



The German Federal Youth Council's Statement on the implementation of common objectives in the youth policy field „participation“

General Appraisal

The German Federal Youth Council has actively accompanied the EU-white paper process since 1999 and contributed numerous proposals for an intensification of cooperation in youth policy within the European Union. Hence the German Federal Youth Council has expressly welcomed the final passage of common objectives for participation and information of youths by the EU-youth ministers on the 25th of November 2003.

The activities that have been induced by the EU and the member states after the objective's passage are by far not sufficient to lastingly and decisively extend the opportunities for participation of youths and fail to live up to the expectations that have been aroused in the youths. Many activities and actions on both national and European level had been agreed on already before the passing of the 2003 resolve and so far a true surplus value is not in sight.

On the European level the increasing interweaving of activities within the framework of the European Youth Pact, the open method of coordination in the youth sector and the consultations for the new EU-program „Youth in Action“ aggravates ensuring a continuous participation of youths on all levels. This is highlighted by the European Commission's planning for the European Youth Week (Youth „Etats Généreaux“), which is being designed largely without youth participation, disregarding many of the European Youth Forum's proposals, leaving out the current problems of the EU concerning the acceptance of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe and aggravating through immense pressure of time an appropriate participation of youth in the preparatory phase in December 2005. As a consequence the interest of youths in questions concerning the European Union is diminishing.

In Germany too, there are numerous visible hindrances, that are opposed to a more extensive and effective participation of youths. Particularly in the arena of politics there are plenty of reservations against a stronger inclusion of youths. Since 2003 opportunities of participation are even being restricted and reduced in some areas with reference to corresponding EU guidelines in the area of joint decision making in financial matters.

Chapter 1

The national situation at the time of passing common objectives in the field of participation and information.

Participation and laws

Participation had become contractual by legal provisions in many areas of our society before the passing of the common objectives in 2003.

Below is an overview of the guidelines:

The pillar of participation of youths and children in international law rests upon the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In Germany too, the participation of children and youths is firmly rooted in the law. The Law for Children and Youth Welfare (Volume Eight - Social Code – SGB VIII, Child and Youth Services Act) factors in the involvement of young people in the shaping of measures concerning help for children and young people, including for example local job opportunities for youths. The law stipulates “to involve children and young people, according to their stage of development, in all decisions in public youth welfare concerning them“ (§ 8, subsection 1 SGB VIII). Furthermore their “growing abilities and the increasing need (...) to self-sufficient, responsible acting as well as the respective special social and cultural requirements (...) have to be taken into consideration.” (§ 9 subsection 2 SGB VIII). This point also refers to the handling of financial means and resources, or to express it in legal terms, financial aid planning (for more information look up § 36 subsection 1 SGB VIII). There the law prescribes. “Young people have to be involved already in the demand-oriented planning of measures“ (§ 80 subsection 1 subparagraph 2 SGB VIII). Concretely this means that there shall not be such a thing as an allotment of money and other resources “from above“ to the youth associations, but young people should be able to plan and work independently in this area.

Not brushing aside the importance of transnational and national guidelines it is still vital to adjudge young people their rights. The German Federal Youth Council highly welcomes therefore that some states have written down the participation of children and youths in their municipal codes.

A very specific opportunity to participate is naturally to take part in elections. The right to vote and be elected (active and passive suffrage) is a matter of age, among other things. Thus, age is a major legal aspect concerning the involvement of young people in politics and matters of society.

The role of children's and youth organizations

Already before 2003 in Germany, children's and youth organizations were active on all levels. These are the experimental theatres for young people's participation. It is there that they are equipped with everything necessary for a self-determined political life and not in theory through complicated papers and lectures but indeed through learning by doing. The willingness and ability to articulate one's own interests, ways and means to enforce these as well as handling conflicts are integral parts of this. Children and youths learn in teams and in organizational work to group together with peers and find compromises. Cooperation counts and orders from “above“ are being scrutinized. At the same time children and youths gain a deeper understanding for taking responsibility for others, as well as wielding “power“ responsibly.

This enumeration comprises core areas of political learning. Active co-shaping of all areas is foregrounded. Hence, youth organizations do not only offer opportunities to participate in given structures but also demand to be part in the active shaping of democracy. Democracy becomes part of everyday life as living together in leisure time and in organizations are shaped according to democratic principles. Through this children and young people learn the forms of communication in a democratic society. One important area in this learning process is the election of representatives to speak for the members of the group. The advantages of such a “structure of representatives“ are directly experienced by the young people. Success in ones objectives is enormously facilitated through closing ranks with cooperating partners in neighbouring communities, states, nationwide or international and by acting united and speaking with one voice. It is in groups that young people learn to recognize their own role within a group and to fill in this role. And with that young people and children learn to use the abilities of the individual for the benefit of the group and learn to assign tasks to people according to their abilities and skills. In short, youth organizations offer the chance for youths to put into practice democratic cooperation in various fields from a decision on group activities to opinionforming in political matters.

The initiatives in the field of a extended participation of youths taken by the European Commission are by no means sufficient support for the work of children's and youth organizations. The initiatives are marked by a pseudo-participation in the form of youth conferences, short-notice youth events and similar non-recurring events. Likewise, the half-year national and European youth conferences held on occasion of the Presidency of the Council for the European Union have to be interlinked much closer with existing structures if a lasting effect is to be achieved.

Chapter 2

Actions realized on national level since the passing of the common objectives with reference to each of the three objectives and action lines

- 1. Enforced civic commitment of youths in their community**
- 2. Extended involvement of youths in the system of a representative democracy**
- 3. Extended Support of the various forms of the acquisition of participatory competence**

A differentiation of the various activities, projects and actions according to the three objectives and action lines makes little sense in the view of the German Federal Youth Council if the issue is the depiction of emphasised activities in this field. Two issues of these focal points are of special interest for the German Federal Youth Council and its member organizations.

Shape participation -“Project P – get involved“

Come in Contract

“Come in Contract“ is the German Federal Youth Council's contribution to the federal initiative “Projekt P – Misch dich ein“ („Project P – get involved“). The “P“ stands for politics and participation. Youth initiatives and participation projects are generated, are included into networks, empowered and are made visible. Behind “Project P“ stand apart from the German Federal Youth Council the Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth as well as the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung).

The central thought of “Come in Contract“ is the obligatory participation of youths in society and politics by entering conventions with persons in key positions. Youths start projects on topics they are interested in such as social justice, education, violence, environment, international issues, protection of minorities. Then, the youths get to know processes of decision and are accordingly trained and qualified to approach persons in charge to help them realize their objectives and wishes. The pivot here is the mutual agreement between the youths and the decision makers. Through the conventions both “parties“ commit themselves to implement the agreed objectives. The contract constitutes the inventive, obligatory and motivating element and aims at a new form of participation.

These contracts are reached in written form between mergers of youths and political instances on federal, state, or municipal level (p.ex. Members of Parliament of a certain constituency) as well as other decision makers (p.ex. from the economical sector). These contracts have the following features: They are useful, concrete, realistic, mutual, checkable and effective. They are true to life and effective for a wider circle than merely that of the initiators. The reached contracts can be implemented in a reasonable time frame and have a realistic chance for success.

The youths formulate their wishes and demands to politicians and decision makers well thought out and concisely phrased. The politicians and decision makers in turn offer their competencies and authority for the implementation of the objectives.

“Come in Contract“ is taken up with great interest by the youths and group leaders. Many very creative projects were generated by very unusual approaches to the subject of participation in politics and changes of politics. Thanks to the chances for financial funding within the framework of “Project P“ many of these projects started. The 100 initiatives successfully effected or still being in effect have held negotiations with politicians and persons in administration key positions and have done so partly for the first time or have continued and enforced an already successful dialogue of recent years.

The spectrum of the German Federal Youth Council's member organization's projects that have taken place in 2004 and 2005 range from negotiations with politicians concerning the amending of laws, negotiations for rooming in community facilities to counselling the ministry for environment by youth environmental organizations, the organization of a youth policy week in the Landtag (legislative assembly of a German state) and to mentoring young women as well as the creation of new jobs through pertinacious negotiations and a charity football tournament.

Other projects base their focal point on publications, websites or brochures for the use of other youth groups and organizations in which “Come in Contract“ and its entire spectrum is promoted. The resulting support material based upon the projects put into effect have the advantage that they were made by youths for youths. The material supports the continuity and transferability of the effected participation projects.

A list of projects with a short description of their aims can be found on the homepage of “Project P“: www.projekt.p.de .

It is also an aim of “Project P“ to give participation of youths and its support a broader public through the media. Thus broadsheets have been placed in magazines for young people and in 2005 a nationwide poster campaign was launched with the motto: Powerplay – with the Essen young Christian workers group and their project “Kohlenkick“.

“Come in Contract“ is promoted largely through the homepages and magazines of the member organizations and young farmers clubs. A well devised concept for communication led to articles and information about “Come in Contract“ on youth servers of the states as well as in periodicals on political education and youth welfare.

The support for work on participation through specifically created programs and initiatives proves to be positive and motivational. However, without the existence of structures for youth work and organizational work that enable a punctual and thematic work on projects, “Come in Contract“ could not have been put into effect. Therefore a linkage to these structures is absolutely indispensable.

All in all the nationwide “Come in Contract“ projects are important pillars of the “Project P – get involved“ campaign. This democracy- and participation-fostering concept of contract negotiations fits in very well into the entire concept of the both qualifying and initiative promoting measures of the project partners.

Joining and decision making

[bite 05] Photograph and essay-writing contest for young people

The name “bite“ stands for „Bild und Text“ (photo and text). It is the title of the photograph and essay-writing contest of the German Federal Youth Council. In addition to an attractively designed and inviting brochure, a concept was developed which had an entirely participatory character. With the example of Playing Arts each participant is also a member of the jury, the young people can and should be able to rate themselves.

The theme was “visions of a youth-friendly world“. Four categories were established – photo and text, divided according to age : 14 to 16 and 17 to 21 years.

The contest comprised participation at all levels as a special aspect of the concept is that the participants themselves decided over prizes and criteria. Thus all the young people who had sent contributions were automatically part of the jury. In preliminary rounds which took place until the 17th of May 2005, the artists would rate each others work. Therefore each member of the jury was sent a data disc with the different contributions. Each juror rated the contributions according to a scale, giving their reasons in a comment in a length of one or two lines.

The winners of these preliminaries went to the finale in form of a compered workshop, which took place from the 27th to the 29th of May 2005 in Berlin. In the workshop the winners were chosen and each group prepared a speech for the respective winners to beheld at the awarding ceremony.

The winners of the final were recieved at the Bundeskanzleramt on the 3rd of June 2005. Chancellor Schröder himself presented the winners with their prizes.

In addition to stating opinions which constitutes the most important aspect contributing to a participation of youths, the non-material and the concept of rating convinced.

The prizes were: a dinner with foreign minister Joschka Fischer and asking questions that you had always wanted to ask. See what the minister of finance Hans Eichel's job was all about or visiting Volker Kauder, secretary general of the CDU.

Further activities in the field of participation

Numerous member organizations of the German Federal Youth Council are active with their own thematic focal points, activities and new methods to ensure and expand the participation of youths which is the basic cause of youth organizations and associations.

Below we can only list a small selection of activities.

Arbeitsgruppe der Evangelischen Jugend in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - aej (Working Group of Lutheran Youths of the Federal Republic of Germany)

Previous to the 2004 European elections the aej got particularly involved in the political discussion and inspired young people to grapple with European politics and cast their votes. At various opportunities youth work such as recreationals, seminars for co-workers, youth church services, project weeks and festivals, the election and its topics were taken up.

Contact: www.evangelische-jugend.de

Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend (Association of German Catholic Youths)

The project "Kohlenkick" created additional jobs. With a football tournament the youths collected donations to finance a further job in Essen.

Contact: www.bdj.k.de

Bundesjugendwerk der Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Youth Work of the Worker's Welfare Organization)

Life is ours and groups rock! With a new pedagogical concept "Das Leben ist unser!" ("Life is Ours"), that has been developed by honorary work groups over 18 months, the opportunities for participation, pedagogical work, the quality of supervisor's education and training and intercultural competences were ameliorated.

Contact: www.bundesjugendwerk.de

BUNDjugend (Youth Group of the German Federation for the Environment and the Protection of Nature "Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland", BUND)

"Wann, wenn nicht jetzt! Wer wenn nicht wir!" ("When if not now! Who if not us!") is the motto of the YES2004 arranged and organised by the BUNDjugend prior to the International Conference on Renewable Energies (renewables2004). A broad scope of contentual and methodological know-how about renewable energies was put across to the youths. It was also a forum for the youth's own ideas and common projects.

Contact: www.yes2004.de and www.bundjugend.de

djo - Deutsche Jugend in Europa (German Youths in Europe)

„Jetzt reden wir!“ („Now we're talking“) was the motto of a migration conference. More than 50 Russian, Kurdish, Kazakhian, Ukrainian, Polish, Kirgisian and German youths debated: particularly about integration, education and participation.

Contact: www.djo.de

Jugend der Deutschen Lebensrettungsgesellschaft (Youth of the German Life Saving Society)

The nationwide campaign “Kinder – Kinder machen eine neue Welt“ (“Children – Children create a new world“) is about the wishes and needs of children, local children's and youth organizations develop new ideas “for a new world“ they grapple with the playful experience of nature's elements and collect ideas for the expansion of opportunities for participation under the motto “If I was queen/king of...“.

Contact: www.dlrg-jugend.de

Naturfreundejugend Deutschlands (Young Naturefriends Germany)

Children's Summit 2004 – children develop a contract for the future at a summit meeting and discuss it with politicians from all over Germany.

Contact: www.naturfreundejugend.de

Bremer Jugendring (Bremen Youth Council)

“Jugend macht Europa...aber wie?“ (“Youth creates Europe... but how?“) was the motto of a meeting with politicians from the EU parliament prior to the European elections, to ask questions on a Europe of Youths.

Contact: www.bremerjugendring.de

Encroaching in politics of integration

Youth organizations open to youths with migrational backgrounds

From 2003 on a new orientation of youth organization's work towards an intercultural opening can be observed as a reaction to the demographic development. Already in October 2001 the German Federal Youth Council had decided to systematically enforce the process of intercultural opening in youth work. On occasion of the plenary meeting in December 2004, the German Federal Youth Council has discussed the weak points in the integration of children and young people with migrational background within youth organization's structure. The German Federal Youth Council has incited internal processes for the enforcement of intercultural competence. It is to be emphasised that the German Federal Youth Council does not consider migrant's organizations a competition but partners for cooperation and existing umbrella organizations and youth councils intend to open to migrant's organizations in order to cooperate with them.

To support youth organizations in the opening process for young people with migrational background and their organizations, an intensive cooperation between the German Federal Youth Council and the staff of the commissary for integration of the Deutsche Sportjugend (German Sports Youth) and the IDA e.V.

Chapter 3

Implemented actions to determine the existing knowledge with reference to the participation information and taking all useful actions to complete, update and facilitate access.

Get along!

Participation with a method – Ideas for youth projects with examples in practice, tips and methods.

In 2004 a helping hand for participative, democratic methods and tips for small project management correlating to political and social participation was published within the framework of “Come into Contract“. A CD-ROM with high surplus value was developed. On the CD-ROM “Come in Contract – participation with a method“ there are successful examples from project practise within the framework of “Come in Contract“. The idea of a contract as the motor for one's own project is supported here . Successful projects should serve as inspiration for others.

The focal point is of the CD-ROM however, is on collecting methods and tips for practise, so as to get interesting projects of one's own going. A selection of methods, games and tips are described in detail. These are suitable for groups, initiatives or project teams to democratically plan, that is with a maximum of participation, objectives and actions.

In addition legal bases for youth participation, depictions of different forms of social and political participation, a checklist for successful project management, tips for good public relations and ideas for contacting politicians. This is supposed to stimulate youths to get active. Each tip and each description is supported by illustrative material. There are contracts between youths and politicians, clippings of project documentaries, pictures and visualizations of theoretical descriptions, numerous links and an extensive literature list, referring to more successful projects and initiatives that expand the sound texts.

Youth organizations and school

“At eye-level“. A cooperation on equal terms between youth organizations and school

Schools are under political pressure to countervail structural deficits by new pedagogical concepts. With building and upgrading all-day schools the recommendations of the “Forum Bildung“ (forum education) are to remedy the deficits detected by the Pisa-study. In the course of this endeavour the institution that is school and many protagonists outside school are directed towards each other. Background and prerequisite at the same time for such a development is the opening of the comparatively closed system “school“ to the inside as well as to the outside.

One important partner in this respect is and has to be the work of youth organizations. In youth organizations education is achieved by tangible educational offers and by the organisation of educational processes, particularly a inspiring environment that creates chances for education. The youth organizations create offers that are beneficial to the development of young people, that are oriented on their interests and rouses new ones, that enable self-determination and social participation. At all times the youth organizations are oriented towards the interests and reality of life of children and young people. The principles of voluntariness and participation take care of that. By the meeting of heterogenous groups (different nationalities, age etc.) a stimulating climate is created. All of this forwards so-called key qualifications such as the ability to work in a team, to compromise, to take criticism and to forge relationships. The self-acquisition of educational processes, as a member of a group or participant, within the framework of the multifarious opportunities in youth organizations offers the opportunity to gain financial, training and rhetorical competences. As an institution of “non-formal education“ youth organization work dispenses with educational goals that depend on performance controls and selection.

A central prerequisite for a well working partnership is however, that it takes place on the same eye level, that is youth organizations create independent and supplementary offers and that pedagogical concepts are developed by all participants. They are neither dogsbodies nor stopgaps for poor school grades. On that condition, schools can be supported by the youth organization's competencies in social education that is able to reduce everyday conflicts and expand young people's chances for development. Acquired social competence will have positive effects on the climate in school. The experience of youth organization workers – for example in team work – can add valuable new impulse for work in schools.

Pupil's cafés, tutorials, environment ralleys, mediator training, or school paramedic training, project workshops and seminars on topics like democracy, tolerance or choice of profession and many more. In practise it becomes evident that cooperation with youth organizations has become an established part of schools. The common projects are not limited to the afternoons. Depending on the pedagogical concept the offers of education and leisure can have a character like classes or extracurricular activities, these offers can either be continuous or can have project character. Not all of these activities take place in school facilities. School-related children's and youth work can take place in all sorts of locations: within school boundaries, in the respective organization's rooms or outdoors, for example at a district survey. There are no limits to creativity as youth organizations have an abundance of experience.

The variety of youth organization's work with its different objectives, contents, methods and different procedures offers a broad educational spectrum. Furthermore the youth organizations put, according to need, working aids, counselling competence or teaching materials at the disposal of schools. The foundation of a cooperation are the jointly formulated objectives of the involved parties, oriented at the guidelines of politics for cooperations and at the specific guidelines for these programs and models of the respective states.

In the joint mission for education based on partnership of schools and youth organizations work, contents of syllabus, youth work's fields of action and socially relevant daily topics and complexes of problems complement each other. The youth organization's aims are not a mere day-care offer but a comprehensive formation and education. The cooperation of schools and youth organizations aims at ameliorating learning and education in schools and other places of learning and the development of common methods. The youth organizations participate in the process of creating new structures and contents of the educational system. They are aware of the joint responsibility for the growing up of children and youths in the fields of learning, education and forma-

tion. The great strength of youth organization's work is in the field of informal and non-formal education.

The German Federal Youth Council has published a brochure in 2005 (series 42) which contains various examples form practise of the cooperation between schools and youth organizations and hence gives a good overview of the great variety of cooperation.

Shape education

The German Federal Youth Council takes an active part in the discussion on the further development of the German educational system and will contribute the various ideas, methods and activities of children's and youth organizations on all (federal) levels along with its political ideas. Children's and youth organizations in Germany recognize the joint responsibility for the upbringing of children and youth in the fields of education and formation. The most important demands on schools are:

- Get off the 45-minutes-tact: lessons need flexibility in order for learning to make sense and progress are possible on an individual basis.
- 1+1 = friends: whether handicapped or migrants – exclusion is detrimental to society as a whole. Integration of excluded groups has to be pressed ahead in school.
- Joint learning is fun and makes you clever. Social competence counts – unfortunately only too rarely in schools' syllabi, Social learning has to become an integral part of the educational canon.
- Boys and girls together: Basically girls and boys should be educated together. But putting blinkers aside: if it becomes evident that in some circumstances separated classes are a gain especially for girls, there should be no hindrances to classes in homogenous groups.
- Tower block or villa: If the school ignores the youths circumstances of life, education and formation remain patchwork.
- Take schools by the hand: Individual concepts of learning have to be developed further. An extension of career oriented offers that focus on the qualified accompaniment and support of pupils falls into that category.
- No money more problems: Through the curtailments of recent years, schools have been hard pressed. We demand an increase of investments in school's infrastructure to ensure a good equipment in schools.
- Learn teaching: A school that puts emphasis on social competence and wishes to give the pupils more than merely syllabus education, is in need of a reform of training and extensive continuing process of learning for teachers.
- New teachers for a new country. There are too few teachers in Germany. As a consequence lessons are being cancelled and teachers have to do overtime. The paring down in personnel has to be evened out by employing more young teachers.
- Competence with the media counts. It is good for every school to be online but without a trained handling it has little use. Competence with the media is a key qualification and should be in every syllabus.

- School is a matter of pupils: School is designed for pupils – but rarely with them. We demand the inclusion of pupils in the organisation and shaping of life in school and a reform of the educational structure in Germany.
- For a strong co-determination: We demand a 50 % share of the vote for pupils in all school boards with the other 50 % shared by teachers and parents.
- Freedom of press for school magazines: Democracy starts at school. Uttering and publishing an opinion freely is a vital part of this. We therefore demand a free pupil's press and independent from the headmaster's consent and free from any prohibition of distribution. As for all newspapers only ordinary press law should be applied.

Participate in the parliamentary elections for the Bundestag 2005

Young people count – if they cast their votes!

The German Federal Youth Council and its member organisations launched numerous actions prior to the parliamentary elections on the 18th of September 2005 in order to raise awareness for the needs of children and young people as well as helping top make a decision.

A newsletter informed on current developments, activities and positions with respect to youth policies. An interactive database contained offers and activities of and for youth organizations for the parliamentary elections. The brochure “Jugend w(z)ählt – Forderungen des Deutschen Bundesjugendrings zur Wahl des 16. Deutschen Bundestags“ (“Youth counts and votes – demands of the German Federal Youth Council for the parliamentary elections of the 16th German Bundestag) sums up numerous demands of children's and youth organizations on the political parties. A poster titled “Misch dich ein – auch bei der Bundestagswahl“ (“Get involved – in parliamentary elections too“) was printed and was used at member organization's events to motivate youths to cast their vote.

The Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) offers once again a so-called “Wahl-O-Mat“ (“Vote-O-Mat“) on its website to offer youths an insight into important political questions through simple theses. Many of the young editors have a youth organization background. The German Federal Youth Council co-operated as a media partner.

Many member organizations tried to reach young people by means of election spots, appeals to vote, information for young voters, postcards in order to convey information on the elections.

Chapter 4

Modalities of consultation of youths concerning the implementation of common objectives and devising the report

The German Federal Youth Council was informed about the implementation of the objectives within the framework of the task force for European youth policy by the ministry for family, senior citizens, women and youth.

Special consultations whose subject was expressly the implementation of te agreed objectives were not held. At the moment a proposal how the consultations within the framework of the open method of coordination and the formulation of national reports can be ameliorated is in discussion.

Chapter 5

Difficulties of the implementations of the objectives and action lines on national level

Still there are many hindrances in the implementation of the objectives, particularly in the field of political participation. The German Federal Youth Council has, on occasion of the parliamentary elections on the 18th of September 2005, formulated demands that can contribute to better opportunities for co-operation:

Our demands for more participation of young people:

No representatives: Wherever it is possible the children themselves should be directly involved – and not adults representing the children! We demand direct rights to involvement and decision-making competencies, attuned with guide-lines of youth welfare, for young people.

Act locally: On municipal levels young people as well as the independent supporters with youth welfare planning have to be involved at an early stage. It is the only way the obligation proscribed by the Child and Youth Services Act can be implemented actively and youth work is provided with a sound financial and contentual basis.

Lower the voting age: Young people know very well what they want. And they reach decisions far more frequently and independently than did the generation of their parents. Still they are on democracy's waiting list – entry only 18 and above. We demand the lowering of the voting age to at least 16. We are opposed to a surrogate voting right, which means parents cast a vote for their children: Young people are very well able to fill their role as citizens.

Knowing what's up: Children and youths have to be taught about their rights to participate – by appropriate media as well as text books. “Children's rights“ should be part of every syllabus as are maths and German. It is also the obligation of adults to get information on the rights of young people and to respect and promote them.

Have fun participating: Curiosity in young people is aroused only if they feel they are directly addressed. It is therefore imperative to be close to the circumstances of young people's lives, to develop offers according to their age and to offer attractive opportunities for participation. It is also important that young people can comprehend all steps of operational and organisational structure and procedures – it is the only way to learn how an idea becomes reality.

Participation with an impact: Wherever children and youths are involved their effort should have a visible impact. The basis for this is that there are substantial opportunities or decision-making behind the label „participation“. Genuine participation is more than deciding on the list of beverages for the next youth club party...

Chapter 6

Detected and expected effects

Direct effects of the passing of the objectives are, in the opinion of the German Federal Youth Council, visible to a very low extent. Neither the European Commission nor the majority of the national government have raised the necessary awareness for the resolved objectives nor have

they developed mechanisms for an extended participation in the implementation on the respective levels. It is to be hoped that these deficits can be remedied until the next national report is formulated. National conferences on the development of national frameworks of action, regional conferences on the evaluation of the implementation of the framework of action and a continuous information and communication of the responsible ministry of youth with independent supporters on all levels can make a valuable contribution to this process.

Chapter 7

Clues as to which action lines were more or less useful, which were easier or more difficult to employ, as well as proposals which action lines should be added, neglected or changed.

At this point of time a finalization is too early. It is necessary on both the European level as well as in the member nations to adopt mechanisms that see to youth and their organizations being appropriately consulted before and after a passing of objectives. Financial means for information campaigns on backgrounds, contents and further steps after the passing of objectives by the EU-youth ministers are absolutely indispensable. These financial means have to be provided on all levels.