be able to highlight and analyze the historical lineages of right-wing extremism, racism and anti-Semitism. In addition, a network has the advantage that the partners can independently organize joint projects. In this regard, under different network constellations, training courses, workshops, exhibits and evening lectures have been organized with the colleagues of the ITS.

### **Are there projects you would like to implement in the short or medium-term with the ITS?**

In addition to the consulting offerings, we now have the duty in Hesse to bring together and make more visible prevention programs and above all else to link the stakeholders more closely to each other with the new federal program, “Live Democracy! Active against Right-Wing Extremism, Inhumanity and Violence.” As a consequence, the responsible bodies in the Hessian Consulting Network who provide prevention services in different areas can come more clearly into focus. Many stakeholders in Hesse are not yet aware of the pedagogical work of the ITS and I can imagine that the demand here will rise sharply. Personally, I would also systematize and expand upon our experiences with the project, “The Forgotten Stories of Oberscheld.” This project was only possible with the support of the ITS and we have already had requests from other places that want to engage with their own history. It would be wonderful to be able to share another long-term project with the ITS.

(International Tracing Service, Annual Report 2014)