Thesis paper concerning the Structured Dialogue from the perspective of the involved actors

Summary of the Interim Evaluation Report 2012

(1)   The **Structured Dialogue** receives general approval from all involved actors. In contrast to the previous year, the classification of the respective projects in the coherences of the Structured Dialogue and the EU-Youth Strategy are known at least rudimentarily by most project leaders. But the European and federal implications of the projects are still less known by the decision-makers and young people.

(2)   From the perspective of all involved actors, the Structured Dialogue imparts **political relevance and new impetus from the EU** for local youth participation, as well as it accomplishes a function of motivation and activation. Especially the leaders of youth work consider the Structured Dialogue as a **tail wind from the EU and a support** for their own work aiming at local youth participation.

(3)   The implementation of structured dialogue confronts **top-down approaches with bottom-up projects**. A linked question for the youth organizations and project leaders is, how they can combine this constructively and create added value.

(4)   It is important for the involved actors to implement the Structured Dialogue **in municipal and local contexts** in order to locate and link it with the living environment of young people. In doing so, they use their **own scopes of interpretation and action**.

(5)   The project leaders recognize the European dimension as a core element of the Structured Dialogue, whereby **target group-specific approaches to European issues** are considered to play a central role. Implementing the EU-Consultation-topics resp. national theme corridors has proven to be a difficult and complex challenge. Therefore, the topics are picked up and diversified depending on the local needs and circumstances.

(6)   As project leaders suspect that due to its complexity, the Structured Dialogue **might ask too much from young people**. Therefore they are looking for starting points to link directly to young people's living environments. For that task, project leaders see themselves in an intermediary function.

(7)   In addition to verbal reflection processes, medial and artistic means of expressions are important for young people in the different projects of the Structured Dialogue. Particularly focusing on barely approachable young people, these **creative methods** play a key function due the empowerment function they offer.

(8)   The success of the dialogue processes depends on a setting ensuring a serious and respectful **exchange at an eye level** between the involved actors. To make this happen, young people and decision-makers alike should be prepared specifically for the concrete dialogue situation.

(9)   Dialogue processes between young people and politics require **time, endurance and continuity** in order to develop gainfully. This is sometimes difficult for young people preferring a different speed of the regular political processes. Therefore leaders of youth work play an important role for the processes both as mediators and as carers.

(10)   In view of the **financial, structural, and staffing requirements,** the current austerity budgets for youth work will make it difficult in the long run to root the Structured Dialogue on a sustainable basis and beyond single project funding.

Eva Feldmann-Wojtachnia / Dr Barbara Tham
April 2013

Center for Applied Policy Research (CAP)
Research Group Youth & Europe
at Ludwig Maximilians University Munich (LMU)
Maria-Theresia-Str. 21
(D) 81671 Munich (Germany)
eva.feldmann@lrz.uni-muenchen.de
b.tham@lrz.uni-muenchen.de