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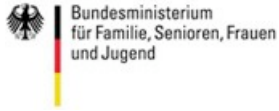
The Structured Dialogue in Germany – resonance and impact

Evaluation report on the first phase of the implementation
within the framework of the EU Youth Strategy in Germany

(2010-2013)

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Resonance and impact of the Structured Dialogue.
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Introduction

The Research Group Youth and Europe at the Center for Applied Policy Research (C●A●P) at the University of Munich (LMU) was assigned by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) with the scientific monitoring and evaluation of the Structured Dialogue in Germany. The report refers to the first implementation phase of the Structured Dialogue in Germany (2010-2013). It presents the scope of impact and resonance in reference to the project realisation of the Structured Dialogue in Germany. On this basis, it derives conclusions for the further development within the next phase of the implementation (2014-2016). The research interest is focused on analysing the real dialogue processes between youth and politics, and pointing out the impact of the Structured Dialogue and the issues of the EU Youth Strategy.

In 2012, data were collected from six selected projects in order to generate a significant sample. An interim report documented the main results (2012). These were bundled in ten theses¹ and verified by the involved actors in a second round (2013). In addition, actors from the youth work and youth policy field were interviewed, and an online survey was set up for all young people who participated in a project of the Structured Dialogue in Germany in 2012 or 2013. The present report analyses all results of the evaluation and derives conclusions and recommendations for the further development of the Structured Dialogue in Germany. The English report is a shortened version of the original German edition².

¹ See appendix

² See <http://www.cap-lmu.de/download/2014/StrukturierterDialogOnline-Endfassung10-12-14.pdf>

1. Analytical approach of the evaluation

The Structured Dialogue intends to involve young people more intensively in the EU policy and to respect their concerns in a more binding way. Out of the need for targeted support of youth participation, over the years, the Structured Dialogue has developed to a tangible instrument for participation of the EU Youth Strategy. Its processuality, the continuous development of its procedures and concerns posed a particular challenge for the evaluation. Therefore, a process-related analytical approach with a participatory nature was chosen. The individual analytical steps and the respective further clarification of the research questions were made in close coordination with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the National Co-ordination Unit at the German Federal Youth Council, the National Agency for the YOUTH IN ACTION Programme, the National Working Group for the Structured Dialogue as well as other relevant stakeholders.

On the part of the evaluation there was intentionally no set definition of the Structured Dialogue that should have been reviewed. Rather, an appreciative inside view of the actors of the Structured Dialogue was determined on the basis of the various project experience. Actors within the project framework are project leaders, young people as well as decision-makers. On this basis, the potentials of the Structured Dialogue become visible.

1.1 EU Youth Strategy and Structured Dialogue

For the future development of the cooperation in youth policy in Europe, in 2008 an extensive consultation process was launched with the governments of the Member States, young people, as well as the sponsors and organisations involved in youth work. They were asked which issues and contents they considered the most important, and what conclusions they drew from the experience gained with regard to the future. The results of these surveys have been incorporated into the EU Youth Strategy for a renewed framework for the European cooperation in the youth field (2010-18). For this purpose, two essential goals were identified:

- “create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market”, and to
- “promote the active citizenship, social inclusion, and solidarity of all young people”.³

In this document, the Structured Dialogue is mentioned as a prominent implementation tool of the EU Youth Strategy.

“The structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations, which serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the youth field, should be pursued and developed.

The themes of the dialogue should be aligned with the overall objectives of European cooperation in the youth field and the priorities for each work cycle. Clear objectives and realistic procedures should be established for each cycle of dialogue in order to ensure continuity and follow-up. The dialogue should be as inclusive as possible and developed at local, regional, national and EU level and include youth researchers and

³ Council Resolution of 27 November, 2009, on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018). OJ C 311 (2009), p.2.

those active in youth work. Structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations in other policy fields should also be supported”.⁴

Annex III to the Council resolution explains the implementation of the Structured Dialogue in greater detail. The Structured Dialogue extends to 18-month cycles which are dedicated to a predetermined sub-priority aligned to the overall European political priorities. Furthermore, each presidency can select a specific topic for its term of office. The Structured Dialogue includes consultations with young people and youth organisations on all levels in the Member States and is conducted at the EU Youth Conferences as well as during the European Youth Week.

The implementation of the Structured Dialogue is conducted in four steps. First, national youth seminars on European priorities are realised. The results of the national seminars are the basis for the next step, the youth events of the Presidency. Then the results of the youth events are discussed within an informal forum of the Trio Presidency, the Commission, the European Parliament and youth organisations. In a fourth step, the outcomes of the forum are discussed with young people and representatives of EU institutions during the European Youth Week. The results of these debates shall be included in decision-making processes of future European policy.

For each cycle, the Commission appoints a European Steering Committee which is responsible for the overall co-ordination. The Member States form a National Working Group to ensure the implementation process within the Member States. Both the Member States as well as the Commission are responsible to pursue the Structured Dialogue in cooperation with all involved actors, and to identify and disseminate good practices.

For the working periods of the Trio Presidency during the analytical period, the focus of the Structured Dialogue was placed on the following topics:

- January 2010 to June 2011: youth unemployment
- July 2011 to December 2012: youth participation
- January 2013 to June 2014: inclusion of young people

In Germany, the EU Youth Strategy is continually being pursued in a newly initiated cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal Länder in the area of child and youth welfare. This cooperation takes place in the new established Working Group of the Federal Government and the Länder on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy.⁵ The Structured Dialogue is considered an essential means of transmission of the EU Youth Strategy. On the one hand, it shall take up the priorities set on the EU level, on the other hand it accompanies the implementation process of the EU Youth Strategy in Germany as well as the national priorities, the so-called theme corridors:

- participation
- social integration and transition into the labour market
- appreciation and recognition of informal and non-formal education

⁴ ibidem, p. 4

⁵ For more information on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy in Germany (in German), see: <https://www.jugendhilfeportal.de/eu-jugendstrategie>.

In 2010, a National Working Group (Nationale Arbeitsgruppe – NAG) was convened and the National Co-ordination Unit at the German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring – DBJR) was set up for the implementation process. A homepage⁶ was set up, and information material and a practice manual were issued as central means of communication and information. There is no independent funding programme for the realisation of projects linked to the Structured Dialogue. For funding, however, it was possible to apply within the framework of Action 5.1 of the formal Youth in Action programme, which has been integrated in the ERASMUS+ programme. Furthermore, a participatory and interactive online tool was developed and realised the consultation process. In order to meet the demands of the evidence-based practices of EU youth policy, the Structured Dialogue is also scientifically monitored and evaluated in Germany.

1.2 Evaluation concept

Basically, the chosen evaluation method serves for the visualization of the project implementation of the Structured Dialogue and its further development on the basis of the actors' input. The research approach follows the basic principles of the participatory and process-related evaluation. This means that all relevant stakeholders and selected projects involved in the Structured Dialogue are incorporated actively and fairly into the evaluation. The goal is to depict a range of opinions as diverse and wide as possible and to include this into the further development.

The evaluation focuses on the projects of the Structured Dialogue which took place in the first phase of the implementation in order to analyse the top-down topics of the Structured Dialogue in conjunction with the local bottom-up approaches. This way, the scope of resonance and impact of the Structured Dialogue in the first phase of the implementation is derived. A total of six projects were visited at their main dialogue events with politics and were examined as a sample case for the evaluation. All actors such as project coordinators, political decision-makers and young people were questioned in qualitative group and individual interviews. In addition, a questionnaire was distributed to the young people involved. An interim report documents the results of this survey.⁷ The main findings are summarised in a 10 thesis paper.⁸

The projects studied are characterized by a wide variety of features and approaches. All projects were funded by the Action 5.1 "Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy" in the EU programme YOUTH IN ACTION. The following projects were examined within the scope of the evaluation:

- The project "**Europareise**" by eSw (Protestant students' work in Westphalia – Evangelische Schülerinnen- und Schülerarbeit in Westfalen e.V. Berchum)⁹
- The co-operation event "**Europawerkstatt**", conducted by JEF (Young European Federalists Germany – Junge Europäische Föderalisten Deutschland e.V. Berlin)¹⁰ and Hertie School of Governance

⁶ See <https://www.strukturierter-dialog.de/startseite/> (in German)

⁷ Summary of the interim evaluation report: http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2013/ThesispaperENG_SD2012.pdf

⁸ See appendix, page 27 et seq.

⁹ For further information on the project, see: eSw (ed.): Dokumentation "Europareise". Ein Projekt des „Strukturierten Dialogs“ zwischen Menschen und Verantwortlichen der Jugendpolitik. Hagen 2013 (German only); For more information on the project partner (in German), see: www.esw-berchum.de

¹⁰ A documentation of the event and publication of the results (in German) can be viewed at: http://europawerkstatt.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/tp_2012_europawerkstatt.pdf, event report as vimeo on project homepage <http://europawerkstatt.eu/>

- The event "**Berlin-Action**" by „Grenzläufer e.V.“ (Mittenwalde)¹¹
- The Regional conference "**Europa geht weiter...**" co-ordinated by the federation of cultural child and youth education (Landesvereinigung kultureller Kinder- und Jugendbildung Sachsen-Anhalt e.V. Magdeburg)¹² in co-operation with the Chancellery of Saxony-Anhalt, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs as well as further institutions of youth and educational work in Saxony-Anhalt
- The European conference „**Take Five for Europe**“ (Bremen)¹³ co-ordinated by the regional youth welfare offices and youth councils of four northern German Länder
- The event "**Second-Attempt**" within the framework of the project "A-Team! Youth Parliament in Görlitz" (Jugendparlament Görlitz), realised by the association Second-Attempt e.V.¹⁴

In 2013, an interpretive loopback took place as a follow-up to the project survey. A qualitative interview was conducted with all project co-ordinators. Here, the interview partners had the opportunity to give their point of view on the 10-thesis-paper of the interim report. They also had the chance to give recommendations for the further development of the Structured Dialogue in Germany. In addition, stakeholders from the youth work and youth policy field were interviewed, and all young people who participated in a project of the Structured Dialogue in Germany in 2012 or 2013 received an invitation for an online survey.

According to the systematic participating observation during the central dialogue events of the chosen projects, it was possible to trace in detail the relevant developments. It was important to include as wide a range of actors in the study as possible. Therefore, semi-structured individual and group interviews, questionnaires and online surveys were conducted. The questions aimed at the objectives, the procedure, and the results of the projects, as well as ranging these issues in the overall context of the Structured Dialogue and the EU Youth Strategy. In addition, personal social data of the young people were collected on a voluntary basis, which provide information on the access and scope of the projects.

1.3 Research questions

The overall research interest of the evaluation, the question on how successful the Structured Dialogue as a political approach to gain more youth participation is, can only be answered adequately after finishing the third implementation phase in 2018. After the first phase, however, trends and developments are visible which may serve as guidelines for the further development the Structured Dialogue. Therefore, the study was focused on finding out which framework conditions, criteria and settings need to be strengthened in order to make the Structured Dialogue a meaningful participation process tailored to the needs of the target group.

¹¹ For further information on project partner (in German), see: <http://grenzlaeufer-ev.de>

¹² For further information on project partner (in German), see: <http://www.qoeurope-lsa.de/>

¹³ For more information on project (in German), see: <http://pages.jugendinfo.de/bjr/jring/index.php>

¹⁴ For more information on project (in German), see: <http://www.second-attempt.de/a-team-jugendparlament-gorlitz/>

The main research questions in the evaluation of the project implementation of the Structured Dialogue in Germany are therefore focused on the following research interest:

- How is the Structured Dialogue realised in the projects? Which recommendations for the practical work can be derived?
- Which impacts does the Structured Dialogue show in the projects? Which success factors are helpful according to the actors?
- How is the resonance on the Structured Dialogue in the projects?
- How are the dissemination, sustainability and reliability of the Structured Dialogue being supported?
- Which potentials and opportunities of development does the Structured Dialogue have?

The presentation of the results is structured according to the following classifications, based on the research criteria:

- acceptance and relevance
- access and participation
- efficiency, results and reliability
- sustainability, transfer and results
- European dimension

The inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, the European impact on young people's living environment as well as the flexibility and diversity of the approaches of the Structured Dialogue were also taken into account as cross-sectoral issues.

2. Impact and resonance

The statements given in the interim report 2012 could be strengthened and sharpened during interviews and polls (2013). In general, the 10 theses were confirmed by the interviewed actors, although they weighted them differently. To achieve a systematic summary, the results have been bundled thematically. In relation to the qualitative and participatory approach of the evaluation, all formulated aspects are considered and analytically collected.¹⁵

2.1 Acceptance and relevance of the Structured Dialogue

In line with interim report (2012), the evaluated projects and interviewed actors regard the Structured Dialogue in general positively. All actors value this dialogue instrument highly as a means for the implementation of EU youth policy. Some experts and professionals within the youth work field regard it as the core element of communication and a means of dialogue between the EU and its young citizens. The results of the 2013 evaluation allow for a deeper and more differentiated view of the Structured Dialogue according to the actors' point of view. The respective evaluation of acceptance and relevance depends on the political understanding and personal goals of the interviewees. This allows for a wider interpretation of the current state of the Structured Dialogue.

In the following, the key elements for the evaluation of acceptance and relevance of the Structured Dialogue are described. The interview partners evaluate the acceptance of the Structured Dialogue mainly from the viewpoint within the project realisation. Several actors understand relevance, in addition to the relevance of the individual projects, as a clear political intention to achieve and implement concrete results. The interviewed young people regard relevance as a successful process of dialogue and feedback from politics.

Basic understanding of the Structured Dialogue

For the actors in the projects, dialogue means "*communication in both directions*"¹⁶, with the real life conversation as the basis. Important seems the feedback effect which makes the interview partners hope that long-lasting dialogue structures will be established and that young people can thus "*get into contact with European politics, (...) are taken seriously (...) in terms of active politics*". Nearly all interview partners see the Structured Dialogue both as means of participation and as political learning process. Basically, the actors stated that in its function as a means of participation, the Structured Dialogue offers young people – also disadvantaged youth – the possibility to get into contact with Europe. Some actors even see political education as an included mission of the Structured Dialogue.

With regard to the consultations, many project co-ordinators see them rather subordinated and consider the projects as the basis for political discussions on politics. The real-life dialogue is essential for dealing with topics of EU youth policy and the EU Youth Strategy. The know-how and the political demands resulting from the work in the projects may be

¹⁵ The text makes clear if the statements are given by all or by several actors. Views of single actors are stated if they seem relevant for the context (e.g. concerning experiences with disadvantaged youth) or if they are in controversy to the opinion of the majority.

¹⁶ The statements in italics are quoted from the interviews.

included afterwards in the consultation process. This has to be ensured in the second phase as well. However, some actors are worried that the process of the Structured Dialogue as it is being implemented at the moment will become more formal and stuck to written texts by means of consultations. Therefore, the orientation along projects of the Structured Dialogue is very important for the actors, allowing for flexibility and diversity during the implementation on the local level.

Political approach and understanding

In the framework of the Structured Dialogue, some actors are also discussing the political understanding and the question, which idea of policy young people should follow through the Structured Dialogue. The principle of dialogue also means that one should critically discuss politics and its implementation. From the perspective of some experts, it is necessary to discuss the approach of strengthening the European dimension of youth work as it is encouraged by the Structured Dialogue including, and the political understanding of participation.

Moreover, the awareness of decision-makers for the political approach of the Structured Dialogue has to be strengthened. The Structured Dialogue and its demands are rarely known by political actors and are therefore seldom used as a resource for decision-making processes. Mostly the clear commitment to use the Structured Dialogue as an effective instrument for the participation of young people is missing. In one interview, the role of the political level was regarded as follows:

“The Structured Dialogue can only be effective if there is political interest in it.”

In the actors' viewpoint, we generally need a more active commitment for the goals and demands of the Structured Dialogue. Also, political decision-makers should think of ways and opportunities of a broader implementation of the Structured Dialogue and the actual use of the results of the dialogue.

General positive perception

The online survey (2013) confirms the positive trend of the interim evaluation (2012). A vast majority of the young people rates the projects of the Structured Dialogue as good or very good. There are only few negative votes. Also in the open question on the general opinion about the Structured Dialogue, it is rated highly, but it is also criticised in its way of concrete realisation. The young people are certain that the project was valuable or very valuable for them. The Structured Dialogue in itself is regarded as a tool to ensure that the European community can grow together. It allows especially for young people to get involved. In their opinion, projects of the Structured Dialogue are a unique opportunity to have a deeper insight into politics and media. They also believe that the projects help raising a long-lasting interest in politics and fostering skills of dialogue (exchanging arguments, listening, understanding and convincing).

Moreover, the self esteem of young people is strengthened in the projects, and they receive positive feedback and motivation for their engagement in society and politics. According to the young people, the skills and knowledge obtained and shaped in the projects are the basis for political debates. They sharpen their competences for participation in democratic life, strengthening an active European citizenship.

In the interviews, the Structured Dialogue is generally valued positively, but the opinions in detail are more differentiated. On the one hand, people stated that the Structured Dialogue is already functioning and that it reaches youth successfully:

"(...) that we can say that we have gained a good position and we have set up good framework conditions, and that the focus should now lay on qualifying the process and also have in mind the quantity."

In this context, the support and advice of the National Agency and the Co-ordination of the Structured Dialogue in Germany are praised. Other statements in the interviews refer to the character of a process of the Structured Dialogue and the learning-by-doing character of the projects. They regard it as an instrument of dialogue, but not as a catch-all solution for motivating young people to participate in Europe. In reference to this, some actors wish a broader discussion on the term participation in relation to the implementation of the Structured Dialogue in Germany.

Positioning of the Structured Dialogue

In contrast to the first phase of the implementation (2011), most project co-ordinators have at least an idea of how to position the respective projects in the context of the Structured Dialogue and the EU Youth Strategy. However, the political decision-makers as well as young people are mainly not aware of the political implications on the European and the national level. From the viewpoint of the project co-ordinators, the sole classification in the Structured Dialogue process is not enough to achieve an effect. The relevance of the Structured Dialogue depends on its connection to the basis. This can only be obtained by including the projects into local structures of youth work.

Projects of the Structured Dialogue can only be successful if they are based on the local level and deal with the needs of the young people who live there. Many actors see a discrepancy between this fact and the overall priorities decided top-down by the EU presidencies. Especially the topics of the EU Youth Strategy and the priorities set in Germany are broad thematic areas which allow for links to local issues, according to several actors. In order to connect young people's interests and EU priorities, a skilled transfer is needed, as well as trained mediators in education and youth work. This would help young people understand why the set priorities are up-to-date and where they are relevant for their own lives.

2.2 Access and participation

Referring to the access to the Structured Dialogue, the interviewed actors regard a broad participation as a core element for the implementation in Germany. Not only elites, but all young people and youth organisations should have access to the Structured Dialogue. The goal is to include young people, initiatives, and youth organisations in the process of dialogue. In general, the Structured Dialogue must be promoted on a broader level and inform a higher number and a variety of young people, motivating them to participate. Also young people who are not members of an organisation should have the opportunity to be included into the dialogue with politics.

Including a variety of young people into the Structured Dialogue process

In 2013, many interview partners stated that it is essential to not only include young people interested in politics, but also youth with fewer opportunities and a “non-political” attitude. Those who view politics with criticism and from a distance should also be invited to bring in their opinions. There is a need for low-level opportunities to participate, creative ways of access. The following statement is an example for this demand:

“A broad transmission is a task we have to focus on more intensively in the future. (...) Up to now, it has been too focused on the youth councils, and much to my regret other areas haven't been included sufficiently. In my opinion, it is not enough to use the dialogue as an instrument for youth councils. It is my belief that the core challenge is to find ways of how we can make the complex processes and the presentation more understandable and easier.”

According to the interviewed actors, it is necessary to include more youth organisations and institutions of youth and educational work, possibly even schools. Some actors wonder why the Structured Dialogue is nearly unknown or seldom used in civic education, although participation and the dialogue with politicians are core elements in this field.

2.3 Efficiency of the projects

Projects of the Structured Dialogue aim to design communication between youth and politics as a successful process and reach concrete results. Also the follow-up of the results and their implementation are main goals. It is therefore important for the results of the projects that they receive feedback and have an impact. Efficiency in the context of the evaluation means the special quality of the projects and their use of resources. This is linked to the positioning within the Structured Dialogue and the framework of the EU Youth Strategy. Here, the support of youth participation on a local level also plays a role. In the evaluated projects, the actors focused on the concrete elaboration of the dialogue processes anyway.

Impact of the projects

Especially the young people wish that the projects make an impact and get recognition also outside the project. As already stated in the interim evaluation (2012), the real dialogue processes between youth and politics need time, endurance and continuity in order to develop efficiently, especially in the first implementation phase of the Structured Dialogue (2010-2013). In the online follow-up phase (2013), the majority of the interviewees believe that the projects have made an impact for youth. Some young people were even surprised by that effect. They want to follow the way their ideas are used and stay in touch with involved politicians.

However, some young people criticised the lack of seriousness among the decision-makers involved in the dialogues. They would not be interested in the suggestions set up by young people, and they would only discuss things superficially without talking about details and only give phrases as answers.

For the project co-ordinators it is important that there is a willingness to bring young people and politics together on the local and regional level. They consider the politicians who are responsible for the implementation of the results to have a special role. They should be won

for the goals of the Structured Dialogue in order to become disseminators. In this way, the results can be followed on the long term, further developed and implemented sustainably.

Effects of the setting of the dialogue process

Most of the actors share the basic understanding that the success of the projects is based on their local placement in circumstances and political structures. This requires the willingness of the involved actors and systems to co-operate and network. The “right” setting of the dialogues between young people and politics plays an important role in ensuring an effective implementation of the projects of the Structured Dialogue. However, there is no catch-all way of reaching a successful dialogue. The better the respective setting is adapted to the local needs and circumstances, the more effective is the Structured Dialogue as a political instrument of communication.

Moreover, it is important that all involved actors are open and honest. They should listen carefully to each other. The interviewees regard it as essential that the distance between the involved actors is reduced and that a basis for exchange is set. The young people as well as the decision-makers should be prepared adequately for the concrete dialogue situation, in order to avoid false expectations and polarisation. Therefore, the participants call for respective modules to increase qualification and raise awareness.

Reliability

In order to come to rather concrete arrangements and solutions as a result of the projects of the Structured Dialogue, all actors have to be willing to agree on current issues and identify the need for action. The more connected the issues discussed in the dialogue are to current political processes, the more understandable are the results for young people. Therefore, young people stated in the online survey that it is important to have political actors participating in the dialogue who are actually involved in the decision-making processes regarding the issues discussed on the dialogues. They expect participating decision-makers to clear out where the connections are to their work, which ideas they can transfer to their working environment and implement.

The young people participating in the online survey also criticised that their input would not be heard and that events don't have any outcome in their opinion. The results are not communicated in public or they are considered as politically irrelevant. The real support from politicians is seen as essential by the project co-ordinators:

"If we are able to motivate politicians who took part in such a way that they keep on participating, then the process can generate its own momentum."

Success and results of the projects

In general, it is difficult to make clear which input from young people has led to which political result, given that the Structured Dialogue is a dynamic process. Political decision-makers see this as a weakness of the Structured Dialogue as a political instrument – its impact is vague and difficult to control. The process is time-consuming, slow and it doesn't always lead to clear results as there are different stakeholders. Especially decisions taken on

EU level are a mixture of different inputs and decision-making processes. In the projects, it is therefore difficult to show the concrete impact of the results to the participants.

On this account, the project co-ordinators emphasise that the success of the projects of the Structured Dialogue should not only be measured by evaluating which results have been implemented. The projects should not make young people expect that they can directly influence political decision-making processes. Young people should rather be explained that Structured Dialogues are also a consulting instrument and may help raise mutual understanding. Politics can learn from the projects which topics are important for young people and how they view certain issues. This can improve the relationship between politics and youth, make a long-term contribution to decision-making processes, and foster youth participation.

Educational aspect of the projects

All actors share the opinion that the projects of the Structured Dialogue also initiate educational processes. Participating young people develop a better understanding of how politics work and which mechanisms can be used to achieve political effects. In the view of the project co-ordinators, this impact of the Structured Dialogue should not be underestimated. Many young people get into contact with real politicians for the first time in their lives. The personal dialogue raises their awareness for political processes and motivates them to reflect political issues and become engaged in society. For this reason, real life dialogues between young people and decision-makers in the projects of the Structured Dialogue are so important. One young adult stated the following in the open question of the online follow-up survey in 2013:

“The project of the Structured Dialogue arouses a first and sustainable political interest and fosters skills of dialogue.”

Nearly all project co-ordinators regard the implicit political learning process of youth as essential for the success of the implementation of the Structured Dialogue. In their opinion, this is a requirement which results in the need of teaching participation competences and empowering through the projects which would make young people fit for the dialogue with politics. This includes the targeted transfer of the European dimension. For the project co-ordinators, it is essential that the young people and the politicians are adequately prepared. This includes necessary information for the inclusion of the project into the Structured Dialogue as well as awareness of opportunities and limits of the concrete dialogue process. The Structured Dialogue includes a learning process not only for young people, but also for political decision-makers. This learning process could be supported by offering respective information and qualification. The focus on the political actors is expressed in one interview:

“[It] would be good to see the learning process also commence among the politically responsables, (...) I still see a chance for the Structured Dialogue to better include the other side.”

Some interview partners who work in youth education centres wish for a better use of the resources there to set up workshops which can prepare young people.

2.4 Transfer, feedback and sustainability

According to all actors, the feedback procedure affects different decision-making levels, depending on the formulated issues. It may concern the local, regional, national or the European level. All interviewees stated that it is essential for the implementation of the Structured Dialogue to clarify how the issues and demands discussed in the project will be treated afterwards. The question is how results of local or regional dialogue projects are transferred to actors and decision-makers, and how the feedback from these levels will get back to the young participants. This also applies to the transfer and inclusion of project results into relevant consultations. All participants regard transfer and feedback as the basis for making the projects relevant, thus strengthening young people's participation in politics of the EU. A statement from one of the interviews points that out:

“If you realise the Structured Dialogue and you get results, the most important thing is that you explain young people which value that information has, how the results will be included into work and that these results actually have an impact. And that a feedback structure will be set up.”

Functioning feedback as indicator of success

According to almost all actors a the big disadvantage of the Structured Dialogue is a lack of feedback from politics from the local to the EU level. In equal measure, statements without commitment or just general comments do not encourage the participants. Some actors involved in the consultation process above all wish for a more consistent feedback from the political level of the European Union.

A noticeable fact of the answers of the online follow-up survey is that only a third of the young people state that they have received feedback on their comments and project results. Many young people haven't received any feedback or don't know how to answer that question. Some young people say that they didn't formulate concrete results in the project which would have called for feedback. For the future implementation of the Structured Dialogue it is necessary, according to the project co-ordinators as well as to the political actors, to make binding agreements and to set up a functioning feedback structure. Young people who participated in a Structured Dialogue should receive a political answer clearing out which value their results have, if and how they will be included in decision-making processes, and which impact they have. One project responsible demanded:

“The things that can be moved and changed on the European level within the six months period, (...) must be transferred back to young people's living environment.”

The mode of feedback should be adapted to young people, making sure that the participants are able to comprehend it. If the proposals young people set up can't be realised or worked with, the young participants should be given reasons why and possibly also suggestions on how results should be formulated so that they can be included into political processes. This way of “negotiating” is the only way to ensure actual participation

Public impact of the projects

According to many actors, transfer requires more public awareness for the projects of the Structured Dialogue. Young people who doubt sustainability and impact of their ideas in the

political field wish for more publicity for the Structured Dialogue. This would increase the pressure on the political level.

In the view of the project co-ordinators, public relations should raise awareness for the EU Youth Strategy and strengthen the field of youth work. While the general idea of a functioning dialogue between youth and politics is appreciated by young people, the instrument of the Structure Dialogue is not well known yet. Only few young people have heard of it so far, as illustrated by the following statement from the online survey:

“Great approach, which hasn't spread to many young people, however.”

Sustainability

As described in the interim report in 2012, the participants aim to continue the dialogue processes initiated in their projects in order to bring continuity into the exchange between youth and politics. More than half of the young people state in the online survey 2013 that there has been another event following the project they participated in. A long-lasting work on the projects gives hope that one is able to work more intensively on topics and issues and thus get more effective results. One-time events, on the contrary, are not regarded as productive or targeted.

Participation in the Structured Dialogue is seen as a process for the longer term in which all actors contribute and make sure that the achieved common results have an effect. In addition to the individual projects, young people shall therefore have concrete opportunities for a long-lasting engagement in political processes. To ensure and support this, respective structures have to be developed and strengthened. Partners from youth work and youth educational work as well as youth councils are perceived as especially important in this context, given that they function as supporters of the projects of the Structured Dialogue. Young people need space for dialogues (and their preparation for these dialogues) where they feel comfortable. Some actors responsible for projects regard the development of regional co-ordination bureaus as essential, because they ensure continuity, carry on working on topics and issues, establish regional and national transfer, and ensure access to the Structured Dialogue for all interested young people.

Connection between projects and consultations

The direct connection between the projects and the ongoing consultations seems difficult during the first implementation phase of the Structured Dialogue in Germany (2011-2013), and is only ensured in few projects. There are various reasons for this fact. Some projects first create the preconditions for a dialogue between youth and politics before getting started with European issues and participation in the consultations. In other projects, there is a disparity between the time frames of the consultations and the individual project planning, which makes a connection rather difficult. Nearly all project co-ordinators as well as many actors regard a strong focus of the Structured Dialogue on the consultations with a critical perception. Some actors even question the transparency of the procedure:

“Regarding the consultation, one must ask if the results are really legitimated? This question hasn't been discussed adequately. It is too anonymous. Who really participates, who uses this?”

During the follow-up survey, most of the participating young people state that they haven't taken part in a consultation process, or don't even know what is meant by that. This fact corresponds to the sceptical view among project co-ordinators who oppose such a strong

concentration on and alignment with consultations within the Structured Dialogue. If the EU's issues are only communicated top-down via a "one-way system", using surveys without feedback, the consultations cannot be successful in their opinion. Instead of more formal requirements and written surveys, they demand more meetings and real-life dialogues for the consultations.

Moderate voices among the actors see opportunities for a connection between projects and consultations, given that real-life dialogues between youth and politicians result in answers to the questions raised by the EU. One project co-ordinator describes it as follows: "Projects are the basis and consultations the peak." However, the inclusion of project results into ongoing consultation processes is, according to the actors, only useful if there is feedback responding them. Young people should be able to clearly see that their demands and ideas are considered in political processes.

Structural framework of the project work

In order to ensure sustainability of the projects, structures and framework conditions are needed which can guarantee continuity in addition to the individual projects. Especially regarding the current savings plans for youth work, the projects are facing enormous financial, institutional and personnel challenges. In many places, the necessary resources and financial support – in addition to the concrete funding of individual projects – are demanded, which would establish the Structured Dialogue sustainably on a wide range.

2.5 European dimension

The implementation of the European dimension is understood in various ways. It ranges in the projects from dealing with EU topics to discussing the EU and European politics in general to European projects with young people from different Member States.

EU Youth Strategy

The European dimension in the projects of the Structured Dialogue is realised by enabling young people to participate in certain topics of the EU Youth Strategy. By setting up projects and consultations, they are motivated to formulate their views and bring them into the process. One interview gets to the heart of this fact:

"What makes the Structured Dialogue different from other instruments of participation is that it actually implements the EU Youth Strategy."

In some actors' point of view, the top-down setting of topics is justified because it makes clear where the participation of young people in European politics is requested and where decision-making processes can be influenced. Some project co-ordinators regard the Structured Dialogue as a support for local youth policy from the European level. With the support from Brussels and by dealing with concrete European issues, youth participation shall gain more importance and impact. The current importance of the EU Youth Strategy with the set priorities can help local youth work receive greater recognition, in their opinion.

Space for the exploration of European topics

All projects are more or less closely linked to the topics of the EU Youth Strategy, aligning them to local requirements. The interviews clear out that there is more space needed in order to bring the top-down approach of EU and bottom-up needs of local and regional youth work together. If this free space is used, the project co-ordinators see a good chance the living environment of young people can be linked to Europe and European youth policy. The interviewees regard it as legitimate to formulate topics to be discussed on the EU level, and at the same time responding to impulses from the bottom, so to say from youth, and then choosing what young people want to discuss, what is important for them among EU topics. Thus Europe is not a topic set from the top, but rather something young people create with their needs and experiences. Young people also need free space in the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy so that they can process their ideas and interests within this framework.

Furthermore, project co-ordinators point out that many young people are not able to fully catch the European level, and that they don't feel they can participate in European decision-making processes. Projects of the Structured Dialogue are able to alter this perception and build bridges between young people and European policy. A project co-ordinator stated:

"The whole thematic area Europe was a topic we all had to warm up with. (...) This approach Structured Dialogue has given us many opportunities to process European topics close to young people's living environment. If we have and use this free space, we are able to further develop the topic Europe and European youth policy. Focusing on just one of them would be a deadlock."

If the Structured Dialogue is only used to receive answers on limited questions by the EU, in order to legitimate European policy, then it becomes kind of a "one-way street". This would not be regarded positively by those working in the youth education and youth work fields. The EU is generally seen as far away and too abstract to really get the attention of young people focused on European topics. The project co-ordinators will certainly not be willing to be exploited and just execute requirements from the EU.

Communicating Europe

In some projects which have a focus on getting young people involved, the inclusion of the European level is rather difficult. They are busy doing the groundwork, getting young people acquainted with the EU and European politics. In these projects, the Structured Dialogue is regarded as a process of education where young people work on topics on their own and learn that the topic they are interested in has several dimensions, and that Europe is important for it. In this case, the projects of the Structured Dialogue do their bit to let young people become familiar with the issues of the EU Youth Strategy step by step. This process needs time, and only future projects can lie the focus on the European dimension. The following statement of a young interviewee may serve as an example:

"Through the project, I got over the barrier between me and politics, and now I am also interested in (European) politics."

European projects

Most projects of the Structured Dialogue cover the regional or national level during the first phase of implementation, as far as participants are regarded. In the projects with an international orientation, some actors see a special European dimension. In these projects, young people from Europe meet and exchange their views of EU topics, get to know the

opinions of other young Europeans and reach joint conclusions in the end. This creates an added value on the European level that functions as a basis for European active citizenship.

3. Conclusions

The main focus of interest in the evaluation (2010 – 2013) is the question of how the Structured Dialogue has been implemented in projects so far, and what conclusions can be derived regarding its further development from the interviewees' point of view. For the development of specific recommendations is the interpretation and analysis phase of the evaluation (2013) as seen from multiple perspectives. By now, the interviewed actors have gained a sufficiently wide range of experiences for the implementation of the Structured Dialogue. Therefore, they can assess in greater detail its potentials and the possibilities of development in light of their work and with regard to the promotion of youth participation. Using the impact analysis with reference to the actors, the relevant factors for the further development of the Structured Dialogue as such and its implementation in projects in Germany have been identified. Below, these are presented systematically, and appropriate recommendations for actions are derived.

3.1 Expectations and challenges

As a result of the first phase of the implementation of the Structured Dialogue in Germany, many expectations and challenges for the next steps (2014-2016) were expressed by the interviewees. On this basis, it is possible to identify or derive main parameters of the Structured Dialogue that the actors consider important for its optimisation and further development.

As stated above, regarding the effects and response, many actors appreciate the Structured Dialogue as being well set up. The necessary information services and existing mechanisms in the first phase are regarded as essential and supportive. Therefore, mainly expectations and challenges are expressed, that need to be complied with in the implementation of the Structured Dialogue in the following phase (2014-2016).

More clarity in communication

Especially with regards to the high complexity of the Structured Dialogue, most actors demand more clarity in communication as one of the main parameters in its further development. For the next phase in the implementation, the interviewees expect a more transparent handling of content and objectives of the Structured Dialogue as well as a larger spread of information.

The concerns, possibilities and limitations of the Structured Dialogue in Germany would have to be communicated more easily and accurately. This refers in part to the use of too many

technical terms, a too complex language within the EU, but also to non-binding platitudes as well as to more transparency in the transfer of concerns of the EU youth policy into the actual youth work. In light of the principle of subsidiarity in the youth and educational work in Germany, the top-down definitions within the implementation process of the Structured Dialogue are partly perceived as debatable. Regarding the political actors involved as well as the decision-makers in dialogue projects, for many of the interviewees clear communication means more commitment and reliability in terms of the results generated in the projects. Political commitment means devoting oneself to a case and requires the actors involved to know each other's goals and needs.

More pronounced political commitment

For most actors of the Structured Dialogue, its implementation must not be confined to a small group of insiders and experts. Most project co-ordinators wish for more interested, competent, and authorised politicians as partners in the Structured Dialogue. Moreover, there has to be "*something to negotiate*". The co-determination has to be made binding, and the issues which young people would like to discuss need to be included in the dialogue process. If the EU, federal, state, and local governments really want more participation and involvement, they need to be willing to agree on binding rules with the target group youth. Without a greater commitment to the Structured Dialogue on part of the politicians, it is difficult to reach a long-term effect.

Promote flexibility and diversity in the implementation

For most interviewed actors it is very important to keep or build their own scope of actions and testing for the project implementation of the Structured Dialogue within the second phase. The multimodality of access is regarded as one of the key factors for a successful implementation. If the Structured Dialogue is to do justice to its claim of being an instrument to enable more youth participation and dialogue between youth and politics, the use of different formats and multiple channels of communication as well as varied ways of implementation is necessary. In this context, some actors want a greater openness in definition and interpretation of the Structured Dialogue for the implementation in Germany. It seems to be important to have specifications that are not too rigid for the implementation, as well as flexibility and formats that are tailored to local needs. For most actors, a concentration or reduction of the Structured Dialogue to a mere consultation procedure appears to be too limiting. Also, the Structured Dialogue should fulfil its dialogue function as well as its fundamental claim of participation.

Strengthening the position of the implementation bodies

Many of the interviewees basically ask for more information and transparency about the results from the Working Group of the Federal Government and the Länder and the National Working Group for the Structured Dialogue (NAG). The actors consider the transfer of content into the child and youth work as important and generally wish for stronger public relations in this area.

Some of the interviewees propose to further strengthen the NAG's role and powers in the next implementation phase. For this purpose, the NAG's power to act and decision-making competences need to be clearly outlined. In order to further develop the Structured Dialogue in a qualitative way, the actors consider it as helpful to critically examine the stumbling blocks in the Structured Dialogue.

Conclusion: Strengthening the conditions for success and creating a wider public

With the goal to further increase the resonance of the Structured Dialogue regarding its increased acceptance and the qualification of the involved actors, some conditions for success and main parameters for projects of the Structured Dialogue can be derived. This includes the following factors:

- orientation towards participants and youth-friendly implementation
- strong interest on the part of the actors in the concerns of the Structured Dialogue (youth participation and EU Youth Strategy)
- relevant politicians with authorisation within the political decision-making processes as dialogue partners
- a declared political will with corresponding feedback procedure
- sufficient resources (time, personnel, financial resources)
- didactical and methodical competences to accompany the implicit learning processes and facilitate the dialogue processes
- adaptation to the specific situation
- good networking and close contacts of project co-ordinators in politics and youth work
- sustainable structures to anchor and stabilise the Structured Dialogue beyond specific projects
- good preparation of young people and politicians through pedagogical offers and/or targeted information services
- specific information services about the Structured Dialogue and the EU Youth Strategy for the different target groups
- debate about the possibilities and limitations of the Structured Dialogue throughout the entire process

The prioritisation and the realisation of these parameters have to be discussed more extensively, especially in the National Working Group.

3.2 Recommendations

As part of the evaluation, the participants made a number of comments and suggestions on how to optimize the Structured Dialogue as such, as well as in projects in the second phase. The proposals are based on experiences gained in projects and aim to provide both quantitative and qualitative improvements. They are to contribute to the further development of the Structured Dialogue in the process of its implementation and identify ways and means on how to better achieve the ambitious goals. They are aimed at the

alignment of the top-down targets with the bottom-up expectations. In addition, the parameters need to be set accordingly to provide for sufficient resources to increase efficiency and sustainability. The goal is to further develop the Structured Dialogue into an established political instrument that facilitates the participation of young people in the EU Youth Strategy.

Initiating more participation in the Structured Dialogue

Many of the optimisation proposals are directed to achieve a wider dissemination of the Structured Dialogue and to provide young people of various backgrounds with the opportunity to participate in projects and consultations. The following measures have been proposed:

- communication in the Working Group of the Federal Government and the Länder on the topics of participation in order to perform not only information services, but to achieve significant initiatives, projects, and processes in the federal states
- provision of additional resources to finance projects
- greater involvement and systematic development of civic education
- targeted approach of youth social work as poorly involved area of youth welfare so far
- connecting existing participation projects and formats of youth and policy with the concerns and issues of the Structured Dialogue
- inclusion of creative ways and methods of cultural youth education
- increased attention within the Structured Dialogue to young people with fewer opportunities and the corresponding necessary conditions

Winning school as a new actor

Schools are the place where the foundation is laid for political understanding, and thus also for the willingness for political participation. If schools offered information about the issues and possibilities of the Structured Dialogue and the students receive specific offers for participation, it would be possible to reach a greater number and a more representative cross-section of young people. However, therein lies the challenge to transfer the approach, the methods, and the implementation of the Structured Dialogue into the context of schools without losing sight of its goals. In this context a fundamental consideration is to be given on what role, if any, schools can fulfil in the Structured Dialogue in the future. The following proposals need to be addressed according to the participants who have already had experience with co-operations with schools:

- implementation of the Structured Dialogue within the framework of working groups, project-based instruction, special promotion days, optional courses, or other voluntary formats
- incorporation of the Structured Dialogue into the curriculum of civic education and development of an appropriate curriculum in the context of the educational mandate of schools to teach European politics
- models and co-operation formats between schools and non-formal education.

More real dialogues, less consultations

In order to better incorporate the concerns of the consultations into the reality of local projects and facilitate an efficient implementation of the Structured Dialogue, it is essential to adjust the timing of events. In addition, it is necessary to reduce the topics that are addressed in the consultations, particularly the questions arising from these topics. The interviewed participants consider the following optimisations as appropriate:

- clarification of the context linking the project work with the consultations
- active participation of young people in the determination and specification of the German theme corridors
- greater consideration of the interests of young people, and communication of their proposals when setting the European agenda.

Setting up and supporting regional co-ordination bodies

In order to establish sustainability and continuity in the Structured Dialogue, not only single projects are required but also longer-term local support structures. All involved partners need to inform about the Structured Dialogue, encourage, advise and support projects, promote networking at the local level, ensure transparency, and raise public awareness. For this purpose, mainly the project co-ordinators consider the following steps as necessary:

- development and promotion of regional co-ordination bodies by the states
- provision of additional funding for personnel, infrastructure and projects of the Structured Dialogue beyond ERASMUS⁺.

Organisation of national youth events

Regularly scheduled national youth events bring young people from various projects together and offer them the opportunity to discuss their concerns on a federal level, focus their results and thus give emphasis to those issues. Such events at a federal level make the Structured Dialogue more visible, and promote the exchange of experiences and better networking between the participants and their projects. The majority of the interviewed participants as well as the interviewed young people consider the following primary approaches helpful:

- organisation of regular national Structured Dialogues.

Strengthening the European dimension

By addressing the concerns of the EU Youth Strategy the topic of Europe is highlighted more prominently within the youth work. In addition, European projects allow for a substantive discussion between young people and politicians from different Member States. Through cross-border dialogues a European public can be established, which is required as a basis for active European citizenship. For this purpose, the participants make the following proposals:

- better conveying the meaning of Europe and European dimensions within the projects by means of the respective issues
- development of youth-friendly materials about European politics in the context of the Structured Dialogue and the EU Youth Strategy

- taking advantage of the tailwind function of the projects within the Structured Dialogue for a stronger Europeanization of the local youth work
- initiating European projects, that are organised in European partnership and integrate participants across borders

Establishing feedback structures

In order to improve the feedback on the topics discussed by young people in the projects as well as the merged responses from the consultations it is necessary to agree on specific feedback structures, which meet this requirement and establish transparency. For the interviewed participants this specifically means:

- communication of the feedback in a language and format understandable for all young people
- regular reports and organisation of feedback events where the relevant decision-makers are made accountable for their activities
- using varied forms of media and events for a presentation of the feedback with more public impact

Activation of the political levels

As part of the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy it is also important to more strongly address the politicians as a target group, to inform them about the goals and issues of the EU Youth Strategy as well as to raise their awareness for the concerns of the Structured Dialogue and motivate them to participate. In this, the political decision-makers need support and preparation as well. It is important to increase the political will significantly in order to actually achieve effectiveness in the Structured Dialogue. In light of their expertise and experience, some participants give the following differentiated recommendations:

- development of workshops, conferences or training days for committees of the Länder parliaments involved in European politics, youth policy spokesperson, or even local parliaments for the qualification and training relating to youth and European policy
- conscious reflection and clarification in politics about the possibilities and limitations of the liability in the Structured Dialogue
- development of approaches for improved cross sectoral co-operation on the respective issues of the Structured Dialogue
- involvement of the political decision-making level in peer-learning processes in the context of the EU Youth Strategy
- development of services that interconnect exchange, discussions and networking on topics of the Structured Dialogue and the EU Youth Strategy on a political level

Round tables as an instrument for reflection

The Structured Dialogue not only needs projects and consultations for its implementation but also places for discussions between all actors about the goals and implementation on a meta level. For a greater overall impact, representatives from academic fields and the media need to be involved as well. Such events provide an opportunity to comply with the evidence base of the Structured Dialogue, and discuss the results of the scientific monitoring and evaluation on a larger scale. Some of the actors, who work at the interface between science and practice in relation to teaching European politics and strengthening youth participation, recommend the following discourses for the further implementation of the Structured Dialogue:

- organisation of round tables on a local, regional and national level where all involved actors as diverse as possible reflect on the results and further developments of the Structured Dialogue in Germany
- discussion on the value of the Structured Dialogue as transmission belt of the EU Youth Strategy as well as the possibilities of a better alignment of the top-down processes with the bottom-up processes
- initiation of an interdisciplinary discourse on positioning the Structured Dialogue in the EU Youth Strategy with regard to the promotion of youth participation

3.3 Concluding remarks

In review, the first phase of the implementation of the Structured Dialogue presents a positive picture in the evaluation. The evaluation shows what role the project orientation plays in the implementation of the Structured Dialogue. Through projects the Structured Dialogue can make an impact locally. Here, real dialogue processes take place between young people and politics. The evaluation uncovered that all participants expressed the wish for these processes to be further developed and stabilized. In conclusion it became clear that the Structured Dialogue is still at its very beginning in many places in Germany. Generally, the participants welcome the policy approach of the European Union. However, they need more time for a longer-term and sustainable implementation. Moreover, the European dimension in the projects would have to be significantly strengthened. Therefore, the scientific evaluation and evidence-based monitoring of the Structured Dialogue put the main focus in the second phase of the implementation regarding sustainability and the added European value.

4. Appendix

Thesis paper on the Structured Dialogue

Summary of the Interim Evaluation Report 2012

- (1) The **Structured Dialogue** receives general approval from all involved actors. In contrast to the previous year, the classification of the respective projects in the coherences of the Structured Dialogue and the EU-Youth Strategy are known at least rudimentarily by most project leaders. But the European and federal implications of the projects are still less known by the decision-makers and young people.
- (2) From the perspective of all involved actors, the Structured Dialogue imparts **political relevance and new impetus from the EU** for local youth participation, as well as it accomplishes a function of motivation and activation. Especially the leaders of youth work consider the Structured Dialogue as a **tail wind from the EU and a support** for their own work aiming at local youth participation.
- (3) The implementation of structured dialogue confronts **top-down approaches with bottom-up projects**. A linked question for the youth organisations and project leaders is, how they can combine this constructively and create added value.
- (4) It is important for the involved actors to implement the Structured Dialogue **in municipal and local contexts** in order to locate and link it with the living environment of young people. In doing so, they use their **own scopes of interpretation and action**.
- (5) The project leaders recognize the European dimension as a core element of the Structured Dialogue, whereby **target group-specific approaches to European issues** are considered to play a central role. Implementing the EU-Consultation-topics resp. national theme corridors has proven to be a difficult and complex challenge. Therefore, the topics are picked up and diversified depending on the local needs and circumstances.
- (6) As project leaders suspect that due to its complexity, the Structured Dialogue **might ask too much from young people**. Therefore they are looking for starting points to link directly to young people's living environments. For that task, project leaders see themselves in an intermediary function.
- (7) In addition to verbal reflection processes, medial and artistic means of expressions are important for young people in the different projects of the Structured Dialogue. Particularly focusing on barely approachable young people, these **creative methods** play a key function due to the empowerment function they offer.

- (8) The success of the dialogue processes depends on a setting ensuring a serious and respectful **exchange at an eye level** between the involved actors. To make this happen, young people and decision-makers alike should be prepared specifically for the concrete dialogue situation.
- (9) Dialogue processes between young people and politics require **time, endurance and continuity** in order to develop gainfully. This is sometimes difficult for young people preferring a different speed of the regular political processes. Therefore leaders of youth work play an important role for the processes both as mediators and as carers.
- (10) In view of the **financial, structural, and staffing requirements**, the current austerity budgets for youth work will make it difficult in the long run to root the Structured Dialogue on a sustainable basis and beyond single project funding.