PARTICIPATION AS A MEANS OF COMBATING SOCIAL EXCLUSION (B3 4105)

PROJECT REPORT

CONTENTS

Meaningful youth participation is about recognizing and nurturing the strengths, interests, and abilities of young people by providing them with real opportunities to become involved in decisions that affect them at individual and systemic levels.

Preface

The Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelische Jugendsozialarbeit (BAG EJSA) is a protestant professional association which has been dealing for many years with mobile youth work, community-oriented work and neighbourhood work with disadvantaged young people.

Inspired by the professional conference of the Diakonisches Werk [1] and the German Protestant Church in Berlin in June 2000 ("Does market orientation of social services lead to social exclusion?") and by the EU budget line B3 4105 "Preparatory measures for the action programme – combating and preventing social exclusion" it did not take much time to decide to apply for a project in which we could obtain
- participation of young people
- an evaluation of experiences made by agencies and their staff in different countries
- results at a European level

It did not take much time, either, to define the content-related objectives of the project:
First of all, different countries should try to define social exclusion and to find out what we have in common and where we can see differences.
Second, we wanted to compare how participation of disadvantaged young people in the neighbourhood was implemented and reached by the different facilities and whether the following hypothesis made by us could be proved:

By participation of children and young people in the neighbourhood we can combat or even prevent social exclusion.

These were our plans.

The implementation of the project was even more exciting than the conception. We found out that in Europe we can learn a lot from each other, that participation options for young

people, e.g., are practically unlimited if carried out in the right way. For this, we need certain conditions of socialisation, partly also the tradition and particularly the willingness to let young people participate. I, and all of us in Germany, were able to overcome our scepticism.

The project is now coming to an end, it was a success, and I think we can state without exaggerating that it was a great success. We owe this to the project coordinator Sandra Kröger, to her commitment, her patience and her professional know-how, but of course also to the four participating projects, their staff and their young people.

It was a project in which we were not only dealing with participation but it was a "real" participation project. Thanks a lot to all those who contributed to its success. The best thing would be if it had consequences. Participation shall continue to be part of our common work and the European networking, next time in relation with the White Paper Youth. We are looking forward to implementing it. Maybe together with you?

MICHAEL FÄHNDRICH,

MANAGING DIRECTOR BAG EJSA

STUTTGART, MAY 2002

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[1] Welfare facility of the German Protestant Church

I - Introduction

For 18 months the project partners [2] of the EU project "Participation as a means to prevent social exclusion" dealt with the questions of social exclusion as well as participation of socially excluded young people on a neighbourhood level.

In the course of the project two processes took place at the same time. On one hand the respective project coordinators met five times to discuss and define certain expressions, and to develop participation strategies against social exclusion. On the other hand, young people were invited on a local level to think about "social exclusion" and "participation", to have an exchange of opinion and define these concepts. We witnessed a broad creative diversity: questionnaires were developed and evaluated, a CD-ROM was created, others went into schools, a play was created – discussions always took place. Another objective of the project was to promote the development of local social networks. This was supported to a certain extent. At the same time, however, we realised that the wishes of (disadvantaged) young people are not always at the centre of attention of adults, especially when they would have to shift power.

The project group considers the results a good basis for the further development of European strategies to prevent social exclusion. In doing so a closer relation between the phenomenon "social exclusion" and the necessity of comprehensive "participation" has to be made.

At the end of the project, the project group would like to stress the following points:

The importance of transnational cooperation should not be underestimated, since it is a

necessary precondition for an integrated Eu-rope. Only through a border-crossing dialogue can strangers become friends, only by specifically looking at the situation of similar fields of work in other countries and the knowledge so obtained can Europe become more colourful, can people identify with Europe.

2. This means that we have to understand the different meanings of expressions and concepts. This is absolutely necessary in order to understand different cultural, social and political fields and to place them in a social context. Europe cannot grow together, dialogue will not be possible if we do not know about these differences. For such an intercultural dialogue competent translators are indispensable who, apart from translating the language are intercultural mediators and thus are the key to make such an exchange possible. In this respect we were very fortunate.

3. Besides the opportunity to see how specific topics are discussed in other countries we had the rare possibility to have an exchange about how social work is organised in the respective countries, what went right and what went wrong (exchange about best/worst practice). This exchange is especially important in a moment in which the social "face" of Europe seems to be essentially changing in order to be able to adapt to the coming changes.

4. Another point we consider important is the direct exchange between experts and young people. Only by a dialogue between the generations will it be possible to get to know and understand each other and then, to create a relation between partners characterised by empathy and trust. This dialogue took place both on a local and on an international level (during the conference). The direct contact is particularly important in order to be able to take into consideration the needs, interests and opinions of the young people and to plan "participation" accordingly.

5. All in all we can state that the conference in Brussels was the unchallenged highlight of the project. This was because the European dimension of our efforts became clear for many participants, also because the young people were the protagonists and because we could present the fruit of our work to a

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[2] The Childrens Society, Ente Acli Istruzione Professionale (EN.A.I.P.), Interkulturelles Kontaktbüro, Interkulturelles Netzwerk sowie Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelische Jugendsozialarbeit (BAG EJSA)

broader audience. Generally speaking we would like to stress the importance of the face-to-face contact, which is indispensable for the creation of partnerships and border-crossing cooperation. It is especially in transnational cooperation that we need these kinds of real meetings in order to shape trust and make cultural differences understandable before they become barriers.

6. We would also like to emphasise the importance of project support by the European Union in the filed of social work. It is factually not only financial support but apart from above mentioned aspects such as border-crossing dialogue and exchange of best practice, has the effect that the promoted fields get a stronger emphasis on a local and national level which should not be undervalued in the context of a social Europe.

7. For the future we would like to continue and spread the results reached so far. That means on one hand, that we will pass on the developed strategies and recommendations to the respective local and national offices. It especially means to make strong use of these results and experiences within our organisations, and particularly in our respective local networks. Finally, we would like to stress that we consider feed-back very important in order to evaluate the quality of our results in yet a better way.
A few remarks about the structure of the present documentation:

As a first step the project partners report about the course of their local project, about their experiences and results (II).

The following text is a summary of the one year of work and analysis (up to the Brussels conference) of the coordinating group (III). We did not include a specific description of the local work with young people since this is contained in the respective reports of the project partners.
First, you will find a description of the general social context in which young people grow up nowadays, and the risks connected to this context (3.1). In a second step you will find several definitions of "social exclusion" and "participation" with reference to the respective national differences (3.2). Following this, the results of the work of the coordinating group (definitions, analysis and specific experiences) and of several individual young people will be lined out (3.3). At the end of the documentation you will find recommendations developed by us, that we would like to pass on to the European Commission (3.4).

In the final part you will find a detailed description of the Brussels conference taking place from February 27 – March 1, 2002 (IV).

In the annex you can see a photo galerie of the conference as well as ideas developed at the conference about the project topic.

We hope you will enjoy this documentation and we will proceed our way towards a united Europe.

Sandra Kröger, Project Manager

BAG EJSA

Stuttgart, May 2002

II - Reports from the participating project

2.1 The Children's Society - UK report

Four of The Children's Society's projects from different regions of the UK have been involved in the partnership group. Each project works to support young people who are living independently from a young age. Projects provide a range of support from help, advice and support with accessing and maintaining accommodation, benefits, self confidence, personal growth, goal setting, education, training and independent living skills.

A key focus of all our projects work is too provide young people with opportunities to influence and participate in local decision making forums and within The Children's Society are a few examples of the work that occurs at project level.

Their work has taken place through facilitated dialogues with staff and young people on the nature of "social exclusion" and "participation". The key findings identified included: a lack of basic resources and facilities; difficulty in accessing basic services; a fragmentation of those services (through gaps in provision, contradictions between policy and practice and a lack of linkage across departments and sectors); a lack of opportunities for young people to shape service provision and a lack of respect or understanding for the issues young people faced. One key proposal to assist young people's participation was the development of a Young People's Task Force as a mechanism for young people to influence and shape policy and service development at local, regional and national levels.

In addition to the collective response, each project has developed local responses with young people:

In-line Newcastle has involved young people in peer research into the 'health needs of socially excluded young people'. This has resulted in recommendations for health policy at local and national level. Staff have involved young people in a Multi-Agency forum & social services sub-group for care leavers to improve access to services for care leavers & homeless young people. Events have been organised to bring young people together with policy makers.

Young Tenants Support Project, Lambeth, London, has developed an accredited peer education programme: for young people talk to other young people about their experiences of being independent from a young age. The programme is linked to a "buddying" scheme that uses the skills and experiences of established tenants to befriend and support tenants who are more vulnerable.

South Derbyshire After Care Project: has set up a 'Buddy Reading scheme' which provides accredited learning opportunities. Young people train to work with younger children in schools to support literacy development. Young people have also participated both in The Children Society recruitment for project, regional and national posts and in the organisation's initiative for young people to participate in its governance.

St Helens Young People's Housing Support, Merseyside have supported young people to become active Foyer Committee members. Young people have been helped to become involved in town-wide forums and management groups that influence policies and systems in the town.

April – August 2001: Key landmarks

❖ **"The London Bash"** was a one-day event planned by young people and held with partners to explore the experiences and causes of homelessness and social exclu-sion. It took

place in April 2001 and brought together the local work described above on social exclusion and participation.

❖ The findings of the participative research partnership between The Children's Society and SOLAR, University of Northampton. 'Young, Homeless and Socially Excluded: challenges for practice interventions' made policy and practice recommendations**.**

❖ A **CD-Rom** and **Newsletter** were produced by young people with the help of staff. They record the April event and show how the project research and action contributed to the European partnership.

September 2001 - February 2002 *Looking forward – what are the solutions for an inclusive society?*

Within their local areas all the groups continued to explore the issues of social exclusion, using a variety of methods to do further research into young people's experiences. They also began to look at how the messages could be communicated to influence policy makers, through methods such as questionnaires and group meetings, peer[3] education training and presentations to policy makers and partners. The following key elements provided the framework for moves towards an inclusive society:

❖ A briefing paper summarising the findings was sent to the UK "Social Exclusion Unit" to feed into their investigations into the issues facing young homeless and runaways
❖ The Children's Society set up an internal "Next Steps" group to take forward the recommendations.
❖ Young People from Young Tenants Support Project did a presentation on Social Exclusion at the UK House of Lords for key influencers from across the private, public and voluntary sectors.

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[3] The word peer is used to refer to any group who enjor the same standing, either by reason of their jobs eg teachers. or by reason of their grouping in the community eg young people.If therefore we use the term "Peer education" in relation to young people it means that educational processes and means are used where young people learn from each other, evaluate each others progress and gain from collective learning.

❖ Young people planned the workshop on capacity building[4] and social exclusion for Brussels.

EXCLUSION WALL

BRICKS

LABELLING	CONFIDENCE	WORKERS LACK OF KNOWLEDGE
SUPPORT	LIFE SKILLS	PRIORITIES
SYSTEMS	ATTITUDES	CONTINUITY
HOUSING	MONEY	EDUCATION
DISCRIMINATION	BENEFITS	HEALTH

⬆ BLOCKS

Solutions Young people identified the solutions which would put an end to the way they had experienced being excluded – the 'Wall of Inclusion':

INCLUSION WALL

BRICKS ⬇

BETTER LOCAL RESOURCES	MULTI AGENCY WORKING	QUALITY STANDARDS
WORKER TRAINING	SHARING LEARNING EXPERIENCES	INFORMATION SERVICES
APPROPRIATE STANDARD LEVELS		MORE SUPPORT
EDUCATION		BENEFITS
HEALTH	DISCRIMINA-TION	HEALTH

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[4] "Development work that strengthens the ability of community organisations and groups to build their structures, systems, people and skills so that they are better able to define and achieve their objectives and engage in consultation and planning, manage community projects and take part in partnerships and community enterprises.
It includes aspects of training, organisational and personal development and resource building, organised in a planned and self conscious manner, reflecting the principles of empowerment and equality." (Steve Skinner; 1997)

⇧ BLOCKS

The young people wanted the decision makers to know how they experienced trying to access housing systems and services. Furthermore that the difficulties they faced were linked to problems of lack of a basic income. These in turn limited access to education and training, and created a negative impact on their health and well-being. These elements and the under-pinning discrimination experienced by the young people were topped by the less tangible effects of attitudes and labelling by others.

Young people used the concept of a 'Wall of Exclusion' to describe how social exclusion feels to them.

The young people considered 'HOW' the message was shared was key to making decision makers take notice. The young people decided this would be a central part of the Children's Society's workshop at the Brussels conference. Young people decided they want to create impact, provoke debate and create dialogue. Building a 5ft wall to represent how they had experienced social exclusion did this. As they 'knocked down' the wall they showed how capacity building solutions needed to be linked together to create an inclusive society.

| APRIL - JUNE 2002 |

An evaluation event took place in April 2002 that looked at young people's experiences of participating in the EU partnership, the impact on them and their local projects, workers experience of the partnership and the impact on The Children's Society.

SUMMARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMEN-DATIONS FROM THE PROJECT EVALUA-TION

Participation
Young people spoke of feeling "respected, valued, listened to, needs acted upon, given responsability, felt important". The partner-ship

created a wealth of opportunities, growth in personal confidence and skills.

The Partnership
The relationship between young people and workers was key to a positive inclusive experience. In the evaluation, young people recommended opportunities for transnational projects to follow up preparatory measures where young people could co-ordinate projects jointly with workers. They also suggested closer joint working between young people and EU planning groups, to create mutual respect and understanding of each other's perspectives and work.

The Conference
Young people felt they had developed a more in depth understanding of social exclusion. They have provided constructive criticism of all aspects of the event. The thought that young people should be more involved in the conference planning of "social exclusion" partnerships and that professionals taking part should make greater efforts to ensure they handle presentations, workshops and plenaries in an inclusive way.

May – June 2002

The "Next Steps" group will ensure that messages from the research and the European partnership are taken forward with Government and other organisations and lead to change. The group of young people have been invited to join the 'Next Steps' group to ensure young people are involved in this. A seminar is planned in London for June 2002, where key government departments will meet with young people and The Children's Society to consider policy pro-posals. Key proposals include:

❖ *Increases to welfare benefit levels for young people who are experiencing forms of social exclusion Age discrimination in benefits has no sound basis.*

❖ *The need for cross government links in designing and implementing policies. An example of lack of coherence between policies is that young people are financially penalised for wanting to access higher education whilst living independently.*

❖ *Improve access to services such as suitable and affordable housing.*

❖ *More flexible ways to provide "peer group support" for young people*

❖ *Quality standards for workers. Young people need to be able to directly influence the setting of standards and the monitoring processes.*

❖ *The development of a "Young People's Task Force" as a means of young people influencing service development and provision*

Carol McCauley, Katherine Sullivan & Rosie Edwards,

London, May 2002

2.2 Enaip Lucca: Social exclusion and participation of young people

The Lucca network against social exclusion

The transnational project 'Participation as a means to prevent social exclusion' was carried out by four European cities which did not only start with the same letter (the "L"), but which also had the desire to find solutions and methods helping to ease social exclusion of young people on a local and European level. The project on social exclusion and participation was developed on a local basis in the city of Lucca in Tuscany.

Lucca (Tuscany, Italy, EU) is a city of about 90.000 inhabitants, of roman origins and of catholic traditions, enclosed in a circle of a 3 miles long medieval wall. To young people, though, the city has little to offer: indeed, there is only one youth centre, no self-managed places, only few equipped playgrounds, and the small local initiatives which are organised on a district level are almost isolated and not connected among each other.

But there are quite a few young people. As for many of them, they are also in need of many things, not only of space.

In order to put this project into practice, En.A.I.P. Lucca, a non-profit organisation, has been working for years in favour of young people, constantly for the last 20 years and for more than 40 years if we disregard a short period of inactivity at the beginning of the 70's. En.A.I.P. helps them in the present offering them housing and assistance, and helps them in the future teaching them a craft.

For the purpose of this project, En.A.I.P. Lucca contacted those who work with young people and those organisations which are mainly made up of young people. It was decided to involve the Youth centre Kaboom into the project which is managed with the City council of Lucca, the City Youth Council which is a representative body for local young people's associations, the Province's Pupils' Council which represents the young people in the schools and which has been put into practice by the Ministry of Education under the previous government, and the young people of the district San Vito. For each of them, specific local actions have been identified.

We have tried to meet the young people at places where they usually meet: the Youth Centre where we presented the project in the Workshop Europe, in the meetings of the City Youth Council where we were able to mobilise several dozens of girls and boys, and at the young people's Friday evening meeting in San Vito, one of the peripheral city districts highly at risk. Of course, reactions were quite varied: scepticism, disinterest, availability, enthusiasm.

En.A.I.P. contributed with its long-term experience in the field of combating social exclusion made in the solidarity shops, carpentry, printing and naval construction workshops for drop-out children, in homes for young people who are mentally challenged and in Youth centres for young people between 12 and 19 years of age. We started especially from this latter experience in order to let the project Social exclusion and participation take root.

The project started in March 2001 with a first preparatory visit to Leipzig which was the moment to shape the project and which allowed to transfer the ideas, the proposals, the perspectives and the partners' expec-tations to a local level.

In the same month the project was presented to the plenary meeting of the City Youth Council of Lucca, a representative body of young people's associations which counts 40 registered members. They showed their interest in the project and also the will to find out how they could co-operate.

Later, it was the turn of the young people in the San Vito district, a working-class area in the outer city which has a high migration rate of Italians from the Southern parts of the country, a low education level, but a high level (as far as the city of Lucca is concerned) of petty crime. In this area as well, we witnessed mixed reactions, from enthusiasm to scepticism. The idea of putting a project into practice in this district and having the opportunity to travel to Brussels was a great motivation for many of them, while others feared 'just another promise' which would not be kept.

During the second preparatory visit in June, the young people from the Kaboom Youth Centre were involved into the project. We explained the project and its aims to them and started to expand on the subject of social exclusion of young people within the Work-shop Europe, a weekly meeting in which we discuss and deepen the knowledge on European topics as well as prepare and organise European exchanges in which the Kaboom Youth Centre participates and which is part of the different activities of the Centre.

Still in June, another youth organisation was involved: the Province's Pupils' Council which is a representative body for middle school and high school pupils in the Province of Lucca. In this case as well, the body was involved because of its representative character.

The basic idea was to make young people aware of social exclusion; in some cases, it was just talking about this topic, while in others, for example in the Youth Centre, we entered deeper into the details launching provocative debates on diversity, exclusion, and on those excluded from society.

After a first phase of debates, meetings within the Europe Workshop, plenary meetings of the City Youth Council and meetings of the purposely created Commission, we pro-ceeded to a more structured phase in which we wondered together with the young people: how do others think about it? That was when the basic idea was born which united boys and girls later - a questionnaire.

The questions that made up for the frame-work of the questionnaire had arisen in the debates and during the meetings which had taken place beforehand in the various parti-cipating groups and bodies. The hetero-geneous sources are reflected by the three-fold character of the questionnaire: questions on exclusion, on participation and on youth representation.

After a long discussion the young people from Kaboom defined the questions concerning the causes of social exclusion of young people. 24 possible answers were worked out which are subdivided into three big blocks: deprivation of something, illustrated by the titles Lack of (e.g. family, money, job, sentimental relations, etc.), Having (money problems, unsatisfactory job, different political opinions) and Being (homosexual, ugly, mentally or physically challenged, etc.). Since we noticed the multidimensional character of social exclusion right from the beginning, we decided to offer five possible elements that contribute to pushing a young person out of society. Furthermore, the possibility to assign a score to these five factors or, in other words, to rank them by importance assigning a higher score to those factors considered decisive.

We then tried to find out about the awareness of young people on exclusion or better if there were two different ways to describe the same phenomenon. Furthermore, we asked the participants if they knew persons whom they would describe as excluded and if they themselves during their own lives ever felt excluded. Last but not least, two questions dealt with the possibility to belong to "a fringe group" by own choice, and if so what the possible reasons could be.

The second category of questions con-centrated on participation of young people in social life and put the accent especially on "feeling part of it", on the feeling of belonging and, first of all, participating. We asked for personal experiences from the past or the present which made the person feel an integral part of a group or of society, if at any time in their lives they had made decisions which concerned them in their everyday life and if there was a place or event which more than others stood for that particular person or which made the person feel very much at ease.

The third category of questions, which was mainly developed by the City Youth Council and the Province's Pupils' Council, included questions concerning the mere fact of the existence (of the youth representational bodies), one part in which they asked for a judgement on these bodies as well as for their positive representation and at the

end gave the possibility to suggest how the interests of young people could be defended in a better way before the institutions.

A point which we made in every interview was that there were no 'wrong' or 'correct' answers, but the important aspect was that everybody filled in the questionnaire with his own originality and his own ideas. We didn't look for specific answers in particular nor did we want to see our own ideas confirmed, but we wanted to the person's point of view on the matter. Thus, many young and very young people felt very free and proposed ideas that they considered and still consider not very compatible with institutions. As far as methods are concerned, we decided together with a group of young people from the two Councils to define the age groups to whom we wanted to submit the questionnaires, and we also decided to state the provenance of those interviewed and register their district, sex, actual job and place of birth.

After that, we trained and instructed several young interviewers so that they were able to illustrate the questions' aims and objectives and to spread the questionnaire first of all in schools. Indeed, our intention was not to have a perfect questionnaire from a statistical point of view, but to retrieve certain information and to make the young people reflect and think about these topics.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE'S RESULTS

In two months' time, the questionnaire was filled in by 411 young people between 14 and 29 years of age, 44% of whom were boys and 56% of whom were girls. The main age groups were the 15 to 17 year olds (born in 1985, 1986 or 1987) which constituted 42% of the total interviewees, and the 18 to 20 year olds (1982-1984) which made up for 47%. The remaining 11% includes the age group 21 to 29 years of age.

As far as those "born in Lucca" or in the near surroundings are concerned, the sample consists to some 65% of them, while 35% of them were born "elsewhere" (in another province or region, abroad).

Lastly, 44% of the interviewees are residents of the city of Lucca, whereas 56% live in a different district.

Exclusion and I

56% consider *the different* as the ideal type of the excluded person, which is different in the judgement of the people or due to an obstacle which doesn't depend exclusively on the person himself (e. g. physical or mentally challenged, child of prisoners, Mafia members or turncoats, a beggar) or different because of a personal lifestyle choice which is considered "unsuitable" or of "bad morality" (e. g. homosexual, prostitute, drug addict, etc.). In the contrary, 42% recognises in the alien not necessarily a stranger or someone excluded. The person is strange because he withdraws (dreadlocks, nomads, vagabonds, religious person) or because he doesn't know how to express himself (timid, fanatic).

Among the causes of exclusion, *lack of friends* obtains the highest ranking with 46% of the preferences, which was nominated by 28% of the interviewees as a first choice. The other elements in order of nomination: lack of family (31%), being mentally or physically challenged (28%), being homosexual (26%), being filthy (25%), lack of money (22%), being racist (18%) and then the rest.

From the answers given to the question "what does social exclusion mean to/for you?" derives that it implies not only that a person is not accepted by "someone" within society, but it means also isolation of an individual living in a group, because of a lack of communi-cation or relations with others or due to simple incomprehension.

For the young people that were interviewed, marginalisation starts - at least for 41% of them - from exclusion from society, e.g. being put aside by the others. Notwithstanding their short lives, 38% of them declared to have lived moments in which they felt mar-ginalised, either by schoolmates or by a group of friends; this is particularly true for migrants who had difficulties to adapt to the new situation.

Participation and I

A participation boom can be registered by groups and associations (93%). One young person in two is involved in sports groups (53%) and one young person in four takes part in "informal" groups where they develop their social relations, e.g. in Youth Centres or music bands (23%).

The environment where the young people feel most at ease and "where they can do what they want" is their home (73%). Detaching largely (36%), sports activities rank second and are an occasion where they can have fun without being responsible (fitness places) or do team sports under guidance of a "boss" - in short, another protected place.

Youth Representation and I

Even if 72% declare that they know the representative bodies (45% the Province's Pupils' Council which was founded recently, 41% the City Youth Council, 34% know the Institute's or Faculty Council and barely 11% the Diocesan Council), this percentage is considerably lower when asked if they take care of participating in these bodies, of deciding or just of knowing what is done for young people.

It arises clearly from the questionnaire how the job, and sometimes the boredom, of representing is easily delegated to others even though they might not be satisfied, if not in the least part (48%), with how these representative instruments are used.

They feel the desire to be listened to (44%), to be informed at all levels (40%), but in the end, first of all - for those who answered - to be organised and to be really represented by consistent and capable persons (63%). Furthermore, they desire specific solutions, young people who work and are committed to young people also at a national level (48%), because they have the impression that we like to analyse, observe, sometimes also give voice to the young people, but then we do not let them be protagonists of their own choices (67% in school, 42% with friends) and fool them, making them feel important only for a few moments, in some places without guaranteeing them to protect their ideas.

Dreams are that politicians, the adminis-tration, the lack of energy, funds, beliefs, moral, coherence, interest and whatever else will not lead us to being deaf with regard to those who do not stop believing in life, and that we delegate matters to them which are important for us and for their lives, and that we make them take over their responsibilities giving them the freedom to choose and to make mistakes.

WHAT RESULTS - WHAT PER-SPECTIVES?

More questionnaires will be filled in during the coming months. We expect to reach the number of 1000 questionnaires by Septem-ber 2002. In addition to an evaluation by experts, En.A.I.P will publish the results.

Together with the province of Lucca, which is a partner in the project and has participated in the Brussels conference with its head of administration and the chairman of the social affairs' committee, we have launched the idea to build a permanent working group on youth policies. This project will include the City Youth Council of Lucca as well as other young people's representative bodies existing in the province.

The young people who have taken part in the Brussels conference specifically strengthe-ned their commitment. One of them has been elected president of the City Youth Council of Lucca, and two others have been elected members of its presidency. The two young people from the Kaboom Youth Centre have been actively involved into the European exchange activities and will participate in the project "Lucca centro" (Italy, France, Belgium and Portugal) which will take place in Lucca at the end of July; one of them will go to Dresden for a transnational exchange called "Being different" where he will meet young people from Sweden, Germany, Denmark and Poland.

Mirco Trielli, Centro Kaboom

En.A.I.P. (Lucca)

2.3 Results of the survey in Lübeck

The model project Interkulturelles Netzwerk [5] of the Deaconry of the local community is project partner in Lübeck, Germany [6].

Procedure
In cooperation with the Internationaler Bund (International Federation), project street work, we were looking for (and found) a group of approx. 10-12 young people aged between 14 and 18 years. At the beginning the young people discussed the topics exclusion and participation and developed a questionnaire with regard to these topics. The questionnaires were handed out and filled out in their schools. Altogether we obtained a quantity of 205 questionnaires as a data basis. The evaluation results were then presented to a Council consisting of 17 different stakeholders of respective social institutions, participating young people and political youth representatives of the Social Democratic Party, The Christian Democratic Party and Alliance 90/The Greens. The Council held four meetings and dealt with the question how the results could be implemented practically and be transferred to a political level.

The front page of our questionnary

Experiences during the implementation

We made the experience that the young people were strongly interested in the topic and that lively discussions took place among them. We realize, however, that fast results

are necessary to maintain the interest (long-term commitment) of the young people. That is why the evaluation of the questionnaires and the presentation to the Council had to be carried out as fast a possible. Thus, the questionnaire does not correspond solely to scientific criteria, but in tendency is indeed representative. The feed-back of the results to the Council resulted difficult. Many members did not attend the meetings regularly, especially the political represen-tatives. Mostly, this was due to other obligations they had. This made an intense debate about the topic more difficult, and the motivation of the young people declined as they had the feeling they were not taken seriously.
If participation is wanted by decision makers, it is important to make efforts and take the time to implement them.

Selected results[7]
Dealing with the topics being disadvantaged, exclusion and participation of young people we have to distinguish between the definitions by experts and by young people. The results of our survey showed that some factors are part of the category "processes of being disadvantaged and of exclusion" which are not being considered in the debate between experts. We will present these factors later in this documentation.

First of all, we would like to focus on those factors with a potential of creating disadvan-tages that all parties involved agree upon:

- *insecure or low income/unemployed parents*

Our survey revealed that 9% of the families are affected by unemployment. We can assume that for young people it is not unemployment itself but being excluded from certain material opportunities that is a criterion for exclusion. This can have tremendous effects on the network of relations (e.g. lack of respect)

- *lack of or insufficient education (e.g. language kills)*

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[5] Intercultural Network, Lübeck
[6] Supported by the Federal Department for family, senior citizens, women and youth

[7] A comprehensive documentation can be ordered at the Interkultruelles Netzwerk.

7% of the participants in the survey consider their opportunities for vocational training low, 38% consider them instable. Approx. 30% do not believe to be able to get their dream job with their school degree. Additionally, 17% do not get any support for school. Altogether these are important factors that form a potential for exclusion considering the importance of a school degree and educa-tion/vocational training.

Few young people indicated weaknesses whereas language skills were concerned. The Council, however, pointed out different observations. Both German young people and young migrants had immense weak-nesses whereas language skills were concerned. Even reading and understanding simple texts is difficult for some of them. Since communication is an important key qualification, we should focus particularly on this point. According to the survey, young people seem not be aware of the fact or do not see any problems in the lack of language skills.

- *Lack of or instable social network of relations*

The social network of relations comprises the whole environment of the young people, namely family, friends, teachers, class-mates and other important contact persons. 9% of

the participants of the survey indicated that their relation to their parents is bad or very bad. It is shocking that 5% do not have parents or friends as communication part-ners in case of problems. 20% of those interviewed do not trust their teachers. Divorce or separation can (but does not have to) be an indicator for a problematic network of relations. 23% live in single-parent households, 14% in "Patchwork Families".

- *Belonging to a structurally dis-criminated minority (e.g. ethnic minority, refugees, disabled, different sexual orientation, religion etc.)*

22% of the young people indicated migrants as an excluded group. We can also state personal experiences made in this field: among those involved in the survey 42 persons were discriminated against because of their belief or their ethnic background. These persons could be almost all of the young migrants involved (43 persons), yet it is not clear whether Germans (e.g.

migrants from Russia now holding a German passport) also gave this answer.

One factor mentioned by the experts, yet not by young people, is the
- *Lack of access to social services*

Non of those involved in the survey turns to supporting facilities, the Youth Office or other facilities for young people in case of problems. Only one person indicated a social pedagogue. The Council, however, reported about a lot of young people turning to institutions. We have to distinguish *when* young people turn to an institution. Most of the times they are already strongly under pressure and have talked to several other persons before choosing to refer to institutions. With regard to this we should trigger a discussion about how to create the necessary conditions within the institutions/facilities to make communi-cation between young people and partners possible before the situation seems to be out of hand.

Another factor is important to young people when it comes to disadvantaged positions or even exclusion. Personal exclusion refers to the peer group, to persons of the same age. The factor refers to

- **Lack of certain consumption goods**, which have a meaning within the youth culture. Mobile phones and brand clothing are important goods in order to be accepted. 15% find it problematic going to school without wearing brands. The result would be gossip and being ignored. Of the 205 young people concerned 57 consider something very important that they do not possess, 22 of them even four things. These young people – 10% - must feel very disadvantaged among their peers.

Answering to the question who was excluded by society can be put into four different categories:
- *Cultural (migrants, Germans)*
- *Social (homeless, dirty people, poor people, drug addicts)*
- *Physical (overweight people, disabled, ugly people, people who wear "strange" clothing)*
- *Mental/ ideological (political extremist groups, pushers)*

The survey showed that young people think, exclusion is everyone's own fault. According to tendency, exclusion caused by others is only attributed to the cultural group, namely migrants and Germans. When asked how those groups could be included, the majority answered that those who caused their own exclusion should become active in order to be included. Also those who are excluded by others should become active themselves, but for this group the state and other persons were mentioned as being responsible for their inclusion as well.

Interpretation approaches:
The results show that material goods are a fixed reference scale in the youth culture. Mobile phones and brand clothing are necessary in order to be included in a group.

Most of the young people agree that the slogan "Everybody is responsible for his/her own luck" is appropriate. A person who excludes him/herself must be able to re-include him/herself. Structural conditions play a minor role: "Homeless should wash, overweight people, disabled, ugly or those wearing "strange" clothing should become like the others".
This attitude, which may only be a phase within the development towards adulthood, creates an enormous potential of isolation and puts pressure on the individual young person. They are responsible for everything themselves. Being weak or out is not accepted. "If someone does not have brand clothing, he/she has to find a way of getting them", otherwise the person is not fit for being accepted in a group.

With this background in mind, politicians, pedagogues, teachers, social workers and educationists have to think about the question how to reach and communicate with young people. Even though adults may have difficulties accepting the priorities of young people they have to be taken seriously, otherwise approaches of participation and inclusion will not meet their interests.

Participation – how, why and with whom?
In our interviews we asked young people what they are interested in, how they could imagine participation and with whom. 93% of the young people find good education very important, 83%

emphasize the importance of a job they like. 73% underlined the importance of safety on the streets, 65% pointed out that a sound environment was essential. 50% define a lot of leisure time as important. Whereas politics are concerned only 10% regard them as very important. 39% said that they were not at all interested in the

topic. This seems to confirm that many young people are tired of politics. The remaining question is: what do politicians of the different parties propose when it comes to the inclusion of young people, representing their interests and especially when it comes to transferring the idea of political interest as an important part of a democratic society.

Young people agreed when asked about a lack of facilities. Everything connected to leisure time was mentioned. The main items on the list were a youth centre, a disco for the younger ones, and for those older than 16 party rooms and hobby rooms, an internet café, a park for skating, soccer and other sport fields. Young people would like to have a place near their home where they can meet and spend their leisure time. In the respective neighbourhood, comprising 28 km² there is only one remote youth centre, that is not well equipped and thus not attractive and difficult to reach. Informal meeting points like play grounds, bus stops, parking lots etc. often cause conflicts with the neighbours and/or the police.

The young people would like to change the following things in their neighbourhood: less cars, more safety on the streets (in traffic), modernization of the roads, houses and schools, more green areas and a clean city. Again, we can see the desire for orderly outside appearance that is well cared for. They also mentioned the behaviour of people. All should act friendly, not be violent, should be clean and not take drugs or smoke cigarettes. With regard to social and political commitment animal protection and environmental protection were indicated.

Conclusions
We can now discuss, whether to meet the "expectations of order" of the young people or

check if there are other factors causing this. The desire for an orderly outside world may have its roots in a general disorientation of the young people and be a sign of the desire of a transmission of standards and values. If

this was the case, how could we re-transfer them? Or did the young people merely want to give the "correct" answers? The results do not allow a definite conclusion, but they can be the beginning of a new context-related confrontation with young people in order to come closer to the young people's concept of participation. Opportunities for forms of participation seem to be given: 69% of the young people would be interested in committing themselves to a project in their neighbourhood. Now we have to create methods that trigger the fantasy, creativity and motivation of the young people and create an atmosphere/structures that make participation possible.

Susanne Samelin (Interkulturelles Netzwerk)

Michael Klein (Internationaler Bund)

Nina Wächter (Internationaler Bund)

2.4 Leipzig projects

1. Social context of the Leipzig projects

At the moment Leipzig has a population of approximately 494.000 inhabitants Being a traditional traffic hub as well as a centre for trade and fairs, during the past 100 years Leipzig developed into a city of European dimension which had an innovative influence on economy, the technical sector, science and culture. However, the city faces great challenges at the present moment, like so many other big cities in the Eastern part of Germany. The most pressing problem is the high unemployment rate of 18%, approximately 60,000 empty apartments and financial problems of the public bodies.

The different developments of the neighbourhoods are particularly evident in the Eastern part of the city, a traditional working class area.

Empty houses in need of restructuring, abandoned shops and small businesses amount to an over-proportional level in this area. Since those who find themselves in better social conditions move away, we witness a social polarization.

The Interkulturelles Kontaktbüro Leipzig was project manager of this sub-project, a model project of the Federal Department for family, senior citizens, women and youth under the auspices of the Ökumenische Sozialstation Leipzig Süd-West e. V. for the inclusion of young migrants. The Interkulturelles Kontakt-büro is defining the framework conditions for inclusion work and promoting the opening of regular options to migrants. Since the Interkultutrelles Kontaktbüro is not an organization of youth work itself, five projects were carried out in cooperation with partners, four of them from the Eastern part of Leipzig. The Association of the Vietnamese carried out one project comprising several neighbourhoods. The Vietnamese form one of the three largest migrant groups in Leipzig.

The project partners in Leipzig were as follows:
youth centre Rabet of the Youth Office Leipzig
the Association of the Vietnamese in Leipzig

the open meeting point for children and young people "Tante Hedwig" (Aunt Hedwig) of the Internationaler Bund
the citizens' meeting in Volkmarsdorf of the *Trägerschaft von doppelspitze GbR*
the Leipziger Kinderbüro e.V. (Children's Office)

2. Brief presentation of the individual projects with regard to contents and main results

2.1 School project

The first project was aiming at capturing attitudes and perceptions of young people concerning their environment with regard to "being socially disadvantaged", "social inclusion" and "exclusion by society". Our target groups were 3 classes (8th + 9th grade), of a *Mittelschule* and one class (8th grade) at a high school. The results showed that disadvantages were particularly stressed in the fields of family, peer group and school. Furthermore, material differences were frequently mentioned as a reason for being disadvantaged for those with fewer financial means, as well as a lack of equal oppor-tunities with regard to vocational training. Social disadvantages and the exclusion of social fringe groups were hardly perceived.

2.2 Leisure time projects

Within the framework of open youth work two other approaches were started in two youth centres. One was making a video in the neighbourhood about being disadvantaged and exclusion, the other the creation of a questionnaire for young people by young people in which the young people's point of view about the causes for being disad-vantaged was to be defined. The initial interest of the participants faded (…missing part in original, the translator)
A preliminary result is the list of ranked topics made by the young people:
1. Family
2. Work
3. School/leisure time/friendship/love
4. Money
5. Drugs
6. Violence

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7.   Future/changes

Generally, the reasons for the early termination of these projects lay in the fact that the young people were not obligated to participate in the open youth work, more specifically, however, the young people "re-oriented" themselves after the start of the project and became interested in illegal drugs. The termination of the projects made obstacles evident that make a successful implementation of participation difficult and that ought to be overcome.

2.3 Pedagogic photography course during a project week at school

In the fourth project we chose an indirect approach concerning the topics "being disadvantaged" and "participation". During a project week at a *Mittelschule* the self-perception of attitudes and the development of such attitudes based on participation were examined. We were aiming at increasing the knowledge of the young people and at the same time increase their confidence in their abilities.

Before and after the project week the attitudes of the young people were evaluated by using standardized psychological tests. A result, particularly among the girls, was an increase in self-confidence and a decline in feeling dependent. These are necessary mental preconditions in order to overcome disadvantages actively and to be able to have an adequate share in the resources of society.

2.4 Interviews with the migrant group of the Vietnamese

The last project was not referring to a neighbourhood but to the migrant group of the Vietnamese. The objective was the development of a questionnaire with the participants of a German course for young Vietnamese and interviews with the young people, with particular regard to "being disadvantaged", "exclusion" and "inclusion" of Vietnamese citizens.

The following results were obtained:
The young people feel disadvantaged due to a lack of language knowledge (German), lack of working permit and restricted possibilities of movement for asylum seekers

Objective existing disadvantage due to low income and small living space are perceived but dealt with differently, since the living conditions in the country of origin were much worse
. Personal discrimination is perceived, yet there is a positive attitude towards the Germans
high degree of willingness to inclusion in the German and European society. The most important obstacle in this respect is the language barrier.

3. Observations

The following observations were made in Leipzig with regard to all projects:

3.1 One essential observation is that "being disadvantaged" and "participation" are **seen in a different way from the outside by society** than **seen from the subjective inside by those affected**. That is why the disadvantaged persons mentioned before can only be motivated to a certain extent for the programmes, since they do not have a subjective interest in the objectives.

3.2   What does being disadvantaged mean for those affected?
During the projects it became clear that essential **subjective** indicators of being disadvantaged are perceived in the primary relations of families and peer-groups. The relation to friends, within the group or to the boy/girl-friend is more important than voca-tional training or participation in a project.
These observations are contrary to the official **objective** indicators such as social welfare, unemployment etc. The questions of the individual future or political participation are hardly recognized as a problem by the young people, they seem not to be aware of them.

3.3 This is different in the group of the Vietnamese. The problem of the language barrier is clear and people are aware of it. However, we made the following observation: if they speak the German language well, they realize that they are living in a totally different culture. The different cultural characteristics make contact with Germans more difficult.

4. Results

What conclusions can we draw?

4.1 A success of the projects was that young people could be reached with regard to the topics "being disadvantaged" and "participa-tion" and thus a certain consciousness was created.

4.2 Participation cannot be forced onto people. Young people are attracted by short measures, such as events. Longer projects on a voluntary basis exist only as long as the young people are motivated.

4.3 Relations are very important to young people. That is why participation options should not merely focus on consumption, events or programmes, but should be embedded in the relation networks.

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Peggy Diebler,

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III - Participation and Inclusion in Europe – Participative Strategies in the Local Context

3. 1 General context

On one hand, the **economic, social and socio-cultural changes** in Europe lead to different forms of individualization and multiplication of life styles and partly create more opportunities for children and young people[8]. They can shape their own life more freely and have more choices. Information and communication technologies, e.g., can help reduce traditional obstacles, that lead to an exclusion of the most disadvantaged citizens in our society. On the other hand, at the same time these changes in our economies and societies and their risks have a more direct effect on children and young people[9]. To get back to our example this means, that a lack of media competence can nowadays lead to a rapid exclusion from the developing knowledge society[10]. The **labour market** is characterized by globalization, liberalization and structural changes. Theses three structural elements lead to rationalization of jobs, their reduction or relocation (to cheaper countries) as well as to the creation of new job sectors with high qualified jobs and to a decline in intervention by the government in favor of the lower third of the population. The labour market requires more and

more technical skills, but also social competence, vocational experience, flexibility and mobility. We have a closer relationship between vocational training and opportunities in the labour market. At the same time the minimum qualification requirements to ensure entry into the labour market) have increased[11]. Today, it takes a lot longer to find oneself in a stable situation on the labour market[12]. The unemployment rate of up to 28% (in the age group of 15 to 24-year-olds, in Italy) reflects the difficulties of gaining access to the labor market and finding a stable position. In Germany, more than 40% of those receiving welfare benefits are children[13].

Apart from the structural changes in the labor market other equally important changes can be seen: **demographic changes**, since life expectancy is rising and birthrates are declining; due to stronger migration and mobility within the Union we witness a tendency towards a **growing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity**. At the same time the **structure of the households is changing** due to a tendency towards a de-institutionalization of the families. **New rolemodels** of men and women are affecting both the labor market and the question of parenthood. Today, the family, the neigh-bouring community

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[8] See Huster (2001: 165).
[9] See Debiel (2000: 51).
[10] See Dabinett (2000).

[11] See Hills et al (1999).
[12] See Giddens (1998).
[13] See Bartscher (1998: 17). For an Anglo-German comparison see: Craig, Mayo and Taylor (2000).

and the church are not as stable as 30 years ago. Due to the relative withdrawal of Government there are only a limited number of reliable support institutions that young people can refer to[14].

These developments are now no longer marginal phenomena to young people when growing up. They now make an impact which reaches the heart of youth transitions. If the world of work becomes a problem, youth, as a phase of biographic preparation for the world of work becomes a problem as well[15]. If we continue to base ourselves on the idea of the working society (namely: "Without work inclusion in society is not possible"), we have to ensure that young people obtain the adequate measures and support for young people according to their capacities and are prepared for work, in order to be able to switch from vocational training to gainful employment[16]. At the same time we must emphasize that social exclusion does not only mean being excluded from gainful employment but goes beyond that and is more complex[17]. A program to combat social exclusion should be based on this consideration.

Disadvantaged young people are particularly affected by the rationalization measures in our economies (reduction of unskilled jobs). Since they have fewer resources, support and financial opportunities they become the main victims of the crisis in the world of work[18]. During the past 20 years, the situation of young people in the transition phase from education, apprenticeship/training to labour market has worsened objectively. The unemployment rate among young people has increased. Many young people cannot keep up the pace and are threatened by constant social and economic exclusion. That is why they should have a particular responsibility in politics and business.

Dealing with the expression "disadvantaged young people": it implies an existing normality of participation in society from which they differ. Today, this normality may no longer exist. Furthermore, I would like to point out that **"disadvantage" and "social exclusion" are used as synonyms** in this document which is due to the different meanings of expressions in the three partner countries. Thus, "disadvantage/d" is related to society. [I do not think these two words are synonyms- they illustrate different political analysis of the reasons for poverty- so disadvantage comes from an understanding which merely sees some people being born with or experiencing advantages over others. Social exclusion on the other hand comes from a broadly social democratic common understanding across Europe based on a relationship to employment and the labour market.

3. 2 General definitions

3.2.1 Social exclusion

The expression "social exclusion" was brought up in scientific discussions in the 1960's and owes its breakthrough to René Lenoir[19]. Only after the 90s it was introduced to a broader public. What does it generally mean[20]?
The concept of social exclusion refers to the effects of the interactions between changing family structures, a decline in less protecting/supporting communities, a chan-ging welfare state, a decline in jobs those with lower qualification, the new "working poor" and the declining average income of the lower middleclass[21]. Social exclusion is a particular form of deprivation and barriers, which, alone or in combination, prevent a full participation in sectors such as education, health, environment, apartments, culture, access to rights or family-support as well as additional vocational training or job offers. Exclusion can be defined as the denial

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[14] Especially in Great Britain poverty plays an important role in the evolution towards social exclusion. Mainly children and young people in this country are affected by poverty, and more than in other EU Member States. The children's poverty rate - like the one in Portugal - is the highest one of all Member States. See Hobcraft (1998). For the notion of "social capital" see Puttnam (1993), Raffo and Reeves (2000).
[15] See Mielenz / Münchmeier (2001: 413).
[16] See Münchmeier (2001: 429-430).
[17] See The Lord's Provost's Commission on Social Exclusion (2000: 2 f.) and Ostner (2000: 33). For a general overview on the Commission's activities in this area refer to:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/index_de.htm
[18] See Ostner (2000: 30 ff.).

[19] Lenoir (1974). For a recent summary on the present discussions in France, see Paugam (1996). A presentation of the history of marginalized people in Europe 1830-1930: Gueslin and Kalifa (1999).
[20] For a summary of the present discussions see Parkinson (1998).
[21] See Mangen (2001) and Guidikova (2001).

(or non-realization) of civil, political, social and cultural rights which have their origin in the citizenship.

The European Union also contributed to the development and introduction of the expression "social exclusion". The history of the existing Action program "Social Inclusion" was as follows[22]:

The origin of the program is laid down in the Amsterdam Treaty. Art. 136 and art, 137 define that the European Union is to support the cooperation when combating social exclusion. Apart from promoting economic growth it is aiming at social inclusion in order to promote social cohesion. The main means to do this is the common action program "Social Inclusion" with a budget of 75 millions for the years 2002-2005[23]. Within the framework of this action program all member states of the EU developed national action plans (NAPincl) in which they outlined what is done to combat social exclusion and what should be done additionally. Different risk factors of social exclusion were defined in a first evaluation of the national action plans[24]. However, most member states considered gainful employment the best method for preventing poverty and social exclusion.

At the same time a number of preparatory measures were carried out and financed substantially by the European Commission. The results were introduced (within the meaning of best practice) in the newly created action program. Our program is part of the preparatory measures.

But not only grows the importance of the topic "social exclusion" within the Commission. But "Participation" is discovered more and more, and this especially in the field of participation of young people[25].

With the adoption of the Charter of Basic Rights in Nice in December 2000, the EU additionally committed itself to a European Community of Values. The Charter contains a comprehensive catalogue of basic rights. In Nice, the EU also committed itself to a "Social Europe" and to the social-political measures and objectives defined in the European Social Agenda[26].

3.2.2 Participation[27]

Participation involves two perspectives: the point of view of those affected who want to participate in society and the point of view of the political institutions which have the power to decide whether participation is promoted or not, or, in the extreme of cases, even blocked[28]. Participation, in the latter point of view, unfortunately is often part of a policy of acceptance: a strategy to ensure[29] a smooth course of things, to smoothen and integrate opposing points of view, thus, creating a sort of occupational therapy that abuses the hope for influence in the respective institutions.

By serious options for participation options we can obtain a great potential of knowledge, especially about local backgrounds. Society will waste part of its potential for problem solving if young people are not allowed to take part in the decision-making process[30]. In their wishes, interests, ideas and perspec-tives, young people may have values which differ from those of the adults and thus may introduce new aspects and perspectives into decision making processes[31].

The success of a concrete option for participation must be measured as follows:
1. Do we have specific results? Did we trigger a change or reach an objective we focused on?
2. How was the quality of the process and the conditions within this framework (e.g. support by politicians, administration, personnel and financial resources), was the method suitable for young people?
3. Which personal changes or changes within the group can we see[32]?

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[22] For a concise overview over the EU-analysis and EU-policies in this area, refer to Frazer (2001).
[23] See http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/oct/i01_1395_de.html for more information.
[24] See http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/joint_rep_de.htm
[25] See Commission Européenne (2001a und 2001b) and Hermann (1996: 37 ff.)

[26] For the general topic "Europäisches Sozialmodell" see Aust / Leitner / Lessenich (2000) and Ostner (2000).
[27] See Bur, Stevens and Young (1999) for European participation projects.
[28] See Bartscher (2000: 22).
[29] See Bartscher (1998: 32).
[30] See Liebrich (2001: 864).
[31] See Deutsches Jugendinstitut (1998: 135) and Feldmann (2000: 60) and Schröder (2000: 7).
[32] See Bruner, Winklhofer and Zinser (1999: 72).

"Good" forms of participation let young people (with the support of adults) work voluntarily for a commonly previously defined transparent aim with great commitment in a certain period of time[33]. The methods used should help shed light on the specific perspective of the young people.

A project can only be successful and politically credible with regard to formal decisions if the results are transferred successfully to a decision-making level in politics and administration and the planning of the project is realistic. Therefore, we need competent "translators"[34].

Participation is a complex process, as many different stakeholders meet each other (young people, parents, administration, politicians, pedagogues, teachers, housing associations, architects etc.). All of these stakeholders have different background systems (e.g. hierarchies, decision making processes, technical dimensions and tasks) that have to be synchronized. That is one reason why the stakeholders should discuss at the very beginning how participation is defined - in order to avoid potential disappointments.

Participation of young people requires certain capacities on their part[35], comprising social abilities as well as technical knowledge. In order to acquire such abilities they need the opportunities to learn and to obtain the respective qualifications. Closely connected to this are participation activities which have an educational function aiming at the willingness to take over responsibility, learning democratic decision making processes, and the ability to solve (civil) conflicts[36].

3.2.3 National differences

Within this general framework important national differences should be stressed. These differences have their origin in various principles of the organization of a welfare state that developed over the centuries as well as in the constitutional characteristics of the national states, namely central or structure. We also have to take into consideration that during the past decades the member states represented in this project have seen quite different sociopolitical approaches. The historic structures that were developed as well as the political decisions since the beginning of the 70ies lead to the fact that social exclusion is spread quite differently in Great Britain, Italy and Germany and has different faces. Of course, theses differences have an impact on the specific forms of social exclusion of young people. Some of these differences which have been discussed within the group of project partners will be presented as examples hereafter.

In Great Britain, e.g., and to a lower extent also in Germany, homelessness plays a much greater role than in Italy. The main reasons for this are very high rents, especially in huge cities, a weaker social safety net in general. Generally speaking, in Italy publicly "discernable" social exclusion is not as widely spread as in Great Britain and partly also in Germany, due to strong family ties.

The unemployment rates in the three countries among the 15 to 24-year-olds also differ greatly. from 9.6% in Germany (with great regional differences) to 12.1% in Great Britain and 28.3% in Italy[37]. One reason for the extremely high unemployment rate in Italy is the importance of the family: many young people are officially registered as unemployed but find work within the family network and, in doing so, are supported actively by their families.

The national differences are also reflected in different meaning of the terms used, e.g. "exclusion" and "inclusion" which have different connotations in the three countries concerned.

In the UK, for example, the term "integration" has overtones of giving up your culture. In a coutrny where equal ooprtunities are very important, it is therefore more helpful to talk about "inclusion". In Germany, on the other hand, "integration" has positive connotations and means that the person is socially integrated; thus, the English idea of integration corresponds to the German term "assimilation". In Italy, "integration" means being gainfully employed. When it comes to taking over the culture each individual has a certain space, i.e. each person can decide what he/she wants to and

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[33] See Bruner, Winklhofer and Zinser (1999: 56).

[34] See Bruner, Winklhofer and Zinser (1999: 79).

[35] See Bruner, Winklhofer and Zinser (1999: 81).

[36] See Ministerium für Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (1996: 36 ff.).

[37] According to a statistics of Eurostat:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-product/DE?catalogue=Eurostat&product?3-05022002-DE-AP-DE&mode=download

can take over from the Italian culture and to what extent. "Assimilation" in Italian means that migrants take over the Italian culture.

Besides the differences of the characteristics of the welfare systems and the attempt of their modernization, there are also diffe-rences in the prevailing political culture of active democratic participation. In Great Bri-tain, e.g., institutionalized student repre-sentative systems (student parliament) like in Germany do not exist, so we have no co-decision rights within the school defined in the law. The wide spread student and youth councils which exist in Germany and Italy do exist in the UK but are actually combined with few legal rights for young people under 18.

Above mentioned examples show clearly, that forms of social exclusion and oppor-tunities for participation are still quite different in the participating countries and have their repercussions in the local context.

3. 3 Definitions developed within the project

3.3.1 Social exclusion

Social exclusion is very close to exclusion from being part of society, whereas "disadvantge/d" can be seen as a partial exclusion or an inclusion that is not complete. "Exclusion" is verbally more structural than the expression "disadvantaged". Therefore, we should make a difference between individual symptoms and mechanisms, that are the structural cause for exclusion. Social exclusion takes place where barriers are already present. It is gradual, subdivided into phases and not wanted by the individual.

The structural indicators for social exclusion that were defined in this project are practically identical with those that are known on the subject. Gainful employment, e.g., or a fixed income was considered essential. In close connection with this is access to education and gaining qualification, which means having access to the resource "education" in general, that comprises elements like lan-guage skills, social competence and technical knowledge.

Another group contains indicators that are connected to the opportunity of access to social services and facilities as well as the possibility to

claim civil rights before court. Participation in social life (culture, asso-ciations, information) is also part of this group. Those who do not have access to resources considered essential are being excluded. There is a specific distinction between the experience of young people in other EC countries and in the UK where young people between 16-18 years estanged from their parents do not automatically receive welfare benefits and all young people under 25 years receive lower amounts of social benefits than those above 25 years.

The participating young people in Lübeck mentioned lack of access to public life as a factor of being excluded. They were not conscious about the potential of being excluded due to a lack of access to social services. They defined the lack of certain consumption goods as an essential factor for exclusion.

Being embedded in a social network of relationships was considered another impor-tant factor. It is not so important who is part of this social network of relationships as long as there are stable contacts with a "friendly" environment or with the family[38].

Furthermore, belonging to a minority that is discriminated against (ethnic minority, migrants, disabled, sexual orientation, religion) is considered a structural factor of social exclusion. This factor is structural because the law handles these persons in a discriminating way in contrast to the "majority culture" or because an infrastructure that enables people to exercise their civil rights is not available.

Finally, living in a structurally disadvantaged region or city suburb is decisive, as well. This is particularly evident in rural areas, where people do not have the same access to civil services and goods as does the city population due to a lack of infrastructure and public transportation systems to the cities. However, there is a population in certain suburbs of the cities that have developed during the past decades that is disad-vantaged, often simply because of their address, but also because of an inadequate infrastructure and an often extremely high unemployment rate[39].

Additionally poor excluded people are stigmatized and discriminated against by labels. Recent reports from the UK described the experience of young people at school, who were entitled to free

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[38] See Wilmott (1987).
[39] See Parkinson (1998).

school meals on account of their families low income, but were reluctant to accept because young people were required to stand in separate queues in the school cafeteria, which necessitated everyone knowing they were poor.

The English young people participating in the project identified other factors for social exclusion. Some of them are very concrete, others are more difficult to define. Hard indicators that were mentioned by the young people were lack of money and lack of housing. Government policies may be carried out in an arbitrary way on local, regional or national level and can also lead to social exclusion. Finally, the young people mentioned, that acquired social competences in their CVs, e.g. technical knowledge, were not recognized. The soft indicators are also important, such as lack of self-confidence,, lack of respect, e.g. a down-putting attitude towards them that they experience, lack of mental and/or physical health as well as lack of support by adults to help them overcome exclusion[40].

The different projects found out, that the young people often do not perceive their being excluded even when realizing that social exclusion does exist. This was confirmed in Lucca, Leipzig and Lübeck in the questionnaires and discussions. As long as a young people feel included in a group of reference they do not feel excluded. A group of friends but also the family is of utmost importance when dealing with the perception of social exclusion. This was also confirmed in each of the three cities. In England this issue is discussed within the meaning of social networks[41].

The reason why young people often do not perceive their own objective exclusion is due to their growing up in a "culture" of social exclusion which normally does not allow a direct comparison with other ways of life. That is why there is an important link between poverty in one generation and lack of opportunities of participation in the following generation which is related to an inherited way of passing on social exclusion and often also a "socialization of failure"[42].

3.3.2 Participation

First of all, the formal right to participation has to be given, even if the possibility to participate does not necessarily imply the power to make decisions. At the same time we have to explain to the young people that they have rights and what these rights are. This was emphasized both by the English and the Italian project partners. Laws do not make a difference if there is a lack of information about them and, as a next step, a lack of support to claim theses rights, e.g. when claiming welfare payments.

Whether forms of participation attract young people is essential for their motivation. Young people want to be appreciated and do not respond to all forms of participation. There-fore, it is necessary to find the appropriate form of participation collectively. The importance of social networks of young people, which is often neglected or not recognized, must be strongly taken into consideration. The subject of a participation project should also be defined together, in order to meet young people's interests. In Lübeck, e.g., the young people are not much or not at all interested in issues such as classical social and political subjects, but would be willing to contribute actively to more safety on the streets (traffic), a sane environment or a more friendly attitude of people. In order to make a participation project attractive it has to be based on the real life situation of the young people and should not be too theoretical.

The analysis of problems as well as the definition of objectives only make sense, if all those affected are included *from the very beginning*. The most important basis for effective processes of participation is a functioning communication and interaction between all parties involved.
At the beginning of such a process of participation and cooperation of children and young people an equal level of information of all parties must be ensured: aim of the participation. In order to avoid that young people turn away from society ("alienation") and thus their opportunities for participation the rules must be defined clearly, such as objective of participation, room for and limits of action, competences and more[43].

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[40] See also Coles (1995) and Fitzpatrick et al (1998).
[41] See also Wilmott (1987).
[42] See also Social Exclusion Team (2001).

[43] See also Feldmann (2000: 61), Ketter (2001: 822) and Bur, Stevens and Young (1999).

A helpful illustration which we have used in our project is the ladder of participation[44] which allows to determine the degree of participation actually present:

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[44] Sherry Arnstein in 1969 was the first to develop the ladder of participation, but which concerned the participation of adults. The ladder shown here is similar, but regards children and young people. See Hart (1997).

	8. Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults
	7. Youth initiated and directed
	6. Adult initiated, shared decisions with youth
5. Consulted and informed	
4. Assigned, but informed	Degrees of participation
3. Tokenism	
2. Decoration	
1. Manipulation	Non-participation
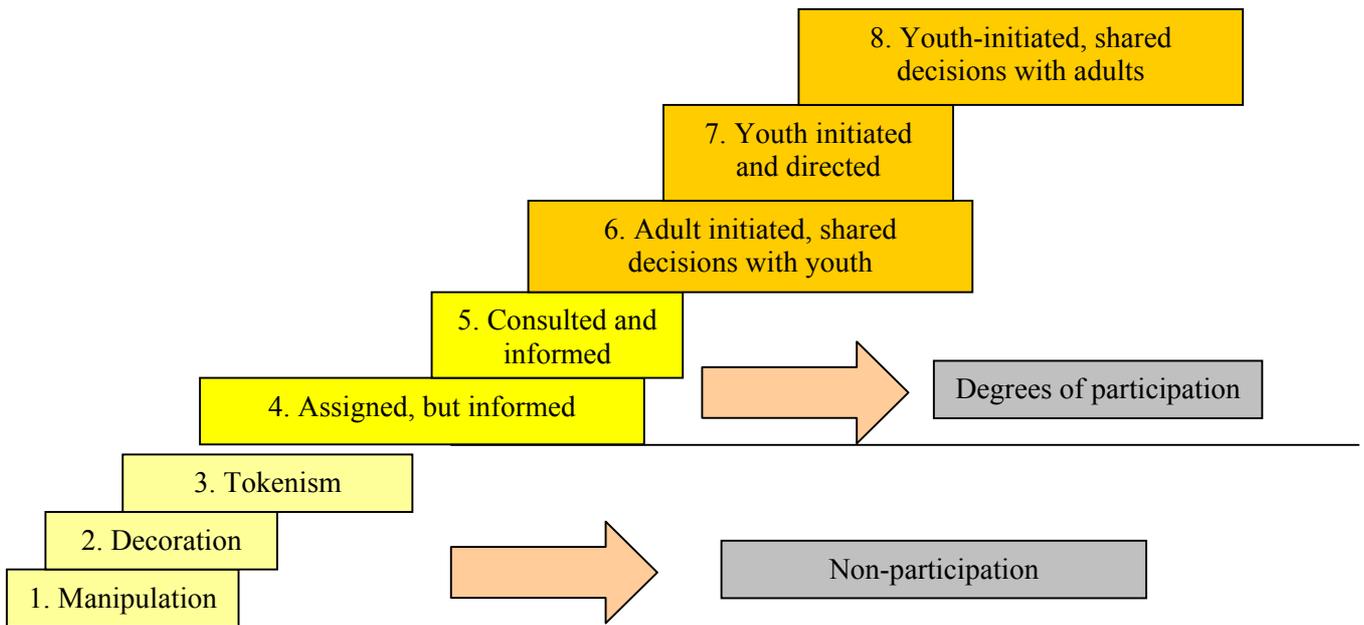
The interval between planning and putting a project into practice should not be too long, since long waiting periods lead to frustration among the children and young people[45]. At the same time, the participants have to be aware, that they are generally acting on behalf of the next generation of young people, especially when it comes to planning processes, since these normally take quite some time.

Lübeck and Leipzig experienced that a participation project should not take too long. In both cities it was difficult to keep the young people interested for more than several months.

The local supporting structures are usually provided by participation projects of *utmost* importance. This involves providing personnel and budget as well as a net of investors, promoters and cooperation partners[46]. The possibilities for cooperation between public and independent promoters for young people on one hand, and politicians, administration, schools, associations and churches on the other hand, the exchange and the coope-ration between different institutions is the key factor for the transfer and realization of young people's interests. The success of models of participation in this context depends highly on the rights and framework conditions that (can)
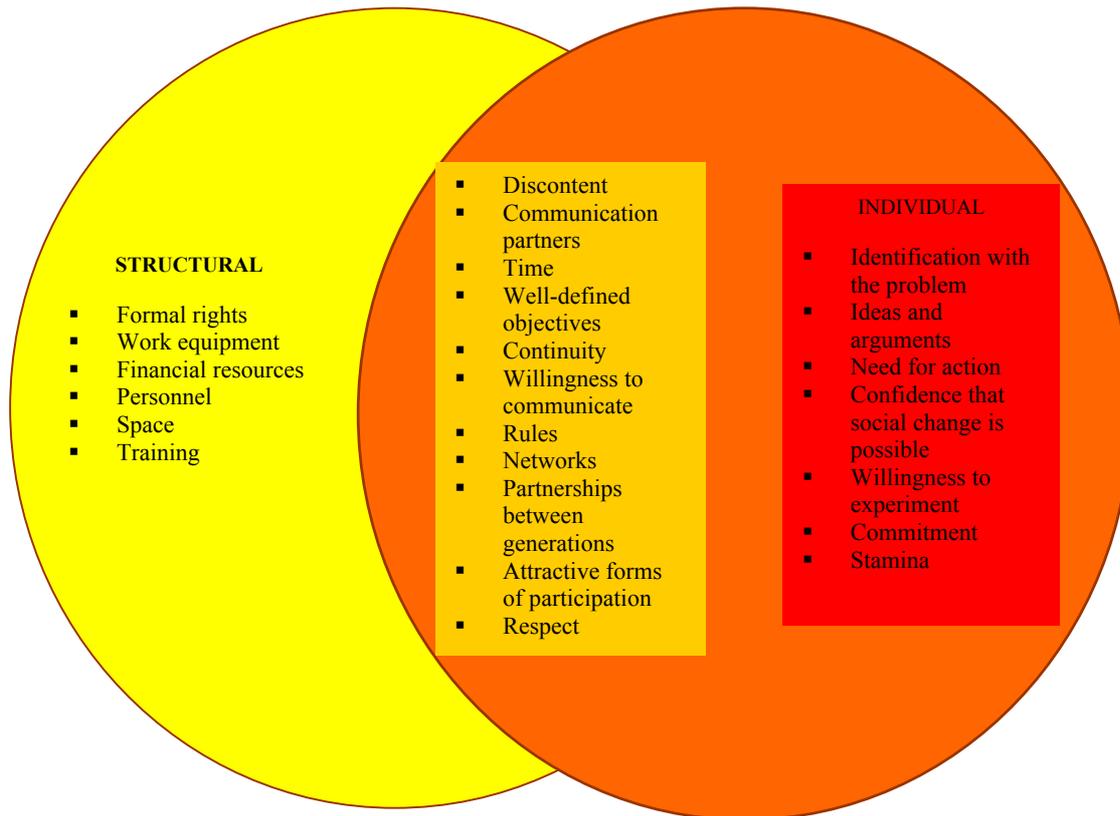
guarantee a successful transfer of the results of this work to the political and administrative level.

Another important criterion for a successful participation of citizens is fairness. That means that the difference in power between experts and lay people should be balanced in the ideal of cases by trying to create equal opportunities to influence for all. Part of this is transparency with regard to decisions and objectives of single participants, in order to make decision processes understandable. An open information policy and settlement of conflicts is of utmost importance in order to eliminate differences in perception and misunderstandings as soon as possible.

During our discussions we have worked out a number of conditions for participation and tried to assign them to categories of structural or individual factors, i. e. which conditions must be present on a structural level so that participation can succeed, and which ele-ments must be brought in by the individual. This has shown that not all conditions can be assigned to one category or the other, those have been put into an 'intersection' category.

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[45] See also Feldmann (2000: 60).

[46] See also Bruner, Winklhofer and Zinser (1999: 75) as well as Bayerischer Jugendring (1997: 17).

STRUCTURAL

- Formal rights
- Work equipment
- Financial resources
- Personnel
- Space
- Training

- Discontent
- Communication partners
- Time
- Well-defined objectives
- Continuity
- Willingness to communicate
- Rules
- Networks
- Partnerships between generations
- Attractive forms of participation
- Respect

INDIVIDUAL

- Identification with the problem
- Ideas and arguments
- Need for action
- Confidence that social change is possible
- Willingness to experiment
- Commitment
- Stamina

What other elements do we need?

Forms of participation should be process-oriented. That means not reducing them to single events but embed them in a long-term participation strategy[47]. By doing so, sudden disappointments (not reaching a concrete goal) can be compensated more easily. Furthermore, the process-oriented character can contribute to establishing and supporting networks. Within these process-oriented forms of participation it should also be possible to focus on the respective context and thus, not to ask too much neither of the young people nor of the adults.

The strategies for participation should promote capacity-building, recognizing, acti-vating and making use of individual and collective resources, needs and potentials of a community, as well as putting them into relation[48]. This could also help not to focus on problems without considering their context.

The concept of community capacity building has been discussed as a local strategy for

overcoming exclusion which links up individual and structural empowerment-strategies. It means "working with community groups and community based organisations to build their structures and systems, and to help their members develop skills, so they can:

- play a more active part in the social and economic activity in there are

- participate more in developing and delivering services

- influence the decision making processes that affect their lives

- develop networks that support these aims [49].

There are a number of formalised forms of participation at grass-root level[50] which are intended to lead to representative, open and project-oriented processes. It is important to

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[47] See also Bruner, Winklhofer and Zinser (1999: 80).
[48] See also Fülbier / Münchmeier (2001: 848).

[49] Kilbride (2002). More on this concept see Skinner (1997), See also the concept "Empowerment". See Urban (2001).
[50] See also Bruner, Winkelhofer and Zinser (1999: 28) and Institut für Entwicklungsplanung und Strukturforschung GmbH (1999: 19) and Möller (2000: 389)

realize that by defining a certain type of project and method you automatically pre-select a certain group of young participants. Within the framework of youth social work the projects at grass-root level are the most useful ones, as they promote an "unfiltered" articulation of the young people without the need for them to know much about forms of participation. On the other hand, there are great disadvantages, as well: the lack of institutionalization and thus, the lack of finances, which are contrary to a long-term strategy of participation[51].

A certain degree of formalisation of offers at grass-root level is necessary, as opportunities for joint decision making should not depend only on the good will of and the personal contact with adults[52]. An institutionalization alone, however, is not a sufficient pre-condition for realizing participation. For-malised and grass-root-level forms of participation should be linked and then be transferred to a political level (lobbying).

3.4 Practical experiences / conclusions

Unfortunately there are some obstacles for participation strategies. These can be classified into different categories, even if some of them overlap each other: social, legal, socio-political, power-political, admi-nistrative and financial.

Different aspects belong in the "society-related" category which are connected to general developments in society. First of all, we can state a lack of acceptance when it comes to participation of children and young people. Since they are still minors and have no right to vote they are treated like second-class-citizens and their interests are per-ceived or represented only sporadically, and most of the times arbitrarily or without true commitment. The lack of acceptance by society of young people was particularly emphasized by the English project partners. One essential consequence of the lack of acceptance is an increasing lack of motivation of children and young people to take part in participation processes. We can describe this aspect as paternalism and patronization. Adults do not take children and young people seriously enough. Within this context schools can play an important role. Their democratic task is to make young

people active and make them participate, yet they do not fully fulfill this task and do not make enough use of their potential for participation.

Another obstacle for successful participation of young people (but also of adults) is the tendency not to deal with genuine public problems in politics. A lot of topics are not discussed publicly and are not made accessible to the public. This development is particularly evident when it comes to huge construction projects but also general questions of how to shape public space. In both cases the protagonists turn to private enterprises or so-called expert-commissions and not to the citizens affected of the respective area. One of the reasons for this is that particular subjects are not considered "suitable for participation", i.e. that adult citizens are not considered capable of developing a competent opinion, let alone children and young people. In such cases we can talk about a learnt disempowerment or of a certain form of disenfranchisement in which the actual experts are degraded to public figureheads. Furthermore, the lack of accep-tance of participation processes creates particularly high obstacles at grass-root level, especially for disadvantaged young people. It may be difficult for a young person with a low self-esteem, reading difficulties, fear of official institutions or who generally relates with difficulty to higher authorities to take part actively in strictly formal participation processes, even if only due to the language used on this level. This does not mean that this particular person may not have a variety of ideas how different aspects of their own life and public life could be shaped in a better way.
Another important point is that there is a commonly spread prejudice against fringe groups ("not capable, not reliable, not willing, dihonest, unclean, no stamina") which prevents at the very beginning a development of cooperation between different stake-holders.

These general characteristics in society are reflected in the law, beginning with co-decision rights in kindergarten and schools and lead (by means of defined rights, e.g. on a local level) to the minimum voting age.

The next obstacle for participation projects are socio-political developments. Two tendencies particularly affect young people: inconsistency and structure of social services and making the citizens responsible for problems within society. Inconsistency and structure of social services

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[51] See also Bayerischer Jugendring (1997: 16).
[52] See also Bruner, Winklhofer and Zinser (2001: 92).

means that social service agencies are not linked well enough on one hand and make decisions that block the others on the other hand. Getting welfare payments is not very useful if the money cannot be used to pay rent since young unemployed people do not get housing contracts. The options of social service agencies often do not meet disadvantaged young people's interests and needs. The main reason for this is the lack of inclusion of young people in planning and carrying out the respective projects.

Another equally important development that started in the mid-80ies is the fact that affected citizens are made responsible for problems within society and a diminishing solidarity[53] within society ("everyone is res-ponsible for his/her own luck"). Due to this substantial development the right to parti-cipation in society which is defined in the Fundamental Rights Charter, is being more and more undermined. Those who are socially excluded are responsible for this and therefore must help themselves. Children and young people who grew up in such conditions and who did not experience the social mass movements at the end of the 70's and beginning of the 80's, cannot imagine that social problems do not have their origins in the individual but society. Thus, there is a strong probability that they lose their interest and courage (or do not even develop it) to unite and actively promote their interests.

This development is particularly evident in the survey of the Lübeck project. Most of the young people that were interviewed stated that exclusion was the person's fault and that excluded persons must become active in order to re-include themselves. Being weak or showing weakness is not in, so they said, and is a sufficient factor for being excluded.
The young students in Leipzig did hardly define any factors for exclusion that have their origin within society. Even unemploy-ment was hardly regarded as a factor for social exclusion. However, they consider themselves excluded if they do not have the possibility to complete an apprenticeship.

Besides above mentioned aspects we have to consider the power-political aspects in participation projects. Conservation of power is a guiding principle for action concerning all those involved: parents, elected political representatives

in administration, elected social workers, just to mention a few. All of them are concerned about maintaining their field of power, no matter how small it may be. This mentality becomes most clear with regard to a reluctance to institutionalize co-decision rights and put them into practice, so participation projects continue to depend on the good will of the adults. The will for power is often reflected in a lack of transparency or information flow. This turns participation pro-cesses into a farce.

Another obstacle for participation models can be found in the administration and public institutions. Before a potential participation project can be started the administrative procedures take too long to find an adequate place or personnel. Some reasons can certainly be found in the legal regulations. But we can also assume that many people employed in the administration are afraid, they may not have the organizational and technical skills and also fear to create conflicts with their supervisors if they commit themselves too much to the needs of disadvantaged persons. Especially the English project partners reported a unsatis-factory support for young people in need by public institutions as well as a lack of cooperation between the single authorities, so that in the end the young people are not "cushioned" by the social net. In order to combat this phenomenon the idea of a "Young people's task force" is discussed in England. This should give the young people the opportunity to gain more influence on social facilities and their services.

Finally we have to take a look at the financial (connected to human) resources of participation projects. We see a lack of financial resources that is just as great as the other ones and expresses once more that participation of young people is not taken very seriously[54].

In well embedded participation projects the following results can be achieved:
The young people may become more self-confident and more independent. Both factors are connected to a broader knowledge of

their own strengths and weaknesses and thus also the ability for self-criticism and correction, a factor of utmost importance in overcoming social exclusion.

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[53] See Craig, Mayo und Taylor (2000).

[54] See Bur, Stevens and Young (1999).

Furthermore, communicative and social skills can be strengthened and lead to a greater ability of conflict-solving and compromising (different way of dealing with conflicts). At the same time the ability to do something for a certain period of time (long-term commitment) is developed. On an individual level the young people are learning actively to exercise their democratic rights and are acquiring a deeper technical knowledge[55].

Both the young people and the adults may identify strongly with the decisions and projects put into practice together. This is a useful contribution to social responsibility[56] (and thus to social cohesion) as well as to a good relationship between the generations[57].

Structurally, there might be an increase in democratic discussions within a community or region[58], as well as an increase in social resources[59] and the creation and radication of local networks. Initiating a change or reaching an objective can also create new potential for participation.

The following aspects are a result of the exchange between the project partners about the development of strategies for participation:

1. In order foster social cohesion it is of utmost importance to consciously involve the weaker to avoid even stronger disadvantages in comparison to others[60]. Furthermore, it's only via the participation projects that socially excluded young people can make their needs known to the public.

2. Social exclusion is multi-dimensional and happens step by step, i.e. social exclusion cannot be reduced to being materially poor or having a lack of education. People are not excluded from one day to another (*are* excluded since exclusion it is a process and always contains a line between inside and outside and is not independent of more or less conscious decisions of the insiders).

3. Therefore, strategies to combat social exclusion must be multi-dimensional and process-oriented. Many different forms of participation (institutionalized or at grass-root level) must be seen as complementary among each.

4. In order to make different forms of participation work, we need a number of criteria: first of all the commitment of politicians and the administration to partici-pation of children and young people, the willingness of politicians and the adminis-tration to share power and competence and the willingness of politicians and the administration to take children and young people really seriously and provide the necessary resources.

5. It does not make sense to discuss strategies about the participation of disadvantaged young people, without including the young people themselves actively and grant them specific rights right away. When children nowadays become young people at an earlier stage and these become adults at an earlier stage, we have to grant them the respective space for responsibilities and opportunities within society. There are many rights for children and young people, both in national and in international law, such as the UN convention for children's rights[61], e.g. the right to active, age-related participation in all questions related to them[62]. But too many times this is ignored.

Participation of young people is *one* of many aspects to combat or reduce social exclusion. Participation projects, no matter how well embedded, contribute to a development of personality which can help disadvantaged young people to overcome their specific exclusion.

Participative strategies *can* help to combat the phenomenon that particular problems within society are attributed only to certain individuals by developing and possibly applying solutions together to solve these problems. In participation projects by definition that comprise different stakeholders and different young people, young people can realize that their disadvantage is not rooted in individual causes but in society. Still, they are not completely helpless.

When adults mention an interest in the participation of young people they must provide the respective possibilities for co-decision. An abuse or manipulation of young people must definitely be avoided.

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[55] See also Brunder, Winklhofer and Zinser (2001: 91)
[56] See also Feldmann (2000:60).
[57] See also Feldmann (2000: 10).
[58] See also Bartscher (1998: 33).
[59] See also Verein für Kommunalwissenschaft e.V. (2000: 32) and Schmidt (2001: 104).
[60] See also EAPN (1999: 9).

[61] UN Convention on children's rights (1989): http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm
[62] See Institut für Entwicklungsplanung und Strukturforschung GmbH (1999: 13) and Möller (2000: 383) and Mierendorff (2001: 55 f.).

3. 5 Recommendations

The project group would like to pass on the following recommendations to the European Commission.

- In order to combat this phenomenon, we need a **comprehensive information and awareness programme about social exclusion**, since it is a difficult process to identify and can only be reduced if awareness of it is increased. A lot of research has to be done on the phenomenon of social exclusion, and a better definition of the latter as well as the indicators of its measuring scale have to be found. It is important to consider not only hard but also soft indicators (e.g. self-confidence, experienced discrimination). Model projects must be evaluated more profoundly, have to be made accessible to the public and have to gain influence on structural and regional policies. That's why we support the European Commission in its efforts to give a special attention to these fields within the Action program "Social Inclusion".

- **When developing and evaluating programs and projects** - on EU, national or local level[63] - a stronger focus has to be put on actively **involving the target group, i. e. in this case socially excluded young people**. Only by doing so we can assure that the respective actions don't miss their target group, that existing resources as well as local deficits are taken into account and that people actually receive the help they need.

- In the future it should be a primary objective to **promote and support the inclusion of disadvantaged young people in existing programmes**. Without an increase in human and financial resources as well as respective capacity building measures in the administration, politics, schools and vocational training facilities this will not be possible.

- Social services must be controlled with regard to their **suitability for young people**. This is only guaranteed if young people are included actively in the definition and organization of the respective services.

- We need a strong commitment of politicians and the administration with regard to participation of children and young people, the **willingness of politicians and the administration to shift power and competences** as well as the willingness to take children and young people truly seriously and to provide the necessary resources.

- Within this context **institutionalised organs** representing young people, e.g. the local, regional and supraregional student representative organisations, Youth Councils etc. should have the right to be listened to by the administration and politicians with regard to all questions concerning them and should have **a stronger voice** in the respective committees.

- We need to **define local resources and local deficits**, e.g. in the fields promoting language skills, school and education planning, vocational training and gainful employment, child care, providing apartments, psycho-social counselling. This is necessary to combat social exclusion successfully, reach the target group and activate local resources and could be reached by cooperation between the individual stakeholders of local networks (young people, municipal administration, schools, churches, NGOs, businesses offering vocational training etc.)

- **Inclusion must be promoted comprehensively, systematically and in a sustainable way.** Within this context sustainability means that social inclusion processes should be a long-term task of society and

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[63] For example in Germany the Programm "Soziale Stadt" (social town). See Oberste Baubehörde im Bayrischen Staatsministerium des Innern (2000).

should not be counteracted at the same time by exclusion strategies. Participation of all people in society should be the objective. In order to ensure this, we need **local offices** that should be run and organised by adults and young people together. These offices should help young people claim their rights, support them with regard to additional education measures or offer such measures, and to ensure that there are considered in the planning and implementation of participation procedures actively.

- Furthermore, local networks, public institutions, local administration and business should **develop systems which offer young people a range of opportunities to do apprenticeships, training and practical work in their community.** This could range from advice work, youth & community work to multi media research and regeneration work or developing new projects. The purpose would be to enable young people to develop transferable accredited skills, obtain jobs, become involved in managing, running and taking part in schemes.

- **Participation projects must be financed on a long-term basis for various reasons:** they are based on a certain confidence between young people and adults that has to be established (which requires a lot of time) and cannot be transferred arbitrarily onto other persons. It also requires time to establish good contacts with representatives from politics, the administration, business, social offices, schools etc., which are essential for the success of participation projects. Within the framework of participation projects especially young people develop hope and expectations. Not meeting these expectations would be worse than not starting a participation project at all.

- **Communication problems** (apart from power-related aspects) between those involved in a participation process often cause misunderstandings that lead to a blockage. In such cases we need both adults and young people acting as **facilitators and mediators.**

- As long as social inclusion depends on being employed especially disadvantaged young people must be offered more **opportunities to obtain qualifications and thus the opportunity to find a job**. Within this context the certification of life skills and of the results of informal learning as well as of gained knowledge and competences within the process of work should be reinforced.

- If exclusion and unemployment is not to become the characterizing experience of a whole generation, the **philosophy of the welfare state** should no longer focus on compensating poverty (social security) but create measures that promote long-term inclusion (social investment).

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IV - Documentation of the conference

The **central conference** took place **in Brussels from February 27 – March 1, 2002.** At the conference, those who were involved in the project on another level than project coordination had the opportunity to get to know each other and have an exchange of opinion. Furthermore, the results of the project could be presented to and discussed with a broader audience of experts. Only projects that take participation of young people seriously and create the respective space for them can be model projects when it comes to the implementation of participation. That is why **young people from three partner countries were actively involved** in planning and carrying out the conference, and, of course, the project itself. We believe that this is why a refreshing and unique dynamics developed that was characterised by listening to each other and the will to learn from each other. This should be emphasised especially with regard to the fact that the dimensions of social exclusion differ in the different countries and that young people are affected to a different extent by social exclusion. This became clear in the discussions.

The conference was opened by the managing director of BAG EJSA, Michael Fähndrich, **Lissy Gröner, member of the European Commission,** and the project manager Sandra Kröger. Different topics that

formed the general basis of the conference were introduced. It was mentioned, e.g. that **more and more young people are socially excluded** and that this phenomenon is not merely due to unemployment among young people but is multi-layered. At the same time the welfare state is declining in the Western European states and is asking more and more of the individual person. It was stated that participation can complement the welfare state but cannot replace it. A part from the growing extent of exclusion of young people we can note a new development: the group "young people" is being perceived more strongly. This became evident officially for the first time in November 2001 in a **"White Paper Youth"** (drawn up by the European Commission). Thus, the European Commission expressed its wish to consider young people more strongly in the future, even include them. This is a necessary decision

since Europe cannot renounce to the competences of young people. **"No democracy without participation "** is one of the statements in the White Paper. Whereas participation is concerned we must ask ourselves from which point of view this topic is discussed: from the point of view of young people or the point of view of the adults? A number of questions have to be answered, e.g. what structural framework conditions are necessary for successful models of participation, what competences do young people and adults need do have, what positive results can be achieved in participation projects and many others.

 Following the introduction **Luc Tholoniat from the DG Employment and Social Affairs** gave an overview of the political and institutional background of the project. He pointed out the different steps of develop-ment undertaken so far in the **European Action Programme "Social Inclusion"** as well as the stakeholders involved in it, the national differences and collectively defined indicators to define social exclusion. He identified the priority **"Mobilisation of the relevant stakeholders"** as one main chal-lenge in the implementation of the action pro-gramme. The broader context of the project can be seen at the beginning of this project documentation. For further information see

www.yes-forum.org, a dialogue platform de-veloped by BAG EJSA together with Euro-pean partners on which information about the action programme "Social inclusion" of the European Union can be seen.

Afterwards the four project partners presented **the course of their projects in the respective countries** in the plenary. Information about the different projects is included in the first part of this documen-tation. Then, a market place was held by the project partners, where all participants had the opportunity to get a deeper insight into the different projects by taking a look at comprehensive information material on boards and by talking to the project partners / young people personally. This had been included in the programme by the project group in order to make

a more direct and less frontal communication possible and to give a more colourful insight into the work of the different projects. Through photographs, gra-phics, texts and talks the participants were able to get a better impression of all project partners.

The official programme of the first conference day ended with a **plenary discussion about the question "Is participation a means of combating social exclusion?"** Mirco Trielli (Enaip, Lucca), acting as facilitator, started the discussion by asking young people "What would you change, if you were president of Europe?" The young people had various ideas: reduce the separation of people due to their colour of skin, social background or religion, take into consideration their opinion

in society, listen to young people and take them seriously, improve local processes of communication by including people in pro-jects in their neighbourhood, guarantee free access to education, reduce communication barriers between institutions, politicians and young people by "local courses about communication and listening".

In the following discussion especially young people mentioned different experiences made in the course of the participation pro-cess. For the first time **"I learned something about my neighbourhood"**, another person participated with the hope to make a change for the next generation, and thirdly, there was the common consent that during the project many "things were triggered and a lot has already been achieved", yet "there remains a lot of work to do". A common experience was that politicians want to know what young people think, but do not transform their ideas in politics. Furthermore, **adults do not really listen to young people.** On the other hand, someone said that young people do not always know enough about their rights and opportunities to participation or are often not interested in promoting their own interests. We agreed that we ought to focus more on projects in the every-day environment of young people, as they are not attracted by institutionalised project forms. In that field there is a lack of finances, but not of ideas.

In the morning of the second day (motto: "Overcome social exclusion? Let young people participate!") each project presented a workshop

regarding a topic chosen and pre-pared in advance. The following work-shops prepared by both adults and young people were presented:

The Children's Society: "Capacity Building: Should we build social networks or teach young people how to fit in?"

When preparing the workshop the young people from England had seen social exclusion as a wall preventing capacity building. The foundations of the wall consisted of the lack of basic resources and services which are needed for inclusion, and the discrimination which underpins this approach. The labelling lack of skills etc were consequences and provided the upper layers of the wall. They developed the idea of a wall of inclusion as a way of describing the constructive process of capacity building. Here the foundations consisted of good services with quality standards, which were built on by aspects such as peer education and multi agency working. Just as the "wall of exclusion" fitted together to exclude, so the wall of inclusion required agencies to work on a range of levels with young people's active involvement to tackle the problems
(see p. 8-9).

In the following discussion the young people participating in this workshop repeated how painful and frustrating it is to be excluded again and again from different social groups. After being asked by adults whether the young people were willing to make active

contributions, they answered that it was difficult to be motivated **when being permanently discriminated against.**

When asked whether participation strategies could be successful in the present system or whether essential changes would be necessary, there were different points of view that could be referred to as **"from within the system"** and **"by changing the system"**. Those who argue on the basis of factors from within the system are in favour of a change in the structures of society by commitment within existing structures, whereas an analysis by changing the system aims at a complete restructuring of social, economic and political systems. To put this analysis in a nutshell it means that the structures have to change if social inclusion is not possible within the present

structures. As a synthesis we stated that ideally the structures should change by involving young people actively. An important point was that every person remains the same person and does not have to give up the own identity to fit in.

ENAIP: „Is participation a means of combating social exclusion?"

This workshop consisted exclusively of adults. As a warm up exercise participants were asked to "imitate" paintings. One example was "The Scream " by Edward Munch. The participants had to look at exclusion from the outside. One result was that all of us are excluded as observers (of paintings). Nobody is listening. Since everybody knows "The scream " there is a connection. Exclusion is reciprocal and leads to losses. Excluded people are stigmatised. "The Scream " is a cry for help. The excluded person seems blurred, the other people are painted with clear lines. The second task was to change these pictures in such a way that there would be an interaction, a connection between the existing elements. By doing so we realised that we can't improve the pictures by embellishing only single extracts from the paintings.

Interkulturelles Kontaktbüro, Leipzig: „Social Inclusion of young people in local processes. About the experiment to strengthen social networks of people within their neighbourhood "

Different project approaches, successful and unsuccessful cases, opportunities of parti-cipation, prevention of social exclusion were discussed in this workshop. The focal

point was the needs and wishes of young people. One approach was sending young people through their neighbourhood in order to name gardens and public places, and thus be able to see how they perceive their environment. During the discussion we realised **how important an exchange of experiences between generations is.** Only by such an exchange can changes be triggered. An exchange of opinion promotes the opportunities of development of all those involved. Another important factor is the right balance between youth representatives (representative) and participation in the development of projects (direct). Participants of this workshop recommended to make us of the variety of possibilities of participation, but **keep the project proposals open for changes** in order to ensure that projects are open to new-comers and new ideas.

Interkulturelles Netzwerk, Lübeck:"In und out – who, how and why – an international comparison"

In this workshop a play was performed in order to trigger ideas about the topic

"exclusion". In the evaluation phase different results were observed: while the insiders felt a friendly atmosphere, the outsiders were rather disoriented. **"Those outside feel isolated".** Isolation was then defined as the essential problem, whereas exclusion is concerned. **Tolerance was defined as antidote or counterpart of social exclusion**. Exclusion is connected to our fixed definition of values, which prevents inclusion. Openness and tolerance are preconditions to combat social exclusion.
Active listening and mediation between different positions as well as the ability to learn to accept criticism can contribute to combat social

exclusion since barriers are removed. A final perception was that the insiders have power but did not necessarily perceive this as an advantage.

The results of the workshops were then presented in the plenary.

In the afternoon we listened to brief presentations by external speakers about the main topic "Frame conditions for successful models of participation" (described in detail below), which were then discussed in detail in the workshops.

Michael Crilly, Newcastle Civic Centre: „Social exclusion as a learning process – methods of youth research in Sweden, the Netherlands and Great Britain "

The participants from Newcastle presented a strategy for **restructuring the neighbour-hood** being worked at since the beginning of 2001 in Newcastle and other European cities. Active involvement of young people in research about social exclusion, analysis of the neighbourhood and development of solution strategies is an essential part of this strategy. The young people involved in the project were attracted by an unusual add which was aiming explicitly at young people who experienced social exclusion in various ways. The topics to be dealt with were **chosen by the young people themselves.** The main results of the project were presented as follows and discussed afterwards:

- The **networks** of young people (peer groups on one hand, political contacts, lobbying, research on the other hand) are of utmost importance. These networks have to be linked.
- The **attitude** as a basis for interaction between young people and institutions is essential. We need a change in attitudes with regard to the culture of excluded young people.
- Media and art are seen as ideal means of transmitting these topics.
- **Participation requires confidence** and time to create such confidence. Participa-tion also requires incentives and conti-nuity. Starting to work at grass-root level is networking and capacity building at the same time.
- The individual social systems must become more flexible in order to be able to adapt to

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individual situations in a better way. How can organisations change their structures in order to become more flexible?

Barry Percy-Smith: Participation and Story-Telling. „What democratic framework conditions do we need? What must be changed in the system?"

First of all, the question was raised how planning and research projects are being carried out and how decisions are generally made. The essential question was, **who was defining social standards.** A first hypothesis revealed that young people are not included adequately (or not at all) in such basic consi-derations. Different conditions of successful participation based on examples in which socially excluded young people were able to overcome social exclusion by active partici-pation were presented and discussed:

- **The importance of peer-groups** should not be under-estimated
- We need an open flexible society and a **democratic climate**
- **Dialogue** between adults and young people as equal partners is of utmost importance
- We have to create the **necessary structures** to make participation of children and young people possible in the early stages of their every-day life. Adults

  should take over the role of a facilitator and accompany decisions.
- The cohesion of families needs to be supported.
- Furthermore, we need a **change in mentality** in order to perceive young
- people's participation as something positive, not as a problem.
- We must develop a broader understan-ding of social exclusion, of how it deve-lops and what regional and national poli-cies are needed to combat this pheno-menon.

Gabriele Tomei, Pisa: „Sustainable results in youth projects "

Gabriele Tomei talked about experiences with a participation model in an Italian small town **where local support structures did not exist before**. This is an important point, since different basic situations require different concepts. A

survey had been analysed in three steps: first of all a basic evaluation was made. It became clear that young people are the key figures and that problems in the city are mostly limited to one or two neigh-bourhoods which leads to a **labelling** of those who live in these areas. In the second step interviews were carried out and in a third step adults, especially the parents, were involved. The most important result was that the participation process had been important to the young people, but quickly looses meaning if no follow-up projects take place. **The individual participants matured** during the process.

Beate Vinke, Walberberg: "Participation – put your own interests on the table. Which requirements do pedagogues and young people have to meet"

This working group started out with the following hypothesis: **Formal inclusion is not enough to create participation.** Participation is an attitude characterised by dialogue, cooperation and empathy. Young people feel immediately whether adults take them seriously within the meaning of this concept, or whether they are being used as an alibi by "politically correct" adults. Participation is not always easy. Adults have to give up their attitude of being experts and have to shift power, young people must take their life into their own hands in self-responsibility. **Participation is profitable for individuals in their personal lives and for society, as well**. In the workshop we discussed what young people and adults expect from each other in a collective participation process. First, this question was discussed in separate groups (adults and young people separately), then the results were presented to the other groups by forming physical images. An important result was that the **expectations hardly differed from each other.** At the centre were openness, curiosity and interest, respect for the differences and the wish to be taken seriously. It is important to note that young

people and adults do not have equal positions, since adults have more power with which they should deal carefully and in a transparent way.

In the plenary in which the working groups presented their results Susanne Samelin of the Interkulturelles Netzwerk summarised the criteria for successful participation as follows:

- A certain **attitude** of young people and adults of openness and tolerance must be given or developed.
- **Communication and dialogue** between young people and adults must be claimed and promoted at the same time.
- **Structures are important:** networks of young people as well as those between politicians, young people and social workers. Help and support as well as adequate financial means are needed. Participation of young

people should be recognised as a part of politics.

- **Individual aspects** (particular situation at the respective place) must be taken into consideration: individual situations must be considered, individual participation concepts should be developed. Individual competences should be promoted and included. At the same time young people have to be motivated.

On Friday morning the results of the projects were summarised. Therefore, several essen-tial points that had emerged so far during the conference were presented in the plenary:
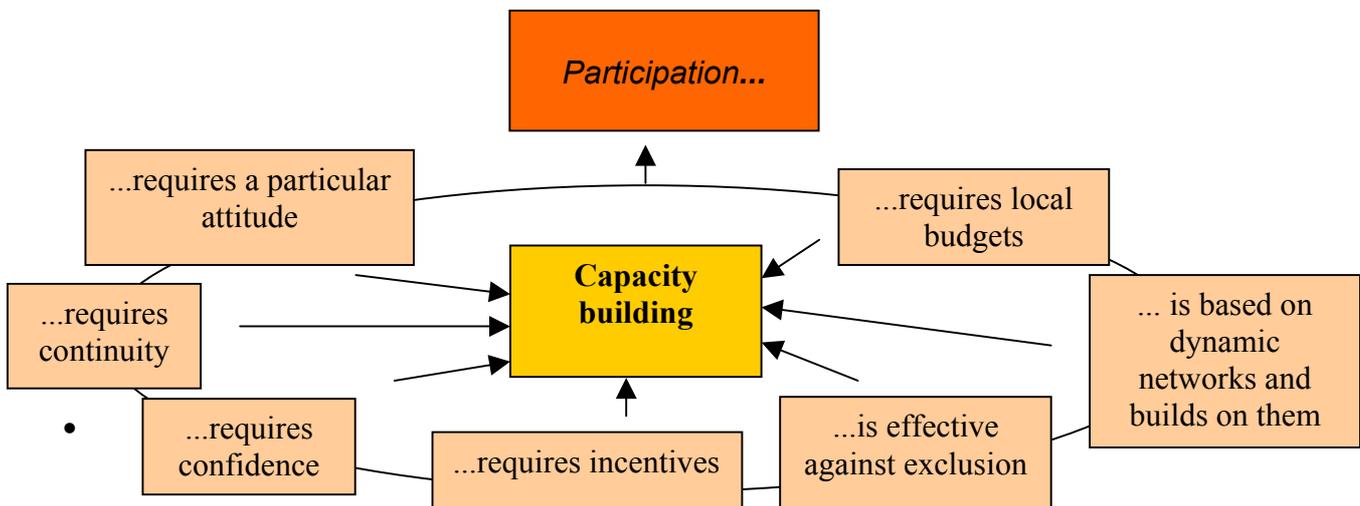
Following this, Sandra Kröger (BAG EJSA) outlined the main results of the **work of the coordination group** during the past year. At this point we could see that these results were **very similar to the results of the conference.** The conference had added a few other important elements, like peer-education and attitude. For further information about the results found by the coordination group see www.yes-forum.org.

In the following discussion, based on the results of the co-ordination group, we emphasised the importance of the involvement of children **as early as possible**, since participation as a solution/method would not be effective after a certain point of time. Furthermore, we agreed, that we should not only focus on participation methods but on the objective of participation. **Why**

participation? We are dealing generally with the question of **social cohesion and educa-ting people about democracy**. Adults also have to explain the meaning of concepts. By participating, one belongs to a community, becomes a citizen in exercising one's own rights. But we cannot expect from young people that they show commitment if adults do not set a good example, which is often not the case.

One young person said, that he enjoyed the conference very much, that it had been good to meet people who think alike and that now, so he hoped, something would change.

Rosie Edwards (The Children's Society) acted as facilitator in the final round about the topic: **"Inclusion strategies between public intervention and self-organisation".** Repre-sentatives of several national and European youth organisations had been invited for this discussion. They briefly presented them-selves at the beginning.

With regard to the different national socio-economic traditions **Ulrike Wisser**, BBJ, Brussels, pointed out that too many govern-mental structures prevent self-organisation and the other way around. When it comes to inclusion strategies we have to check what the financial means provided by public bodies are meant for. In her opinion, a good opportunity to pursue the topic of participation is the White Paper Youth. Now it lies in the hands of the regions and communities to make use of the opportunities in order to shape a socially including European Union. It is not clear yet, what will lie within the responsibility of the European Union.

Fintan Farrel, European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN), Brussels, stated that 62 million people in the European Union were living in poverty, even though it is one of the richest regions in the world. That is why social inclusion has become one of the priorities for the European Union. According to Mr Farrel, participation strategies will lead to a change in society. Participation of all citizens is also a way to **strengthen the lacking confidence** in local and national representatives. We are dealing mainly with power-related questions, since talking about participation means talking about power.

He also mentioned the European Convention, where Giscard d'Estaing made a statement about the participation of young people. With regard to the topic "Social Inclusion" he recommended to influence the next National Action Plan (2003) in order to improve the living conditions of young people. Furthermore, Mr Farrel stated that young people would like to shape the future, but did not have the self-confidence since adults put little trust in them and do not challenge them.

Katy Orr of the European Youth Forum, Brussels, a representative body of 91 members, confirmed that the convention mentioned before offered young people the opportunity to participate. The European Youth Forum would play a facilitating role in this process. She also stressed the impor-tance of peer-education. She is convinced that **participation has to be connected to concepts** and has to start as early as possible. She also pointed out that practical ways of participation would differ greatly in the single nations. Finland and Norway, e.g., have a participation rate that is much higher than that of the other countries. Young people have the lowest income in society and are thus depending on financial and other support by the governments. In addition, they do not know how to deal with money. Further-more, and with regard to participation strate-gies, she described a Portuguese project in which disadvantaged young people were assigned a mentor for support and advice. This had a great influence on the positive development of the local community.

Gerhard Lehwald, managing director of the Leipziger Kinderbüro e.V., emphasised that the individual development in life has to be taken into consideration, focusing on pro-cesses and the development of situations of social exclusion. He underlined this, giving several examples of young people, who tried again and again to find a job, yet were turned down and not taken seriously. Because of this they had developed the feeling that **they were not able to control their own life** but also a feeling of guilt that they themselves were not competent enough, did not find the right words, that they would not be able to make it in the future. In his opinion, in the early stages of childhood something can be achieved or changed, we can give feed-back and create structures.

In the final discussion it was emphasised the necessity to **take over responsibilities for (additional) education of young people** and "monitor" social policies by doing so. An essential problem was the fact, that politicians do not include young people suffi-ciently. Another

obstacle was the restricted financial means and the ways of how financial support was distributed. One opinion was, that the public bodies cannot be the only answer to all problems, like everybody is hoping, especially not in an enlarged Euro-pean Union, since in the potential member states the problems (of young people) are even greater. Within this context another participant pointed out that in Poland and the Baltic countries youth social work is of high quality and that we could learn a lot from these countries. Everyone agreed that at the present moment best practice and peer-education are shared insufficiently and that we have to learn more from each other.

Furthermore, the question was raised of how the young people present at the conference had been chosen. The choice of the young people should depend on the respective project/topic.

In the course of the discussion several sug-gestions about the implementation of partici-pation strategies were made. They could be classified according to the responsible people they are directed at but can only be success-ful if all parties involved implement them:

- Give the young people a say whereas youth budgets are concerned. Carry out projects in which young people administer the finances themselves.
- Take into consideration the interests of young people from the future member states
- Point out the reasons for exclusion
- Create an overview of experiences made so far
- Trigger learning processes on a political level
- Draw up programmes and project propo-sals and present them to the European Commission
- Activate city partnerships
- Influence national policies, make political recommendations
- Make use of the Y.E.S. FORUM
- Include young people more strongly in the preparatory work of future conferences
- Make local finances more flexible
- Make use of the White Paper "Youth"

At the end of the discussion Sandra Kröger thanked the young people, the interpreters, project partners and colleagues of BAG EJSA for their co-operation and support. The other members of the co-ordination group now had the opportunity to make a final statement to the plenary, after which the conference was officially closed.

Apart from the official programme, all partici-pants had the opportunity to write down ideas and thoughts about different topics, such as "social exclusion", "inclusion", "participation", and "strategy recommendations" on papers taped to the walls of the entry hall. These are documented in the final part of this documen-tation.

Sandra Kröger,

BAG EJSA

V – Involved Persons

Coordinating group

Peggy Diebler (Ökumenische Sozialstation)
Rosie Edwards (The Children's Society)
Michael Klein (Internationaler Bund)
Sandra Kröger - Project coordinator (BAG EJSA)
Christoph Lang (Interkulturelles Kontaktbüro)
Monika Pietzsch - Project secretary (BAG EJSA)
Susanne Samelin (Interkulturelles Netzwerk)
Mirco Trielli (En.A.I.P.)

Young people

Katrin-Elisabeth Albert, Raymond Atkinson, Rachael Bennett, Cassandra Blake, Eileen Böhmke, Rebecca Borraccini, Lesley Davies, Daniele Davini, Daniela Dini, Marvin Edwards, Stefano Guidi, Nicke Johnston, Jenny Kermes, Carol Larne, Claudia Laszig, Manuela Martens, Cal McKenna, Rebecca Narducci, Jennifer-Chantal Niemann, Andrea Paolinelli, Beatrice Schäckel, Carl Slater, Ann Marie Smith, Matteo Tronchetti.

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