

European Conference 2006

Results of Working Group I: Young people conquer their social areas - Participation and involvement on the local level

Practical examples:

Giuseppe Porcaro, Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe

Chantal Risser, City of Mulhouse, France

Joachim Barloschky, City of Bremen, Germany

Mary Hanlon, John Hanley, City of Dublin, Ireland

Elfa Spitzenberger, Gertraud Sobotka, City of Linz, Austria

Comments:

Maren Sierks, City of Berlin, Germany

Anikó Molitorisz, City of Budapest, Hungary

Chair:

Alexander Bartling, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Report:

Antje Klemm, Regiestelle E&C

Young people conquer their social areas - Participation and involvement on the local level

The preamble of the *European Charta on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life* specifies five key elements for the participation of young people: the right, the means, the space, the opportunities and, where necessary, support. These terms also form the framework for the results collected in this Panel.

As a rule, it can be said that there is no single optimum solution that is equal for all. However, it is nevertheless important to seek such a solution and to take new approaches. This has been demonstrated by our examples. It was also evident that a variety of local conditions also necessitate a variety of instruments.

Living up to the claim of also actively integrating, in particular, disadvantaged young people, and at their conditions, initially requires no less and no more than a paradigm change: For participation and involvement to be lived out consistently as a value per se, and not merely as a means to an end.

What fundamental standards, methods or experiences in the involvement of young people were formulated in Panel I?

Participation must focus on the concrete sphere of residential and living environments of the young people. Their interests and needs and, above all, their potential and their resources must be used as the starting point for developing offers that the children and youths really take seriously. We have become fa-

miliar with numerous good examples in which children and youths have been actively included in the design of their residential quarter, for instance, thus conquering their social areas in a manner visible to all.

Especially with regards to the disadvantaged, long-term monitoring is important as the ability to become actively involved can only manifest via a learning process and disadvantaged children and youths, in particular, must be continuously supported to this end.

This means that the work with disadvantaged children and youths and the requisite structures and resources must be reliable. In order to establish the requisite trust, it is also of tremendous importance to design the negotiation processes that often characterise involvement projects transparently and to clarify why it might not be possible to realise one idea or the other immediately, if at all.

One focal point of the debate in this context was the question of how to maintain the continued motivation of the children and youths if those negotiation processes prove to be tough and tedious. A single answer that satisfied all of the participants was unable to be found.

Furthermore, it was discussed whether models of representative democracy, such as children and youth councils, are indeed the right way to include disadvantaged young people. The fact that models exist that attempt to live up to this claim, such as in Mulhouse, demonstrates that this approach is feasible. Nevertheless, the participants emphasised that spontaneous actions and expressions of interest by children and youths must also be taken seriously and dealt with. The fact that further efforts must be made to realise inclusion in the formal systems is evidenced by approaches such as the Co-Management-System, to which the Council of Europe has already been committed for a long time.

It appears to be very important to improve the frequently negative image of the children and youths living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (and not merely to embellish and repair the neighbourhoods themselves). In other words, they must experience recognition and esteem in the community. After all, the experience by the children and youths of self-efficacy and self-confidence in their own abilities are the prerequisites for active citizenship. Promoting this as early as possible - and also in the formal education systems - was formulated as a major challenge. As has also been illustrated by examples, schools can render a valuable contribution towards gaining access to all children and youths, if possible.

This access was also addressed in discussion of the earliest possible promotion and monitoring of young people. In this context, the role of day care centres was emphasised, via which the parents can also be reached. This is a significant aspect as the inclusion of the families was specified as a fundamental condition for success, in order to also empower disadvantaged children and youths, in particular, to actively participate when their needs are involved.

A substantial need for action that was formulated by numerous sides is the equipping of the professional specialists, such as social workers or district management staff, with the requisite competencies and instruments that enable them to implement standards such as resource orientation and empowerment in their work with the children and youths. In view of today's realities in numerous European cities, an intercultural orientation of this work is especially indispensable.

All of the practical examples have demonstrated that reliable and resilient cooperation and partnerships on the local level that include the most important actors are important factors for the successful inclusion of the children and youths in the design of their own sphere of residential and living environment. These actors include male and female residents, the local authorities, politicians, welfare services, NGOs and other groups in civil society, local enterprises and housing associations. The presentation from Bremen illustrated that this approach can function if it is implemented consistently and if neighbourhood groups are, for instance, provided with their own budgets, enabling them to make decisions concerning modernisation projects on their own responsibility. Of course, this involves processes that must be sustained and facilitated.

Another requirement that was made - and this establishes a connection to Panel V - was for the research activities to be intensified in the fields of participation, empowerment and democratisation and to drive the networking with the actors from local experience. This should pave the way for experimenting with and suitably monitoring new strategies.

The great importance of staying power in the face of protracted change processes and the requisite funding was emphasised on numerous occasions. Above all, however, the requisite support from the responsible local politicians was emphasised, as this represents the prerequisite for financial safeguarding. Ultimately, the disadvantaged neighbourhoods render a disproportionately greater level of integration performance than other neighbourhoods. In this context, the performance also rendered in the municipalities by non-governmental organisations should receive far greater recognition than in the past.

As far as the funding of models of good practice is concerned, the examples have shown how added value can arise through the combination of different resources, such as European, national and municipal resources, private funding and civic commitment.

According to the participants, it is imperative that the collection of positive experiences in European municipalities be continued. However, the needs of young people in rural regions should not be neglected in this respect.

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Results of Working Group II: Good Governance and integrated approaches – Standards for the cooperation of public services, NGOs and the civil society

Practical examples:

Dr. Konrad Hummel, City of Augsburg, Germany

Britta Ström, City of Malmö, Sweden

Dr. Maria Joaquina Marques Serrão, City of Leiria, Portugal

Janice Hoiles, Nigel Jenner, Sue Feighery, Kalishia Le Coutre, City of Brighton, United Kingdom

Comments:

Ursula Schenk, City of Mannheim, Germany

Hermann Dorenburg, City of Offenbach, Germany

Dr. Siegfried Haller, City of Leipzig, Germany

Nika Tavnikova, City of St. Petersburg, Russia

Chair:

Hartmut Brocke, Foundation Sozialpädagogisches Institut Berlin "Walter May"

Report:

Rainer Schwarz, Regiestelle E&C

The German city of Augsburg presented its project for developing management on the social sphere level into a management principle for municipal administration through the experiences of the disadvantaged neighbourhood.

The implementation of the Swedish Metropolitan Policy was presented by way of the example of Malmö in Sweden and the challenges facing the municipal institutions in the tug of war between prosperity and the increasing exclusion of youths were illustrated.

The presentation from Leiria in Portugal demonstrated the way in which urban development processes ("Living Better") have resulted in the design of specific programmes in the city and the effects these, in turn, have had on development.

Brighton in the United Kingdom presented the programme "eb4U – East Brighton's Communities Working Together". Four actors from the programme presented their individual perspectives and roles together. This granted us particularly authentic insights, especially due to the participation of a youth advisor.

The discussion in Panel 2 covered a broad spectrum of topics, ranging from the coherence of communal policy, the discrimination that arises from discrepancies in prosperity, established gender roles and migration background and participation that involves talking more with young residents than about them, all the way to the ethos of social sphere programming comprising respect vis-à-vis the residents, societal groups and ethnicities, listening and observing attentively and the authenticity of the programmes and actors.

In this context, dispute remained regarding the breadth and depth of the social sphere paradigm and the necessity of directly acquiring the perspectives of children and youths, among other things.

The following assumptions and statements - according to the jointly achieved result of the Panel - are of particular importance for the design of Good Governance and integrated approaches in neighbourhoods with a special need for development:

- Action within the scope of integrated action concepts is the most important element in European cities for the participative development of neighbourhoods and quarters in which social and structural problems are concentrated. The experience gained in this respect from communal politics and communal management can serve as an overall basis for the modern development of cities. Such an overall urban reorientation is also the basis for a more just, albeit unequal, distribution of communal commitment, i.e. the basis for an equity-oriented "equalisation of neighbourhood burdens". In this context, it can be said that "all are equal, all are different".
- The development of "Good Governance" in neighbourhoods takes place in the tug of war between sectorally oriented national and European policies and holistic, integrated urban development. At the same time, the boundary conditions for communal action have altered: The large social institutions no longer guarantee social education, the municipalities have less money and are characterised by a rapidly growing diversity of people and cultures in the cities. What remains is the task of enabling social integration and establishing coherence.
- The definition and strengthening of civil society is particularly significant in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- In the tri-partite relationship between politics, civil society and municipal administration, the pressing goal is to strengthen the civic commitment of all sides to such an extent as to secure sustainability, transparency and legitimacy for social development in the cities.
- Sustainability is achieved when space and time for experimentation are available in order to develop projects on an impact-oriented (evidence-based) basis and to either lastingly anchor these in the community, or to end them.
- An integrative approach comprises more than simply an additive process of the neighbourhood-specific orientation of sectoral planning and action. It involves strategies of specifying common development goals for the neighbourhood and securing the resources available to this end.
- It involves a fundamental understanding of the processes of change: The measure of success is not the elitist envisioned result, but the sustainable and lasting process design oriented towards permanent adjustment.
- A new communal management approach in disadvantaged neighbourhoods must render more than just a permanent "more of the same" effect; it must be oriented towards holistic solutions, the designing of networks and management through negotiation.

- Defining problem resolution strategies on the social sphere level also involves not only referring to a specific territory, but also referring to the associated social relationships and structures.
- "Special allocations" on the communal, regional, national or European level should initiate and temporarily shape these processes so that room is achieved for experimentation and implementation of the new procedure.
- Both top down and bottom up processes must be defined in this context. The *top down* processes must strategically formulate objectives, enable result controlling and provision structures that create room for action: Responsibility, decisions, personnel and financial resources are utilised on the neighbourhood level. From the *bottom up*, the processes in the neighbourhood organisation and communal institutions must be participatively designed in the guiding principle of action for the social sphere.
- This process design means that the young citizens, in particular, and the social groups and institutions in disadvantaged neighbourhoods must be provided with possibilities of finding their own problem resolutions and covers the establishment of a capacity for dialogue in the context of mutual address and respectful attention.
- Neighbourhood-oriented management means transferring "powerful" decisions to the neighbourhood in civically oriented decision-making forms.
- The sustainable development of education, employment, health and integration opportunities requires a clear shift of investments from systems of intervention to preventive action. At the same time, the prevention - the designing of conditions for the development of young people - must be based on broad social alliances.
- Good Governance requires the precise specification of needs for action. Children, youths and families should be given priority in the development of the neighbourhood, thus shifting into the centre of communal policy under the understanding of an investment in a future economic factor.
- Youth policy in this context is an interdisciplinary policy and should be reflected in all fields of communal action – Youth as the "mainstream" of social urban development in neighbourhoods.
- Communal management that pursues the paradigm of the social sphere requires new forms of financing, such as foundations and funds, with delegation of the decision-making responsibility over these to the (young) residents, as well as interdisciplinary sources and the use of communal funding (social sphere oriented community budget).

What does this mean for European programmes in the future?

These programmes should:

1. Reach the communities directly, permit more self-responsibility and trust in the resources and energy of the residents and actors and groups in civil society in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, thus enabling authenticity and holistic process design,
2. Establish as a precondition the social sphere as a paradigm of political management,
3. Permit failures,
4. Work with budgets on the communal level,
5. Impart a message with a holistic perspective of the disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

A participant of the Panel summarised the result of this panel discussion with the following sentence: "For programmes to reach the communities, they must initiate and facilitate processes of participation, organise problem resolutions on an interdisciplinary and participative level and promote a culture of authenticity and intercultural exemplification."

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Results of Working Group III: Intercultural strategies and the promotion of tolerance in communities

Practical examples:

Paul Kmen, Iasi, Romania

Anne Wehkamp, City of Solingen, Germany

Panagiota Ligdopoulou, City of Athens, Greece

Dr. Martina Schmied, City of Vienna, Austria

Hibat Tabib, AFPAD, City of Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, France

Comments:

Christian Meineke, City of Marburg, Germany

Miriam Traversi, City of Bologna, Italy

Chair:

Peter Lauritzen

Report:

Dr. Heike Riesling-Schärfe, Regiestelle E&C

Summary of the recommendations and comments on the practical examples and discussion contributions:

The integration of immigrants, people with a migration background and ethnocultural minorities is an important municipal task for the future that is central to the social coherence of European societies.

The participants of Panel III expressly confirmed this assumption from the first European Conference in Berlin in 2004.

The examples and contributions of the Panel have made it clear that the discussion process to this end is conducted in the municipalities. The "Berlin Process" initiative continued with the 2006 European Conference is an important approach to link the discussion on the local municipal level with the national and European level.

The participants of Panel III have emphasised that the European municipalities must accept the responsibility they have for the integration of people with a migration background and that the municipalities must also actively exercise this responsibility.

The European municipalities have the task of facilitating the design process and further developing this in cooperation with non-governmental organisations, self-directed immigrant organisations and the citizens of the civil society. This task cannot be delegated or "sold" to third parties.

This is realised in the county of **Iasi** through the exemplary inclusion of international organisations with which coalitions are formed, in order to increase the opportunities

of integration for Sinti and Roma in educational institutions and on the labour market under problematic macro-economic conditions.

The contribution from **Athens** has shown how non-governmental organisations can adopt the important municipal task of integrating disadvantaged children and youths from ethnic minorities without municipal support and, indeed, in part facing substantial resistance. Although this approach cannot serve as an example, it nevertheless shows that social initiatives and projects can arise and render an important contribution under the most adverse conditions.

Xenophobia, racism and intolerance escalate when precariousness in a society grows. A preventive approach towards integration must be geared towards all disadvantaged children and youths. This includes secured residence permit status, language classes, a qualified school leaving certificate, perspectives for employment and the possibility for young people to incorporate their abilities in society.

Employment perspectives are of central importance for all youths. A realistic chance for young people to find employment is decided not only by qualification, but also by the existence of networks.

The municipal integration policy of the City of **Solingen** is establishing a special offer structure for male and female immigrants in the context of this core topic. Here, language classes and employment offers are combined with target group work, coaching and monitoring of pupils in the societal sphere, the certification of partial qualifications and strategic controlling of networks in the field of "school-education-continued education", with participation by the immigrant organisations.

A primary issue of the 2004 Berlin Conference was how to positively focus on the resources of people with a migration background and immigrants and how the skills they have brought with them can be utilised. Yesterday's work session focussed more closely on the overall communal level, the level of systems and institutions.

The topic of "Governance" also played a major role in Panel III. In this context, the question was addressed of how, and by what means, the residents of a neighbourhood can develop into a community.

The example of **Pierrefitte-sur-Seine** demonstrated that responsibility for the integration of people with a migration background and ethnic minorities ultimately lies with every resident of a district and that this responsibility must be returned to the citizens.

The example of **Vienna** was met with enthusiasm. Here, the newly founded Magistrate Department for Integration and Diversity Affairs has adopted a bridging and integrating role for other agencies. Additional regional offices have been opened in various districts that actively participate in the field of integration. Furthermore, every hierarchical level of the local authority has staff with a migration background, with 14 lands of origin and 23 languages being represented.

This is a role model of how cultural variety and differences can be incorporated in daily life – an issue that was also raised by Panel III:

How can European municipalities manage the transfer of tolerance that is exercised - according to the findings - in day-to-day life, despite all of the associated inconsistency, to the society as a whole?

It was discussed that many more concrete strategies might still have to be interchanged in the future, in order to transfer "good" examples to society.

The exchange of experience in Panel III made it clear that numerous debates that were held in one country three years ago are only now starting to be held in another country.

The participants of the Panel have emphasised the importance of reaching and utilising the European public and of continuing the municipal exchange, also on the European level. The trans-municipal exchange of practical experience within the framework of the Berlin Process has achieved much on the local level and has provided the participants with many ideas since the year 2004. The Berlin Process should be continued.

The messages of the 2006 European Conference should contribute to this

- Combating discrimination and strengthening tolerance of absolutely all types of "otherness".
 - Expanding intercultural competencies
 - Improving vocational offers for disadvantaged youths
- and
- Motivating the mayors of European cities to place the topic of social cohesion against the background of an increasingly heterogeneous composition of the population on the political agenda.

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Results of Working Group IV: The contribution of non-formal education for the employment perspectives of disadvantaged young people

Practical examples:

José Alfaro, Eva Martín Pérez, Telesfora Ruiz, City of Granada, Spain
Sandra Subota, City of Riga, Latvia
Chester Morrison, City of Liverpool, United Kingdom
Katrin Lundmark, City of Skellefteå, Sweden

Comments:

Heidrun Nedoma, City of Stralsund, Germany
Bernd Kammerer, City of Nuremberg, Germany
Annette Berg, City of Monheim am Rhein, Germany
Merete Papapetros, Frank Stoerup, City of Copenhagen, Denmark
Prof. Dr. Nazmi Oruç, City of Eskisehir, Turkey

Chair:

Peter Kupferschmid, German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Woman and Youth

Report:

Judith Schwarzburger, Regiestelle E&C

Four presentations were made in this panel, three of which involved municipal strategies (Granada, Riga and Liverpool). The fourth presentation involved a project and the viewpoint of an NGO (Skellefteå, Sweden). On the basis of the presentations, the comments and the discussions, it initially became clear that the term "non-formal education" has very different definitions in the individual European nations.

All of the panel members agreed that non-formal education is especially important for disadvantaged youths, as these not only have impeded access to the formal education systems, but have also frequently experienced failure in these systems. On the one hand, non-formal education focuses on the abilities and competencies of the young people and, on the other hand, contributes to the acquisition of social, "democratic" and - consequently based on this - vocational competencies.

The primary concern in this respect is not qualification, but rather the activation of disadvantaged youths, the development of their personality and the strengthening of their self-esteem.

Non-formal education is intended to empower them to become active on their own behalf. This is particularly important for youths living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Supporting youths in this context through non-formal education aspects also facilitates their learning in a formal education system. A tiered qualification system is necessary in this respect. Such a system renders that which the youths have learned evident to them step by step.

The participation of youths in political decisions, for example, also represents an important form of non-formal education. This was made apparent in a particularly impressive manner by the Liverpool project. So-called youth advisory groups advise the political decision-makers in this context, thus exerting an influence on municipal policy.

Youths also receive training and guidance that enables them to inform other children and youths of the offers of the city and to assist them in making use of these offers. In this way, youths experience from the examples of others that disadvantages can indeed be overcome.

Participation has more than simply a motivating effect in this respect, as it also allows the offers and programmes to be oriented very closely to the needs, wishes and goals of the youths.

The participants also agreed that intensified cooperation between the governmental institutions, NGOs and other actors is necessary in order to improve the opportunities for youths.

This involves:

- The integration of formal and non-formal education
- A combination of methods of extra-curricular youth work with those of the school system
- A combination of employment and qualification measures with the school and leisure activities
- Cooperation between the school, youth assistance and training systems
- Greater promotion than to date of young people in a network process
- Neighbourhood orientation, so that the offers can be more closely oriented to the spheres of residential and living environments of children and youths
- The participation and inclusion of the parents in both the formal and non-formal educational processes of their children.

Good planning and (self-critical) review of the results are additional prerequisites for the success of non-formal education concepts.

The possibilities of certification for non-formal education also vary greatly between the individual countries. This aspect was highlighted as being very important in view of greater social recognition of these educational aspects.

However, certification also increases the compatibility of non-formal and formal education in that the knowledge acquired upon starting a career path is thus recognisably utilisable for the youths.

Integration in the labour market is the most crucial point for all youths, but especially for disadvantaged youths, as this involves their future and the future of European societies. On the basis of the different municipal strategies presented, it has been shown that various successful possibilities have been found on the local level to achieve the social integration of youths that have been excluded from society.

The core message of Panel IV can be summarised as follows:

Youths must be regarded as assets and as opportunities, not as problems or burdens, in order for them to feel understood as important members of society. This involves taking youths seriously and appreciating their reality. Youths require guidance and support in order to recognise their existing potential, to utilise this potential and to take the next steps towards vocational and social integration through confirmed (non-formal) educational success.

As different as the presented projects were, it was demonstrated that the local strategies reflect similarities in their approaches. These approaches were developed on the basis of substantially different baseline conditions in the individual countries. The exchange during this conference will enable these similarities in the approaches to be elaborated, thus identifying standards that could be valid throughout Europe. Therefore, this exchange should be continued.

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Results of Working Group V: Towards a new dialogue between Youth Research, Youth Policy & Youth Work

Practical examples:

Lasse Siurala, City of Helsinki, Finland

Terje Grytten, Else Marie Stuenæs, Oslo Youth Council, Norway

Prof. Dr. Helmut-Armin Willems, Luxembourg

Mmag. Manfred Zentner, Austria

Prof. Howard Williamson, United Kingdom

Comments:

Alexandra Raykova, Forum of European Roma Young People

Sunduss Al-Hassani, Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO)

Bettina Schwarzmayr, European Youth Forum

Margo Gorman, Combined European Bureau for Social Development (CEBSD)

William Lay, Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Community (COFACE)

Chair:

Dr. Heike Förster, German Youth Institute

Report:

Andreas Hemme, Regiestelle E&C

Panel V had the mission to work out how a local research dialogue can be initiated between youth research, youth policy and youth work, to have a closer look at these three fields of activities and to draft recommendations for their future coordination. The starting point was the question how experiences and skills can be better interrelated between each and every actor and how they can be used better for the own work.

Five contributions from Finland, Norway, Luxemburg, Austria and Great-Britain addressed the potentials and obstacles of the dialogue between youth work, local youth policy and youth research considering both, the scientific and the practice-based background. These contributions were commented and discussed intensely by the representatives of European youth associations and European networks dealing with questions of social inclusion.

The central question was: How to bridge the gap between the three fields of activities? How can hurdles to a cooperation between youth research, local youth policy and youth work be described?

On the one hand, the lack of a common language between all actors involved in youth research and youth work was pointed out, as it leads to difficulties in the mutual understanding. Although good examples were repeatedly referred to on the Panel, it would seem that the common language and the lack of effort by all sides to learn the language of the other sides led to the greatest obstacle to bridging this gap.

Then it was stated, too, that research and practice are using different media for their discourse and exchange and that they do not refer to each other. Scientific magazines are hardly read by practitioners, and the more practice-based magazines of youth workers are hardly ever used by scientists for their publications. Everybody just remains apart.

The different interests of the actors were quoted as an additional hurdle that makes cooperation and dialogue difficult. Thus, the target group of a scientific paper does not primarily comprise practitioners, but often also includes researchers themselves. Defining common interests as a starting point and finding appropriate forms for the local research dialogue still remains a challenge. There are differences, for instance, in weighting the issues which local youth work and youth research are dealing with. The specialised magazines of practitioners were again quoted as an example, because they seldom refer to the findings published in research-oriented magazines.

The speakers and participants also underlined that local and regional positive and exemplary approaches do actually exist that strive to bring youth research, youth work and local youth policy together in order to develop common strategies. Thus, the representatives from Oslo reported about forums developed locally in order to enable youth workers to get familiar with the results of youth research and to discuss them. Another example for the successful dialogue on the national level are the coordinating meetings in the context of the German federal youth programme "Voluntary social year", where the results of scientific project monitoring are presented and discussed with the youth workers of the various projects of the programme. But these examples are considered to be sporadic approaches only, as they are not systematically implemented as a strategy. Youth research is requested to make results more accessible and understandable than it actually does at present.

On the national level, the European comparison gives a fairly divergent picture: Certain countries like France and Germany have special youth work institutions working on the whole territory, whereas this coordination of activities that could facilitate the access to scientific knowledge does not exist in most of the other European countries.

In addition to that, it was discussed whether the leading role of local youth work in decision-making complicates the dialogue at eye level between researchers and practitioners. This question resulted in the request to integrate all actors as early as possible in the local research dialogue in order to guarantee the highest possible degree of transparency.

The keyword of the social co-production of knowledge enabled to illustrate the positive impact of the combination of practical experiences and scientific findings, for instance, on local youth action plans. Manfred Zentner from Austria used the examples of the municipalities of Dornbirn and Schwechat to show how the political decision of these municipalities to enhance their youth work resulted in the joint development of various activities with NGOs; the projects had been evaluated by scientists 5 years after their start, so that researchers, youth workers and the local policy were able to revise the youth work action plans in a common process. In this context, the scarcity of public municipal funds was pointed out, and a solution of this dilemma could be the stronger involvement of students who are normally very much interested in practical knowledge.

Prof. Dr. Willems from the University of Luxembourg also referred to the positive developments in recent years on the national level in the interaction of practice, research and politics, as a consequence of which action approaches such as "evidence based policy making" are virtually the standard nowadays. Also the hierarchies amongst the knowledge producers from practice, science and politics have undergone a transformation and are recognised far more strongly as being on equal footing. Long-term studies in particular, such as the Youth Survey conducted in Germany, lead to closer and longer-lasting cooperation and a new dialogue structure on the part of the actors. As another German example the regular "children and youth reports" of the Federal Government were quoted; they are elaborated in close cooperation with scientists.

The interaction of practice, sciences and policy on the national level encounters difficult circumstances on the local, municipal level which can only be overcome, if the local youth policy and youth work are more willing to take full profit of the results and experiences of the youth research and to implement them in their local strategies. Long-term youth policy strategies are required, not only short-term programs or campaigns that can only be of limited impact. The municipal planning of youth aid and the local action plans developed in Germany in relation with the Federal Programs "The Socially Integrative City" and E&C offer an excellent starting point in this context.

On the other hand, it was also stated that the professional practice represented in the various countries by fairly different associations and organisations (committed to their individual goals and ideological or religious concepts) can also either accelerate or slow down the research dialogue.

The fact that the financing of research projects often fails to cover the transfer to practice after completion of the project, often giving rise to frustrations despite good cooperation, must be regarded as another important obstacle.

Self-critically in a certain way, the scientific side also referred to the internal discussion concerning the significance of basic research in comparison with practical research (quote: "Excessive practicality is suspicious") that may probably also "irritate" dialogue partners.

It was also pointed out that evaluation research plays a major role and that, namely on the levels of local youth research and youth work, tools and mechanisms should be developed in order to make the results measurable and comparable. The evaluation tools will finally have to be implemented and financed by youth work institutions on the various levels (centrally, regionally, locally). Based on the results of his evaluation projects, Prof. Williamson from Great-Britain illustrated that it is a strong argument for debates with policy-makers that certain preventive measures are proven to be cheaper than reactive repair activities, namely in the fields of activities of children and youth aid. Certain participants referred explicitly to the riots of young people in France. At this point, youth researchers also declared that they are willing to carry out an intensive analysis of the actual costs of youth research and its funding bodies.

A lot of participants on this panel also stressed that there are actually more than three actors, because also the economic sector and the young people themselves

have to participate in the dialogue. This showed that the various levels of cooperation also play a role: What works fine locally, does not always turn out to be successful on the national or international level and vice versa. As an example, the implementation process of the White Paper was quoted which was pushed on the national level, but implemented only in exceptional cases on the local level. What is missing here are intermediate levels of communication and mediation.

Conclusions:

In conclusion, it was stated on this panel that, in spite of all obstacles, there are very good examples for the cooperation of the three actors on the national and, concretely, the local level. In relation with the inclusion and active participation of young people in society, for instance, a program of ten Swedish municipalities was quoted as one example. It is necessary to make these examples public. One concrete proposal was the publication on the website of the Youth Knowledge Centre (<http://www.youth-partnership.net/INTEGRATION/EKC/Intro>) and / or to better link the individual national project data bases with each other.

The intensification of the communication between the local youth research, policy and the actors of local youth work (in particular the NGO) is urgently required. The local research dialogue should also result in the active joint definition of common issues for research by all local actors of youth work and youth policy in order to improve the practical relevance of applied sciences.

The whole debate made it clear that the levels of the discourse need to be distinguished. On the local level, the most important is the support of sciences for the elaboration of action plans and strategies for the youth policy in its local context. In exceptional cases, local activities are also evaluated by scientists. Youth research as basic research does not exist on the local level. This is the field where a national approach is necessary in order to keep the approach of “evidence based policy making” alive and to develop offers for the local research dialogue.

In Germany and other federally structured countries, additional levels of competence exist (in Germany the *Länder*), which can also work as an operational level of intervention and foster youth research in the regional context.

From the point of view of youth researchers it has to be critically added that the Community of Science (notably the universities) often keep a certain distance to practice and does not seem to be too much interested in implementation-orientated research. In Germany this so-called practical research is mainly carried out by the Universities for Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) and special independent institutions which are often criticised for their lack of theory, because they are working in close relation with the everyday practice of youth workers. This trend was confirmed by Austria and Luxembourg. But for the consulting and support of politicians both are required (basic and practical research).

On the other hand, the actors on the local level often do not take full profit of the important scientific support or they just go on without it for financial reasons. Here, the positive examples from Austria and Sweden can contribute to illustrate the benefit of scientific monitoring and evaluation clearly and to even improve their importance in the local context.

An essential prerequisite for the success of the cooperation between three fairly different actors is the early involvement of all the three groups of actors in the planning of activities and projects, so that they can benefit from each other, clarify their individual roles and cope early enough with potential conflicts of interest.