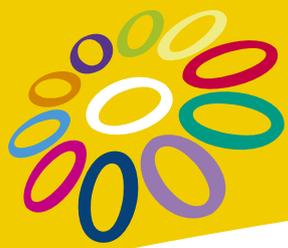


GERMANY

DISADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE:  
JOINING THE WORLD OF WORK





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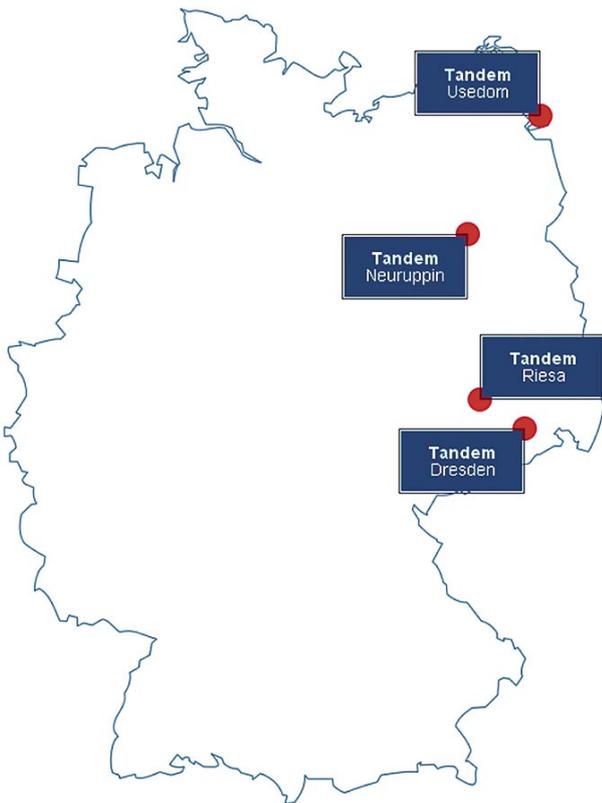
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# INTRODUCTION: NATIONAL BACKGROUND

## I Briefly about the project

The DP “PAKT” is located at 4 sites in East Germany (New Länder), 3 rural regions showing severe infrastructure lacks (Riesa, Neuruppin, Usedom) and one metropolitan area (Dresden) (see figure 1). In the new *Länder* of Germany, the development of the economy and employment differs from region to region but is generally inadequate (see figure 2). The following details refer to these 4 project sites and the different target groups of our DP, young persons with problems in managing their transition from school to vocational training or employment.

■ Figure 1:  
Map of Germany with the 4 project sites



■ Figure 2:  
Situation of the vocational training and employment situation in 2004

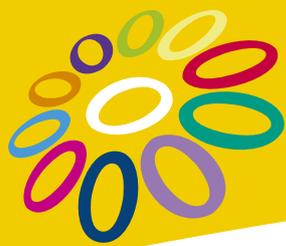


grey=very disadvantageous; orange=disadvantageous; light orange=balanced

## II The socio-economic background

### 1. Economy

In 2003, economic development in Germany remained static for the third year in a row. Domestic activity remained inadequate. In Germany, major insecurities manifested itself among investors and consumers causing hesitancy which was totally unexpected. The general monetary condition which was temporarily unfavourable for the German economy also had a negative impact. Overall, foreign demand was not strong enough to provide crucial



impetus. One reason for this was the abrupt upward revaluation of the Euro. The sustained economic weakness had a major impact on the labour market and had an extremely detrimental effect. The overall unemployment rate in Germany in 2003 was 11.6 % . In the new Länder, the unemployment rate continued to be twice as high (18.5 %) as in the old Länder.

In mid-2003, the German economy returned to growth. Nevertheless, the number of unemployed persons in 2005 has risen up to 13 %. In some rural regions in the new Länder the unemployment quota reaches 20%. The economic growth doesn't produce the desired effects concerning the development of employment ("jobless growth") (see Table 1). Job security is declining in all the sectors. Especially, jobs for un- or low qualified persons are disappearing which eminently affect our target groups.

■ Table 1: Gross domestic product, active population, unemployment rate (1991-2005)

Jahr	GDP (in 1.000000000 Euro)	Number of employees	Unemployment rate <sup>1</sup>
1991	1.534,60	38.664.000	7,3%
1995	1.848,45	37.546.000	10,4%
2000	2.062,50	39.038.000	10,7 %
2001	2.113,16	39.209.000	10,3 %
2002	2.145,02	38.994.000	10,8 %
2003	2.163,40	38.622.000	11,6 %
2004	2.215,65	38.782.000	11,7 %
2005	2.245,50	38.672.000	13,0 %

Source: Federal Statistical Office 2006 / Federal Employment Office 2006 S.17

## 2.1. System of Educational and Vocational Training

The German education system is standardised and selective at the same time. One of its characteristics is the need for an early decision for one of three educational routes (see figure 3) opening different gateways for future perspectives (access to higher education, vocational system, labour market etc.). After four years of elementary school you have to decide if you attend the Basic Secondary School (Hauptschule, 5 years), the Middle Secondary School (Realschule, 6 years) or the Grammar School (Gymnasium, 8-9 years).

Vocational training in Germany is mainly organised in the "Dual System" which offers training in two settings: the vocational school and the company. For three years the young people are trained on the job in a company three days a week while studying in the vocational school two days a week. In the last few years, the companies stopped providing sufficient apprenticeship training positions to cover the demand. Thus, more and more young people are excluded from this system which offers the best opportunities of transition to the labour market. Support for these young people has formed its own and very complex system of vocational education and training with tools like full-time vocational school trainings, pre-vocational courses, off-the-job training and a variety of other measures.

<sup>1</sup> All quotas relate to the number of total civil labour force; this means all employees, trainees and public servants (without soldiers).

■ Figure 3: The system of education and training in Germany

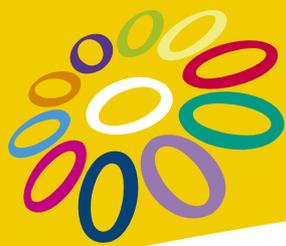
Universities min. 4½ years Polytechnic 4 years Academies 2 - 3 years		Crafts Master Course 3 years	technical college 6mth – 4years			Higher Education Or Labour market (>18 years)
		LABOUR MARKET			Projects for unem- ployed young people	
Grammar School Gymnasium 8-9 years	Comprehen- sive School Gesamtschule 5-9 years	Higher Vocational Schools 1-3 years	Vocational Training 3-4 years	Vocational Schools (e.g. Health Service) 3-4 years	prevocational training 1-2 years	Secondary Education II Age 15-18
ISSUE 3: High status gap between vocational training and other training trajectories						
ISSUE 2: Career guidance						
		Middle Secondary School Realschule; 6 years	Basic Secondary School Hauptschule; 5-6 years		Special Schools max. 9 years	Secondary Education I Age 10-15/16
Orientation Stage (2 years)						
ISSUE 1: Early selection according to hierarchical secondary education						
Elementary School Grundschule; 4 years						Primary Education Age 6-9
Kindergarten; 3 years						Age 3-6

(Sources: CEDEFOP 1995; KMK 2003; FMER 2006; own elaboration)

## 2.2. Statistics on educational achievement

Education and training are of decisive importance for the integration in the labour market and in preventing poverty and exclusion (see Table 2). In Germany, the amount of people with a low level of education is still considered to be fairly low (see Table 3). However, the number of school drop-outs not participating in education or vocational training was 8,2 % in Germany in 2004/5. Regarding the quota of persons without completed vocational training or higher education, the rate of unskilled women has decreased in the last years compared to the rate of unskilled men (1996: women 16,5%, men 12,8%; 2003: women 15,7%, men 14,2%). It can be recognized that young women caught up with young men regarding educational achievements and even got ahead of them in matters of university degrees (see Table 3).

Generally, all the young people today are confronted with insecure job perspectives. But young people with a basic secondary school degree or without any school leaving certificate have a very pessimistic view on their professional future. They have to compete against a big number of high school graduates concerning training



and employment positions. Moreover, the results of the PISA Study (2003) made clear that educational success in Germany is greatly dependent on the social origin of the pupils. Children and adolescents with an immigrant background or from socially deprived families are especially affected. While the gender specific inequalities in the area of education are about to even out, the gap between high-performance youngsters from academic milieus and resigning young people from underprivileged groups has been increasing.

■ Table 2: Employment status of young people according to graduation (in %)

Graduation / employment status	Without graduation	Basic Secondary school	Middle Secondary school	Technical college entrance qualification	General Qualification for University entrance
Unemployed	61 %	25 %	17 %	15 %	7 %
In vocational training	4 %	32 %	36 %	25 %	15%
University/college of higher education	-	-	1 %	17 %	60 %
Employees	25 %	43 %	46 %	42 %	18 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Source: Shell 2006

■ Table 3: Graduates of the school year 2004/5 (total, according to graduation and sex)

Graduation	Total		Women		Men	
	absolute	in %	absolute	in %	absolute	in %
Without graduation	78.200	8,2	28.400	6,0	49.800	10,2
Basic Secondary school	237.700	24,8	100.900	21,5	136.800	28,0
Middle Secondary school	398.700	41,6	202.900	43,2	195.800	40,1
Technical college entrance qualification	12.400	1,3	6.500	1,4	5.900	1,2
General Qualification for university entrance	231.500	24,1	131.400	28,0	100.100	20,5
	958.500	100	470.100	100	488.400	100

Source: Federal Statistical Office, 2006

### 3. Unemployment

Regarding unemployment great differences can be observed between the Länder and regions in Germany: In December 2003, the unemployment rate, which was 11,6 % in Germany as a whole, varied between 24.5 % in the Sangerhausen (Sachsen-Anhalt) agency district and 4.3 % in the Freising (Bavaria) agency district. Furthermore, the structure of unemployment certainly varies from region to region. Major regional differences can be seen, for instance, concerning the number of long-term unemployed in comparison to the total number of unemployed persons. While 43.4 % of the unemployed in Eastern Germany had been unemployed for longer than a year, the figure for Western Germany was 32.3 %. This corresponds to the structural job deficit in the East of Germany which continues to be a lot higher. While there are 13 unemployed persons to every job vacancy advertised in Western Germany, in the East German Länder, there are 34 unemployed to every job vacancy advertised.<sup>2</sup>

School to work transitions in Germany are institutionalised by two thresholds: the first one from school to vocational education and the second from vocational education to employment. According to this, problems emerge with vocational education and employment.

Data of the Federal Employment Agency has counted 522.776 unemployed people under 25 (see Table 4) in 2006. The data of BIBB shows a total of about a million young people who are attended by the different supporting structures (labour market policy, youth welfare system etc.) not to forget the hidden number of unemployed outside the official statistics (so called "Silent reserve").

Problems referring to the vocational education appear especially in a quantitative and qualitative deficit of training positions. For example: The relation between offer and demand declined considerably from 118, 7% (1992) to 95, 0% (2004); the number of not successful applicants rose from 35.700 (1998) to 44.576 (2004)<sup>3</sup>.

The actual deficient development of the economy and the public sector caused by the general economic and employment situation is the main reason for the problems arising at the two thresholds (school to vocational training and vocational training to employment). The compensation of the deficit in the vocational system by massive extension of off-the-job- trainings and other measures leads to an accumulation at the second threshold and to a rising number of unemployed young people between 20 and 25<sup>4</sup>.

The percentage of people without or with uncompleted vocational training surrounds in Germany 15% which implies a high risk of unemployment. This risk increases with the actual change of economy structure and the declining employment options for lower qualified people. Regarding vocational training and employment gender specific differences can be observed: Since 2003 the girls' rate starting a vocational training in the dual system decreased considerably (from 43, 4% to 41, 8% in 2005). This can be attributed to various reasons. The quota of girls in full-time vocational schools is disproportionally high as well as there are more female young people aspiring higher education. In the "Dual System", there is also a smaller spectrum of professions that are chosen by girls.

The vocational training report (Berufsbildungsbericht 2005) shows that girls are more flexible and more mobile looking for training positions. Generally, there is a drift of young women from the new Länder in more prosperous regions while young men with low qualification profiles often stay in their home region.

At the same time, there are ordinarily more men being parented by the supporting structures of the labour market policy such as employment promotion projects etc. Results of the latest research show that disadvantaged young men are affected in another way than young woman by the structural transformation of the labour market considering that one important pillar of their male status ("bread-earner") is profoundly threatened whereas women have still other options for identification.

However, the flexibility and the above mentioned higher educational achievements of young women don't have a positive impact on their success in the employment system or in their economic status. The access to employment positions is still worse for young women and their average income has remained lower than men's.

<sup>2</sup> National Action Plan for Employment, 2004, S. 49.

<sup>3</sup> BA 2005: Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung. Angebot und Nachfrage auf dem Ausbildungsmarkt 1994-2004.

<sup>4</sup> Lappe, L (Hg.): Fehlstart in den Beruf. Jugendliche mit Schwierigkeiten beim Einstieg ins Erwerbsleben. München 2003.



■ Table 4: Unemployment 2003-2006 (total, according to sex, age and regions)

year		2003		2004		2005		2006	
			in %		in %		in %		in %
Total Sex		4.376.795	11,6	4.381.281	11,7	4.860.880	13,0	4.487.057	12,0
	Women	1.930.580	10,8	1.932.563	10,8	2.254.773	12,7	2.149.118	12,0
Age	Men	2.446.215	12,4	2.448.719	12,5	2.605.656	13,4	2.337.882	12,0
	Under 25	516.135	9,9	504.381	9,9	618.867	12,5	522.776	10,8
Region	Under 20	84.299	4,5	75.060	4,2	123.701	7,4	108.466	6,8
	West Germany	4.376.795	11,6	4.381.281	11,7	4.860.880	13,0	4.487.057	12,0
	East Germany	1.623.614	18,5	1.598.522	18,4	1.614.153	18,7	1.480.028	17,3

Source: Federal Employment Office, 2007

#### 4. Poverty

Due to the low economic development the quota of risk of poverty (60% of the average income) increased in the last years (1998: 12, 1%; 2003: 13, 5%). Even though, it is still inferior to the EU-average (2001: 15%). Accordingly, Germany belongs together with the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands to the countries with a relatively low poverty rate and minor social exclusion.

The high unemployment rate remains to be the most urgent problem in Germany based on the fact that unemployment constitutes the main cause for an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The quota of risk of poverty for unemployed persons is 40, 9% while households with two incomes hold a quota of only 4%. Especially for children and young people the risk of poverty has increased. 15% of the children under 14 and 19, 1% of the young people under 24 lived in 2003 below the poverty level. Children under 18 are exceedingly dependent on social welfare (7, 2% vs. 3, 4% of the total population). 50% of them grow up in single parent households.

People in the new Länder are on average to a lesser extent well off than those living in the old Länder. Also there are differences between men and women. The average income of women merely consists of 70 percent of the average income of men. The risk of poverty rate for unemployed woman is 63% compared to 52% of men's.

The notion of poverty in industrialised countries where the elementary needs are satisfied is naturally a relative one. Still the level of income has a really strong influence on participation and realisation chances in Germany.

#### 5. Social Policy

##### 5.1. Institutions responsible for Social Policy

In Germany there is a quite complex system of supporting structures regarding Social Policy. The complexity is

emphasized by the three political levels and its different responsibilities (Bund, Länder, Kommunen) due to the strong federalism in Germany. For instance, the labour market policy is mainly determined by the federal level (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) while the youth welfare service is organized on the communal level.

Referring to our TG, one of the main responsible institutions is the communal employment promotion (ARGE) which coordinates since 2005 unemployment assistance and social welfare for persons capable to work in a new benefit system “Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende” (Basic Security for Job Seekers). On the other hand there are institutions from the youth welfare service that are responsible for the social and individual development of young people and for the reduction of disadvantages.

As mentioned before a multitude of training policy programmes and labour market policy mechanisms are increasingly used in East Germany. Concerning the providers of such measures, a relatively stable market has developed in the last ten years. This is, however, divided among separate providers of vocational orientation and support courses, off-the-job training courses and integration support, many of these providers highly specialized and certainly efficient in their segment of the market. Too few links between the providers and above all too few links to the regional economy exist, and there is also too little development of long-term perspectives after completion of a course; at heart, every provider is determined by the struggle for his package of measures. The switch to vouchers for training courses and the practice of tenders, while in principle right, has complicated competition and so in practice has isolated the providers further. Youth welfare institutions, from where disadvantaged young people often “graduate” to these measures, are disconnected.

## 5.2. Political declarations regarding the TG problems

In conformity with the agenda set at the European Council in Lisbon, German employment policy is guided by the three general goals: full employment, increase in job quality and labour productivity as well as strengthening social cohesion and social integration.

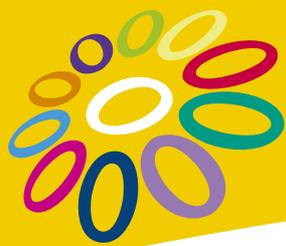
The main political maxim towards disadvantaged young people (with special needs) is “vocational qualification for everybody“. Referring to the European Employment Strategy the national action plan aims at halving the number of young people without completed vocational training.

The German Government undertook big efforts in labour market policy and has implemented basic reforms. Within the meaning of a “proactive welfare state” that “actively supports and demands”, social protection and enhancement of integration opportunities are combined with the requirement that persons seeking employment and unemployed persons take initiatives of their own and accept responsibility for themselves. The aim is to achieve swifter integration into the labour market.

An overview of the most important core elements of the labour market reforms:

- Strong increase of the preventative approach in labour market policy
- Pooling of unemployment assistance and social welfare for persons capable to work into a new benefit system “Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende” (Basic Security for Job Seekers), while “Fördern und Fordern” (actively supporting and demanding) has been established as the basic principle of a new labour market policy
- Reorientation of tools of a proactive labour market policy aimed at enhancing integration opportunities
- Transformation of the labour administration into a service agency whose core tasks focus on job placement and on new organisational, management and control structures
- Flexible dismissal protection<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> National Action Plan for Employment, 2004, S. 7



### III Target groups

In the case of our DP we focus on two target groups: young people cared for by state institutions (from the youth welfare service) and disadvantaged young people (under 25) without vocational training or employment (dropouts from school, hangarounds etc.). One tandem project concentrates especially on young mothers and disadvantaged young women.

Till the end of 2006, there were 420 young people participating in the different projects, 244 young men and 176 young women. The aimed turnout for the whole EQUAL term adds up to 683 young people.

### IV Why are new measures/methods/tools necessary?

Unemployment is disproportionately high among those disadvantaged young people who have a particularly difficult social position and life history, cared for by state institutions. This group of people with their patchy CVs has great difficulty crossing the threshold to working life, in view of the strained situation on the training and labour markets in this area. It is also striking that when labour market mechanisms are put into action to support these young people, the various counselling and care centres are hardly connected at all, and there are only a small number of co-operative offers available connecting supportive resources (e.g. parenting support, vocational preparation and employment promotion), in particular in structurally weak regions.

In the case of this target group, there can be said to be a *double disadvantage structure* on the labour market in East Germany, since not only their problematic life histories but also what is known as East Germany's "market disadvantage" both make their integration into the labour market more difficult. To improve their employability and prevent permanent dependence on social security, closely-linked strategies are needed from all those involved. This is because a lack of labour market integration results in longer stays in supportive institutions ("making a career out of attending schemes"), leading to rising support costs.

The double disadvantage is aggravated by the high degree of pillarisation in structures for support and care in Germany. The employment support schemes and the state institutions for youth welfare have not yet become connected or coordinated. The transition to work and the integration of young people into the labour market, for example, has hardly been documented in social statistics by any of the German Youth Welfare Service's effectiveness analyses, even though it is known widely enough that these young people in particular have a higher risk of failure at both the first threshold (from school to vocational training) and the second threshold (from vocational training to work), not only because of the present conditions of the labour market. In youth welfare institutions this is seen as the job centre and employment promotion services' problem. Thus the youth welfare and care services are hardly integrated into the regional networks for employment development, especially in East Germany.

The institutions' maintaining bodies generally display little commitment to an active role in regional employment development and, as socio-economic establishments, developing their own employment potential which young people could in turn take advantage of.

At the same time, labour market mechanisms also provide few cooperative plans in which the supportive resources of the parenting support and care services are linked in a targeted manner to the employment support schemes.

Nearly all recent studies of young people show that they see integration into the labour market as the overriding aim of their personal development. At the same time, the fear of unemployment determines their self-esteem and, not uncommonly, their political orientation. All in all, the question of independence and social involvement is thus linked closely to integration into the labour market. Young people do not differentiate between the development of their personality as far as their participation as citizens is concerned and their possibilities in the world of employment; for this reason they can not understand the institutional split in the way the central themes of their life are dealt with.

Neither the youth welfare service and care institutions nor the employment support services have until now systematically incorporated these findings. Youth welfare service and care institutions still too often believe that young people should be protected from the challenges of the working world, even though such challenges have already long been a central part of their everyday life. Employment support services are still dominated by the view that young people should first be brought closer to the working world by means of qualification courses, although research into the development of ability in young people has shown time and time again that only activity-oriented plans which are closely linked with the social environment can make contact with them, especially with disadvantaged groups, and improve their ability to organize themselves on the labour market.

These institutions working adjacently to one another can only be successfully opened up if the maintaining bodies for the youth welfare service and for the employment support services act together as an intermediate placement and teaching structure between young people and the labour market, and become closely linked to the regional economy.

To this effect, projects need to become integrated into the regional economic structure and become involved as social agents for these categories of people. The *social agent* approach means on one hand both provoking and promoting the target group's activeness and independence on the labour market, and on the other hand looking for new work-oriented avenues for this group in the regional economy and opening them up in a regional network. At the same time the split and duplicated support structure which has predominated until now is avoided in case management, as according to relevant research, the target group indeed has the potential to hold its ground on the regional labour market (e.g. in new areas of employment in social economics) in terms of both independence and enterprise.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### DP PAKT

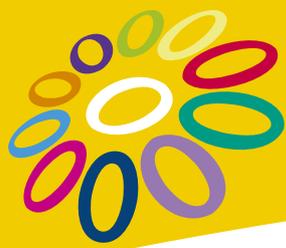
#### 1. Goals

The DP PAKT is based on the EQUAL Thematic Field 1, employability; its aim is to ease access to the labour market and its sub focus is on “especially difficult labour market situations”. Moreover, labour market policy aims from other thematic fields are covered, in particular in the areas of entrepreneurship and equal opportunities.

In the above drafted situation it is vital to develop regionally connected creative projects helping to improve young people's training and employability at the same time as regional employment development, the overall aim is “networks not single measures”.

There are several dimensions to labour market policy goals. The aim is

- To further improve and extend the organisations supporting the DP (operational partners) in their efficiency and their capacity to deal with problems, opening up the pillarised support structures and building up regional networks of cooperation (**cooperation and networking**)
- To strengthen the employability of the young people through new forms of qualification (**qualification**)
- To open up new avenues of employment in the regional economy and embed them in a regional network (**development of new employment fields**).
- To strengthen the social capital and self-confidence of young people through a participatory structure at project level, helping them to develop workable future prospects for themselves and their employment (**provoking and promoting the target group's activeness and independence on the labour market**).
- To develop support structures setting the available labour market policy mechanisms in a regional context and that of young people's social and life history, thus ensuring sustainability (**development of a support structure in line with regional and biographical options**).



## 2. Strategies:

The strategies to achieve these goals are subdivided into four sections:

- 1) Building up regional development platforms for vocational training and practical employment: the tandems  
The tandem idea is a common regional development platform built up by one organisation from the youth welfare service together with one from the employment promotion. They bring together their specific expertise and their professional approaches such as biographical access (youth welfare service) and networking (employment promotion) in order to learn from each other and strengthen the employability of the target group. The tandems don't build up a new structure of measures but act as intermediate organisations in the regional networks and in between the pillarised supporting and learning structure in Germany
- 2) Developing individual qualification and employment perspectives for the young people through biography-oriented Case Management  
For a successful work in the tandems it is vital to start from the social and biographical background of each person. Considering the double disadvantage structure of the target group an integrated biographical case analysis is essential to develop adequate qualification and employment fields. To open up the potentials and the competences of the young people it requires an enabling structure of acceptance and practical employment. The tandems confront the region as well as the young people concerned with qualification and employment taking away the stigma of the disadvantaged. The activities in the projects must be related to the resources of the young people and strengthen their employability.
- 3) Opening up innovative employment niches in the social economy  
Especially in regions with low infrastructure it is not enough to qualify young people for a hardly accessible labour market but to open up new low-threshold employment fields for their target groups. This means that the projects themselves develop and test out innovative business ideas in the fields of social economy, tourism and crafts in order to hive off economically independent sections ensuring sustainability.
- 4) The tandems as social agents  
The tandems are set out to act as examples and models for each region to promote an integrated transition system, especially in regions lacking infrastructure. For the success of the projects it is indispensable that the tandems act as social agents in the regional employment promotion as well as developing actors in the regional economy. By demonstrating good practice, other people from the region get involved, especially strategic partners at a regional level who act as transmitter of good practice in their sections (regional mainstreaming). The cooperation of organisations of two different support structures as there is the youth welfare service and the employment promotion has to be brought back into the discussion about a professionalized youth welfare service and employment promotion for young people (sectoral mainstreaming).

## 3. Project Structure

The DP PAKT is a sectoral network with project locations in three Länder in the Eastern part of Germany (Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen). The **four tandem sites** (see figure 1) each with one organisation from the youth welfare service and one from the employment promotion build the core of the **DP** and establish regional networks incorporating strategic partners and other supporting institutions. The DP is **coordinated by Iris e.V.** based in Dresden who conduct the coaching and monitoring of the tandems and organize the knowledge management between all partners. Due to this effect, quarterly held transfer-workshops are carried out where the developed models and approaches in the different tandems are discussed and enhanced. In **national thematic forums** the examples of good practice are connected with policy makers and experts. In

the **transnational partnership** with Lithuania and Austria, the innovative potential of the DP is related with the experiences of the transnational partners and the transferability of the methods are tested. The **external evaluation** accompanies and enhances the process with their expertise, refines the integrated approaches of each tandem and highlights the participants' point of view.

#### 4. Tools/ Methods

The main innovation in all tandem projects lies in the combination of methods derived from social work as well as from the employment promotion for young people. This way, the mix of methods brings together the two hitherto often separated goals of personal development and qualification for the labour market.

##### 1. Biography-oriented Case Management

As above mentioned the biographical access is fundamental for the development of an adequate individual approach for each youngster. The competences, interests and resources of the young people have to be discovered and related to the possibilities offered in the project. This is provided by **integrated assessments** or different diagnostic procedures carried out in the process of work. In the following the Case Manager and the young person together develop goals and formulate steps to reach these goals (individual development plan). According to this plan individual qualification and training modules are conceived. The role of the Case Manager requires social pedagogic knowledge as well as an expertise in counselling methods. The Case Manager accompanies the young person in the whole process and acts as a linking person between other organizations and support structures (psychologists, outreach clinics, debtors' helpdesks etc.).

Case management, in this perspective, is not accomplished as a test-based diagnostic method but as a process in which the persons in need are acknowledged to be self-responsible and competent for her or his own living conditions, wanting to participate in this process and relating themselves proactively to their environment.

##### 2. Activity-oriented learning

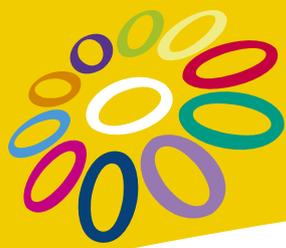
Actual research about the development of ability in young people, especially disadvantaged young people, has shown that only activity-oriented plans which are closely linked to the social environment can enable contact with them and improve their ability to organize themselves on the labour market. For this reason all qualification units are connected with a special project. This project is, at best, designed by the young people and has a benefit for the town, the community, for themselves etc. The competence and learning needs arise from the project; out of the project activities qualification modules are developed meeting requirements and improving their performance; they link informal learning with a formal qualification basis. The seriousness of the work motivates the young people and shows them the need for further qualification. The created products visualize the results of their work and strengthen their self-esteem.

##### 3. Flexible and interdisciplinary help

The wide range of problems the participants are faced with needs a flexible mix of methods combining psychological, social, event-pedagogical and work therapeutical elements. Motivational activities as well as empowerment activities are of fundamental interests regarding the various failure experiences and break ups the young people had to undergo in the past. A very close cooperation with other support organizations is essential to coordinate and bring together all the activities and relate them to the individual development plan.

##### 4. Participation and Transparency

As it is already shown above, one cross-section method is to involve the young people as much as possible in all the levels of the project. Projects that want to develop new employment fields are reliant on a broad participation. If we are looking for new forms of learning and working we need the involvement of these young people on the one



hand, because we need their ideas and their resources. On the other hand, participation has become one central element of education. In a continuously changing world of work, development of ability means to learn how to stay capable of acting and how to organize learning processes and employment yourself. Participation in the projects begins with methods like “think tanks” or “future workshops”, continues with the participation of young people in the project organisation and management and should result in transparent perspectives and involvement of the young people towards their future plans after the project ends. Only this way they are able to learn about planning, organization and coordination processes in teams, they can take over responsibility and show and develop their potentials and competences in an experimental space.

## II Good practices

### 1. Introduction to activities



The activities with the target group take place at the level of the regional tandems under the motto “different routes, common aims”:

- In Dresden a needlework studio is being set up which offers modular vocational training in part-time for young mothers and disadvantaged young women. At the same time qualification courses in information and communication technologies are carried out for young people who take over public relation tasks and the marketing for the needlework studio.
- In Riesa, a „Euro camp“ is being set up at an old communal farm which remained unused since reunification. The basic labour market policy strategy here is to create a platform for qualification and employment in the market segment of tourism. The business strategy is based on the region’s tourism Policy (camping sites and hostel on the Elbe cycle path; technical and catering services). There are plans to develop further tourist attractions for travellers (young people) and for local people which should contribute to local people’s regional identification. For this purpose business plans are developed and the marketing policies of the new service and production providers optimised through management coaching.
- In Neuruppin, the so called “Nest Builders” are involved in meaningful community-oriented work; the target group includes dropouts, who need to be newly orientated and motivated. The curriculum includes formal and informal qualification components as well as practical employment-oriented activities. While restoring and arranging public spaces (“green classroom”) the young people can see clearly the success of their work at the same time as being productive.
- On the Usedom Island, the meeting point “look- in” serves as a platform for learning and working as well as a converging point for employment-based models conceived here (culture, art, alternative travel agency, event cafe etc.) It aims at involving the community, offering services which fulfil or awake needs. Young people with complex problem backgrounds can work as craftsmen in the woodwork studio (developing marketable products) and in the restoration of sailboats. In this project an integrated diagnostic method especially for this target group with special needs has been developed to document the competences and potentials of the young people in the working process.

## Other activities:

### Coordination:

- Knowledge Management and Training  
National and transnational training seminars for the project staff are carried out during the EQUAL period. Further, the model for the integrated tandem structure is to be subsumed into training modules for field workers and a reference book to transfer the good practice into the regions, to the policy makers and to the specialized public.
- Coaching and monitoring of the tandem projects
- Documentation and public relations (national and transnational Mainstreaming)
- Creation of a commercial training position generating the new job profile "Management Assistant in Social Economics"

### Evaluation:

- Expertise about the cooperation between youth welfare service and employment promotion
- Portrait of the integrated approach of the regional tandems
- Expertise about the utilisation of the PAKT support structure through the participants
- Scientific steering and moderation

## 2. Best practice examples

In this chapter we will expose two best practice examples; one particularly focusing on the biographical access and a new professionalism in case management dealing with young people with special needs, the other one specialising in the development of new regional avenues of employment. Therefore, we will dwell on one tandem partner from the youth welfare service and one from the employment promotion as well as on how they are embedded in and enriched by the tandem structure.

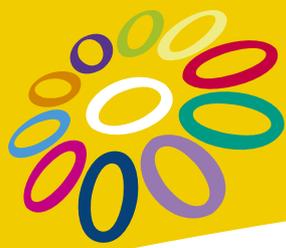
### **Woodwork studio Wrangelsburg (Chancen Nutzen e.V.)**

In the woodwork studio in Wrangelsburg an employment project was established which is specially designed for young people with complex and interconnected problems in all areas of life (problematic social background, psychological and psychiatric problems, drug addiction etc.). The starting point was a difficult regional situation in which the supporting organisations with their standardised integration instruments regarding this target group were at a loss.

The complexity of the problem situation of the participants needs a wide range of **interdisciplinary help**, a **high flexibility** within the project to guarantee an individual approach and an **effective working network of suitable cooperation partners**. The project integrates different features such as psychological, social, event-pedagogical and work therapeutical elements of diagnostic and support as well as individual qualification modules. Since it is very difficult to arrange regular vocational training or employment for this target group an employment project was built up which **combines diagnostic and therapeutical procedures with labour market oriented development of competences**.

In a first diagnostic phase the competences of the participants are tested (personal development, social behaviour, working and learning behaviour, educational level, autonomy). The therapeutical interventions is targeted to reduce the deficits of the participants and to prepare them for the practical part of the project.

In the practical work they built up a creative woodwork studio where they create and construct furniture and restore old sailing ships. In the process of work the participants discovered their own competences and limits and learned how to extend them. Just as fundamental was the reflection of group dynamical processes to increase their willingness for teamwork and tolerance and to develop new strategies of conflict management. The accompanying qualification targets on the long run on an autonomous take over of project tasks by the young people. **Based on**



**the diagnostic output accomplished in the process of work the project staff develops with each participant an adequate future perspective and passes on measure recommendations which are coordinated by the responsible institutions.**

Through the alliance with the tandem partner CJD Usedom the young people get **access to regional networks** and **broaden their scope of experience and activity**. Within this framework and via the special competences of the tandem partner in this field sustainable possibilities of commercialisation of their products are developed. The different approaches of the two partners facilitate a holistic **support of the young people**. Assistance from the partners can be enlisted unbureaucratically.

One important point is to **publish the project regionally** to open up new learning spaces beyond the protected project frame and establish gateways to the region with effect on employment.

The success of this project appears in the stabilization of young people who until now could not be involved in other measures. All of them elaborated a sustainable future perspective for themselves and drop outs could be avoided. One good example of the flexible and cooperative structure of the project was the fast establishment of a boat-builder training position for a young man who got enthused and highly motivated by the restoration of the sailing boat after a series of dropouts in various measures. For the establishment of this training position the employment service, the vocational school and another training provider worked together in order to meet the requirements of the German vocational system.

The strong bias towards young men in the composition of the participant reflects the disadvantage structure in the region. During the past few months young women could be integrated in the project which affected the atmosphere in the group as well as the way of conflict solution in a very favourable way. The professional team started already in a mixed formation engaging a female boat builder as an instructor for the restoration work and a male youth worker for the biographical work. This way they can act directly on the new situation and use it for gender specific reflection processes.

A beneficial factor for the success of the project was the openness and the integrative structure of the authorities in this region. Two years ago the rural district implemented an administrative model where the management of the whole district is tied on a communal level (“Optionskommune”). Furthermore, a further aperture of the authorities during the EQUAL period can be denoted. Via regional conferences and project presentations the responsible authorities got interested in the approach and a favourable regional climate of transition was developed where the different support structures work closely together. This distinguishes the project from the other tandems, especially the ones in the metropolitan area of Dresden, where it is much harder to get through to the responsible authorities and the establishment of such a cooperative network has always been a big challenge.

Last but not least, the sustainability of the project with his professional approach after the EQUAL period is already ensured by regional subsidies.

### **Eurocamp Riesa (Sprungbrett e.V.):**

The starting point was an old communal farm which has been lying idle for years. In the beginning, the **usage of the terrain was discussed** with external experts and the participants of the project, mainly young people without graduation or completed vocational training. Then in small working groups the overall project was designed. The participants together with a management consultant realized a calculation of profitability and made a tourism concept on how to **integrate the Eurocamp into the regional tourism strategy**. Out of this results work packages were extracted and a project plan established.

The **integration and participation** of the target group in all levels of this initial and planning phase led to a stronger identification of the young people with the project and strengthened their motivation.

According to the project plan the participant got work orders completed by qualification modules (e.g. alternative methods of construction, tourism and business administration) which linked informal teaching methods with a formal qualification basis. These **project-based learning units** qualify the young people to continue the

camps tasks and lead them to an external graduation along the way improving their employability. The broad arrangement of the project offers **various possibilities of learning and working on different levels** (organization and planning, public relations, marketing, constructing, gardening etc.) beyond the “artificial” arrangements of other employment projects. This wide range of employment fields excels this project as best practice compared to traditional employment projects where the options for the young people are very limited.

The tandem partner Biotopia gGmbH is particularly responsible for the determination of individual goals with each participant. In an **integrated assessment centre** the potentials and competences of the young people are identified. Through the combination of individual working and qualification modules according to their profile and personal interest the project connects with the circumstances and self-management of each participant and thus adds up to their life context. According to the structural disadvantage and the various break-ups and difficulties in their previous life history the **competence oriented approach** is essential to discover their social capital.

While organizing adventure camps and other social activities for children and other young people from the region, the responsibility of the participants was encouraged and their social competences sustained. By **representing and advertising the Eurocamp in public** the cruising radius of the young people was extended and the identification with their region strengthened. In various open house events the young people gained acceptance for their work in public which is a crucial point for their motivation.

The identification of the young people with and the motivation for the Camp became particularly apparent when many youngsters who weren't participants anymore and without any financial incentive came to the camp ground and offered help in the social activities.

**According to the ideas and competences of the participants** they keep developing and extending the terrain and the building for an all-season use (camping ground, open air stage, beekeeping, seminar rooms, climbing, canoeing etc.) aiming at an economically autonomous business management in the future. The **self constrained setup of the Eurocamp and the participatory organization of the whole project** strengthened professional and social competences as well as the young people's self-confidence. This way, they overtook the responsibility for their future perspectives and the development of the region.

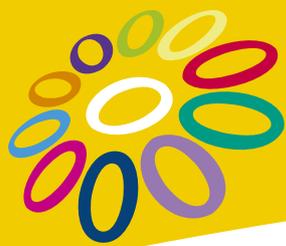
A realization of this Eurocamp project by a private company would not be feasible because of the lack of tourism and visitors in Riesa. For such a social economic organization the camp constitutes a good source of income and is therefore a predestined field for alternative employment.

An overall significant success factor is the **attitude and the openness of the professionals in the projects towards the young people and their specific circumstances**. Moreover it became clear that long-time experience in this sector and a strong regional standing of the realizing organisation is an essential factor in building up a cooperative network.

### 3. Challenges (+ impedimental factors)

The practised **combination of two different, up to now strongly pillarised institutional systems with their particular approaches** (as there are the youth welfare service and the employment promotion) represented a great challenge for all the stakeholders. The different standpoints and experiences of the cooperating professionals required intensive coordination processes as well as an openness of all actors towards new concepts and methods.

The cooperation of the projects with the supporting institutions was hampered by **a short term measure orientation** of the employment promotion service which is slanted towards a fast placement of the young people in the labour market. This led to a continuous replacement of young people in the projects (the average participation period was only 6 months) which foiled a long-term invested and biography-oriented development of competences and perspectives. Besides, **lacking cooperation** between the projects and the institutions, intransparent actions of the administration and low consideration of suggested proposals complicated a sustainable and corporate



development strategy. The **incertitude about their status and future** in the projects shortened the motivation of the young people to involve themselves as well as the motivation of the professionals who invested lots of energy in **bureaucratical struggles** with the institutions.

This process was intensified by an unexpected decrease of the number of participating young people supported by the youth welfare service and a simultaneous increase of young people supported by the employment promotion. **This demonstrates a general tendency in the supporting systems in Germany: youth welfare policy is more and more marginalised by the employment promotion policy.** Strategic and policy concerning young people is being transformed in strategic and policy which focuses only on labour market integration. Drawing back the attention to young people and their circumstances in a holistic perspective is a great challenge within this process.

Another crucial point experienced in the last year was the necessity to create **acceptance and appreciation for these new approaches in public.** One important task is to disburden the target group from their stigma of being disadvantaged and their bad reputation as unmotivated and defiant youth. Alternative qualification and employment projects like these require a new attitude towards alternative employment, especially in the private sector. In many cases the promoted activities of the young people are considered to be disturbing the labour market. Generally, lacking employment fields in the open space that can be filled by unemployed people lead to a strong competitive situation which makes it more difficult to establish new projects.

A last challenge concerning sustainability will be to **conciliate this individual, complex and expensive approach with the great number of cases.**

### III Recommendations

According to the presented examples of best practice these are the DPs' central recommendations:

Field workers and multipliers:

1. As the best practice examples demonstrate, a flexible **individual and biography-oriented approach** to the target group is essential. This approach refers on the one hand to individual potentials and competences as well as to biographical connecting factors and on the other hand to biographical problem complexes. In many cases only the solution of basic biographical problems like drug addiction, family, behavioural or gender specific problems etc. enables access to further biographical perspectives as education and the development of competences, vocational training or employment. At the same time the link to individual competences and biographical orientation facilitates motivation and activation. For this individual and biography-oriented approach flexible, multifaceted and integrated diagnostic methods as well as target-group specific, small-scale (regional) and if necessary long-term project offers are required (no „bulk commodity“).
2. In order to give substance to this individual biography-oriented approach it is essential to link the individual development of competences with **local or regional contexts of application** (possibilities for vocational training, employment and social integration, requirements of the labour market). In case of limited regional application fields it is necessary to open up alternative employment forms and possibilities to live. For this a view beyond the pedagogical work with the individual biography, across the single measure and project framework and the own professional competence and institutional logic is needed. Furthermore, cooperation with external professional competence and different institutional logics is fundamental. This includes forms of political intervention, for example regarding the predominance of the Labour Offices and their strict orientation to the so called „first“ labour market.
3. Strongly associated with the second point is the recommendation of a **self-confident appearance with publicity effect** and the presentation of project results in a local or regional context. Therefore, different forms of adequate visualizing of the project results have to be developed. For that purpose **lobbying for the target group** and a close description of qualitative results beyond the hard placement facts is required. Last but not least the **(social-)**

**pedagogical work and professional competence** and their contribution to the solution of the problem are to be extracted.

4. According to our project results the involvement (**participation**) of the target group in the development of the project as well as in the whole project process via participation- oriented methods is recommended. In this context the connection to the manifold individual strong points, the interests, activities and orientations of the target group as well as group dynamical motivation processes come to the fore.

### Strategic partners and policy maker:

1. Pivotal is the **acknowledgement and the enabling of alternative forms of education/qualification, vocational training and employment**. They could be incorporated in the regional priorities in the implementation of European programs (ESF) or other local or regional programs. New models of modular vocational training with an opening of vocational schooling, a diversification of specific vocational fields and the development of new employment fields in the social economy offer such alternatives.
2. The necessary **cooperation of several actors** with different logics of action and different institutional frameworks („depillarisation“ of the supporting structures) requires an **agreement of a political nucleus** with a common thematic parenthesis (region, biography, youth, employment development). On the basis of our results the establishment of regional oriented competence agencies is recommended where thematic fields and the relevant supporting structures are brought together. In one of our best practice examples this was possible in the frame of the so called „Optionskommune“, one model for communal administration implemented in the course of the German labour market reform. Other forms of cooperation are models of cooperative case management or youth conferences U25.
3. The **youth welfare service** has to incorporate their perspective and their professional competence (as well as the competences of their target group) which aim at an integrated **coping of life** into the political discourse which is widely one-dimensional oriented towards employability. At this point it is also a matter of alternative and acknowledged forms of social integration if not manageable via the labour market. At the same time the thematic field **youth and employment** as a central topic for young people has to be discussed to a greater extent in the context of youth welfare services.

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