



European Union  
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**PROCEEDINGS  
FROM THE CONFERENCE  
ON COOPERATION  
OF YOUTH CLUBS AND  
EDUCATIONAL  
AND CORRECTIONAL  
FACILITIES**

This proceedings is the output of the conference on Cooperation of Youth Clubs and Educational and Correctional Facilities which took place on 14th of May 2019 in Brno. The conference was part of the project of “Cooperation between YCs and ECFs”, ref. CZ.03.2.63/0.0/0.0/16\_06 5/0003828, which is subsidised from the European Social Fund of the EU, from the state budget of the Czech Republic in the framework of the Operation Programme Employment.

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## INTRODUCTION

Cooperation of Youth Clubs (YC) and Educational and Correctional Facilities (ECF) is a project implemented by RATOLEST BRNO, z.s. in the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2019. The conference aimed at informing the professional public about the project outputs and the themes connected with its implementation. The conference was held in Brno on 14 May 2019 at the presence of 77 experts from YC and ECF, social workers of the institution of Social and Legal Protection of Children (ISLPC), half-way homes and other related services for young people leaving ECFs. Five papers were presented and one panel discussion was held. The themes of the presentations included:

- Output of the cooperation project and good practice complemented with a view of partner YCs and ECFs.
- History of YC and vision for the future, and introduction of activities of the Czech Street Work Association
- Work of experts with the young person from his or her arrival to the institute (ECF) until his or her discharge
- Panel discussion of experts dealing with the young people leaving or staying in the Educational and Correctional Facilities (social worker of the ISLPC, Youth Diagnostic Centre staff, YC staff, ECF staff and staff of the half-way homes)
- Summary of the system of work with young people and good practice observed in the course of foreign trips to Spain, Austria and Finland
- Description of the change in everyday life of immigrants after the second wave of the migration crisis and how different nations coexist



The proceedings will include all the papers as inspiration for your work, or for clarification why it is so important for a young person in a special education institute that the follow-up service network is dense and well interconnected.

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Programme Employment.*



## LECTURER



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### Tereza Kašová

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### Martina Zikmundová

is a psychologist and a social educator. Since 2010 she has been working as a director of the Czech Streetwork Association.

### Lucie Karasová

studied social work and special education. Since 2000 she has been working in an Educational and Correctional facility. She worked as an educator, as a special educator, up to the current position of the head educator.





### Veronika Brychtová

graduated from Masaryk University in social education and counseling. She worked as a lecturer in primary prevention programs. Since 2014 she has been the head of the Youth Club Ponorka. Externally, she works in a kindergarten and an elementary school as a social educator.

### Martin Pazlar

works in the social activation service of the Delta Family Center (Dům tří přání, z. ú.). Prior to that, he worked in a Youth Club and as the head of the outreach street work program for children and youth (Jahoda, z.ú.).



### Veronika Melicharová

graduated in the field of social and legal activities. During her studies she worked at the Club at 9 (center of mental health services). She has also worked in the Youth Club Wellmez, where she has been working as the head of service since 2018.

### Jiří Tůma

is a social educator and lecturer. He works in a primary school in Graz, Austria, in the Don Bosco Leisuretime Center, and runs primary education completion courses.



# 22 MONTHS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN YOUTH CLUBS AND EDUCATIONAL AND CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mgr. Tereza Kašová & Mgr. Zuzana Šťastná

In a Youth Club (YC) the staff meet with young people under supervision of the institution for Social and Legal Protection of Children waiting for a stay in Educational Care Centre or after such a stay. Many of our clients face the threat of a stay in a Educational and Correctional Facility (ECF) and a lot of them actually stay in one.

Thus we know from our own practical experience and from other cooperating YCs that young people detained in a ECF are often also clients of a YC. Even while staying in a ECF young people can use YC support during summer holiday when they return home or visit their friends. If a YC is found close to a ECF, they can also use its service when on a walk. Some young people need the support by our service after they leave the ECF. Leaving ECF and return to independent life is a demanding change for young people, even when they return to their original family, which was not and is not fully functional. Young people thus often resolve conflicts with their parents or problems at the beginning of their independent life which they discuss with YC staff.

Discussions on professional platforms where YC staffs meet reveal that cooperation with ECF and other educational institutions is an interesting and still rather unknown area for them. Some YCs already possess good experience in establishment of communication and cooperation with CH for example thanks to their prevention activities. Other YCs



have had clients regularly visiting from a nearby ECF without contact with the ECF staff. Most YCs considered establishment of cooperation with a ECF in the past.

The project was inspired by the overlap of the target group of clients of YC with young people staying in ECF and the declared interest of YC service to develop cooperation with ECF.

## PRE-COOPERATION STAGE:

### Inquiry among YC

The online questionnaire inquiry involved 138 Youth Clubs (YC) working with the target group of young people over 18. This represents 65 % of the total number of these facilities. The inquiry revealed that in the course of past year at least one of these YCs was visited by circa 260 young people on stay or recently having left a ECF. Thus 71 % of the YCs stated that they worked with client leaving ECF.

### Inquiry among Educational and Correctional Facilities (ECF)

The inquiry involved 11 of the total number of 34 Czech ECFs, i.e. 32.4 %. The essential finding of this inquiry was that for 63.7 % of the respondents working with a ECF the services of YC were unknown completely or known only marginally (see Diagram 1).

The offer of social services by a Youth Club (YC) is:  
**(11 answers)**

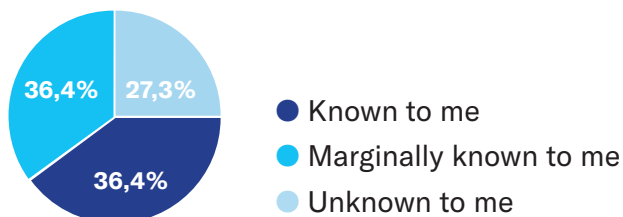


Diagram 1: Awareness of ECF staff about YCs and their services

All 11 participating ECF would appreciate YC as a follow-up service for young people in partial or full scope. ECF employees showed interest in information of young people leaving their institution about YC and the option to use its services. Cooperation between YC and ECF would thus lead to increased awareness of YC among people leaving ECF, which may facilitate their inclusion into normal life.

### YC as suitable follow-up service

The advantages of social services provided by YCs include their relatively high accessibility across the country. There are 256 of them in the register of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. That means that YC service is provided in most big cities and small towns and also in some villages.

YC service suitably complements the network of follow-up services due to its low-threshold nature (meaning that there are no formal or informal barriers for a person to use one). As YC services are often field services (street based work), the young people in need may meet the street social worker of YC in their natural environment, for example on a park bench. An individual may also be taken to a YC by friends who already know the service, which may eliminate the initial mistrust and worries. Then the individual may immediately start looking for a solution of his or her difficult life situation. The solution may take the form of finding a suitable homeless shelter or a half-way home. Young people can see as advantages of YC voluntariness, anonymity of the environment and the broad time span within which they can seek the service. The client does not have to book a date of YC visit and can choose for himself or herself what he or she wants to tell the YC social worker about himself/herself and what he/she wants to be helped with.

YC also knows cases of young people who were clients of YC in the past, for example at the age of 12. He or she visited YC to play foosball, seek help with learning or relationship to a new spouse of his or her parent or with problems at school. For clients returning from a ECF stay the first advantage is the very established relationship based on trust between the young individual and the service. The client can use an offer of help with job seeking or accompaniment to the Labour Office and is often surprised that YC also offers this service. It is therefore important to be aware that even if the client used the YC service in the past he or she may not have complete information about the service and about how to make full use of it.

To comply with the law, YCs may work with people at the age of 6 to 26 years of age, but not all of these facilities have their target group fully defined, all depends on the facility and the locality, and the age group the particular service works with. YCs working with young people up to 26 years of age offer the advantage of availability of their service for young people for 8 years after leaving the ECF, should they need it. Some YCs also provide the option of beneficial voluntary work.

### Why is a YC as follow-up service unknown

One of the reasons is probably the very name of a Youth club, which is, when translated word for word from the Czech language a “low-threshold facility for children and youth”. The meaning of the term “low threshold” is quite poorly known even among professional public. The term “facility for children and youth” is intuitively understood as a facility for the target group of children below 18. The term “facility” hides the fact that the service can also be provided as field service (as in street based youth work). Thus the name itself is a theme for a long discussion about what exactly is included under it.

Many guardians of young people only know YC as a place to spend leisure time or to get free tutorage. Information that the workers help job seekers, debtors, provide accompaniment to offices and generally assist with adult problems is often new information for them too. This very broad range of themes of YC support provided to their clients is incomprehensible for many professionals. The more so as not all YCs offer the same range of services. While one, for example in an excluded locality, organises regular activities and employs lecturers for dance lessons or tutorage, another, in a small town, organises frequent preventive lectures and skate park events etc. the fact that YCs adapt to the needs of the locality and the young people – their clients – in it has the consequence of confusion about the range of particular services provided by YCs generally.

### **What issues must be addressed by Educational and Correctional facility staff when discharging a young person**

Educational and Correctional facility are facilities of the Ministry of Education and often their workers lack information about the available types of follow-up social services for young people leaving their institutions across the country. The follow-up accommodation services such as half-way homes or homeless shelters are known to everybody. But there are also many other services, for example to help young mothers, users of dance drugs etc., needed in singular cases. On the basis of interviews with ECF staff the follow-up services and contacting them should be assured by social workers of the institution for Social and Legal Protection of Children. However, in practice every social worker does it differently. Some of them bring a social curator for adults to the EFC before the young person discharge to meet with him or her, others provide contacts to the available follow-up services, and yet others do none of that and their care ends when the client

reaches 18 years of age. Young people returning to their families are often discharged with a contact to a social curator for adults.

The ECFs are obliged to prepare young people to the discharge and inclusion in normal life afterwards. In the context of the preparation the workers try to make them financially literate, introduce to them the system of benefits provided by the Labour Office and other situations awaiting them. The workers of ECF however agree that this information is of no interest for the young people at the time when they are not yet worried by those problems and they often do not remember the provided information or lose the provided contacts. Some ECF employ the good practice of visiting the follow-up service provider with the whole group and make the young people remember more about the service through personal experience. The most frequently visited facilities include the half-way homes, homeless shelters and in some case also a drop-in centre for drug users. Practical experience of ECF shows that only few young people want to use follow-up accommodation service. Most of them want to be free after leaving the ECF and function without rules and surveillance workers. Here we came across absence of training accommodation not provided by ECF. ECFs often dispose with residential apartments where young people can stay after 18th birthday. This may be a solution for some young people, but these apartments are at the same time perceived as part of ECF. In some ECF young people can stay on, especially with the aim to complete their education in progress, on the voluntary basis.

Sometimes even a couple of years after leaving ECF a young person contacts the ECF worker (for example a warden) with whom he had the best relationship at the time of his or her stay at ECF. This is often in situations when he or she is overwhelmed with problems which he

or she is unable to find a way out of, or on the other hand when he or she wants to boast of his or her new life and success. As the young person spent several years with these people while in ECF and built trust in them, they are often the only people he or she is willing to discuss his or her situation with, and these workers at the same time lack awareness of the available follow-up services and do not know which of these services to recommend.

### Options of cooperation between YC and ECF

The already running pilot cooperation reveals that ECF staff awareness about how YCs function needs to be increased. Only then the ECF workers will be able to provide this information to young people discharged from ECF. YC workers can visit ECF and provide information about the service to the staff or introduce the service to the young people – clients of ECF – and by meeting them in person establish personal contact and eliminate potential fears. Another option is a visit of ECF workers in YC where they can better understand how the facility works and what its goals are. An ideal option of direct introduction of YC, its functioning and the related services is a visit of the young people leaving ECF in a YC. The facility staff can explain how YC works and what particular situations can be addressed. This information provision appears most effective for it is based on direct experience with the service. YC workers can also offer implementation of preventive programmes directly in an ECF. The benefits of this option include not only the very preventive programme implementation but also, and above all, the introduction of YC and its services to potential clients through an interesting theme. ECF staff can also offer the nearest YC to young people to spend their leisure time there while on walk.

## Cooperation project

The purpose of the project was to assure a functioning follow-up network of services supporting young people discharged from ECF in their successful inclusion in the society. To fulfil this objective it was necessary to carry out a pilot project of cooperation between ECF and YC as another suitable follow-up service for young people leaving ECF. Output from the pilot cooperation was used for preparation of a functional methodological procedure for introduction to the professional public. The project involved 3 YCs and 6 ECFs in the South Moravia and Vysočina (Highlands) regions.

### PARTIAL PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- 1 Establish, negotiate and implement cooperation between YC and ECF. The project involved round tables, supervisions and methodological guidance meetings of YC and ECF staff. Seven such meetings were held, and ECF and YC workers attended them jointly. Their objective was to reflect and streamline cooperation, identify potential obstacles and agree on further proceeding. The project coordinator provides ECF workers on request with contacts to local YC in the place where the young person plans to stay after leaving ECF. The ECF worker can visit the YC together with the client before the client is discharged from ECF, or give him or her contact information – for example a FB profile of the service. This way 12 young people leaving ECF were successfully supported.
- 2 Apply good practice from abroad to streamline cooperation between YC and ECF. In this context three foreign trips were organised to Spain, Austria and Finland. Each trip was participated in by 5 workers of YC and one ECF worker. After the



three foreign trips of Czech workers a group of 5 experts from the visited foreign organisations arrived in the Czech Republic. In the course of their visit they saw the practice of a YCs and visited two ECFs, a head social worker in a institution for Social and Legal Protection of Children, a half-way home and a couple of workshops where their findings were analysed.

3 Spread good practice examples among YCs and ECFs across the Czech Republic. The created methodology of co-operation is freely available on the web site of Ratolest Brno, [www.ratolest.cz](http://www.ratolest.cz). The methodology includes proven proposals for YC/ECF cooperation usable in Czech conditions.



# DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE OF YC AND VISION OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

Mgr. Martina Zikmundová

Before 1989, in the period of the Communist Czechoslovakia, social problems “did not exist”, therefore, with a couple of exceptions, preventive social work and social services were not needed. Work with the youth was the task of state organisations such as Pioneer (“Pionýr”) and Union of Socialist Youth (“SSM”).

Right after the Velvet Revolution the subject of social work began to establish itself in the educational system and the first non-profit NGOs were formed to provide prevention, first in the areas of addictions (Drop In 1991, Sananim 1990, Podané ruce 1991), sexual education (Rozkoš bez Rizika 1992), and homelessness (Naděje 1990), and a little later work with youth (Proxima Sociale 1993). The early establishment of these organisations copied the growth of illegal drug use and development of sexual education after the fall of the iron curtain and thanks to it the epidemiological situation in the Czech Republic in the area of infectious diseases connected with use of addictive substances such as HIV has been good.

Not only NGOs introduced the method of street work – i.e. field work, today rather called contact work. In 1993, the Programme of Social Prevention was established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, creating the municipal position of social assistant, whose job description was field work with the youth. Since 1995 Czech social workers received education and scholarships in Chemnitz, Germany, and cooperation developed with the Chemnitz University and similar

establishments in Hamburg. The German model was inspiring for Czechs, but not directly usable due to the different contexts, therefore the services had to be “built from scratch”. An important element was creation of an ethical code and further basic methodological documents describing the position of a professional field worker. In 1997 the Czech Association for Street Work (hereinafter CAS) was established, first as an association of individuals using the method of street work. In the beginning we felt the need to define field and low-threshold services as preventive services, to distinguish them from the pre-November (1989) repressive services. This need for distinction emphasized the principles of confidentiality, client acceptance “as is”, respect for their lifestyle, service availability and anonymousness of its use. The accent on these principles, unfortunately, detached these services from other system and institutional, especially state-organised, services. This accent lost strength as the time passed and today we know that to be beneficial for your clients the mutual cooperation is necessary and beneficial for all.

Youth clubs (or in the word for word translation Low-threshold clubs or LTFCYs) have been established since 2001. For the purpose of their definition, terminology and methodology creation CAS appointed a taskforce and a lot of educational courses and seminars were held. In 2003 CAS membership changed from individual to collective – CAS members have from then on been facilities providing low-threshold social services. One of the principal achievements was assertion of inclusion of low-threshold clubs in the Typology of Social Service of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and in 2006 in the Social Service Act no 108/2006 Coll.

- In 1998 there were ca **20 facilities** adhering to low-threshold work with the youth (i.e. Youth Clubs).
- In 2002 **41 facilities (YCs)** declared themselves to be **LTFCYs**.
- In 2008 the LTFCY service type in the Czech Republic was provided by over **180 centres (YC or street-based youth work)**.
- In 2019 the Register of Social Services of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs lists **256 LTFCYs (YCs or street-based youth work)**.

In 2008 the Terminology was updated – Terminology is a methodological document of CAS defining terms related to provision of low-threshold social service (YC) with detailed comments. The document for example describes the **mission of YC (LTFCY)** (in 2008):

(LTFCY) is to strive for social inclusion and positive change of lifestyle of children and youth in unfavourable social situation, to provide information, professional assistance and support and to prevent their social exclusion.

**Legislative anchoring of YC (LTFCY):** YC (LTFCY) exists pursuant to the Social Service Act no 108/2006 Coll., and its section 53, defining Social Preventive Service. Social preventive services help prevent social exclusion of persons threatened by exclusion for their critical social situation, life habits and lifestyle leading to conflict with the society, socially disadvantaged environment and threatening of rights and vested interests by criminal activity of another natural person. The purpose of social preventive services is to help individuals overcome their unfavourable social situation and protect the society against origin and spread of undesirable social phenomena.

Youth club (word for word translation: Low-Threshold Facility for Children and Youth) – § 62 of Act no 108/2006 Coll.

1 Low-threshold facilities for children and youth provide services (in two forms – Youth Club or street based youth work) to children and young adults at the age from 6 to 26 endangered by undesirable social phenomena. The purpose of the service is to improve quality of their lives by preventing or minimising social and health risks related to their ways of life, to orient them in their social environment and create conditions for resolution of their unfavourable social situation. The service can be provided anonymously.

2 The service pursuant to paragraph 1 above includes the following **basic activities:**

- a) Upbringing, education and activation,
- b) Intermediation of contact with social environment,
- c) Social therapeutic activities,
- d) Assistance in application of rights and vested interests and in organisation of their personal affairs.

Youth Club (Low-Threshold Facilities for Children and Youth) Decree no 505/2006 Coll., § 27 Basic activities included in social service in YCs (low-threshold facilities for children and youth) include:

- a) Upbringing, education and activation:
  - 1 Provision of conditions for socially acceptable leisure-time activities,
  - 2 Upbringing of children to work,
  - 3 Training and fixation of motor, psychic and social skills,
  - 4 Provision of conditions for adequate education,
- b) Intermediation of contact with social environment: activities for improvement of orientation in social relationships
- c) Social therapeutic activities: social therapy, leading to development or maintenance of personal and social skills supporting social inclusion of individuals,
- d) Assistance in application of rights, vested interests and organisation of personal affairs:



- ❶ Assistance in common affairs settlement,
- ❷ Assistance in renewing or fixation of family contact
- ❸ Other activities supporting social inclusion of individuals.

## LOW-THRESHOLD PRINCIPLE

YCs (Low-threshold facilities for children and youth) provide their service with maximum accessibility, with the effort to remove temporal, spatial, psychological and financial barriers preventing the target group from seeking the facilities and using the offered service.

- ❶ The facility creates an environment with the nature and location close to the natural environment of the target group.
- ❷ Passivity or difference in opinions does not limit user's access to the service.
- ❸ The service user can stay **anonymous**. Any documentation containing personal data of the user must be kept with consent of the user and with the right of the user to consult it. The facility only processes the user's personal data necessary for provision of high-standard professional service.
- ❹ To use the services the user need not be member of and need not be registered with the facility. The service use is not conditioned by regular attendance. Users can come and go during the facility office hours as they like. The user is not obliged to join the prepared activities.
- ❺ Social services are provided free of charge.
- ❻ The office hours of the facility are adapted to the needs of their users. They provide the users the possibility to visit the facility at the time they can visit it (with regard to day, month and year). The office hours are stable without unexpected closing times.
- ❼ The service can be used by anybody from the target group without any limitations, unless his or her behaviour limits or threatens himself/herself or others, other users or the facility staff, and effectiveness of the service.

The low-threshold principles distinguished the services from other services and were and still are important for definition of and work in the service identity. Despite that some terms have shifted their meaning in the course of time. The discussed terms include the notion of anonymity of the service use. Anonymous use of the service as the option but not liability of the client has been given since the beginning. Some service providers understood anonymity as an obstacle in cooperation with other services or institutions. Since 2012 CAS has emphasized this cooperation as an important part of case work. Who can and should LTFCY cooperate with? The nearest surroundings of the service users (or clients, as the more and more preferred term), including the family members, teachers (school), paediatric healthcare professionals, OSPOD (Institution for Social and Legal Protection of Children) staff, psychologists and other functions helping fulfil the child's needs and address unfavourable social situations of the service clients.

What are the obstacles to this cooperation? Mutual lack of knowledge of the other's activities, competences and options; the only way is to meet together, inform each other and jointly work on solutions of individual client cases. Only thus the service can become effective and successful.

YC (LTFCY) service has been connected with CAS since the very beginning and CAS now works on the **YC (LTFCY) Vision for 2030**. The document would like to identify the direction and target of further development of the service.



### Present appearance of the vision:

YC (LTFCY) in 2030 will be a service cooperating with all relevant persons and institutions, above all OSPOD, the family and school, as an equal partner.

C (LTFCY) will be the leader and initiator of case work with clients.

YC (LTFCY) will actively seek and address clients, and work with them in their natural environment

YC (LTFCY) staff will be specialist in childhood, adolescence and related needs.

YC (LTFCY) will provide a spectrum of services permitting client take up responsibility for their life

YC (LTFCY) will hear the voice of the child...

Finally I would like to introduce the Czech Association for Street Work (CAS) and its major activities. CAS associated low-threshold social services: YC, field programmes (street based youth work and social street work with substance abusers), drop-in centres for drug users and low-threshold day centres (homeless shelters). All these services are linked together by the contact work method – active seek and contacting clients and work in their natural environment and accessibility of the service.

- CAS provides education through a system of educational programmes in the range from beginners to managers, accredited by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. At present CAS established the Contact Work Institute to further extend its educational programme offer.
- CAS supports quality by execution of Development Audits and

Methodological Visits to Services. Successful pass of these quality assessments is a condition of CAS membership. CAS currently has 90 institutional members.

- CAS is a platform for sharing, organiser of seminars and conferences, including the popular national professional conference with international participation held once in 2–3 years. The next conference will be held in Prague on 4–5 June 2020. CAS operates a professional portal on [www.streetwork.cz](http://www.streetwork.cz) and awards annual prize for the personality of the year and the team of the year called “ČASovaná bota”.

- CAS is active in professional PR. The latest campaigns can be found on [www.pracenaulici.cz](http://www.pracenaulici.cz)

- CAS develops vivid international cooperation, including international scholarships and membership in the global network for street workers Dynamo International.

- CAS supports and implements innovation project, for example of mobile work with children and youth in excluded localities, training jobs (see [www.restartshop.cz](http://www.restartshop.cz)) or street work online – transfer of contact work to the virtual environment ([www.jdidoklubu.cz](http://www.jdidoklubu.cz)).



# STAY IN AN EDUCATIONAL AND CORRECTIONAL FACILITY “FROM ARRIVAL TO DISCHARGE”

Mgr. Lucie Karasová, DiS.

First of all I would like to emphasize that a child can only be placed in an Educational and Correctional Facility on the basis of a court order of precautionary measure, institutional upbringing or protective upbringing. Placement of children in an Educational and Correctional Facility can be largely affected by the workers of the institution of Social and Legal Protection of Children (**ISLPC**) who submit to the court proposals of particular measures concerning child care in the best interest of the child. In this context high-standard multi-resort communication and cooperation is badly needed.

Institutional upbringing in an Educational and Correctional Facility (**ECF**) is governed by **Act no 109/2002 Coll., on execution of institutional or protective education in school facilities and on preventive upbringing and case in school facilities, amending certain other acts**. Other school facilities for institutional or protective education therefore also include Youth Diagnostic Centre (**YDC**), Children's Home (**CH**) and Children's Home with school (**CHS**). At present broad professional discussions are held on the need of amendment of this act, as some parts of it are obsolete and not applicable for the current situation.

The New Civil Code no 89/2012 Coll., has taken away a number of competencies, especially to diagnostic institutes, which has also



changed the system of children placement and relocations across the nationwide network. Courts currently order execution of institutional education in a particular facility, so the children are not placed in Youth Diagnostic Centre first, which played a specific role in this system before (professionals of the local Youth Diagnostic Centre prepared complex diagnoses of the children and were competent to subsequently decide whether, when and to what institute the child should be placed). Their powers also included further relocations of the placed children within the national network. The facilities therefore needed to cope with these changes. I would like to note that the quality of staff in the Educational and Correctional Facilities has considerably improved recently, the professional teams being extended with psychologists and special education experts who took over the role of authors of the detailed diagnostics of social, emotional and cognitive assumptions and competences, with added advantage of direct and intense cooperation with teachers on implementation of particular procedures.

Another fact to be considered is that every facility is unique and has its specifics – this used to be, is and always will be true – as concerns the environment within the facility (geographical location, spatial limitations of the building, material equipment etc.) as well as the staffing (number and professional qualifications of the staff members), and additional services related to the children’s needs and interests. In the Czech Republic there are institutes for boys or girls only as well as coeducational institutes.

## Staffing, professional team:

| Teachers  | Non-teacher staff   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Headmaster</li> <li>● Deputy headmaster</li> <li>● Head guardian</li> <li>● Special education provider</li> <li>● Psychologist</li> <li>● Guardian</li> <li>● Teacher's assistant (day, night)</li> <li>● Teacher</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social worker</li> <li>● Economist, accountant</li> <li>● Cooks</li> <li>● Cleaning ladies</li> <li>● Janitor</li> </ul> |

To work as professional staff member in an Educational and Correctional Facility the applicant must be or should be learned in special or social education, therapeutic work, self-experience training and other professional and specialised themes. In addition to professional education, knowledge, skills and experience the personality of the worker is important too.

Clients often arrive de-motivated, denying real situation, blaming their surroundings. Activities therefore also focus on their motivation for change, and insight-focused cooperation. All work with children is education, upbringing and therapy oriented. This activity focuses on development of personality and its positive features, based on individual educational plan – individual programme of child personality development (PROD). The client – the child – is acquainted with the programme and actively participates in its implementation.

Also due to the new legislation children arrive in our institute accompanied by their parents, ISLPC staff or the staff of the facility from which the child is being relocated. The presence of a parent is very important, in my opinion. In the course of the first meeting the child gets acquainted with the staff, the environment, the house rules and the other children, slowly engaging in other activities in the process. The “Introductory” or “adaptation” phase is most important, when mutual expectations are clarified etc.

The child is included in a particular educational group (according to the child needs and options available in the facility). In our facility the children are accommodated in double rooms, or in single rooms (in the department for minor pregnant girls and mothers with babies the mother is accommodated in a separate room with her child), siblings are accommodated together, where possible.

The essence of work with children with problems and behavioural disorders in school facilities for institutional and protective education and preventive upbringing and care (i.e. Educational and Correctional Facility) is not “care” in the first place, but mainly targeted intervention aimed at development of functioning behaviour of the child. The main aim of institutional or protective education, in my opinion, is to return the child in normal life and improvement of its **competences needed for successful mastering of life outside the facility**. This purpose drives the activities implemented in the course of the child's stay in the special education institute. These activities can be summarised as follows:

- 1 **Diagnostic activity** – includes complex diagnosis of the child in the form of pedagogical and psychological activities. The diagnosis is prepared by a team of professionals (psychologist, special pedagogue, social worker and other professionals in work with the child).
- 2 **Educational activity** – the compulsory part of a normal day is school

attendance, either in the facility or in its surroundings. The children continue with their compulsory school education or building of their qualifications to improve their chances on the job market. In the afternoon the children do their homework with assistance of their guardians. Education in school subjects as well as extramural themes forms part of everyday life in the facility where children, together with the staff, address standard life situations (debt payment, payment order filling out, purchasing...). This is mainly the task of the teachers.

③ **Upbringing activity** – The focus of upbringing activity is the afternoon organised activities with the guardians, where planned or free, group or individual activities include continuous feedback communication in the context of which the child receives current information about appropriateness of its behaviour and its potential consequences. An important part of the upbringing activity is represented by joint leisure-time activities and development of relationships between the children and the staff as well as among the children themselves. Upbringing effect is also exercised in practising self-service activities (hygiene, cleaning, meal preparation, dining, household management, purchasing etc.). This is mainly the task of the guardians.

④ **Therapeutic activity** – an offer to address personal issues in the context of individual or group therapy. This activity gains importance in the work of special education institutes. Long-term use is enjoyed by the various work or art therapies. These activities are mainly implemented by psychologists and special education providers. A great therapeutic potential within the special education institute is certainly represented by every relationship established with a staff member close to the child with whom the child is able to live its personal relationship themes in a safe environment.

Six months before the child discharge from the facility the social worker, in cooperation with ISLPC, addresses the issues of accommodation and employment of the child after discharge, informing the relevant municipal council about approaching discharge of the child from the special education institute. If the child cannot return to its family the social worker cooperates with the youth guardian on substitute accommodation arrangement. This often takes the form of case conference, with participation of the child, the youth guardian, the responsible educators and selected representatives of the special education institute (e.g. the social worker, the headmaster, the head guardian, the attending guardian, a special educator, a psychologist, or the class teacher). Here the options are weighed and the one most beneficial for the child is selected.

The “exit” stage of the stay can vary in length, always depending on where the child goes and in what context:

**a)** Cancelled institutional education (before 18 years of age)

**b)** After 18th birthday

- A known environment and working household the child is used to
- A new household – alone, with spouse, with child
- Specialized homeless shelters – mostly for mothers with babies
- Half-way homes
- Municipal or city flats, social flats (the child can apply after 18 years of age)

In the course of the “exit stage” the therapeutic process in the Educational and Correctional Facility is closed according to individual needs of the child. The professional team, together with the child, look

together for follow-up support programmes and organisations which can continue to help the child in difficult situations. I personally see low-threshold facilities as one of the options of subsequent support for young adults leaving special education institutes.

We are aware of the limits of our work – whether personal or systemic. The child is in the focus of our attention and we must always be aware of this.

Many themes on which we work together with the children are common, only coming in a different stage, even though they may also overlap when the contact between the child and the YC (LTFCY) (Youth club – word for word translation: Low-Threshold Facility for Children and Youth) can already be established before the child leaves the special education institute.

Finally I would like to express my desire to continue to focus on more effective links between these and other services in the social support system.

# SYSTEM OF CARE OF THREATENED YOUTH (PANEL DISCUSSION)

The panel discussion was attended by a special educator of an Educational and Correctional Facility, Ms. Vladimíra Pistrichová, a special educator of a Youth Diagnostic Centre, Mr. Jiří Martinec, a head social worker of a Half-way House, Ms. Emílie Smrčková, a head social worker of a Youth Club, Mr. Jan Kopic, and a social worker of the institution for Social and Legal Protection of Children, Ms. Helena Tománková.

At the very beginning of the panel discussion the participants were given floor to introduce themselves, their work and their target groups.

Ms. Vladimíra Pistrichová, special educator, works with young people staying in an Educational and Correctional Facility, i.e. with people with educational and behavioural problems. She finds it very difficult to generalise work of special educator in her facility, for it always depends on the needs of each individual young person. Mr. Jiří Martinec works in a Youth Diagnostic Centre where the clients usually stay for two months, before they leave for another educational and correctional institute (for example the Educational and Correctional Facility) or return to their families. He works with related services, like homeless shelters or half-way homes. Ms. Emílie Smrčková is the founder of a half-way home where young people come voluntarily. The facility imitates real life to the maximum possible extent, young people must observe defined rules there and the weekends are free.

The following discussion evolved around the question what, in their opinion, was best functional in the system of care of endangered youth



and NEET's. The experts in the field agreed that in Brno there was a broad network of social services, in comparison to other cities. The mentioned functioning special services included SPONDEA (therapeutic centre), the Podané ruce drop-in centre (for drug users), homeless shelters, half-way homes and, last but not least, the Youth Clubs, as one of the suitable follow up services for young people leaving Educational and Correctional Facility or other special education institutes. Youth Clubs were said to be adapted to the needs of young people living in the locality, therefore the address list of all Youth clubs as part of the cooperation methodology might be beneficial. On the other hand, some smaller towns were said to lack social service networks, especially as concerned specific – psychiatric, therapeutic and similar - services.

The panellists coming from the Educational and Correctional Facility, Youth Diagnostic Centre and institution for Social and Legal Protection of Children agreed that they were often meeting with de-motivated clients in their practice. This inspired a response of the representatives of the Youth Club, who said that institutions brought about a certain disadvantage. Young people were there compulsorily, did not want to talk to the staff, and lived there like in a bubble. This was said to be opposed by Youth Club where young people arrived voluntarily, decided by themselves what to discuss with the staff, this was the advantage of Youth Clubs, the clients arriving with their own ideas, not as punishment. The head social worker of the half-way home followed by a description of the ways they motivated their clients, concentrating on motivation for money saving (for own housing or other costs), which may be part of their individual plan, which they must fulfil or else they must leave the facility.

The discussion naturally headed towards the opining of the experts concerning the non-functioning parts of the whole system.

A lack of follow-up accommodation emerged as a big theme. The only available facility in Brno was CESOP (a Centre of social prevention which contains the following social services under one roof: a Youth Club, a homeless shelter and a half-way home), with missing starting accommodation or any flats accessible to young people, with social worker support. There were said to be social flats organised by the city councils, but with a waiting lists and waiting times of several years. According to the youth guardian, Brno needed support housing for young people. The flats should not be in the same locality but across the city. Otherwise the young people might be exposed to influences that might endanger them again. This would mean all previous work with these young people “thrown to the dust bin”, including from the viewpoint of the invested funds.

The special educator from the Educational and Correctional Facility said they were establishing a starting flat where young people were expected to live more or less independently, with only social workers available if they might need them. A psychologist in the audience also working in a Educational and Correctional Facility operating three starting flats said that only one was occupied at the moment. The reason might be that the client still perceived these flats as part of the institute – for the rules connected with their use. The audience voiced the opinion that these very rules might be very limiting for young people. Abroad there were also such flats working on similar principles, but without strict rules. Absence of rules in a starter housing was impossible for they were organised by the special education institutes. Unlike other follow-up services where young people had to observe certain rules,

there were said to be the Youth Clubs, working on different principles, such as voluntariness, with the related higher motivation of young people to visit them.

The audience asked whether the panellists saw any point in ordering institutional education to young people at the age of 17. The social worker of the institution for Social and Legal Protection of Children and Correctional Facility, the former being a facility for criminal offenders. The panellists said the most important aspect was work with the family, institutional education was perceived as the extreme option when everything else failed. Work with the family should be long-term and systematic. There were, however, extreme cases when the parent contacted the social worker of the ISLPC and asked for institutional care for their child. In such cases the social worker said to try to work with the parents in the first place, explain them why placement of their child to institutional care was not the ideal solution. This work, she said, was very demanding and sometimes not completely successful, with the young person placed in the institutional education or correction facility on the basis of agreement between the parents and the social worker. The panellists also touched the theme of follow-up services working with the whole family, the Child and Family Help Centres.

# BARCELONA – A CITY WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE PLACES TO LIVE

(TRIP DATE: 21 – 25 NOVEMBER 2017)

Mgr. Veronika Brychtová

Barcelona is a beautiful city with a lot of interesting cultural monuments. What cannot be seen at first sight, though, is that Barcelona can also boast of a sophisticated system of social services for young people stepping into the life of adults. The system offers them support, both emotional and financial, thus leading the young people to autonomy and emotional balance needed for social inclusion.

Like in the Czech Republic, the social workers in Barcelona provide advisory service, economic assistance, social activation activities, educational events, social and trial housing and accommodation service. There are no correction homes as we know them for young people with delinquent inclinations, but a special form of work with them in prisons exclusively assigned to them.

Federación de Entidades con Proyectos y Pisos Asistados (FEPA) aims at joining together all organisations working with risk youth. With a joint philosophy they work with adolescents across the engaged subjects on the national as well as international level. FEPA helps extend cooperation with administrative authorities and supervises viability and economic sustainability of these organisations. At present FEPA associates ca 30% of Spanish non-profit organisations active in this area.

The following paragraphs will focus on major findings in the area of housing for young people and assistance of social services in this area. Young people can seek help in the form of social housing. The nature of this service is accommodation in crisis and is only temporary, for the time needed by the clients to get out of their crisis. The target group includes all kinds of individuals needing temporary emergency accommodation, incomplete families, no-income families, as well as young people looking for their own home in vain. This service is to support social inclusion through psychological support, consultancy and planning, or accompaniment where needed. The use of the service is voluntary and the clients are motivated for use of related services to get complex care.

Another important part of the whole system of work with young people in Barcelona is represented by trial housing. The process works like standard apartment rent, but the condition is that the young person applying for moving in such an apartment is an employee or student motivated to work on their life plan or target. These apartments offer an alternative of accommodation and support for the youth to be able to achieve independence and full personal autonomy through development of individual responsibility, knowledge of oneself, critical thinking, assistance in taking up responsibility and becoming free, coming with the adult age. The service is to respond to the currently unfulfilled client needs – psychic, physical, material as well as social. The social workers offer constant support in the process in the area of hygiene, self-care etc. the staff includes social pedagogues, guardians and psychologists who visit the clients as needed.

The working hours of social workers helping adolescent clients is sometimes very flexible with maximum adaptation to the client needs.

The social workers communicate with their clients often also via the modern media such as Whats App.

The interviewed workers also mentioned negative experience with client living in these apartments. The most frequent issues included incompliance with the agreed rules and addictions. The clients must face loneliness which they were not necessarily used to before. They must learn to live with themselves. Of course, sometimes the unpleasant state of mind is stronger than the wish to become independent and some clients then return to their previous way of life – in the family or in institutional care, or find their way to squat or the street. The workers, however, take it as a lesson to learn, for they consider the way itself, or upbringing of the client, not just a straightforward achievement of the defined result. The clients often return after a time, think up new ways to improve their life situations in cooperation with the workers according to their current state of mind. The workers are aware that in a certain stage the client may not yet be ready for the help they offer as they offer it, and that is why they make maximum effort to adapt their help to the individual client's needs.

Some trial accommodation also offers trial employment to clients of trial and social housing in the case of forest works. The clients are employed for 2 years, and in the course of that time they prepare for their real jobs, ritualise competences etc. Then they enter the standard job market prepared to adapt to a real employer.

This system of trial housing is still badly missing in the Czech Republic. And yet this form of help to young people appears very functional and needed.

Generally speaking, in Spain in general, and in Barcelona in particular, the donors believe more strongly in social service than donors in the Czech Republic. This also suggests that social service financing will be better than in our country. The state is willing to pay for service quality, not to services providers offering cheaper services, which may be seen as another step towards social service quality improvement. As for the area of employee care the organisations active in Barcelona and its close surroundings value their employees very much. Work under individual supervision and other forms of education and psycho hygiene go without saying. They believe there that if employees do not like their work they do not work on their professional development, do not have clearly defined competences, mission, goals and methods of their work and cannot do it well. Satisfied and professionally self-aware employees can subsequently create job opportunities where their client needs will be satisfied.

The most important lesson I learned from my visit to Barcelona was the feeling that the social workers there were interested in their clients as individuals with different needs and therefore needing different approaches to find their own way and life target. The staff of the institutions we visited were active and enthusiastic and loved their work. They manifested great appetite and motivation to provide a helping hand to their clients on their complex way to adulthood.

# GRAZ – A CITY THAT LISTENS TO AND SUPPORTS CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN HARD LIFE SITUATION

Mgr. Martin Pazlar, DiS.

Children and youth of Graz live through similar life situations like their peers in the cities of the Czech Republic. Here as well as there some of them are more and others are less successful in life. The less lucky can use the network of social services to improve their unfavourable social situation. I would like to present to you some of the services and their attributes I find inspiring.

We have visited a youth club called *Funtastic* (an alternative of the low-threshold club), an emergency accommodation facility called *Schlupfhaus* (for clients at the age of 14 – 21 years), two workshops of the non-profit organisation called *Heidensplass*, and a supported housing project called *4Raum*. We have also talked to the head of the local department of State Police, responsible for close cooperation with the purpose and preventive nature of police work, and visited a department of a prison for youth under 18 called *Jakomini*.

## Service Interrelations

The first attribute that comes to my mind in connection with the visited services is their interrelations within the network. The provider of each service is aware of the existence and offers of the other service providers and can give examples of their mutual cooperation.



Emergency accommodation, *Schlupfhaus*, offers its clients the option of supported accommodation for the period of one year before they find their own accommodation. The client's return to the society is supported with a defined amount which the client learns to use economically, and which the client can use as they wish (part must be used as a contribution for the accommodation costs).

The *4Raum* project is organised by six NGOs in Graz, who create innovative multidisciplinary teams which individually help threatened families. The spectrum of services corresponds to the level of threat to the children and the young people in the families and ranges from preventive strengthening of the family via family rehabilitation to help in crisis in the form of temporary accommodation of the children outside the family and work with the parents focused on changes that might enable the children's return to the family environment. The cooperation engages the school, the office of social services for children and families, and the police.

### Independent Decision-Making and Volunteerism

The *Heidenspass* organisation teaches the clients to work, and use money paid to them for their work done according to their needs and decisions. An important aspect of this is an emphasis on independent decision-making by the client, for example about how much work they will do, or when they want to be paid for their work (daily, weekly, or monthly). Everybody wanting to earn money is given a chance with the aim to help them find permanent jobs.

In the *Schlupfhaus* emergency accommodation facility the client can decide to leave in the course of the night (the entrance door is not locked, but can only be opened from the inside). The staff of this

accommodation service speaks about the principle of voluntariness as an instrument increasing use of the service by the clients and supporting their independent decision-making. The clients also know that the supported accommodation is rather for those who stay, cooperate and head towards change.

### Acceptance of Client's Life Conditions

Young mothers at the age of their adolescent peers can visit, with their children, the youth club called *Funtastic*. They can use an equipped room there, shared with other mothers, and the staff teaches them to cope with their maternal and family obligations. At the same time they can meet their friends and fulfil their adolescent needs. The responsibility for their babies and their care and upbringing rests with the young mothers, the hours when the space is available is defined and so the mothers must also use services of other centres or go for walks without their babies. Meeting with peers has preventive effect, as the other boys and girls see how difficult it is to take care of a baby and how it changes the mother's life.

### I Work Here and Now

A long-term head of the *Funtastic* youth club spoke about his work with clients "here and now". I think it is a concept that is very close to the contact work method, characteristic of low-threshold social services (see the publication *Contact Work*, ČAS, 2009). What he meant by that was not only conversations with the clients about themes they are currently interested in, but also utilisation of the current interest of the clients in activity and development. The "here and now" feature is manifested by the fact that when the clients for example come up with the idea to organize a non-alcoholic mixed drink tasting event, the staff gives them a chance to organise the event on the same day (the clients think up the menu,

purchase ingredients, organise the client furniture and clean up after the event). Thus the staff approaches the life tempo of the adolescents.

The same worker very pragmatically addressed problems with getting up in the morning and missed lessons by a client. He agreed with the parents of the boy that he would wake them up in the morning so that they can wake up their son for school. After three weeks the parents began to mind that and started waking their son up by themselves. Thus the problem with lessons missed for oversleeping was resolved.

### State Police Closer to People

The headquarters of the State Police in this region of Austria decided to approach the citizens. The goal was to be in contact with the citizens before a problem arises by violation of legal standards. In the context of the campaign the policemen participated in various social events where they presented a prepared programme for the participants. Their programme was not so much a show of police strength and technologies, but rather a message that policemen were also people with whom you could talk and who were ready to help when you were at a loss.

The Police address different communities for there are many different cultures and religions living next to each other in Graz. Specially selected and trained policemen also visit youth clubs showing the clients that they are here for them if they need protection (and that at the same time they control their violations of the law). The head of the Funtastic club confirmed that his club was sometimes visited by a policeman in the club opening hours, to sit down over a cup of coffee and talk about what happened in the surroundings and whether they needed help with anything.

## Jakomini Prison – Youth Department

The prison is situated close to the historic centre of Graz. The accused wait here for their sentence and imprisonment in the length of up to 18 months takes place in the same location. Thus the sentenced stay in the familiar environment, continue in the learned regime, in school education, and in cooperation with specialists (psychologist, social worker, physician, consultant). Young prisoners are supported in learning their basic life skills, sporting and artistic activities, and group therapies with different themes.

Characteristic features of approach of individual providers of these services, according to my observations, include their openness of approach to the conditions of their clients. As the lives of some clients are complex, the workers are open to various approaches, ideas, activities and investigations of the potential of change on the side of the client. The service providers I met in the course of my scholarship represent for me a living example of a positive approach to children and adolescents in difficult life situations, as this is mentioned by the Norwegian paediatric psychologist Lars Lyster in connection with behavioural disorders, who says “we must give them something, not to take something away from them”.

# SYSTEM OF CARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FINLAND

Veronika Melicharová, DiS.

This system is based on the Youth Act according to which every child has the right to growing up in a safe environment supporting its physical and mental health. Children have the right to be involved in matters directly affecting them and contribute to their solution. If a family gets to a situation when they are unable to provide basic upbringing and care of the child then the responsibility is taken over by authorities under local self-governing bodies in towns and cities. The authorities then cooperate with the children and their families and provide the needed care.

Services for families with children in Finland are divided to basic public service, preventive care and specific care of children and families. The basic public services include centres for children and youth, schools and centres of care of mental health. Preventive care includes support and assistance to children and families in the context of the basic services paid by the state. Specific care includes evaluation of the client needs and specification of a plan of individual care. This means voluntary outpatient work with the family (called open care). Another form is institutional care, including follow-up care after its completion. The individual plan of care of client/family is the responsibility of local authorities, responsible also for social work in the locality. Authorities and institutions must communicate and cooperate with each other. Of course the client families should be involved too, where possible. The decision about the child's future is therefore always a collective decision. The individual plan of care is revised every four years.

The system of services obviously also includes the reporting liability, which is stricter in Finland than in the Czech Republic. This liability applies not only to social workers but also to every citizen. Reported must be any finding raising doubt about the child's future. The reporting liability also applies to psychologists and overrides the professional confidentiality obligation. The reported family has the right to information about the reporter. The social worker investigates the situation on the basis of the report and evaluates the findings in direct cooperation with the family. Distinction is made between singular and repeated events. Then the worker assesses the need to take some steps to resolve the situation, and which steps.

The strong points of youth care in Finland is a good system of preventive and open outpatient care, which is voluntary, as mentioned above. This care can be tried before the decision about institutional care of the child is made. This care is provided by a network of centres for the youth, capturing clients under threat. The threats may include for example premature termination of the child's education. Then there is a network of state-owned and private (state-subsidised) advisory centres and therapeutic centres or substitute family care (child adoption and guardianship). Another interesting form is represented by professional guardian families where the husband and wife taking care of up to seven children are adequately learned in the subject of foster child upbringing. Their learning includes for example social work, psychology or pedagogy. Before a more radical solution is taken the child and its family should first use at least one form of this open care. This system, however, also has its negatives, for example lacking cooperation of the families and lacking motivation for change. Another negative of the system is that the parents immediately request institutional upbringing of their child out of fear that the child

might establish a stronger relationship with the substitute family than it has developed with its own family. In these cases, unfortunately, the children end up with institutional care immediately instead of any alternative option attempt.

Authorities, social workers and organisations must therefore intensively communicate with one another. The strongest position is that of the social worker, and it is him who decides about the type of care the child will receive and takes the largest portion of responsibility for the matter. In our country the court decides about institutional upbringing of the child. Great demands are placed on education of social worker in Finland, nothing less than a completed master course. This position of social worker can also have its negatives, such as abuse of this power for decision about institutional care. Parents may however request replacement of the social worker or address the court if they do not agreed with the social worker's decision.

The system of assistance to children and youth in Finland, like in our country, also includes low-threshold facilities for children and youth. Unlike the Czech system, attendance of the facility is not conditioned by unfavourable life situation of the child because of the absence of the social nature of the service. The facility staff does street work, or field work. The field or street workers look for individuals who need care, as they believe. These can be previous users of the service or newcomers recommended by third parties. The staff provides their clients support and assistance in addressing their problems, such as finding a good job, school etc.

Another way social worker can offer help to children and youth is contact of cooperating institutions as soon as the child or young person



finds himself or herself in a hard life situation, such as premature school attendance termination, loss of job etc. These institutions may include the school or social or healthcare services. The institutions forward the information to the centre workers who subsequently contact the potential client and then it is solely up to the contacted client whether he or she wants to make use of the offered helpd or not.



## WORKSHOP

Following the study trips to Finland, Austria and Spain two experts from each of the visited countries arrived in the Czech Republic. We prepared for them visits to the Youth Clubs (YC) and Educational and Correctional facilities (ECF), to a head social worker of the institution of Social and Legal Protection of Children (ISLPC) and a half-way home. The goal was to show them our system of youth care for young people ending up in ECF. Finally the visitors shared their systems of work with young people in their home country with the other participants and defined opportunities for improvement they noticed in the course of their visit to our country.

The visiting experts were in Velké Meziříčí, where they visited a ECF and a YC. The work in the ECF was introduced to them by a special educator, the main guardian and the headmistress of the institute. The foreign experts could experience the system of work with children and young people in the ECF and we also introduced to them our system of measures for the youth (educational, protective and criminal). In the Wellmez YC the local social worker introduced them to the characteristics of the target group. This was followed by a discussion about the function of comparable institutions in the visitor's countries.

The ECF in Moravský Krumlov was introduced to the foreign experts by its headmaster, who explained them the obstacles they had to overcome in their everyday work, whether on the regulatory side or on the side of the children and young people they worked with. This was followed by a visit to the ISLPC in Židenice (city district of Brno), where the head of the department talked about competencies of social workers and working in the ISLPC. We compared our experience with

experience of our foreign guests. The last visit to the SOS children village provided information about the services the SOS villages offer. The experts could see a house for the foster families and a half-way home. The themes of the visit also included education of foster families and work with clients in a half-way home.

The four-day visit was closed by a facilitated workshop at the presence of ECF and YC representatives. The big themes of the workshop included competences of social workers, working in much lower numbers in the Czech Republic than abroad. The main obstacle seen by the foreign experts was the fact that nearly every step taken by a social worker, whether in the ECF or in the ISLPC had to be approved by court. The foreign experts further recommended having more workers than clients in the institutions.

The social workers from the Czech Republic greatly appreciated the support the work of social workers gets abroad. Foreign social workers enjoy more freedom of decision-making and more extensive cooperation among the social institutions – lawyer, social worker, teacher etc. Further foreign inspiration included education of social workers, for example in Finland much more practice-oriented, which is an aspect completely missing in the Czech Republic.

And finally the experts selected examples of good practice seen by them as key in the system of work with threatened youth:

#### **1 Small institutions**

The smaller the youth institute the better. The best practice is to have institutes for 7–21 young clients. At the same time each young person needs to have a separate room to live in.

## ② Special education for institute workers

Education for professionals working in special education institutions on everyday themes they come across in their work, such as: facing aggression, group work, work with psychiatric patient etc. Continuing education of professionals improves their work with young people and increases their competences.

## ③ Professional family homes

This means social workers of the ISLPC with education – psychological, pedagogical, social – as an alternative between special education institutes and guardian families. These people are mainly used for work with young people with behavioural disorders or those for whom neither the special education institute nor a guardian family is fitting and who need an intensive professional approach. Their specifics include close cooperation with the family of the client with support provided by the professional guardians to the parents too.

## ④ Professional foster families

Fosters must be adequately educated and their preparation must include consideration of their own past, relationships and parenthood. Then they are accompanied through the whole process of care of the foster child or young person by a support team. This assures appropriate selection of guardians and supporting surveillance over development of their relationship to the entrusted child or young person.

## ⑤ Power of social worker (institution for Social and Legal Protection of Children)

The worker needs more powers to act when the child is assumed to be threatened. The worker can order taking the child away from the family for up to 30 days if he or she suspects that the child is threatened, until the family situation is properly investigated. Then the child placement is ordered. The court only enters the process if a child over 12 or its parent to not agree with the decision.



## 6 Parent versus child opinion

The opinion of the child is taken seriously and the law lays down how to treat it. Children over 12 are entitled to know about everything that may affect their lives. In another system all children under institutional care must be in contact with a social worker for 2 hours a month. This overloads the workers who lack capacity for this – this is an example of a poorly prepared legislative act.

The workshop also resulted in the finding that the social systems in the individual countries respond to the immigration waves and services to the youth are often profiled for work with people from different countries. That is why the contribution will be about work in a multicultural environment.



# “WIR SCHAFFEN DAS” IN PRACTICE

Mgr. Jiří Tůma

This article has no ambition to become a professional essay. It rather wants to be a “though from below”, introduced by a couple of interesting figures and connected with individual practical examples and particular impact on the lives of young people I work with every day.

I have lived in Austria since 2012, and have worked in education and social work since 2014. In leisure-time centres, as teacher assistant, in public nurseries, as social teacher and coordinator in complementary basic education for the youth, all that in Graz, a city comparable to Brno in size – with the population of ca 300,000. The population structure is quite different, though. This is what the latest statistics say:

## Foreigners living in Graz ca 24%

- 3 421 foreigners more than in 2018
- 2 754 Austrians less than in 2017
- 34,794 EU citizens (other than Austrians)
- 35,253 citizens from outside EU, 1 486 more than as at 1 January 2018



For example the Gries quarter is inhabited by 43.9 % of foreigners today. And there are quarters (Schönau, Triestersiedlung) where this number is even higher.

The population structure was obviously also changed by the refugee crisis in 2015. Today Graz is home to for example ca 2100 Syrians, who were ca 100 before 2015.

These statistics do not say all, though. There is another very interesting statistic revealing that in Gries quarter lower elementary schools are attended by ca 92 % of children with other than German mother tongue. In Graz as a whole there are ca 53 % such children.

I taught at VS Schönau elementary school where German was mother tongue of 3 children out of the 223 pupils of the school and these children came from 23 different nations of the world. In the city centre there are schools where no child speaks German. Austria does not use the two-level term of nationality and citizenship like we do. Austrian citizenship automatically means inclusion among Austrians and EU citizens in the statistics. However, German has often not even been mastered by second or third generations of Turks, Kurds, Bosnians, Chechenians etc., who in addition do not feel to be Austrians or Europeans.

Let me give a practical example: Who am I? I am 17. I was born in Austria to Turkish parents, I am Austrian, but not for Austrians, who rather call me Ausländer, or Kanake, my name is Mehmet. I cannot find a good job, good positions are only for the “Herberts”. For my relatives in Kurdistan I am Alemanik with a strange accent. I can speak some Turkish and Kurdish but I cannot read these languages, I have

German accent. My German is not good either. I am connected with others in the city by Islam, hatred to Shias, especially Afghans, and contempt of all that is Austrian (school, police, authorities, people). Next summer I will marry in Turkey, only my parents know whom. It is all the same to me, I do not want a tattooed Austrian girl with piercing and mini shirt. Turkish girls born here are spoiled too.

There are many interesting stories we meet with in our Don Bosco centre. Let them speak for themselves, only with changed names. The official progress of asylum proceedings and migration is generally known and similar across Europe, so I will not go in detail. The year 2015 brought a lot of new things into the mosaic, with many surprises for me. The initial public help was fantastic: collection of food and clothing, welcomes... There are 13 leisure-time centres in Graz. At one of our common meetings in August the city representatives asked us whether we would let in refugees. We were all for it and began to organize the first voluntary language courses, joint cooking, football tournaments. Only one social worker – of Turkish origin – was against. At that time I accused him of xenophobia but he clearly knew what he was talking about. He knew that our clientele – foreigners – were not prepared to accept foreigners among them.

**John** – 18 years old, came here when he was four with his parents from Rwanda. His friends are exclusively Africans, Brazilians and Dominicans. When in autumn 2015 he visited our centre to play football and the ground was full of Syrians, Iraqi and Afghani he said: “I wonder how many more of them will creep to our Austria, where they have everything for free.” He does not want to play in the same team with Europeans and calls Austrians homosexuals. He is very intelligent but does not want to study. He has no problems with compliance but many

of his friends do. He admires those that were or are in prison as great achievers. By the way, allegedly up to 80 % of cases of youth criminality involve foreigners. In Graz there are Kosovo-Alban, Afghan, Chechenian, Romanian and mixed gangs.

**Rahim** – 20, Afghan, born in Iran, never saw Afghanistan. In his own words, he rode in on the refugee wave in 2015. After the first preliminary interrogation in Traiskirchen he waited for the first asylum interview until 2017. He received a negative answer, filed an appeal and keeps waiting for a second interview. He lives in a dormitory with other refugees, waiting for 4 years now. He sometimes attends German language classes, just to pretend effort. He no longer believes that this will help. He receives € 150/month from Caritas. He cannot work officially. He earns his living, like many others, by purchasing and resale of marijuana. He says to know people who received asylum while behind the bars.

**Ali** – 18, Afghan. His father and his sister were murdered by Taliban, his mother is missing. His father worked in an American base as cook. Ali is very hardworking and purpose-driven. He holds German certificate on level B2, and certificate of complete primary education in Austria. He worked as volunteer with Red Cross etc. He could attend an apprentice school or evening grammar school. But the system waited for his 18th birthday and granted the second and definite rejection of his application for asylum. He does not understand it, he says he could not do more to show to be an asset for Austria, “we the good must leave while the criminals receive asylum”. Ali hid for some time, with the help of fund raising paid an attorney, and failed. A couple of days ago he crossed the Italian frontier in the hope for renewal of his asylum seeker proceeding. I do not know his chances, or whether



that is another rumour. Some failed asylum seekers currently believe that Italy will prefer to meet the quotas with them rather than with newcomers from Africa.

**Omar** – 24, Iraqi, Sunni. He also arrived in 2015. Shia militia broke his knee for he played football in a park. He came as an adult, and attended a short German language course. He had no other rights. A couple of days ago he received a one-way passport and flew to his father in Qatar. The settlement of this affair took two years. His friends from the dormitory wait for their second interview until now. Maybe they hope that the system has forgotten about them and they receive asylum automatically after five years from the first registration. Iraqi cannot understand why asylum is only granted to Syrians and Sunni as a discriminated Syrian group cannot understand why asylum is granted to Shia etc.

**Umalt** – 15, Chechenian, arrived with his parents and siblings in 2006. Both parents and older siblings worked, his younger sister attended school, and Umalt was apprentice. The family could be classified as “well integrated”, although I am sometimes not sure what exactly we mean by that. Umalt was different from many other Chechenians and other nationals of Transcaucasia here in Graz. He did not practice any combat sport like most young Chechenians. He had no problems with compliance. Nevertheless, after twelve years of stay, one early morning, twelve policemen arrived with a decision about eviction. The family received two hours for packing their most necessary belongings. Subsequent petitions and newspaper articles did not help. Nobody has ever explained why it was them who were expatriated. The Chechenian community is considered most risky as concerns Islam radicalisation and youth criminality. And yet these people stay.

I personally feel that Austria recently increasingly points out the fundamental difference between emigrant – wanted to leave – and refugee – had to leave. Nobody understands how the criteria of decision-making about asylum grant really work. I personally feel alibis in it, we have accepted them, helped them and the more of them now realize that it makes no sense being here and leave by themselves, the better.

The system clearly did not expect the problems about to come. Intolerance among the foreigners themselves, groups that fight against each other elsewhere in the world have come together here. Completely different expectations on the two sides. Negative attitude of seniors, and not only them: for example the pensions and subsistence reachable by successful asylum seekers looks unjust for many people. Related political changes in the recent two years. Overworked and poorly prepared school teachers: the system of education in Austria is still conservative, focused on performance and knowledge. In my opinion this produces a high number of failures, especially among foreigners.

Further on problems in schools I can recommend the book by a Viennese teacher, Susanne Wiesinger, titled “Kulturkampf im Klassenzimmer” (Battle of cultures in school class). She, inter alia, notes the rapidly growing importance of religion, leading to radicalisation, in the process of identity seeking by children and youth. The second generation is usually much more orthodox than the newcomers in 2015. There are many new projects and institutions working with refugees and immigrants. Many of them, despite working very well, currently begin to face existential problems and lose clients.



We in leisure-time centres do our best to help – tutoring, advisory service, job seeking, learning, housing, contact with authorities and the police, and we mainly try to teach them to live together. Children and youth increasingly understand the need to speak German as the only way to communicate with each other in this Babylon. “Straßen-deutsch” takes up a lot of words from other languages, for example Arabic. Some expressions are literally translated.

Graz is a nice intercultural city with a typical atmosphere thanks to these people. When I walk in Augartenpark in the city centre I feel it to be a “trip around the world in twenty minutes”. The diversity is very enriching and attractive, if it remains friendly and peaceful.

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