

# **APPROACHES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTHS IN BULGARIA AND GERMANY**

## **PART 1 APPROACHES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTHS IN BULGARIA**

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## **PART 3 APPROACHES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTHS IN BULGARIA AND GERMANY – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**



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## **PART 1 APPROACHES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTHS IN BULGARIA**

### **A. Approaches for development of training programs/training methods**

There are various approaches for development of training programs and various training methods. It is difficult to 'learn' to use training methods effectively simply by reading about them. Ultimately, one tutor has to try them out, and be prepared to make mistakes. One must not be surprised if things work out in different ways than expected. It is advisable to keep a record of the methods a teacher use, and reflect on his own experience of using them, to help him adapt and improve them. It would be even better if a teacher could ask colleagues or friends to observe him using different methods and get feedback. The participants in the training courses can also give feedback on the methods introduced; after all, they are the ones who should be benefiting from the training directly. The most appropriate methods for teaching and developing a training program should be chosen in relation to the content and learning materials, which are needed to bring about the achievement of the learning outcomes. Even if a teacher develops skills in using a wide range of methods, he should not be tempted to use all the interesting methods in one session. The participants may enjoy them at first, but too much variety may cause confusion and frustration. Teaching methods are used to enable learning to take place, not to prove that the teacher or trainer is a good performer.



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People learn best by what they do and see, less by what they hear, smell or feel. The best methods of learning will try to involve several senses but with a focus on seeing and doing. Quite often, these methods will also require more time to implement and thus many trainers and teachers will prefer to cover a topic in a theoretical or classroom presentation with supporting written materials.

The education process is generally accepted to follow certain didactic principles:

- **The principle of the active and conscious appropriation of the knowledge and skills** – this principle expresses the necessity of manifesting an active and conscious attitude of the students in the learning process; it also creates the students the necessary premises of a profound and creative understanding of the notions under discussion, by avoiding the mechanic, formal learning. The simple presentations or defining of the categories lead to confusions or wrong interpretations if one does not specify the circumstances which can determine a particular phenomenon, the causes of its appearance or the evolution of some indicators and so on;
- **The intuition principle or the principle of the unity between real and abstract, between rational and sensorial**, expresses requirements related to

the fact that it is necessary that the learning process starts from the real contact with the studied object or phenomena, from the specific reality and has the purpose to internalize the perceptions gained through the various senses in order for an intense mental activity mapping solutions to complex situations to be enabled;

- **The principle of connecting theory with practice** is naturally connected to the intuition principle and supposes that the appropriation of the knowledge aspects be through their direct joint with practical activities, thus one avoids the accumulation of the formal pieces of knowledge. There are a lot of modalities for applying this principle:
  - the presentation of the applying domain of the knowledge and the illustration with concrete examples;
  - solving problems and exercises specific for every object;
  - the usage of the appropriate methods in the teaching-learning process, such as the case studies, the company games;
  - visiting the companies;
  - laboratory works and practice activity.

Within the principle of connecting theory with practice an improvement of the students knowledge and life experience takes place. The pieces of knowledge gain an operational value, by forming abilities and skills. The students' spirit of observation, thinking, imagination and attention are also developed; new attitudes, motivations and beliefs are formed.

- **The principle of accessibility and of respecting the students' age and individual particularities** implies that the organization of the system of learning be realized taking into consideration the real possibilities of the students; it is conditioned objectively by their age, their previous knowledge, their individual



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physic and intellectual potential. The accessibility does not supposes the renunciation at the intellectual effort from the students' part, but their training in a continuously and sustained effort in order to assimilate new pieces of knowledge, abilities and skills. The dosage of the effort is required in fact, because the exceeding of the students' possibilities leads to a mechanic learning, lack of interest, breakdown. The specialists (Postelnicu C., 2001, p. 300) speak about a series of individual particularities, specific for every student:

- the psychological specific, represented by the psychic features (temperament, character) and distinct affective-emotional particularities (interests, aspirations, needs, beliefs);
  - the neuron physiological specific, represented by the functional particularities of the nervous system and of the sense organs;
  - the intellectual capacity, represented by functional particularities of the nervous system and of the sense organs;
  - the volume of knowledge, abilities and skills of every student;
  - the life experience, familial environment and learning style of every student.
- **The principle of knowledge systematization and continuity** supposes that the content be taught and learned in a specific scientific and pedagogical order, which has to assure the information accessibility and assimilation in their naturally sequence. The observance of this principle starts with the content organization in logical sequences: chapters, sub chapters, themes. Exemplify.
  - **The principle of the rigorous and durable appropriation of the knowledge, abilities and skills** expresses the requirement of keeping the essential knowledge, abilities and skills for a long time, for being reproduced and used

when necessary. If the other principles stress the knowledge assimilation, this one takes into account the knowledge fixation.

- **The principle of assuring the feed-back within the system of learning** refers to the continuous improvement of the results, depending on the previous achievements. During the teaching process, the feed-back is an essential condition for the efficiency of the educative act. The teacher has to assure himself all the time that the knowledge he transmits to the students is understood by them and they can also operate with it.

These didactic principles should be followed no matter of the particular teaching method chosen: collaborative learning, explorative learning, game- based learning, half-baked approach to games, virtual experimentation and storytelling practices, project- based methodology.

Commonly **collaborative learning** is defined as a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together. According to Smith and MacGregor (1992) “collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together”. Collaborative learning is connected to approaches that present learning as an active, constructive, and social process where an individual actively constructs knowledge facilitated by peer interaction, evaluation, and cooperation. Collaborative learning describes situations in which subjects are becoming mutually aware of their shared goal and are working in group interactively towards this goal, triggering learning mechanisms. There is a wide range of collaborative learning activities both in classrooms and online; collaborative learning activities can include collaborative writing, group projects, joint problem solving, tasks that utilize web-tools and software, debates, or even study teams. In educational practices collaborative learning is thought to be useful for reasons connected to pedagogical perspectives such as the formation of characters.



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Collaborative learning is believed to contribute in the cultivation of habits of involvement and commitment to a community because it encourages students to acquire an “active voice” and a “sensitive ear”. Being able to recognize and resolve differences that students may encounter when collaborating with others is another valuable asset for the student, and thus the future citizen, that can be practiced and gained through collaborative learning. It is worth bringing into focus the fact that there is not any guarantee that the benefits from a collaborative practice will occur in every attempt for collaborative learning. As Bennett (1996, cited in Chronaki, 2003) states the fact that students have been structured in groups does not necessarily guarantee the development of collaboration. Groups can easily turn out to form a situation, in which the members are working individually and not necessarily collaboratively.

As we know, students who are engaged in service learning learn by doing. They integrate theory from the classroom into real life experiences. In its simplest form, cooperative learning gives students something to do other than listen. For instance, students can be asked to create a task (jigsaw puzzle, Jeopardy game, questions and answers, etc.) that will demonstrate learning has taken place. Students can also be assigned a ‘teaching moment.’ They teach the class, formulate questions, and generate discussion. In addition, students can be broken into groups of various sizes with specific outcomes required, which again, demonstrates learning.

It is also important for students have a sense of ownership and accountability for their class. This is achieved by having the students write their own ground rules for the course and create their own expectations of what they want learn in class. One important ground rule that the tutor can encourage is for students to sit in a different seat every class session to enhance class cohesion. Other ground rules could include cell phone use, tardiness, attendance, side-talking, respect for others, etc. It is important to note that students are told the faculty has the final say in ground rules. Expectations might include





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learning more about the community, actively participating in civic engagement, and taking advantage of service learning resources and programs. Students are required to sign a copy of the grounds rules, which demonstrates their acceptance of them. At the end of every course session expectations are reviewed”<sup>1</sup>.

In contemporary learning theories the learner is described as “an active learner of knowledge acquisition”. The ideas underpinning **explorative learning** are well in line with such a notion. Discovery learning, exploratory learning, as well as inquiry-based learning are learning approaches that enclose the idea of exploration and knowledge acquisition which underpins the widely used term “explorative learning”. Explorative/Inquiry-based learning is a strategy about student exploration of knowledge. Though researchers have proposed different definitions of inquiry and exploration they generally share the same opinion according to which there are at least four critical steps when conducting learning based on exploration/inquiry:

- Generating hypothesis,
- Collecting data,
- Interpreting evidence,
- Drawing conclusions.

Papert (1993) has pointed out that ill-structured problems and semi-finished environments are more meaningful for the learner than well-structured ones due to the fact that they provide more opportunities for the learner to use different problem solving strategies and to take an active role in the learning process through exploring, developing, and constructing. The **half-baked games** espouse Papert's (1993) considerations. In fact, half-baked games appear as semi-finished environments, targeting at engaging students with changing their rules. The idea of the half-baked approach is considered to be ideally suited to studies and educational projects, where

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mesacc.edu/other/engagement/ASSETSAbstracts/Y2Abstracts/Mesa.pdf>





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there is a need to guarantee a frame in which students could construct and explore specific concepts with educational value and hold an active role. The semi-finished nature of this approach could also guarantee that a level of freedom could be given to the students to develop their own thinking and their own works. Leaving parts of the learning activity and design open constitute a challenge for students; on the other hand this semi-finished nature can be seen as a good way to restrain students' cognitive load. In such an approach students are free to experiment with the different parts that comprise the learning experience or learning environment. Learners are encouraged in this way to actively engage in the educational process and they are not seen simply as consumers of the educational game but also as explorative producers, as constructors of the rules underpinning the game.

In the last decade there is a growing agreement that more attention should be paid in the development of the creative learning capabilities that each of us carries. **Storytelling** can be placed among these capabilities. Significant learning outcomes can occur when storytelling technique is applied in thoughtful and reflective ways. The use of "story-telling" as a learning and teaching tool arouses the educational community's interest. The majority of debates focus on the feature of the narrative which is embodied in the storytelling technique. Mott et al (1999) referred to narrative as an "effective tool for exploring the structure and process of meaning making whether the object of analysis be everyday life, the novel, or film". Such a conception is not new. The potential to contextualize learning through story-telling and narrative practices has been also identified by Wells (1986). Wells (1986) states: "Constructing stories in the mind - or storying, as it has been called-is one of the most fundamental means of making meaning; as such it is an activity that pervades all aspects of learning [...]. Through the exchange of stories, teachers and students can share their understandings of a topic and bring their mental models of the world into closer alignment".



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The digital world we live in, allowed and instigated the emergence of the digital storytelling practice. This is not to say that the traditional story-telling practice is being disappearing but to emphasize the fact that a new and enriched form of this practice is coming into the educational stage by using digital multimedia, such as images, audio, and video.

The time that each story lasts vary. The same applies to the type of the stories. The stories can act as vehicles for representing historical events (historical documentaries), informing or instructing on a particular concept or simply telling personal experiences (personal narratives).

A critical question that is raised is who can be the creator of the stories? Both teachers and students can be the creators of the stories. Research has shown, that "the use of anticipatory sets at the begging of a lesson" offers a student the opportunity to create links between existing and new knowledge (Ausbel, 1978 cited in Robin n.d) and to engage smoothly in the learning process (Robin, n.d, Burmark, 2004, Ormrod 2004).

**Project-based learning** (PBL) is proposed as a teaching and learning strategy and methodology that engages learners in sustained, cooperative investigation and includes authentic content, authentic assessment, teacher facilitation but not direction, explicit educational goals, collaborative learning, and reflection. Projects are long term activities that bring together ideas and principles from a number of subject areas. Teaching and learning through project seems to be a complex and demanding activity for teachers and students.

Project-based learning as a method of teaching and learning is mainly based on contemporary learning theories which argument that knowledge, thinking, doing and the contexts for learning are inextricably tied. Learning is partly a social activity taking place within the context of culture, community, and real life experiences. Knowledge construction has become a key term in describing a more active student role in



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developing and creating their own knowledge. It is central in describing the process of learning within problem-based and project-based learning. It is based on pedagogical ideas coming from J. Dewey and certain constructivist perspectives.

Ideas of constructionism (Papert 1991) such as: learner as active builder of knowledge, creation of a student-centred learning environment, emphasis on artifact creation as part of the learning outcome based on authentic and real life experiences with multiple perspectives are reflected in project-based learning. Knowledge construction implies an active and reflective information-seeking process among the students where the teacher is not the primary or sole provider of information. Within this theoretical context learning is seen as a social process where the students have to relate to each other in order to complete their tasks. One objective of the project work has been to provide better insight on how students work on knowledge construction in different activities and learning environments. Project-based learning is a model for classroom activity that shifts away from the classroom practices of short, isolated, teacher-centred lessons and instead emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary, student-centred, and integrated with real world issues and practices. PBL helps make learning meaningful and useful to students by establishing connections to life outside the classroom, addressing real world problems, and developing real world skills. PBL supports learners to develop a variety of skills including the ability to work well with others, make thoughtful decisions, take initiative, and solve open problems. In the classroom, PBL provides many unique opportunities for teachers to communicate and establish relationships with their students. Teachers are required to be ready to change their role from coach to facilitator and to that of co-learner. Teachers and students can discuss the learning that is taking place exploiting students' products, drafts, and works.

In addition, the following teaching-learning methods and experiences can be used to expose the participants to a wide range of disciplines:



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- thematic multidisciplinary seminars, to expose learners to cross-disciplinary issues and interactions;
- talks by guest speakers, to provide disciplinary perspectives and summaries of disciplinary contributions;
- problem-oriented workshops, to deal with and resolve real-world problems through focused case studies;
- teacher-accompanied participation at government agency meetings, to expose learners to public participation in the policy process and the operational reality of the government;
- video-recorded role-playing for reviewing and discussing the dynamics of group interactions, attitudes and skills related to real-life situations;
- student seminars incorporated into courses.

In conclusion: Youth at risk and youth in disadvantage have many barriers to overcome in their quest to achieving academic success. One barrier that can easily be overlooked is the stereotypes that VET providers have of this sub group of learners. These stereotypes must be acknowledged in order for an active and successful learning environment to be created. Stereotypes can include negative personal beliefs regarding ethnicity, socio-economic background, lack of academic preparation, and dysfunctional family dynamics. "At-risk students do not need a different curriculum. What they need are the same qualities of teaching that most help mainstream kids."<sup>2</sup>

## B. Good practice examples

**Project: "Rückenwind (tailwind) in practice - Training to prepare a network of partners and specialists to integrate disadvantaged youth at the regional level"** implemented by the National Cultural Center "Future Now 2006", Smolyan Municipality

<sup>2</sup> Roland Tharp, director of the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE)



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Association and New Horizons supported by NCEMPI, the program "Youth in action" program of the European Union. Rückenwind is an international initiative which operates in many countries with regard to the problems of disadvantaged young people. The objective of the project is building the capacity of local actors and building a network of partnerships for the implementation of the strategy Ruckenwind in Bulgaria. The program included representatives of the Department "Youth" to the Ministry of Education and Science and an expert on European integration and the National Voluntary Service Agency (NCEMPI) <http://www.youthnetworks.eu/SearchEvent.aspx>

**MOTRASUP** is a vocational training program providing support to the social adaptation of people with disabilities and their realization on the labor market. MOTRASUP prepares disabled people for providing attendant support to other people with problems (people with physical or mental malformations, single mothers, elderly persons, persons from the minorities, ex-prisoners, etc.) wanting to develop skills for independent life. MOTRASUP is a set of vocational training methods, content and products using the information and communication technologies and respecting the requirements for learning materials destined to people with disabilities. MOTRASUP is the first program for web-based training of disabled persons for the profession of "Social assistant". MOTRASUP gives the possibility to realize the "training of trainers". MOTRASUP is an implementation of the European strategy for the development of modular vocational training programs and it is tightly connected to the idea of life long learning. This project has been motivated by the need to create training systems, which would help the social adaptation and realization of individuals with disabilities and encourage them to live independently. The modular system for training disabled individuals to provide attendant support to other people in similar condition has been created in response to the need of these individuals for social and professional integration and offers one possible solution to their problem. Attendant

support is a system of procedures and approaches meant to aid individuals, families and small groups of people with specific physical, psychological or social problems. This type of support is carried out by non-professionals and is based on the assumption that the person in need of support and the one who is helping him/her are in an equal position. The project considers training disabled people in acquiring knowledge and experience in the provision of attendant support to other people in disadvantaged position (individuals with physical or mental disabilities, with damaged senses, in specific health condition or with mental illnesses, bedridden people, aged people, single mothers, former prisoners, abused children, drug addicts, people from ethnic minorities and others). The program will include training in social skills, basic knowledge of the nature of mental disorders, caused by different illnesses, self-help techniques, principles of healthy life and diet, techniques for conducting therapy conversations, relevant legislation, and social protection of individuals in disadvantaged positions. Source: <http://www.motrasup.info>

**Integrating Orphans into society “Agapedia project”** (project of association Integra) - <http://www.integra-bds.bg/bg/orphans.html>. The purpose of the project is to help integrate into society disadvantaged young people (orphans, abandoned children, children from broken families, abused etc) by teaching them basic social skills such as communication, PC literacy, foreign languages, cooking and cosmetics, job application and sustaining it for a longer period etc.

Currently, Integra-BDS has an Orphans Training Center with about 30 children and teenagers involved in the program and various social-skills development activities. Main objectives of the project: Creating and implementing a working model for the successful social integration of young people who are about to graduate and leave orphanages and similar institutions; holistic approach in their intellectual , social , moral and emotional development by providing training for four years by our qualified staff in the Integra





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Orphans Training Center; helping the disadvantaged people develop working habits and skills, job application and interviews preparation for their successful social integration and professional realization.

**NT CRAFTS - New access to continuing vocational training for isolated labor market groups through self-training in traditional crafts.** A Leonardo da Vinci pilot project coordinated by Znanie CVT with partners from Spain, Greece, UK, Finland and Czech Republic ([http://www.znanie-bg.org/projects\\_02\\_en.html](http://www.znanie-bg.org/projects_02_en.html)). During the project will be developed, tested and analysed a self – learning and training package for acquisition of skills for design and production of four hand-made articles, characteristic for the natural specifics of the partnering countries and suitable to be produced at home and offered on the market as souvenirs or home staff: decorative carpeting (Bulgaria), basketwork (Spain), pottery (Greece), and Lapland pullovers (Finland). The self-training system offers flexible training opportunities for people who do not have access to the traditional training forms.

**REVIT project:** European citizens living in remote rural or insular areas are often excluded from mainstream educational activities easily accessible by people living in larger cities. Fewer lifelong learning opportunities are available to both young pupils and adults. The educational background of people living in rural areas is much lower than people living in urban areas and cities with urbanisation still being under progress in many countries. The problem faced by every rural remote area is that young people are moving to cities to get a better education and to lead a more interesting life. On the other hand, the lowest educational levels are found in rural, remote municipalities. The vicious circle “being remote means having less educational opportunities, which further increases the remoteness” results in an artificially limited scope of educational activities





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needed in remote areas in comparison with those registered in the urban areas. One of the main reasons for depopulation of the rural and distant/island regions lies with the fact that people do need further education – both higher, university education and specialized vocational training - in order to accomplish targets and achieve self-fulfilment and economic success. The key goal of this project is to show in actual practice and by a scalable example, that it is possible and economically feasible to substantially supplement the meager and sometimes irrelevant educational opportunities normally available to residents of remote and insular regions in the EU: through modern ICT-based distance education and training for young pupils and adults alike; using innovative thorough technologically and methodologically approach; utilizing existing infrastructure at otherwise declining schools and revitalizing their operation in order to become multi-purpose local learning centres accessible to all; establishing learning partnerships between schools, training centres, firms, research facilities and universities to their mutual benefit for personally meaningful educational activities and courses; producing exemplary educational material to last beyond the project, that would be otherwise lacking in these regions and would lead people either to exclusion or to migration. Here one of the courses developed under the REVIT project is presented in more details. This is a course, which is directly related to the target group of this project. However the REVIT methodology allows VET in various fields and themes (there are course on agro tourism, e-commerce, organic farming, English language, writing skills) and it is highly adaptable, which makes it a very suitable practice for people having fewer educational opportunities. The e-course Pupils with Special Educational Needs (PSEN) was designed to help remote schools and teachers to deal with this area of school education. This e-course gives teachers who have completed their teacher education the possibility to study about this specific area in their own school, or even at home. The e-course was created for teachers in comprehensive education (primary and secondary level).



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Participants in this course are required to have a basic teacher education or a Master's degree in education. Participants should also have at least a few years of working experience in either primary or secondary schools. The course tutor should be an expert in the area of Special Education and have a Master's degree in education. In addition, a background in working at a school that provides services for or research on Special Educational Needs is recommended. The course 'Pupils with Special Educational Needs' was designed for those teaching pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) who have been integrated into mainstream education. The course aims at: Sharing theoretical knowledge and practical experiences gained on working with a different learner in large groups; helping teachers to acknowledge the support needed for fostering different learners' growth and building their healthy self-esteem; helping teachers in managing their everyday work practice and assisting them to process problems faced in work situations; assisting teachers to support the development of a healthy self-esteem in different learners, their preparation for further studies and thus preventing their later exclusion. The online workspace for the course 'Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream education' contains several folders: Course Guide; Inclusive school: This folder contains information about the inclusive school; Special themes: This folder has information on Asperger's syndrome and ADHD syndrome as well as on children's and adolescents' psychological symptoms; Encountering diversity: The folder contains material about the various ways diversity manifests itself, such as attention and emotional disorders; Individual Education Plans (IEP): This folder contains information on the preparation of Individual Education Plans, or IEPs; Co-operation: In this folder, there are material concerning the co-operation between school, home and various other groups that are part of SEN pupils' lives, as well as information on intra-school co-operation concerning SEN pupils. Source: <http://revit.cti.gr>



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## **Project "Increasing employment opportunities for unemployed individuals through quality vocational education and training"**

([http://www.az.government.bg/Projects/Prog/OtherProg/Frame\\_BGCPO.htm](http://www.az.government.bg/Projects/Prog/OtherProg/Frame_BGCPO.htm)) The project aims at creating conditions to improve adaptability and increase the employability of unemployed vulnerable/disadvantaged groups on the labor market through the implementation of a set of measures that meet their specific needs: information, advice, training and learning skills in different professions/ specialties of key competencies and social skills. This project represents the planned implementation of the Public Enterprise "Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Center" /PE "BG-DE VTC"/ public tasks in the training of unemployed persons, incl. representatives of vulnerable groups in the labor market, trainers in vocational training centers and instructors. The activities, which will be implemented by the branches of PE "BG-DE VTC" in Pazardzhik, Pleven, Smolyan, Stara Zagora and Tsarevo are:

- a. training for vocational qualification demanded by the labor market;
- b. training for key competences;
- c. raise methodological competence of adult learners, including training of mentors.

For the unemployed people from other places dormitory and dining room is available as accompaniment service, which has an important effect on people's inclusion and supports their socialization. The project activities will include 1,687 unemployed persons of disadvantaged groups in the labor market, registered with the labor bureaus: young people under 29 years, people over 50 years of age, long-term unemployed, unemployed persons with low or unintended market labor shortages and qualifications of key competences, including unemployed with low education (including Roma); people with disabilities.



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There are the two options available: Training on "Social and civic competences" – the aim of the training is to develop skills in civic and social culture, overcoming social isolation, change management - understanding of their role and the role of civil society and Training "Enterprise and entrepreneurship." Training in professions relevant to starting own business is planned to be conducted. Its purpose is skills for checking motivation and attitude to start their own businesses to take a risk assessment, planning and management of projects. The combination of professional training with the core competencies of entrepreneurship will provide greater opportunity for participants in the labor market.

Unemployed persons involved in the project will be trained on part of the job or in training for attainment of vocational qualifications. The courses are organized based on the demand of the labor market occupations and specializations in the following areas: automotive, orthopedics, agricultural, and gas equipment installation, electrical, welding, information technology, computer engineering, accounting, shop assistants, waiters, bartenders, cooks, hotel employees, gardeners, construction, refurbishment, maintenance roads and buildings, furniture makers, beauticians, hairdressers, office secretaries, personal and administrative assistants.

The training is practical and is organized on a modular basis. It includes a theoretical part, practical training conducted in educational workshops and labs, and practical partner companies in PE "BG-DE VTC" where students will have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills in a real working environment and a real job. The training for attainment of vocational qualification will be completed with state qualifying exam on the theory and practice of the subject to acquire the level of proficiency. In conducting the examination representatives of employers, trade chambers, social partners and employment offices will be invited in order to ensure maximum transparency and objectivity in the assessment of acquired competences. In this way, the learners

themselves get a chance to showcase their knowledge and skills to prospective employers that can facilitate their entry in the labor market.

## **PART 2 APPROACHES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTHS IN GERMANY**

### **A. Training methods / training programs targeted on disadvantaged youths**

*„We are constantly told what we should do, but nobody tells us how to do it“ (a young man participating in a program for further education)*

The following methods are discovered within all school and professional measures focused on youths at a disadvantage:

- a. Support for developing social competences and for learning action strategies
- b. Training for application
- c. Individual conversations for the purpose of finding the aims and defining the support plans, adapted according to the individual needs
- d. Help for the management of daily activities, for example consulting on obligations, dependencies, living environment
- e. Individual support through the so called “companion” or „god father“
- f. Accumulating experience through practical activities

#### **1. Business and school – BUS**

This project is focused on disadvantaged youths in the final year of their compulsory education, which are leaving school – sometimes after multiple repetitions of several school years – probably without a diploma for 10<sup>th</sup> grade and without particular perspectives for finding training opportunities or employment. Some of the youths get trained by means of a combination of school education and practical experience in a



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company during the last year of their compulsory education for the purpose of transferring from training to employment. The selection of the youths takes place at the schools, which join the project on a voluntary basis. The program for each youth has a duration of one year. As a rule the youths study three days a week in special classes, considering the requirements of professional life. Two days a week the trainees spend at the companies and enterprises where they get vocational training on their specialty.

Through the connection between the company practice and the school education within groups of peer learners, the youths should regain their motivation.

The important objectives in these cases are:

- Discovering the connection between the professional and school requirements,
- Solid and realistic professional orientation,
- Specific selection and taking a training position, respectfully – employment placement.

The usage of trainee places at companies is implemented by the respective trainers and it achieves the intention of best reconciliation between the interests and abilities of the youths and the available employment places in the enterprises. Furthermore, the trainers serve as accompanying staff during the practice in the company and at the same time play the role of discussion partners with the enterprises. The project creates a possibility for the participating enterprise to conduct a targeted search for young workers and to integrate the suitable youths, who can do their training practices there. The majority of applications for training places, respectively for working placements, coming as personal initiative from some youths would have no chances for success considering the competition from other candidates. Experience shows that through their successful relations with these youths many enterprises manage to win a staff member, who fits perfectly within the company context.

The practices, which as a rule takes place over a whole year, offers to the enterprises an opportunity to learn how to discover and assess the skills and qualities of these youths.

[http://www.businnrw.de/bus-in-nrw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=6](http://www.businnrw.de/bus-in-nrw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=6)

## 2. Youths in work plus

The objective of the project "Youths in work plus" is to find labor contract opportunities, with all compulsory social insurances and remuneration based on certain tariffs or on the pay levels that are usual for the place of employment, for youths at their first contact with the labor market.

The program is focused on youths in need of help that are still under 25 years old.

Participation in the initiative is implemented through a statement from the Employment agency or the Job center. After this statement the youths are allowed to enter a process of individual accompanying on behalf of local consultants for a term of a maximum of nine months. At the same time the specialists from the Chamber of commerce and industry, as well as those from the Crafts chamber collect employment places on the labor market.

The objective of this process of accompanying is to prepare the youths for becoming employed and to make finding the proper person easier for the enterprises. In case of need for intermediation within a labor contract with compulsory social insurance, financial support can be provided for inclusion in the labor market on behalf of the Employment agency or the Job center. Round tables have been organized for the purpose of applying the "Youth in work plus" in other places in the labor market in all region Nordrhein-Westfalen. The practical work on site is coordinated by the district agencies.





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Peggy Ülker (ARGE Cologne): "A substantial factor is the individual support, which the program participants receive through the consultant social pedagogues, as well as through the experts from the Industrial, Commercial or Crafts chambers. In addition to this, I consider that it is very important that the strengths and desires of our young clients are respected and taken into consideration".

[http://www.gib.nrw.de/arbeitsbereiche/jugend\\_und\\_beruf/jugend\\_in\\_arbeit\\_plus?fieldset=programm](http://www.gib.nrw.de/arbeitsbereiche/jugend_und_beruf/jugend_in_arbeit_plus?fieldset=programm)

### 3. Production Schools

„**Production school**“ is a collective term for various approaches, which however, are related to different target groups. The essence lies within an educational concept, which is not focused on studying from books, but on a constant relation between theoretical and practical education, and, during the practical training, on real orders from clients. The students learn and work on real orders, received from external clients.

The practice related aspect should go to theoretical clarifications and vice versa – from the theoretical aspect to practice, thus enabling the implementation of the complex process of learning. So far the existing production schools in Germany were mainly focused towards youths that have not graduated school, towards youths, for whom it is considered that they would not accept any other training offer and towards youths that have already turned down several offers for acquiring qualifications through vocational training.

[http://www.bva.bund.de/nn\\_2158820/DE/Aufgaben/Abt\\_II/esf-projekte/Xenos\\_20II/Xenos\\_II-node.html?nnn=true](http://www.bva.bund.de/nn_2158820/DE/Aufgaben/Abt_II/esf-projekte/Xenos_20II/Xenos_II-node.html?nnn=true)

### Learning from the job – Production school Offenbach

*„If you give someone a fish, you will feed him once. If you teach him how to fish, he will feed himself all his life.“*



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The participants in the project work at a public Cellar / Cafeteria and in a coffee shop. Under special guidance they learn and practice various culinary techniques in the services sector. The specialized theory is taught in direct connection with the work done. If necessary the youths can finish 10<sup>th</sup> grade later on. A modular construction of separate certified training and work units, as well as the formation of grounds for the acquisition of qualifications, makes the adoption of provable competences for different sectors and their offer to the labor market. During the yearly duration of the project the youths / adolescents learn and practice key qualifications such as independence, communication skills, readiness for participation and team work. In their professional and personal planning process they are supported by the assistants.

A company practice of up to several weeks provides an opportunity to try your own abilities. The production school works in an integrated system with other production schools / bearers of education. Thus, offers in different labor spheres can be made. The integrated system contributes also for the creation of about 69 practicing placements in Offenbach. The cooperating partners are enterprises, chambers, financial institutions, municipalities, clients, political representatives, schools, the federal association of production schools, the national group of production schools in Hessen.

## **B. Good practices EQUAL**

### **Project: Kompetenz und Vielfalt erkennen – Betriebliche Integration von MigrantInnen**

[http://www.docstoc.com/docs/27641954/Participant-fiche-\\_2\\_](http://www.docstoc.com/docs/27641954/Participant-fiche-_2_)

EQUAL theme: Employability - (Re-)integration to the labour market

Beneficiaries: migrants

Project Objectives: To improve the participation of migrants in the labor market through innovative strategies aimed at exchange of intercultural competencies and methods of



"managing diversity." The project focuses on cross-cultural mentoring and matching the demand of the labor market with the capability bounding migrants seeking work. Among the activities carried out under the project are: advice for businesses - consulting staff - preliminary selection of staff - start application procedures - competency analysis - an approach to provide advice oriented resources - individual counseling as per the specifications of the profession and targeted hiring work or involvement in a program of continuing education - advice and support for employers - providing information to regional and national labor market - mentoring - optimize documents for work.

### **Project: KiLIM - Kompetenztransfer interkulturelles Lernen & Integration von MigrantInnen**

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/73536595/KiLIM-PrisonPortal>

EQUAL theme: Employability - (Re-)integration to the labour market

Beneficiaries: migrants from the Saarland region

Project Objectives: improve and strengthen the ability of migrants to act so that a) to plan and develop their own professional integration and also b) while managers responsible for human resources in local enterprises to be able to understand and benefit from extraordinary skills and potential that are available to them that would be very useful for their enterprises and institutions.

In the 80s of the 20th century, the educational level of young foreigners improves but mid 90s is stagnating. To this day, children and young people with a migration background suffer from significantly disadvantaged position compared to German students when it comes to participation in education and training.

Innovativeness of the project is contained in that it offers guidance counseling - qualified balance of competences, especially in relation to young people with migration background and related specific competencies in order to form a European education



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and European passport ELP. Training - a wide range of application areas, starting from direct transfer from school to vocational training and employment and work.

## **Project NOBI Norddeutsches Netzwerk zur beruflichen Integration von MigrantInnen**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_884.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_884.htm)

EQUAL theme: Employability - Combating racism

Beneficiaries: Foreign immigrants, foreign nationals born in Germany, naturalised Germans, ethnic German resettlers from Eastern and South Eastern Europe, late resettlers and refugees with the right to stay in Germany

Project Objectives: To establish and institutionalise an information and advice network for the professional qualification and integration of immigrants. That includes:

- Optimising labour market policy instruments and concept development
- Optimising the range of advice on offer (processing information, analysis, evaluation as well as cooperation and further training). The lack of compatibility in supply and demand for qualification in the labour market in general and in labour markets within companies, the lack of formal qualifications and failure to recognise existing skills and qualifications - all this already deal a knockout blow where criteria for (in-company) vocational training and continuing education measures are concerned. By implementing diversity management concepts in the public sector and developing qualification sequences for staff training and in-service training as well as an intercultural sensitisation and qualification of human resources staff and works councillors in industry, commerce and administration.

## **Project MigraNet - bay. Netzwerk z. strukt. Neuordnung der ber. Integ. von MigrantInnen**



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[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_886.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_886.htm)

EQUAL theme: Employability - Combating racism

Beneficiaries: Immigrants in Bavaria

Project Objectives: Aim of this measurement is to decrease the number of unemployed people with immigration background by helping their skills and foreign qualifications to be recognised, advice of setting up a business, "diversity management", improve language skills. Whether self-employed or not, immigrants belong to a discriminated group on the German labour market. Women suffer the most from this situation because of family duties, social-cultural aspects as well as "classical aspects" like doing the household chores and bringing up the children. Further assistance and qualification is needed, to make up for the loss and deficiencies. In addition to that, instruments are missing which show different qualification measurements. They need support when they get into contact with employers or other important people on the labour market. Barriers have to be removed so that access to the labour market is possible.

### **Project InBeZ - Integrations- und Beratungszentren für MigrantInnen Rhein-Saar-Elbe**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_888.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_888.htm)

EQUAL theme: Employability - Combating racism

Beneficiaries: Immigrants in Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland

Project Objectives: 1. Optimisation of access to and addressing of migrants/organisations; 2. Provision of local information/consulting centres; 3. Optimisation of consulting and qualification offers in the regions; 4. Gender-sensitive consulting; 5. Target-group-specific training and further education; 6. Co-ordination of job-market tools on sector and national levels; 7. Reduction of hostility to foreigners and racism There's a low percentage of holders of qualified educational and professional



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degrees. Until recent this was not an issue but with the reduction of jobs in mining and heavy industries due to the structural change in the regions the target group has been directly affected and continue to do so in a particular way. Skills and further education becomes a significant element in the job search process.

## **Project ProIntegration - Integration durch interkulturelles Mainstreaming**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_887.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_887.htm)

EQUAL theme: Employability - Combating racism

Beneficiaries: Immigrants in Berlin

Project Objectives: To help improve the vocational integration of a target group especially affected by unemployment.

To tap the specific potential of immigrants with regards to the specific Berlin's economy. Involve all parties having to do with the vocational integration of immigrants, including all levels of integration - the integrated approach will have a sustainable labor market policy impact if the right participants are brought together and if targeted network-building takes place while the project is running. Since the unemployment rate of unskilled workers is approx. 42%, and since 74% of unemployed immigrants in Berlin have not completed vocational training, their qualification in accordance with demand is of the utmost importance as a means of securing sustainable employability. But qualification must be more appropriate than it has been in previous projects – that is, it must be geared to immigrants' existing competencies and to the needs of the business community in Berlin. Thus, ProIntegration concentrates more on tailor-made modules, which are chosen from a set of options to meet individual needs, than on complex continuing education measures. Because migrants are faced with special entry barriers into the labor market, improving their vocational integration is also an express focus of Berlin's ARP program for labor market policy. ProIntegration is responding to this focus with the innovative



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strategy of cross-cultural mainstreaming - it is to reduce obstacles to the vocational integration of immigrants in Berlin and to make better use of their specific potential for the benefit of Berlin's economy.

## **Project Arbeit und Qualifizierung für Zuwander/innen (ProAQua)**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_890.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_890.htm)

EQUAL theme: Employability - Combating racism

Beneficiaries: Ethnic minorities in Bremen and Bremerhaven

Project Objectives: 1. Integration of ethnic minority women and men by means of tailored qualification, training, consultation and employment programmes targeted at the initial labour market, 2. Transfer of these acquired innovations to the field of employment promotion for ethnic minorities by good practice approaches. With special focus placed on the healthcare and nursing industry as service provision sectors that are increasingly opening up to non-German employers in order to meet the demands of a rapidly diversifying patient structure. Often reasons for the high unemployment rate of non-Germans are given along the lines that recruited migrant workers had not completed any vocational training, and the problem would practically take care of itself "naturally" upon the worker reaching the age of retirement and the entry of his/her children and grandchildren into the labour market. However, the Commissioner for Integration Matters of the State of Bremen points out that in the past 10 years, year for year more than half of the non-German youths only acquire or do not even acquire the lowest-level general secondary school education certificate. Inter alia, according to the Commissioner for Integration Matters, the professional course of many non-German youths proceeds from lacking or inadequate school education to the resulting qualification deficit, thus heading directly into unemployment. To tie in previous experience or "brought along" qualifications and enable candidates to work





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towards German certification. A regional innovation is the training of language and cultural mediators, who in turn are in demand in the healthcare industry, but in other social fields as well.

This DP is exploring new avenues that uses e-learning in combination with traditional classroom teaching to counteract the disadvantages faced by ethnic minorities in information and communication-based learning and vocational fields. As an "innovative laboratory" the project is well suited to support complex regional employment policy-related innovations, such as change management within the employment promotion of ethnic minorities. The aim is a significant quality enhancement in the integration of ethnic minorities by means of the jointly developed target group-tailored methods and new means of access to internships and the initial labour market. Ethnic minorities need a high level of support before and if necessary in the initial phase after taking up work. The goal is to combine or interlock qualification and connected employment placement/mediation services such as coaching after becoming employed.

## **Project ALBUMArbeitsprozessorientiertes Lernen und Beraten mit und für Migrant/innen**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_889.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_889.htm)

EQUAL theme: Employability - Combating racism

Beneficiaries: Foreign immigrants and naturalised Germans from immigrant backgrounds in Hannover economic area

Project Objectives: Main objective is for immigrants in the Hannover economic region to combat discrimination in and exclusion from the employment market and thus oppose and dismantle the structures of racism and xenophobia. Experience has shown that entrepreneurs from immigrant backgrounds sometimes lack skills and qualifications in accounting, marketing or other specific management competencies, a lack which



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weakens their competitiveness dramatically. Demands on the skills of the workforce are changing radically. Along with the general trend to higher specialist qualifications, social, cultural and communicative skills are also assuming greater significance. Education, skill building and qualifications are the keys to durable integration. Projected participant groups are not primarily immigrants without work, but more those who are active as entrepreneurs or employed in local enterprises. A declared aim of the DP ALBUM is to develop personal potential and offer people a way of securing their position within an enterprise or of improving it through developing appropriate areas of responsibility. For this, new forms of cooperation between immigrant organisations and educational facilities should be set up, links made across lines of responsibility, and a client group-oriented interrelationship between various forms of funding and support (e.g., counselling and skilling/qualification, classes and self-study) established, to arrive at a new quality of provision that will be stabilised and sustained through horizontal and vertical transferability.

### **Project LINK-UP**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_982.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_982.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reconciling family and professional life

Beneficiaries: People living with HIV and AIDS

Project Objectives: To improve the adaptability of businesses to integrate people with disadvantages, especially people living with HIV/AIDS. To improve the employability of this target group. The project is to look at improved and measures of qualification tailored for the target group, such as resource-bound training in order to improve work and employment for people living with HIV and AIDS. Experience in the USA, Canada and Australia has shown that with the concept of "supported employment", operational integration into the labour market is possible despite the disability and an unfavourable labour situation, if ability and resource oriented development of jobs and job oriented



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training are part of the integration practice directed at individual cases. In the light of this, the development of strategies and models against discrimination and the unequal treatment of people living with HIV and AIDS in the labour market is the challenge for this development partnership.

### **Project Transnationaler Arbeitsmarkt Europa TAE**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_981.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_981.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reconciling family and professional life

Beneficiaries: Migrants within the EU

Project Objectives: To strengthen the mobility of unemployed people to get a new job within the European Union, esp. in the countries Great Britain, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. To develop a networking and experience exchange between the different actors responsible to arrange job opportunities on European and national level. The project specifically covers the border region Sønderjylland / Schleswig and its entire transnational job market at that German/Danish border. It is expected from employees to get active where their work power is needed. The fundamental readiness for this and the possibility of arranging jobs into different countries has to be done first separately and than country wide but without relevant language knowledge and intercultural or social cultural training the chances for a job abroad are little. It requires before a detailed preparation in communication of the applied country as well as a training for general communications. A conversion strategy of the project is the structure of operating partnerships, which facilitate the exchange of training. This opens the chances to smaller enterprises for training, if the form of the group training is also included. Also the possibilities of employment in the European countries and the determination of jobs abroad with the support of a personnel coach, the "job finder", to show opportunittees on european and national level.

## **Project GALA - Gestaltung altersübergreifender Lern- und Arbeitsprozesse in KMU**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_983.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_983.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reconciling family and professional life

Beneficiaries: 1. small and medium-size businesses; 2. young vs. elderly employees in Potsdam region.

Project Objectives: To increase the chances for integration predominantly for young people into vocational education or a job in a small and medium-sized company in Potsdam. The aim is to show young people the possibility to have job opportunities without missing the family ambitions as well as the transfer of knowledge and skills from the elderly employees. To improve the equal treatment of genders and the unused potential of skilled workers in the district of Potsdam has to be mobilized. Companies are not focused on the compatibility of family and job ambitions - therefore is no equality, esp. the access to vocational training, further qualification and employment. Between the generations there is latent pressure because of this. Use of intergenerative learning and working in a company, new models of working hours, demand-oriented and individual-tailor-made learning offers connected with an additional support regarding family planning, expectation of future life, education in sexual matters etc.

## **Project Tandem**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_984.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_984.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reconciling family and professional life

Beneficiaries: (1) small and medium-sized enterprises (SME); (2) employees and persons looking for work; (3) regional development: building up regional infrastructures and actions which will secure the innovations and sustainability of the programme.



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Project Objectives: (1) the improvement of the capability of adaptation of the SMEs and their employees and people searching for employment and (2) the improvement of the reconciliation of family and professional life in the rural areas of the Vogelsberg District. Almost every working person will be faced with the challenge of coping with changing demands on job activities and its growing complexity. Traditional qualification is no longer sufficient to fulfil the changing requirements. An individual's willingness and capacity for a lifelong learning process are needed to improve employability and adaptability. This is why employees and people searching employment shall be motivated and supported a lot more on their way to continuation of their education for employment opportunities or setting up a business or young enterprises

## **Project LOEWE Lernoffensive zur Entwicklung mittelstaendischer Wertschoepfungsverbuende**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_985.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_985.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reconciling family and professional life

Beneficiaries: Unemployment in Lower Saxony

Project Objectives: The objectives are to secure employment in Lower Saxony's enterprises as far as possible even though jobs will (necessarily) have to be transferred because of competition between locations, to mobilize internal company potentials by qualifying formerly neglected target groups (low-qualified workers, older workers, migrants etc.) as well as modernizing work organization with regard to improving reconciliability of family and job in order to facilitate access to the labour market for "family women and men". An early evaluation of qualification needs and a respectively early qualification adaptation is necessary because of the Lower Saxonian dependency on the high-technology area of the car industry with its supply chains in small and medium-sized enterprises. The traditional system of further education and, moreover, the dual system



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of vocational training are too inflexible with regard to the future - there is no much reduction of unemployment figures by further qualification in spite of a demand for specialists in this industrial sector. SMEs, in particular, have difficulties in recruiting adequately-trained specialists from the labour market. The workforce's level of qualification has to be updated permanently. An "influx of new knowledge" could be detected which companies could acquire free from the publicly-financed education system. This phenomenon will gain an even greater importance on the regional labour market considering the fact that the general ageing of the working population coincides with the decrease of the share of younger people in the population, because companies will lack the necessary innovation potential in their future workforce. The project aims at SMEs to firstly qualify their own workforce potentials (women, older employees, lower qualified, migrant workers) themselves by endogenous structures of further education and secondly not to de-qualify them for the future company development by long periods of learning disaccustoming.

## **Project NEXT AC**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_986.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_986.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reconciling family and professional life

Beneficiaries: Unemployment in Aachen area: migrants, sole educators as well as people who have to carry familiar extra burdens, elderly people or long term workless.

Project Objectives: To create new jobs opportunities by means of family oriented start-ups for less-qualified people who are inhibited in professional reincorporation.

The enormous difficulty in entering business start-ups as a low-qualified person, especially in Aachen, result from the non-existing possibility for those people to even get in contact with start-ups – not at last because the problems in this sector are well-known: particularly the lack of personal and professional qualification on the one hand and



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creditworthiness – in a bank's point of view – on the other hand. These people should have the chance to get qualified to realize a good and successful business idea and to realize a long-lasting establishment on the market.

## **Project Zukunftssicherung durch Erleichterung der Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_988.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_988.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reconciling family and professional life

Beneficiaries: Unemployment in the regions Südwestsachsen and Chemnitzer Land plus the towns Chemnitz, Zwickau and Plauen

Project Objectives: To design a complex innovative proposal for the reintegration of a particular target group (vocational repatriates) for a work-life-balance of equal opportunities and the compatibility of family and career. Almost every participant needs a special individual qualification plan for reintegration into employment. Through the present project a base-oriented system of qualification with the centre in Mylau is established to provide the whole region with proposals of qualification in: commercial area, IT, CAD, Multimedia, languages (predominantly English) and setting up a business. The qualification programmes are based on modules and regarding the base can be coordinated to the special needs of the participants. So the compatibility between qualification supply and qualification demand is achieved and a united quality level for the project region is assured. This proposal contains goal oriented as well as structure oriented elements. Failures of reintegration of the target group into the field of IT are traced. Process oriented innovation means new didactic methods, instruments and procedures are used to assure reintegration. Structure oriented innovation means improvement of the reintegration policy. But all these innovative proposals would not





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reach their goals if the requirements for reintegration are not given: flexible working hours and flexible solutions for optimal care for children and high maintenance relatives.

### **Project Activating Women's Potential for Entrepreneurship (AWOPE)**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_952.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_952.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps and desegregation

Beneficiaries: women entrepreneurs

Project Objectives: To create partial projects of support on creation and protection of working places as well as support of female entrepreneurship spirit. These projects are performed by active and preventive measures on support of transfer on entrepreneurial qualification and managerial responsibility as well as combined supporting offers.

One partial project - called "quality standards and training for female multipliers" - is working on the creation of target-group orientated quality standards for consultation and training offered for female entrepreneurs. A partial project called "Women Innovation – Women Invent" sensitizes young women for the upcoming possibilities on starting a business by using a patent. At the same time this program develops methods and instruments in order to multiply these procedures in the future. Another partial project develops innovative measures when businesses are taken over. These measures counteract towards statistical proved differences and difficulties within the family due to a business take-over and also offer help for the concerned generations. As a result this partial project protects existing working places susceptible to crisis for instance when a daughter takes over the business from her father with unaccompanied transfer. The Cooperation Competence Center plays an important role while creating and protecting working places as well as supporting the growth of a business. The Center itself provides the knowledge and the targeted support for organized co-operations.

## **Project Integra.netNeue Wege zu Qualifizierung und Beschaeftigung**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_950.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_950.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps and desegregation

Beneficiaries: Persons with foreign origin from the four federal states of Hesse, Thuringia, Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg Improving the employment-skills of Persons with Foreign Origin (PFOs) in order to integrate them into the labour-market.

Project Objectives: 1. Offering activities and tools for the PFOs in order to increase their qualification (supply-element). 2. Pushing the PFOs to look actively for jobs (demand-element). The main-part of the migrants is concentrated in the non-skilled and semiskilled bracket, especially in the labour-intensive manufacturing industries. PFOs with non- or low-education are one of the most endangered groups in the labour-market. In addition, there are often deficiencies in the German language and lacks in the formal certificates. This complicates the re-integration into the first-level labour-market and into a long-term employment. The project was selected because of the following reasons:

1. Using different instruments for the profiling of the PFOs for the labour-market. Tools and procedures are "Competence-balance", test-procedures, generating a "competence-certificate".
2. Generating qualification-concepts, which improve the chances for integration/reintegration into the labour-market. Parts of them are "Labour-market-fitness-trainings" which especially stress on improving "key-skills". Among others are profession-oriented language-courses (enhancing the language-competence) and IT-trainings for women.

## **Project Berlin DiverCity**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_953.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_953.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps and desegregation



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**Beneficiaries:** Unemployment in Berlin specifically women

**Project Objectives:** To ease the market access to target groups who had been discriminated on the labour market up to now, above all female target groups and those with a migration background, to open up to them future-centric labour market segments (IT sector, technology, natural sciences) and to convince both companies and institutions (e.g. public authorities and schools) of the potential of these target groups. Since 2003 the entrance requirement for further training in the IT sector has been at least 4-6 years job experience in the sector which means that it is almost impossible for people switching to this occupation or women to gain access to the IT sector. The same applies to necessary vocational preparatory vocational measures in the technical or IT work areas (especially) for young women. They no longer receive gender-specific support from the Federal Employment Agency. The goals related to competence development and empowerment of the EQUAL target groups are linked to qualification in new profiles which offer labour market opportunities (e.g. diversity knowledge management) or in-service upgrading training (for women striving to obtain executive positions), practice-related (and if possible in-company) orientation and qualification, the development of new diagnostic methods and accompanying approaches (e.g. for young women) like assessment and (net) mentoring and new teaching-learning approaches to self-organised and blended learning.

### **Project Frauen @ Europa**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_954.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_954.htm)

**EQUAL theme:** Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps and desegregation

**Beneficiaries:** Women incl. those of foreign origin in Lower Saxony

**Project Objectives:** The main goal is to establish the equality of women and men by:

- Reduction of gender-related discrepancies on the labour market ;



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- Increase in the proportion of women in international fields of activity;
- Pre-emptive securing of employed women`s jobs;
- Support of personnel development processes in SMEs;
- Opening new prospects of employment;
- The integration of unemployed women, particularly of migrants and job returners, into the labour market;
- Increase in the use of gender mainstreaming within the system of further education.
- Structural changes, new technologies and alternating working conditions create high pressure on employees, as they demand a steady adaptation of their job capability. Due to their partly inconsistent job career biographies, their great proportion of part-time employment and their large number on the lower hierarchy level, women are often first when it comes to fall a victim to rationalization measures within a company.

It is intended that the project will increase the women`s proportion in "international" fields of activity - companies would profit by skills that are traditionally seen as "female", like a proficiency in (foreign) languages or a social (intercultural) competence (diversity management). Innovative qualifying concepts should enable employed women to start working in the named fields of activity within their companies, and the access to these companies should be opened for unemployed women. Jobs with an international working background, which are mostly connected with a greater demand of qualifications, should open up new perspectives to women.

### **Project FUTURA: Frauen - Unternehmen - Technik Und Regionaler Arbeitsmark**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_956.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_956.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps and desegregation

Beneficiaries: Women's employment in the western part of Westphalia (the counties and cities of Borken, Coesfeld, Recklinghausen, Münster and Dortmund)

**Project Objectives:** The project's goal is about creating new employment opportunities in the participating labour market regions (western part of Westphalia). It fosters the employment and career of women in the primary job market as much as in future-oriented sectors. Women job selection is characterised by the minimisation of gender specific risks. The determination of employment fields with a favourable future is too vague for women to base their decisions on. Thus, it is hard to determine the qualification demands of women in technical jobs methodically and the determination serves solely as a general guideline. More importantly, the focus lies on the hands-on approaches that concern job choice, qualification schemes and network activities. To convince companies by targeted, regional projects and measures to employ women. The activating approach consists of applying training management, offering opportunities in technical jobs and the concrete agreement on general professional perspectives, e.g. in company-based retraining. According to case management, primary cases have to be spotted and placed in the appropriate vacancies.

### **Project RegioPlus' - Saechsischer Kooperations- und Kommunikationsverbund**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_958.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_958.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps and desegregation

Beneficiaries: Target group A: female employees, female job repatriates, jobless women

Target group B: migrants, elderly employees and elderly unemployed. Target group C: young employees, training and study dropouts

**Project Objectives:** To support the process of restructuring the job market in the respective regions and to create jobs in present unemployment areas. To enable the underprivileged and socially deprived to be integrated into the job market with the help of innovative integration and qualification projects. On one hand the population is getting increasingly older, in the future the population will decrease. On the other hand



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qualification opportunities reveal obvious imperfections - it is believe now that not the low capital but the lack of qualified staff causes the slowing economic growth. Purposeful innovations bring out new qualification methods as tailored on-the-job qualifications and practice-oriented modular qualifications, which are adapted to prospective industries. For that purpose and with the help of information and communication technologies new learning methods, tele-learning and self-learning as well as the access to the information technology, which has not been accessible to this target group until now, will be realized.

### **Project FoBiSYS - Forschungs- und wirtschaftsorientiertes Bildungssystem**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete\\_957.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ECDB/equal/jsp/dpComplete_957.htm)

EQUAL theme: Equal opportunities - Reducing gender gaps and desegregation

Beneficiaries: Disadvantaged people (people returning to work, unemployed, people new to the labour market, older people)

Project Objectives: The development partnership FoBiSys uses the competencies and resources of the national and trans-national project partners in order to test and to implement, with widespread impact, new strategies in vocational education & training in the region and in strengthening regional SME, and moreover, to reduce disadvantages, especially gender specific ones. In order to strengthen the performance of the enterprises and to develop and implement a functional employment strategy to reduce unemployment life long learning will be addressed by practical, task and activity orientated modules at all qualification levels. The pro-activity of disadvantaged people will be encouraged and, therefore, measurable transfer results will be achieved by the experience of taking on the responsibility of self-discovery and self-development of own capabilities - tailor made concepts in personnel development and training; curricula development for different qualifications and management levels; application of new training moduls.

## **C. Good-practice: Cultural approach - Creative Methods**

### **1. Job Act**

#### **Game of professions Job Act® – From the scene to the place for training**

JobAct® is directed towards adolescents up to 25 years old without vocational education.

The youths must:

- continue developing their individuality through independent initiatives and skills for team work
- to receive a new world outlook for their own biography
- to undertake responsibility, to learn self-evaluation and to present themselves
- to find an appropriate place for education or work placement.

#### **Methods**

JobAct® connects theatrical pedagogic methods and work on the biography with creative and classic approaches for application management. Company practice and training supplement the action approaches within the project.

#### **Implementation**

The project is split into two stages:

**During the first stage the participants develop a theater play – form the idea to the premiere.**

During this process they are supported by a theater pedagogue and, if this is necessary, by additional specialists (for: the physical work, language skills development, décor building, creation of masks and costumes, sound and lighting techniques). Together with this intense management of the application takes place, supported by the work of the theater pedagogue and the related analyses of the individual strengths and weaknesses.

At the same time, enterprises, which could participate actively in the elaboration of the theater play (for example through material services: production of furniture, decors, hair-





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cuts, masks) are sought, in order for the first contacts between the adolescents and the participating enterprises to be established. The premier of the theater play marks the end of the first stage.

**The second stage of the project takes the form of an intensive company practice, which the adolescents carry out in one of the attracted enterprises.** During this process the participants are constantly supported and trained by the consulting specialized pedagogues. Regular reflections on the practice situation (including with the means, used by the theater pedagogues) contribute to resolving conflicts arising in the enterprise from the mere beginning, in order for a stable final situation of starting a training or employment to be created.

[http://www.projektfabrik.org/projekt\\_ja\\_konzept.php](http://www.projektfabrik.org/projekt_ja_konzept.php)

## **2. Theater project “The ramp”, Vocational school Emden**

Within the framework of this prevention project, teachers in religion and social pedagogues at schools develop together with the students a stage performance on the topic of violence. The objective of this educational activity was to initiate discussions in a didactically attractive manner in order for awareness towards all forms of violence in the social context to be achieved.

The inspiration for this project came from the extremely positive feedback from the students in their vocational-preparatory year on the cooperative religion lessons during their classes. Within the specialized group of Social pedagogic this project was presented by the religion teachers and consulting teachers, as well as from the school social pedagogues and managed to trigger strong interest.



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On the basis of the feedback receive from the students and the professional circle of teachers, the idea for the theater project was developed. It was supposed to create an opportunity for living experiences to be obtained, for problematic situations to be clarified, for various concepts to be reevaluated and for fantasy to be stimulated. The youths with potential disposition towards violence need to receive an opportunity to change their perspectives through role playing and to consider particular behavioral demonstrations. The pedagogic objective here is for one person to be enabled to step into another's shoes and to develop oneself deductively on the basis one's own violent experience, to develop openly and independently alternative approaches for conflict resolution. The role work in the theater project does not mean that the commonly accepted possibilities for conflict and problem resolution are not experimented with the group of actors in everyday situations. The aim here lies within the expression demonstration of a stage truth and the entertainment, which this brings to the audience. In this particular case the adoption of a particular stage role can generate an intensive discussion and debates. This work on the personal and external living aspects makes the differentiation of the personal opinion for one's self possible. Naturally, within this project the attention is focused on the preparation of the play and its effects on the audience, but the role work is also taken as a part of the pedagogic process and the individual circumstances and consequences for the different participants are taken into consideration.

The students from the grade for vocational preparation often demonstrate strong weaknesses, such as failure to concentrate and inability to persevere. With a great part of these students the poor results, which arise from these weaknesses trigger frustrations and thus lead to further disruption of the sense for self-assessment. The project oriented understanding, which expresses the various inclinations and interests of the different participating students, here has to offer them the possibility to regain the ability to be constructive. The development of motivation through recognition of one's individual

abilities actually represents an „interim stage” within this project. Due to the interdisciplinary character of the class and specialized lessons it is necessary that all participants should meet regularly in order to plan together the implementation and to allocate the tasks. The pedagogic aspect of work in harmony and integration of all participants is the focus in this field.

If we are realistic in our observations, we have to specify that the clientele, which the students are addressing, is actually available during a single year. Besides, the main preparation should take place before the beginning of the school year. At the beginning of the schools year the actual activities should be implemented following a time schedule, which should be strictly observed. In this particular form, the theater project is a school and professional interdisciplinary project. Considerable previous planning, as well as coordination, constant control of execution and permanent agreement between all participants are an absolute necessity for the successful completion.

[https://good-practice.bibb.de/gp/index.php?id\\_offer=77&action=gpc\\_detail](https://good-practice.bibb.de/gp/index.php?id_offer=77&action=gpc_detail)

### **3. Best practice: IT Learning**

#### **Support for media competences in vocational education**

The topic “media competences” is not excluded from the support provided to disadvantaged people. Lately it is even appearing that the so called „digital divide” of the society into the groups of those with in-depth media competences and those without such competences is not so dramatically big, as we feared until a just a few years ago.

Since the abilities for competent and independent usage of digital media have mainly been applied in connection with professional practice, while at the same time they are surely facilitating professional development, as it was in the past, the necessity for broadening the scope of media education, especially for youths with poor chances for professional start, is still present.



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The objective is clear: after graduating from a certain qualification the youths should possess basic skills in the PC and Internet sphere – regardless of the profession, which they would like to practice. This is also valid for the educational measures, preparing students for professional education, because finding a place for company training without PC and Internet skills is becoming ever harder than ever.

Some proposals for eLearning appeared in the field of support for professional integration within the framework of the exemplified projects. So far however they were mainly directed towards specialized personnel. The offers for youths in some of the professional integration support projects are still in their development stage. After the first attempts in the sphere of eLearning, the usage of Internet-based proposals for blended learning, crystallized and became a standard. In the mean time the specialized discussion is taking the direction of intensive use in the working conditions, from wherever the trainee is physically situated. Thus the trainee is getting support by enriched virtually accessible class rooms with learning resources.

from: „Acquisition of professional qualifications by youths with special education needs“,  
Federal ministry of education and scientific research (BMBF), Bonn, Berlin 2005

### **PART 3 APPROACHES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTHS IN BULGARIA AND GERMANY – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

In Bulgaria there is a number of national programs focused on provision of vocational training and employment of jobless youths, elderly people, people who have dropped out of the labor market due to industrial restructuring, people with disabilities. Some of these programs are “Carrier start”, the program “Activating the inactive”, program “From social support to employment”, program “New opportunities for employment”, program



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“Assistants of people with disabilities”, National program for employment and training of people with permanent disabilities. There is also a number of projects, carried out both by structures of the state administration as well as by private and non-governmental organizations, focused towards vocational training of youths and people with primary and lower education, representatives of the Roma ethnic community, persons with reduced disability, women and people at the age of 50 years and more. The principles and the particular approaches for developing the educational programs are rather an element of each separate initiative and not like in Germany – an approved state practice. In Germany fixed leading educational principles find their place in each federal program: living environment in the focus of training; empowered competences instead of underlined deficits; interdisciplinary and individual learning; a training concept focused on action. In the case of Bulgaria the decision for the selection of the particular training approaches is left to the persons (organizations) implementing the training. This on the one hand allow greater adaptability towards the target groups, freedom of choice, testing more practices and finding the training methods, which are most appropriate for particular aims. In addition to this we have to keep in mind that the state projects and programs rely on accredited providers of vocational training, which to a certain extents guarantees the quality of the provided services. On the other hand however, the failure for putting specific parameters concerning the used training methods hides the risk of using methods, which are insufficiently effective. In difference to Germany, in Bulgaria the quality of result of the educational/training process is rarely done and its social and economic efficiency is not evaluated. The involvement of employers in the activities related to the development of the training programs, the evaluation of the results of the training, in the assessment of the needs for training in particular professions and specialties is still underdeveloped.



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A lack of balance still exists in Bulgaria – on the one hand the supply of training services greatly exceeds the demand for such, and on the other hand there is a mismatch between the offered training services and the need for such services concerning quality, types and topics. This is particularly significant at a regional level. There are flaws in the provision of services for vocational education and training in the context of lifelong learning, both as a scope of covered professions and specialties, and as a quality of education, characterized mainly through the implemented training programs and training methods. The legitimacy of training and the certification of the results is also a serious problems.

Considering the fact that Germany is famous for its experience and great results achieved in the sphere of vocational training, it is not surprising that there are a number of initiatives, aiming at applying the German experience on the territory of Bulgaria.

One of the largest in scale is the establishment of three vocational training centers back in 1995 following the initiative of the Bulgarian government. These are Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centers (BGVTC). Bulgarian-German because Germany is supporting the implementation of the project "Professional training and employment encouragement" since 1993 and this project to a great extent replicates the substantive elements of the German vocational training system. BGVTC complete the system for vocational training and qualifications in Bulgaria mainly through the pronouncedly practice focused training services they offer. The main objective of the Bulgarian-German project is the training of perfectly qualified specialists in accordance with the European quality standards. BGVTC are situated in the towns of Pazardjik, Pleven and Stara Zagora. Each of the three centers is specialized in training in different professions. As of November 6, 2001, by means of decree № 255 of the Council of Ministers, these centers became a part of the Ministry of labor and social policy. The Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centers are the only training establishments in Bulgaria, which are



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members of the European association of vocation training institutions (EVBB). This association unites educational institutions and non profit organizations from seven European countries, managing 1000 training centers. During the year 2010 two new Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centers were opened in the towns of Tsarevo and Smolyan.

Within the project „Innovative approaches for identifying and responding to vocational education and training needs of disadvantaged youth” the partner team will exert all necessary efforts to transfer some of the best German practices in the sphere of vocational education and training for youths at a disadvantage, so that the experiences of German state in the sphere of vocational training of youths at risk and in socio-economic isolation is also applied and adopted within the territory of Bulgaria. Our main objective is to work on the introduction of a concept for specific focus on the individual, who needs support in particular with regard to the stipulation of the training needs from the view point of the development of programs for vocational training. We consider that the one-sided perception of the target groups as homogenous sub-groups, for each of which are valid common objectives and methodic approaches, creates great obstacles for the successful formulation of specific and effective proposal for each separate individual as well as his/her flexible transition to another type of necessary support or professional integration direction. We would also like to stress on the system of evaluation of the results from the training from the perspective of the specified specific objectives, as well as from the perspective of its socio-economic efficiency.

We have to imagine a project for support of professional integration of young people, which is not situated in a vague place in environment, but exactly in the living quarters, where the participants in such initiatives come from. There they know the situation very





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well and feel at home. The objective of such a project would not be to create something, which is necessary somewhere, but something, which is necessary in the exact place where the users live. The youths should constantly try to find out, by means of discussions with the other residents, how they could improve the quality of life in this particular place by their own services and efforts. These services could have tangible or intangible nature. They should be supported in their ventures by the social workers, pedagogues and craftsmen. The latter should also make sure that the services provided by the youths are such that add value, and not just a cheaper implementation of other workers' compulsory tasks.

A project of this kind should gain the interest also from third parties, which should then research in depth what competences and skills the youths should possess in order to be useful and meaningful for their living environment: technical skills, organizational skills, musical skills or other artistic competences.

In projects like this, youths can simultaneously learn valuable life techniques for every day life, but also acquire practical competences, important for the labor market. These skills and competences would become relatively independent on the basis of their unconscious labor market success and the youths would gain experience with particular usefulness and applicability. This would greatly support the social status, the social references, the sense of self-evaluation and the personality of the youths – even if, after this, they are not that lucky with the chosen job.

**From: Prof. D-r Franz Josef Krafeld, Support for professional integration, focused on the living environment, May 2005**

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