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## Introduction: Community Education, Learning and Social Professions in Europe

"A better society produces better schools instead of better schools producing better societies."

(Hartmut v. Hentig)

Community Education as an idea, a concept and a pedagogical movement and hence a form of practice has found widespread acceptance for instance in Great Britain but has not really found an echo in German practice (Morris 1924, Heuter 1987). Only the 1980s registered a certain resonance of the concept in reform initiatives in the Federal Republic of Germany promoted above all by Jürgen Zimmer, Otto Herz, Christa Klement and Angelika Krüger who regarded Community Education as a concept and a means of changing the school education system. Their slogans, questions and points of reference were, 'open the schools, allow life to enter', or, from a different perspective, 'what is the connection between education and life?'

Community oriented forms of learning (Gemeinwesenorientiertes Lernen), in the terminology of the German discourses, was an attempt to bridge the gap between school and social pedagogy and to introduce new forms of learning which let a meaningful continuity between different spheres become more evident (Herz 1986, p.13). The guiding idea, according to Krüger, was 'to re-connect learning, education and formation more explicitly with life processes, to link traditional seats of learning and education with the life of a neighbourhood, a community, the region and society in general and to integrate school pedagogy and community work... Learning thereby assumes relevance for life and takes place as participation in local and regional developments (Krüger 1989, p.384).

Seen from this point of view, the schools, or rather teachers with a special kind of commitment, play always a central role as the starting point of initiatives. 'There are definitive advantages in regarding the school as the place of community oriented education

and formation' says Christa Clement (1990, p.30) and lists the advantages of an already existing infrastructure of the school system.

This meant that the discussion on Community Education centred on the issue of a long overdue reform of the school system. Institutional concepts and practices predominated in this debate and the non-school context received relatively less attention.

In the German Democratic Republic there were also moves, within a completely different political context, towards better links between pedagogical institutions and the interests of the community. Gräßler sums this up as the question, how schools could become a centre of community life around cultural and sports activities. These reflections referred back to the 1947 draft programme of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED), the ruling Communist party, which demanded that schools be transformed into 'cultural focal points for city and country incorporating all initiatives of after school care' (Gräßler 1992, p.20, cf Gräßler 1989 and 1991). The guiding principle in the GDR, 'collaboration between schools and non-school institutions towards a "communist education", was prescribed by the Law on a Unified Socialist System of Education of 25. February 1965 (ibid. p.21).

By contrast, in the Federal Republic of Germany the central notions of Community Education in traditional and contemporary discourses focus on terms like new life styles, life-long informal learning, networking between different spheres of life, recognition of life competences, community oriented curricula related to social context; this means they are located in the areas 'before and after school' (Bundesministerium 2005).

As a consequence of the controversies in Germany following the Pisa study some of the old issues around Community Education re-emerge, without however making explicit reference to that tradition.

The German Pisa results triggered an academic and political educational debate concerning the scope of formal institutions of schooling and learning. The discussion largely ignores the fact that all western industrial societies are in a state of profound transformation which is indicated by the term 'knowledge society'. Mottos like 'life competence', 'key competences', 'flexibly applied qualifications' appear, depending on prevailing interests, at

times more in academic, at other times more in popular debating circles or talk shows and turn the whole field of education and 'life-long learning' as well as 'education as a human resource' into pedagogically and socially inflated topics.

This raises the question whether in relation to Germany the school is possibly the wrong starting point for Community Education and whether it should not be launched from the perspectives of 'Pedagogy within Youth Work' (Sturzenhecker/Lindner 2004), of the significance of informal learning or the role and scope of resources of civil society in the construction of better functioning neighbourhoods and communities through community development. How will core ideas of Community Education lead to new forms of practice when we choose youth work, adult education (Löbbecke 1989) and social work as the starting point?

Community Education in many ways is an 'airy fairy' concept which might bear the hidden message that life 'outside' is better than within the school. 'Community' has many positive connotations which contrast informal relationships favourably with formal regulations, inviting a cosy accommodation. 'Community Education is not a fixed pedagogical method nor a didactic theory, but takes different shapes from case to case depending on the interests, needs and possibilities of those involved. Here, practice does not result from theory, instead the attempt at theorising and systematising originates from the observation and evaluation of practice' (Krüger 1990, p.11).

Wingendorf goes one step further and attests Community Education a poorly developed theoretical profile which he considers a structural deficit. 'The weak theoretical contours of really existing Community Education may be regarded as a structural deficit which, turned optimistically, can nevertheless function as a precondition for operational possibilities. Community Education exists as a search process without an identifiable instigator, as a process without consistent structure. 'Community Education' has a credibility problem', "Community Education has an in-built tendency to generate into an 'things to all men' formula", Community Education is merely a 'self- fulfilling prophecy' or: "We may have become the unwitting victims of our own pragmatism". Although he concedes a little later

that there is hope for a "constructive confusion" (Wingendorf 1996, a p.9, Wingendorf 1992 and 1996b).

This positive recognition of the pragmatic practice potential of the Community Education approach, which is so alien to a German concern for theoretical stringency, echoes both Schleiermacher's verdict on the 'dignity of practice' and the approach by Pestalozzi who commented on his early pedagogical projects with children and young people in Stans as follows: 'I did not have a theory, I simply had to follow my intuitions'.

The more precise contents of Community Education can also be related to the movement of pedagogical reforms in Germany of the 1920s. J. Zimmer sums up: 'Community Education contains both a traditional reform ideal and a radical one in the claim to break open the school ghetto, to break down walls, to link school and life. Community Schools apply this appeal in a dual sense: They become neighbourhood and community centres for everybody; and they send out pupils beyond the school confines to do their learning and experiencing where life and action take place unaffected by school interests' (Zimmer 1991, p.20).

German schools are today still sometimes dominated by caretakers who, in unison with cleaning brigades, make sure that order returns at the end of the official school day which is not to be disturbed by external visitors to and users of school premises. Only occasionally can clubs, associations and adult education institutions hire classrooms, but they cannot make a claim to belong as representatives of the community. Teachers leave the premises as quickly as possible and regard any delay as an imposition. 'Our experience indicates that "opening the school" cannot happen without "opening the teachers", above all not without "opening the caretakers" says Gräßler (1992, p.26) albeit with a view to the former GDR but his observations have a wider validity. It could be argued that Community Education as a concept which develops out of practice could not take roots in Germany because there was no corresponding practice, in contrast to Great Britain for instance.

Another reason for the appeal of the concept of Community Education which emphasizes links to everyday life experiences and demands the de-institutionalisation of the school is the euphoric treatment of practice. This in turn is based on the validation of life experiences

as a competence which exist and are of immediate use for a community without having to be formally recognized in the form of official certificates, qualifications and diplomas. This notion assumes renewed significance in the current debate on reforms. The so-called 'Leipzig Declaration' of the 'Forum Bildung', entitled 'Being educated is more than being schooled', demands, among its many points, new forms of networking and regards social and youth services as 'providers of pedagogical opportunities'. 'The specific contribution by social and youth services lies in the necessary difference of their pedagogical approaches from those of the formal education system' (Bundesjugendkuratorium 2002, p. 317). In addition, all-day schools assume a special significance. The 12th Report on Children and Youth (Bundesministerium 2005) makes reference to the profound changes which take place in the pedagogical work of youth and social services which require corresponding conceptual changes. The Federal Government in its response to the Report welcomes the perspective of developing 'community-based educational scenarios' (Stellungnahme 2005, p. 14). Accordingly, a comprehensive notion of education combines formation, pedagogical guidance and education in one single approach. A precondition for this is the 'interplay between school and other seats of education and worlds of learning' (Bundesministerium 2005, p.350).

Thomas Rauschenbach supports the proposal that it is vital to pay more attention to the outof-school processes of formation. 'Processes of learning and education of children and
young people do not conform to an institutional logic and are therefore not tied to one
particular type of location. It is necessary to reflect on possibilities to facilitate non-formal
educational processes and opportunities of informal learning yet to be created within and
beyond the family, besides considering the prevailing form of school-based learning which
presently appears to leave no alternatives' (Rauschenbach 2002, p.501f).

Thomas Olk on his part differentiates the range of possibilities that particular seats and contexts of education could give rise to. 'Given that the acquisition of knowledge and skills within the ambit of the school, determined by curricula and timetables, concentrates on linguistic and symbolic competences in dealing with cultural knowledge and on instrumental competences in dealing with the outside world, the pedagogical opportunities

and services of youth services, specially in work with children and young people, concentrate on social and personality-related competences' (Olk 2004, p. 533).

At a more theoretical level there are meanwhile plenty of proposals for a reconceptualisation of the collaboration between school and out-of-school youth and social work (cf. Pauli 2006). The position of the school as the domineering institution has given way to a model of networking, expressed in exemplary form by Coelen: 'In promoting relevant educational policies it would make sense to develop a concept which, starting from the segments of "community-based youth work" and "open-door schools" would arrive at one of "district youth education" capable of integrating school and youth work as equal partners in providing instances of formation and socialisation' (Coelen 2002, p. 61; cf Filtzinger/Johann/Seibel 1987 and Oehrens 1990).

Especially in German-language publications, the intercultural dimension of schools appears as a constitutive element of Community Education. Community Education therefore gets linked frequently to intercultural education. But, as Schweitzer remarks, this is also an area 'in which in contemporary Germany positive associations are as yet scarce on the part of pedagogical and political practitioners' (Schweitzer 1994, p.11). For him this is a distorted perspective. It assumes that the term 'community' refers to groups of people who have certain characteristics in common which formed their internal bond and with which they can also separate themselves out from other groups. This would ignore the dimension of power between members of such communities and towards other communities.

The ideological and programmatic use of the terms 'intercultural education' and 'Community Education' would ultimately presuppose a type of communication based on equality and the absence of power differentials in the sense of Habermas' ideal conditions for 'power-free discourses' between members of different ethnic groups and/or institutions and their representatives. Schweitzer's hypothesis is that 'intercultural education and Community Education share structural features. Both parameters describe a process of social disintegration on several levels' (ibid., p 13). While intercultural education is to be understood as a communication strategy by the state designed to overcome dysfunctional barriers between social and ethnic groups, Community Education would appear as a reform

strategy within educational politics designed to dissolve boundaries within the school (classroom, teaching units, subject areas etc.), between the education system and the lifeworld "immigrant family", as networking between different institutions of the social service sector and as control in the areas of school, social work, further education, leisure, culture and policing. 'For Community Education this includes a further process of disintegration between the indigenous and the immigrant groups, citizens and foreigners, middle class and lower class, majorities and minorities' (ibid.).

These critical remarks mark the ideological stumbling blocks which impede the acceptance of Community Education in Germany by reducing it to a narrow aspect of the relationship between school and neighbourhood.

In view of this and on the strength of its experience in international and interdisciplinary cooperation the European Centre for Community Education (ECCE) developed a more comprehensive concept of Community Education and contributed to its implementation. ECCE was founded at a time when the then Department of Social Pedagogy of the Fachhochschule Koblenz conducted a model project for the Federal Ministry of the Family (1984-1986) entitled 'Encompassing leisure and culture in neighbourhood based school and youth work' ("Freizeit-kulturelle Breitenarbeit - Schule und Jugendhilfe im Stadtteil") which evidenced the 'concrete practical possibilities and difficulties in the implementation of Community Education' (Filtzinger/Johann/Sauer/Seibel 1987, cf. also Oehrens 1990, p.12).

"The fundamental task of the ECCE is to further the concept of Europe as a social community through the promotion of activities which will facilitate the comparison of existing models, and the possible development of new models of community education. In this context the term community education is used to include the fields of social work, community work, youth work, work with disadvantaged people and other related educationalactivities."

This aim should be reached by

- multilateral exchanges for practitioners, students and teaching staff,
- intercultural learning opportunities for workers and for those engaged in their education and training in the field of community education,
  - networks for the exchange of information and research about theory and practice in the field of community education.

(cf. http://ecce-net.eu/welc\_en.htm) <14.12.2006>

The following is a presentation of various examples of how the aims of ECCE have been put into practice, with the instruments created by ECCE. Examples relate to the structure and orientation of curricula which introduce students in different ways to intercultural and international fields of work (cf. Friesenhahn/Kniephoff/Seibel 2001, p.206). In these contexts aspects of Community Education have a special role and significance.

#### "ACCESS-Europe"

"With financial help of the ERASMUS-bureau in Brussels(CMA-87-D-001) ECCE developed a more formalised joint study programme in 1987: 'Additional Certificate in Community Education Studies – ACCESS-Europe'.

... It is designed as a modular training scheme i.e. students have the opportunity to select individual units according to their interests and motivation.

Module 1: Language tuition

Module 2: European Community Studies

Module 3: Two bilateral seminars (6 days) or one multilateral seminar (10-14 days)

Module 4: Studies and / or practice abroad

The <u>certificate</u> is awarded by ECCE in conjunction with the respective university in the home country of the student".

(http://www.fh-koblenz.de/sozialwesen2/ecce/dim en.htm) <14.12.2006>

## ..Europe-COMES"

"In 1989 - based on the 'ACCESS-Europe' programme - the department of Sozialpädagogik extended its international study programme. Another certificate course: ,European Community Education Studies — Europe-COMES' was developed and implemented in the existing course structures. It encompasses:

- The passing of the 'ACCESS-Europe' certificate,
- Membership in a student's study-project with international / intercultural dimension,
- Participation in courses which are provided for ,Europe-COMES'.

Together with their Diploma students who have passed the programme successfully receive an additional <u>certificate</u> from the department staing in detail the single units.

(http://www.fh-koblenz.de/sozialwesen2/ecce/dim\_en.htm) <14.12.2006>

#### "European Community Education Studies – E.C.E.S."

"Based on the existing developments and experiences with "ACCESS-Europe"and "Europe-COMES" the department of Sozialpädagogik has introduced the independent course programme: "European Community Education Studies – E.C.E.S" in 1995/96." (http://www.fh-koblenz.de/sozialwesen2/ecce/dim\_en.htm) <14.12.2006>

"The steps on the way towards the integration of an international and intercultural dimension of social work, which have so far been pioneered, have thereby become institutionalized at a higher level. The study programme for instance declares foreign languages to be a compulsory element. It requires two semesters spent abroad, one concerned with placement studies" a and for the purpose of one (Friesenhahn/Kniephoff/Seibel 2001, p.208 f.).

Beyond promoting those curricular elements ECCE has achieved important developmental objectives:

#### European Dimensions in the Initial Training for Youth and Community Workers

"In 1992 ECCE received funding from the Commission of the European Communities through its Task Force: Human Resources, Education Training and Youth, for the first phase of a project whose purpose was to explore the European Dimension(s) in the initial training of youth workers. A team of lecturers (Chair: Prof. Seibel, Koblenz) from four departments from Cork (Ireland), Leicester (England), Bologna (Italy) and Koblenz (Germany) were invited to investigate the question which qualifications, skills and attitudes youth and community workers need in a changing Europe. In international teams four modules were developed, which have been /will be implemented in the courses at the participating institutions:

Module 1: Philosophical starting points, concepts and approaches to youth work

Module 2: Framework and co operation between state, welfare and voluntary bodies

Module 3: Social Policy for young people

Module 4: Youth work competencies for good practice in international/intercultural youth work."

(http://www.fh-koblenz.de/sozialwesen2/ecce/dim\_en.htm) <14.12.2006>

# Developing anti-racist strategies: an experiental learning module within the Youth for Europe programme

"In addition to the production of the modules: "European Dimensions...." ECCE was given the task to develop a special module for post-professional training in international youth work in 1993. An expert team (Chair: Prof. Lorenz, Cork) with members from France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Ireland and Germany was responsible for developing and testing the module. In the meantime the module is translated into English, German and Italian and successfully implemented in basic and post-professional training.

(http://www.fh-koblenz.de/sozialwesen2/ecce/dim\_en.htm) <14.12.2006>

### Thematic Network: 'Social Professions for a Social Europe'

(within the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme of the EC)"The consortium ECSPRESS (European Consortium of Social Professions with Educational and Social Studies) is

constituted by a binding agreement under German law between three European academic organisations:

(besides ECCE <a href="http://ecce-net.eu">http://ecce-net.eu</a> <a href="http://eassw.org">http://eassw.org</a> and FESET <a href="http://www.feset.org">http://eassw.org</a> have taken part.)...

The results of the <u>ERASMUS</u> evaluation conference in <u>Koblenz/D</u> 1996 (SEIBEL/LORENZ, 1998) and the preparatory work between the partner organisations led to the identification of three thematic focal points:

- 1. European Dimensions in the Curriculum Development of the Social Professions
- 2. The Role of the Social Professions in fighting Social Exclusion
- 3. Social professions in changing socio-political contexts in Europe".

  (<a href="http://www.fh-koblenz.de/sozialwesen2/ecce/ecsp\_en.htm">http://www.fh-koblenz.de/sozialwesen2/ecce/ecsp\_en.htm</a>) < 14.12.2006>

The present publication highlights Community Education from interdisciplinary and international perspectives. In this context the version of Community Education favoured by ECCE which implies a multiplicity of dimensions and levels is being applied.

In Scotland the school is not at the centre of the concept of Community Education. In contrary to many other countries the approach of Community Education started by integrating Youth Work, Community Work and Adult Education. In her contribution *Lyn Tett* is tracing the trends in this country.

Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka - in referring to Helena Radlinska - identifies the conceptual relationships between the Polish tradition of Social Pedagogy and Community Work and links this with deliberations for the education and training for the Social Professions.

Paul Taylor broadens the perspective of Community Education to "Political Centred Education" and gives reasons to create - in an emancipatory way - a new understanding of citizenship and of political literacy. This is made clear by an action-research programme carried out at Rennes.

Franceso Villa analyses the conflicting fields between the western coined global individualism and a global community. He postulates that social sciences - both in theory and practice - relating to Community Development ought to be more recognised by social professionals in conceptualising their work. Individual perspectives need to be overcome in favour of an all-embracing perception, which allows to practice the community in a complex, autopoietic, self-referential society.

Based on systems theory *Karl Heinz Lindemann* looks critically into the school as a system. The task of the school is to accomplish a link to the macro-systems of economy and science and to create at the same time learning processes, which are located in the life-world of the children. The discussion of the relationship of the general and the specific in educational processes lies at the centre of his deliberations.

Whereas the contributions mentioned so far are grouped around discourses on Community Education which are characteristic to the respective country, thus encompassing transnational aspects as well, the following articles are dealing explicitly with European perspectives.

Walter Lorenz recalls the importance of personal international contacts and relationships - beyond the programmes of the EU – for the professionalisation of the Social Professions in Europe. He looks critically into the administrative guidelines of the programmes of the EU, which often are based on other logics than those of initiatives and networks like for example the ECCE. The latter are concentrating on the improvement of intercultural learning facilities for and the recognition of the linguistic diversity of the participants. Europe needs a social orientation and the recognition/acceptance of cultural diversity. The implementation of such a logic is one of the challenges for the Social professions.

Oldřich Chytil explains this in more detail by using the Thematic network Ecspress as an example. The co-operation of three major organisations, Feset, EASSW and ECCE has given far-reaching impulses for the professionalisation of the Social Professions in Europe. In addition to consolidating the relations, the integration of the new partners from the

CEEC into the already existing and the creation of new networks has been of outstanding importance.

Franz Hamburger makes the process of European integration a subject of discussion and underlines the fact, that in this process different "Europes" have emerged. On the one hand is it obvious, that the social policy has to subordinate itself to a radical economic policy, and on the other hand the social and democratic legal systems are strengthened by the Charta of Fundamental Rights.

In analysing the local conditions of Social Work these ambivalences are obvious. It is the task of Community Education to throw light on these correlations and ambivalences and to treat the social affiliation and identification.

Romain Biever - starting from a project in Luxembourg - describes the relationship between "L'economie social" - Community Economy and Community Education and envisages the civil society as a crucial actor with a view to a productive development at the local level.

In the final part examples of the implementation of the central ideas of Community Education are elucidated.

Lina Majauskienė and Irena Leliūgienė demonstrate how the main features of Community Education have entered the educational policy of Lithuania and they outline a "Community-Education-Profile of School Social Work". Concretely they connect the concept of a lifeworld orientated Social Work with Community Education. In doing so they indicate that deliberations on the relationship between people and environment - influenced by the German "Reformpädagogik"- progressive education - have been object of the educational reflections already in the thirties of the last century.

Susanne Elsen is looking at a wider picture of the social pedagogy and social policy and introduces economic models which are not aiming at maximising the profit but in which the just distribution of the gained earnings are at the very centre. On this theoretical

background she introduces links to the liberating social work, which can lead to the self organisation of the persons concerned, if concrete improvements can be derived.

#### Federica Zanetti and Elena Pacetti

Indicate that in the context of an education in the realm of civil society not only the school but also the family and the social services play an important role. Using an example of the Faculty for Education at the University of Bologna they point out how "educazione alla cittadenza" - citizenship education - have entered the curriculum. Thereby they debate that today the belonging to a Community - given the technological means - is not restricted only to social or geographical prerequisites but can also be experienced in a virtual way.

Finally the contribution by *Anna Aluffi Pentini* addresses a topic of high praxis relevance. It documents the forms of everyday racism present in Italian schools and analyses the relevance of the role and method of the 'cultural mediator' in relation to the problems arising, pointing out the community work character of this work.

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