Potentials of participation and informal learning in young people’s transitions to the labour market. 
A comparative analysis in ten European regions.

Case study report on participation and non-formal education in the support of young people in transitions to work in East Germany

By Holger Seifert
February 2004
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1 Introduction

This East German case study report is written within the context of the 5th Framework Project “Youth Policy and Participation. Potentials of participation and informal learning in young people’s transitions to the labour market. A comparative analysis in ten European regions” (YOYO). As a part of this research project, we have conducted interviews with young people, agency workers and experts who have been involved in two programmes concerned with transitions from school and training to work.

In this final report, the outcomes of all previous interview rounds in East Germany are analysed in relation to each other. In addition, the joint Working Papers 1 (Youth transitions, youth policy and participation), 2 (How to avoid cooling out?) and 3 (Joint analysis report on case study agencies) are integrated into the analysis. The remainder of this report is structured in the following way: In Chapter 2, the specific context of youth transitions, education- and employment trajectories, and the role of youth policy (discourses) in East Germany will be discussed and set against the general situation in Germany as laid out in the West German report. In Chapter 3, the sample of the interviewed young people is described and an overview of transition steps of the project participants is presented, accompanied by a number of typical biographical portraits. In Chapter 4, the biographical orientations, motivational turning points and expectations of the young interviewees and their experiences with institutions before entering the case studies are analysed. In Chapter 5, the two case studies are examined with regard to the concepts of participation, motivation and learning and the relationship between them. This chapter will bring together the views of project workers, external experts and project participants on these matters and discusses issues of success and failure with regard to the case studies. The following chapter provides a common evaluation integrating the views of all stakeholders and the researcher. In Chapter 7, political and policy recommendations are made.


## 2 Context of Youth Transitions

This section gives a brief characterisation of the German transition system and highlights the specificities in East Germany in comparison to West Germany.

### table 1: The system of education and training in Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universities min. 4½ years</th>
<th>Crafts Master Course 3 years</th>
<th>technical college 6mth – 4years 5.3%</th>
<th>Projects for unemployed young people</th>
<th>Higher Education Or Labour market (&gt;18 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polytechnics 4 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academies 2 - 3 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LABOUR MARKET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar School Gymnasium 8-9 years</th>
<th>Comprehensive School Gesamtschule 5-9 years</th>
<th>Higher Vocational Schools 1-3 years 8.0%</th>
<th>Vocational Training 3-4 years 57.2%</th>
<th>Vocational Schools (e.g. Health Service) 3-4 years 19.8%</th>
<th>prevocational training 1-2 years 9.5%</th>
<th>Secondary Education II Age 15-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISSUE 3: High status gap between vocational training and other training trajectories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISSUE 2: Career guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Secondary School Realschule; 6 years</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>Basic Secondary School Hauptschule; 5-6 years</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>Special Schools max. 9 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary Education I Age 10-15/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Stage (2 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ISSUE 1: Early selection according to hierarchical secondary education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary School Grundschule; 4 years</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten; 3 years</th>
<th>Primary Education Age 6-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Sources: CEDEFOP 1995; KMK 2003; own elaboration
all figures: school leavers in 2001 (general education 100%; vocational education 100%)

The German education and training system – as displayed in table 1 and specifically if viewed in a European comparative perspective – is highly standardised and selective at the same time. It asks of children and parents to take crucial educational decisions at a very early stage (ISSUE 1 in table 1). As the 2000 OECD-PISA-study confirmed, these and other characteristics of the German education system (e.g. packed curricula, little project-learning, little full-time schooling) cause a re-production of social inequalities instead of promoting educational mobility (Baumert et al. 2001).
In 2001 9.6% of the pupils left school without any qualification (11.1% in East Germany), 25.6% (15.7%) with basic qualification, 40.4% (45.2%) with middle qualification and 24.4% (20.0%) with ‘Abitur’ or the ‘Fachhochschulreife’. Both the latter lead to higher education. The quota of those entitled to attend tertiary education has risen from 31.0% of the same age group in 1992 to 36.1% in 2001 (KMK 2002).

Vocational education is mainly delivered by means of vocational training (57.2%), followed by (full-time) vocational schools e.g. for professions in the health and care sector (19.8%). Vocational training in Germany is traditionally organised in the Dual System. The Dual System offers training in two settings: the enterprise and the vocational school. Federal regulations define and set the standards of the 355 recognised trades. The Dual System is renowned for its high quality vocational training and has in the past virtually guarantied successful labour market integration (BIBB 2003). In recent years, the system has come under pressure. Ever since re-unification in East Germany and now in West Germany (BIBB 2003) there has been a considerable decline of training places available revealing the dependency of apprenticeship vacancies from the performance of the economy as a whole.

The Dual System has always struggled to meet the demands in East Germany. The large industries of the socialist past had virtually vanished in the process of economic re-structuring following re-unification. New ones are operating very efficiently and exhibit all signs of jobless growth. SME’s (the backbone of the West-German economy) in the East lack the financial resources and human capacities to train and employ (enough) young people. Hence, many young people in the East have to rely on compensatory measures like the non-company-based training1. As can be seen in table 2 (p. 4) more than 100,000 non-company-based training places are provided in East Germany in 2003. Those account for 27% of all training places as compared to about 4% in West Germany. Another 38% of the company-based training places in East Germany are at least partly subsidised by public funding (Greinert 1998). Short-term campaigns to produce enough training vacancies hold the danger of exhibiting serious qualitative deficiencies thus shifting the problem of successful labour market integration from the school-to-training transition on to the transition from training-to-work. (Paul-Kohlhoff & Zybell 2003)

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1 Non-company-based training places are those, which are completely or almost completely financed by federal programmes or programmes of the Employment Service. Company-based training places are supplied by the economy. In addition, vocational schools provide training in a wide range of health service professions (e.g. X-Ray assistants).
Public funding for non-company-based training is provided with reference to the concept of 'dis-
advantage'. Based on §241 SGB III, non-company-based training was originally conceived for
young people coming from 'special schools' and showing learning, physical or mental disabili-
ties. It was to supply sheltered training environments specifically designed to meet the needs of
this target group.

In order to deal with the lack of company-based dual training opportunities following the break-
down of whole industries and lines of work and the poor labour market performance in East
Germany the concept of disadvantage and hence the possibility to fund non-company-based
training had been adopted for East Germany. Young people are termed ‘market disadvantaged’ if
they cannot find apprenticeship places within the Dual System of vocational training. As re-
search has shown, due to funding procedures the distinction between market disadvantage (due
to labour market conditions) and social disadvantage (rather addressing individual difficulties) is
increasingly blurred. The (continuing) loss of training places in the Dual System in de-
industrialised especially eastern regions of the New Federal States has resulted in a sharp in-
crease of measures for the ‘socially’ disadvantaged even though the young people exhibit no
signs of individual difficulties. In addition it should be assumed that for the two target groups
(socially and market disadvantaged) different pedagogical concepts and vocational settings
would have to be provided. In practice, they are no different. This directly effects the motiva-
tion of the trainees and leads to stigmatisation (Ulrich, 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>non-company-based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>($§242 SGB III: ‘disadvantage’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>13,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>2,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source: BIBB/AB 2.1/U. Beicht/Dr. J.G. Ulrich/Stand: 01.07.2003
http://www.bibb.de/redaktion/erste_schwelle/5_2003/tab05-1.pdf  [2003-10-16]

Besides, the training market does not operate on the principle of choice. Since the market cannot
meet the demands (in East Germany 2-3 young people compete for one training place in the Dual

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2 The term of 'disadvantage' is part of the major legal directives by which compensatory measures are governed: the
Employment Promotion Act (AFG, reformed in 1998) and the Children and Youth Assistance Act (KJHG, from
1991, part of the SGB III, the German Welfare legislation). In the AFG 'disadvantage' is defined as follows: „Elig-
gible for assistance are trainees with learning disabilities and social disadvantages who for the reasons lying in
their person are not capable to initiate, continue or complete successfully a vocational training.“ (§241).
System), young people are channelled into third or fourth choice compensatory training measures. Very little attention is given to sound vocational advice, career guidance and counselling (ISSUE 2 in table 1). There is little negotiation space for young people. Priority is given to solve the problem in numbers. The issue is thus shifted to the next transition step, the transition into the labour market. Three years after finishing their training only 40% of all trainees work in the professions they were trained in. Considering the high value attached to a vocational qualification for placing people in the labour market this figure points to serious mismatches between training and future employment. The non-receptive labour market leaves specifically those young people stranded, which had to call upon the compensatory measures. Non-company-based training in East Germany was devised as measures to temporary compensate the lack of training vacancies in the economy. The measures still lack the acknowledgement of their users and the industry. As the second class training system, it has now become the problem itself (ISSUE 3 in table 1).

Besides the segmentations produced by the education and training system itself, a less visible line of segmentation governing youth transitions is the regional one between urban and rural areas. Though not being reflected by official figures young people in rural areas are considered to be coping with particular transition challenges: an even less varied supply of training vacancies in the locality, higher demands on mobility (e.g. to access public services) and traditional assumptions regarding standard life courses and gender roles. Being registered unemployed or dropping out of vocational training is highly stigmatised. Faced with bleak economic prospects, torn between “having to leave” and “wanting to stay”, young people face ambivalent decisions (Böhnisch & Rudolph 1997). Women, High School graduates and those with strong family support tend to move to the cities where they are likely to find a wider supply of apprenticeships and better employment chances. Every year about 14,000 young people leave East Germany to the West in order to start a vocational training. Only few of them ever return.

In general, gender differences have rather increased in the past. The situation of East German women is not any more characterized by the relatively homogeneous structure of the early 1990s. The social disparity between women has increased. The most remarkable changes appear with regard to the employment status of the 18 to 59-year-old women. In 1990 86 of 100 women of

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3 Ethnicity related segmentations, as described in the West German report, feature less so in East Germany due to the small percentage of young people with ethnic background living there.
this age group were gainfully employed, currently it is only every second. Meanwhile, the gender equality lead of East German women compared to those in the West, which resulted from the far higher labour market participation has been used up. Besides, they are unemployed more frequently than men and participate less in further education measures. Among other things this manifests itself in the fact that four of 10 women had been unemployment since re-unification. Besides, about half of them was or is unemployed, with and without breaks, for more than 24 months. Against this background two thirds of the East German women feel disadvantaged with regard to equal rights and gender equality. East German women judge their chances in the working life essentially more critically than East German men. (Winkler 2004)

Young people in Germany are normally involved in education or training at least until the age of 19 or 20. This keeps youth unemployment figures systematically below the general unemployment figures and low compared to other European countries. However, unlike in other European countries, unemployment rates in Germany do not fall after the age of 25, i.e. youth unemployment carries a high risk of long-term exclusion. In East Germany and the regions of the case studies considered in this report, the unemployment rates for young people and for adults are about twice as high than in West Germany even though they are kept at bay by an active labour market policy. The importance and the extent of active labour market policies in East Germany compared to the general situation in Germany are underlined by the figures in table 3. Job-creation measures, for example, feature 14,5 times more often in the East compared to the West.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Participants in active labour market policies (September 2003)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Germany</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person in work (paying social security)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worker on short time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct subsidies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>re-training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>job-creation measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structural adjustment measure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bundesanstalt für Arbeit: [http://www.pub.arbeitsamt.de/hst/services/statistik/detail/h.html](http://www.pub.arbeitsamt.de/hst/services/statistik/detail/h.html)  [http://www.arbeitsamt.de/hst/services/statistik/monat/aktuell.pdf](http://www.arbeitsamt.de/hst/services/statistik/monat/aktuell.pdf)

4 Based on all person in work paying social security in East Germany and West Germany.
The case studies were based in an urban (Dresden) and in rural contexts (Freiberg). Both are situated in the Free State of Saxony/ East Germany. Saxony (alongside the Free State of Thuringia) is one of the more prosperous New Federal States but in comparison to the West German Federal States still heavily disadvantaged as can be seen at the unemployment figures of table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dresden region</th>
<th>Chemnitz region</th>
<th>Saxony</th>
<th>Germany (East)</th>
<th>Germany (West)</th>
<th>Germany (East)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>unemployment in %</td>
<td>15,0 (16,0)</td>
<td>18,4 (18,1)</td>
<td>18,2 (19,4)</td>
<td>19,8 (19,3)</td>
<td>9,0 (8,4)</td>
<td>11,3 (10,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14,1 (14,4)</td>
<td>19,9 (20,0)</td>
<td>19,7 (19,8)</td>
<td>19,5 (19,3)</td>
<td>8,1 (7,8)</td>
<td>10,6 (10,0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15,9 (17,5)</td>
<td>17,0 (16,3)</td>
<td>18,2 (19,0)</td>
<td>20,1 (19,2)</td>
<td>9,8 (9,0)</td>
<td>12,0 (11,0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 25 in %</td>
<td>12,2</td>
<td>12,4</td>
<td>12,5</td>
<td>15,0</td>
<td>7,4</td>
<td>9,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Absolute</td>
<td>52,341</td>
<td>60,305</td>
<td>487,245</td>
<td>1,947,259</td>
<td>3,307,730</td>
<td>4,257,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under 25</td>
<td>(5.860)</td>
<td>(3,203)</td>
<td>(52,497)</td>
<td>(175,432)</td>
<td>(299,496)</td>
<td>(474,928)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bundesanstalt für Arbeit: [http://www.pub.arbeitsamt.de/hst/services/statistik/detail/h.html](http://www.pub.arbeitsamt.de/hst/services/statistik/detail/h.html)

The German education and training systems is highly representative for a conservative, employment-centred type of transition regime (see State of Art Report, Yoyo Working Paper 1, Walther et al., 2002). Its dominant feature is the standardised vocational training in the Dual System. Compensatory measures are subordinated and try to match the logic of the Dual System. Tight labour market regulations hinder the development of regionally adapted and flexible integration measures. All transition-related measures and policies are geared to a direct integration into the qualified segments of the labour market. Access to almost all compensatory measures is conditioned (mostly based on Employment Service criteria) and not voluntary.

Higher education routes are restricted to those with upper secondary school qualifications (Abitur) while options of upgrading from lower trajectories are limited and very demanding. A stable rate of 14% achieves neither a vocational nor a higher education qualification reflecting the selectivity of the education and training system (Troltsch 2000). Participatory activities are almost entirely delegated to the soft sector. In Germany, this sector hardly features in training or school-to-work-transitions.

Therefore, we have been looking for case studies, which try to address at least some of the aforementioned peculiarities and provide non-standard ways of dealing with young people who are at risk of marginalisation or social exclusion. Both case studies have their own particular focus on issues of integration and participation.
The two projects analysed were:

1. The “Shalom” Project in Freiberg: It offers unemployed with different but exclusively vocational qualifications aged 18 to 28 but without labour market experience a three-year full-time job combined with re-training and further education. It gives subject-oriented support and labour market orientation building on previous (work and life) experiences and competences. In researching and presenting past Jewish life and work in Saxony and Northern Bohemia the project contributes to a sensitisation against anti-Semitism and racism, a phenomenon widespread in the region and latent amongst some project participants itself. Its innovative aspect arrives from the unique combination of socio-culturally inspired work, research and training with the possibility of offering the participants a full wage for three years and thus medium term financial security.

2. The network of “Kompass-Job-In Club”/“Job-Shop” and “Lee(h)rlauf” in the city of Dresden is characterised by unconditional enrolment and a low threshold approach. It offers counselling, career guidance, vocational orientation and provides those interested with temporary jobs. Young people were attracted to the „Kompass-Job-In Club” for its free internet access, the search facilities for training and employment places, the relaxed club-like atmosphere and the advice offered for writing and submitting job applications as well as offering support in life and career issues.

Since both projects integrate elements atypical to the German transition system this report is set to highlight the implications of their approaches on the subjective and the systemic level as well as the problems they encountered.
3 Sample description

3.1 General information

The group of disengaged interviewees totalled 20 young people. During the first interview round (WP2), 8 persons were interviewed and during the second interview round (WP5), 17 participants. Of the latter group, 5 young people were interviewed a second time. At the “Shalom” project in Freiberg the initial idea was to interview the whole group of the “Shalom” project, 10 young people. Whilst in the first round in 2002 only 4 people declared their interest, due to a formal evaluation agreement in the second round everybody was interviewed including one former participant, who had in the meantime moved on to start a vocational training. At the “Kompass” in Dresden altogether 9 young people were interviewed. Two of them were interviewed twice. The others had no interest to be interviewed a second time. Additional information was available due to the close contact with staff and acquaintances of the persons concerned. The following tables describe the sample according to gender, age and education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>table 5: Project/ gender/ age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project 1: “Shalom” in the town of Freiberg
Project 2: Network „Kompass-Job-In Club” / “Job-Shop”/ “Lee(h)rlauf” in the city of Dresden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>table 6: Education/ gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of education (qualification)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory (completed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-compulsory:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Drop out)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A respondent is entered only once and according to the highest educational or vocational attainment. Drop out post-comp. refers to any unfinished post-compulsory education, which may not be the one and only try.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>table 7: Project/ level of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of education (qualification)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The individual transition pathways are shown in table 8.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name, sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Transition Steps</th>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Particular background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJD “Shalom” Freiberg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anje, female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>VT</td>
<td>Employment as landscape gardener 24 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>due to illness officially recognised as severely handicapped, living with her (unemployed) partner, rebuilding their own house (multiple dwelling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doreen, female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>VT</td>
<td>VT: shop assistant 36 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>Living with her partner in a small, old house inherited from her Grandmother; both parents long-term unemployed, difficult village milieu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katarina, female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>VT (ncb): Wholesale &amp; Retail assistant 36 mth</td>
<td>Unemployed 24 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>Living close to the partners’ parents, no real contact to her parents, difficult village milieu, separation from partner, new partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konrad, male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>VT</td>
<td>VT: industrial electronics engineer 36 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>due to illness officially recognised as severely handicapped, living with his parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karola, female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>VT (ncb): Hotel management assistant 36 mth</td>
<td>Unemployed 24 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>Re-training due to health reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natascha, Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>VT</td>
<td>VT: shop assistant 36 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>Separation from partner 2 years after birth of child, new partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert, male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>VT</td>
<td>VT: machine builder (DO: health reasons) 24 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>Severe health problems, living with his parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chantal, Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>VT (ncb): Office Executive 36 mth</td>
<td>Parental leave 24 mth + unempl. 12 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>after MS no training place → VHS after re-training no job → leaving city of origin to move in with her partner → Freiberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karina, Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>VT (ncb): Office Executive 36 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>living with her partner, family business hit by flood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene, female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>VT</td>
<td>VT (ncb): Office Communications 36 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>living on her own of the age of 18; commuting weekly to current VT; parents divorced, no contact to mother, stepmother unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lena, female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>VT: cook (DO: pregnancy + lack of interest) 12 mth</td>
<td>SS, ES</td>
<td>living with her partner, bound to her village; forced DO shop assistant-VT for health reasons: (prolapsed intervertebral disc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Early Career</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius, male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>NQ</td>
<td>Criminal career/drugs</td>
<td>School (DO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markus, male</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>NQ</td>
<td>Criminal career/drugs</td>
<td>School not finished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danilo, male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Criminal career/drugs</td>
<td>VT: cook (DO; health reas.) 3 mth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manne, male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Criminal career/drugs</td>
<td>occasional jobs (illicit work) 6 mth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malte, male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>NQ</td>
<td>Criminal career/drugs</td>
<td>School not finished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastian, male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Health and drug problems</td>
<td>VT: Haulage firm (DO) 10 mth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte, female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Health problems due to allergies</td>
<td>BVJ (Office &amp; Retail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakob, male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>LS (SS)</td>
<td>Migrant background</td>
<td>various occasional jobs, voluntary work (flood) + searching for apprenticeship vacancies 10 mth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadja, female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>LS (SS)</td>
<td>Migrant background</td>
<td>HS (DO), MS (DO)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NQ: No qualifications; SS: Special School (learning difficulties); LS: Lower Secondary; MS: Medium Secondary; VHS: Higher Secondary/Gymnasium with vocational profile; HS: Higher Secondary/Gymnasium; ABM: Job Creation Measure; BBE: Vocational orientation; BVJ: Pre-vocational education; VT: Vocational Training (classic Dual System); VT (ncb): non-company-based Vocational Training; VYA: Vocational Youth Assistance; ES: Employment Service; SS: Social Security; YW: Youth Work; UD: University degree; DO: Drop out
3.2 Clustering the transition pathways

Within the sample, a number of clusters emerge. The clusters can be described as patterns, which significantly organise the transitions of the interviewees. They should be understood as an analytical tool to highlight features shared among interviewees to extract re-occurring issues and their specificities.

Analysing the pathways of transitions a number of re-occurring issues surface. Such dominant features include:

- long and recurring periods of unemployment
- an aggregation of vocational trainings/ re-training
- periods of unemployment interspersed with child-raising leave
- health and drug problems

3.2.1 Female mothers in rural settings: trajectories riddled by unemployment and lacking vocational perspectives

This cluster is highly characteristic of the Freiberg sample. Ten of the eleven interviewees did not find a job following a successful vocational training. In addition, seven of the eleven interviewees started one or more re-training courses and/ or vocational trainings. The sample aggregates a total of 378 months (31,5 years) of unemployment, an average of 2,86 years per person. Of the nine women interviewed, five have given birth to a child. Eight of the nine women including all the ones with children live in a relationship. In most cases, the partner holds a job. This is one of the reasons why they feel unable to leave the region. Additional reasons cited include the attachment to the locality and house-ownership. Five of the eleven interviewees including both male persons report that serious health problems have diminished their chances on the labour market. Drop-out always features in connection with health issues and/ or pregnancy. Some report learning difficulties at school, none above-average marks. None presents themselves as very ambitious with regard to professional careers. Those who once fostered ideas of a “dream job” have long given up: either for health reasons or because no training vacancies were available or because no jobs could be obtained within the field they were trained in. At the time of the interviews, they opt to pursue – as they maintain – an ordinary life: having a job to make a living and caring about family and children. The “Sha-
“Shalom” project most participants⁵ are currently involved in will be the longest period of any sort of employment they will ever have experienced.

Biographic portrait: Katarina (26)

After finishing secondary school, Katarina (26) starts a non-company based training because she cannot find an apprenticeship in the “Dual System”.

“It was non-company-based, which means that you’re not trained in a real company, much as most here (in Freiberg). … I would rather have liked to be trained in a real company, real practical work in a company. … Well, you have real orders in the dual system. In non-company-based training, you cannot really understand it that way, I think. When you do practical training there, you … do not learn anything practical. You’re the fool, you have to make coffee and you clean up.” (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 26, 34, 35)

She successfully finishes the training as „Wholesale and retail assistant“. She describes herself as ambitious, claiming that she did not want to become a simple shop-assistant, the only other training alternative available at the time and within the region. Afterwards she does not find a job and becomes unemployed. After two years, which she mostly spent home alone and retrospectively looks upon as a great burden, the employment office offers her a training course in the telecommunication sector, during which she becomes pregnant. She has to quit the course and takes parental leave. Having all along looked for a job during these three years she is registered unemployed for another 11 months. Again, she can hardly cope with everyday life. She loses motivation and suffers from the social control of the village milieu. At that time, she lives with her partner close to his parents.

“I really felt shut in. I let myself go at home. I hated myself. I couldn’t stand myself, it was awful.” (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 86)

“My best friend dragged me into dog school so at least I had something to put all my energy in. Because you can’t get yourself out of the pit.” (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 99)

Working in the “Shalom“ project has changed her outlook on live and enabled her to discover a new professional field.

“I have finally found my vocational profile (graphic design). I have done my practical placement … and now I am of the opinion that I want to see that through. I want to go that way. My normal vocational training got me nowhere but this now is something I am interested in.” (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 16-20)

⁵ One person left the project to start a vocational training. A new participant has since filled the vacant place.
“I also think that I have become more open. That I also say something, if I do not like it. This I also learnt here. … You start to wonder whether things make sense. I would probably have just lived along. You start to think further. I am different now, more positive. … I have a task. The work has changed me. Maybe not the project as such. I earn my own money. This is probably what got things going. … Every other project would probably have caused the same effect. I am glad that I have come here and that everything went that way.” (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 22, 48, 55)

Whether or not her newly discovered field of interest is to give her a better chance on the labour market remains open. In the meantime, she has also separated from her partner. What Katarina thrives on is the very fact to re-discover some sense of agency and something worthwhile to strive for.

### 3.2.2 Lost in (urban) space

Two outstanding features characterise the transition pathways of the Kompass-Job-in-Club visitors in Dresden. Virtually all of them report about unfavourable social surroundings. The parents may have separated, the relationship to stepfather/-mother is difficult, contact to the family of origin has completely terminated. The second feature is the multiple drop-out careers. The reasons given for drop-out range from personal problems to health reasons (including mental problems and drug addiction) and unbearable working conditions. Clearly, the interviewees have come to the Kompass-Job-in-Club to deal with the aggregated problems faced in the light of past educational failures, current day-to-day problems and lacking future perspectives. The activities they are currently engaged in are short-term and often not meaningful to the individuals themselves. Long-term plans change by the day and are continuously adapted to the (few) options available. Still, most have not lost hope to get hold of their lives. They are in search for the lost pieces of their puzzle of life.

Biographic portrait: Manne (22)

Manne is 22 at the time he is interviewed first time. He starts to work right after finishing school although he is still required to attend education programmes.

“I graduated from secondary school in 1996. I did not have any vocational training but I also did not look for any either, took it quite relaxed. I worked cash on hand for six month.” (Manne – Kompass - 22, male, 2)

The Employment Service requires him to enrol in a career orientation course where he completes a placement as a roofer. As a result he starts an apprenticeship as a roofer but because he refuses to take the intermediate exam because of family reasons he gets fired. This starts a
fight with his mother who “throws him out” at home. For a few weeks he is homeless. He is placed in a job-creation-scheme by the Employment Service.

“I did not like it because it was just a kind of occupational therapy for social misfits.” (Manne – Kompass - 22, male, 8)

Afterwards he works as an untrained worker on a building site in the West of Germany. Later he starts a training as a technical assistant in computer science, which he quits after seven months. After that he spends some time in England and Ireland on a “Leonardo da Vinci”-programme. In the course of his practical training he acquires foreign language and on-the-job knowledge. After his return he is unemployed and lives on welfare benefits. He finds an apprenticeship as an “assistant of software technology” which again he quits after nine months.

“I don’t have the energy to say, (you) keep doing that for another year, if it isn’t what I want to do. I don’t like compromising.” (Manne – Kompass - 22, male, 170)

After another six months of unemployment he decides to join the Federal Armed Forces on a medium-term career option, which includes an apprenticeship training. He is adamant to find the structure necessary to enable him to see something through and let him concentrate on one thing for a longer period of time.
4 Biographic orientations and experiences of young people prior to project entry

According to the definition developed by the EGRIS research network in Joint Report 2, turning points are “changes in young people’s motivation and engagement, which may go along with transitional steps, such as entering a supportive measure, but which could also happen through other crucial (learning) situations”. The following chapter seeks to explore the turning points before entering any of the case studies and focus on those, which have been explicitly mentioned by our interviewees.

4.1 Turning points in young peoples’ transitions

As it emerged from our interviews, every young person has his or her motivational career. The development of this career can be strongly influenced by learning experiences and by crucial life events. However, turning points identified as positive life events were never connected to the realm of work or education. They are associated with transitions in the private sphere and include moving together with a partner, marriage, the birth of the child or overcoming a difficult illness.

Since disengagement of young people has a multidimensional character it is difficult to analyse, which factors precisely affect the motivation of the respondents. Research has highlighted that young people can disengage from the formal education system for different, for individual and systemic, reasons, which are often interconnected with factors like social and economical disadvantage, emotional (in)stability and lack of support (Schreiber & Schöpfer 2002).

Negative turning points described in our interviews clearly associate with these factors. Situations like moving away from the village of origin and with it the break-down of social networks, the divorce of the parents and or subsequent difficulties with stepmother or stepfather have been connected with school truancy, educational underachievement, lacking motivation and complete drop-out from education or training. In all cases these incidents were associated with negative outcomes for the transitions of the respective respondents.

The most de-motivating life-experience reported was the one of unemployment following vocational training for the older respondents and for the younger ones the fact, that no voca-

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tional training place could be found. The lack of individual agency, the experience to fail in pursuing the chosen options and hence the powerlessness to influence the biography feature strongly in our interviews.

“I had wanted to become a nurse, but did not get the training. So I went to the Employment Service and they offered me this non-company-based training and I considered this better than not having anything at all. So I did that. Office communications, just the opposite of what I had wanted.” (Irene – Shalom – 24, female, 6)

4.2 Motivation prior to project entry

All our respondents describe the prospect of reaching a personal goal as the best motivation. Our respondents’ main goal is to get prepared for their vocational future and/or the re-integration into the labour market. This leads to personal goals such as finishing vocational training, acquiring special skills even if these do not lead to a degree. Another aspect is to have a stable financial situation during and after their training courses.

A number of general circumstances have been described to de- or increase motivation. These are the family situation, the learning environment during training courses, and in some cases psychological problems as well as changes in the living situation. Especially the last point is mentioned quite regularly. In order to stay in the familiar environment the interviewees of the Freiberg sample rather chose less attractive training courses than move away.

Again, the dominant and most de-motivating feature mentioned is the continuous experiences of failing to enter a training or the labour market, no matter how hard the respondents may have tried, how many times they may have downgraded their aspirations, re-trained or applied for apprenticeship places. Many of them report to be at a loss as to what else they could do. They describe themselves and appear to be superfluous.

4.3 Aspirations, needs, wishes and plans – the meaning of work

The aspirations, needs, wishes and future plans of nearly all interviewees and both for women and men centre around the issue of training or employment. For the younger ones, mainly those interviewed in Dresden it is the search for an apprenticeship, which features foremost. The older ones are desperate to find some, but preferably stable employment. Apart from that they have modest demands on their career. With the exception of two interviewees all state that work plays the most important role in their lives.

“You have to work…” (Antje – Shalom – 27, female, 56)

“(You have to) work, which job doesn’t matter. Whether that is in your (trained) field of work or not, but you have to do something.” (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 129-132)
“I wish to have a job, no matter what, how or where. Well; ‘where’ is not unimportant. But this is all what I wish for right now.” (Karola – Shalom – 25, female, 228)

„I need a training. I can’t do (unqualified) temporary jobs all my life. At least I want to have a vocational training, in order to have something to show. … Without work life is boring. There is nothing to do, sitting around at home all day. And if you don’t have any hobby, which could keep you busy all day you don’t know what to do all day and get bored, just as I do these days.” (Sebastian – Kompass – 19, male, 61, 67)

There is a clear orientation towards gainful employment, which however is not connected to fulfilment or personal aspiration, but related to independence and the acquisition of the financial means to make a living. The prime goal is to become financially independent of parents, partner or the state and to find a stable employment. The vocational orientations have often been downgraded after having failed so many times to reach their goals. The reasons cited most were the labour market conditions and health reasons. Some remain hopeful to find employment within the field of their previous training but most simply hope to find any kind of job. As expected and in line with other research findings (IAB 2002; Winkler 2004) there are no gender-specific differences within our sample regarding the work orientation. Young women in our East German sample neither desire nor consider to retreat from the labour market.

Social networks, relationships and family building are subordinated to the quest for employment. Starting a family (if not done so already) is always connected to stable employment:

“I want to have children once I have a real job. Once I can afford a child. It will take some years but it doesn’t have to be earlier. … The things I want to offer my child I want to have earned myself and not get them from the state.” (Karola – Shalom – 25, female, 69, 81)

“… first find a job. To have some security. But you never know, what comes. And than: children. I’m not getting any younger. (Chantal – Shalom – 25, female, 209, 217)

Asked about their general outlook almost all and both women and men hope to secure employment, start a family, have a decent financial outcome and stay healthy.

“(I wish), that I can keep the flat, that I can afford life, a car, maybe start a family and, above all work: that wouldn’t be a bad idea. But wishes … you live from one day to the next and whatever comes after is uncertain. (Karola – Shalom – 25, female, 258)

Those least clear about their general future also display the least inclination to start a family. Mobility to reach their goals features both in the statements of the Dresden and the Freiberg interviewees. In order to start a training a number of the Dresden sample are prepared to move away: to other countries like Austria or to West Germany. Two of the male interviewees consider or have in the meantime taken up a training whilst serving in the Federal Armed Forces.
The quest for a training or apprenticeship place by far rates highest on the agenda of the young people interviewed in Dresden. Again, personal interests or family building are subordinated.

Two markable exceptions are found in the Dresden sample related to both the meaning of work and the general outlook on their future. Both young people describe themselves as part of the punk youth culture. Both detest the pure financial value of work. They uphold the idea to do something biographically meaningful to support a living. Hence, as long as this can not be realized and as long as this ‘vocation’ has not been found, as is the case with both, they are content to live on welfare benefits.

“I don’t mean life without work. But everybody should do what he can and not that I for example have to do something, what I don’t want. But it doesn’t work that way … the state and politics (demand it). (Having a job and earning money) Yes, it’s simply compulsory.” (Malte – Kompass - 18, male, 146, 154)

In conclusion it can be stated that securing a place in the labour market is the striking aspiration. The very position within the labour market is of far less interest and at that point in time not important. Other plans or dreams, like for example family building are sub-ordinated.

4.4 Experiences with institutions

Experiences with institutions, especially with those of gate-keeping function like the career guidance department of the Employment Service and the Employment Service itself have overwhelmingly been described as negative. In lack of alternatives, the interviewees, especially the ones from Freiberg put all their hope into the Employment Service. Despite the negative experiences there is nowhere else to turn to. Evaluating their situation they often mention feelings of powerlessness, disappointment and insecurity:

“Well yes, … they couldn’t give me anything either.” (Konrad – Shalom – 22, male, 38)

“In order to find jobs (the Employment Service) is total crap. You have to find something yourself. Just look around. Well, the job data base is OK. To look at www.arbeitsamt.de where employees insert their job offers. I use that too. But the actual career guidance and the people there, you can skip that, chuck it in the bin.” (Manne – Kompass - 22, male, 122)

“I am a shy and reserved person. I could not imagine to go to the Employment Service to tell them what I think, ask them for advice for a specific job, which I would want to do. I wouldn’t dare to ask them.” (Sebastian – Kompass - 19, male, 95)
Experiences at school have not explicitly featured in positive terms even though about three quarter of the interviewees also claim not to associate any negative experiences. Again career guidance was criticised for being insufficient or lacking.

“Career guidance at school, well, they dropped us a list with professions and we were to choose one. It wasn’t more than that.” (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 46)

Others report that during school they weren’t aware of the importance to choose and inform themselves about the different possibilities. It was not on their agenda at that time.

In stark contrast to the responses of the young people termed as trendsetters⁷ our interviewees mention very few people or institutions to turn to if in need of support. In general only the very partner our interviewees may be living with or one other person they may feel close to are mentioned as a resource. The families of origin are often described as exercising social control (especially in village milieus), as not understanding, as broken (divorce, domestic violence) or even missing. In some instances the ties have been severed by the respondents themselves. Social networks are hardly ever mentioned in connection with transition issues or decision making processes. At times they do feature with regard to leisure time activities. Hardly ever mentioned are interests or topics by which social networks could be worthwhile being mobilised: activities, which would require common grounds. Networks of a professional nature have never been built up since none of the respondents were able to spend a sufficient long enough time in employment.

In short, with very few exceptions the young people interviewed would not consider the standard gate-keeping institutions like career guidance and Employment Service as places to turn to if in need of support. To make matters worse exactly those are the most influential institutions governing transitions from school to work in Germany. In addition, in their own descriptions most of our interviewees have only small networks at their disposal. If in need of support most of our respondents have to rely on their own personal resources.

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⁷ see “Transition Experiences of Young People in East Germany” WP2 report East Germany. June 2002
5 Case studies analysis

5.1 Introduction

For the case study analysis, a number of methodological approaches were adopted:

1. Interviews with project participants
2. Video documentation by young people
3. Expert interviews
   3.1 Interviews with project workers
       All key workers in both projects were interviewed as part of WP3. Additional
       information was gained through informal contact and other cooperation besides
       the YoYo project.
   3.2 Interviews with project officials
       In each case study the one and only person at management level was inter-
       viewed as part of WP3.
   3.3 Interviews with ‘external experts’
       Interviews were conducted with altogether five external experts in the areas of
       local politics (Freiberg: 1), employment services (at local level in both Dresden
       and Freiberg), youth policy and practice (Dresden)

4. Document analysis

   Reports to the funding bodies, leaflets and PR-material, newspaper articles and TV
   documentaries were used. (see annex, page 62)
5.2 Methodology

5.2.1 Interviews with project participants

Individual interviews were carried out with altogether 20 persons, of which 5 have been inter-viewed twice. The first round of interviews was conducted between February (Freiberg) and
July 2002 (Dresden). The second approximately one year later in February/ March 2003. In
Freiberg all eleven participants were interviewed in the second round.

In Dresden as well as in Freiberg the project and the cooperation proposal were initially pre-sented to agency members and leading staff. In Dresden staff members hence contacted suit-able interviewees. In addition three young adults got in contact with the research team due to their interest in WP 4, the video documentation. The selection of interviewees was impeded by the open and network structure of the agency. The young people come and go; occasion-ally and at times very irregular. The intensified cooperation with the “Kompass-Job-In Club” in the course of the research project eased the access to the target group.

In Freiberg the initial idea was to interview the whole group of the “Shalom” project, a total of 10 young people. At first, the researcher visited the project on one of the training days and explained the research matter. The young people remained sceptical and reserved. The presen-tation was met with scepticism and the request for precised questions likely to be asked during the interviews. The interview guide was duly delivered and discussed internally in the group. Two weeks later interview dates were set with the project worker in charge. Despite their original agreement and general approval, at the very day only 4 persons were prepared to be interviewed. The others changed their opinion at short notice, stating they simply wished not to talk about themselves. Nevertheless, four interviewees did agree to participate and thus consciously opposed the group pressure. In the end, those interviews were uncomplicated

8 The involved staff and the researcher identified the following reasons:
1. At the time of the interviews the project was in its very early stages. The group was in the process of finding itself. Group-dynamic processes and even bullying superimposed training and work. Open discussions about issues of general or specific interest, e.g. the very motivation of the decision reached, were impossible.
2. The projects’ purpose in content, the review of Jewish history in the Freiberg region, caused the participants considerable problems and contained potential conflicts. The region is known for latent rightwing extrem-ism. The participants had to withstand at times considerable pressure from acquaintances and relatives. A few weeks earlier threatening letters of rightwing content addressed to the previous group working on simi-lar issues had been discovered. The participants shied publicity. (Cooperation in the context of WP 4 (video documentation) was declined unanimously too.) The participants hardly identified with the general concept of the project.
3. According to their own statements they found it hard to face intensive biographic questions. They were con-tent to have left behind the long periods of unemployment and living on welfare benefits, of biographic and financial insecurity. The offered incentives could not change their opinions either.

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and highly significant. Considering the style and articulation one can conclude, that hitherto the interviewees have only rarely verbally expressed their opinions about the subject matter.

In both cases the interviews were held in the location of the case study agencies. All interviews were done by the authors of the report. In contrast to the original planning all but one have been individual interviews. Retrospectively this was positively evaluated if compared to the one two-persons-interview and judged by intensity and depth of content. The surroundings and the set up of the interviews allowed the interviewees to freely, openly and mostly undisturbed express themselves and their opinions. In all cases, the course of action was explained and anonymity promised prior to the interview taking place.

The general interview guide was modified and revised by the authors. All interviews were recorded on tape or mini-disc, fully transcribed and analysed with the help of the Max-QDA Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). The analysis was furthermore structured by using a code system jointly developed with the partners in Tübingen/West Germany.

5.2.2 Video documentation by young people

Additional information about the views of the young people and the staff regarding their perception of the Dresden case study was acquired in producing the video documentation as part of WP4. The production of the video documentation supplemented the information gained in the two interview rounds with the young people involved.

5.2.3 Expert interviews

For each agency, the researcher initially identified informed experts. We defined the experts according to a) their knowledge of content regarding the work of the agency (key workers) and b) their influence on the policy level related to the case study agency (policy experts: see annex, page 62). The chosen experts had to fulfil one of the two criteria.

Contact was established face-to-face or by telephone in order to ascertain willingness to participate and schedule the interview. Due to pressures of work, two interviews with Employment Service staff in Freiberg/Chemnitz were carried out via telephone. The respondents were articulate in their assessments of the programmes but clearly diverse in their statements regarding the situation of the young people. The more direct their involvement with the participants of the project, the closer their judgement reflected the views of the young people.
themselves and the less abstract their ideas of how to facilitate the young persons’ transitions to work.

The respondents in all of the interviews were open and cooperative with the research team. Those directly involved in the agency expressed their interest to utilize the results for their own internal evaluation. The interviews took place at various locations to suit the schedules of the interviewees.

The data generated from these expert interviews broadly corresponds with the material generated in the interviews with the young participants in both the case study agencies.

5.2.4 document analysis

The documentation and information material used to augment the interview data was exclusively generated by the agencies themselves for either internal use or, to a minor extent, for external public relations.
5.3 Shalom Freiberg

5.3.1 Description

The Freiberg branch of the CJD Chemnitz runs the “Shalom” Project. CJD stands for Christian Youth Work Village, a large and nationwide operating voluntary organisation of Christian background founded in 1947 on the initiative of the pastor Arnold Dannenmann.

The project is partly funded by the federal XENOS programme\(^9\) (one member of staff as well as overheads and direct expenses) and by the SAM\(^10\) of the Employment Service, which covers the wages of the 10 participants.

The project offers 10 young unemployed with different but exclusively vocational qualifications but without labour market experience, aged 18 to 28, a three-year full-time job combined with re-training and further education. It gives subject-oriented support and labour market orientation building on previous (work and life) experiences and competences. In researching and presenting past Jewish life and work in Saxony and Northern Bohemia the project contributes to a sensitisation against anti-Semitism and racism, a phenomenon widespread in the region and latent amongst some project participants itself. Its innovative aspect arrives from the unique combination of socio-culturally inspired work, research and training, a “topical red thread”, with the possibility of offering the participants a full wage for three years and thus medium term financial security.

The project offers a modular qualification based on the training outline for the skilled profession of “Fachangestellte(r) für Medien- und Informationsdienste“, the revised and modernised equivalent of a librarian. The participants are trained to handle media and information services including archiving, PR and computer skills. They acquire the European Computer Drivers Licence (ECDL). In addition and directly related to the work schedule they are acquainted with basic skills in the Hebrew language and Jewish history and traditions. The main body of work consists of surveying, analysing, describing, archiving and, later on, presenting in public the history and state of the New Israelite Cemetery in Dresden. This also includes research into the biographies of the deceased, some of whom have heavily contributed to Saxon culture, economy and social development.

\(^9\) The XENOS programme was implemented in late 2001 to support projects and initiatives, which combine a sensitisation against right-wing extremism with measures of labour market integration. XENOS draws its funding in parts from the European Social Fund.

\(^10\) SAM (Structural Adjustment Measure): specific measures/ funding schemes in disadvantaged areas; effectively: wage subsidies for (meaningful and locally relevant) jobs designed by the public or third sector.
However, due to the pressure by the IHK\textsuperscript{11} and its equally high and inflexible standards for vocational training, the training components of the work are neither in part nor fully recognised or certified. It is no equivalent to a vocational training.

Similar work in content started as early as 1998 with 15 young people on welfare benefits. The idea and its implementation can be fully ascribed to the specific interest of the Director for Pedagogical issues within the Freiberg branch of the CJD Chemnitz. The project did respond to a previously little acknowledged chapter of local and regional history. In doing so, it offered young people on welfare benefits vocational orientation, the possibility to acquire qualifications\textsuperscript{12}, guidance in training and labour market issues and delivered intercultural Social Youth Work.

The project received considerable media interest. Two books were published\textsuperscript{13} and a film was made by the regional TV station\textsuperscript{14}. In late 1999, the project was awarded a prize at the competition “Fit for Life and Work – new practical models of social and vocational integration for young people”. Several times since, it has been presented at exhibitions organised by the Federal Ministry for Family, Elders, Women and Youth and the German Youth Institute (DJI).

The particular project “Shalom” started in December 2001 and is due to last three full years. Again, the project offers the participants employment, vocational re-orientation, and the possibility to acquire new qualifications, guidance in training and labour market issues and above all, financial security. In addition, the cooperation with another CJD project in Freiberg, the “WWW”\textsuperscript{15}, provides the participants with meaningful placements, which (ideally) draw on a combination of previously acquired professional skills and newly acquired competences. In the course of the project, several exhibitions have and will be designed. Schools will be visited to present the findings. A virtual sightseeing trip to the sites of Jewish history in Freiberg is about to be finished and will be hosted in the Internet as well as sold on CD.

\footnotesize
\begin{enumerate}
\item IHK: Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Membership is obligatory for all trades and industries. It has a major influence in the design, modification and implementation of vocational training within the “Dual System”.
\item Again, due to the organisation of the German VET system these qualifications were neither certified nor officially recognised.
\item Schön, Claudia (2001): “Gestohlene Jugend. Die Zwangsarbeiterinnen von Freiberg.”, MDR, 30 min, 03.05.2001
\item “WWW” stands for “Wir wissen weiter”, “We know the way” and offers jobs (if available) and placements in the region.
\end{enumerate}
If wanted, the participants can move on to other forms of training or employment as soon as the possibility arrives. As this has happened in one case, a new participant is introduced as soon as possible.

### 5.3.2 Analysis

#### 5.3.2.1 Participation

To establish the concepts and experiences of participation within each project, we first made use of the list of participation approaches in the YOYO Expert Report (WP3, Cuconato et al. 2003, p.32). These are:

- Participation as attendance of project and choice (passive involvement through voluntary attending and offer to be actively involved)
- Participation as a community approach (participatory activities within, and directed towards influencing social context around the project location).
- Participation in project-related decision making (active influences and involvement in decisions concerning activities within project).
- Participation as a biographical dimension (active decision-making with regard to own life in general and one’s transitions in particular).

Analysing the empirical material caused us to revisit this differentiation. First, there is little evidence between participation and informal learning or motivation if participation is defined as a purely self-directed activity in the sense of merely attending a course or a project (Participation as attendance of project and choice). This as such does not bear any analytical value with regard to learning activities or motivation.

This is not true, if we understand participation as a process of becoming or being involved in the shaping of common matters. In other words, only if the individual person by attending a project becomes involved in issues of mutual concern, (informal) learning may result.

In order to thoroughly analyse our case studies it was helpful to distinguish three different dimensions of participation:

1. the process of participation as a common activity
2. the subjects of participation e.g. individuals, groups, institutions, regions
3. the places for participation e.g. communities, projects, politics, economy
Participation as a process is further differentiated according to:

1. initiative (finding and developing ideas)
2. goal definition (reflecting different perspectives, calculating the consequences)
3. planning and cooperation (time schedule, delegating responsibility, agreeing to rules)
4. performance (carrying out the work and taking decisions if necessary)
5. reflection (evaluation)

Hence, participation as a process is closely related to the rights and the possibilities of the subjects to make informed decisions and take on responsibility. It is a controlled, negotiated and self-determined process.

An activity purely directed to the individual life (project), e.g. the decision as such to attend or not attend a project, may thus not be considered participation in itself. It depends on the respective structure and content of the activity and the informed choice of the participant if mere attendance may be referred to as a form of participation connected to learning and (personal-biographic or project) development. As such, participation if understood as a process cannot be taught, it has to be experienced in activity. Hence, adequate means have to be found to provide the space for participation. In addition, participation requires and generates specific competences. Engagement into a participation process also requires that its subjects perceive the meaning and the value of it. It is a reflective process.

We presume that individuals experience the value of participation once they become aware of the interaction between people (participants) and the aggregating results of their activities. This may result in learning experiences and respectively increase motivation.

Our evidence proves, that exercising informed choices prior to participating in an activity increases motivation and hence the potential to actively engage into the process of participation. Nevertheless, choice is not an exclusive pre-condition to instigate a process of participation.

Adopting this concept of participation to our first case study we see, that participation in a general sense is valued by the CJD agency. Participation is recognized and supported as an important element for learning. Content and structure of the project allow for formal and non-formal learning. However, it is also acknowledged that the processual elements of participation cannot be directly utilized for the individuals’ transitions-to-work. There seems no way to explicitly build on them. The project environment and the labour market/education system reality oppose each other and cannot be bridged.
Participation as an element of youth (related) policy does not feature in the interviews with the Employment Service sources. It seems of no practical relevance, an unknown concept.

According to the official CJD sources and the statements made by the participants we can draw the following conclusions:

5.3.2.1.1 Dimension I: participation as a process

initiative (finding and developing ideas)

Referring to the project description it becomes obvious that the overall idea and the structure of the project have been developed solely by the CJD officials. The participants themselves can bring in additional ideas and initiatives with regard to the design of some specific sub-steps necessary to fulfil the overall task. The project as such would extremely benefit from but neither demands nor requires the participants identifying with the overall aim. The project can not demand nor require this identification since the attendance of the project was not voluntarily. Even though the employment service sources maintained that it was up to the participants to decide about their attendance, the participants themselves left it clear that they did not experience choice. They stated the following reasons:

- the fear of losing benefits if refusing the offer
- the desire to “do something, never mind what” in order not to be unemployed anymore and unemployment being the major setback in the self-perception of the young people
- the lack of information about the nature and content of the project at the time of their enrolment (see WP3)

goal definition (reflecting different perspectives, calculating the consequences)

Again, this level of the participation process is largely at the hands of the project manager and leader. The goals are set and defined by the CJD officials. The funding bodies involved evaluate the project according to previously defined goals and hence leave no space for alteration. In turn, the participants have no inclination to influence the project goals. They do not consider this their task.

planning and cooperation (time schedule, delegating responsibility, agreeing to rules)

The planning of the projects’ overall activities has been and will be within the sole responsibility of the project leader. The project structure and the financing modalities demand this. The participants expect this since they consider their attendance primarily as a job, which they...
would like to fulfil to the best of their abilities. In general, this does not involve taking on responsibility for the overall planning.

Cooperation between staff and participants has evolved within the course of the project and is now handled in a more participative manner. Responsibilities for the required work and the choice/design of education modules and partly their content have increasingly been shared. This may be attributed to a mutual learning process. On the one hand, the project leader learned to adapt to the needs and demands of the participants. On the other hand (some of) the participants developed the courage and interest to engage in daily running issues of the project. In practice the participants are engaged in the weekly team sessions\(^\text{16}\), writing work progress reports to funding bodies\(^\text{17}\) and articles to local media.

Conflicts arising from the daily work contributed to the need to define, negotiate and agree common rules even though they are yet under discussion. The participants acknowledge the (informal) learning processes, which those conflicts have brought about.

**performance (carrying out the work and taking decisions if necessary)**

The performance level in the process of participation is the one most valued by the participants. It is the level they most engage in and identify with. Performance relates to three aspects:

- the practical work and the placements,
- the formal learning and
- the informal learning including the acquisition of transversal and life skills.

All participants unequivocally share the first two, whilst some of the participants only value the third – informal learning. The CJD sources share this assessment: “very committed and professional work” (project leader). The practical work as well as the compulsory but freely chosen placements allowed for fulfilling experiences, were motivating and provided the space for the participants to bring in and realise their own ideas. The participants take on responsibility. This aspect bears the closest connection to the labour market and with it the hope to find a job via the organisation. The stringent labour market orientation of some participants

\(^{16}\) This includes (1) a description of the weeks work by the different working groups, (2) analysing the problems attached to the work, (3) defining the steps ahead and sharing the responsibilities attached to it. According to the project leader, who has introduced this structure, this has considerably reduced dissatisfaction levels. It reduced the planning insecurities and allowed for transparency of the projects internal time schedule. Even though the participants are more sceptical about the use of these team sessions they value the fact of being formally involved.

\(^{17}\) Whilst the project leader alone had written the first report, severe conflicts arose, when the participants got hold of a draft copy. It was then decided to work on these reports together.
may at the same time be the reason, why those refuse to acknowledge the space for informal learning.

**reflection (evaluation)**

Reflection and hence the internal evaluation of the project activities is perceived in a contradictory way. On the one side, structures have been created to include the reflection into the process of participation. The structures referred to are:

1. the weekly team sessions and
2. the yearly group outings to places of interest with regard to the content of the work\(^{18}\).

On the other side these structures are perceived by some of the participants as inadequate to facilitate evaluation (1) or an extra-curricular task and hence unnecessary to the fulfilment of the job (2). Whilst some participants acknowledge the use of these yearly trips, others, especially those who conceive their engagement in terms of formal training or labour market integration, have no inclination to engage in this kind of process. They would only do so if explicitly devised as official part of work. Even than it remains doubtful, whether this could result in a reflective activity.

5.3.2.1.2 Dimension II: subjects of participation

Participation within the “Shalom” project addresses the individual participants and the group as a whole. The latter aspect relates to the involvement of the group in local cultural events and media appearances due to the content of its work.

5.3.2.1.3 Dimension III: place of participation

As the place of participation, we identified the local culture. Researching Jewish traditions in Saxony and presenting the results to the interested public, in schools and exhibitions contribute to a differentiated understanding of the local history and at the same time attempts to address anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism within the region.

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\(^{18}\) These trips are supposed to facilitate the exchange of ideas and the reflection about issues related to the content of the work including issues arising from this work like career planning, social and group issues, the examination of issues related to anti-semitism.
5.3.2.2 Participation and Motivation

Following the development of the project over more than a year it clearly shows, that the engagement in the process of participation has an effect on the motivation of at least some of the participants. The statements within the interviews of WP2 were extremely cautious with regard to the value of work and training content\(^{19}\).

“The project … here is restricted. When it is over, I am unemployed again. I have some applications running. If I had something now, something I am trained for, I would definitely take it, because that would not be a fixed-term job, I guess.” (Konrad – Shalom – 22, male, 70)

At the time the participants viewed the project primarily as a waiting room, a rescue place. They were glad that they found a training measure in their area and thus were able to end their unemployment. But the fact of being in a job-creation-scheme rather than a training course with individually perceivable career prospects did decrease motivation.

“The money is all right. … But the project is a job-creation-scheme. Nonetheless, theoretically we’re all unemployed.” (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 82, 84)

One year later the majority of the participants thrive especially on the results of their practical work and their formal learning experiences. The performance level within the process of participation seems to have the greatest influence on motivation. The participants experience the meaningfulness of their own activities and practically utilize the content of the formal training curricula.

“If you see the exhibitions for example, if you went to that festive opening. This was good. When the people talk about it and others eagerly listen to it: this keeps your spirit up and makes you proud.” (Antje – Shalom – 28, female, 41)

“If you see what you have done you can say: ‘I have worked towards that. I have achieved something’. It may not be completed but it makes a good start.” (Chantal – Shalom – 25, female, 172)

“(It is fun) to realize that your work progresses and you see what you have done towards that. … (It is important) that your work bears fruit, that in the end one can see, what one has put so much effort in.” (Doreen – Shalom – 27, female, 102)

In addition, the performance level is the one they perceive receiving their wage for. The financial incentive as a motivating factor to contribute to the practical success of the project work must not be underestimated.

\(^{19}\) The value in terms of financial security, “occupation” and social integration has never been disputed.
The link between participation and motivation is less clear if transferred to all others but the performance level of the participation process.

This link remains unclear,
- since there is no explicit need for the participants to engage on other levels even if the project leaders would desire this.
- due to the counter-productive enrolment procedure (see WP3).
- since engagement on other levels has no immediate relevance or value attached to it. In the perception of the participants, engagement on these levels can only rarely be utilized in biographic terms, let alone transitions to work\(^20\).
- since the design of the project does not provide for any formal qualification with regard to the overall content. Hence, engagement on the other levels is far more susceptible and able to instigate informal learning. Only very few participants perceive this and subsequently utilize these possibilities. Others are very critical about the lacking formal options.

To conclude: the particular setting of our case study proves that participation in direct and practical activities (the performance level of participation) increases the motivation of the participants. It is a reflection of the participants’ pronounced work ethic and their desire to participate in the working world in a meaningful way. Participation or engagement on the levels of initiative (finding and developing ideas), goal definition (calculating the consequences), planning and cooperation (time schedule, delegating responsibility, agreeing to rules) and reflection (evaluation) may be desired by staff but neither correspond with the structures guiding the project (funding regulations, pre-structured work schedule) nor the expectations of the participants. Hence, its effect on motivation is difficult to establish.

5.3.2.3 Learning

The project provides a whole range of learning opportunities. On the more formal side, this includes computer skills with the possibility to acquire the European Computer Drivers Licence (ECDL). The small scope for formal learning has been criticised by both the CJD sources and the participants but has to be exclusively attributed to the structure of the German education and training system.

\(^{20}\) One person had been interviewed 8 months after leaving the project. She was the only one to acknowledge specifically the effects of informal learning with regard to her further transition.
According to our assessment informal learning is facilitated on different levels:

1. **Individual level**
   - specific but not formally recognized practical skills like media and information services, languages, research and PR techniques
   - interdisciplinary nature of the work (IT, photography, archiving)
   - tailor-made tasks: working in small groups according to interests, skills and “pedagogical needs“ (group leader)

2. **Level of personality development**
   - due to the content and close relationship with the highly engaged project leader
   - content (history, right wing extremism, (defending) own position)
   - on an emotional level in meeting people, who have lived and suffered during the NS time.

3. **Level of competences**
   - peer learning
   - group dynamics (negative: bullying)
   - positioning oneself and reaching a different understanding of the NS time beyond the information provided by teaching (materials)

4. **Level of project structure**
   - structuring the teams’ working sessions
   - analysing work progress, report on problems, defining the next steps

Three different learning concepts have been identified:

1. **teaching**: related to all the practical skills necessary to fulfil the tasks e.g. computer skills, interviewing, photography
2. **learning by doing**: mostly related to the practical working tasks
3. **peer learning**: small working groups with clear tasks to fulfil e.g. computer presentations

The main aim of the "Shalom" project is not the official recognition of these skills on the labour market (hard skills), but raising the awareness amongst the participants about their skills and capabilities by providing them with opportunities to experience themselves in various contexts. Hence, informal learning is mostly connected with personal development,
questions of self-esteem and dealing with the projects’ internal issues as well as the participants’ personal problems. It is hardly related to the issue of vocational or professional career.

Some of the participants readily identified the effects informal learning had on their biography. They speak of higher self-esteem, a sharpened understanding of history and current issues related to Jewish culture or a new outlook on their professional career, which they may undertake after finishing the project or the (yet) vague option to find a job after successfully undertaking a practical placement.

„I think that I have become more open. That I also say something, if I do not like it. This I also learnt here. … You start to wonder whether things make sense. I would probably have just lived along. You start to think further. I am different now, more positive.“ (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 22)

„I have finally found my vocational profile (graphic design). I have done my practical placement … and now I am of the opinion that I want to see that through. I want to go that way. My normal vocational training got me nowhere but this now is something I am interested in.“ (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 16-20)

Others report about the satisfaction they experienced in personal terms following practical placements in the third sector, which specifically called upon their personal interests. Experiences of success, new motivation, increased social contacts and (unsuspected) opportunities to unfold were regularly told of:

“Working at the animal sanctuary: that was my best time … I keep it in mind. I could have got a part-time job straight away, based on the € 165,00/ month regulation²¹. They were pleased with my job and a bit sad when I left again. One gets used to each other and settles …” (Doreen – Shalom – 27, female, 73, 87)

“If I would keep being unemployed than I would work (in the Third-World-Shop) on the side … Why should I not do that as a hobby to occupy myself?” (Antje – Shalom – 28, female, 115)

The six week practical placements had been organised by the participants themselves. They were supported by staff and the co-operating CJD project “WWW”. The fields of activities chosen can be divided into three groups:

1. the afore-mentioned placements in charitable organisations of the 3rd sector according to personal interests and hobbies
2. placements in enterprises related to previously acquired qualifications with the shared experience of freshening up knowledge
3. placements in newly discovered occupational fields (vocational re-orientation)

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²¹ Regulation within the welfare legislation governing supplementary income of benefit recipients.
The latter two groups directly report about the benefits of formal learning within the “Shalom”-Project. The computer skills including the ECDL were rated highest as the following statements confirm:

“I had no idea about computers, neither knew how to switch it on or off nor anything else. … They all laughed about it but today it is not an issue anymore. I’ve bought one myself.” (Lena – Shalom – 27, female, 55)

“We have learnt something new again. Especially with computers. Lots of things I already knew, but than again, I learnt functions I hadn’t heard about before.” (Natascha – Shalom – 27, female, 123)

Nevertheless, the current labour market situation shatters such positive experiences.

“… but as job, to be really employed? Business is bad. Ever more people are made redundant.” (Karina – Shalom – 24, female, 7)

“They would have hired me immediately. But they have no vacant positions and no money. They have their own problems. As everywhere.” (Natascha – Shalom – 27, female, 137)

“I was very satisfied … It’s just the general thing that there is no work right now.” (Robert – Shalom – 28, male, 105)

Along the same line, a number of participants do not identify the informal experiences within the project as learning activities of practical relevance. The reasons are manifold but point (1) to previous training and labour market experiences and (2) to the negative connotation they attach to any project activity apart from practical work and formal learning.

“For me further training means that I learn new thing, lots of new things. And this doesn’t happen here.” (Robert – Shalom – 28, male, 81)

“The project can’t offer me anything. Because I don’t believe that once I apply for a job anybody may interest, whether or not I have copied out gravestones. The computer skills are useful, but apart from that?” (Natascha – Shalom – 27, female, 385)

The wage participants receive may also contribute to less favourable attitudes towards learning. According to Little (2003) extrinsic motivational goals may under some conditions be subtractive to intrinsic goals. Practical work, which the participants feel they are rewarded for is rated higher than any other activity. There are also indicators that without the wage some young people would not have participated at all.

“You have your working times here and once you are home another life starts. This is nothing far-reaching. … Now: ‘Shalom’ is work; ‘Shalom’ is money. Yes!” (Karola – Shalom – 25, female, 132, 142)
“There are some, who are not interested in Jewish history. They always say ‘No’ to everything. You notice they don’t take anything out of it. They are only here for the money. They have been trained in ‘office’ and they want to do ‘office’ – nothing else.” (Antje – Shalom – 28, female, 59f)

“(It serves) to keep young people occupied so that they are not unemployed anymore. As a matter-of-fact, why would they choose such people? Nobody would voluntarily come forward to do this if they were not really interested in it. If the project would simply have been advertised, fewer people would have come.” (Karina – Shalom – 24, female, 250-272)

These statements point to highly ambivalent processes and expectations within the group. The issue of positive (informal) learning experiences is directly related to these expectations as will be described in the following two chapters.

5.3.2.4 Learning biographies

Three of the eleven interviewed participants speak of genuine life events or turning points, which they directly relate to the project. Others have clearly developed in a biographic sense without though attaching this to the project itself. Nethertheless, this can be depicted by the actions of the participants, their growing involvement in filling the project with life. Here one could rather speak of competence development, a process, which may in the beginning be unnoticed by the participants themselves but shows respectively in times to come.

Irene may serve as an example for the positive biographic effect the project can have. She had moved on to a training as a X-Ray assistant and remarks about her time at the “Shalom”:

„They (the Shalom) have made me contemplate about myself. What I should do with my life. If they would not have been there, I would not have done it. To think about what I could do job-wise. You cannot do that at home sitting on your own. (Irene – Shalom – 24, female, 213-215)

Neither does she neglect the learning experiences even though she claims that this learning can not directly lead to jobs.

„I had thought that their (Jewish) religion is not interesting. That they are more narrow-minded. It was interesting to find out how they live and what they believe. How they celebrate (their festivals) in their family. We never had that at home. I really liked that. … And with the Personal Computer, I got the ECDL. And we worked with this photographer. This is something I can now use in my training where I need to know how to develop X-Ray films. This has come to my advantage. … But now I train in a profession. I say people will always get ill. It’s a profession with a future. I know that I build on something proper. I will get a job. In the ‘Shalom’ it wasn’t like that. You don’t get far enough with that knowledge in order to get a job. They (the authorities) say: ‘Well, you did this project’. But there is no real job connected to this work. (Irene – Shalom – 24, female, 139-147)
Just as Irene’s, Katarina’s learning biography stands for both facets of learning, the biographic learning and the content-related learning, whilst Antje can be considered as an extremely positive example for the social effects the project can have on its participants.

Katarina remarks:

„I think that I have become more open. That I also say something, if I do not like it. This I also learnt here. … You start to wonder whether things make sense. I would probably have just lived along. You start to think further. I am different now, more positive.“ (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 22)

and:

„I have finally found my vocational profile (graphic design). I have done my practical placement … and now I am of the opinion that I want to see that through. I want to go that way. My normal vocational training got me nowhere but this now is something I am interested in.“ (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 16-20)

Antje, following her long illness, claims that apart from learning about the past and the history of these people the project has changed her relationship to the public, to people in general:

„Now you try to understand these people, to emphasise, to grasp history. You get interested and the more you do, the more you get into it. The longer the better. … You think about something different, not only about the things you have learned for your job. … It is so varied. Take the contact with pupils and people in general. I did not have that when I was ill. I was locked in, almost cut off. As a landscape gardener I had a lot of contact with people and suddenly I didn’t have that anymore. It knocks you sideways. You are not used to be with people anymore. And this (confidence) I built up again. The linguistics, to tell stories, to speak at all. If you are ill this falls asleep. You are afraid of people. Here I can regain all that. This is so important. (Antje – Shalom – 28, female, 62-63; 88-89)

Apart from that, the difficult group processes including severe conflicts some participants had with each other and with the project leader have contributed to biographic learning. This has not been made explicit in the interviews but shines through the statements of the participants. Here, the social interaction within the group of previously long-term unemployed young people forced the participants to develop social competencies: to cope and actively deal with the conflicts.

„In the past it was only Karola and Lena who talked and also criticised. In the meantime others have joined in. Antje for example does not mince her words. I’m not the only one who has developed in that respect. You must not take everything.“ (Katarina – Shalom – 26, female, 178)
5.3.2.5 The relationship between staff and participants

The project leader as the person solely responsible for the day-to-day running of the project had in the beginning adopted a very personal approach. Her own past experiences of being self-employed, managing projects on equal terms with others and her urban almost post-modern background led her to establish close contact to the participants in order to engage them to the subject and the tasks ahead. This was not successful.

Today the personal relationships between the participants and the project worker and between the participants themselves are highly ambivalent. Drawing on all sources available we may conclude that the participants are divided into three sub groups.

One group directly opposes the project leader and does not wish to engage in any activity going beyond the formally required to fulfil the actual work. They argue that any personal involvement with the project leader is counter-productive to a “real” working environment, which they characterize as one of a clear leader and “subjects below” (subordinates) to fulfil the given tasks. They neither expect nor wish to be involved on emotional or personal terms. They are overtaxed by the boundary diffusion of their working environment: the loss of boundaries between the personal-private and the public-work related, a feature, which these participants had yet not come across within their rural context.

“I expect to have a different form of contact to the person in charge. The respect for a person – in a proper enterprise you have respect for the boss. You have a different relationship. You don’t start a trustful relationship.” (Natascha – Shalom – 27, female, 255)

The second group remains rather in the background, neither engaging beyond the required nor working against the project leader.

The third group has established a close and trustful relationship with the project leader, has a far more positive outlook on the over all aim of the project but at the same time is subjected to bullying by the first group.

“I can talk about everything. I can come to her, whenever I have a problem. … She is not … how shall I say … now in my training I have an old Maths teacher. His attitudes are of the past. 30 years ago. She is not like that.“ (Irene – Shalom – 24, female, 236)

After two years, group building and -rebuilding processes are still in progress and only now show first signs of positive developments.

A closer analysis shows that a trustful relationship is not per se profitable for both participation and motivation. Whilst the participants may be highly motivated even without a trustful relationship (as can be shown on the attitude the participants have towards their practical work), it is rather doubtful, whether participation integrating all levels of its process can
evolve without a trustful relationship between project workers and participants as well as between the participants themselves.
5.4 Kompass Job-in-Club Dresden

5.4.1 Description

The Kompass Job-in-Club is a citywide operating club-like internet cafe offering career guidance and counselling in order to assist young peoples’ integration into the training and labour market system. The club primarily targets disadvantaged young people aged 15 to 25, who cannot anymore be reached by other, more formal institutions like the Employment Service. According to the relevant §11 of the JuSoPro\textsuperscript{22} and §13 (1) of the German Child and Youth Welfare Act (SGB VIII) those young people may have left school early with no or very low qualification, they may be drop-outs, juveniles, drug users and/ or having continuously experienced failure. As laid out in its mission statement the agency offers tailor-made social-pedagogic support and care “to compensate social and individual disadvantages”. Apart from that, the club follows a low-threshold approach keeping its doors open to anybody who comes in.

The project is integrated into a network of three more agencies dealing in principle with the same issues but finding different approaches. The cooperation is supposed to reduce overlaps, match the different offers and deal with specific cases.\textsuperscript{23} The work of the Kompass Job-in-Club also includes outreach work for which it receives additional funding.

In general, funding is approved on a yearly basis. Under these conditions staff members claim, it is very difficult to ensure long-term continuity, trusting relations to the clients and high quality work, let alone adapting new concepts and strategies. Due to the general changes of funding regulations within the Employment Service and the lack of municipal funds, the project has already lost two key staff and is threatened in its very existence.

The “Kompass-Job-In Club” with its entire interior and IT equipment was badly damaged by the August 2002 floods. All furnishing and equipment was lost. In due course, the club had re-opened in two small rooms nearby. The work was restricted to issues of formal guidance and advice. Hence, the unique aspects of the work, the informal setting, the club-like atmosphere and the low threshold approach, were not offered. The absence of young people just “dropping in” reflected this situation. The agency was mainly used by young people actively seeking advice in specific matters like CV writing or dealing with issues related to welfare

\textsuperscript{22} JuSoPro: Jugendsofortprogramm – Immediate Action Programme for Young People to reduce youth unemployment. The programme was introduced in December 1998. For a review of the initial programme see Walther (2000)

\textsuperscript{23} for critical comments see WP3 East Germany
and Employment Services. In November 2003 the “Kompass-Job-In Club” moved to different premises altogether. Funding has sharply declined. The club-like atmosphere and the low threshold approach had to be given up completely. Today access to the “Kompass-Job-In Club” is subject to prior permission by the Employment Service. The ‘programme’ has evolved into a conventional short-term measure for unemployed young people who in this way are to be re-inserted into training or work. In addition two staff members are funded for outreach work in order to access exclusively those young people who are formally neither in touch with the local Employment Service nor with the respective Youth department of the City. The analysis of the “Kompass-Job-In Club” will be confined to the state prior to these last changes.

5.4.2 Analysis

Again, we would like to adapt the approach to participation as laid out in chapter 5.3.2.1. Hence, we first refer to participation as a process with its different levels and follow on to name the places and subjects of participation.

5.4.2.1 Participation

Participation as referred to by the staff of the Kompass-Job-in-Club has a qualitative and a quantitative dimension. The latter points to attendances: the numbers of visitors, divided into:

a) customers of internet facilities and the club users as well as
b) specific cases, who receive support and guidance.

The qualitative dimension takes account of the involvement of the young people into:

a) day-to-day issues of the (pre-flood) club,
b) biography related decision-making processes and
c) the identification of training demands.

Participation in day-to-day issues included the maintenance of the facilities especially related to computer technology or the contribution of their own skills24.

Participation with regard to biography related decision-making processes includes on the one hand the process of vocational orientation. It is primarily about finding out what really fits the person before trying to match this with open positions or training offers. Related interests and occupational fields are sounded out in the process. Nevertheless, limited options – for indi-

24 For example, some participants had taken the photographs for the letters of application the young people are assisted to write in the club. Due to the destructive impact of the floods and the restricted space in the current facilities, options like that are not available anymore.
vidual or structural reasons – require negotiation processes and compromises, which have to be developed together.

Participation with regard to the identification of training demands refers to a practice defined by §11 SGB III. Employment Services are supposed to react to the feedback of the relevant institutions with regard to training offers missing on the market and/or their actual content. In theory, young people via the measures or institutions they attend are thus enabled to feed ideas into the transition system and its measures or content. Even though the network the Kompass-Job-in-Club is embedded in provides this space on a structural level, in practice this procedure never worked out. Until now, the Employment Service is in no position to match offers and demands on a local or regional level. The recent policy changes and the complete reform of the Employment Service as an agency have stopped any of such participative approaches.

Employment Service sources themselves claim, that participation of young people is about young people deciding to attend or not attend an offer available. The concept is further blurred if the young person concerned receives financial support from the agency. Under these circumstances, participation is enforced in the understanding that benefits will be cut if the offer is not attended to. Choice is not an option anymore.

Other external experts maintain, that participation in the wider sense of ‘active’ participation (participation as a process) is a crucial element of youth policy but refer to the inadequacy of current legislation and regulation.

The young people themselves view participation as their own active steps to regain control on matters of their concern. Hence, they refer to participation in its biographic dimension.

Analysing participation according to the three dimensions, according to its procession character, according to places and according to the subjects we can draw the following conclusions:

5.4.2.1.4 Dimension I: participation as a process

initiative (finding and developing ideas)

The Kompass-Job-in-Club provides the space for young people to take initiative. Initiative thereby refers to issues brought in by the young people, which the individuals are overtaxed to tackle themselves and thus need the support of others. They did in the past (pre-flood state)
also include the possibilities for young people to bring in their own ideas with regard to the
day-to-day running of the club.

**goal definition (reflecting different perspectives, calculating the consequences)**
This level too refers to the issues brought in by the young people. They are the ones who have
to define the goals ahead and take deliberate choice as to what to do next. They are assisted
and guided by the staff of the Kompass-Job-in-Club.

**planning and cooperation (time schedule, delegating responsibility, agreeing to rules)**
Again, at this level the staff of the Kompass-Job-in-Club can only assist in dealing with indi-
vidual issues. They may have to make clear, that the sole responsibility for the actions to be
taken lays with the young person itself thus facilitating active engagement. Staff if deemed
necessary to the benefit of the person creates time schedules and rules. Due to the nature of
the issues brought up (individuals needing support), adherence to the rules and schedules is
fully up to the person concerned and has no consequence for further collaboration.
To a lesser extent planning and cooperation as part of the participation process can also be
applied to the running of the Kompass-Job-in-Club (pre-flood state). Staff defined rules and
responsibilities. None of the interviewed young people ever considered this problematic. The
project manager in turn was aware of the potential benefit the inclusion of young people
would have into the general running of the Kompass-Job-in-Club.

**performance (carrying out the work and taking decisions if necessary)**
Most of the actions required to be taken in order solve the issues of concern are performed by
the young person itself. Nevertheless, young people recalled a number of incidences, where
they valued the additional support by staff. Such support mainly meant to accompany the
young people to institutions they felt uncomfortable with, e.g. employment service.

**reflection (evaluation)**
The young people are encouraged and given space to reflect on their actions. Even though this
may be a long-running process the young people interviewed maintained that this helped them
to proceed in life. They value the persistence of staff.

5.4.2.1.5 **Dimension II: subjects of participation**
Participation within at the Kompass-Job-in-Club addresses the individual participant in its
interaction with staff and the club as an entity.
5.4.2.1.6 Dimension III: place of participation

As the place of participation, we identified the individual life project and to a far lesser extent, referring to the identification of training demands, the local youth and employment policy.

5.4.2.2 Participation and Motivation

The motivation to tackle individual issues of concern is the main reason to engage in the process of participation. This motivation at times arises only after the persons has visited the Kompass-Job-in-Club a number of times and built up a trustful relationship. The interaction with staff is freely chosen and can be suspended at any time without any consequences to fear. This fact lies at the heart of the success the Kompass-Job-in-Club has in the view of its users. The young people feel free to engage, according to their self-perceived needs and the time and space they prefer. They perceive being taken serious thus engaging deeper into the process of participation.

“The ‘Kompass” is a place where you get comprehensive advice regarding all sorts of issues. They have ‘Know-how’. They have got it up top. (Danilo – Kompass – 27, male, 108)

Most other advisory bodies related to transition matters do not offer such unconditioned enrolment or low threshold approach. This is specifically true for the current employment service practice. Young people if long-term unemployed or of disadvantaged background with no or little education face a repressive practice: they have no choice whatsoever with regard to the training or integration measure and its particular content. They have to adapt to the offers available. Lacking motivation quickly follows. The employment services’ current practice of vocational orientation for the disadvantaged or disengaged has to be criticised along the same line. Even though it is well known that certain professions (e.g. low-skilled building trades) bear no chance on the labour market, for the sake of institutional stability the young people are still assigned to those training providers. Young people are socialised in these directions without being informed about any alternatives.

At the Kompass-Job-in-Club the young people experience a different reality: sound and independent advice, guidance and support.

“(At the Employment Service) they have treated me badly in conversations and so. They didn’t talk to me properly. They said: ‘You can have this and that und you have to do that.’. When I was there they sent me around from one person to the other and nobody knew what to do. I don’t like to go there. It’s a red rag to me. … I would have expected it to be like the ‘Kompass’. Employment Service is like the Welfare Office. It’s no good for me. … In the ‘Kompass’ it is more like meeting pals, drinking coffee
and talking about what to do next. Easy going. They have lots of experiences and knowledge, which I have never experienced at the Employment Service” (Malte – Kompass – 18, male, 77-84)

“The ‘Kompass’ fulfilled all my expectations. In the beginning I got to know it as a café to play. But when it came to write applications I didn’t quite know what they were doing. The explained that I can write them here, that I can search the Internet free of charge for training vacancies. They too told me that they could give me advice if I needed to and that they would go along with me to the Employment Service. That was real encouragement, somebody from the Kompass coming along. Because one may get much more out of it than going their on one’s own. (Sebastian – Kompass – 19, male, 91)

“If they (Kompass) would not have been there, I would not have a job. I wouldn’t be where I am now. I would still be unemployed. You cannot rely on the Employment Service, there you are abandoned. … At the ‘Kompass’ they helped me to find a job, they helped me to solve my debt problems and that I made a good job with my application, there they helped me too” (Jakob – Kompass – 19, male, 110; 219)

Despite all positive statements by the young people interviewed, they also recall demotivating experiences.

“With jobs it’s momentarily pretty … lousy. I’m already asking in supermarkets if they need cashiers or someone to fill the shelves or cleaning. I’m down to doing almost anything … whatever there is: (pursuing) my hobby paper mâché, computers and the shop assistant. But all three don’t take me anywhere right now. And if I’m honest, I don’t want to leave Dresden.” (Danilo – Kompass – 27, male, 88-90)

In addition to the non-receptive labour market, they face an education and vocational training system, which simply can not cater for everybody and hence channels young people into schemes they never asked for.

5.4.2.3 Learning

Formal learning processes are not part of the concept of the Kompass-Job-in-Club. The professional staff facilitates acquiring skills in providing support and guidance. They do not provide any help if not requested to do so. The main objective is to guide people, to offer orientation, to act as a “compass” and thus provide space for informal learning.

Informal learning covers different areas of the clubs’ work. On the one hand, the setting of the project (pro-flood state) itself allowed young people to share their experiences with peers and staff on an informal relaxed basis. On the other hand, trustful relations with individual members of staff enable the young person to deal with issues that are more intimate. Aspects of informal learning range from becoming acquainted with information technology and internet use or writing an application to dealing with personal issues, taking deliberate choices and developing biographical prospects.
“Well, I don’t know any place like that. Actually, there are really lots of Youth Clubs but I know none, which deal with things like computer and apprenticeship or trainee places. Nobody else does that as far as I know.” (Nadja – Kompass – 18, female, 438)

The approach staff take – identifying first the persons’ individual wishes, ideas, problems or difficulties – implies that previous life and work experiences are recognised and – “following critical reflection” (mission statement) – are included in any future planning.

The importance of recognizing informal competences resulting especially from leisure-time or youth-cultural activities is specifically stressed at the expert and managerial level. In view of persistent experiences of failure, disillusion, marginalisation and subsequent resignation the full set of resources need to be drawn upon to re-integrate the young people, so the opinion.

The participants themselves report overwhelmingly positive learning experiences. The statements mostly refer to biographic progressions the individuals have taken. They range from greater self-assertiveness in dealing with institutions like the Employment Service to higher self-esteem when applying for jobs, simply getting hold of their own life again, or being able to handle formal administrative requests, like filling in application forms.

“(Getting) heaps of advice for different issues, e.g. looking for flats. D. knows a lot about that, told me how to get my own flat when I thought about moving out during my apprenticeship. Explained me how to apply for housing benefit and how to negotiate tenancy agreements. … The friendliness and openness of staff – you don’t get that anywhere. There are many Youth Clubs but I don’t know any where I can write job applications and where I can get such good advice. You only have benefits if you know the ‘Kompass’. … I mean, there may be people who manage everything on their own, but for those, which have no orientation … they can come, get advice, find out about their interests: they would definitely find their way.” (Sebastian – Kompass – 19, male, 101; 113; 115)

The learning concepts applied here are almost exclusively individual tuition, counselling and sound advice based on a trustful relationship. The participants themselves consider the learning environment as one of peer learning, even though it is the staff they refer to. The main reasons they cite is that staff is very easy to get along with and that the environment within the club facilitates non-formal learning. Thus role-modelling by staff can also be considered an element of (informal) learning.

Nevertheless, none of the learning is formally recognized. The Kompass-Job-in-Club itself provides no ‘hard’ resources. One of the agencies within the network, which the Kompass-Job-in-Club is part of, offers short-term jobs as well as training and additional education. Some of the participants were drawn to those offers due to the close contact between staff and the trust they placed into these contacts. In general, though, most activities to re-integrate
young people into training or employment have to and are facilitated by the Employment Service.

5.4.2.4 Learning biographies

Like the interviewees in Freiberg our respondents in Dresden explicitly refer to learning by mentioning the practical issues they have tackled. In this case writing applications or finding a training place or a project. Very rarely they refer to learning in a biographic sense thus reflecting their own development. Jakob is a notable exception. In addition to getting together a “proper” application and learning how to get through job interviews he states:

“What else did I learn? Well everything to do with jobs. To find jobs and everything around that. In the past I didn’t care about that. But in the ‘Kompass’ they encouraged me: ‘Search and try’. Here I learned to become independent in occupational matters. They have got me further in my life.” (Jakob – Kompass – 19, male, 222)

Apart from that changes in life or attitudes are rarely attached to singular events or specific interventions connected to the ‘Kompass’. Our interviewees would turn to the ‘Kompass’ whenever they are in need of advice but not only with specific job-related matters but questions of orientation, relationship or financial matters. They may visit the Club, dwell on the atmosphere and but not turn up again for months. They find their way back if they desired to do so or if they were at a loss as to wherever else they could turn to. Hence, the ‘Kompass’ rather serves as an anchor on the stormy waters of their lives. It is the social interaction with peers and staff within the Club, which for some provides the only stable element in life.

5.4.2.5 The relationship between staff and participants

As mentioned above the relationship between the young people and the project workers is – due to the low-threshold approach and the voluntary access of the young people – characterised by trust and understanding. The young people are able to choose the person to turn to. As they said, they can expect advice on matters relating to all spheres of life. The young people interviewed made it clear, that those are the main reasons why they would rather turn to the Kompass-Job-in-Club and not to agencies like the Employment Service.

“I just know that the people here help me. And they are really kind. … It’s a friendly atmosphere. There are nice people here, not like the Employment Service where you think: ‘Oh my god! Here comes some old witch.’ They are all younger, more kind. Don’t know. They don’t stand there putting pressure on you, saying: ‘Get on, Get on, Get on!’ But rather – don’t know – you don’t get this pressure. … I would say they are happy if they managed to help somebody. In a way it’s like the doctor, who has helped his
patient to recover. Who is happy about that, if he gets a ‘Thank you’ or some flowers or something like that.” (Nadja – Kompass – 18, female, 447 – 452, 495)

The staffs’ approach is firmly based in a youth work tradition. It focuses on the life-world of the young people, foremost accepting their current situation. It means, that they are to represent the interests of the young people, consider the wishes, interests and values of the young people, actively integrate the young people into the decision-making processes and facilitate re-orientation and searching processes. This may include “constructive arguments”. In turn, staff expects the young people to be “willing to change something, never mind, in what direction” (Project leader). They may not need concrete ideas, but the will to change is seen as the starting point to engage in the agencies’ work. Trust is seen as one of the most important issues.
6 Common evaluation of the case studies

6.1 Success and critique: the evaluation by young people, project workers and funders

Even though both projects by definition share the same target group they were conceived for different reasons and thus developed in different ways. Hence, success has to be conceived in different ways. The “Shalom” was intended as a one-off three year project with clear tasks outlined whilst the “Kompass” was to close a gap in service provision for young people on the verge of total disengagement with the aim of reaching out to young people and help them to find and make their way back into the regular transition system.

The success of the “Shalom” is evaluated on differing criteria depending on whose agencies’ criteria one adapts as relevant. From the funders point of view three aspects are stressed. The first aspect refers to the content of the project thus stressing the performance and respectively the fulfilment of the tasks proposed, the review of local Jewish history. The second one is to occupy young people previously unemployed to keep them off the register. The third aspect relevant from the funders’ point of view is to enhance the participants’ prospects on the labour market by training them and subsequently supporting them to secure employment. Whilst the first two aspects can be easily evaluated in a positive way the third one is ambivalent. By now (only) one person moved from the project to start a training but apart from that no successful further transitions or even transition prospects can be accounted for. It had been stated before, that biographic progression, personal development and growth or a widened personal or professional horizon – elements, which can be associated with informal learning – do not feature as success criteria on the funders side. This clearly follows the logic of the German transition system. Apart from standardised trajectories, no other options or success criteria seem relevant or possible to fund and support. Hence the project could possibly be criticised for not managing to facilitate labour market integration. However, in view of the current labour market situation within the region and in East Germany altogether, this clearly can’t be delivered by a project of such nature.

The “Shalom” project could possibly be far more successful if able to integrate elements of recognized formal learning, professional counselling and an approach geared not to finding jobs but developing jobs for or with its participants. All these features point to a more integrated and participatory project approach, which however is currently not fundable in Germany.
Success from the perspective of the project worker/manager integrates the aspect of personal development to the ones mentioned above. In doing so the staff refer to a combination of competence development and enhancing personal skills. The project manager maintains, that the way of dealing with the issues of anti-Semitism and Jewish history – e.g., meeting former forced labour convicts and the practical historic work – sensitises the participants and enables the participants to take notice of anti-Semitism in every day life. For the project manager it is a success if the participants are able to cope with their own insecurity and anxiety, with the tension raised by the issue. On a more general level the project is considered successful if the participants leave feeling more confident, with higher levels of self-esteem, having improved their social and communication skills. If they can prove themselves and are able to say: “I have managed to create something” (project manager). The project workers attach utmost importance to the effect a three year activity has on the biography of the participants given the fact that this will be the longest period ever they will have been continuously employed.

This point is unanimously shared by the young people. In view of the bleak labour market situation and being fairly aware of the effects long-term unemployment has had on their own lives the option of a financially valued three year engagement in purposeful activity is viewed as success in itself. Furthermore some but not all participants value the diversity of tasks and the ability to engage in new fields of activity as well as the profound training they consider to have been given in dealing with information and communication technology. High relevance they attach to the fact that all learning activities are subordinated to the tasks of the project, which implies that such learning is seen as far more meaningful in the eyes of the participants. As some participants maintain they now feel more able to make deliberated choices with regard to their next steps in life. This points to a continuously underestimated aspect of educational activities or training measures within the German transition system: the subjective meaningfulness of the activity and hence the motivation to engage in learning processes.

However, as much as most participants value the given possibilities to learn and engage in practical and meaningful activity they criticise the project for its limited duration and the fact that it does not reframe their position on the labour market. The participants largely recognise the positive effects the project has on their lives but – following the logic of the German transitions system itself – they are hard pressed to find ways to convert these experiences into recognised and socially as well as financially valued future activities. Along those lines the
critique also focuses on the boundary diffusion of the learning forms. Learning in the eyes of some participants is attached to a formal process without the biographic component. The mix of formal and informal forms of learning and the project approach of the activities including the practical work may be deemed innovative and appropriate by staff and the scientific evaluation but apparently overtaxes the current capacities of the participants. They thrive on clear tasks and rather despise self-organised learning. In addition a major point of critique focuses on the entry criteria and the perceived lack of choice.

The success of the “Kompass” is primarily based on its open door and low threshold approach. This point is shared – for differing reasons – by all the agencies and the participants involved. The participants, and some of them for the first time, find partners who they can share with and develop their future prospects not only related to the realm of work but to their current life situation altogether. They are highly appreciative of the project, claiming in various contexts that they have not experienced such forthcoming approaches in other situations. The staff at the “Kompass” define their success as their ability to map out valid biographic options and implementing those with the participants. They uphold that this process must start with first and genuinely identifying the persons’ individual wishes, ideas and general problems or difficulties. Only than, possibly inappropriate expectations regarding the participants’ own future are dealt with and suitable alternatives are mutually found. Again, they claim, the principle of voluntary access demands that they take their clients seriously. They cannot, as in the beginning demanded by the Employment Service agents, simply be taken to the institutions in order to be transferred back into the regular transition system. It took some years to reach acceptance for a more thorough and biographic approach. Whilst the importance of actual placement rates is denied by the Employment Service, the respective interviewee holds that labour market integration is the prime aim:

“They (the target group) are to be re-introduced to work. They should be willing to return to the Employment Service – may be assisted in the beginning – and accept help as well as re-involve in the placement procedures.”

Hence, as long as the disengaged young person can find his/her way back into the formal transition system, the work of the Kompass-Job-in-Club is deemed successful. Even though both parties may not share the validity of the chosen approach they agree on the positive outcome. However, the case study agencies’ director is more critical towards the Employment Service policy insisting that:
“Success always has to be countable, measurable and weighable. … Most preferably, large numbers of young people shall be attended to. … Although very significant with regard to long-term relevance and a sustainable career the way and process of re-integration into the labour market is not of interest. … Everything has to be subordinated to structural considerations.”

6.2 General evaluation

Two different but innovative cases have been selected in order to exemplify the issue of participation and informal learning in youth transitions in East Germany.

In broad terms and by definition the two projects share the same target group: young disengaged people. The target group definition in both cases is due to funding restrictions and not for conceptual, educational or pedagogic reasons. The way the projects are set up, they could just as well include anybody but would not receive funding.

Nevertheless, at closer examination a number of differences remain. First, the reasons for disengagement at the “Shalom” project can be clearly defined. The participants successfully finished vocational training but never found a stable job and became long-term unemployed. The Freiberg region suffers from economic depression. The chances for re-integration into the labour market remain bleak as long as the young are not prepared to leave the region altogether. In addition, in a number of cases social or health problem further aggravate the situation. For those reasons, the Employment Service has placed the participants to the project.

In contrast, the open access and low threshold approach of the Kompass-Job-in-Club do not require anybody to give reason for their coming.

Comparing both projects, the access criteria in place are the most important elements considering motivation and active involvement of the young people. Even though the young people may make use of the Kompass-Job-in-Clubs’ facilities and offers for an indefinite period, it is free to them, how often and how intimate they get involved. This fact combined with the setting (Internet café) ease formal participation. Hence, disengaged young people can be reached.

From the researchers point of view it is the ability of the project workers to reach and maintain contact and a trustful relationship with young people on the fringes of society and verging on complete disengagement which makes their work so successful. As the one and central approach biographic considerations are put before structural ones. The seemingly independent position within the transition system gives the project its credibility. At the same time, as will be outlined within the next chapter, this contributed to the downfall and virtual extinction of the project following the recent labour market reforms with its change of funding policies.
The “Shalom” in turn provides a fully structured three-year programme not only defined by a training schedule but more specifically by a clearly locally bound socio-historic frame. This innovative design may give meaning to the tasks and issues the participants face. However, because the young people were not in a position to make informed choices before entering the project, the active engagement remains sub-optimal. It is primarily the wage people receive, which draws them to participate at all. Nevertheless, receiving a wage gives the participants time to ‘breathe’ and may open up resources for re-orientation and self-development.

The approaches chosen in both cases are unconventional before the background of the German transition system. Aiming to improve young adults’ employability and re-integrating them into the labour market by means of a project-learning approach in a socio-historic field rarely features in the German transition system since this is highly structured and geared to vocational qualification and status in order to provide direct linkages to the labour market. The “Shalom” neither provides the one nor the other. For reasons outlined earlier no vocational qualifications can be obtained nor does the content of learning and work point to a qualified profession resp. a position or place in the labour market. The “Shalom” adopted an approach based on competence development. It means that the participants are supported to develop vocational skills of various professions, guided to develop new vocational prospects and encouraged to develop the competences necessary for personal growth and biographic progression. The project provides a frame of reference, within which meaningful activities can unfold. Those range from targeted learning to practical work on a more formal and accountable level to the informal nature of learning like dealing with group processes and individual issues or the public due to the involvement in a theme of local historic relevance. The project would clearly benefit if resources were available to combine the learning and working activities with professional counselling, career guidance and an approach not only geared to finding jobs but developing jobs for or with its participants out of the activities the project offers. All these features point to a more integrated and participatory project approach, which however is currently not fundable in Germany.

Similar issues have been raised by staff and officials at the “Kompass”. Delivering guidance and counselling in combination with the means to initiate and support meaningful activities is seen as the key to secure transitions in a longer term.
Both projects, the “Shalom” and the “Kompass” have limited options at their disposal with regard to actively supporting the future transitions of their participants. They are not in a position to develop activities out with the boundaries of the formal transition system. Hence, once the participants leave the project (“Shalom”) or perceive that they got all the support available or needed (“Kompass”) they are left to face a transitions system, which is unable to cater for their needs resp. cannot provide the options to build on their previous biographic and/or work experience. As long as the labour market remains virtually closed for these young people the effects are limited.

Furthermore, both projects are not helped by the recent change of labour market policies and funding legislation. The restructuring of the Employment Service has lead to a funding policy geared even more to activities related to direct labour market integration. Activities of a transitional nature, support structures within “transitional labour markets” (Schmid 1998) or regionally adapted, unconventional forms of labour market integration are not fundable anymore. Whilst this may reduce revolving door effects by introducing profiling procedures to secure ‘perfect fit placements’ and reducing the funding for container schemes like training measures it has severely limited the scope for activities, which provide the space for advantageous de-tours and individually tailored activities. Those are not considered ‘core-business’ of the Employment Service and shall be funded by Local Authorities. Under the current legislation the “Shalom” would not receive Employment Service co-funding for its participants anymore. The “Kompass” had already been forced to abandon its open and voluntary access approach to secure its already down-sized funding. The Internet Café can barely be maintained. Its main activities today consist of six-week group courses to determine and enhance the young peoples’ chances of labour market integration. The additional Local Authority funding is limited to outreach work for a strictly defined target group with prescribed numbers to attend to.

In conclusion the following factors have been identified as beneficiary to the projects:
- unconditional voluntary access,
- individual counselling with a focus on personal development,
- education as a means to provide purpose and subjective meaningfulness,
- the sustainability (especially medium-term financial security) of the projects themselves,
- time and space to build up trusting relationships between participants and staff,
- low staff turn-over, high personal engagement, a charismatic figure to initiate the project.
In addition, a number of structural factors have been identified, which greatly influence the work of the projects.

First, there is the ever-recurring issue of tight regulations governing transition-to-work related projects. Funding is primarily delivered on the condition that the projects aim for direct labour market integration. Since labour market integration in the German transition system is heavily bound to formal qualifications, informal or unrecognized skills cannot directly be utilized for transitions to work.

Second, both projects have the capacity to unveil resources for informal learning and participation in providing space to tackle some of the more burning personal issues of the participants. However, for structural reasons in the (East) German context informal learning and participation do not add up to relevant options for a successful transition to work. As observed, informal learning is mostly connected with individual/personal development, questions of self-esteem and dealing with personal and/or social problems. However, there seems no linkage to a prospective vocational career. Hence, the biographical relevance of such factors is perceived to be rather low. If there is no perceived biographical relevance (to learn) young peoples’ motivation to engage more than necessary decreases.

The “Shalom” case proves that economic circumstance (a non-receptive labour market) in combination with a highly structured VET system and its minimal non-traditional transition-to-work options limit the practical scope and override the content and programmatic design of the project including some of its possible effects.

In any case, funding dependencies or funding insecurity make a mockery of many sound concepts. The “Kompass” can serve as an example: even though the quality and necessity of the agencies work have never been disputed, despite statements like: “The future of the Kompass has never been at stake” (Employment Service & City Youth department), the recent changes in the German labour market legislation lead to a U-turn of the agencies work in order to simply secure some funding. The participatory approach had to be discarded. Staff had to be dismissed. The “Kompass” is not anymore a place to turn to for young people in need of guidance or advice.
7 Conclusions

The two case studies analysed in the course of this research project offer a number of issues to re-consider on the policy level and the level of transnational comparison. The case studies prove that despite the heavy institutionalisation of the German transition system innovative approaches can be implemented. The report also highlights the limitations such projects face. From these limitations a number of recommendations can be drawn.

7.1 Recommendations on political and policy level

Participatory approaches in Germany are traditionally related to the field of youth work and youth related activities like leisure and sports. Policies guiding transitions to work do not consider active participation as a central feature. The potential of a participatory praxis is underestimated. The “Kompass” example at the interface between (social) youth work and conventional transition-to-work measures indicates that such an approach might be more suitable to integrate disadvantaged young people and meet their needs. Outreach work and low threshold approaches seem efficient means to reach people alienated from and/or frustrated by their prior experiences within the formal transition system. A further economisation of transitions towards shorter, faster and more efficient pathways has to be resisted. Integrating a biography-centred approach together with a clear service orientation into the formal support structures guiding transitions to work may help young people to cope with the multi-faceted challenges they face in their transitions today.

The highly structured German transition system is close to find formal answers to virtually all aspects of a young persons life, yet it is unable to combine or package them in a transparent and user-oriented way subjectively relevant to the young person. In this respect the department-orientation is rather of hindrance than of benefit and not empowering young people to find their way and develop meaningful careers.

Both case studies point to the increasing need to incorporate professional career guidance and counselling into mainstream education and service provision. Within the “Shalom” it became clear that this issue had been underestimated resp. not funded and supported by sufficient staff resources. It lead to severe conflicts. The work of the “Kompass” and the way this work was appreciated by the young people only underlines the need for comprehensive and integrated career guidance and counselling. Today’s praxis of mere information provision in formal institutions guiding transitions to work needs to give way to differing and adaptable forms of accompaniment and partnership. The importance of voluntary and unconditional access as pre-condition for the success of any such activity was raised and must not be underestimated.
The continuing lack of gainful employment virtually all over East Germany demands alternative scenarios in support of young people wanting to enter the labour market. A labour market policy limited to placement fails where there are no jobs to place people to. Instead, projects like the “Shalom” should be enabled and equipped with the necessary resources to develop employment prospects out of their own activities. It asks for a labour market policy geared towards regional development and de-centralised network approaches in support of the local economy. In planning as well as practice not universal but regionally adapted concepts are to be developed enhancing the flexibility and scope of action in order to be reflective of the participants needs and their locality. The benefits seem apparent. Such an approach considerably enhances the motivation of its participants and provides options beyond the life of the project. Alongside this the general need to break funding dependencies has become apparent. Short-term funding does not secure the sustainability of the projects. It leads to structural insecurity as well as high staff turnover and threatens the projects at the core of their quality: their ability to create and maintain trustful relationships with the participants.

The “Shalom” case further highlights the contribution a project learning approach can make towards the vocational qualification of its participants. Yet it effects are limited as long as those or other independent agencies are not in a position to recognize and validate the acquired qualifications and/or competences in order to secure the transfer and recognition of informal learning into the formal transition system. Yet attention has to be paid to elements and environments which should not be formalised.

The life stories of our interviewees point to another issue. In view of the increasing insecurities young people have to face the institutions of the formal education system are required to become reflective of and preparing pupils for the de-standardisation of life courses. It highlights the growing need to support competence development and the integration of informal learning experiences into the curricula of formal learning. It points to a new culture of learning, utilizing the potentials inherent within the young people, creating time, space and the funds necessary for the young people to unfold.

7.2 Comparison and transfer of findings

The case studies as such are unique and embedded into the logic of the German transition regime even though they can be identified as good practice from a national point of view. They reflect the German ‘normality’. Nevertheless three aspects can be identified, which are open to transnational comparison and transfer and could possibly justify recommendation.

The first aspect is related to the financial arrangement of the “Shalom” project. The wage its participants receive on the one hand draws at least some young people to participate at all. On
the other hand the medium-term financial security allows the participants to ‘breathe’ and offers them the space to rekindle resources for re-orientation and self-development.

A second aspect, also related to the experiences drawn from the “Shalom” project, which could be promising also in other national contexts is the combination of labour market related training with tasks resulting from a locally perceived cultural need. Countries governed by workfare policies may benefit from the perception a project like the “Shalom” receives in the immediate locality. Even though the particular project did produce conflicts, internally between individuals and their relationship to the topic of Jewish history and externally between the participants and their organisation on the one hand and the public including city officials on the other hand, the project contributes to enhance the local culture, examining and revealing underlying assumptions, values and even prejudices. The participants themselves are forced to take a stand on such issues. Thus, this controversial topic of immediate and local relevance contributes to informal learning in a natural way.

The third aspect relates to the work of the “Kompass”. The approach of the “Kompass” answers the immediate need of those in the midst of at times chaotic transitions. Many young people were first drawn to the club for its Internet facilities. The threshold to access this institution had consciously been set low and was backed up by a friendly youth-like café atmosphere. The voluntary access guaranteed that the young people would make use of the offers available beyond the Internet use and according to their self-perceived needs thus remaining in control of the ways and purpose of their coming. Only once they asked for help the issues were negotiated. The informal contacts built up previously were, as our interviews prove, the foundation to make the subsequent counselling process possible. Staff and young people alike maintained that the trustful relationship not only serves to improve the labour market chances of the young people but first and foremost instigates a personal development of the young people involved. It gives stability in otherwise fragile life situations. Such biography-related (informal) learning processes are, besides the staffs’ qualification, the result of the structural set up of the project, its participation enhancing atmosphere and the close and straightforward co-operation within the immediate network of agencies.
References


Annex

Expert interviews

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<th>place</th>
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materials used

| CJD “Shalom”, Freiberg        | half-yearly reports to XENOS (funding body) |
|                               | CJD leaflets, newspaper articles and PR-material related to the most recent work |
|                               | TV documentary (Schön, Claudia (2001): “Gestohlene Jugend. Die Zwangsarbeiters von Freiberg.”, MDR, 30 min, 03.05.2001) |
|                               | observations: |
|                               | – informal visits to the project |
|                               | – opening of an exhibition designed by the project leader with the help of the participants in the City Exhibition Centre |
| DAA “Kompass-Job-In Club”, Dresden | yearly report to funding agencies and customers |
|                               | leaflets, web-site, newspaper articles and PR-material related to the most recent work |
|                               | TV documentary, mdr sachsenspiegel (15.01.2003) |
|                               | observations |
|                               | – informal visits to the project |
|                               | – stall at the Dresden Career Fair “KarriereStart 2003” |