

**Handout for the European Conference:
“Integrated strategies for children and
young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods”**

November 23th – 25th, 2004 in Berlin

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Preliminary Remark

This paper serves as a basis for discussion for preparing the European Conference. It mainly reflects the experiences, approaches and standards of good practice of social inclusion of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, which have been collected within the framework of the programme platform E&C of the German Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth since the year 2000. The main request of this paper is to combine these experiences with the European discourses and approaches of social inclusion of young people.

In the first chapter the programme platform E&C is shortly presented, and in the following chapters 2-4 core elements of the platform's philosophy are combined with the current European debates. Chapter 5 highlights the aim of the European Conference as well as the descriptions of the panel themes from the point of view of the program platform E&C.

1. The German programme platform ‘Development and opportunities for young people in deprived neighbourhoods (E&C)’ (*Entwicklung und Chancen junger Menschen in sozialen Brennpunkten*) (E&C) as an example of ‘Good Practice’ for the present European discourse¹

In contrast to the traditional national public funding programmes of the Federal Children and Youth Welfare, the programme platform E&C is a programme in partnership and refers to the joint initiative ‘Districts With Special Development Needs - The Socially Integrative City’² (*Die Soziale Stadt*) of the Federal Government and the Federal States (*Länder*). The objective of the programme platform E&C aims at pooling resources with a cross-departmental approach and to encourage and support the inhabitants, in particular the children and young people, so that they participate actively in the processes of social renewal in disadvantaged and deprived neighbourhoods.

The programme platform E&C organises the cross-departmental exchange of information on the federal, regional and municipal level that is joint up in the individual neighbourhoods, thus offering a nation-wide expert debate about the further development and the reform of social services in the Federal Republic of Germany. The programme platform E&C strives to mobilise the entire infrastructure of child and youth welfare for these social areas, which already exists thanks to the Federal Child and Youth Welfare Programme (*Kinder- und Jugendplan des Bundes*). Furthermore, it shall qualify and develop the work of public and private bodies responsible for child and youth welfare in these social areas and put the acquisition of future-oriented skills in the very centre of the new guidelines for the improvement of the infrastructural and social situation in poor and deprived neighbourhoods.

The programme platform E&C pursues the following objectives:

- combating social exclusion,
- to promote the acquisition of future-oriented skills (in the fields of youth welfare, education, social matters, health and employment),

¹ the following chapters (1-4): Hartmut Brocke, Stiftung SPI, Working hypothesis, High-ranking expert group December 12th and 13th 2002 in Brussels

² Similar to the British National Strategy Action Plan ‘A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal’ (Oct. 2001) with its cross-cutting Neighbourhood Renewal Funds. (Translator's note.)

- strengthening individual responsibility and social commitment by the cross-department mobilisation of competencies in public authorities, responsible bodies and the democratic community.

The programmatic background ‘Social work as co-production’ recommends to all actors in the field, as a change of paradigms, to switch over to social-area-oriented networking on the two following levels:

- strategic networks of public authorities,
- operational local network.

Textual supports are combined with the involvement / participation of the addressees of child and youth welfare. The main focus lies on the development and extension of local networks together with the development of democratic commitment, the pooling of sector-oriented public funding programmes and the implementation of community projects.

The programmatic background ‘Social work as co-production’ emphasizes the concept of Human Capital, combines local forms of participation with successful projects / activities and economic growth. The availability of social capital, in particular of a fairly high level of education and qualification of young people, improves the competitiveness of all involved areas as well as the more intensive social cohesion. The lack of social capital is associated with lack of economic success, social exclusion and poverty.

The change of paradigm initiated by the programme platform E&C also includes the following dimensions for its procedure:

- the economic dimension,
- the ecological dimension,
- the social dimension,
- the intercultural dimension,
- the gender dimension,
- the ethnic dimension,
- the spatial dimension.

In addition to that, special sub-projects belong to the national programme platform E&C for specific sets of problems. This sub-projects are based on ‘intersectoral responsibilities’ of public and private bodies involved in welfare work, and on the active involvement of the addressees. This was particularly evident in the sub-project ‘Competence and Qualification’ (*Kompetenz und Qualifikation – KuQ*) and actually is in the ESF-Federal Programme ‘LOS – Local capital for social purposes’ (*Lokales Kapital für soziale Zwecke*). In these projects, towns, communities and counties with E&C-areas obtain funds / global subsidies which offer a new form of specialised management with determined programme objectives (networking of municipal / local authorities) and local participation thanks to the delegation of budget responsibility within the limits of a special (experimental) fund.

2. The correlation between education and social inequality – the notion of competence in the educational debate³

³ cf. also: European Conference, Panel I, p. 8 *et seq.*

The core focus of all common efforts is the question how new generations, children and young people as well as their parents can be supported and provided with the appropriate general set-up, so that the development of their own personality and the ability to acquire future-oriented competences can be strengthened and not impeded. Therefore, education is always more than school education, than vocational training or acquisition of additional skills. It is the prerequisite for the ability of children and young people to assert and position themselves in an ever changing world. Modern educational sciences therefore do no more address mere qualification, but life skills in general.

Access to resources and opportunities to benefit from such personality-related educational processes determine biographic opportunities and the future lifecycle. These resources and accesses are unequally distributed depending on the educational level of the provenance of families and the growing up in disadvantaged, deprived neighbourhoods.

The question what life skills children and young people will have to acquire for their future can only be answered by a time diagnosis of the "Society of the Future". Regarding this time diagnosis, there is basically a common understanding on the national and European levels. The Society of the Future will be:

- a knowledge-based society requiring lifelong learning;
- a risk society, in which personal biographies need to be kept flexible although the personal identity has to be preserved;
- a work society that did not run out of work, but in which the challenges for the individual to participate become more and more demanding;
- a democratic society in which people participate in political debates and are free to communicate their opinion;
- a strengthened civic society with manifold forms of participation, solidarity, social networks and cooperation of the citizens;
- an immigration society where people of different provenance, religion, culture and tradition live together and need to be included.

Depending on the individual living conditions and the place of residence, this time diagnosis seems to the future society either as risk society or as multi-option society. Anyway, the time diagnosis bears the chance to filter out attributes, qualities, standards, desirable / indispensable abilities and capacities, in order give a sense to the notion of competence.

The risk society requires the ability to establish one's own identity, the knowledge society learning abilities, the civic society the ability to get involved and to participate, the work society the ability to reproduce, the immigration society intercultural competence. The specification of core competences for the future is not only valid for the individual subjects but also for the professional interaction and the institutions of social work and welfare. Interventions, offers, measures, projects, public funding programmes, thus, contain criteria for the shaping of desirable offers on all levels

- career development,
- new professional settings,
- transformation of the institutions.

Such a comprehensive notion of education can, intrinsically, not be limited to the institutions of formal education, but requires the deliberate and active integration of informal and non-formal educational offers for children and young people as well as for the consolidation of their parents' educational competence and their places of

residence (immediate family environment, organised spatial proximity, non organised spatial proximity).

3. Core points / conclusions for the European Debate of the Civil Society⁴

The triangle of public institutions, addressees, users, citizens and providers of social services needs to be redefined.

Public institutions such as the Federal Government (*Bund*), the Federal States (*Länder*) and the municipalities cannot be released of their public responsibility for the core area of common quality standards and the largest possible access for all members of the society.

Co-responsibility of addressees, users, citizens as well as voluntary organisations need to be integrated and strengthened in public and private action (mobilisation and follow-up of the social capital).

Good governance (involvement and participation) requires that citizens get involved in decision-making with the necessary competence in decentralised structures, with development processes that are adapted to the local level, with relationships based on confidence and the respect of common commitments, on the acceptance and proximity of specific cultures and communities and a decision based on societal arrangements with the local environment.

The goal of solidarity and active involvement of all citizens can only be achieved successfully, if politics, institutions and networks support and promote it. Such networks are mainly associations, political initiatives, projects and foundations. The added value of commitment results from dialog, communication and social behaviour. Social capital is generated, it is available in defined social areas and can be assessed locally. Work for money, individual work and voluntary work become more interconnected. The transition between the various fields of activities becomes normal.

A prerequisite for a more flexible time scheduling of people is a new and “all-embracing” understanding of achievement with, among others, the valorisation of activities which are not gainful occupation. The economic performance of each and every individual requires further achievements (education, social achievements, achievements beyond and after the job). Social citizenship offers better opportunities of inclusion also for immigrants and foreigners, because it implies the involvement and participation in public missions. Radical and rapid changes of technologies and culture require (new) creativity in politics. The new paradigm of social policy is: result-orientation. Therefore, problems need to be solved not institutionalised; this means to civilise not to subsidise municipalities and systems.

4. Conclusions for policy and administration (Europe, national level, regional level, local level)

Policy and administration must introduce overall concepts, take the initiative that is likely to trigger the (new) definition of an agreed, cooperative mix of responsibilities between all actors involved and, thus, offer a corresponding concept for the individual offers of social services. Policy and administration will have to determine a core set of standards and quality features which are indispensable for public funding.

⁴ cf. also: European Conference, Panel IV, p. 15 *et seq.*

Policy and administration will have to develop programmes and guidelines for public funding that contain incentives in order to strengthen all fields where one of the essential elements is lacking (entrepreneurial orientation, objectives of public welfare and civic participation).

They should introduce funds for innovation enabling to collect experiences with new experimental practices.

In this context, the “steering models” of the previous years can be enhanced, so that they will no more be in competition with the active participation of citizens but complementary. Thus, participation of addressees, users and citizens can be formulated not only as a right, but as duty of each and every social service offered.

The new political objectives are:

- better satisfaction of the citizens with local services and planning projects (acceptance),
- increased participation of the citizens in democratic decision-taking and the revitalisation of local democracy (democratisation),
- strengthening the cooperativeness of citizens among themselves (solidarity),
- relief for municipal budgets thanks to the participation of citizens (efficiency),
- better political results in the sense of the definition of political targets (result- and solution orientation).

So-called win-win-solutions must be part of the funding programmes and guidelines for:

- the public administration,
- the addressees,
- the providers of social services.

This implies the draft of fair rules for redistribution (advantages and burdens) as a frame for each and every reform measure. E. g.:

- more budget autonomy,
- saved money has to be reinvested for social purposes,
- provision of experimental funds,
- acknowledgement of the actual costs (administration, quality management, development of human resources) and the readiness to contribute one’s share.

5. Organisation of a European Conference in November 2004: ‘Integrated Strategies for Children and Young People in disadvantaged neighbourhoods’ – Methods and Fields of Activities

The objectives of the programme platform E&C – social integration, promoting the acquisition of competencies for the future and the promotion of individual responsibility and civic commitment – also have first priority on the European agenda. Furthermore, approaches and tools as recommended by E&C – networking and intersectoral action, local partnerships and participation – play an increasingly important role also for the approaches of the European Union. In a lot of European countries outside the EU, too, the development of new municipal and local concepts as a reaction to urban phenomena such as poverty and exclusion have first priority for the improvement of the situation of children and young people.

Although the general national and municipal / local set-ups are distinctly different, all European towns and communities are facing similar challenges. Similar to the open method of coordination, a Europe-wide exchange is organised with the European Conference for the exchange of good practice of social integration of disadvantaged children and young people on the municipal and local level. This shall sharpen the view on innovative integrated strategies of social inclusion beyond national borders, enable learning from each other and contribute to strengthen the social dimension in Europe.

Four fields of activities have been defined for this purpose (detailed description p. 8 *et seq.*), which are crucial for the sustainable improvement of the situation of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. On the one hand, concepts are addressed of school and education (formal, non-formal, informal), because the acquisition of life skills substantially determine the future opportunities of children and young people (p. 8 *et seq.*).

Another central challenge and strategic mission for the future is the Europe-wide integration of young migrants, especially in neighbourhoods with a specific demand for development. Here, sustainable concepts of intercultural city and neighbourhood management need to be developed, the equal access of young migrants to offers of education and other local services have to be guaranteed (p. 10 *et seq.*).

The development and actual implementation of new municipal management strategies and tools, which will have to replace previous patterns of political and administrative solutions, constitute another core issue of the European exchange. This means new and efficient forms of *Governance*, new forms of cooperation, alliances and networks also with private actors as, for instance, the civic society or the economy. Briefly: it means strategies and approaches for action in the sense of *local capacity building*, enabling to combat processes of urban segregation (p. 13 *et seq.*).

The promotion of involvement, participation and civic commitment of young people and their families close to the citizens on the municipal / local level which contribute efficiently to the sustainable urban development and to foster the civil society, constitute the fourth core issue of the European Conference (p. 15 *et seq.*).

The result of the European Conference organised by the Federal Ministry for the Family, Elderly People, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) in cooperation with the Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) will be a Joint Declaration of the European municipalities about ‘Integrated strategies for children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods‘.

Description of the conference themes from the point of view of the program platform E&C

Panel I: Acquisition of life skills – education and learning (formal, informal, non-formal) in disadvantaged neighbourhoods

1.

The society of the future (keyword knowledge-based society) requests that today’s children and adolescents grow up to become real personalities provided with social competencies and vocational skills that make them fit for future requirements. Objectives of educational policy such as lifelong learning are in the very heart of the

European growth and employment strategy. This is neither limited only to the mere economic well-being and the adaptation to the increasing expectations of the labour market, nor to the creativity and development of the individual; the challenge is the proper functioning of democratic structures and the social cohesion.

The access to educational offers is a core element for participation and equal opportunities. But namely children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods do not have this access to the necessary extent. The most serious impact results from the social provenience, i. e. the lack of socio-cultural capital in the family background. The earlier children and young people in disadvantaged areas are given access to educational offers, the better educational disadvantages as a result of marginalised living situations can be compensated. But besides formal learning the entire field of non-formal and informal learning needs to be focussed much more. Education in this understanding does not only mean the acquisition of knowledge, but also the process of empowerment enabling an autonomous management of one's own life and the acquisition of autodidactic learning possibilities.

2.

A lot of European countries have a long-lasting tradition of integrated educational offers that successfully foster the life skills of young people. Many European municipalities provide promotion, consultancy and care for children, young people and their families. But entire groups of the population in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are not reached by these offers or do not use them. In spite of considerable investments in such neighbourhoods municipalities are therefore confronted with increasing restrictions of development chances of children and young people and with the disadvantaging impact of their place of residence. As a consequence, reforms were launched in a lot of places, in order to adapt the infrastructure of schools and education to the actual requirements. The strategies are different and geared to the individual problems and contexts of the concerned neighbourhoods.

3.

If they want to meet their public responsibility for equal opportunities of children and young people growing up in disadvantaged areas, municipalities have to guarantee the access to and the participation in educational and social services. Local policy and administrative action need to concentrate on the places, living areas and on specific solutions for children, young people and their families in the concerned neighbourhoods (integrated and resource-oriented local action), in order to better target the specific needs of young people and their families in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

For the personality-building process and the development of own potentials and individuality it is very important to start with the promotion of skills and education as early as possible. Many countries already have exhaustive early childhood education for a long time and strive to extend this programmes and efforts. In addition to that, strategies exist to combine family care and educational offers with other services ("*one stop agency*"), where parents having small children can be helped to hunt a job, to qualify themselves, to find a dwelling and to get healthcare services, etc. Day-care centres, for instance, can be a suitable place for such family-oriented offers and help to activate civic commitment and self-organisation of the inhabitants of concerned neighbourhoods, thus becoming family and neighbourhood centres.⁵ Day-care centres

⁵ In England, for instance, the programme "*Early Excellence Centres*" in the field of elementary education generated positive experiences all over the country. Besides child-care and education there have been developed services for families providing, in addition to educational guidance and offers for

should cooperate with other public institutions and organisations of the third sector and the private economy in the neighbourhood, too, in order to provide such offers, and especially with the schools in order to secure the transition from nursery schools to basic primary schools.

In order to promote the successful transitions in personal careers social area-based integrated strategies of all actors can be a crucial impulse for success. The cooperation of early childcare institutions and basic primary schools, common care services of youth welfare and schools as well as the involvement of vocational training centres and the local economy for the transition from school to work can promote the social integration of children and young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Such integrated educational offers which consider the importance of area-based approaches for the life of children and adolescents and also integrate aspects of, for instance, the promotion of violence prevention, language courses for ethnic minorities and migrants as well as healthcare issues, substantially contribute to improve the future opportunities of children and young people.

In addition to that, the offer of vocational training is very important for the future opportunities of many young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, because it improves their employability. Such offers need to be “tailor-made” (*Case-Management*) and to help young people to acquire social and vocational key-qualifications as necessary skills for the labour market. Here, too, integrated strategies in the sense of networked youth welfare offices, social care offices and employment agencies but also the economy and the voluntary sector are very helpful.

Furthermore, the promotion of extracurricular non-formal educational services is essential for the acquisition of future skills, namely for disadvantaged young people, because it is an important contribution to social integration, active civic commitment, solidarity, the personal development, voluntary work and self-confidence of young people. It is essential to also acknowledge these acquired capacities and to strengthen the complementarity of formal and non-formal education and training. For the validation of non-formally and informally acquired capacities procedures, standards, assessment criteria and information need to be made transparent. But informal learning in youth welfare must in no case lose its open character.⁶

Panel II: Immigration / Interculturality: strategic integration management as municipal task

1.
Questions of migration and the solution of complex integration issues are a major present and - above all - future challenge for most of the European states. International migration movements in their double dimension of immigration and emigration have become a global phenomenon by now and are no more a national one. The cross-border mobility becomes increasingly important as a consequence of globalisation processes and confronts the European national states with new political tasks. Although the legal framework conditions for immigration and integration differ in the various European countries – due to their different historical development – and therefore possibilities of integration are in- or excluded, the European municipalities are facing similar challenges. The future of many European cities and municipalities will be multi-ethnic and intercultural. Thanks to the immigration but also to generative

the integration into the labour market, also educational opportunities and support for the development of self-help potentials.

⁶ Common working paper of the European Commission and the Council of Europe “Pathways towards validation and recognition of Education, Training & Learning in the Youth Field” February 2004

effects the proportion of young migrants will grow significantly compared with the whole young population. This development concerns mainly the big and medium-sized European cities. Considered regionally, migration essentially is an urban phenomenon. In a city as, for instance, Frankfurt on the Main, the proportion of young migrants totalled nearly 50 percent in 1997 already. And even for medium-sized towns in Germany like Solingen the proportion of young migrants is predicted to rise sharply in order to attain 42 percent of the total young population by 2010.⁷

And the distribution of migrants within the cities is fairly similar in most of the European cities. Migrants are disproportionately present in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with an accumulation of social problems. The existence of ethnic colonies in certain neighbourhoods which over the last years were also considered as a consolidating factor in relation with the integration of immigrants, is more and more becoming a social problem for most of the European cities. Exemplary for the difficulties to integrate migrants are the low employment rate and the high unemployment rate in many countries also among immigrants of the second generation.

2.

The promotion of intercultural living together has therefore become a strategic mission for the future with central responsibilities but local solutions. Integration takes place in the communities and social areas. Integration can only be successful on the local level where complex integration problems have to be solved.

The experiences made until now on the European level in connection with the implementation and shaping of integrative strategies point out that individual projects can well be successful, but do hardly trigger the intended long-term and synergetic effects. Urban integrative policies – that is illustrated by municipal approaches in countries that have a lot of integrative experiences like Great Britain, the Netherlands or Denmark – have to be implemented as intersectoral issue, because many political fields are involved and key-partners need to be integrated for the cooperation.

3.

Beyond all different municipal framework conditions and local problems in the European cities a strategic integration management is required (migration management) and a long-term political management on the local level. This has to take the specific needs of the individual groups of migrants into account. Integration is an interactive process that calls for efforts of the immigration society and the immigrants.⁸

The implementation of a migration management strategy initially requires the implementation of a management relevant reporting, that enables the deduction of approaches for further action and informs about the achievement of targets determined by the municipality. Besides that, the development of a strategic and long-term planning is necessary that includes fine-tuned measures and gets a network involved of actors of integrative policies and the migrants themselves.

⁷ When differentiating the distribution of migrants for the Federal Republic of Germany, one finds out that 80 percent of all migrants are living in West-German big cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Differentiated even more, one recognizes that 60 percent of all migrants are living in West-German big cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, whereas 21.7 percent live in cities with 100,000 to 500,000 inhabitants. On the other hand, the proportion of migrants in rural areas is only 2.8 to 7 percent. (Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband e.V., Social Report 2002: Die Einwanderungsgesellschaft. Forderungen an das Jahrzehnt der Integration (The Immigration society: Challenges for the decade of integration), p. 25)

⁸ European Committee on Migration, Towards A Migration Management Strategy, Council of Europe, November 2002

Essential therefore is the creation of an intercultural network and the institutionalisation of local structures of participation and informal opportunities in which migrants and their own organisations can get involved. Multi-ethnic networks in the cities and their neighbourhoods that integrate the actors of the most various social fields are also the basis for an integrative process with equal chances for all. This requires and enables simultaneously to actively address and promote the civic commitment of migrants who can call for potentials and mediation skills of intermediate actors. The implementation of a migration management strategy as municipal mainstreaming strategy requires the implementation of approaches for action that transfer the strategy on the practical level. This namely includes the intercultural opening up of the administration as crucial starting point for a credible intercultural policy, an approach that is still only starting in Germany but successfully practiced and evaluated for years already in other European cities like London. The intercultural opening up of the administration is to guarantee that not only the indigenous people have access to and take profit of local services but also the immigrants and all linguistic and / or cultural minorities.⁹ A particular attention is to be turned to the equal access of young migrants and their families to healthcare and social services.

In order to counter the segregation of young migrants already in their early childhood and to obviate processes of marginalisation and selection as early as possible, the promotion of skills for the future of migrants, especially in the fields of education and language learning have to be focussed more in many countries, because without language abilities the social and cultural integration is even aggravated, and bad school or training reports result in disadvantaged employability and the minimization of future opportunities. The successful integration requires the participation with equal chances of young migrants and their parents in educational processes and successes, uses and promotes their self-help potentials as essential resource.

In view of the increasingly remarkable phenomena of transmigration, which means that, given the uncertainty of the perspectives of return or further migration, migrants increasingly less consider their cross-border migration as a unique process that ends and change their place of residence more often, the necessary acquisition and improvement of language abilities and other skills becomes more and more important for migrants in the schools of their hosting countries.¹⁰

Panel III: Management strategies and local social development concepts in disadvantaged areas

1. Children, young people and their families who are growing up and living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in conditions of segregation and deprivation, require specific promotion, care and support for their social integration, for the creation of job prospects, for the safeguard of their chances in healthcare and education and for their successful struggle against social and educational problems.

⁹ Hauke Hartmann/Marga Pröhl, Interkulturelle Stadtpolitik – Handlungsansätze und gute Beispiele, Journal der Regiestelle E&C, Nr. 10, Mai 2003, see also Städtenetzwerk „Cities of Tomorrow“, www.cities-of-tomorrow.net

¹⁰ Ingrid Gogolin, Migration und Bildung, Journal of the Regiestelle E&C, No. 6, July 2002

On the municipal level many European countries and communities already have differentiated offers of promotion, consultancy and care for children, young people and their families. Often different institutions and authorities are responsible for the various development fields of family support and child-friendly conditions for growing-up. Each of these entities tries with their own specialisations, own structures, procedures, standards and quality management to act successfully in their corresponding fields. All these institutions separately make the experience that multiple resources have to be (are) invested in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and that in spite of this investment the social problems cannot be solved in a sustainable manner and that there is no positive infrastructural, economic, cultural or social development in relation with the educational and health situation. But the strategy of “always more of the same” can not cope with the negative development trends which aggravate themselves mutually in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

2.

In order to adequately treat these problems and to counter the spatial concentration of poverty, integrated municipal and local strategies have been developed. In many countries these strategies are also considered in the context of administrative reforms and in connection with aspects of good governance and area-based management of development process and the pooling of resources. This includes, above all, the overall concept of the “activating state” and of “*good governance*”.

The five principles of good governance are:

- *Openness*: The Institutions should actively inform and communicate with the citizens and use language that is accessible and makes it understandable how political decisions in their community which concern them are taken.
- *Participation*: The citizens should be consulted and increasingly involved in the decisions which concern them and, in general, in the Community life.
- *Accountability*: A new structured form of cooperation needs to be developed between responsible authorities and institutions in order to find concrete solutions on the corresponding levels of decision-making, which suit the needs of the population.
- *Effectiveness*: The resource the Community has in form of its citizens has to be valorised, so that citizens can even better help to cope with the challenges of the society, to contribute to the success of the various measures which concern them and to the proper functioning of the Community in future.
- *Coherence*: A comprehensive strategy has to be developed that coordinates the various policies and levels of decision-making.¹¹

In many European countries, these principles are transformed into successful development strategies for the sustainable urban (neighbourhood) development structured according to the so-called *area-based approaches*.¹²

3.

These approaches are based on the assumption that for the protection of the development and opportunities of young people and their families the cooperation and networking of various offices such as employment and social affairs, health, schools, youth and family, economy and urban development is necessary. In addition to that,

¹¹ Regiestelle E&C, Weiterentwicklung der BMFSFJ Programmplattform „Entwicklung und Chancen junger Menschen in sozialen Brennpunkten“ (E&C) Programmperiode 2003-2006, August 2003 (unveröffentlicht)

¹² cf. Programmes in Germany (Die Soziale Stadt und E&C) Denmark (*Kvarterløft-Programm*), England (*New Deal for Communities*), France (*Politique de la Ville*), the Netherlands (*Big Cities Policy in Den Haag*), Austria (Soziale Stadterneuerung) and Sweden (*Urban Development Program*) etc.

particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods need for their social cohesion decentralised approaches which enable the active cooperation of all regional and municipal / local levels, the social partners and the civic society.

These guiding principles can also be found in the design of integrated concepts in connection with the German joint programme of the federal government and the federal states “The Social City” or within the structure of the programme platform E&C. Notably the tools of the local action plan anticipate the positive experiences with concepts of sustainable social urban (neighbourhood) development on an area-based level (for instance with the federal programme “Local capital for social purposes – LOS”).

Local action plans as a tool are based on decentralised, cooperative and participatory project design strategies and decision-making processes which include, in particular, the local actors in the field. Local action plans are a (steering-) tool of small-scale, area-based, strategic and cooperative municipal development policy. Their aim is to strengthen and to promote local resources and to trigger impulses of social inclusion and offer of opportunities to participate and cooperate actively. They are designed for clearly determined development tasks and locally relevant problems.

Local action plans and integrated concepts for action include at least:

- a differentiated and area-based description of problems, a guiding vision and targets as well as success indicators;
- a binding cooperation and networking agreement for all involved institutions;
- a binding form of participation for the citizens and local actors and
- PR-work and evaluation on the basis of social data in relation with the success indicators.¹³

The sustainable shift to integrated action in favour of disadvantaged neighbourhoods also needs special neighbourhood-based – local – steering elements. Thus, local cooperation and networks enable synergetic potentials and effectiveness thanks to cross-organisational and interdisciplinary strategies of all actors involved in the field. Besides the various municipal offices these are general schools and vocational training centres, employment initiatives, educational and social institutions, charity organisations, neighbourhood management, local enterprises, citizens’ action groups and initiatives of locally acting institutions.

Such cooperation and networks strive:

- to pool intersectoral competencies in order to improve chances for the integration of children, young people and their parents,
- to reduce double work by efficient division of labour,
- to enable the know how-transfer between municipal authorities and institutions,
- to ensure action close to the citizens by concentrating on integration supports and area-based approaches and on cost-reduction that helps gaining new room for manoeuvre thanks to synergetic effects.

Considerable synergetic effects can be achieved especially when the various offices cooperate and pool their public funds in a concentrated manner (for instance in form of area-based budgets / social area budgets). In parallel to that, an operational local network cares for the integration of local actors of the concerned area, the definition and design of participatory structures and the involvement of children, young people and their families in relation with all issues which concern them and their place of residence. For the activation, empowerment and self-determination of the local

¹³ DJI, E&C im Kontext neuer kommunalpolitischer Strategien, 2003

residents it is necessary to delegate resources and responsibilities to the participating committees and alliances of the civic society in form of, for instance, experimental funds.¹⁴

Panel IV: Strengthening the civil society and participation

1.

The European states are offensively facing at present the challenge of strengthening the civil society and the participation of young people. The present impulses of the European institutions – among others triggered by the White Paper of the European Commission “A new Impetus for European Youth”¹⁵ explicitly address local actors for issues such as participation and information as it does the Charter ‘Participation of young people on the local and regional level’ of the Council of Europe.¹⁶ Both publications stress that the participation of children, young people and their families starts on the local level.

Experienced participation and comprehensively well prepared information for young people have a decisive impact on whether or not the aim of an active citizenship can be achieved. It is necessary that young people get actively involved in the decision-making processes (especially those processes which concern them directly).

The European discourse about the civil society also addresses the promotion of self-responsibility, civic commitment and voluntary work of, especially, young people (mobilisation and care of the social capital).

2.

A lot of European municipalities already have exemplary procedures that get young people involved in the political life on the local level. For many of the approaches of social urban (neighbourhood) development, bottom-up strategies of activation and participation play a major role that place citizens as experts for their own issues in the very heart of the processes.¹⁷

3.

As a result of the European discourse about participation by young people the Council of the European Union named three objectives to encourage young people to be active citizens” and to ‘reinforce their effective participation in democratic life:

1. increase the participation by young people in the civic life of their community;
2. increase participation by young people in the system of representative democracy;
3. greater support for various forms of learning to participate,

¹⁴ Regiestelle E&C, Weiterentwicklung der BMFSFJ Programmplattform „Entwicklung und Chancen junger Menschen in sozialen Brennpunkten“ (E&C) Programme period 2003-2006, August 2003 (not published)

¹⁵ Commission of the European Communities, White Paper “A new Impetus for European Youth” COMM (2001) 681 final, 21.11.2001

¹⁶ Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, Adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe , 21 May 2003:

http://www.coe.int/T/E/CLrae/5_Texts/5_Conventions_and_charters/young.asp#TopOfPage (as per 7 June 2004)

¹⁷ cf. for instance experiences with programmes in Denmark (*Kvarterløft*-Programme), England (*New Deal for Communities*), France (*Politique de la Ville*), the Netherlands (*Big Cities Policy in Den Haag*), Austria (*Soziale Stadterneuerung*) and Sweden (*Urban Development Program*), Soziale Stadt info 14, Aktivierung und Beteiligung – ein Blick in sieben europäische Länder, October 2003

This implies that all young people should have access – according to the conditions of their individual living conditions – to public life in society and that they can participate without impediments. The following lines of action are, amongst others, proposed:

- promotion of the involvement of young people in existing participatory structures,
- recognition of the competence of children and young people by local participation in problem solving processes,
- more awareness of the work done for young people by parents, social workers and other relay persons and
- identification of the obstacles which prevent specific groups, especially disadvantaged young people from participating.¹⁸

All structures have to make sure that they bear in mind gender issues when getting children and young people involved and create, wherever necessary, such structures.

Children and young people need their own representative structures that need to be actively involved in political processes (for instance own councils for children and adolescents, parliaments). The Co-Management-System of the Council of Europe illustrates how one can integrate the opinion of young people consequently in formal decision-making structures.¹⁹ It is, nonetheless, indispensable to involve also non-organised young people in the dialogue. Therefore, the most different forms need to be developed so that the largest possible participation of children, young people and their families succeeds. Young people should get used to the rules of the representative democracy and be shown ways to active participation. In this context, one has to find out also why so many young people are not interested in this form of democracy and why they do not get involved.

Another important cornerstone are offers to learn participation. Non-formal educational experiences essentially contribute to the personal development and active citizenship of young people. But also the formal education system should “teach participation”. Successful participatory structures will have to be created or, if they exist already, valorised. And young people must be able to understand the advantages of active participation in civic processes. This can be fostered by getting them involved in neighbourhood projects as for instance the design of children playgrounds, their own housing or their cooperation as “eco-detectives”. Also open forms of participation can be envisaged such as children and youth forums, round tables, hearings or office hours.

Namely for disadvantaged children and young people the conditions for participation and equal opportunities need to be created. Especially these children and young people often are not integrated in the existing participatory structures. Thus, they often are not used to formulate their own needs publicly. Their only strategies to solve their problems are often violence and delinquency. Their rules develop according to their peer-groups in their own environment, e. g. in the street or other structures which are often fairly independent. These young people need particular motivation to participate in the design of their own living conditions. And often they do not feel competent enough for politics as a civic practice.

¹⁸ Council Resolution of 25 November 2003 on common objectives for participation by and information for young people, http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2003/c_295/c_29520031205en00060008.pdf

¹⁹ information: <http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural%5FCo%2Doperation/Youth/7%2E%5FAbout%5Fus/>

New sustainable forms of participation which are adapted to social conditions and the age of young people are the prerequisite for the initiation of a sustainable process of social co-production. These forms should be based on the environment of children and young people and be characterized by their ideas and needs. Necessary information has to be provided for in an understandable manner, easily accessible and not discriminating. Structures and learning forms need to be developed that consequently strive to promote the participatory opportunities of young people and their families, who will have to be involved in all decisions that concern them. Participatory structures, methods and tools have to be designed in a way that they can actually be experienced. Low-level concepts are required that do not exclude innovative ideas and do not seem to be rigid processes.

Participation of all young people is a chance to organise social processes in an alert and lively manner. Especially marginalised children and young people are facing the question whether (civic) commitment pays at all, because it is not clear for them whether such commitment will really end up in positive changes they can experience themselves.²⁰

²⁰ Rainer Schwarz; Sandra Scheeres: Die Bedeutung von Aktivierungs- und Beteiligungsformen für die zentralen Programmodule in E&C, 2002 (not published)