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ABSTRACT

Some 180 experts from 10 European countries met at the University of Trier (Germany) to exchange information about youth assistance projects and hear views about the extent of unemployment among disadvantaged youth and development of innovative solutions. "The Failure of Young People to Cope with Life When Unemployed" (Bohnisch) showed how difficult it is to give encouragement to the unemployed by means of social studies concepts and projects. "Systematic Attempts of Social Studies to Diagnose the Life Environments of Socially Disadvantaged Young People" (Uhlendorff) drew on a social studies diagnosis of youth assistance and education planning to show the extent to which the future working lives of youth can no longer be forecast on the basis of conventional criteria. The basic tenet of "Ethnic Discrimination and Youth Unemployment" (Chauhan) was that not ethnic origin but the response to people of other colors was the cause of discrimination. Twelve projects from the European Community member states and Austria that were considered innovative in the field of assistance to the disadvantaged were presented: Escuela Taller de Valdedios (Training Workshops), Spain; Bureau "Maatwerk" (Tailor-made), Netherlands; Acting Up, Great Britain; Initial and Updating Training Federation (AUF), Germany; RADITA, Career Orientation for Foreign Girls, Austria; INTERFACE, Great Britain; Brusgaard Production School, Denmark; Traject M., Netherlands; Chantier Nature (Nature Building Site), France; Tintamarre, France; SILOG--Local Authority Qualification and Employment Project, Italy; and Employment Project Trier-North, Germany. A resolution that demanded investment in the social and vocational future of disadvantaged youth was drawn up to be sent to politicians and decision makers in member states. (YLB)

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European Symposium for the Evaluation of Innovative Projects to Integrate Disadvantaged Young People into Work

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Some 180 experts from ten European countries met at the University of Trier from 10 - 13 March 1993 to exchange information about youth assistance projects and hear people's views about the extent and problems of unemployment amongst disadvantaged young people, and the development of innovative solutions. The symposium was sponsored by Hywel C. Jones, the then Director of Task Force Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth in the Commission of the European Communities, and it was organised by the Education Department of the University of Trier.

The organisers received support from CEDEFOP in particular. During the preparations for the conference already, it became apparent that the projects conducted by CEDEFOP and the European vocational guidance and training networks resulting from these are helpful tools in a Europe that is growing together. In the next few years the various Community action programmes in the field of education and training and vocational guidance will be giving priority to combatting unemployment. (See: "Guidelines for Community Action in the Field of Education and Training (Doc. COM (93) 183). In the CEDEFOP Work Programme, this key area is reflected in various research projects such as, inter alia, studies on forms of segregation, the rôle of the job market and training systems in segregating/re-integrating young people, or the need for job information and careers advice by young people looking for training or job opportunities. Thus the Trier symposium also provided important stimuli for the CEDEFOP's current work.

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At the conference twelve European projects were presented, and these were reported on and discussed in working groups. Above all the contact between those responsible for implementing the projects resulted in an intensive exchange of views. Both basic and innovative papers set the direction for scientific and political discussion on social work for young people in Europe. Parallel to the symposium papers and working groups, there was an Info-Exchange with stands at which projects, careers advice bodies and organisations providing information about European youth work introduced themselves. The CEDEFOP also had a stand there. In the margins of the conference, excursions were made to projects in Trier. At a cultural function, the youth theatre "Acting Up" from Liverpool performed the play "Stories from the pool of life". (See description of the project 'Acting Up' on P.7).

Create socio/cultural leeway for the unemployed

How difficult it is to give encouragement to the unemployed by means of social studies concepts and projects was shown by Prof. Lothar Böhnisch from the University of Dresden on the basis of experience with unemployment in East Germany. In his opening paper entitled "The failure of young people to cope with life when unemployed - key conceptual issues for social studies in combatting unemployment amongst disadvantaged young people", the social studies expert drew attention to the problem caused by normative life patterns which see work as playing a central rôle as an integrative force in society. In the meantime, since the seventies, it had become questionable, particularly in the western world, whether it was the norm for everyday life to be governed by work. Due to the experience of unemployment, people's biographies manifested breaks and time loops that eroded their focus on work. In the process the relationship between life and work can seem questionable; on the other hand young "drop outs" in particular place a strong emphasis on the immediacy of life experience in niches of society, as opposed to the standard forward-looking life planning via career prospects. Lothar Böhnisch notes a crisis of work and its socially integrative function here, manifesting the shortage of community work. At the same time, participation in the wealth of the industrial and working society is called in question.

It therefore remains for the field of social studies to create new areas of work in sectors such as culture, ecology and communication, and maintain a plurality of

access to work. In so doing, socio/cultural latitude will have to be given in which people with biographies in which work does not feature can find opportunities for secondary integration into a society in which they find cultural support for their specific biographical situation and can build up their self-esteem.

Biographies without conventional life and career planning

The stimulating paper by Uwe Uhlendorff, scientific project worker at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, entitled: "Systematic Attempts of Social Studies to Diagnose the Life Environments of Socially Disadvantaged Young people" drew on a social studies diagnosis of youth assistance and education planning to show the extent to which the future working lives of young people can no longer be forecast on the basis of conventional criteria. Young people feel less and less bound by the old biographical stages of school - vocational training - working life - marriage - family; instead the young frequently look for work that meets their current biographical situation. When interviewed, young people proved extremely willing to talk in detail about their own life experience and thus present a very personal picture of themselves without regard for conventional attitudes to life.

A Europe opposed to ethnic discrimination

Vipin Chauhan works as an independent adviser and trainer in social studies in England. As a black man of Asian origin, he speaks from personal experience when he describes the forms of communication between European social studies experts as difficult. The basic tenet of his paper entitled "Ethnic Discrimination and Youth Unemployment" is that it is not the ethnic origin that is the cause of discrimination, but the response to people of other colours. People are given negative social attributes, always from the standpoint of those in positions of power. Suppression and discrimination from above against coloured people produces disadvantagedness. In addition, there is also institutional racism, as seen for example in a local authority project involving young people from ethnic minorities and managed by not a single person from the community affected (black people), or in certain firms in which English had to be spoken as a matter of principle. This gave rise to the prejudice that young black people had problems with their ethnic origin, without it being realised that it was the training systems that first produced the problems for black people.

There are meanwhile clear signals that young black people are increasingly willing to resist suppression. The unemployment rate amongst young black people is twice as high as amongst young whites. Here too the discrimination is patent, because where young black people's qualifications are equal or better, young whites are given preference. Many of these young people turn to crime, others become active socially, and yet others become resigned and do not seek employment any more. Vipin Chauhan calls upon social studies not to "make young black people white". In a multi-cultural Europe, social studies should lend support to the black identity by creating positive opportunities in positive environments. If it does not succeed in this, only the interests of white institutions will prevail.

The projects from the member states of the European Community and Austria, presented in the working groups, are considered by their countries as innovative in the field of assistance to the disadvantaged (any quotations are those given in the projects themselves).

Escuela Taller de Valdediós, Spain

The Escuela Taller (Training Workshops) are a programme of on-the-job training, subsidised by the public sector with the object of restoring and maintaining the artistic, historic and cultural heritage and the urban residential environment of Spain. Unemployed people under the age of 25 are given alternately a theoretical and practical training in the relevant occupations or craft techniques. The Escuela Taller de Valdediós is proposing to restore the monastery of Valdediós and make it habitable again. By way of countering unemployment in the structurally weak region of Asturias, craft trades are being revived in an integrated form of training. The aim of the project is to provide a socio/cultural stimulus to the environment. The governing principle of all the activities is the concept of an "endogenous development".

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Bureau "Maatwerk", Netherlands

"Maatwerk" means tailor-made. It is a private organisation founded in the eighties to integrate unemployed people in the Dutch town of Helmond who are difficult to place in jobs. The underlying idea of this approach is the conviction that everyone seeking work can be placed and motivated in principle, provided that a suitable job is found. In order to achieve this, the placement counsellor looks at the job seeker's individual situation in detail and endeavours to discover his particular strengths. Then he looks for a "Tailor-made" job for his client. To this end, initial contact is made with a potential employer. The counsellor is also available for advice after the job seeker is appointed to deal with any problems that may arise. The public authorities provide subsidies of 500 - 1,750 guilders to the employer over a period of six to eight months to offset the cost of any additional tutelage.

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Acting-Up, Great Britain

Acting-Up gives socially disadvantaged young people aged between 16 and 25 years an opportunity to develop social and personal competences. This is achieved through the medium of the theatre. The basis is the philosophy of "empowerment" (empower someone to do something). The young people are given the opportunity through the medium of the performing arts both to discover talents of their own and to try out decision-making competences that are of significance for their personal and occupational development. The project which was developed out of the practical experience of the workshops (drama, dance, music, production) features important qualitative innovations such as regular group evaluation meetings and individual tuition by means of a tutorial system. At the same time, local, national and international understanding and cooperation are to be sought through transnational training projects.

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Initial and Updating Training Federation (AUF), Kassel, Germany

The AUF im Landkreis Kassel e. V. (the Kassel rural area) is a non-profit association whose objective is to create training places and jobs for unemployed young people in the area. The association, founded in 1986 by socially committed local government politicians, meanwhile has a number of local boroughs as members. It is managed by the Landkreis Kassel, the AUF being responsible for various training projects, workshop projects and an advisory centre for young unemployed persons. Since 1986 the training projects have trained young men and women to be data processors, joiners and seamstresses. In the workshop project in Immenhausen recognised by Land Hessen, unemployed young men and women who are often dependent on social security are employed and given further training and social counselling in the course of 18 month-long projects within the framework of job procurement schemes ("Working and Living"). A further workshop project entails extending and restoring a barn owned by the Landkreis and an "Old School" belonging to the Land Welfare Association. The training comprises 28 hours of practical work and 11 hours of tuition per week. In addition to providing a broad-based technical training in various skills, the integrated approach provides both personality-forming methods of instruction such as group and adventure training (canoeing, hiking, cycling) as well as two-week on-the-job practicals.

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RADITA, Career orientation for foreign girls, Austria

RADITA is a training project for foreign girls between the ages of 15 and 19. In accordance with the principles of feminist work for girls, their specific problems as foreigners and girls are to be analysed and suitable models for life planning and preparation for working life developed.

By enabling the girls to get to know and obtain practical experience of vocational occupations hitherto unknown to them by means of in-house practicals and a "trial apprenticeship", they are to be put in a position to review a career decision and improve their chances of obtaining an apprenticeship. The course programme also entails tuition in German and the mother tongue, labour legislation and training in social matters and applying for jobs to equip them for the subsequent job-hunting.

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INTERFACE, Great Britain

The training as youth and community workers offered by INTERFACE is targeted at 18-25 year olds. At the same time 50% of places are reserved for women and ethnic minorities. Professional competences are to be built up and promoted taking ethnic origin, culture and sex into account. The full-time training comprises three weekdays of on-the-job practical experience (experience in obtaining accommodation, social services, health) and two weekdays of tuition. The training also entails two full-time practicals of 2.5 months each in the second and third years. In the process, existing good youth and community structures are given support and developed further by drawing on ideas and initiatives. The training of staff is ensured by qualified supervision (analysis of training standards) and cooperation with Westhill College.

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BRUSGAARD PRODUCTION SCHOOL, Denmark

The Production School Brusgaard founded in 1980 is situated in Jütland (10 km from the town of Randers). It has a staff of 28 full-time, highly qualified technical experts who have a great deal of experience in practical working life and teach 120 pupils. The objective and motivating factor is to give young people a different form of instruction entailing the direct manufacture of products. In addition to the traditional school subjects such as languages, history and civics, it is possible to qualify in twelve technical subjects. The level of the course aims to extend the Danish elementary school standard. In the workshops, high quality products are manufactured for export. The annual European pupil exchange (with Germany, England, France, Greece, Ireland and Portugal) plays an increasingly important rôle in the training.

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TRAJECT M., NL-Rotterdam

Traject M. is a job orientation project for poorly qualified girls and women between the ages of 16 and 25. The project is initially being financed for three years by the Rotterdam Department for Social Affairs and Employment. The Foundation Women and Work in Rotterdam would like as a matter of principle to improve opportunities for women at work and the economic independence of women. This is to be achieved by motivating them in the choice of a job, individual guidance, work orientation courses (e.g. tuition in Dutch and mathematics). In this there is cooperation with local youth welfare organisations and schools. Since the beginning of 1991, 100 hours of training have been given for 428 young women and girls, 312 of whom were found training places or jobs, whilst 85 are still taking part in job orientation courses or being given individual guidance. Half of the participants come from a culture other than that of the Netherlands.

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Chantier Nature (Nature Building Site), France

The Lille-based project combines improvement of the environment with the objective of integrating disadvantaged people socially and in terms of work. The task is seen as two-fold:

1. Restoration of a residential area
 - by "tailor-made" planning in consultation with the residents
 - by maintaining the natural environment
 - by having recourse to numerous techniques and competences for scientific studies on the restoration of the area in question in order to be able to carry out large-scale projects, inter alia the laying down of principles for the further running of these areas.
2. The integration of unemployed people socially and in working life by opening up new fields of work for the disadvantaged.

Examples were given that showed particularly the integrating aspect with regard to disadvantaged young people. The "loafers" who had previously made the parks in their area a disgrace now tend them and make them a pleasure for themselves and the residents. This often brings the young people additional recognition in their environment.

The project "Chantier Nature" sees its future in cooperation at regional, national and European level. A network of Belgian, Dutch and English organisations whose function is to "deal with neglected areas" and look after disadvantaged young people is being set up. The environment is considered to be one of the areas in which it will be possible to create jobs in future. In order to avoid futile competition with industry, the staff of Chantier Nature largely seek out tasks which are not worth industry's while, such as for example the fortification of dune landscapes.

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TINTAMARRE, France

A further French example of linking integration into working life with concrete social needs is Tintamarre "or the answer to the dual call for social and cultural integration". The Association ARIA (Association Raconte Interculturelle de l'Albigeois) based in Albi (France) seeks to teach young people vocational skills through theatre work with a view to reintegrating them into working life. All the tasks are performed by the participants, from writing the plays to marketing them. The project gives them an opportunity to become acquainted with professions such as acting, singing, cutting, radio-, light- and sound engineering etc. ARIA's object is to "devise new integration models, create opportunities for transferring knowledge, competences and educational schemes, as well as exchanges between people and organising gatherings to realise joint projects."

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SILOG - Local Authority Qualification and Employment Project, Italy

The Italian project, based in Forli in the Emilia Romagna region, was set up in 1987 by the municipal authorities within the framework of the public sector's "new-found" responsibility for young people. The "Local system for combatting youth unemployment" acts as a "Planning and Coordinating Body" for a network of autonomous initiatives. "Its activities range from youth information centres and projects to provide vocational training and employment for disadvantaged young people to job creation and initiatives to set up in business". The latter in particular

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are of great importance in this region especially. In the region where commerce lives on the host of small businesses, guidance on going into business is given in school already. With the aid of rôle and planning games, the pupils practise being businessmen along with the staff of existing firms, banks, chambers of commerce and trade unions.

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Employment project Trier-North

The project which is part of the community project Bürgerhaus Trier-Nord is a qualification and employment programme for local people drawing social security. Building restoration and services are the fields in which for example 12 lone mothers are being trained. Their fields of work involve assisting with the restoration of blocks of flats and helping the needy of the neighbourhood. Forty five per cent of the funds required are paid out of the European Social Fund. The special feature of this programme is that the "vocational opportunities are brought to the door of those who would otherwise have no opportunities". "Familiarity with the neighbourhood provides the supportive and accepting framework, as well as the social monitoring which gains momentum".

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Despite the different positions adopted by speakers and despite the variety of projects, there was common ground: It was established for instance that it was possible to teach disadvantaged young people vocational skills where working life took on features of ordinary life. For this reason working life should have a bearing on the development prerequisites of the young people resulting from their situation and way of life and take them as they are, encourage them to believe in themselves and act with self-assurance accordingly ("empowerment"). Experience showed that

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the disadvantaged category could in principle satisfy the qualification requirements of a working environment moulded by EDP and analytical/logical thinking if given the necessary coaching and training programmes geared to the target group. However, such coaching ultimately only reaches a few.

There was unanimity that future-oriented projects in Europe must be guided by the interests and situations of the disadvantaged, and not just by commercial interests and the exigencies of institutions and associations or by the social market economy's problems of legitimation. As all European countries continue to attribute an important rôle to work as a socially integrative factor, it was stressed that to maintain an orientation toward work and a willingness to work, one must not only focus on vocational prospects in the first and second labour market, but must promote socio/cultural work to develop and strengthen a feeling for the meaning of life. The positive experience gained in the projects should also be included in standard vocational training.

The participants learned at first hand that, to optimise local projects and approaches, it is worth learning from another Europe-wide and giving each other encouragement for the local work. To this end, the University of Trier has set up the "Continuing Vocational Training Network Eurosocal" within the Education Department. Further information may be obtained from:

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The Resolution below which was drawn up during the symposium, the results of which are to be made public, is being sent to the competent politicians and decision-makers in the member states and institutions of the European Community.

Resolution

From 10-13 March 1993 some 150 experts from 12 European countries met for an exchange of views on youth unemployment and unemployment amongst young adults.

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At a scientific symposium, the social causes and consequences of youth unemployment were discussed as well as the ideas and success of innovative projects designed to integrate unemployed young people into society and working life.

Given a registered unemployment rate in the EC member states in 1992 of 18.5% on average and more than 30% amongst women and ethnic minorities and forecasts that it is going to rise still further this year and in years to come, the experts at the conference table the following demands to the political decision-makers at national and European level:

That

1. increased funds be provided to combat youth unemployment at European Community and member state level.
2. aid programmes be made more transparent, that they be made more compatible with each other and that application procedures be simplified.
3. the continuity of existing aid programmes at national and European level be assured and that they be adapted flexibly to the changing needs of young people, especially longer periods of assistance for the long-term unemployed.
4. the continuing- and updating training of the professionals engaged in combatting youth unemployment be given Europe-wide e.g. transnational assistance.
5. existing programmes be supplemented: promotion of the networking of programmes, schemes, projects at local government and regional level, promotion of local employment initiatives.
6. programmes be assisted that seek to avoid a one-sided orientation toward the existing employment system, and instead focus on social and cultural projects that take better account of the way of life of young people.

The scientific experts warn of the high economic and social costs that will be incurred if the existing aid programmes are scaled down out of narrow economic considerations.

The money spent on generous aid programmes will stand the test of any cost/benefit analysis. Investment in the social and vocational future of disadvantaged young people is not only economically sensible. The survival of our society depends on it.