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**Contemporary provision for youth – services and approaches.
A German Perspective with a European Orientation**

**A Contribution for the European Social Workshop:
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1. The European Union and the ongoing European integration process in the perspective of the citizens are regarded quite ambivalent. The agreement to this historical project is losing evidence and on the other hand scepticism concerning European issues is increasing.

Nevertheless Europe influences our daily lives through transnational agreements, treaties and action programmes. Looking at young people we can say, that only a few of the European legal basis are targeted directly towards young people. They are laid down in article 29 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (crime against children), article 13 (Anti-discrimination, title IX (Social Policy, Education and Vocational Training and Youth) chapter 1 (social regulations) with articles 136 and 137 as well as chapter 3 (Education and Vocational Training and Youth) with articles 149 and 150.

2. International networks (like EUSW), transnational projects and the development of international activities in the area of practice and training are gaining more importance. This happens in the light of the globalisation process, which confronts all societies with new challenges and demands. And that means social policy and welfare models will change their shapes. The active welfare state is becoming an activating welfare state or with other words the trend is described as: from welfare to workfare. EU-measures are aiming at economical issues, the increase of mobility, harmonisation of protection programmes in the working life and so-called actions programmes, social and regional funds. All in all welfare is still a national task which on the other hand getting more and more >Europeanised <.

3. These recent development and statements underline that provision for youth, the discourse concerning young people and youth work is seen as a crucial element in European Policy - at least on the official level of the discussion.

The basic for this development was expressed in the White Paper on Youth.

Participation has become a core issue, particularly expressed in the White Paper on Youth by European Commissions. Participation means that young people has to be involved in decisions which are important for their lives and they have to be integrated in their communities, young people have to be consulted before decisions are taken.

As the big five challenges for the future the following points are mentioned:

- the demographic development
- changing conditions/social constellation for the life world of young people

- involvement of young people in the public life
- European integration
- globalisation .

4. In addition a research on the social situation of young people in Europe came to the result that young people have to cope with overall trends which affects their lives. E.g. the trend towards longer and more complex transitions to adult life, to which extended education and training contributes significantly. A second point is social change and inequalities. And last but not least young Europeans are confronted with the fact, that they are living in an aging society and therefore they will become a weaker electoral factor.

In the future the youth phase will be less standardised, is becoming more open ended, characterised by pluralized life-styles.

Young people in Europe, that means 75 millions citizens (out of 450 millions) between 15 and 25 years old, are confronted with changing social constellation, with new trends in leisure time activities and increasing demands on schooling and learning. Young people are forced to take decisions on their own, because traditions and the traditional milieu are not longer examples in order to cope with the future. Social services for young people have in this context the role to support, to assist and to empower young people.

5.Many events have been organised in all countries focussing on the European Youth Programme and Youth Policy. More than 200 young people from all over Europe gathered in Brussels from 5th-7th December 2005 to debate on the future of Europe in the "Youth takes the Floor" conference, expressing their opinions and views on current and future issues concerning Youth Policy. Participation and a European Pact for young people have been essential points of the discussion.

6.The conference was followed by a meeting of the European ministers responsible for youth affairs in Bad Ischl in Austria in March 2006.

“Europe cannot develop into the most competitive economic area in the world, as foreseen in the Lisbon Strategy, if a new approach to education is not found. The aim of establishing a European Qualifications Framework and policies on recognition of non-formal and informal learning as well as life long learning strategies has to be thoroughly pursued together with youth organisations. Participation is an essential element of democracy. Young people need to be given the space, the means and the necessary support to be engaged into policy development in the areas that directly affect their daily lives. In these three fields we have developed the following concrete demands:

1. Youth and Jobs
- 2.Combatting youth unemployment and implementing the European Youth Pact
- 3.The value and significance of non-formal and informal learning

The future of youth in Europe

Young people want a two way process, consultation alone is not enough. We want to create a real dialogue. Therefore a structured dialogue needs to be established on an equal basis between youth representatives and decision-makers.”

7.There is no doubt that in all European countries young people have been and are still a special target group for social professions. Perspectives and methods have changed over the last decades but nevertheless, young people will remain a target group because they have always special needs according to their age and the task

(transition from school to work, establishing their independent lives etc) which belong to youth. We have also to take into account, that approaches and responsibilities for the work with young people are divers .

The period which is called youth is now seen not just as the transition from childhood to adulthood, but as a very specific stage in everybody's biography, very often located between the angels of socio-cultural independence and relying economically on parents.

But modern youth is also characterised by individualisation and autonomy, by specific peer-fashioned youth cultures and lifestyles that exercise an often stronger influence of young people's attitudes, choices and behaviour than family and other institutional contexts.

8. Youth policy is concerned with participation and citizenship, combating social exclusion and promoting inclusion, with ensuring access to information. Youth policy is also concerned with multiculturalism and minorities, with promoting equal opportunities in all European countries.

Nevertheless the influence of the European integration on national youth welfare is often underestimated. In the self-perception the European dimension does not play an essential role. With regard to financing youth work is - in a German view – local based. The communities paid app. 61%, the lander app. 35% and the federal bodies app 3%. Europe is so far not a big player in this game on national level.

On the other side we have to confirm that all in all youth policy , education and action schemes for young people do play just a marginal role within the European policy.

The following areas were identified as youth related topics:

- Participation.
- Information.
- Voluntary work

9. Service provision Child and youth services in the Federal Republic of Germany is a wide-ranging system that aims to improve the living conditions of children growing up and to promote the participation of children and young people in society. Children and youth services describes the area of social work which serves to promote the development of young people outside school. Youth welfare aims to improve the opportunities for children and young people and to support their families. German youth welfare is in the hands of state-run youth welfare departments and nongovernmental, charitable organizations (NGOs). The duties of these departments are proscribed in the Child and Youth Welfare Act (Kinder und Jugendhilfegesetz--KJHG) of 1991.

10. Youth welfare comprises the following main areas: general youth and social work, day care for children, and the finding and supervision of foster parents and guardians. Besides helping disadvantaged children and young people overcome their problems in life and education, youth welfare also takes the needs and interests of their young clientele into account. Available measures extend from open facilities (e.g., advice or youth centers), where participation is voluntary, to highly interventionist measures (e.g., admittance to a home, revocation of custody). It is primarily the latter tasks that fall within the responsibility of the state-run sector of youth welfare departments. In recent years, Germany's youth welfare departments have moved from a mainly repressive, interventionist approach to a more service-

oriented, preventative one. Parallel to this development arose the demand for a much broader "universal" youth welfare system that would deal not only with the afflicted person as such, but try to influence that person's environment .

11. In Germany, the number of employees in social services has increased over the last years. As a result, social services have become a major factor in local employment markets. Approximately 320.000 public sector employees work in the social services field. Of these, 79% are employed at the municipal level, 20% are employed by the states, and only 1% by the Federal government. Commercial providers concentrate on a few selected employment areas, in particular in care of the elderly and the disabled. Approximately 70.000 employees work for commercial for-profit services . The welfare organisations are clearly the major provider of services. They employ about 780.000 people, or two thirds of all social services employees. Overall 66% of employees in social services work for non-profit providers, 28% at public agencies, and 6% for commercial firms.

12. Education and training in the social professions

In Germany, education and training is the responsibility of the Länder - and not of the Federal Government. This leads, apart from other distinctions, to a heterogeneous terminology in the field of training. But even on Länder level, structure, content and terminology of training institutions are not necessarily the same.

According to the Bologna-process Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschulen) will offer Bachelor and Master- programmes for social work. With the Bologna process connected is the aim, to develop a university structure in Europe which avoids obstacles concerning mobility. But the results up to now show really other picture. The diversity of the structure and even of content issues has increased enormously.

13. The Development of Training for Social Professionals

The training of social professionals has its roots in the end of the last century. In the context of industrialisation, when important changes took place within society.

The growing complexity of society and the social tasks and problems led to the recognition that those involved in social and youth welfare must have proper professional training.

The training at university level started in 1969.

In 1969 at university level new four-year fully academic diploma courses were established: Erziehungswissenschaft with an option in Sozialpädagogik.

In 1971 the higher vocational schools and academies, which had belonged to secondary education were transformed to "Fachhochschulen" and integrated into the system of higher education. These "Fachhochschulen" are supposed to provide a three-year course (in some of the Länder four years) which has to be "practice-related on a scientific foundation".

14. **Social work** has its roots in the poor relief, in social movements, in the emergence of the voluntary welfare work. It can be understood as reaction to the social need which resulted from the industrialisation in urban densely populated areas. Accordingly, social work is the answer to social predicament and concentrates on that part of the population, who had fallen out of the formal and informal social security systems. It is a matter of support, counselling, assistance to self-help and it

aims at the promotion and stabilisation of humane living conditions; briefly, social work as an intervention against psycho-social predicaments, as organised assistance. The study of social problems is in this view the object base of the social work.

15. The term **social pedagogy** was used in Germany for the first time around 1850 by Karl Mager and Adolf Diesterweg and draw the attention to new social problems, that emerged in the context of the industrialisation and were summed up as the "social question".

A new form of pedagogy, i.e. a social pedagogy was supposed to help solving these problems (Pauperism, neglect, decay of the family structures) through educational contributions/interventions. The cultural and social change taking place at that time was understood as a loss of community, the traditional norms and values disintegrated. The term social-pedagogy refers to a certain >modus of action/intervention, which includes apart from assistance and help also education, formation (Bildung), support, counselling and empowerment. Following the ideas of the enlightenment the concept of Bildung is very important.

"Bildung", that is the perspective – following the ideas of universal humanity – that each individual has the right to develop his personality, supported by the educational system became the overall aim for the social/pedagogical work with children and young people.

16. Since the training courses at universities and Fachhochschulen have been established they have a scientific orientation. Initially, the courses were very pragmatically orientated and directed towards practical social needs.

The traditional approach orientated on the classical triad of methods (case work, group work, community work) was in the beginning of the 1970s replaced by critical, emancipatory theories, which concentrated on the social/political conditions of social and personal/individual problems. Social workers were seen as agents of social change. In the 1980s again individual- and relations- orientated approaches came into the fore. Parallel social movements and "alternative projects" (e.g. for young people in risk, homes providing educational leisure time activities ecc.) created new forms of providing social services.

17. Since the 1990s there are three dominating approaches:

i) Ecological-systems theories with the starting point, that social problems and needs arise when disruptions occur within social-ecological human systems.

ii) "Lebensweltorientierte Soziale Arbeit", with the starting point that social work(ers) must refer to the "Lebenswelt" (the social environment) of the clients in order to support people; the clients are seen as the real experts for their lives, professionals can give suggestions, but have no moral right to try to change individuals, but their task is to try to improve the living conditions for clients.

iii) Soziale Arbeit als Dienstleistung – Service orientated social work as a response to the requirements of a flexible modern society. In this concept one central point is the former client is seen the productive user in his/her civic status. Social work is not necessarily linked with a specific traditional orientation towards values but has to guarantee good professional provision of social services

18. There is no doubt that social work has changed its paradigm: From help and assistance in need and want towards support of coping and mastering the life in a complex society. Social work is concerning its self-image as a modern, profession with high standards

In the public domain (e.g. in newspaper, magazines and TV) social work is not seen in its helping function, required in this context is the function of social control. In addition we have to confirm, that social work has not yet sufficient strategies to bring and establish their professional view concerning social problems, social condition of personal growth, deviancy, inclusion and exclusion into the public.

Main employers for Sozialarbeiter and Sozialpädagogen are local or regional institutions (Kommunen, Landkreise), the Länder or the federal government (Bund), the welfare organizations, churches or other so called 'free' institutions, like associations or project groups.

19. Critical remarks

Participation is a noble aim and belongs – as we have seen - as a crucial term to political discourses. No doubt, that participation and democracy “viens très bien ensemble”. Participation is seen as a fundamental principle of democracy.

But on the other side we have – at least in Germany - to take into account, that the willingness to participate in political settings amongst young people is marked not very strong. Young people have a remarkable distance towards official politics and they prefer - if at all - non-conformal political engagement.

20. We have finally to take into account political and societal limits and restrictions
In key words. :

- economisation of all social dimensions, new criteria what “good” youth work is
- a proactive youth work should be able to present participation as an attractive, responsible activity. But often the reality does not offer the necessary framework and perspectives.
- the neo liberal ideas of managerialism is not compatible with the basic principal of youth and social work: solidarity and just community. You cannot buy solidarity!
- Youth work must develop its own standards to show for what it is responsible.
- Responsible youth work reflects on its boundaries and has its starting point in the social reality of young people and is not orientated towards political idealisation.
- Kids and young people live in a consumer and leisure time society. Young people use youth work activities as an/one offer amongst other possibilities, They use offers of youth work for their “leisure time careers” that means sometimes for their qualification, sometimes, in order to establish personal social networks or sometimes as a connecting point to enhance their individual status respective their position in the peer groups.
- Youth work is not compulsory. Young people are active, are willing to learn as far as the content, the setting, the group and the professionals are interesting
- Youth work should guarantee democratic learning arrangements, in which participation, support and personal enrichment are essential cornerstones.
- Because of the visible developments (lack of strong connections to formal organisations, big influence on peer-groups on opinions and life style, change of values and changes in the inter-generation-relationship professionals in youth work should reflect permanently on their role and function and how that fits to the needs, challenges and tasks of young people.

- Approaches , concept and methods in youth work have the following overall objectives: to create good conditions and to establish a sufficient framework for the growing up of young people, to decrease inequality , to respect democracy and human rights, to ensure participation and to involve kids and young people in archiving this aims in their neighbourhood and beyond. Really a challenging task for professionals