

Heike Lorenz, Michael Brendt

no borders, no limits, no boundaries for education in europe



This title is also available as eBook
ISBN 978-3-96557-121-1

You can find us on the Internet at
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This publication is edited by the Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V. (be) [Federal Association for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy] and the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Individualpädagogik e.V. (AIM) [Federal Working Group for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy].

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Bibliographic Information of the German National Library

The German National Library lists this publication in the German National Bibliography; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Printed in Germany

ISBN 978-3-96557-120-4 (Print)

Publishing house

ZIEL – Zentrum für interdisziplinäres erfahrungsorientiertes Lernen GmbH
Zeuggasse 7–9, 86150 Augsburg, www.ziel-verlag.de
First Edition 2023

Cover image

Ben Collins

Graphic, layout design and print

FRIENDS Menschen Marken Medien | www.friends.ag

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Preface

Dear readers,

in your hands you are holding a book that would like to take you into the world of a very special offer within the framework of educational support within Europe: We invite you to explore the world of Individualised Social Pedagogy work with young people beyond the borders of home countries. For this purpose, we have compiled a wealth of contributions in this book that are suitable for approaching the meaning, the possibilities and the opportunities of these services.

The publication is divided into three parts.

The individual passages in the first part of this volume, some of which are very moving, tell about the challenging work that carers undertake with the young people in the stationary placements. They illuminate the microcosm of Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures and aim to give an understanding of what Individualised Social Pedagogy work means in practice and how it is experienced by the people involved.

In this context, we can imagine each individual support measure as a room in a “design hotel”: There is a common roof, but no two rooms are alike, because each room must be tailored and equipped to the individual support needs of the young person who is being cared for.

If we go on a journey of discovery in this house, we can read stories that give courage and confidence. We can visit rooms where we witness developments that were hardly imaginable before.

All these rooms and the stories associated with them belong to people. People who have persevered, supported and participated when young people’s biographies threaten to fail (irrevocably). Our special thanks go to all those who had the courage to provide us with the description of their personal room in this book.

The second part informs about framework conditions and aspects that – in addition to the direct work with the young people at a project site – are to be seen as a necessary scaffolding and common roof for successful help processes.

We understand this framework as a kind of macrocosm: Our authors inform and position themselves. They take a stand on political as well as professional issues, for example on schooling opportunities for stays abroad, on qualifications of pedagogical staff, on the effectiveness of educational support far away from home or on the European dimension of educational interventions and services.

Finally, in the third part, we provide a legal opinion commissioned by the Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V. [*Federal Association for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy*] from Prof. Dr. Dr. Reinhard Wiesner in 2019. Until 2010, Wiesner was head of Department 511 for legal issues of youth welfare in the German Bundesfamilienministerium BMFSFJ [*Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth*]. During his active time there in 1991, as head of the department, he was responsible for the reform of the German Youth Welfare Law, the context which gave individual case support in Germany and abroad a legal framework and thus legitimacy for the first time.

The expert report primarily sheds light on the complicated relationship between the legal foundations of the German Youth Welfare System and the European Regulation “Brussels IIa”. This regulates access to educational support measures within the European framework by reservation of authorisation of the host country.

The report was produced as part of a comprehensive intervention strategy of the Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik [*Federal Association for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy*] on the reform process of SGB VIII, which was concluded in June 2021 under the name „Kinder- und Jugendstärkungsgesetz KJSG“ [*Act to Strengthen Children and Youth*]. Under the title „Masterplan – Damit Individualpädagogik bleibt“ [*Master Plan – Ensuring the continuation of Individualised Social Pedagogy*], the be had previously been intensively and specifically involved in the professional and political debates in Germany over a period of two years and has campaigned for the preservation of this form of support.

This publication now aims to enrich these debates, especially on an international level. It aims to encourage and invite mutual understanding, dialogue and fruitful discussion in a field that is controversial, especially in political terms:

Despite its great successes, this form of support has been and continues to be controversial. Sensational stories comparing Individualised Social Pedagogy with “holidays under palm trees” encourage envy and a lack of understanding. At the same time, scandals and dramatic events repeatedly find their way into the public eye in a

polemical way and cause a stir, incomprehension and outrage. If it were not sufficiently scientifically proven how highly effective and efficient this form of support is, it would have been abolished in Germany long ago. However, this form of care has already “survived” a whole series of amendments to the law and continues to be practised effectively and successfully.

Nevertheless, this book is also written for people to whom the “Individualised Social Pedagogy Cosmos” of cross-border educational support is still largely unknown. We have taken care to ensure that the language used in this publication also reaches people who do not come into contact with this field of work on a daily basis. If we have not succeeded in doing so at any point, please do not hesitate to contact the authors or editors. We will be happy to answer your questions and are at your disposal personally, but also in a larger context, e.g. within the scope of an event.

In this publication, we want to analyse facts, but also discover and develop the next steps. We want to contribute to making interaction and cooperation in Europe even more agile and effective, and to help ensure that all the advantages of this valuable habitat are used!

We want to tell how amazing it has been so far, despite some stumbling blocks, to support young people in their development across borders.

Because Europe – that’s us. There are many of us. We have space – and so many different places, conditions, opportunities ... for each and every one of us.

And the last decades have shown us this: we can create opportunities in our Europe. Even for those who struggle with great burdens. For those who have not (yet) been able to succeed in turning the lever in their home country. We can do it together. We can make it possible for everyone to lead a successful life in, with and even for Europe.

Let’s talk about it!

This book is the result of a cross-association cooperation: the Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V. (be) [*Federal Association for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy*] and the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Individualpädagogik e.V. (AIM) [*Federal Working Group for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy*] have joined forces and resources for this project. The authors each represent one of the associations, and the editorial group is equally represented. The work that begins with the publication of the volume is also jointly supported and taken responsibility for.

Our thanks go to the two umbrella organisations for their trust and full support.

Special thanks go to the members of the editorial group who tirelessly thought through and discussed all the topics with us in many meetings until we were sure: Now it is perfect! – at least for the moment ... Eva Felka, Monja Heinz, Michael Karkuth and Sven Riegler: Without you, this book would not exist!

The editorial work benefited particularly from Monja Heinz's meticulous preliminary editing. She reviewed and commented on each contribution, sometimes several times. Her expertise and linguistic proficiency have enormously enriched the creation of this book.

We are also pleased and grateful for the very professional and committed support of our lector and proofreader Peter Schuto (www.einfach-fehlerfrei.de).

Our “hottest” thanks, however, go without a doubt to all our authors, who made this project possible and made it shine with their diverse contributions!

Heike Lorenz
Michael Brendt

July 2021



Heike Lorenz

born in 1959, studied social pedagogy and social management after training as a pre-school teacher. She worked for 25 years in the field of educational support, most recently for several years as a coordinator of Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures in Germany and abroad. From 2000 to 2008 and from 2017 to 2021, she volunteered on the board of the Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V. [*Federal Association for Individual and Experiential Education*]. Her core competencies include work in the areas of quality development, participation, communication and public relations. Since 2008 she has been working as an independent personnel and organisational development consultant.

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Michael Brendt

born in 1959, is a qualified social education worker with professional experience in addiction treatment and youth welfare as well as in general social services and in the management of residential youth welfare facilities. Since 1996 he has been working as a systemic family therapist, supervisor and organisational consultant in private practice. He is the founder and owner of a provider of Individualised Social Pedagogy projects, where he has been managing director since 2002.

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Introduction: "Real life" – The practice of Individualised Social Pedagogy

Sven Riegler

In the first part of this book, we take a look at the practice of European Individualised Social Pedagogy. The reports on the experiences of people who were or are involved in concrete support measures in various roles take us into their lively everyday lives.

Young people and carers describe from their very personal point of view how a lot of courage and leaving one's comfort zone can create the conditions for change and what such a change of perspective can do for all those involved in the support process. The view into the microcosm of the project work gives us insights into everyday life and the individual successes that young people achieve in these settings.

Parents impressively share their experiences of how they perceive the changes in their children. At the same time, they also report on their own worries and hardships in this context. Thank you for your openness!

Youth Welfare Office staff comment on care abroad from their professional point of view as representatives of a referring authority. From their perspective, it is about how the framework conditions have to be designed so that the support is successful, and especially about the question for which young people it can be effective. As representatives of the authorities, they speak from decades of experience and with knowledge of very different support processes. They dialectically describe the advantages of these measures and at the same time take a critical look at the difficulties that can arise.

A retired head of a facility gives us an insight into his many years of experience with Individualised Social Pedagogy measures in the context of the entire youth welfare system. In a very touching and impressive way, he describes how the initial spark of Individualised Social Pedagogy measures within his organisation came about and why this form of support has established itself as a permanent offer over the course of time.

People of all ages, regardless of their upbringing and socialisation, can find themselves in situations in the course of their lives where they want to use the chance of a "blank sheet of paper" in the sense of a new beginning. Stays abroad represent this chance for young people, but also for families, as the article „Italien war unsere Rettung“ [*Italy was our salvation*] from the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* of 15/16 May 2021 describes.

All the contributions in this first part of the book allow one essential insight: for the protection of children and young people, there must be no mental, professional or territorial boundaries.



Sven Riegler

born in 1975, works as an educator and outdoor trainer. Since 1998, his focus in youth welfare practice has been on the fields of social group work, flexible educational support, residential youth groups, Individualised Social Pedagogy measures in Germany and abroad, travel projects, experiential education group and individual measures as well as the coordination of Individualised Social Pedagogy support in Germany and abroad.

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Vallbo in Sweden was my salvation

Theresa

I was twelve, pregnant and without perspective.

Today, I no longer ask myself how all this could happen.

I am just incredibly grateful that I had the opportunity to spend my youth in Sweden. The most important thing for me was to live in an intact family where I was not afraid of violence. Where, for the first time, I could experience a feeling of safety and a constant sense of security. Where I was shown that I could trust adults.

My life before Sweden was a mess I could not handle. It felt like a permanent attempt to simply survive.

My family and I moved to Germany when I was six years old. I remember being very relieved at that time. I thought, no matter what may come now, it can only get better. But my father continued to drink in Germany, and the violence that came with his drinking only got worse. Sometimes he would come home late at night and start fights with my mother, which was especially bad.

After only a few months in Germany, my siblings and I had to move with our mother to live with our grandfather who lived in the same town. With his support, my mother had gotten help from the police. Everything happened so fast. All of a sudden, we packed our suitcases and unpacked them at our grandfather's house. There we would stay for an indefinite time.

My mother did what she could. After my father, who had only been living in Germany for six months, moved back to his country of origin, we moved into another apartment.

There, things were finally supposed to get better. But somehow all this really got to me. I know today that my siblings felt the same way.

My mother was always very busy and had several cleaning jobs so she wouldn't have to draw money from the state. She worked very hard. Unfortunately, this meant that she was hardly ever at home. She, too, should have recovered first from everything she had experienced. But she kept going. And she always made sure that the refrigerator was full. We had enough to eat. But in return, she was just overworked and tired.

“You’ve always been difficult,” I was told. I know that I always felt a strong sense of tension, but I didn’t know where to put it. The older I got, the greater and more unbearable it became. There was a lot of fighting in our family.

At some point I started to cut myself, I think I was about 11 years old. I had seen a friend do it because she was sad. I wanted to use it to show that I wasn’t feeling well. And I was hoping that something would change. That my mom would just stay home and say, “I love you!” or even be happy. In addition to my tension, I felt her sadness and also her exhaustion.

At some point I lost myself completely. I did things that were just extreme, especially for my age. I became cheeky at school, my grades got worse, and I started befriending people who were older. I started drinking alcohol with them. I wanted a reaction from my mother and wanted to defend myself against the violence from my big brother, and at the same time I felt very sorry for everything. I knew that my brother was only like that because he had been beaten up himself.

Everyone in the family was overwhelmed. We didn’t know how to deal with what we had experienced. Nobody talked about the violence and sexual abuse. I asked myself, “Is this all normal?” but I didn’t dare ask. I had no words to express my feelings and despair. Before the time in Sweden, I drank a lot of alcohol, and at one point I confided in my sister, totally drunk.

When I was 12, I was sent to a group home for the first time, a girls’ home about 10 km from home. I wanted to improve and be good so I could go back home, but I was just overwhelmed. I was afraid of everything. I felt very lonely in the home. To keep some normality, it had been agreed that I would continue to attend my old school. I was overwhelmed with the bus ride, I was just afraid all the time. Afraid of being on the wrong bus and being late and not making it again. And then I thought about home all the time.

At some point I made friends with a few girls in the home who were older and drank alcohol. When I went along to parties or on dates during the week that went late into the night, I quickly forgot what was actually bothering me, especially when the alcohol was flowing. Today I know that the girls felt the same way I did. Both had experienced domestic violence and sexual abuse. And so a terrible time began, which was characterised by several changes of school, changes of home and placements in psychiatric institutions. It always started the same way. In the beginning I made an effort to improve myself, but it was easier to run away from the problem. Now you might ask yourself, what kind of problems can a 12-year-old have that are so hard to bear? My

thoughts always revolved around my family. During that time, I learned that my older brother was addicted to heroin, and I was afraid for my younger brother, who was the only one still living at home with me and my mother. One sister, who was always very close to me and whom I was sometimes allowed to visit, was also living in a home. And my other sister had been in one home after another and was now living with a man who was not good for her. With each change, I became more unstable and so I got to know children and young people who were in the same situation as me. At some point I felt sure that it didn't matter anymore what happened to me.

After the situation had escalated more and more, the court ordered that I be placed in a closed psychiatric ward. I didn't realise what that would mean.

But this time I was lucky.

The guardian ad litem at the court, who knew me well, stood up for me. This woman did not believe that a closed psychiatric ward would be right for me. She knew the "Husky" project and the social worker from the youth welfare office. And a contact was made. The Youth Welfare Office worker probably understood my desperately muddled life situation, which I myself could no longer find a way out of.

Through him, I was given the chance of care abroad in Sweden as an alternative to closed accommodation. I was sceptical, but I wanted to take this chance.

My mother had a hard time with such a decision. But my mother didn't want to lose me either. Something just had to happen!

In the meantime, I had become pregnant and was clinging to the idea of becoming a mother. Fortunately, this was not a reason for rejection by the youth welfare agency. Sweden also has a good health system and support for pregnant women.

I had met my carer in Germany beforehand, she had come to Germany at very short notice especially to get to know me in advance and then to travel to Sweden with me. I found her to be a cheerful, warm-hearted person.

After completing all the formalities, I was relieved when I arrived in Sweden, even though I missed my mother and siblings. There I learned a lot about myself and my mind became clearer. I realised what it would mean for me to have the child. My carers told me to think about it carefully, but that I also had to make up my mind whether I could manage to take care of and raise a child while still going to school. The longer I thought about it soberly and by myself, the more I realised that I wasn't yet ready for such a big challenge.

The fact that I could think about my decision in peace and with close support and come to a decision that was right for me was a crucial point in my life. I was finally able to make a decision for myself. I did not become a mother.

This peace was totally new for me. I had to learn how to deal with it. My foster family gave me such a warm welcome. They lived in a big house with their own two children and another teenager.

I settled in quickly because I was used to packing my bags and unpacking them in other places. I quickly noticed that things were different here – and that was good for me.

With the Flex correspondence school, I was supposed to do my Certificate of Secondary Education in Sweden. Unfortunately, it took a few months before I finally received all my school documents, but looking back, it was worth its weight in gold. I was able to arrive in peace. It was September, cold and wet.

After a couple of weeks, the first difficulties arose. I often stayed up late at night and in the morning I couldn't get out of bed. After the past turbulent year, I still had a lot to digest. Especially in the evenings, I thought about a lot of things that kept me from sleeping. But I still had to stick to certain rules. There were very few rules, and I could understand them well. One of them was to get up in time and eat together. During meals we had cheerful conversations and discussed which tasks should be done and who needed help with what. That's how it worked during the week.

In the beginning, I had telephone contact with a 16-year-old boy. I had a relationship with him. He didn't like the fact that I was now living in Sweden and also that I didn't have the child. He made this very clear to me. Over time I realised how unhealthy this relationship was for me. I was able to end this relationship.

I did a lot of outdoor activities with my carers. There were animals on the farm and in the house there were rooms that were used as a guesthouse. Often the whole family was together and we laughed a lot. For the first time in my life, I experienced what it meant to live in an intact family. I had a very good relationship with the children of my carers. They did not replace my real siblings, but when I missed my family terribly, I valued the time with them.

Here, the foundation was laid for me to learn that exercise is good for me. My sleeping patterns also changed quickly. I could fall asleep better in the evening and in the morning I felt a lot more rested. And so I learned to get through the first crisis situation.

“No, it was better!”

Experiences of a young person in Poland

Felix

Summary of an interview with Felix and his grandparents about his experiences in Poland

In the course of his life, Felix has moved from one support measure to the next. No-where really worked out. This caused him great sadness and the permanent feeling of “It’s all my fault!”.

When the youth welfare office offered him the option of care in Poland, he couldn’t be bothered at first: “I don’t know anyone there and how am I supposed to talk to the others? And then it’s so far away from my family!”

In Germany, Felix lacked a perspective on where and how things could get better. To fail again in a new residential group, that was not what he wanted either.

The decisive factor for his agreement to the care in Poland was the fact that it was HIS decision. Of course, you can’t really talk about voluntariness if you don’t have a choice, but during the preparation phase, Felix had the time to make the decision his own.

For Felix it was important: “The staff member from the youth welfare organisation visited me at home and also talked to my family. First, I got a lot of information about life in Poland, and I was able to get to know my future carer here in Germany before I travelled to Poland with him. I had the feeling that I can also say no at any time.”

The Polish carer and Felix liked each other. That was the decisive point for Felix to agree to the care in Poland.

In the first months in Poland, Felix tried to settle in, but it didn’t work right away. Everything was different somehow. There were often thoughts of dropping out and going back to Germany. And then? What next?

When asked who helped him with his own questions, he says, “I worked that out myself. It was my decision to participate in the measure, so no one else could make the decision for me.”

During the measure, Felix had the opportunity to talk on the phone with people who are important to him and to exchange ideas. His grandparents are especially important to him. They always notice when something is going on with Felix.

The grandfather describes a crisis situation: “I spoke to Felix then and told him that he should think twice about dropping out of the measure, because that makes no sense at all. He had settled in by then and the carer had become a good friend to him.” Felix then relented: “Yes, ok, I’ll keep trying.”

Things were particularly bad after the visits home to the grandparents and during the subsequent return journey. During the two years of care in Poland, Felix was home twice in the first year, then monthly. In addition, he received visits from his grandparents in Poland. In retrospect, these visits were important for the success of the care.

The grandmother describes her impression of the measure in Poland as follows: “At the beginning, Felix went to Poland from our place because he had already lived with us for eight weeks. That was terrible for us. My husband went there once for the support programme planning meeting and told me afterwards that everything was fine and Felix was doing well there. In October, we took our first flight to Poland together. When we flew back, it was hard to leave him there, but I realised that he was in good hands. It felt positive. Everything was right. We made an effort to then just think more about HIM and put our own interests aside. For me it was very hard when he left, obviously.”

While in care, Felix completed a correspondence school and achieved his goal, a secondary school degree. The mostly positive feedback from the school and getting to know the teachers personally, as well as the special structure of the school, had motivated him to keep going – and it worked out!

In addition to the carer, Felix’s family, the organisation and the youth welfare office, Felix also had a contact person in the ombudsman’s office in Germany in case of conflicts or complaints. However, Felix only reports normal everyday conflicts that could be solved with his carer.

The prospect of being able to return to his grandparents’ household existed for Felix throughout the two years in Poland, and that is what happened in the end.

Looking back, Felix replies to the question of whether it was as he had imagined it: “No, it was better! The typical horror visions of living in a hut in the forest without electricity and running water, with an outhouse ... horror visions like on TV, where you see it in exaggerated series, it wasn’t like that!”

At first there were language difficulties and, fortunately, Felix was able to converse with the carer in German. However, he quickly began to understand Polish and was able to pick up on other people’s conversations. Speaking the language was more difficult.

“Felix, would you recommend this kind of care abroad to other young people?” – “I would recommend that they do it, but only if they really want it themselves. If you don’t want it yourself, it’s no use at all. The measures are different from the measures in Germany. You don’t know anyone there. Getting to know someone is also difficult because of the language barrier. At the end of the day, you don’t have as many contacts as in Germany.”

“Do you rate that rather good or rather bad?” – “You can see it either way. For example, if you’ve screwed things up a lot with someone here, it might be good if you don’t see that person any more. But it’s also difficult if you only know a few people. Everything is reduced.”

Felix broke off the contact with his old ‘bad’ friends, even though he had his mobile phone at his disposal – it was HIS decision.

“What is the most serious difference to the situation three years ago?” – Grandparents: “He is much more approachable. He can take a bit of criticism without being immediately driven up the wall. He has settled in with us now and so far everything is good. He has changed a lot in that time. When he came home at the beginning of the measure, he was still very explosive, so I said: ‘Oh dear!’, but now he is totally approachable. Now everything is ok.”

“You believed in Felix and that it would work out with the carer in Poland?” – “Yes, we both did.”



Felix

Vanessa in Greece

Harda Dück

*„Wem Gott will rechte Gunst erweisen, den schickt er in die weite Welt,
dem will er seine Wunder weisen, in Berg und Tal und Strom und Feld“*

*[“Those, to whom God wants to show true favour, he will send into the wide world,
to them will he show his wonders, in mountain and valley and stream and field.”]*

Eichendorff wrote this at the beginning of the 19th century. I was granted this favour because I travelled the world and lived first in the East, then in the West and now in the South of Europe. My parents gave me the strange name Harda and my surname Dück is only really easy to pronounce in German-speaking countries. Surprisingly, even as a child I was keen on school, on reading books and learning foreign languages. Although my parents advised me to pursue natural science subjects, they realised that my interest lay in literature and pedagogy, and so I was able to become a teacher of German and English. As a teacher, you often come into contact with students whose behaviour does not conform to social norms, and you try to help them.

The idea to work in Individualised Social Pedagogy and experiential education projects arose in 2014 through a call from an Individualised Social Pedagogy organisation that was looking after children in projects on Crete and was looking for further project sites. I have lived on this island with my Greek husband since 1998 and have two children of my own who are now grown up and live in Germany and Switzerland. I have been teaching foreign languages for so many years now and noticed that my students also liked to meet me for other activities in their free time, for handicrafts, for baking biscuits, hiking, swimming or sightseeing. The idea of giving a disadvantaged young person a home and a new start appealed to me and my husband. A staff member of the organisation visited us more often and we familiarised ourselves theoretically with the idea of Individualised Social Pedagogy. It was not a hasty decision, because the organisation sent the first young person after almost two years, during which the staff member got to know us very well through numerous visits, familiarised us with Individualised Social Pedagogy measures and thoroughly checked whether we were suitable for responsible projects. My husband works in the medical field and therefore has a good knowledge of human nature, a lot of empathy and the medical knowledge that is very helpful for child care.

Our house, located about two kilometres from a town in the north-east of Crete, is set in a large olive grove and offers plenty of space for both us humans and, of course, our pets.

When our project description is given to the public youth welfare, we often hear that this setting is not thought to be suitable for children and young people with difficulties. In addition, they expected strict rules and consistent educators with a set programme. We neither live in poverty as self-supporters, nor are we the strictest parents in this world. So for which children or young people is our project placement suitable? In my opinion, it would be suitable for almost all children and young adolescents under the care of youth welfare offices. We exclude violent offenders and drug addicts because our household includes my elderly mother and we sometimes have visitors with small children. We don't really want to be the last solution for a child or young person, to be the only solution at the end of a series of failed interventions. Project placements abroad should be considered similar to a "semester abroad". A necessary experience for many children and young people, the long famous "wandering years" needed to learn a trade and which are often decisive for the rest of their lives.

We started our new work in the area of individual and experiential education at the beginning of March 2016. Vanessa, who was almost 16 years old, had been in the care of the Youth Welfare Office since her birth. As the third child of a single polytoxic twenty-year-old mother, she was born with many birth defects, such as a missing kidney, missing oesophagus, as well as pulmonary and cardiac problems.

In the first foster family, the foster parents split up and then had enough to deal with with their own children. The second foster family already had adult children of their own and two adopted Vietnamese children. The then seven-year-old never got along with these children and recounted harsh punishments, much loneliness and the feeling of inferiority that accompanied her from this time. She tried to describe the unfair treatment to the teachers at school. No one believed her because she was retarded, did not keep up well at school, did not understand mathematics and aggressively fended off the mockery of her classmates during breaks. She also reacted aggressively to the adopted children who were physically inferior to her and punished the foster parents by wetting the bed, shouting and being disobedient.

As a result, she was constantly being passed on, to homes and families who lost patience after a short time. At the end of 2013, she was taken to West Crete to a project placement with a lot of experience. It was the seventh placement in her life. She got to learn many practical everyday things. However, homeschooling was a daily overload and she resorted to her tried and tested coping pattern and ran away. Often the police

had to search for her and she even put herself in danger in the wilderness in the mountains.

The organisation and the youth welfare office decided on a project change within Crete, as the coordinator had long considered our family to be a good solution for this young person. So our new everyday life began. The first two months were hard, we had to get to know each other, learn to assess Vanessa, and test out where boundaries had to be drawn. Although not officially diagnosed, she clearly had full-blown FAS¹.

The daily routine often started at six o'clock in the morning. There was no pre-determined programme, as it was first necessary to assess what was actually possible that day. Of particular relevance were the physical activities. The long summer and sunny spring and autumn in Crete allow for outdoor activities. The sea was one of the most important places to be. She could swim, but initially only stayed where she could still stand. She learned to snorkel and dive and so we could extend her stay in the water up to three hours without a break. We gave her the security to hold on to us at all times during long-distance swimming. She learned stamina and concentration and how to assess danger, was physically active and had extreme fun exploring the underwater world. There were no outbursts on the swimming days, no arguments, no depressive phase, no difficulty falling asleep, no protest at being schooled. In maths, however, we did repetition and did not progress beyond grade 5 level. Acalculia, among many other impairments, belongs to the classic FAS catalogue. Thalassotherapy, recovery in the sea, is a therapy I am really convinced of. Immersing the whole body and head in the tides and then floating in the water works wonders. It is in no way comparable to visiting a swimming pool in chlorinated water, the loudness and the confined space of a building or fenced area.

When Vanessa found out that she was supposed to go back to Germany when she came of age, she was very disappointed. We had to take her to the sea immediately, as it was the ideal medium for her to find balance. Quote: "I have to go into the water now!"

In the mild winter months we tended to go into the mountains and embellished the long walks with stories about the place and about the trees and stones, so it was always an event for everyone, through everything you can imagine. Another important factor in Vanessa's well-being was the pets. We had two particularly cuddly cats and three small dogs. Shortly after taking in the youth, we also decided to get a slightly larger

1 FAS = Fetal alcohol syndrome, prenatal damage caused by consumption of alcohol by the mother.

guard dog again. The puppy was a great joy and he developed into a proud and fine animal. Every day she took him for a walk and the “team” of the pretty young woman with the proud black dog was known around town and attracted the eyes of passers-by. She was proud to be approached about her dog, but also about the fact that some fearfully moved aside, “respecting” her and her dog. She could still remember how, in the first foster family, she would crawl into the big dog’s basket at night when she was scared. The therapeutic effect of pets was a gift from heaven and an absolute necessity, especially in the case of this young person. Learning was easier with a cat in her lap. During the walks, she had some responsibility for the dog. He had to learn to walk “at heel” and it was important to avoid the street cats in advance. At home, she was in charge of feeding the entire flock of pets, changing the water and keeping them clean.

Vanessa’s many fears receded, all her phobias, visions and nightmares stopped. She became more balanced and never had to take psychotropic drugs. After medical consultation and the agreement of all those responsible, we disposed of the tablets she had brought with her. We managed to give her support, to be a family to her, to have her complete trust. We actually assumed that she would be able to stay with us for longer than until she turned 18. She was an 18 year old child with a sub-average IQ and felt happy and secure with us.

She was childishly enthusiastic about history and loved all the Minoan archaeological sites and palaces. We visited these and the historical museums frequently and always found new topics of history, mythology and general knowledge that were interesting. She also learned a lot in the other museums without realising that they were trying to teach or instruct her. In general, she learned better through practice and by developing an interest in something. We visited the natural history museum particularly often because they offer practical experience in all natural science subjects. The staff were friendly and would lovingly explain natural phenomena to school classes or even to us as individuals, using experiments in which the children were involved.

We went on a longer trip to Athens. There she learned about ancient Greece. She was amazed by all the climbable ruins, temples and ancient sites and listened with fascination to the related historical events and myths. We could spend days visiting museums and talking about sculptors or philosophers. She also got to know my husband’s family of origin and became particularly fond of my husband’s sister, who visits us every year in Crete.

Our Vanessa was warmly welcomed by our friends and the Protestant church community and felt content. She wished to be baptised – something we made possible.

Experiences of a project site in France

Laurence

My name is Laurence, I am 50 years young and I live in the south of France with my seven-year-old son. Our small village of Chalabre, with its 1,000 inhabitants, is located in the department of Aude.

I am very close to my large family of origin and it means a lot to me that the family supports my Individualised Social Pedagogy work with young people. Every day I am surrounded by people of all ages, professions and socio-economic backgrounds here and I like our social gatherings.

I studied psychology and education in Toulouse, and complemented my studies with additional training in school care for blind pupils. I then worked for eight years in a children's home and nine years in the individual integration of disabled pupils. During this time, I was able to gain many helpful pedagogical skills in the area of promoting social competences.

Through my godmother, who has been working in the care of foster children for 30 years, I first heard about the work of an Individualised Social Pedagogy organisation. This work differs from the classic French foster families, the familles d'accueil, because of the intensive professional counselling. I did some research and quickly contacted the coordinator of the organisation in France. We met and discussed whether my profile met her expectations and whether a cooperation was conceivable for both sides.

I put a lot of thought into it before embarking on the adventure of Individualised Social Pedagogy in 2014. With every project comes a great responsibility, which I carry out with commitment, professionalism and emotion. At the beginning, I was afraid of the language barrier, as I do not speak German. However, with the support of the French-speaking coordination, the cooperation was smooth. Within the organisation, the language difference has never been an obstacle either, as dialogue with the various partners in the project is encouraged and impeccably mediated by my coordinator.

It is important to me to respond to the resources of the young people, to restore their self-esteem and at the same time to ensure a physical and moral well-being. It is clear that the individual educational support is only possible because I can work in complete transparency. This is guaranteed by good professional supervision and a network of people built around our children and young people.

So far, I have been able to accompany and support four young people in my projects. For three years now, a young person has been living with me, who was first educated in distance learning at the CNED (Centre national d'enseignement à distance), graduated from the College and has now been training to be a carpenter for 1.5 years.

These were four completely different experiences in which I recognised the need to constantly adapt my pedagogical “tools” to the development, crises, desires, needs, context and so on. All the young people were given the chance here to continue writing their biographical story in their own way, without erasing everything that had happened before. Here they found a place free of prejudice in a new environment with different rules, where they were listened to and where they were accompanied on a part of the way into adult life. The good coordination supported and continues to support me, among other things, in the “pitfalls” and obstacles I have to face in my work.

One of these obstacles is the attitude of people outside my project who do not understand our way of working and sometimes interfere with it. But the challenges can also be in dealing with the family of origin, the boyfriend or girlfriend, the school board, the police and many other protagonists.

At these points I receive a lot of support from my coordinator, with whom I meet weekly by phone or in person, through collegial counselling, supervision and further training. I work independently and yet I am part of a supportive network.

Believing that young people should be given the opportunities to develop their skills and abilities, I want to give them back confidence in themselves. With this self-confidence, they will then find their way more easily to school and work. It is the Individualised Social Pedagogy care that makes it possible to look at each young person in his or her uniqueness, which is why I think it is essential to maintain this individual guidance and support. In addition to a wide range of activities, leaving the familiar environment of the country of origin and getting to know a new cultural and learning space are a benefit for the personality formation.



Laurence

A father tells his story

Norbert

My name is Norbert, I am 58 years old, I live in Luxembourg and I am the father of a son who will soon be 19. My son spent 18 months in an Individualised Social Pedagogy measure abroad. He came back a few months before his 18th birthday and has now been living back in Luxembourg for about a year.

It is my concern to share the consistently positive experiences we had during and after this measure. Too often, the families of those affected withdraw and the subject is buried.

When I first heard about this measure, my son had already been in a psychiatric clinic for eight months. My son had become conspicuous since he started school. We went through innumerable contact points in Luxembourg, and all kinds of diagnoses were made and all kinds of treatments were carried out. All of them turned out to be wrong, and I would like to point out that until then it was very difficult or almost impossible to make the right diagnosis. As he got older, the problems at school became increasingly more intense. In addition, my son started to use marijuana on a massive scale. All this led to my son ending up in a closed educational institution. In the end, he could no longer withstand the pressure there and suffered a breakdown. Now, for the first time, his illness was properly recognised.

I could not really imagine what an Individualised Social Pedagogy measure abroad would mean. I was so concerned about my son's well-being that any solution was welcome. At that time, my son kept breaking out of the closed ward of the clinic and would disappear for several days. Each time he was picked up again, he was completely stoned. Then he had to be sedated and he was fixated to the bed pumped up with drugs → a horrible experience for everyone involved. The possibility to tear my son away from his familiar environment and thus remove him from the bad influence of the wrong friends seemed to me to be the only solution at that time. Based on previous experiences, I was also aware that an individual educational measure would be ideal for him.

Although I felt it was the right thing to do, at the beginning it was a terrible thought to put the responsibility for my child in the hands of complete strangers, far away from home and without the possibility to help. I would like to take this opportunity to once again express my gratitude to my contact person and to the entire team at the organi-

sation. Through their commitment, they have managed to ensure that my son is doing as well as possible today, while at the same time providing security for the family at home.

The positive and steady development of my son during the measure was remarkable. It has definitely brought him back on the right track. After initially struggling, my wife and I realised that it was very good for us to have handed over the responsibility for our son. Without this step, our marriage would have broken up. After we were able to recover from the stresses and strains of the past years, we now have the strength again to support our son in the best possible way.

To spare other families another aspect, I would like to mention that due to all the circumstances with our son, we did not always give our second child the necessary attention. This turns out to be a problem today; we should have paid more attention to it earlier.

Another problem was the long approval period for the Brussels IIa procedure. My son was at his lowest point at that time. I don't want to count the days he spent confined to his bed until the necessary authorisations were obtained. Also suboptimal was the fact that my son had to come back to Luxembourg during the measure – 3 months before his 18th birthday – to appear in court. Due to his illness, arrangements had to be made regarding guardianship and a suitable place to live had to be found for him. Until all this was settled, he had to stay in the psychiatric hospital. He was much better off in the measure abroad.

I was surprised by the positive development of my son and by the positive effect this step had on all family members, as well as by the constant and tireless commitment of the entire team of the organisation.

For me, it is important that this kind of help continues to exist. Without a radical change in external circumstances, my son would have been completely thrown off track. Without the removal of his negative reference points in Luxembourg, such an improvement in his life would not have been possible. Without the distance from our son that enabled us parents to find our way back to each other, our family would have broken up.

It would be desirable for administrative procedures to be speeded up and made easier, especially when acute action is needed. Then it would be great if, in the digital world we live in, the people concerned don't have to travel halfway across Europe to attend a court hearing to extend the measure, for example. In my view, digital attendance would be a good solution. It would also be good if such measures were recognised by all authorities, even if it only affects a few people.

I would like to see the possibility for affected parents and siblings to exchange ideas with each other and with professional support. Being able to share concerns and experiences with others is a very positive support, as we have been able to see from our own experience. It helps immensely to realise that you are not alone and that other families are experiencing exactly the same thing. It is simply good to put aside the shame about what you have experienced and to talk about it.



Norbert

Something so great is unique!

Manon

My name is Manon K. My husband and I are parents of two daughters, Lora, 15, and Melissa, 12. I work at a Luxembourg bank, my husband works at the municipality. Neither my husband nor I have a professional social background.

You are not born to be a mother or a father. No, you grow into the role. Rarely without detours, but if we are honest, we all take detours. Some detours have stumbling blocks, some more, some less. Often we want to give up, but keep going. But at the end of the day, at some point, we all need help.

I would like to write down these lines for the mothers, fathers, family members and all people who want to clear the stumbling blocks, which are sometimes more like boulders than stones, out of the way or need help in overcoming them. Because raising a child is individual and always a challenge.

What works for another child doesn't have to work for yours. You have to want to understand, question, even the therapist sometimes, because not everyone with a diploma can help in every situation. Education is not a task where you pick up a book and find the answer to your question in a certain chapter. No, it is a process: for you and for your child. No task in life is as difficult as raising a child.

I want my and our story to be an encouragement that sometimes letting go is the solution.

How I struggled, with myself, with our daughter, how I tried to be strong and solve problems alone, how I risked breaking up our family, not wanting to admit that I couldn't do it alone! I didn't want to say out loud that we needed help, let alone allow help. But after thinking for a long time that the worst thing for me would be to accept help, the very worst thing was not getting the help we needed.

I was literally screaming for help. We did get it, but it didn't help. We got worse after every therapy session. At the beginning I thought maybe this is the process, it will get better, it has to get better. But it got worse. I was fighting for our daughter while she was fighting with herself and I couldn't do anything. My life was like going to war every day – unarmed.

These lines are meant to reach all the people who are going through such feelings, who want to or have to give up, who see no other way out than to leave everything behind. They ought to know that we too are not at the end of our journey, but that we have found a companion to accompany us.

The therapy sessions, which took place twice a week, became more and more of an ordeal. One factor that can't be ignored was that my husband and I are both working. Scheduling therapy sessions, after work or during the lunch break, was a gruelling time for us, our child and the grandparents, especially because we always felt bad afterwards and then we had to go back to work or school some days.

That time was just awful. Not because of the time we sacrificed, no, the result was just not satisfactory. After the sessions especially, the provocations and frustrations were greater than before.

I sometimes had the feeling that we were not taken seriously. We were denied the right to a therapist who spoke our daughter's language on the grounds that there was no therapist available in Luxembourg. So we sat in each session and had to translate.

Today I think that the therapists were overwhelmed or not specialised in certain diagnoses in children. It would have been ok if it had been said and the patient then been referred to another colleague.

One day a social worker from the school called and spoke to me about our daughter's behaviour. We met and she told me about another mother whose child was taking part in a "project". A placement abroad, in Hungary, where children with behavioural problems are being looked after.

"Hungary? No way!" was my first reaction. Therapy yes, maybe even in Germany, but only if I could go there every weekend. Still, it gave me hope that if this family got help, we could get help too. Maybe even here in Luxembourg or in the nearby border region.

It got to the point where our daughter's escapades got her referred to another hospital. When we met the therapists there for the first time and my husband and I spoke to them, I knew immediately that this was the right place for us. It was minimal relief because I was so broken, I had failed and blamed myself for everything. Broken by pain and by the inability to be the mother our child needed, by the guilt that the whole family was suffering, not just her sister and my husband, but my parents too.

Everyone used to say, “Manon, you have to do something!” But I did everything, I lived solely for our daughter, I cried out for help and I felt that I was at my wits’ end. Today I often ask myself what impression I must have made on the therapists? What was going through their heads when they saw a broken person like me?

The structure of the therapy sessions was different from what we knew. They always came in groups of three or four. Each specialised in a particular topic. I always felt how we, my husband and I, were picked up with the right words. Our daughter always joined in later. I never understood it, but I felt that they knew what they were doing. It was the first time I allowed a stranger to take over.

The topic of the “project abroad” was brought up pretty quickly. Like I said, we would have agreed with Luxembourg or the nearby border region in Germany. An actual proposal, however, was only due to be made after the therapists had got to know our daughter better.

My husband, however, seemed to have realised very quickly that this project would not work out the way I imagined. I think he was even happy that there were people taking over now, and he noticed how I was slowly letting it happen.

We argued a lot, for very different reasons. One of the reasons was that he often made me realise how dominating I was. I wanted help, but I only allowed it up to a certain point. And that, despite the good therapists we now had, I still tried to make my will clear to them. In the process, I often forgot that my husband played a part too.

The idea about Hungary was then explained in a session without our daughter. I was shocked! My husband simply took my hand and saved me from breaking down.

The word “Hungary” and the name of the youth welfare organisation had come up for the first time. Our daughter was then invited in. The therapist told her too that the project would be in Hungary. She didn’t have time to react, she just looked at me and shouted, “And you let this happen?” Then she was escorted out again. Today I know and understand that it was exactly the right thing to do. We were no longer good for each other, and we were no longer any help to each other.

In one session we were introduced to Ms M. Although I was so opposed to the idea, she held out her hand to us and had a smile on her face. I just thought to myself, they don’t know what they are getting into.

I listened to it and thought it was good that no promises were made. But that was the only thing I liked. At some point, Ms M. said a sentence that was so precious to me and that I had been waiting for for years without knowing it. A sentence, a key moment that helped me to accept and hand over responsibility. I want her to know that it meant more to me then and now than anything else that has ever been said, and which is so ingrained in me that it helps me to this day. She said, “Mrs. K., you’ve made it this far, we’re just taking over for a while now, and that’s OK!” An image became embedded in me with that sentence. A bridge between our daughter and me. Ms M. was the bridge from that moment on. That it would still be hard to let our daughter go was out of the question, but the alternative would have been much worse, because we were all just tired.

The first memorable experience for me was the farewell dinner. Our daughter had got used to the idea, she even found it a bit exciting to be without her ever-present mother for a while and without her dad, who never got a word in. And I think she also wanted to find some peace for herself. At the farewell dinner, it was important to me that it should not feel like a farewell, but like the beginning of a journey towards a new start.

The journey was planned for the following day. We met with Ms M., who accompanied our daughter. We had a little time to say goodbye and it gave me a good feeling when I saw how Lora reacted to Ms M.

Back home, I had this feeling I hadn’t known for a long time: confidence. Nevertheless, fears remained. Our daily routine was gone and I was afraid that we were drifting away from each other completely. But if I was honest with myself, I had to admit that I no longer wanted the daily routine we had had for the last few years. I could take a breath and start to find myself again.

I think I was the biggest stumbling block of all for myself. To be honest, I am still my biggest stumbling block today. I make life very difficult for myself sometimes. I think loving myself is a big challenge at times.

The core – if I even consider letting someone get to it – is very well hidden and guarded by my dominance, my control, the respect I demand of myself, my fear, my sadness, my vulnerability and what I have experienced.

Individual – Pedagogical – Successful

Individualised Social Pedagogy measures, working with resources

Norbert Scheiwe

*Niemand ist so arm,
dass er nicht etwas zu geben hätte;
und niemand ist so reich,
dass er nichts zu empfangen hätte.
(Dom Helder Camara)*

*[No one is so poor
that he has nothing to give;
and no one is so rich
that he has nothing to receive.]*

A look at the early 90s of the last century.

“I wasn’t paying attention for a moment and she had already disappeared from my field of vision. I mean our little daughter, who at that time, a little more than three years old, was gradually discovering the world for herself. After a short search I found her. She was sitting on the knee of one of our “resident youths” in a cherry tree and was chatting with him animatedly. At that time, we lived on the grounds of the residential home and the founder of the institution had planted lots of fruit trees in a neighbouring meadow so that the young people would not raid the neighbours’ gardens. The two of them were now sitting in one such cherry tree full of red and ripe fruit. The seventeen-year-old youth fed cherries to his little guest and she gladly accepted. She asked him countless questions in her still halting language, which he answered with much patience and apparently to our little daughter’s satisfaction. I stood at a little distance behind another tree, watching the scene and wondering quite a lot. Firstly, about our little daughter, who did not normally sit on every “stranger’s” lap, but was rather reserved otherwise. And secondly about the youth, with how much empathy, patience and natural pedagogical skill he responded to this little girl and obviously also fulfilled the “trust” she had placed in him. A small “relationship cosmos” that had built up there and which I perceived, at first with astonishment, and which inspired me very much to think and then also to act. After what felt like half an hour, it was probably no more than ten minutes, the young man

climbed safely back down from the tree with our daughter in his arms and the little girl ran proudly, with a sticky mouth and a full belly, cheerfully into my arms. The teenager also left the scene smiling a little. Obviously a satisfying and successful adventure for both. I must add that the teenager in the group was about to be released. He defied all the rules, often reacted uncontrollably and violently, dealt with drugs, repeatedly committed thefts and did not accept any of the adults who tried very hard to help him.”

Why am I telling this story? For me and for our institution, it was one of the initial impulses for Individualised Social Pedagogy measures – first abroad, then at home – and for a comprehensive change of perspective.

What had happened? Here, two extremely different perceptions of the same young person suddenly met. On the one hand, the “structural border crosser” who did not accept any of the frameworks set for him and rejected both the pedagogical offer and the so-called “relationship offer” of a youth welfare institution. And on the other hand, a loving young man who was able to give a small child, previously unknown to him, a great deal of empathy, patience and affection, so that the child was able to engage with him completely without reservation, almost unconditionally, and accept his offer of a relationship without fear. Unusual?

The experts’ prognosis, however, was quite clear: “We can no longer help this young man with our offer. He refuses to accept it, we have tried everything”, was the “verdict”. And of course, this assessment was based on the concretely experienced patterns of action and behaviour that the young man displayed in the group’s everyday life. The structures did not seem to allow him to present or perceive this other side, which he also had.

The reflection on one’s own professional change of perspective and the possible view on existing resources was rather unusual at that time and not yet a really lived and rehearsed practice.

In the context of a case discussion, I presented my observation of the scene described above. After initial astonishment, we realised that after careful consideration, even more resources of the young person came to light than initially thought.

I have to add that an essential basic statement of the guiding principle given by the institution’s provider is: “The institution does not dismiss any young person, every young person gets an offer of help”. This statement is still valid today. Such guidelines, when taken seriously and implemented, are quite helpful.

An interesting process began, which also initiated a conceptual paradigm shift. Away from the focus on deficits, towards a focus on resources!

In intensive discussions with the young man, who was also being closely followed by the judiciary, which had quite a motivating effect, it was now possible to develop a concept together with him that was oriented towards the perceived strengths. The legal guardians, at that time still the state youth welfare office in the context of welfare education and its supervision, as well as the local youth welfare office also agreed.

We took him to a convent and introduced him to a very remarkable woman, a nun who was on home leave. Her usual workplace were the poor villages of the Indian northeast, especially the schools. It was in one of these schools that the 17-year-old young man, together with his carer, was to look after the afternoon leisure activities of the pupils for a few months. After a long one-on-one conversation, the nun and the young man agreed without reservations. Our first Individualised Social Pedagogy project abroad was born, which, by the way, has been successful to this day.

Individual:

Two terms come to mind when I continue to think about this example: “individual” and “resource”.

The 17-year-old youth would probably have had no perspective in the existing “classical” group structure. This offer does not fit all young people equally. Dismissal, prison, drugs and, with a high statistical probability, the continuation of a criminal career would possibly have been the shaping elements of his future. And this despite his existing resources and social skills. The change was probably brought about by the adults’ trust and belief in his strengths and wishes, as well as an offer that was individually oriented towards them. He was good with younger children, enjoyed sports and games, and above all wanted to be personally involved. He simply wanted to have the feeling of being needed and wanted. To practise and try this out in an Indian village and not in a kindergarten or in a primary school in our country was sensible and necessary because the young man was not yet sufficiently stable in his personality to be able to resist all the temptations here. In India, these temptations did not exist and he was able to engage very intensively with himself and with his carer – in this intensity for the first time in his young life. And probably the administrative obstacles in our latitudes and a prevailing stigmatisation of this “target group” would simply have been too high for such an outreach at that time.

This first project of Individualised Social Pedagogy support abroad was followed by many others, which in principle were always oriented towards the criteria of the individuality of the young person and his or her resources. A structure of its own developed in our institution, which deliberately called itself “flexible support”, and which has been able to offer this kind of support to hundreds of young people in almost 20 years. And, of course, this area, like many other areas of educational support, has continued to develop and become more qualified.

The legal framework has also been adjusted. This form of support has been incorporated into the current child and youth welfare law, a requirement for skilled workers has been developed, etc. In my personal opinion, unfortunately, this is not always to the benefit of young people, if, for example, one takes a closer look at the so-called consultation procedure according to the Brussels IIa Regulation. Such legal obstacles not only limit the claim of particularly vulnerable young people to participation and inclusion as well as their right to education, but they exclude them structurally. And this in a Europe that is growing ever closer together and dependent on each other, not for understandable professional reasons, but for political-popular reasons that help no one.

Pedagogical:

In addition to this example, I can think of other components that are essential criteria for successful Individualised Social Pedagogy projects both at home and abroad. The individual setting plays a very important role. Whereas in conventional stationary forms of support, which are mostly oriented towards group pedagogy, the young person has to “fit in” and “adapt” to this structure, the individualised form of support offers the unique possibility of adapting the setting to the needs and wishes of the young person to a large extent. For a certain target group of young people, this is the only perspective left to agree to any kind of help at all. They have already had several attempts at failure and no longer believe in themselves or in this framework.

Sometimes it is downright frightening that young people who have failed several times are offered this conventional form of support over and over again in support programme planning processes. Knowing that the next time it will also go wrong. Often, a frightening wave of failure builds up, creating helplessness and perplexity. Against better judgement, because there are alternatives, such as the offer of individual support. I consider it a real structural discrimination against young people when, not so much for professional but rather for political reasons, they are denied forms of support that could open up further opportunities and future prospects to them. This becomes particularly clear when public youth welfare agencies make fundamental decisions on

Cross-border individual support measures from the perspective of a Youth Welfare Office

Reimund Jäckel

My name is Reimund Jäckel. I am a qualified social worker and have been working for 32 years as a district social worker in the Allgemeine Sozialdienst [*General Social Service*] at the Youth Welfare Office of the city of Remscheid.

I would like to take this opportunity to report on Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures as a form of support in youth welfare, not so much from a scientific perspective, but from practical experience.

For a long time, this form of support has been viewed with great scepticism by the public and the administrations of the Youth Welfare Offices (“If you can’t help them here, you can do even less abroad”) and with many prejudices (“They [the children and young people] cause so much trouble and are to be rewarded with a holiday ...” or “They [the organisations] make a fortune out of the placements!”) Therefore, I would like to contribute to examining these prejudices from the perspective of youth welfare practice and to invalidate them at least in certain points.

In addition to the internal scepticism, the Brussels IIa Regulation, which has been in force since November 2003, prescribes the consultation procedure for the placement of children and young people abroad.

My experience with Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures for young people began at the beginning of the 1990s. The reason for my professional involvement with this form of support were cases of young people who could no longer be reached within the framework of traditional support services or who consistently refused even low-threshold support.

For me, the case of a Russian-German youth, I’ll call him Sergej, then 15 years old, is exemplary. In “real” life, of course, his name is different.

Sergej attracted attention because he could no longer be kept in school, because on the one hand he did not fulfil the school expectations and on the other hand he attracted attention through violence against fellow pupils and considerable alcohol consumption. All attempts to reach him had failed. Due to their own history, the parents were not able to offer Sergej the framework he needed for a sensible development. In the end, the parents gave up and just let Sergej do what he wanted. In many discus-

sions with colleagues and also with my superiors at the time, possibilities were sought to organise support for Sergej that at least offered a chance for him to develop reasonably well. In the course of the discussions, it was considered to place Sergej with an organisation that offers Individualised Social Pedagogy measures. In the end, a combination of a stay abroad (Portugal at the time) and accomodation in Germany was chosen.

At the beginning of the measure, which Sergej was not actually willing to take part in, but which he at least wanted to take a look at, I was worried that both his parents and he himself could eventually torpedo the stay abroad. I was also afraid that he would get into trouble very quickly in Portugal because of the language barrier, which might have resulted in the failure of the measure.

My hope in this case was that Sergej would experience a kind of “reset” through the stay abroad because of the completely different structure there, the foreign language and the values that had to be accepted, which could then open up new perspectives for him for further development in youth welfare.

In the course of the stay abroad, a very high proportion of experiential education measures (outdoor activities over several days, canoe trips, horseback riding, etc.) were chosen and the relationship with the carers in Portugal turned out well. After about nine months abroad, Sergej returned to the responsible organisation in southern Germany, where Sergej’s individual schooling by the organisation began. He lived with another young person in a flat in close proximity to the carers. This was followed by two years of hard pedagogical work by the carers and also by me. There were repeated crises that made it necessary to travel to southern Germany and to adjust the support programme plan over and over again. Sergej was able to develop very well under the conditions, which were on the one hand very tight, but on the other hand left many possibilities open. He was able to take responsibility for himself again and he developed an unimagined ambition in school, which ultimately enabled him to obtain a good secondary school leaving certificate.

When Sergej reached the legal age of majority, he applied for support for young adults. The support was continued with the same organisation. This organisation accompanied him through his bricklayer’s apprenticeship, which he also completed. He stayed in southern Germany and, as far as I could trace, worked briefly as a bricklayer after the apprenticeship and then moved to a furniture company in the field of installation and assembly.

In the following years of my work, I have placed several children and young people abroad. After many cases had a positive and also sustainable result, it was common practice, at least in our youth welfare office, to choose this form of placement.

I was then surprised by the reaction to the consultation procedure to be carried out as of 2003 by the Brussels IIa Regulation. The introduction of this procedure and the associated uncertainty among various organisations and in the administration led to a significant restriction of measures abroad.

In addition, there was the repeated extreme and at times very polemical media coverage of Individualised Social Pedagogy in youth welfare abroad. TV formats such as „Die strengsten Eltern der Welt“ [*The strictest parents in the world*] have conveyed an image of working with severely disturbed children and adolescents to the effect that all it takes is a little poverty and common sense as well as a camera team to “fix” these children and adolescents. Even though I view this format very critically, it nevertheless became clearly visible that the radical change of accustomed living conditions can certainly lead to changes in the behaviour of children and young people and to previously unfamiliar experiences of positive effects.

At the same time, the cases became more and more complex and the lead times until the consideration of a measure abroad became much longer. In the following years, the measures abroad developed more and more into a last resort. The effect of this was that the children and young people for whom a measure abroad was planned usually came to the measures much too late and as a result many measures failed.

Offences committed by young people abroad have proved to be a stumbling block. If young people committed offences abroad, this led to very complicated entanglements with the law enforcement authorities and the local administrations. The consultation procedure that has been introduced and, above all, its extremely long processing time by the local authorities have also proved to be a considerable stumbling block. This complicates the work with the young people to a considerable extent because the waiting time after the decision to accept the youth welfare office’s offer causes the young people’s motivation to drop considerably again, which ultimately calls the success of the measure into question again. It takes a lot of intensive work to keep the young people’s motivation high until the beginning of such a measure.

It is not uncommon for the young people to run in loops through child and adolescent psychiatry and again and again through reception groups and emergency accommodation centres with the corresponding accompanying symptoms. These loops in no way help to keep motivation high – quite the opposite!

From my point of view, the measures abroad are a very good opportunity to let the young people, who run through the classic youth welfare with intensive groups and regularly fail there, break this cycle. The stay abroad in Europe brings about a radical change in the frame of reference, getting to know the values and norms in another country, the opportunity to learn a foreign language and also to experience a different form of relationship with the carers. These factors contribute to triggering a feeling of positive self-efficacy and the experience of further development in the young people, thus giving them a new perspective again.

For this form of support to no longer be used as a last resort, but to become a form of support equal to all other forms, it is necessary in my view that the decision-makers do not see the sending of young people abroad as an absolute exception, but rather – similar to the semester abroad for students – as a positive connotation. I am well aware that measures abroad also involve risks, but in my view the opportunities for a positive change in the lives of young people outweigh the risks.

In order for these measures to succeed, it is also necessary that, while striving for clear goals and efficiency of the measures, we do not forget that the development of young people needs individually different periods of time, because grass does not grow faster if you pull at it.

The consultation procedure currently in force must be changed significantly so that support can be provided without delay. A procedure lasting three months or more with an uncertain outcome is not conducive to achieving the goal. When the consultation procedure was introduced, I myself experienced a situation where the procedure had to be carried out for a young person who was already in Portugal at the time. Until the young person reached the age of majority, the authorities in Portugal did not even reply to the Federal Office of Justice.

Implementation of measures abroad in the Youth Welfare Office Bremen

Rolf Diener

In the Youth Welfare Office Bremen, individual or group pedagogical measures have been carried out for years in a few individual cases in which there is a corresponding indication in the respective case constellation within the framework of educational support. On average, about six to ten measures (out of a total of about 1,200 stationary measures according to §§ 27 in conjunction with 34 and 41 of SGB VIII) are carried out at the same time, with the proportion of male youths clearly predominating. In the following, the explanations refer to the measures that are carried out with a medium-term perspective with a project agency on site in other European countries (focus on Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland), in contrast to the travel or sailing projects that are also carried out.

The measures are usually initiated in case constellations where a long support process with multiple problems in the family and with the young person has already taken place, often accompanied by previous interruptions, changes or terminations of measures, and where intensive, very individually oriented support is considered necessary within the framework of support planning. In addition to corresponding Individualised Social Pedagogy measures in Germany, offers in other European countries are used.

The framework of the measures abroad is characterised by a low-stimulus, very close-to-nature and practice-oriented environment. Depending on the case constellation, limiting the stimuli from outside or, for example, the occurring sense of achievement from more manual and practice-oriented learning experiences for young people who are not so successful or gifted in the theoretical and academic areas are important success factors for a successful development process of the young person. Often, the rather “simple” living conditions on site abroad also promote a positive development in the young people.

Depending on the case constellation and the requirements from the support planning, both Individualised Social Pedagogy and, in a smaller number, group pedagogy measures are chosen. Often, the measures are implemented in a host family or in a family-analogue living arrangement. The continuity of the relationship provided by this setting encourages the young person to engage in personal change processes.

In some cases, the young person had and still has a special connection to the country in which the measure was carried out (young person with Turkish roots in Turkey, young person with Roma background in Romania). In these constellations, the corresponding linguistic and cultural integration can positively strengthen the success of the measure. In these cases in particular, however, the transfer process upon the return to Germany is even more important.

The Youth Welfare Office in Bremen has very high quality standards for the measures abroad, both in terms of procedure and professionalism. Before a corresponding measure is initiated, an intensive examination of the suitability of both the agency and the individual case takes place.

The cases are intensively discussed within the framework of case consultations in the respective district team and then forwarded to the counselling service for out-of-home placement via the head of the Youth Unit. The counselling service for out-of-home placement is a service established within the team of the Youth Welfare Office management, which counsels the decentralised case management in the initiation and accompaniment of stationary educational support measures.

The examination and submission to the Youth Welfare Office management is carried out for each case by the counselling service for out-of-home placement, including a professional assessment by the counselling service. A measure can only be started after approval by the Youth Welfare Office management.

Another component of quality assurance are the on-site inspections of the agencies by the counselling service for out-of-home placement before the first implementation of a measure.

Professional quality standards:

- The binding application of the Brussels IIa Regulation, which can mean considerable effort in individual cases and also lead to significant temporal delays. In this context, a significant improvement is expected from mid-2022 with the new regulation to be applied and the deadline set therein for granting consent (or refusal).
- Good cooperation of the respective agency with the local authorities. Against this background, for example, there is currently no choice of offers in Spain, as constructive and timely cooperation with the local authorities is very difficult there.

- Regular review of the political and security situation in the destination country. In the past, a location has had to be (temporarily) abandoned when the general security situation worsened.
- Child and youth psychiatric clarification in order to exclude the presence of a mental disorder with a pathological status, which might be an obstacle to the measure abroad.
- Requirement of specialist staff (§ 72 SGB VIII) and qualified supervision of the measure abroad by the respective agency in Germany (specialist counselling, supervision, etc.).
- Ensuring on-site schooling.
- Existence of a concept in case of crises during the course of the case.
- A good concept for the transfer to Germany after the end of the measure abroad. Here, the provider must have appropriate facilities in Germany.
- Conclusion of a separate care contract for each measure.
- Regular support programme planning meetings on site by the case management, often accompanied by the counselling service for out-of-home placement. During the Corona pandemic, these were also conducted via Skype.

Emerging crisis situations – whether as an individual case or triggered by public debates – require a flexible and timely response. When the scandalised debate about the measures in Maramures flared up in the media, there was, for example, an on-site visit by Case Management and the counselling service for out-of-home placement in the same week. As a result, a return of the young person – in agreement with the young person himself and the guardians – was not considered necessary. A few weeks later, however, a return did take place, as the young person no longer felt comfortable on site due to the return of a large part of the young people cared for in the project context.

It is important to have good communication with the implementing agency that is open to errors throughout the entire measure, both during the “normal” course of the measure and especially in crisis situations that can never be ruled out with the target group. Here, inadequate and non-transparent communication, as seen by the Bremen Youth Welfare Office on several occasions, has already led to the termination of cooperation with individual providers.

Evaluation

Experience at the Bremen Youth Welfare Office shows that in a limited number of cases measures abroad are a sensible, necessary and appropriate form of provision. In most of the cases accompanied in Bremen with young people who have already had to experience many failures and drop-outs, the measures abroad have led to clear progress in personality development. In our experience, it is important to have good and detailed support planning with the intensive participation of the young person and the legal guardians, in which it is also carefully considered whether and in what form the agreed goals can be better achieved in the offer abroad than in a similar measure in Germany.

The helplessness or lack of knowledge that sometimes arises among professionals must not be the triggering and decisive motive for choosing a measure abroad. In many individual cases, the development of the young person has improved significantly if the support planning has been carried out thoroughly. And this against the background that a majority of the young people cared for abroad could already look back on a longer “youth welfare career” with frequent interruptions or terminations of measures. However, part of the truth is that there were also a number of constellations in which the measure abroad was not successful in the long term, had to be terminated or the reintegration process was not successful. In addition to causes rooted in the respective person or in the development of the young person, the subsequent evaluation of the case histories showed that non-compliance with the listed quality requirements also had a negative impact on the case histories. This requirement applies in particular to detailed case counselling before initiating the measure, to sufficient communication between the agency and case management, and to the quality of the return process.

Outlook on the SGB VIII reform

It is expressly welcomed that a separate § 38 SGB VIII-E is introduced for the implementation of measures abroad. This highlights the importance of this form of educational support and the framework conditions that differ from other services. At the same time, there is stronger legal protection.

"Italy was our salvation"

Ann-Kathrin Eckardt

Where to place children who are acutely at risk at home? What to do with parents who are failing in everyday life? Many of these families have to be separated by the youth welfare office in Germany. But two of them got the chance to grow together again in a foreign place – in Umbria. The fortune of being granted a new life.

The sentence comes sometime in the morning, between two puffs from the roll-up cigarette. "We were lucky." Nadine Hallert closes her eyes for a moment, as she often does while narrating. "Damn lucky." She looks at blossoming cherry trees, at the pastoral landscape of Tuscany, the wind driving clouds over the hills. She is doing well.

Nadine Hallert sits on a wooden bench in front of a secluded stone house. She watches her boys, 13 and ten, play football and her daughter Naomi, eight, ride an old children's bike through the tall grass. A completely normal family moment that no one would have thought possible three years ago. Least of all Nadine Hallert herself. While walking through the hills that morning, the phrase had come up: "I was a wreck, a nothing."

Since she started her new life almost three years ago in this very place with her children, wearing pink Crocs and carrying a few hastily packed rubbish bags, she has lost 60 kilos. She wears a black dress with white dots with her black jeans, and her dyed reddish hair is pinned up to better show off her silver earrings and striking glasses. The puffy Nadine, whose gaze goes blank in the photos from before, no longer exists. On the wooden bench sits a woman who now regularly goes out for a run and says in a firm voice: "I can protect my children now. Italy saved us."

Some stories are better told from the end, because the painful beginning is easier to bear. Stories like that of Nadine Hallert, who still lives in Italy with her three children. And stories like that of Oliver Kern, who has already returned to Germany with his three children after two years in Italy. For the two families (whose names have been changed), the country has become synonymous with their new start. From Bavaria over the Brenner Pass, return to Go.

They owe their new life above all to: a courageous social worker, an Italian carer with a big heart and a youth welfare office that dared to take a new path. It would have been standard practice to separate all six children from their parents on the grounds of acute risk to the welfare of the child. The youth welfare office might have found foster families for the younger children, the older ones would have been placed in homes. In the German constitutional state, separating parents from their children is one of the most serious interferences with the private lives of its citizens. 173,000 so-called risk assessments were carried out by youth welfare offices in Germany in 2019 – 55,000 children were then taken into care, i.e. separated from their parents.

What Nadine Hallert calls "Italy" is called a "full inpatient measure" in her file at the youth welfare office. The name of the youth welfare office cannot be mentioned here, as the family would be too easily identifiable otherwise. Normally, such a measure means round-the-clock care in a home or a psychiatric ward, alone, not as a complete family. For the Hallerts and Kerns, however, it meant leaving Germany and moving to two small villages in Umbria.

Up to now, German youth welfare offices have only sent adolescents or young adults abroad for several months – as a last resort, so to speak, when they don't know where to send them in Germany. Providing intensive care for parents and their children abroad for several years and sending the children to school there is a completely new approach in child protection. The Hallerts and the Kerns are pioneers, so to speak. They are the first two families to be given a new start in Italy by the *Ambulantes pädagogisches Einsatzteam (Ape)* [*Ambulant Educational Outreach Team*], a non-profit organisation from Bavaria.

Their stories demonstrate the healing power that can unfold when broken families can escape their environment for a longer period of time. Anyone who visits the Hallerts and the Kerns understands how capable of change people can be – when they find other people who believe in them and stand by their side. Day and night.

Each child dealt with grief differently. Torben, the middle one, withdrew completely

Where to? In March 2018, this was also a pressing question for Oliver Kern. His wife had suddenly moved out a year earlier and had broken off contact. With him, but also with the children. Why?

"I don't know," says Kern, sitting at the kitchen table of his flat somewhere in Bavaria, while his two daughters and son are doing homework in their rooms.

"I had depressions at the time, I'm sure it wasn't easy." He says his wife also had psychological problems. What he does know is that "the loss hit the children hard. They had a good relationship with their mother before that."

Each child dealt with grief and anger differently: Tatjana, the eldest, tore up photos of her mother. Torben withdrew completely. Mareike, the youngest, stopped using the toilet at some point. The attempt to support Oliver Kern with ambulant family support, who came several times a week, failed. A year after the mother moved out, the two-storey house was completely filthy, food was moulding in the kitchen, and laundry was scattered everywhere. When Oliver Kern sprained his ankle and couldn't get out of his chair for days, he left the children, then five, six and eight years old, to themselves.

"It was really bad," the 43-year-old says today when he talks about that time. He talks soberly, doesn't gloss over anything. Maybe that's what you learn when you've been through a lot of crises in your life.

The youth welfare office decides at the time: The family needs immediate help. But which institution takes in a single father with three children? Hardly any in Germany, and certainly not now, immediately.

Where to? Two months later, the same youth welfare office is faced with the same question again. This time it is a mother with her three children who must be taken to safety immediately. When the family support worker takes the mother, Nadine Hallert, to the youth welfare office on a June day – she is supposed to find out about moving to a women's shelter after several interventions by the police because of domestic violence – two police officers are sitting there. They quickly get to the point: Nadine Hallert's husband is said to possess child pornographic material. Also, the suspicion of abuse is suddenly in the air, Nadine Hallert remembers today on the wooden bench in front of the stone house.

She experiences the next minutes, hours, days as if in a trance: the interrogation, the hurried return to the house, she only has minutes to pack, her husband, Naomi's father, could come back at any moment. Quickly to the school, to get the boys out of class, to move into a mother-child house. Her mobile phone has been taken from her by the police.

At this point, Daniela Huber is already informed about the case. An employee of the youth welfare office wants to know if she could temporarily take in a mother and her three children, four, seven and ten years old. Huber is a social worker and one of two directors of Ape. The organisation also runs a home in Bavaria where young mothers are looked after around the clock. Daniela Huber thinks about it, weighs it up. The house has no security service, and Nadine Hallert's husband is still at large. And the children are actually too old for the house. Huber agrees anyway, as an interim solution for a couple of days.

Experts say: If parents show the will to change, children should stay in the family

In the mother-child house, the Hallerts immediately stand out. The mother seemed apathetic, as if on drugs, Huber remembers. The head of the youth welfare office at the time describes her as "lifeless". The children's behaviour is also conspicuous. They show what psychologists call "sexualised behaviour". Children can develop it as a result of sexualised violence. They tear apart dolls' legs, for example, want to "play sex", draw penises or appear very disoriented. The staff fears for the safety of the babies in their care, the team agrees: the family cannot stay here any longer.

But where to go? The youth welfare office has already made phone calls all over Germany, 30, 40 facilities, all occupied. A mother with three children? In three months at the earliest. Because even for women with several children, care facilities are rare in Germany, especially when the children are a little older. Jürgen Esser (his name has also been changed to avoid drawing conclusions about the youth welfare office), the head of the youth welfare office at the time, is certain: "If we hadn't had the option of sending the families to Italy, we would have had to place the children in family-replacing care." Family-replacing means: without the option of returning to the parents. "So we would have had to place six children in residential care until they were 18 or 20."

The "Italy option" is a brand new one back then. For 15 years, Ape has been offering holiday measures for families with special needs and for traumatised children and young people in the stone house in Tuscany, which lies at the end of a winding gravel road. But Huber had been getting more and more requests from youth welfare offices asking whether, for example, a mother and her child could stay longer. So Huber came up with the idea of rethinking care abroad, which is usually family-separating, and offering it as a family-sustaining measure. In 2017, she moved to Italy for a year to build up a network of educators, psychologists and family therapists in Tuscany and Umbria.

Questions to Christof Radewagen

Eva Felka

As an expert on child protection issues, Christof Radewagen was a member of the Lügde Commission in Lower Saxony, which subjected the structures at youth welfare offices to a critical, systematic and structural analysis to protect children on the occasion of concrete cases of abuse. The commission developed recommendations for the youth welfare offices in Lower Saxony with the aim of minimising structural errors in the future.

Eva Felka: Dear Mr Radewagen, you know thousands of concrete child protection cases in practice in Germany. From your point of view, do we always have to look for national solutions when it comes to the protection of children and young people?

Christof Radewagen: As a general rule, there can and must be no limits to support measures in child protection.

If parents are not in a position to avert danger from their child or if they themselves are a concrete danger to their children, it is first of all important for the youth welfare office to work out how high the risk of danger is and through which offer of support or intervention the danger can be averted.

An important protective factor is the parents' willingness and ability to change. This also determines the appropriate and necessary support setting in each individual case.

Children have a right to their parents and the state has the task of doing everything possible to enable parents to fulfil their parental responsibility. This also includes the implementation of support measures.

EF: In May 2021, you commented on the care of whole families in Italy in an interview with the Süddeutsche Zeitung. How can the protection of children in the family succeed abroad?

CR: By installing a support setting that helps parents build parenting skills so that they can protect and care for their children, serve as stable and positive confidants. In addition, it is also important to support them in being able to provide their children with a minimum of rules and values as well as basic learning opportunities. It is therefore a matter of strengthening the parents' parenting skills or supporting them in building up a minimum of parenting skills. For this, it may be necessary to first offer them a protected framework of support. If this protective framework is outside their usual environment, there should be no limits to this either. The care of whole families in Italy, as described in the SZ report, has helped parents with their children to make a safe and danger-free new start. And the support setting was successful. That is what I call successful child protection!

What is necessary and thus to be initiated in each individual case is what is best suited to permanently avert a threat to a child's well-being. Ideally, this should be done without separating parents and children, because this is almost always a very difficult path for children.

EF: Mr Radewagen, thank you very much for the interview. I wish you every success in your work to protect our children and young people!



Prof. Dr. Christof Radewagen

born in 1968, studied social work and worked as a counsellor and family assistant in the field of child and youth welfare. After completing his doctorate in educational sciences, he was appointed to the Hanover University of Applied Sciences and Arts and then to the Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences and Arts, where he has been teaching as Professor of Theory of Action and Methods of Social Work since 2014.

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Eva Felka

born in 1957, is a qualified social education worker and worked at the Siegburg District Youth Welfare Office from 1980 to 1986. She then worked as an experiential and individual pedagogue in Sweden before founding Project Husky in 1990, which she still runs today. From 1995 to 2017, she was a member of the board of the Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V. (be) [*Federal Association for Individual and Experiential Education*], whose specialist group on educational support she chaired from 2006 to 2017.

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Introduction: "How is quality established?"

Framework conditions for educational projects abroad

Monja Heinz

The following contributions by our authors mainly deal with the prerequisites for successful processes within the framework of Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures in the European context.

Some of the contributions come from Luxembourg, the heart of Europe. The small country with its great importance for European policy, for example in the course of the Schengen Agreement, is known for its diplomatic talent and innovative spirit. The Schengen Agreement has currently been ratified by 26 member states and includes freedom of travel for its citizens without border controls in the so-called Schengen area.

In terms of youth welfare policy, we are now faced with the task of enabling freedom of travel and residence in the Schengen area for all children and young people with and without a youth welfare context. Currently, European law provides for freedom of travel and residence for children and young people in the context of youth welfare only with considerable restrictions, while children and young people outside of youth welfare can experience a new learning and cultural space without restrictions.

The heterogeneous legal situation and the cultural differences in the wonderfully colourful Europe require a high degree of exchange. Exchange in this sense means friendly visits, guest exchanges, exchange of professionals, transregional cooperation models and much more. Above all, however, there is a need for a common understanding of quality characteristics in the field of youth welfare and close, trusting relationships between multidisciplinary European professionals.

With this in mind, the United Nations drew up guidelines for alternative forms of care in 2009. In these guidelines, all states that have also signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (BMFSFJ 2019) are called upon to cooperate with the individual network partners.

Every decision to accompany a young person outside the family in an Individualised Social Pedagogy project abroad causes a certain state of tension for all those involved. Therefore, successful support measures in the European area are particularly effective and successful when there is an appreciative cooperative relationship between all those involved in the placement.

On the part of the professionals, it is therefore of utmost relevance to routinely exchange and get to know each other in European multidisciplinary working groups. Inviting each other and communicating in a way where subjective perspectives are allowed with an open curiosity of others creates security and resilient working relationships.

This includes, among other things, a high degree of openness in terms of content and the presentation of processes relevant to youth welfare in the different countries, but above all a common attitude. Such places of getting to know each other are to be thought of in presence, digitally and in the most diverse formats on a regional, trans-regional, national and international level.

In my experience, hierarchical structures are a hindrance in cooperative relationships, whereas joint case responsibility and defined, binding competences are useful and indispensable.

In 2013, Schmid, following the Danish family therapist Jesper Juul (2012), described four values that make up successful cooperative relationships:

1. Equality

The cooperators perceive themselves as equals in their profession and their contribution.

2. Authenticity

The cooperators openly state their own interests, goals and needs within the framework of the cooperation. It is also important to present the possibilities for optimisation and to approach the other person as present, undisguised and (also) emotionally committed.

3. Integrity

The cooperators respect and know the boundaries of their own profession and those of others. Each profession respects its own integrity.

4. Responsibility

The cooperators reliably take on the responsibilities assigned to them. If individual cooperators reach their limits, the other professions can be asked for help. Responsibility and competence remain unaffected.

Finally, and with heartfelt thanks to the many national and international cooperation partners and authors, one last sentence: Professional cooperation thrives on many encounters between people who represent their work and institutions. I would like to see a jointly developed and established form of Individualised Social Pedagogy throughout Europe, so that our wonderful learning and cultural space of Europe can be experienced by all young people.

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The range of international youth work:

More equal opportunities and recognition

Marie-Luise Dreber, Heike Lorenz

Numerous young people are drawn out into the world every year. They complete an individual voluntary service, work on a joint project during an international youth exchange or do something for the common good in a European work camp. They gain extraordinary experiences and usually emerge from the exchanges with a stronger personality. This development is supported by political framework conditions that consciously promote cross-border youth mobility. As many young people as possible should be able to participate in international experiences. Adapted to the specifics of the field of work, international youth work thus also becomes interesting for educational support.

This article examines the effectiveness of experiences abroad from the perspective of different target group-specific formats. The explanations emphasise that this diversity requires different approaches in addressing the respective target groups. All formats have their own learning potential and should stand side by side on equal footing.

The spectrum of formats for stays abroad is wide. Children, teenagers and young adults can participate either alone as individuals or in a group. During a youth exchange in Poland, they learn to understand how our neighbours live and think; during a voluntary service in Brazil, they can work in an environmental project and broaden their awareness of global developments; while working together on an architectural monument as part of a work camp, they learn about history and contribute to the preservation of our common cultural heritage. Internships abroad make an important contribution to the qualification of young people; as an au pair or in a school exchange they can immerse themselves in the living environment of another country.

What distinguishes the offers of international youth work from other forms of mobility and makes them a field of learning is the pedagogical accompaniment and design. This makes it possible to reflect on experiences of foreignness or otherness, enables a change of perspective and develops an awareness of diversity. Young people help to shape the activities in a self-determined way, they contribute their interests and strengths, they learn to deal with new situations and to take responsibility. In this way, they expand their action competences and the experiences gained promote the development of the personality, participation in society and the civic engagement of young people.

Politically desired

These learning experiences are politically desired. In Germany, they are legally anchored in Sozialgesetzbuch VIII [*Social Code VIII*] and defined as part of youth work. The Kinder- und Jugendplan des Bundes [*Federal Child and Youth Plan*] contains a separate title for the promotion of international exchange, and at the same time it formulates the following as the guiding objective of child and youth welfare: „Die Träger sollen daher in allen Handlungsfeldern der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe jungen Menschen und Fachkräften Angebote unterbreiten, Europäisierungs- und Globalisierungsprozesse zu erfahren und sich differenziert mit ihnen auseinanderzusetzen. Die gesellschaftliche Teilhabe junger Menschen ist eng verknüpft mit der Befähigung, auf die globalisierte und europäisierte Lebenswirklichkeit überzeugende Antworten in Bezug auf die eigene Lebensführung und das soziale Umfeld zu finden.“ [*In all fields of action of child and youth welfare, the agencies should therefore offer young people and professionals opportunities to experience Europeanisation and globalisation processes and to deal with them in a differentiated way. The social participation of young people is closely linked to their ability to find convincing answers to the globalised and Europeanised reality of life with regard to their own lifestyle and social environment.*]

Various bilateral cultural agreements also establish the encounter of young people as an important instrument of foreign policy. With the Franco-German, the German-Polish and most recently the German-Greek Youth Office as well as the bilateral coordination offices for youth exchange with Israel, the Czech Republic and the Foundation for German-Russian Youth Exchange, specific institutions for youth exchange have been created. The focus on specific countries clearly shows that youth exchange is also seen as an instrument of reconciliation with former wartime enemies and people and their descendants who suffered terrible things under the Nazi dictatorship. It is about breaking down prejudices, critically reflecting on one's own environment, perceiving social diversity as enriching and making friends across borders. The desired effects also include immunisation against racism and antisemitism.

For the European Union, youth exchanges and experiences abroad are essential tools for creating a European identity and securing peace in Europe and with its neighbouring countries. It has been successful in doing so. For example, the Sinus study “Generation what?” 2017 came to the conclusion that while the majority of young Europeans consider Europe merely a “necessary construct”, they very much appreci-

ate the freedom of movement on the continent. At the same time, a majority say they have more than two friends in another European country. And they fear the rise of nationalism.

With Erasmus+, Europe has created its own powerful funding instrument, which has recently been expanded to include the Europäische Solidaritätskorps [*European Solidarity Corps*] for individual voluntary services and internships.

Europe as motor of equal opportunities

The European Commission has put an early emphasis on ensuring that European opportunities are open to all young people and not just those who already have privileged opportunities. The 2009 Green Paper „Die Mobilität junger Menschen zu Lernzwecken fördern“ [*Promoting young people’s mobility for learning purposes*] states: „Die Mobilität zu Lernzwecken darf nicht die Ausnahme sein, wie dies gegenwärtig der Fall ist. Sie sollte vielmehr ein fester Bestandteil der europäischen Identität und eine Chance sein, die allen jungen Menschen in Europa offensteht.“ [*Mobility for learning purposes should not be the exception, as is currently the case. Rather, it should be an integral part of the European identity and an opportunity open to all young people in Europe.*]

The Green Paper thus follows on from the conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States within the Council of 21 November 2008 on the mobility of young people. There it reads: „Jeder junge Mensch sollte während des Studiums, der Ausbildung, in Form eines Berufspraktikums oder im Rahmen von Freiwilligendiensten die Möglichkeit haben, auf die eine oder andere Weise an einem Mobilitätsprogramm teilzunehmen.“ [*Every young person should have the opportunity to participate in a mobility programme in one way or another during their studies, training, in the form of a work placement or in the context of voluntary services.*] A renewed European Council agreement on this topic is currently being drafted.

It is therefore not surprising that the idea of making international experiences accessible to all young people has also found its way into the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) and its implementation in Germany. The resolution „Beteiligung, Begegnung und Befähigung: eine neue EU-Strategie für junge Menschen“ [*Participation, encounter and empowerment: a new EU strategy for young people*] states: „Die Strategie für die Jugend wird dafür sorgen, dass junge Menschen konkret erfahren können,

welche Möglichkeiten für Begegnungen, Zusammenarbeit und Bürgerengagement sich ihnen in einem europäischen Kontext bieten.“ [*The youth strategy will ensure that young people can concretely experience the opportunities for encounter, cooperation and civic engagement that are open to them in a European context.*] The European Commission places particular emphasis on social equality and the expansion of support programmes for mobility for learning purpose. This is also reflected in the German Federal Government’s Youth Strategy. The principles for an autonomous youth policy explicitly emphasise the European dimension and the aspiration to reach all young people.

What the science says

The calls for more promotion of international learning experiences and more equal opportunities correspond to the findings of scientific research. With his study on the long-term effects of international youth encounters, Thomas presented the first comprehensive investigation of the effects of youth encounters in 2006 (Thomas et al. 2007). He recognised the great potential of international and intercultural experiences for gaining personal competences.

The effects of international exchange experiences observed by Thomas (2017) include:

- Self-related qualities and competences: self-consciousness, self-reliance, self-confidence, self-assurance, self-efficacy.
- Intercultural learning: being able to adopt another’s perspectives, being aware of differences between cultures and building up in-depth knowledge about one’s own and foreign cultures.
- Foreign language: promoting foreign language competence and a general interest in learning, speaking and deepening a foreign language.
- Social competence: coping with group situations, building team and conflict skills.
- Openness, flexibility, composure: A greater degree of openness to new situations and people and the ability to react more calmly and flexibly in unfamiliar situations.
- Self-awareness/self-image: self-reflection and an examination of one’s self-image, combined with the ability to better assess oneself.

Individualised Social Pedagogy measures abroad

Conceptual and historical reflections in contrast to traditional group concepts

Holger Wendelin

This article discusses Individualised Social Pedagogy measures abroad against the background of German traditions in the care of particularly challenging and hard-to-reach young people. For this purpose, it contrasts support abroad on the one hand with highly structured “intensive pedagogical” group concepts in Germany on the other. In this way, a historical understanding of the location of Individualised Social Pedagogy measures abroad in the overall structure of educational support is made possible.

German traditions in dealing with hard-to-reach adolescents

At the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, what we now call educational support consisted mainly of orphanages, mostly run by churches or organised by towns and municipalities. These bourgeois-oriented institutions looked after and cared for mainly younger orphaned children. Children from the lower classes were left to fend for themselves and sometimes ended up in custodial, penal and corrective institutions (Peukert 1986, p. 40), which, in contrast to the bourgeois orphanages, had a clearly disciplinary and punitive character and relied on strict drill. In the absence of juvenile criminal law, delinquent children and youths were indiscriminately placed in prisons. In 1856, of the 30,000 inmates in Prussian prisons, one third were children (Schmalenbach 1873, cited in Kuhlmann 2018, p. 41).

In the wake of the turmoil of war in the aftermath of the French Revolution, in which the misery of many errant children assumed huge proportions, the Protestant rescue home movement advocated providing a Christian and humane education beyond the usual punitive and disciplinary institutions, especially for these ill-reputed children of lower classes. „Hier ist keine Mauer, kein Graben, kein Riegel; nur mit einer schweren Kette binden wir dich hier [...] diese heißt Liebe und ihr Maß ist Geduld.“ (Wichern 1833, p. 119) [*No wall, no ditch, no bar; only with one heavy chain do we bind you here [...] this is called love and its measure is patience.*]

By 1848, there were already 400 Protestant rescue homes (Kuhlmann/Schrappner 2001, p. 289). Due to their massive quantitative expansion, the Compulsory Education Act of 1878 and the introduction of welfare education by the Civil Code in 1900, which nationalised the education of deviant youths but at the same time placed it mostly in the hands of independent providers, i.e. rescue homes, the rescue homes became more and more like the large, latently violent educational institutions against which they actually wanted to form an alternative. The main focus was once again on discipline and adjustment in mostly closed institutions.

The division of home education into orphanages, where bourgeois children were cared for and educated, and a welfare education for the supposedly difficult cases, which mainly produced disciplinary and violent institutions, was manifested in the Reich Youth Welfare Act (Reichsjugendwohlfahrtsgesetz, RJWG) of 1922/24 and remained until SGB VIII in 1990. The local youth welfare offices were responsible for communal residential education and the state youth welfare offices for welfare education, which led to incentives for structural shifts. Countless children and adolescents were declared difficult and thus shifted to the responsibility of welfare education, stigmatised and disciplined (Runder Tisch Heimerziehung 2010).

The welfare education of the 1950s and 1960s remained true to itself – although now in a democratic constitutional state. Non-conformist youths were incapacitated in predominantly closed institutions and forced to conform in clearly structured, latently or quite openly violent structures. Erving Goffman described such institutions as early as the 1960s and developed the term „Totale Institution“ [*Total institution*] (1961). In the German context, collectivist educational ideals handed down from the Kaiserreich and National Socialism were the guiding principles. The individual had to subordinate himself to the community and serve it even at the price of self-sacrifice.

It was not until the residential home revolt in the course of the 1968 movement that this traditional pre-democratic residential home education practice was exposed and finally led, through public scandalisation, to the reform of the residential homes in the 1970s and 1980s. Education in highly structured and exclusionary institutions was reformed through decentralisation, deinstitutionalisation, despecialisation, regionalisation, professionalisation and individualisation (Wolf 1995). Closed accommodation was abolished in large parts of the Federal Republic and remained quantitatively marginalised until the 1990s. In addition, a previously almost non-existent area of outpatient help was established on a broad and diverse basis, so that out-of-home placement now took on a clearly downstream function and could often be prevented in advance.

In this context, however, it also became apparent that there were still young people for whom the reformed educational support could not do justice:

„Wir stellten als Landesjugendamt, das ja noch selber die Kinder und Jugendlichen unterzubringen hatte, gegen Ende der 1980er Jahre fest, dass wir eine bestimmte Gruppe von Minderjährigen trotz bester Ausdifferenzierung des Versorgungssystems der öffentlichen Erziehung nicht mehr adäquat unterbringen konnten, bzw. dass immer mehr Kinder und Jugendliche aus diesem Versorgungssystem herausfielen. [...] Bei all den üblen Erfahrungen ihres Lebens (allein gelassen, abgelehnt von den eigenen Eltern, von ihnen misshandelt, sexuell missbraucht, ohne Chancen im herkömmlichen Schul- und Ausbildungssystem ...), warum sollten sie sich noch auf Jugendhilfe einlassen?“ (Bohry/Liegel 1993, p. 251) [*At the end of the 1980s, we as the State Youth Welfare Office, which still had to accommodate the children and young people ourselves, realised that we could no longer adequately accommodate a certain group of minors despite the best differentiation of the care system of public education, or that more and more children and young people were falling out of this care system. [...] With all the bad experiences of their lives (left alone, rejected by their own parents, abused by them, sexually abused, without opportunities in the conventional school and training system ...), why should they still get involved with youth welfare?*]

This situation gave rise to projects inspired by reform education under the cipher of experiential education, which initially led to adventurous journeys on foot, by ship or bicycle to remote or particularly foreign regions of the world. Even more than in other reform-oriented projects (e.g. „Menschen statt Mauern“ [*People not Walls*], „Bude ohne Betreuung“ [*Digs without Care*]), the break with confining and institutionalised traditions of a repressive residential education became apparent. Up to now, it is mainly residential projects that have established themselves, which, in addition to the fundamental variation and irritation of German life worlds, are concerned with habitual everyday coping, and experiential education implications are only marginally or implicitly brought to bear. Today, sailing and travel projects take place much less frequently and more in the context of crisis interventions.

The now quite extensive research on support abroad of the last 15 years consequently concentrates on precisely these residential projects. (Witte 2009; Klawe 2010; Klein/Arnold/Macsenaere 2011; Klein/Macsenaere 2015; Wendelin 2011 and others)

Structurally strong “intensive pedagogical” concepts as the answer to the question of how to deal appropriately with hard-to-reach adolescents?

Particularly in the last decade, the term “intensive pedagogy” has become established in the field of educational support. What this means exactly remains unclear. In some places, attempts are being made to establish “intensive pedagogy” as an independent hyphenated pedagogy with its own study programme and professional profile (e.g. Baumann 2015 and Schwabe 2014). In a broad interpretation, one could include all those concepts under “intensive pedagogy” that are aimed at hard-to-reach young people or „Systemsprenger“¹ [*system breakers*], as they are sometimes called, and make some form of intensive effort. Support measures abroad would also fall under this term. Nevertheless, in my opinion, they should be clearly distinguished conceptually from “intensive pedagogy” group concepts, which have been booming in recent years. Such a conceptual delimitation and contrast will be attempted in the following in order to highlight the special features of “intensive pedagogy” group settings and support measures abroad with regard to the lines of tradition described.

Since the turn of the millennium, there has been a return to more structural concepts of support in dealing with hard-to-reach adolescents. It is not possible to say with certainty how strong this trend is in quantitative terms. The federal statistics do not collect such concept-specific data. The state youth welfare offices, which have access to the data via the operating licence procedures, do not report any statistics on this either. Since the 1990s, a significant expansion can be estimated for the particularly exposed forms of closed accommodation. From an estimated less than 100 places around 1990, there has been an increase to about 200 places in 2006 and about 400 places today². According to federal statistics, 467 placements with judicial authorisation according to § 1631b BGB for §§ 34, 35 SGB VIII were started in 2008. In 2015, there were already 620, which corresponds to an increase of about

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- 1 The term “Systemsprenger” is viewed critically and avoided here. It conveys too much of an attitude that foregrounds the problems young people make and relegates their problems to the background. According to Nohl (1933), modern social pedagogy should do the opposite. Young people are thus labelled as destructive opponents of the help system. Constructive and cooperative working alliances are thus blocked. In this orientation, the term threatens to be linked to old thought patterns from the times of welfare education (see also Peters 2020).
 - 2 The estimates are based on data from the “GU 14+” study group and Hoops/Permien 2006, p. 21 ff. There is no precise recording of closed places on the federal level.

Cross-border support needs a professional framework

A quality framework for „Transregionale Kinder- und Jugendhilfe“

Ulla Peters

Introduction

The quality framework „Transregionale Kinder- und Jugendhilfe“ [*Transregional Child and Youth Welfare*], which is presented here, was developed in the context of an Interreg¹ project. Its aim is to ensure the continuity of support and its quality in cases of cross-border support (here specifically Luxembourg, France, Germany) on the basis of children’s rights and to orient the provision of support accordingly.

The existing legal agreements, such as the Brussels IIa consultation procedure, are at best a rudimentary basis for this, as they leave the technical examination to the respective supervisory authorities, which carry it out based on the files. In many cases, however, even these basic procedures are not followed or they are themselves the cause of the interruption of a support measure. Depending on the complexity of the case, the procedures can even complicate matters and make the situation more difficult for the children and young people concerned, for example through the length of time it takes to examine and process a Brussels IIa application. As stated in Wiesner’s legal opinion on the consultation procedure for cross-border placement, on which this publication is based, „[...] Praxis bei der Umsetzung des Abkommens ... in den Mitgliedstaaten äußerst unterschiedlich. Dies gilt sowohl für die Auslegung und Anwendung der Vorschriften des Brüssel-IIa-Abkommens als auch für die Art und Weise, wie das Verfahren in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten durchgeführt wird. Dabei zeigen sich in einigen Ländern auch erhebliche Unterschiede in der Art und Weise der Kooperation zwischen den zentralen Behörden einerseits und den regionalen oder örtlichen Behörden andererseits.“ (Wiesner, 2019, p. 192). [*The practice in implementing the Agreement ... varies greatly in the Member States. This applies both to the interpretation and application of the provisions of the Brussels IIa Agreement and to the way in which the procedure is carried out in the individual Member States. In this context, some countries also show considerable differences in the way central authorities on the one hand and regional or local authorities on the other cooperate.*]

1 The Interreg project “Eur&Qua” was developed and financed in the Interreg programme V A Großregion [Greater Region] (2014-2020), which promotes networking, cooperation and cross-border mobility.

The proposal for a quality framework “Transregionale Kinder- und Jugendhilfe” developed here is aimed at a professional understanding and professionalisation with regard to questions of transregional and transnational services in child and youth welfare (Schulze-Krüdener/Diwersy, 2021b). It is formulated along fundamental demands of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and thereby aims as an essential orientation at a professionally founded common understanding of cases – across the borders of languages and institutional regulations – which develops along the lines of children’s rights. This is particularly necessary with regard to children’s and parents’ possibilities to understand what professional interventions mean and how the rights of children and parents („fragile Adressat:innenrechte“ [*fragile addressees’ rights*] according to Schulze-Krüdener/Diwersy, 2021) can be safeguarded in the case dynamics.

In the following, the Eur&Qua project, which provides the context for the quality framework, is briefly introduced. Subsequently, the basic orientation and structure of the quality framework will be described before concluding with the question of the opportunities for child rights-based child protection in transnational services.

The Eur&Qua project

The Interreg project Eur&Qua (2016-2020), which involved 19 academic and practising partners from the Saar-Lor-Lux Greater Region, which includes Lorraine, the Saarland, parts of Rhineland-Palatinate, Wallonia and the German-speaking Community of Belgium, explored the ways in which child protection is implemented in cross-border situations in the Greater Region. This project was a continuation of previous research on children’s cross-border support histories carried out with the support of Interreg, which addressed questions about the continuity, scope and quality of support for children in a cross-border context.

There are some studies that deal with the comparative analysis of national systems and their institutional foundations and organisational mechanisms (Kindler, 2010; Witte et al., 2017; Grevot, 2010, 2001) and furthermore with cross-border aspects (Meysen/Kelly, 2017; Käckmeister, 2017; Sievers/Bientreu, 2016). The study of professional practices and concrete work in case processing, as well as the experiences of families in cross-border situations, are still largely unaddressed fields of research.

Beyond institutional regulations, however, it is the professional practices, traditions or training systems that, due to their heterogeneity, can lead to challenging situations in the design of the support programme for professionals, children and parents. The

respective understanding of the legal foundations, such as the concept of the best interests of the child used in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is subject to specific social interpretations and designs (Sutterlüty/Flick, 2017). Thus, according to Schulze-Krüdener and Diwersy (2021), „[...] Im transnationalen Kinderschutz ... für die Aushandlung des Kindeswohls im Kinderschutz hochrelevante Fragen in Bezug auf teils schwer miteinander zu vergleichende strukturelle Rahmenbedingungen, Verständnisse und Arbeitsansätze des Kinderschutzes, Mit Blick auf solche Diskrepanzen sind im transnationalen Kinderschutz Problemlagen zu bearbeiten, die nicht einzig territoriale Grenzen überschreiten, sondern diese Grenzen-Überschreitungen auch selbst hervorbringen – wobei der Grenzübertritt im Idealfall Perspektiverweiterungen eröffnet und neue Impulse gibt.“ (Schulze-Krüdener/Diwersy, 2021b, p. 50). *[In transnational child protection ... highly relevant questions arise for the negotiation of the best interests of the child in child protection with regard to structural framework conditions, understandings and working approaches of child protection that are sometimes difficult to compare with each other, ... In view of such discrepancies, transnational child protection has to deal with problem situations that not only cross territorial borders, but also produce these border crossings themselves – whereby the crossing of borders ideally opens up broader perspectives and gives new impulses.]* This means that in transnational services we are dealing with borders in several respects. The quality framework presented here can also serve as an instrument for mutual understanding among professionals and make borders visible and thus workable.

„Qualitätsrahmen transregionale Kinder- und Jugendhilfe“²

Cross-border child protection in child and youth welfare – based on children’s rights and knowledge, collaborative, professional

The very title of the quality framework shows its programmatic orientation: it is based on children’s rights, relies on collaboration and is oriented towards professional and scientific standards.

2 The quality framework was discussed and developed in a working group of the University of Trier (Jörgen Schulze-Krüdener, Bettina Diwersy), the htw Saar (Ulrike Zöller, Christian Schröder), the University of Luxembourg (Ulla Peters, Annabell Hansmeyer) and the management of the Margaretentstift Saarbrücken (Erhard Zimmer).

Fundamentals of the quality framework for cross-border child and youth welfare

In the Interreg V-A Greater Region project „Zur Entwicklung eines grenzüberschreitenden Raums zum internationalen Kinderschutz (EUR&QUA)“³ [*On the development of a cross-border space for international child protection (EUR&QUA)*] from 2016 to 2020, transnational support processes of children and young people were investigated. The results are intended to contribute to the qualification and further development of transnational child protection based on children's rights. The research showed that transregional lifeworlds, i.e. living and working where national borders are crossed and movements take place across these borders, are a part of many people's lives and work. In the Greater Region (border triangle of Luxembourg, France, Germany) they are just as much a reality as transregional support measures. Transnational family situations give rise to transregional child protection issues, as border crossings involve multiple and complex aspects. Another finding is that in the context of social support for children, young people and families, there is often a lack of knowledge of the conditions under which such support is organised in the respective other region. This goes hand in hand with a lack of knowledge about concepts, actors and procedures. There are linguistic and professional challenges that are based on different systems of child and youth welfare or also on differences in the discourses and practices of child protection.⁴

Transregional:

Über die Grenzen einer Region hinausreichend; mehrere Regionen betreffend.

Source: <https://www.wortbedeutung.info/transregional/>

[*Extending beyond the borders of one region; affecting several regions.*]

Support measures:

Transregional

Support measures for families, children and young people that takes place across one or more national borders.

3 On this, see the newly established platform on transnational child protection: <http://kinder-schutz-grossregion.eu/>.

4 For more information, see: Jörgen Schulze-Krüdener und Bettina Diwersy: Transnationalen Kinderschutz optimieren: Vieles könnte getan werden. Ein Forschungsprojekt als Wendepunkt für die Kinderschutzpraxis!?. In: NDV 10/2020.

Experiences of an adolescent psychiatric care clinic with the transition of adolescents into Individualised Social Pedagogy projects abroad

Christof Theis, Fabrice Mousel, Christopher Goepel

As an adolescent psychiatric clinic with a regional care mandate, we report on our experiences in working with providers of Individualised Social Pedagogy interventions. Due to the special features in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (in cases of judicially placed patients in youth psychiatry, parental custody also remains in the hands of the clinic after discharge), we are particularly involved in the monitoring and management of Individualised Social Pedagogy measures in close cooperation with the provider or the project office on site. We therefore have about 60 histories of adolescents in Individualised Social Pedagogy measures who had already received inpatient care at our clinic for a longer period of time.

“Service National de Psychiatrie Juvénile”

The “Service National de Psychiatrie Juvénile” (SNPJ) of the “Hôpital Kirchberg” (HÔPITAUX ROBERT SCHUMAN Group LUXEMBOURG) has been the first national service for adolescent psychiatry in the Grand Duchy since 2003. It offers both inpatient and outpatient clinical services with a nationwide catchment area. The SNPJ has round-the-clock availability and an emergency service for the whole of Luxembourg. The national mission and work within the clinic focuses on the care of adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18. Inpatient care has 23 beds (30 in the future). The main mission of the SNPJ is the treatment of emergencies, crisis intervention, diagnostics as well as the treatment of clinical conditions within the framework of adolescent psychiatric care. On average, 400 adolescent psychiatric patients are admitted and clinically treated each year.

Diagnosics, therapy and assessment of post-inpatient pedagogical care needs

The medical field of child and adolescent psychiatry is particularly engaged in transitions. In quite a few cases, a stay in a clinic for child and adolescent psychiatry, which is usually longer, precedes the transfer of the young person to a measure of inpatient

youth welfare. According to our own internal records, a professional recommendation for an inpatient or social-pedagogical youth welfare measure is made for 10 % of the patients admitted to our clinic. Admission of adolescents to our clinic is mostly voluntary (at the request of the parents) or, in the case of 15 % of the admitted patients (according to an internal clinic survey), ordered by the juvenile court due to a threat or imminent threat to the welfare of the child.

In order to do justice to the complexity of child and adolescent psychiatric disorders, the diagnosis is made after a comprehensive order has been issued, which takes into account not only medical symptoms but also intellectual resources, physical findings and psychosocially relevant stress according to a multiaxial classification system (MAS). All these factors shape the course of mental illnesses in the sense that, as a rule, the additional occurrence of such stresses leads to an unfavourable prognosis and an increased need for help. Particularly in connection with expansive disorders, i.e. in adolescents who act out in the sense of aggressive, impulsive and uncontrolled or delinquent behaviour, a clearly noticeable change in behaviour is visible in the inpatient setting. However, this usually results from a short-term adaptation of the young people to the staff-intensive and highly structuring conditions of an inpatient psychiatric ward. The high degree of external control and supervision, the consistent handling of conflict situations as well as implemented psychotherapeutic and medication measures for better self-regulation and self-control give many adolescents a sense of achievement and self-efficacy for the first time in a long time.

The necessity of pedagogical support (inpatient pedagogical youth welfare facilities and in recent years increasingly Individualised Social Pedagogy measures) following the stay in hospital is discussed with the young person, the legal guardians and the support system at an early stage during the inpatient treatment phase. Particularly adolescents with severe dissocial behaviour problems and accompanying emotional regulation problems with problems in social integration, which have usually been ongoing since childhood, often need stable and reliable pedagogical framework conditions even after the inpatient stay in order to consolidate and expand the treatment effects. An immediate return of the adolescents to a family environment – which is usually under considerable psychosocial strain – can lead to a recurrence of undesirable behaviour and to an educational overload for the main educators and have a further unfavourable influence on the development process of the adolescent.

Practical implementation of pedagogical follow-up measures

The therapeutic guidance and discussion of possibilities for a subsequent youth welfare measure is a topic of the discussions with the young people or their family environment. It is oriented towards the specific pedagogical needs of the young people, such as the question of relationship skills, group skills, the extent of expansive problems (such as aggressiveness, tendencies to run away), but also concrete risks (for example substance abuse, promiscuity, etc.).

For post-inpatient placement and pedagogical support, intensive residential stays in pedagogical institutions are possible, which usually deal with the special features of expansive adolescents (i.e. those who are more likely to act out aggressive and dissocial behaviour) of both sexes, but also in individual cases Individualised Social Pedagogy measures in other European countries. The indication for an Individualised Social Pedagogy measure is made against the background of the current symptoms of the young person's support history and his/her specific needs. Significant attachment problems, little to no group skills and psychological problems resulting from stressful life events in the family context (experiencing violence at partner level with abuse, neglect or repeated attachment breakdowns as well as multiple failures of other pedagogical support) characterise these young people for whom we believe that an Individualised Social Pedagogy measure is an effective form of support.

After the indication has been established, our recommendation for an Individualised Social Pedagogy measure is communicated in numerous discussions with the young person, the legal guardians and the non-clinical support system in order to achieve the greatest possible willingness for implementation and success of this measure among all participants. In our experience, the implementation of an Individualised Social Pedagogy measure against the explicit will of the young person or his/her legal guardians is not very effective. This kind of support is not superior to other possible low-threshold measures due to the great resistance of the young person and his/her family. Nevertheless, an attempt is made in the decision-making process to win over sceptical and rejecting young people and their families for an Individualised Social Pedagogy project by weighing the pros and cons. Especially among young people and parents, fears and anxieties are in the foreground due to the possible distances from home (e.g. not being able to maintain contact with home or not being able to do so sufficiently). In this case, close cooperation with the organisation providing the measure proves to be helpful so that during the course of the support measure, visits by the main reference persons to the location of the Individualised Social Pedagogy projects

can be taken into consideration or the young person can be offered the prospect of a home stay with his or her original family if the measures progress accordingly. We consider it very important that an Individualised Social Pedagogy measure is only implemented if the young person and the parents – often only after a process of negotiation – are sufficiently motivated, even if this motivation may waver.

The locations of these measures (Spain, Hungary, Romania, Greece, France, Finland, Germany, Namibia) as well as their conception (individual-family, urban-rural, etc.) can vary according to availability, but above all according to needs-oriented matching (group ability, environment).

This form of individual and needs-oriented support offers the young person the possibility of a developmentally relevant post-maturation. Especially the geographical and cultural distance to the home country or family environment enables the young person to acquire a new spectrum of possibilities for adaptation and action in the new environment.

The aim of this complex and usually multi-year pedagogical support is to positively influence the rather unfavourable prognosis of young people with mostly expansive disorders, abnormalities in attachment behaviour and often complex post-traumatic stress disorders and to enable them to be transferred to conventional social-pedagogical care (assisted living) in the long term.

Bureaucratic and institutional hurdles in the context of preparation and follow-up care

Once a project has been elaborated and intensively prepared with all those involved, various bureaucratic hurdles nevertheless arise. One of these hurdles relates to the procedure of the Brussels IIa Regulation, which in our case usually has to be ordered by the Luxembourg juvenile court.

The Brussels IIa procedure regulates the jurisdiction and recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and in matters of parental responsibility between the home country and the host country within the scope of the European Union. It must normally be completed before the young person arrives in the host country of the project location.

Everywhere in Europe

Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures
from the perspective of a State Youth Welfare Office

Rüdiger Mey

From February 2005 to October 2019, I worked at the Landesjugendamt (LJA) Niedersachsen [Lower Saxony Youth Welfare Office] in Team 3, Hilfen zur Erziehung [Educational Support].

„Das Team 3 ist zuständig für die Wahrnehmung der Aufgaben zum Schutz von Kindern und Jugendlichen in stationären Einrichtungen der Jugendhilfe mit unterschiedlichen Leistungsangeboten sowie in Einrichtungen für Minderjährige mit Behinderungen.

Neben der Beratung der Träger von Einrichtungen während der Planung und Betriebsführung und der Erteilung der Betriebserlaubnis gehört darüber hinaus die Beratung der örtlichen Träger bei der Gewährung von Hilfe nach §§ 32 bis 35a SGB VIII insbesondere bei der Auswahl von Einrichtungen in schwierigen Einzelfällen zu den Aufgaben des Teams.“¹

[Team 3 is responsible for carrying out the tasks of protecting children and adolescents in residential youth welfare facilities offering various services as well as in facilities for minors with disabilities. In addition to advising the providers of facilities during planning and management and issuing operating licences, the team's tasks also include advising local providers on granting assistance according to §§ 32 to 35a of SGB VIII, in particular on the selection of facilities in difficult individual cases.]

For about four years, I accompanied the Arbeitskreis der Auslandsprojekte (AKA) [Study Group on Projects Abroad] in youth welfare institutions in Lower Saxony as a pedagogical advisor.

1 https://soziales.niedersachsen.de/startseite/kinder_jugend_amp_familie/hilfen_zur_erziehung/schutz_von_kindern_und_jugendlichen_in_einrichtungen/aufgaben/hilfen-zur-erziehung-122836.html

„Der AKA (Arbeitskreis der Auslandsprojekte) ist auf Initiative des Niedersächsischen Landesjugendamtes (NLJA) im Jahre 1996 gegründet worden und befasst sich seither kontinuierlich mit der Thematik von Auslandsmaßnahmen. Unter der Federführung des Niedersächsischen Landesjugendamtes kommen regelmäßig Trägervertreter zu Arbeitsgesprächen zusammen. Dabei handelt es sich ausschließlich um solche Träger, die neben ihrer stationären Jugendhilfearbeit in Niedersachsen auch Maßnahmen im Ausland durchführen können. Der AKA versteht sich als ein Gremium zur Qualitätsentwicklung. Die Mitglieder haben sich einen Verfahrensablauf gegeben, mit dem ein hohes Maß an Fachlichkeit erzielt und eine ständige Verbesserung der Arbeit erreicht werden soll. Die Basis der Arbeit ist die Selbstverpflichtungserklärung (SVE), an der sich die konkrete Arbeit orientiert. In enger Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Trägern und dem Landesjugendamt werden hier Kriterien für die Vorbereitung, Durchführung, Absicherung (usw.) von Maßnahmen im Ausland entwickelt und fortgeschrieben (Qualitätsstandards). Dafür werden Experten (Ärzte, Juristen, Psychiater, Wissenschaftler u.a.) zu Rate gezogen, markante Entwicklungen an den jeweiligen Standorten im Ausland beraten und Erfahrungen ausgetauscht. Auf Basis der Selbstverpflichtungserklärung (SVE) und der Geschäftsordnung bringt der betreffende Träger kritische Vorkommnisse in den Arbeitskreis ein. Das Ereignis wird fachlich-kritisch diskutiert und eine gemeinsame Handlungsstrategie entworfen. Der AKA erhält eine Rückmeldung über die durchgeführten Maßnahmen. Die Mitglieder sichern sich gegenseitig ein hohes Maß an Offenheit und Unterstützung in Krisensituationen zu. Zu der Wirksamkeit von Betreuungen im Ausland gibt es inzwischen zahlreiche Expertisen und Studien, die Nutzen und Effektivität dieser Hilfeform deutlich belegen.“²

[The AKA (Study Group on Projects Abroad) was founded in 1996 on the initiative of the Lower Saxony Youth Welfare Office (NLJA) and has been continuously dealing with the issue of measures abroad ever since. Under the auspices of the Youth Welfare Office of Lower Saxony, representatives of the organisations meet regularly to discuss their work. These meetings are exclusively for providers who, in addition to their residential youth welfare work in Lower Saxony, can also carry out measures abroad. The AKA sees itself as a quality development body. The members have adopted a procedure to achieve a high level of professionalism and to constantly improve their work. The basis of the work is the self-commitment declaration (SVE),

2 https://soziales.niedersachsen.de/startseite/kinder_jugend_amp_familie/hilfen_zur_erziehung/arbeitskreise/arbeitskreis_auslandsprojekte/hilfen-zur-erziehung-122777.html

which guides the concrete work. In close cooperation between the providers and the State Youth Welfare Office, criteria for the preparation, implementation, safeguarding (etc.) of measures abroad are developed and updated (quality standards). For this purpose, experts (doctors, lawyers, psychiatrists, scientists, etc.) are consulted, striking developments at the respective locations abroad are discussed and experiences are exchanged. On the basis of the self-commitment declaration (SVE) and the rules of procedure, the institution concerned brings critical incidents to the study group. The event is discussed in a professional-critical manner and a joint strategy for action is drafted. The AKA receives feedback on the measures taken. The members assure each other of a high degree of openness and support in crisis situations. There are now numerous expert reports and studies on the effectiveness of care abroad, which clearly prove the benefits and effectiveness of this form of support.]

Due to the problems repeatedly described by participants in the meetings of the AKA with regard to the application and implementation of Regulation (EG) No. 2201/2003 of the Council of 27 November 2003 concerning jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility, and repealing Regulation (EG) No. 1347/2000 – also known as the Brussels IIa Regulation – I would like to comment on Individualised Social Pedagogy services in general and Individualised Social Pedagogy services/measures abroad in particular.

Individualised Social Pedagogy programmes have established themselves as residential youth care measures and are therefore an integral part of residential youth care. This refers in particular to so-called residential programmes and/or stationary placements as well as sozialpädagogische Lebensgemeinschaften (SPLG) [*socio-educational living communities*], as they are called in Lower Saxony. Various providers – also from other federal states – operate a large number of locations from this service segment in Lower Saxony. In 2018, approximately 3050 children and adolescents were cared for in these services. This means that about 20 % of the places available in Lower Saxony that require an operating licence were occupied.

During my work, I was able to get to know a large number of residential programmes/stationary placements as well as SPLGs. In retrospect, the conversations with the families who decided to take up this offer and therefore this new way of life were always a new and impressive experience. The reasons for choosing this form of pedagogical work as described by the pedagogical professionals in the families are as varied as the families themselves. They also consciously see the inclusion of a child/

adolescent in their household as a pedagogical challenge. However, due to the respect for the biographical roots of the clients, appropriate consideration must be given. Working with the family of origin also presents all those involved with additional, incalculable challenges.

Most of the professionals I met in the families cited the opportunity for a significantly higher intensity of care – in contrast to care in a traditional residential group – as the reason for switching to this form of pedagogical work. In addition, in a family constellation, it is possible to react to certain behavioural peculiarities of the clients in a much better way than seems possible in a residential group. The prospect of having significantly more time available for the care of individual clients increases the chance of building up an intensive and continuous relationship, which in turn is an important prerequisite for successful educational intervention.

Individualised Social Pedagogy programmes offer great opportunities in terms of intensity and effectiveness. However, where there are great opportunities, certain risks must also be taken into account.

The professionals who decide to provide a place in their family in order to offer an Individualised Social Pedagogy setting move in the field of tension between private life on the one hand and professional organisation or shaping of their lives on the other. As a result, a special relationship of mutual dependence can arise. This means that on the one hand the economic – and thus possibly the existential – component can play a role that should not be underestimated for the respective professional carer. If a care relationship becomes very difficult for various reasons, it is also the task of the counselling professionals to react accordingly.

At the same time, it may be difficult for the client to get involved in a family situation without disregarding the institutional component of youth welfare. Furthermore, the original family may be in competition with the current care relationship.

At this point, the responsibility of the provider or the counselling service is particularly high. Finding out whether these potentially developed dependencies may have a counterproductive effect – both for the clients in care and for the staff – places particularly high demands on the competence of the “professionals” involved. The professionals entrusted with counselling tasks must also have or develop a feeling for moods and, if necessary, disturbances in the respective systems. The repeatedly discussed issue of a superior function or a person of trust with regard to professional counselling can also lead to tensions.

Graduation from school as the subject of Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures for education abroad

Dr. Thomas Heckner

This article examines Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures for education abroad from two academic perspectives:

From the point of view of attachment theory, educational support measures abroad form developmental niches in which non-integrated attachment behaviour can be made up for or corrected (Fingerle 2008).

Helping young people to cope with the life-important developmental task of *graduation from school* is a subject on which the development of attachment behaviour can be traced in a particularly suitable way (cf. Hüther 2008).

The article thus provides a scientific justification for the implementation of Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures for education abroad from the perspective of attachment theory. It also suggests that the measure should be used for catching up on a previously missed *graduation from school* and that this should be an essential part of the relationship between the clients and the pedagogical professionals. With the Flex-Fernschule [*correspondence school*] in Breisach-Oberrimsingen in southern Baden, a specific support programme was created within the framework of educational assistance. Some essential aspects of the mode of action are discussed in this article.

Educational support traditionally sees its responsibility in the promotion of personal competences such as self-competence, professional skills and social competence. It sees this as the prerequisite for successful development – also in the context of school. School content itself tends to be viewed critically as a subject of educational support. Developmental psychology, on the other hand, makes it clear that developmental tasks must be mastered during the completion of social transitions (here from adolescence to adulthood) in a certain stage of the individual's life, if persistent feelings of dissatisfaction, difficulties in future tasks and disapproval by society are to be averted.

Various empirical studies show that the personal life goals of young people correspond strongly with the age-graded developmental tasks, role changes and institutional transitions that are pending in the respective societal context (e.g. Klaczynski/Reese 1991). The age structuring of developmental tasks serves as a planning and coping framework (Heckhausen 1999). Research thus makes it clear that even persistent school dropouts regret having dropped out because they are very much aware of the poorer job and career opportunities that this entails. Their future aspirations are no different from those of other young people. Failure to achieve the developmental goal of *graduation from school* is accompanied by severe losses in self-esteem, while positive progress towards this goal leads to an increase in personal satisfaction (cf. Pinquart et al. 2004; Oehme 2007). Failure to achieve a school-leaving qualification, as defined by society, is more than just a formal hurdle to accessing education and the world of work. Failure to achieve a school-leaving qualification is associated with deep doubts about being able to cope in life and about being a full member of society.

This is the reason for the demand to make school or the mastering of the developmental task of *graduation from school* a prioritised content of social or special education support within the framework of educational support and to overcome supposed legal or conceptual barriers in the area of learning, care and education.

In the Individualised Social Pedagogy settings of educational support abroad, it is possible to accompany even highly risky developmental situations (Güntert 2011). Critical living conditions do not automatically represent a risk for a person's development. The psychology of the lifespan shows that all personal competencies over the entire lifespan simultaneously contain the aspects of growth (gain) and disengagement (loss) and can thus be made up for regardless of predefined time windows (cf. Fischer 2001). Thus, if it is possible to accept critical phases of life as a challenge and – accompanied by social support – to cope with them positively, they can become effective as an opportunity for the subsequent development of personality traits such as one's own attachment behaviour (Fingerle 2008; Hüther 2008).

From a socio-medical point of view, Antonovsky develops the model of a multidimensional health ease-disease continuum within the framework of his salutogenetic concept and advocates taking a look at a person's past, present and future situation instead of only researching the causes of a disease (Antonovsky 1997). This model corresponds with the concept of resilience research, which sees people – influenced by hurtful and protective factors – on a continuum between failure and success.

For the promotion of traumatised and developmentally impaired young people in Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures abroad, this means first and foremost promoting the potentials and resources that strengthen their development. This does not mean playing down the individual risk situations, but rather locating the pedagogical action in a continuum between the opposing poles of risks on the one hand and protective factors on the other hand, and creating a dynamic process of social support that requires continuous reflexive reassurance (cf. Opp/Fingerle 2008).

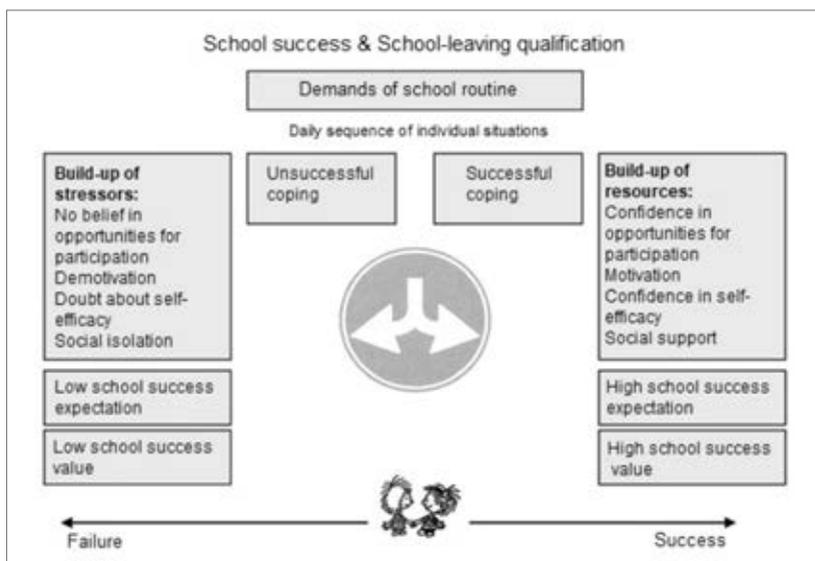


Fig. 1: School success scheme based on Antonovsky's coherence model: school success security in relation to school success expectation and school success value on the continuum between failure and success.

Oppositional, refusing behaviour can also be interpreted as an attempt to cope in the sense of problem-solving action typical of developmental phases (e.g. Berg et al. 1998). This interpretation, close to the concept of coping, points to the self-regulatory character of adolescent developmental action. Young people direct their activities towards themselves or towards the environment in order to restore a balanced state (e.g. Compas et al. 1999). This interpretive approach steers the view away from clinical connotations. This facilitates a dynamic view, as has long been the aim of (special) education in the context of socio-ecological approaches. Static and one-dimensional attributions of persons and deficits are thus dissolved (cf. Opp/Fingerle 2008, p. 16).

Today, even general pedagogy can no longer claim to provide young people with long-term orientations and practical knowledge. Rather, it is about supporting the empowerment of self-guidance and promoting the formation of an inner compass (Opp/Fingerle 2008). This prerequisite contributes to an increased difference between young people who have been well supported and assisted in many ways from the beginning on the one hand, and their peers who are more left to their own devices on the other. In the field of educational support abroad, the young people are additionally burdened by extremely problematic situations (ibid.). Nevertheless, their development is also always influenced by strengthening factors. The same influencing factor can favour different effects, while conversely different factors can contribute to the same effect. The same factor can also have different effects at different times (cf. Coyne/Downey 1991). This circumstance justifies the particularly individual need for support of these developmentally impaired young people. Educational support measures abroad offer the necessary long-term, dynamic, pedagogical-therapeutic setting (Klawe 2010; Klein et al. 2011).

Participation in community life is measured by a person's opportunities and scope for action to achieve an individually desired and socially customary way of life (Armuts- und Reichtumsbericht der Bundesregierung [*Poverty and Wealth Report of the Federal Government*] 2005). Sociological and developmental psychological studies largely agree that young people orient themselves towards the socially prescribed definitions (Klaczynski/Reese 1991; Nurmi 2004). In the transition from adolescence to adulthood, the completion of school as a developmental task also represents a central criterion of young people's self-definition (Nurmi 2004). Against this background, the young people in educational support abroad find themselves in an extremely precarious situation. They have often lost the connection to school at an early age and are thus objectively threatened by the loss of opportunities for participation. They therefore increasingly define themselves as not belonging, reduce their efforts and turn to other orientations (Heckner 1999; Nurmi/Salmela-Aro 2002). Very early on, such disintegration processes have an effect on health development, since young people with a stable avoidance-oriented coping behaviour are more burdened by internalised problem definitions and lower social competence and tend to develop depressive structures (Compas 2001; Seiffge-Krenke 2000).

Why a Curriculum for Individualised Social Pedagogy makes sense

Ulla Peters

1. Introduction

Individualised Social Pedagogy in cross-border contexts has – as described in this volume – emerged from the experiences and approaches of experiential education. It is a form of social support for children and young people that was developed as an offer for those who are not or only with difficulty reachable in other settings of child and youth welfare.

The much-discussed film „Systemsprenger“ [*System breaker*] shown in 2019 and the professional debates conducted in this context have taken up the topic of “offers for children and adolescents” at the limits of organisational possibilities and care and support formats in a publicity-effective and topical way. This development refers above all to no longer focusing on the “repair” of young people, but rather, in the knowledge of the diverse biographical injuries, to asking how spaces and places can be designed in which learning, healing and an experience of self-efficacy are possible.

Menno Baumann refers to these young people as „Grenzgänger“ [*border crossers*] „[die] nicht dazugehören wollen oder können. Die das System Jugendhilfe sprengen und Pädagog:innen zur Verzweiflung treiben“ (Baumann 2020). [... *who do not want to or cannot belong. They blow up the youth welfare system and drive educators to despair.*] „Es sind Jugendliche, die die Helfer hilflos machen“ (Ast/Bender 2020). [*They are young people who make the helpers helpless.*]

The questions raised by such descriptions for child and youth welfare are by no means new. A reflection on who is reached by child and youth welfare and how, and which formats are effective here, was stimulated very early on by Klaus Mollenhauer (Mollenhauer/Uhlendorf 1995), as well as by the work of Christian Schrappner and Sabine Ader. In their research on the „Schwierigen“ [*difficult*] (Ader/Schrappner 2002) in the context of a three-year research project of the Landesjugendamt Rheinland [*Rhineland Youth Welfare Office*] in cooperation with the Jugendamt der Stadt Köln [*Youth Welfare Office of the City of Cologne*] and the University of Koblenz, the question of how children get into difficulties was examined in the context of current help processes. It was asked how “children in trouble” become difficult cases and what role the support systems and forms of support programme planning play in this. Mollen-

hauer was interested in the young people's self-interpretations and typical themes of coping with life, which can be followed up by pedagogical support programme planning. He was also interested in the role of professionals in the dynamics of support measures, in support settings and in the professional understanding of action and self-image. An ongoing question is: Can child and youth welfare develop services for all children and young people, where are the boundaries to other systems such as child and youth psychiatry, school, education, and how can these boundaries be dealt with and shaped so that the transitions between these systems and their cooperation in the sense of a successful growing up of young people becomes more likely.

Experiential Education and Individualised Social Pedagogy

Experiential education is based on concepts that, as the term suggests, use experiences as a pedagogical method to gain access to changes in behaviour and experience. Systematic work is done with the body and self-efficacy experiences of young people in challenging environments. We also find descriptions such as nature and wilderness education or action-oriented learning. In the meantime, there are a number of Master's degree programmes¹ and certificate courses on this subject, which are often located in sports degree programmes. „Der Master Erlebnispädagogik vereint pädagogisches Handeln mit Outdoor-Aktivitäten und versucht durch Gruppendynamik und mit Hilfe von Abenteuer, Spiel, Theater und weiteren sozial-pädagogischen Elementen einen Beitrag zur Gesellschaft zu leisten.“ [*The Master's degree in experiential education combines educational action with outdoor activities and seeks to contribute to society through group dynamics and with the help of adventure, play, theatre and other socio-educational elements.*] This is how the self-description of a study programme reads. In addition to the academisation of the topics in teaching and research, there is also a continuous professional exchange of practical experts, e.g. via the „Erleben und Lernen“² [*Experience and Learning*] congress, which has taken place annually in Augsburg for the past six years.

In contrast, Individualised Social Pedagogy as a form of social support in child and youth welfare is still rarely part of academic curricula and professional training and further education in child and youth welfare organisations.

1 cf.: <https://www.master-and-more.de/master-erlebnispaedagogik/>

2 <https://www.erleben-lernen.de/kongress/>

The question therefore arises as to where and how one can learn what is necessary, for example, for the work of coordinating Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures or for the work in the project sites. The second question is which contents are to be taught, which ones are important so that these special services for children and youths succeed and meet the professional standards of child and youth welfare based on children's rights.³

These were some of the questions that, in 2017, led to the development of the Curriculum for Individualised Social Pedagogy presented here and to a commission from the youth welfare agency ensemble gGmbH Neuss⁴, formulated in this way, for me to develop it.

The first implementation of the Curriculum for Individualised Social Pedagogy took place between November 2017 and February 2018 as an offer for project sites of the executing agency in Romania. A more in-depth study took place between May and October 2018, followed by an initial evaluation of the effects of the training based on the Curriculum in November 2018.

In the following, the basic orientations and the module structure of the Curriculum will be presented, then some aspects of the implementation will be discussed and a brief insight into the results of the evaluative survey and reflection will be given, in order to pose the question of a specialised concept of Individualised Social Pedagogy at the end of the article.

2. Orientations and foundations of a Curriculum for Individualised Social Pedagogy

In addition to basic principles that are considered professionally significant for social pedagogical and education-oriented work with children and young people, such as participation, children's rights and the idea of protection, the considerations for the Curriculum are also based on the results of existing research on Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures.

3 cf.: Standards AIM and standards Transregionale Kinder- und Jugendhilfe [transregional child and youth welfare]

4 <https://www.ensemble-online.eu/de/startseite>

According to Baumann (2020), the factors that make intensive pedagogy settings more likely to succeed are that the services offered are

- equally conflict-proof, de-escalating and present,
- reflective with regard to closeness, distance, bonding and demarcation, and
- holding, and
- provide continuity even across phases.

At the same time, organisations are called upon to offer their staff concepts of emotional protection (Baumann 2020). A recent report on the implementation of trauma pedagogical concepts in a crisis intervention centre in Switzerland points to the importance of staff feeling safe to act. They need to feel safe in order to create safe spaces for children and young people. To do this, they need clarity about what they are doing and why, and who is supporting them (Sarbach/Maissen 2021, p. 38).

In a qualitative study on the effects, commissioned by AIM and written by Willi Klawe (2007), and in the work of Matthias Witte (2009), above all the opportunities of Individualised Social Pedagogy settings for the young people are discussed, which are based on specific factors of effect of this form of help. According to Klawe (2007), the aspects „Passung des Hilfearrangements, die Partizipation der Jugendlichen und Eltern und die Qualität der pädagogischen Beziehung, wie die Unterstützung durch Netzwerke außerhalb des Settings“ [*fit of the support arrangement, the participation of the young people and parents and the quality of the pedagogical relationship, such as support from networks outside the setting*] prove to be particularly significant (Klawe 2007, p. 375). In a recent publication based on an evaluation study by the University of Cologne, it is pointed out „[dass] die jungen Menschen ... in der IAM dazu aufgefordert [sind], eine Entwicklung im Zeitraffer zu durchlaufen und die Maßnahmen sowohl dem ‚Nachholen‘ als auch dem ‚Vorbereiten‘ gerecht werden müssen“ (Stossun et al. 2020, p. 54). [*...that the young people ... in IAM⁵ [are] called upon to go through a development in fast motion and the measures must do justice to both “catching up” and “preparing”.*]

The authors also point out differences in the effectiveness of these support measures based on whether the young people see the support as more or less voluntary and can see it as meaningful or whether they feel forced into the support measure and fight against it. „Während die hohe Strukturierung im Ausland bei denjenigen, die sich zur

5 Individualpädagogische Auslandsmaßnahme [Individualised Social Pedagogy measure abroad]

Individualised Social Pedagogy support abroad – Effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability

The key findings of the two InHAus studies

Joachim Klein, Michael Macsenaere

In view of its relatively low rate of utilisation, Individualised Social Pedagogy support abroad is quite prominently represented in the professional discourse on educational assistance. This is certainly partly due to regular and often polarising media coverage. This article therefore aims to enrich the often emotionally charged professional discourse with research findings from the two InHAus studies. In view of the consultation procedures (Brussels IIa) and the upcoming amendment of Book VIII of the SGB, empirically based knowledge on the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of support abroad is of particular relevance.

Background

Individualised Social Pedagogy support abroad has its origins in the experiential educational approaches of the 1980s (Klawe 2013). The travel and ship projects that were still frequently carried out in the early days largely disappeared as part of the professional development of these approaches, and the focus shifted to the implementation of support as intensive individual social pedagogical care in accordance with § 35 SGB VIII at fixed project locations (ibid.). The choice of the respective location is still often based on the „Konstrukt der pädagogischen Provinz“ [*construct of the pedagogical province*] (Klawe 2015, p. 36), so that the pedagogical project sites are usually located in rural regions close to nature. Due to the individual nature of the support, it is usually provided in a 1:1 setting. Goals and terms are always negotiated flexibly among all those involved in the support process in order to ensure that the support is implemented as precisely as possible (ibid.). In addition to the binding relationship, Individualised Social Pedagogy support abroad is characterised by the following features in particular:

- Authenticity and naturalness of the living environment
- Focus on the resources and strengths of the children and adolescents
- Structural constraints due to location, language and culture (Lorenz 2009)

This kind of support is mainly requested for young people who have a long history of “failure” behind them – often associated with dropping out of school, drug use and the beginning of criminalisation (Fischer/Ziegenspeck 2009; Klawe 2007; Klein/Arnold/Macsenaere 2011; Klein/Macsenaere 2015; Witte 2009). In most cases, numerous other youth welfare measures have been used unsuccessfully before support abroad is even considered as an alternative. Although the total number of implemented support measures is relatively low (Fischer/Ziegenspeck 2009; Destatis 2010), these young people nevertheless cause a comparatively high level of concern for youth welfare offices, youth courts and service providers and keep politicians and the public busy – not least because of the negative headlines in the press (Klein/Arnold/Macsenaere 2011). Accordingly, no type of support in the HzE spectrum (§§ 28-35 SGB VIII) is evaluated more controversially than Individualised Social Pedagogy support abroad. In order to make the often emotionally charged discussion more objective, scientific studies on these forms of support have been initiated in recent years, such as the two studies “InHAus”¹ and “InHAus 2.0”² commissioned by the Bundesverband katholischer Einrichtungen und Dienste der Erziehungshilfen e.V. (BVkE) and conducted by the Institut für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe (IKJ), which dealt with the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of support abroad according to Section 35 of Book VIII of the SGB and whose central results are presented below.

Design of the studies

Within the framework of the InHAus-1 study, 93 support cases provided in a total of 17 countries were evaluated using a quasi-experimental, prospective research design (Klein/Arnold/Macsenaere 2011). The foreign cases were compared with the statistical twins of two matched control groups from the EVAS pedagogical procedure (Macsenaere/Knab 2004), each with 93 cases of support according to § 34 SGB VIII (residential care) and § 35 SGB VIII (intensive individual social pedagogical care [ISE] within Germany). While the InHAus-1 study described above examined the effectiveness and efficiency until the end of the support abroad, the InHAus-2 study looked at the development of the young people after the end of their support abroad (Klein/Macsenaere 2015). For this purpose, 80 adolescents and young adults aged

1 The study was financially funded by Aktion Mensch.

2 The study was financially funded by Glücksspirale.

30 years or less, who had been abroad for at least six months, were scientifically accompanied and surveyed with the help of standardised questionnaires (online and paper versions).

Initial situation at the start of the support measure abroad

The clients of Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures abroad show a number of highly significant risk factors: First of all, at just under 15 years of age at the start of the measure, they are more than 1.5 years older than “normal” residential care home clients. In addition, they have fewer resources and higher deficits, and the proportion of delinquents (60 %) and drug users (85 %) is significantly higher. Compared to the general ISE clientele, there are similar but less pronounced differences: young people in support measures abroad have statistically significantly higher deficits and the proportion of delinquents and drug users is also higher (Klein/Arnold/Macsenaere 2011).

Effectiveness of the implementation of support abroad

Despite these sometimes particularly difficult initial situations, the Individualised Social Pedagogy services abroad that were examined show very positive results. In terms of overall effectiveness, an extremely high success rate of 89 % was achieved. However, not only the success rate, but also the effect sizes are considerably higher than the values usually measured in educational support: the primary scales examined consistently show positive developments with medium or even high effect sizes. Particularly pronounced effect sizes with Cohen's $d^3 > 1.0$ are achieved in the areas of psychological and psychosocial overall load and school development. From the statistical comparisons with the two control groups, it can be deduced that a large part of the described effects is related to the specifics of Individualised Social Pedagogy support abroad: with regard to both the development of resources and the reduction of deficits, the “InHAus group” shows significantly more positive developments than the home and ISE control groups. This leads to a significantly higher overall effectiveness of the support measures abroad (see Fig. 1).

3 Cohen's d is a statistical measure for determining the effect size for changes between two survey points (Cohen 1988). The threshold values are: $d > 0.2 =$ small effect, $d > 0.5 =$ medium effect, $d > 0.8 =$ large effect.

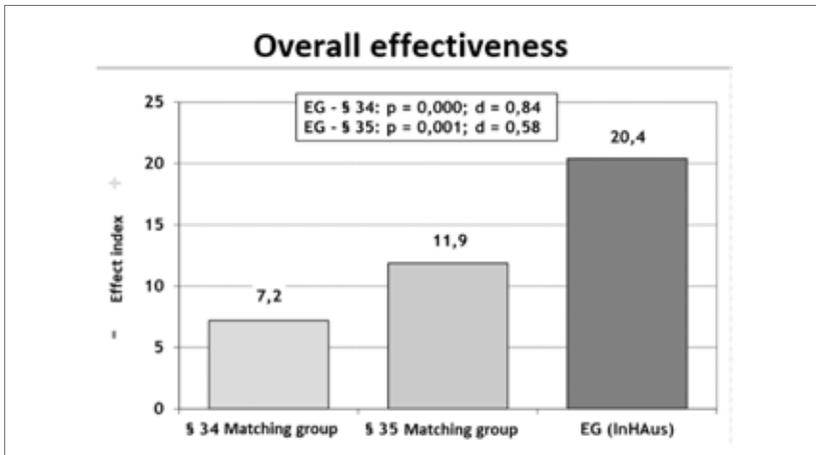


Fig. 1: Comparison of overall effectiveness between groups

The cooperation between the young person and the carer abroad has been shown to be a central impact factor of measures abroad across various studies (Klawe 2010; Klein/Arnold/Macsenaere 2011; Witte 2009). If the development of a resilient emotional relationship and the motivational integration of the young person into the daily routine at the place of care is successful, the probability of successful implementation of the entire support measure increases significantly (Klein/Arnold/Macsenaere 2011). The age of admission also plays a considerable role in effectiveness, because the older the young people are at the beginning of the support measure, the shorter the average duration of their support and the lower the success of the measures examined (ibid.). An earlier recognition of the actual need for support and the initiation of the appropriate form of support – based on an improved social-pedagogical or psychological diagnosis – could therefore additionally increase the probability of a successful implementation of support.

Efficiency of support abroad

Due to this high effectiveness, support abroad also comes off best in terms of economic efficiency of all the forms of support examined: Economic benefits in the sense of reduced follow-up costs in the areas of unemployment, delinquency and illness costs as well as additional possible economic productivity gains (Roos 2005) of over 625,000 € are predicted per case. This corresponds to a cost-benefit ratio of

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Plea for the need to build bridges

Eva Felka

What is the issue?

Children and adolescents spend time in other European countries for various reasons. This is a development that is wanted, encouraged and supported throughout Europe.

The following are examples of ways and possibilities:

- Parents finance stays for their children as part of a student exchange, as a high school visit or for work as an au pair.
- Schools promote internships abroad through the Erasmus programme of the Federal Government.
- Cities foster the exchange of young people within the framework of town twinning.

And: since the mid-1980s, stays abroad for young people have also taken place within the framework of educational support, in rare cases also for children. For this, permission must be obtained from the host country. The legal basis for this permission is the Brussels IIa Regulation. In 2005, educational support was merely added to the European Brussels IIa Regulation, which already existed then, without expanding and adapting the context in a professionally and legally meaningful way.

It quickly became clear in the professional world that this regulation does not fit pedagogical practice in any way, because it had originally been developed for custody disputes between parents across national borders. For example, it regulates procedures in cases of abduction of children by parents to another European country. In the case of placements abroad, however, it is not a question of custody, as this usually remains with the parents. Consequently, for many years there has been a need to harmonise the Brussels IIa Regulation with all the countries involved and to link it to the new context of educational support.

The Brussels IIa Regulation has since been revised and realigned as of August 2022. Unfortunately, this new regulation continues to miss the mark in practice and prevents rather than promotes exchanges across European borders. If an adolescent is already in his or her host country and a new placement of the adolescent in the same country is made there, the Brussels IIa Regulation requires the adolescent to leave the country for the entire period of the new application for authorisation. The new proce-

sure can take months and is to the disadvantage of the adolescent who finds him or herself in a kind of holding pattern in Germany for months without the certainty that he or she will receive a positive decision.

There was a failure to involve practitioners and their expertise in the improvement efforts and to adapt the provisions to educational support practice.

Legal situation in Germany: if a measure abroad is the most suitable form of support to meet the educational needs of a young person, then it must be granted by the responsible youth welfare office.

According to German law, the clients of care abroad are the holders of parental custody. They have the right of wish and choice. The youth welfare office determines the need and finances the assistance from tax money. The independent provider carries out the assistance responsibly on behalf of the parents. Thus, no approval procedure should actually be required, as the responsibility lies with the parents and not with the state.

For two decades now, the providers of Individualised Social Pedagogy measures abroad have been pleading for an intensive quality dialogue between national and European officials responsible for public youth welfare and the representatives of independent providers. The development of binding standards and their verifiability would be an essential and necessary qualitative and structural step in this direction.

Freedom of travel and the right of residence for European citizens within Europe is in principle open to all. Disadvantaged young people, however, are cut off from experiences abroad by the regulation. They need permits for their stay in the context of educational support, which are simply not granted by some countries. Some countries also impose requirements, such as a national ID card, on the independent provider that cannot be met. This results in an inequality of opportunity compared to other young people that is unacceptable – especially in light of the fact that in today's world, proof of experience abroad absolutely belongs on every CV.

Requirements for the stay abroad from a German perspective

- The independent provider must be recognised in Germany by the state youth welfare offices.
- The support must be provided by qualified staff.
- The adolescents participate in the measure voluntarily.
- A medical statement on the care abroad is obtained.
- Complaint procedures are jointly written down and signed by the adolescents.

What is essential?

In the case of care abroad, the following must be ensured:

- the consent of the legal guardian(s),
- the financial funding of the stay,
- health insurance,
- schooling,
- visits by the German Youth Welfare Office on site,
- the provider's compliance with the legal provisions of the host country,
- medical care for the adolescent.

Once this is settled, no child/adolescent should be rejected by a European country in the context of educational support. And the Brussels IIa Regulation must be the basis for this.

Criticism: The approval procedures take far too long for children and adolescents. The reform of the regulation has put the recommended time of processing for the requested receiving country at a maximum of three months. However, if the time is not adhered to, nothing happens! This is because the final decision is always made by the requested host country. No legal remedy is provided in case the time limits are not met.

Proposal: There should be a jointly agreed procedure with defined quality standards within the EU. If these standards are met, this would correspond to an immediate approval without having to initiate a lengthy procedure each time.

What will effectively change as a result of the new regulation from August 2022?

- National regulations will be replaced by uniform EU-wide regulations. Changes to the regulation must always be decided unanimously.
- All applications must be addressed to the central authorities of the host countries.
- As in the past, each stay must be approved on a case-by-case basis.
- After a crisis and subsequent change of the care location, a new application must be submitted – for the period of the new application if the adolescent leaves the country.
- Travel projects must submit a separate application for each change of location.
- Pilgrimages, hikes, holiday trips, internships and school exchanges are also covered.
- “Recital 11” of the new regulation states that it applies to any type of accommodation abroad, unless it is explicitly excluded – and this means that all educational measures are affected!

The stated aim of the regulation is to take the children’s rights into greater consideration. Where might this be seen for the children and young people in educational support?

The European Court of Justice has not yet dealt with the specific legal construction of educational support in Europe. It would have to clarify whether a child is staying illegally in another country in Europe, although the parents agree to the stay, just because the regulation was not followed formally. Is the decision of parents equivalent to the decision of an authority such as the Youth Welfare Office?

If parents pay for the stay themselves, they do not need permission. This means blatantly unequal treatment of children of financially weaker parents.

In other European countries, German concepts of support are still quite unknown. And there are countries that do not even have a youth welfare office as an overall responsible authority. In some countries, these decisions are made by the courts.

Some countries simply sit out the applications and procedures for years, but criticise the fact that there are stays without authorisation.

Legal opinion

on the consultation procedure on cross-border placement
under COUNCIL REGULATION (EU) 2019/1111 of 25 June 2019;
original version of the legal opinion in German

Reinhard Wiesner

Übersicht:

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1. Bedeutung von Art. 23 Buchstabe g Brüssel-IIa-VO 2003
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II. Defizite in der Umsetzung der VO 2003

1. Unterbringungen ohne Zustimmung des Aufnahmestaats
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IV. Rechtslage nach der Brüssel-IIa-VO 2019

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Welche Rechtsmittel stehen gegen eine ablehnende Entscheidung der nationalen Behörden zur Verfügung?

I. VO 2003

II. VO 2019

Vorbemerkung:

Gegenstand des nachfolgenden Gutachtens ist das Konsultationsverfahren bei grenzüberschreitender Unterbringung nach der Verordnung (EU) 2019/1111 des Rates vom 25. Juni 2019, die erst am 1. August 2022 in Kraft tritt. Diese Verordnung ist das Ergebnis einer intensiven Diskussion bezogen auf die aktuelle Rechtslage auf Grund der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 2201/2003 des Rates vom 27. November 2003.

Zum besseren Verständnis nimmt das nachfolgende Gutachten zunächst Bezug auf die aktuelle Rechtslage, wie sie sich aus der Verordnung von 2003 ergibt, um sodann die Änderungen bzw. Unterschiede im neuen Recht aufzuzeigen.

A: Frage 1

Fallen Unterbringungen im Rahmen der Erbringung von Hilfe zur Erziehung (Ausübung des Wunsch- und Wahlrechts im Hinblick auf die Erbringung einer bedarfsgerechten Leistung im Ausland, Ausübung der elterlichen Sorge im Ausland) unter den Anwendungsbereich des Abkommens?

Die Praxis bei der Umsetzung des Abkommens ist in den Mitgliedstaaten äußerst unterschiedlich. Dies gilt sowohl für die Auslegung und Anwendung der Vorschriften des Brüssel-IIa-Abkommens, aber auch für die Art und Weise, wie das Verfahren in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten durchgeführt wird. Dabei zeigen sich in einigen Ländern auch erhebliche Unterschiede in der Art und Weise der Kooperation zwischen den zentralen Behörden einerseits und den regionalen oder örtlichen Behörden andererseits. Die größten Vollzugsdefizite und Unterschiede in der rechtlichen Beurteilung zeigen sich dabei in Spanien. Während die nationale Behörde das Abkommen für alle Unterbringungen im Rahmen der Erbringung von Hilfe zur Erziehung anwendet, kommt nach Aussagen örtlicher Richter und Polizeibeamter das Abkommen in Spanien nicht zur Anwendung, wenn die Verantwortlichen vor Ort von den Sorgeberechtigten legitimiert sind.

I. Rechtsgrundlagen für die Hilfe zur Erziehung im Ausland im SGB VIII

Die Hilfe zur Erziehung ist in den §§ 27 ff. SGB VIII als Rechtsanspruch des Personensorgeberechtigten ausgestaltet. Zentrales Kriterium ist der erzieherische Bedarf bei den Eltern und dem Kind/Jugendlichen im Hinblick auf die Wahrnehmung der elterlichen Erziehungsverantwortung und die Bearbeitung der Eltern-Kind/Jugendlichen-Beziehung. Anknüpfungspunkt ist meist das Verhalten von Kindern oder Jugendlichen. Zu bearbeiten ist aber die dieses Verhalten beeinflussende oder auslösende Eltern-Kind/Jugendlicher-Beziehung. Ihr primäres Ziel ist die Verbesserung der Erziehungskompetenz der Eltern mit dem Ziel, sie wieder zu befähigen, diese Verantwortung (Art. 6 Abs. 2 Satz 1 GG) wahrnehmen und damit die Beziehung zu ihrem Kind/Jugendlichen ohne öffentliche Hilfe gestalten zu können. Je nach Einschätzung des erzieherischen Bedarfs im Einzelfall kann zur Erreichung dieses Hilfsziels neben der intensiven Arbeit mit den Eltern auch eine sozialpädagogische Arbeit mit dem Kind oder Jugendlichen außerhalb des Elternhauses im Rahmen von Vollzeitpflege (§ 33 SGB VIII), Heimerziehung, sonstige betreute Wohnform (§ 34 SGB VIII) oder intensiver sozialpädagogischer Einzelbetreuung (§ 35 SGB VIII) er-

forderlich sein. Dabei handelt es sich bei den vorgenannten Hilfetypen um keine abschließende Aufzählung (siehe dazu schon § 27 Abs. 2 Satz 2: „insbesondere nach Maßgabe der §§ 28 – 35“). Vielmehr können auch maßgeschneiderte Settings für den Einzelfall entwickelt werden.

Unter den Voraussetzungen von §§ 1666, 1666 a BGB kann die Hilfe zur Erziehung auch infolge einer Entscheidung des Familiengerichts über den ganzen oder teilweisen Entzug der elterlichen Sorge gewährt werden. Zwar ist in diesem Fall der Adressat der gerichtlich bestellte Vormund oder Pfleger. Auch in diesem Fall ist die Hilfe aber primär darauf gerichtet, die Eltern wieder in den Stand zu versetzen, ihrer Erziehungsverantwortung gerecht zu werden bzw. eine künftige Gefährdung des KW abzuwenden und damit den Entzug der elterlichen Sorge zu beenden. Die verfassungsrechtliche Grundlage bilden das (Grund-)Recht des Kindes auf Gewährleistung der elterlichen Pflege und Erziehung (Britz, JZ 2014, 1069) sowie das (Grund-)Recht des Kindes auf Schutz vor Gefahren für sein Wohl (Art. 6 Abs. 2 Satz 2 GG; Wapler, 2015, 132).

Hilfen zur Erziehung auf der Grundlage des SGB VIII können unter den gesetzlich näher bestimmten Maßgaben im Ausland erbracht werden. Dabei obliegt der im Einzelfall (örtlich) zuständigen kommunalen Gebietskörperschaft als Träger der öffentlichen Jugendhilfe die Steuerungsverantwortung (§§ 36, 36 a SGB VIII), während die Leistungserbringung – im Ausland ausschließlich – durch Träger der freien Jugendhilfe in Zusammenarbeit mit dem zuständigen Träger der öffentlichen Jugendhilfe, aber auf der Grundlage ihres autonomen Betätigungsrechts im Rahmen des sogenannten sozialrechtlichen Dreiecksverhältnisses erfolgt.

Die Hilfe zur Erziehung i.S. der §§ 27 ff. SGB VIII darf nur dann im Ausland erbracht werden, wenn dies nach Maßgabe der Hilfeplanung zur Erreichung des Hilfsziels im Einzelfall erforderlich ist (§ 27 Abs. 2 Satz 3 SGB VIII). Vor einer Entscheidung über die Gewährung einer Hilfe, die ganz oder teilweise im Ausland erbracht wird, soll zur Feststellung einer seelischen Störung mit Krankheitswert die Stellungnahme eines Arztes für Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrie und -psychotherapie, eines Kinder- und Jugendpsychotherapeuten oder eines Arztes oder eines psychologischen Psychotherapeuten, der über besondere Erfahrungen auf dem Gebiet der seelischen Störungen bei Kindern und Jugendlichen verfügt, eingeholt werden (§ 36 Abs. 4 i. V. mit § 35 a Abs. 1a Satz 1 SGB VIII). Hintergrund dieser Regelung ist die bei der Auswertung misslungener intensivpädagogischer Projekte im Ausland festgestellte Tatsache, dass vielfach psychisch kranke Kinder oder Jugendliche ohne ausreichende

vorhergehende Abklärung ins Ausland verbracht und dort ohne ärztliche Versorgung geblieben sind (Schmid-Obkirchner in Wiesner, SGB VIII § 36 Rn. 59).

Darüber hinaus sieht § 78 b Abs. 2 SGB VIII hinsichtlich der Voraussetzungen für die Übernahme des Leistungsentgelts vor, dass die dazu erforderlichen Vereinbarungen bei einer Erbringung von Hilfe zur Erziehung im Ausland nur mit solchen Trägern abgeschlossen werden dürfen, die

1. anerkannte Träger der Jugendhilfe oder Träger einer erlaubnispflichtigen Einrichtung im Inland sind, in der Hilfe zur Erziehung erbracht wird,
2. mit der Erbringung solcher Hilfen nur Fachkräfte im Sinne des § 72 Abs. 1 betrauen und
3. die Gewähr dafür bieten, dass sie die Rechtsvorschriften des Aufenthaltslandes einhalten und mit den Behörden des Aufenthaltslandes sowie den deutschen Vertretungen im Ausland zusammenarbeiten.

Mit diesen Vorgaben wird nicht nur das eigenständige Betätigungsrecht freier Träger gesetzlich eingeschränkt, sondern – jedenfalls indirekt – auch das Wunsch- und Wahlrecht (§ 5 SGB VIII) der leistungsberechtigten Personen, also der Personensorgeberechtigten.

Die weitere Qualifizierung von Leistungen der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe im Ausland ist auch Gegenstand der aktuellen Überlegungen zur Novellierung/Reform des SGB VIII. So ist im Gesetz zur Stärkung von Kindern und Jugendlichen – KJSG –, das am 30.6.2017 im Bundestag in zweiter und dritter Lesung verabschiedet worden ist, vorgesehen, die zitierten Regelungen für die Gewährung und Erbringung von Hilfen zur Erziehung im Ausland in einer Vorschrift zusammenzufassen und weiter zu qualifizieren (§ 38 SGB VIII – neu). Dazu zählt insbesondere auch die Überprüfung und Fortschreibung des Hilfeplans unter Beteiligung des Kindes oder des Jugendlichen in der Regel am Ort der Leistungserbringung (§ 38 Abs. 2 Nr. 2 Buchstabe c SGB VIII – neu). Nachdem der Bundesrat bis zum heutigen Tage dem Gesetz weder zugestimmt, noch es abgelehnt hat, kann es auch nicht in Kraft treten. Mehr als zwei Jahre nach der Überweisung des vom Bundestag beschlossenen Gesetzes an den Bundesrat ist nun von Seiten der Länder Nordrhein-Westfalen, Niedersachsen und Schleswig-Holstein eine Initiative im Bundesrat gestartet worden, die die einschlägigen Regelungen zur Qualifizierung der Heimaufsicht und der Auslandsmaßnahmen aus dem Kinder- und Jugendstärkungsgesetz aufgreift (Bundratsdrucksache 621/19 vom 20.11.2019; siehe dazu auch den Zwischenruf der AIM – Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Individualpädagogik e. V. und des Bundesverbands für Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e. V. vom 18. November 2019).

Glass houses and other places of growth

Summary and outlook

Heike Lorenz

With the contributions in this volume, authors from very different perspectives have shown the reasons why it can make sense and be worthwhile to enable young people to spend time abroad within the framework of educational support.

The reports on personal experiences, together with the scientific and methodological contributions, figuratively form a model of a greenhouse in which successful support measures can thrive:

Usually, these houses are made of glass; this makes it possible for light and sun to unfold unhindered inside and become effective. The warmth, as a catalyst, accelerates the development of the living beings inside the house. The unhindered inflow of light makes the interior bright and visible, it prepares growth and development. At the same time, it is possible at any time and without danger to take a look from inside to outside, to observe the outside, to classify it and to explore it from an initially safe distance. Like such a house, Individualised Social Pedagogy project sites shelter and protect young people in a phase of life in which they are not yet stable and powerful enough to be able to follow their path in life independently and safely. When the time is right, they will be able to walk through the door and leave the house. More and more often. Until they no longer need to return because they have found their place in the world.

Until then, the coherent and transparent architecture of a glass house offers an enclosing, clear and secure framework. In terms of educational support measures, this refers to the conditions that, in addition to a suitable daily routine, contribute significantly to success: the attitude of the pedagogues, their professional competences, the permeability to the immediate environment and its inclusion as a place of learning and experience, the cooperation of the entire support system.

The architecture also stands for the necessary transparency and verifiability as well as the further development of concepts and pedagogical action. This equally addresses the orientation towards the needs for support and development of each individual young person as well as the right to equal treatment and support from the community. Even some of the stones that can damage the windows of such a house or even cause the house to collapse have found their place in the present volume.

Let us transfer this image to the community of states that is the European Union. Let us imagine it – similar to an allotment garden area – as one large garden, which in 2021 is home to exactly 27 smaller, different gardens. Walking through the grounds, we can enjoy the variety, the splendour and the diversity: each individual garden expresses its history, its culture and its values. Each garden follows its own beliefs and laws and brings out its own unique landscape and architecture. Yet there is a common continuum of principles and values. This forms the basis for all to find their place within the big, colourful whole. Everyone is part of it. It should be the same for the people who live in the European Community. Everyone is entitled to a place. To belong. To be supported. And protected. The doors of the gardens should – it is the declared will of the community – be open. For a mutual visit – just for fun. Or for cooperation, for exchange and for learning with and from each other.

This applies even if there is not always unanimity. And it is precisely then that the quality of a community shows itself most impressively: when it comes to dealing with differences, with the resulting lack of understanding, with disagreements, problems or conflicts. Solutions and good quality in this sense can only evolve in cooperation. If we want to understand others, we have to “listen”. Ask questions. Accept answers. And yet continue to strive for understanding and dialogue. Again and again and again. If we want others to understand, we have to make it “tangible”, explain, inform and convey the meaning.

In Europe, we are no longer at the beginning of the dialogue on cross-border educational support, but still feel far too close to zero. With this book we want to contribute to a better understanding in an international context. At the same time, we would like this book to be understood as an invitation and a prelude to a new kind of discourse – we want to hear you all better, see you better, understand you better and have good and constructive discussions with all of you, especially our European partners.

Over the past 30 years, we have already woven and experienced very different stories about outstanding places of growth.

On the one hand, there are the successfully concluded support processes, which have enabled a sustainable framework through jointly responsible and trusting cooperation between all the authorities, institutions and people involved. We can see individual examples of such successful outcomes in the stories of Theresa (“Vallbo in Sweden was my salvation”) and Felix (“No, it was better!” – ...).

The contribution by Ulla Peters (“Cross-border support needs a professional framework”) takes up the topic of networking and explains on the basis of lived practice how cooperation in transregional spaces within the EU can succeed.

The forms of cross-border support have evolved and changed since their inception in the early 1990s. The contribution by Holger Wendelin (“Individualised Social Pedagogy measures abroad – Conceptual and historical reflections...”) takes us on a journey through time that introduces us to the reasons for and history of the emergence of this form of support from a German perspective.

In an impressive contemporary document, Norbert Scheiwe (“Individual – Pedagogical – Successful”) illustrates this history of development for us from a rather personal point of view.

The contribution by Marie-Luise Dreber and Heike Lorenz (“The range of international youth work: ...”) is about recognition, equal opportunities and equality. The authors explain that stays abroad with their non-formal learning scenarios outside of school and training make valuable contributions to the personal development of young people – also with regard to promoting an understanding of democracy and the acceptance of diversity. Dreber and Lorenz argue that international experiences must be accessible and possible for all target groups.

In addition to non-formal learning processes, school education is of great importance. Thomas Heckner combines two central perspectives in his contribution (“Graduation from school ...”): He sheds light on the influence of schooling on the daily care routine as well as the importance of the school-leaving qualification for a future-oriented, independent and self-reliant lifestyle in the middle of society.

In our German system, youth welfare offices are responsible for professionally managing and taking responsibility for support measures in line with the legal requirements. The contributions by Raimund Jäckel (JA Remscheid) and Rolf Diener (JA Bremen) show quite different approaches and focal points. The authors make clear which aspects they pay special attention to when initiating a cross-border support project.

Rüdiger Mey spent a long time working at the Landesjugendamt Niedersachsen (LJA) [*Lower Saxony Youth Welfare Office*]. The state youth welfare offices provide, among other things, counselling and supervision to the youth welfare offices with regard to support measures carried out in Germany. In his contribution (“Everywhere in Europe – ...”), Mey looks at the role of the state youth welfare offices with regard to

support measures abroad and examines, among other things, the area of tension between the courage to take risks and safeguarding control.

It is beyond doubt that the practice of cross-border pedagogy is a very specific field of work, even for trained professionals. This results in a special need for counselling, reflection and understanding, also through further training specifically tailored to these tasks. In her second contribution to this volume (“Why a Curriculum for Individualised Social Pedagogy makes sense”), Ulla Peters introduces us to a concept she has developed, which has already been implemented several times in different countries with the carers living and working there.

Laurence (“Experiences of a project site in France”) and Harda Dück (“Vanessa in Greece”) give us an insight into the concrete work with young people from the perspective of the carers. Both provide personal insights into their motivation to work in Individualised Social Pedagogy and report on their diverse experiences.

It is even more personal and intimate when parents talk about how it feels to let their own child travel to another country in the hope of a positive turnaround after often many failed attempts at support. It is not easy. And like their children, parents also face strenuous developmental tasks during this kind of care: In this book, two parents talk about how they learned to let go, to find peace and inner confidence and to trust that in the end many things will work out well.

A fairly significant proportion of the young people who choose Individualised Social Pedagogy care abroad have previously been treated in a child and adolescent psychiatric clinic. Christof Theis, Fabrice Mousel and Christopher Goepel work in a clinic in Luxembourg and describe the careful diagnosis, preparation and management of individual support measures abroad from their perspective (“Experiences of an adolescent psychiatric care clinic ...”).

As an interim conclusion from the diversity of the contributions, the following becomes clear:

- There are many participants in a wide variety of roles.
- In order for a support measure to succeed, a high degree of cooperation and communication skills must be established.
- An immense variety of tasks and perspectives must be dealt with and kept in view.
- The same applies to all those involved: Remain open to small-step and flexible adaptation of the support settings so that it remains individual, to the point and appropriate and thus optimal.

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Educational support in Europe across borders – how can it succeed? Over the past 30 years, the field of cross-border individual support, which was mainly developed in Germany, has established itself as a multi-faceted and promising approach.

However, the heterogeneous legal situation as well as the cultural differences in wonderfully colourful Europe require a high degree of effective cooperation in order to successfully manage and implement this form of support.

The aim of this publication is to provide an up-to-date overview of the field of work. Above all, European stakeholders are to be addressed and invited with the intention of reviving the, on occasion, deadlocked dialogues.

The publication is divided into three parts:

The individual passages at the beginning of the volume, some of which are very moving, tell about the challenging work that carers do together with the young people in the project placements. They shed light on the microcosm of Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures and explain what Individualised Social Pedagogy work means in practice, how it is experienced by the people involved and what opportunities it can offer in individual cases.

In another part, stakeholders from science, politics and organisations provide information on various overarching facets. These include, for example, schooling opportunities during stays abroad, qualifications for pedagogical professionals and cross-border cooperation models.

The actual starting point of this publication is presented in the concluding part: In his legal opinion, Prof. Dr. Dr. Reinhard Wiesner takes a close look at the consultation procedure that decisively regulates the cross-border placement of minors within the EU. He relates the procedure – better known as “Brussels IIa” – to the legal foundations of German child and youth welfare law and illuminates and comments on existing dissonances.

The publication is supported and promoted by the two German umbrella and professional associations Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Individualpädagogik e.V. (AIM) [Federal Working Group for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy] and Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V. (be) [Federal Association for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy].

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ISBN 978-3-96557-120-4