

# National report

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# Abeona

AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE  
TO CARE LEAVERS' PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION



Erasmus+

# GERMANY

## Authors :

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schröer  
Dr. Severine Thomas  
Carolin Ehlke, M. A.  
Dr. Katharina Mangold  
Dr. Andreas Oehme

Translation :  
Anne Ellen Koth  
Wendy Marth



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## **PART 1: NATIONAL CONTEXT AND INFORMATION**

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## 1. Legal context of the youth care system: social services in the Federal Republic of Germany

As a federal republic with 16 Länder and more than 320 urban and rural authority districts (town councils), Germany has on the one hand a coherent piece of social legislation at the federal level and on the other the municipalities, which are seen as responsible for implementing the welfare services at the local level. The basic federal legal framework for care for children and youth with problems is the Social Code, Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) VIII, which came into effect in 1990/1991. The central point of this framework, pertaining to all young people aged up to 21 (in exceptional cases until the age of 27), is the child's right to assistance in its upbringing and education.

The implementation of the state's policy is carried out by the statutory local services for child and youth care and education, and this is usually put into practice by the communal Child and Youth Welfare Office. However, SGB VIII explicitly draws attention to the "variety of bodies" that may provide services and to the option of services also being provided by private bodies, meaning that the majority of childraising support is performed by such institutions. Nevertheless, the Child and Youth Welfare Office has a major role, as it is responsible for the overall care management process.

For older youth and young adults, the same spectrum of residential and non-residential care services is available in principle as for younger children and adolescents. In addition, special provisions have been developed either in the form of (single or group) accommodation with social worker support (assisted living) or with non-residential assistance (for example, counselling) (Section 41 – young adults, age 18–21). In particular, accommodation is provided for in assisted living (Section 13) for young adults with a socially disadvantaged background who are enrolled on a scholastic scheme or vocational education measure.

As part of becoming independent in the transition to adulthood, the entry into vocational training and employment, among other things, is of vital importance. In this regard, for socially disadvantaged young people, who can be found in disproportionately high numbers in care, SGB II (basic job-seekers' benefits) and SGB III (employment promotion) become relevant. In particular, a number of new divisions have emerged in practice between SGB II and SGB VIII since the implementation of SGB II, in early 2005. As part of these legal guidelines, employable young people receive basic social services and partly pedagogically orientated assistance. Although SGB VIII has a clear legal priority on guaranteeing the best interests of the child, in practice it can be observed that town councils administer the provision of services for young people aged between 16 and 18 considerably more strictly. Thus, more and more young people are being released early from care and the legal scope of SGB II is being applied to them, which foresees the implementation of tough sanctions for young adults under the age of 25.

## 2. The different mechanisms of youth care: residential and foster care

Foster care and residential care are forms of care which fall into the category of childraising support under the law on child and youth welfare (German Social Security Code (SGB) VIII) The term "childraising support" (Hilfen zur Erziehung, Sections 27 ff. of SGB VIII) covers a

wide range of individual pedagogical and therapeutic measures (Macsenaere et al., 2014). Guardians caring for the person of the child, usually a child or young person's parents, legal guardian or carer, are entitled to childraising support if there is no guarantee that the child or young person will be raised in his or her best interests and thus support is appropriate and necessary for his or her development (ibid.). On this point it should be noted that childraising support for a child or young person does not presuppose any endangerment of the best interests of the child as defined in Section 1666 of the German Civil Code (BGB), but is instead understood as a preventive form of support used to avoid a case being brought before the family court. The type and extent of support provided are based on individual childraising needs and decisions made in the context of what is known as “support planning”. The support plan (Section 36 of SGB VIII) is an instrument to manage support measures and is compiled by the youth welfare department along with as many stakeholders as possible: guardians caring for the person of the child, plus the child or young person, teachers and doctors. This “contract” agreed among all stakeholders is intended to be regularly checked during the support scheme to ensure that the type of support chosen is still suitable and necessary, and/or whether it needs to be amended, e.g. with regard to occupational integration.

Childraising support includes non-residential support (childraising advice, Section 28; social group work, Section 29; youth counselling, Section 30; home-based family support, Section 31; intensive individual socio-pedagogical support, Section 35), semi-residential support (childraising in group out-of-school care, Section 32; inclusion assistance for mentally disabled children and young people, Section 35a (sometimes also no-residential)) and residential support (foster care, Section 33, residential care, Section 34).

In Germany, children's residential care and fostering are understood as out-of-home children's social care services. They involve 24-hour accommodation, i.e. day and night, away from a child or young person's family of origin in a home, foster family or other residential unit, such as a supported group home, and are thus also described as *Fremdunterbringung* (out-of-home care). The basic definition of out-of-home care is when children and young people live, are provided for and are brought up outside their own family in the short or long term. Out-of-home care may take place in a care home or in a family other than the family of origin, e.g. through adoption or a short- or long-term care relationship in a foster family. In Germany roughly 50% of children and young people in out-of-home care live in forms of residential care, and 50% in foster families.

Table 1: Young people (0–26) in care (foster care and residential care) (Germany; 2013; continued and completed residence)<sup>1</sup>

AGE	YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE*	PERCENTAGE**
<b>0–17</b>	161233	1.2%
<b>18–26</b>	28181	0.3%

\* Accommodation according to Sections 33, 34 and 27.2 of SGB VIII

\*\* refers to the age group in the population

Table 2: Young people (0–26) in care (foster care and residential care) (Germany; 2013; completed accommodations)<sup>2</sup>

AGE	YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE*	PERCENTAGE**
<b>0–17</b>	35818	0.3%
<b>16–17</b>	10790	0.7%
<b>18–20</b>	13247	0.5%
<b>21–26</b>	981	0.0%***

\* accommodation according to Sections 33, 34 and 27.2 of SGB VIII

\*\* refers to the age group in the population

\*\*\* 0.02%

Studying the organisational forms of residential children's social care services (defined in Section 34 of the Social Code, SGB VIII), they are seen to have clearly differentiated, well-developed concepts, such as small homes focusing on curative education, congregate housing in homes, psychotherapeutic homes, institutions set up for specific target groups

<sup>1</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt: Statistiken der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – Erzieherische Hilfen; 2013; compilation and calculations by Arbeitsstelle Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistik (<http://www.hzemonitor.akjstat.tu-dortmund.de/>)

<sup>2</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt: Statistiken der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – Erzieherische Hilfen; 2013; compilation and calculations by Arbeitsstelle Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistik (<http://www.hzemonitor.akjstat.tu-dortmund.de/>)

such as congregate housing for under-age mothers and their children, Children's Villages and assisted congregate housing focusing on curative education.

The different forms of residential children's social care services (defined in Section 34 of the SGB VIII) can be mapped out as follows:

- › **Congregate housing in a home**

Children and young people live in a house or apartments which are often part of a larger home. These are separate housing units designed for independent living. Some large homes describe these groups as “external residential groups”.

- › **Units providing intensive therapy based on curative education**

In these institutions, children's and young people's everyday lives are strongly structured, with a therapeutic milieu being created (among other things) by additional therapeutic provisions for the children and young people.

- › **Family-like forms of residential care**

Children's villages and very small facilities usually involve just one group. This category also includes professional foster families, some providing curative education. These are private households where young people in particular need of support live with a carer and possibly their family.

- › **Assisted individual residential care**

In this form of supported living, young individuals are provided with support in the form of “flexible care”, i.e. the degree of support provided depends on the young person's individual needs.

- › **Independent living groups**

This kind of housing can accommodate a group of young minors or adults coming from a home or congregate housing and already displaying a high degree of independence. Living in rented apartments, they are supported by social pedagogues according to their needs.

To link in with these forms of support, SGB VIII offers young adults (Section 41) “continued personality development leading to independent living”. With regard to this, young people and young adults can continue to receive care up to age 21, and in exceptional cases even up to age 27, in the form of various schemes such as assisted living, counselling, financial support or therapy. This depends on their “individual situation”, which is an uncertain legal term and thus controversial in practice. However, the targets set to support young adults in the support plans are usually based on the subjects of schooling and work (Nüsken, 2008).

When they reach majority, parents are no longer entitled to childraising support for their previously minor child. The young adult can now receive childraising support independently, and is required to apply for this support him- or herself. This transition to being an eligible young adult falls under German child and youth welfare law and is a barrier to the continuation of any support schemes which have already begun.

For most adolescents in residential care who attain their majority, leaving care is a critical passage. Though they have the right to stay on, most forms of care end at 18 (see Point 4). Though the law explicitly offers this extended support to young adults, those young adults applying for support for the first time are given very little help in doing so from the child and youth welfare services.

### **3. The different stakeholders and their roles: transitions to work**

Altogether, transitions to training and work are a major challenge in the biographies of socially disadvantaged young people. These transitions have become more fragile and uncertain, yet also more open-ended. It is often not clear where responsibility lies. This has become known as the *Übergangsdschungel* (“transition jungle”).

In the field of German child and youth welfare, youth social work is meant to be responsible for transitions to work. This is a field of work carried out by the youth welfare services, laid out in Section 13 of SGB VIII., the first section of which states: “The youth welfare services shall provide social pedagogical support to young people who depend particularly on support to balance out social disadvantages or overcome individual impairments. This support shall promote their scholastic and vocational education and help them enter work and achieve social integration.” The second section describes some such measures in more detail as “suitable training and employment measures involving social pedagogical assistance”, which “can” be offered if nothing is done by other organisations or stakeholders. The third section then brings up the option of “accommodation in forms of residence providing social pedagogical assistance”, explicitly in connection with “participation in scholastic or vocational educational measures or during occupational integration”.

Youth social work thus extends from social work in schools, careers guidance and advice, helping young people achieve social stabilisation, assisted living for young people on training courses or in education, to state-run vocational training and employment schemes. The latter are at the heart of young persons' vocational support (*Jugendberufshilfe*). The tasks named above, though brought together in one place in this case, can all also be provided by other organisations and stakeholders or under other laws and sets of laws (e.g. SGB II: general basic job-seekers' benefits for young people and others, and SGB III: employment promotion) and by special funding programmes, for example.

What is required here is to pay attention to the fundamentally opposing paths taken by the different sets of laws in the German Social Code which – as Schruth (2014) points out – are poles apart. In practice, the tasks tackled by individual measures are almost impossible to tell apart. Thus, only a small number of measures helping young people transition into

training and work are financed by the child and youth welfare services (youth social work, Section 13); spending by municipalities, including specific federal funding programmes, make up between 4% and 5% of the total volume of spending on job-related measures under the “transition system” (see Kooperationsverbund Jugendsozialarbeit, 2010). Therefore, it is dependent on the residential care institution if they support young people in their employability; the institutions mostly give the responsibility to the so called “job-centers” (employment exchange). Regarding this it is hardly surprising that social workers do not have additional training to support young people in transitions to training and work.

The term “transition system” (Übergangssystem) covers all the educational and job creation schemes which do not provide a vocational qualification. After finishing school in 2008, 34% of all young people who did not start university ended up on one of these schemes (see group of authors behind the 2010 National Report on Education). There are also industry-wide training courses, i.e. fully financed from the public purse, which are not categorised as part of the transitional system. In 2009 these still notably made up more than 20% of all vocational education in eastern Germany.

#### 4. The funding framework: Übergangsdschungel

Frequently, only experts are aware of what funding lies behind a specific project or scheme in practice. At the same time, it is apparent that the social services which are responsible per se for placing and integrating job-seekers in accordance with the relevant sets of laws – SGB II (basic job-seekers' benefits for young people, job centres or municipalities) and SGB III (employment promotion, employment agencies) – have “forgotten their roots in social pedagogy” and are now almost unconnected to child and youth welfare services (Burghardt & Enggruber, 2005, p. 7). They do not see themselves as providing social pedagogical support, and there is little connection to groups such as care leavers; accordingly, there has been discussion for some years now on the problems arising at the touch points between the sets of laws in SGB II/III and VIII, without any solution being found.

The differences in the various social services' fundamental understandings have problematic consequences: they create widely differing frameworks with widely differing scopes of action for young people; they make it harder for professionals working on and between schemes to come to an agreement, and in practical terms they are currently preventing the drafting of an overall infrastructure to support people with training and work. All attempts so far have been very limited with regard to professional approaches and fields of work, and have not been intended to be comprehensive, let alone being comprehensively implemented.

Thus there is still talk of the “transition jungle”, populated by different forms of funding (general provisions or project funding) following different sets of laws (SGB II, III, VIII, XII etc.) with various different actors all following their own lines of logic (federal and state actors, often along with different ministries and different departments within those ministries, municipalities, foundations, job agencies, job centres, youth welfare departments, schools authorities, professional associations, etc.). Within this jungle, they support projects whose programmes also follow different, changing lines of logic. Moreover, these projects are not in any way clearly defined through the logic of their funding; they are often implemented in very specific ways by local stakeholders, which partly reflects the lack of any system behind the scenes, and partly shows that there is scope for creativity.

Since the 1990s, there has been particular emphasis on linking the different schemes in a network, an aim which has also been written into plans for funding programs. Today, however, practically all actors are expected to carry out networking activities: not only those running the schemes but also, especially, the schools, which are expected to lay down roots in their social spaces and cooperate with relevant actors, and gradually also companies and vocational schools. However, these networks are usually initiated by the institutions themselves and extend out around the hub of the organisation like the spokes of a wheel. This means that there may be as many networks in a region as there are actors; these may overlap, but are not necessarily coordinated. So far, however, residential care and care leavers have not been included in these networking activities.

On the levels of financial support which extend beyond the regions (federal government, federal states, Europe), the different programmes are, however, not sufficiently coordinated; for a long time now, in the different regions, it has been left up to a kind of “market” to bring structure to the different provisions. Regional stakeholders can apply for the funding programmes on offer, or for municipal funding, and gain (or fail to gain) financial support for schemes of this kind depending on the state of the market, i.e. the other, competing applicants, the quality and the price of their plan or the funds which are available for distribution – and, in some cases, also depending on how good their connections are. Yet this market is an odd one: the young people described in this context as “clients” do not have any money of their own, and thus do not have any choice as to whether they “purchase” a service. Following the logic of the market as understood by the job agency, in particular, they are actually the “product” which the client (the job agencies and, indirectly, the companies) order and purchase from the contractors (i.e. the companies providing education, etc.).

This market thus does not tend to react to the needs of young people and young adults; instead it responds to the needs perceived by providers of funding and education. This is a difference which can lead policy on funding and social policy to contradict practical work with people on the ground, confronted with young people's needs. In addition, the market does not work in every situation, and produces parallel structures and forms of support; fields of responsibility are increasingly unclear, projects and programmes come and go or their names change, and neither the young people nor the experts have a full overview of what schemes and networks are actually in place locally, let alone the results they are producing. On top of this there are conflicts between the different institutional actors, which are always primarily bound to the logic driving their own actions, and which are often in competition with one another.

In other words, the problem today no longer lies in a basic lack of “innovative” instruments for providing support during transitions – there is no lack of “ideas” for how to provide such support. In recent years an ample number of such ideas have been developed via a series of model projects (e.g. with European funding). The main challenge, instead, lies in creating a coherent overall transitional structure in the various regions, and in integrating groups such as that of care leavers. This is not just a question of bringing order to a chaotic funding system; the schools and vocational schools, the local economy and the youth welfare services are also part of the infrastructure in which transitions take place.

## 5. Profiles of the youngsters: care leavers

International studies indicate that care leavers usually leave, or have to leave, care settings or institutions at just 16 to 18 years of age, while their peers stay at home for far longer on average in line with the extension of this transitional stage (see Stein, 2006). There are signs of a similar discrepancy in Germany, where the average age at which young people leave their parental home<sup>3</sup> is considerably higher than that at which they leave child and youth welfare institutions (see Eurostat, 2009). Many (almost half of) young people leaving residential care (as defined in Section 34 of SGB VIII) between the ages of 18 and 21 move into their own home. Another point which stands out is that a large proportion of residential care schemes end abruptly: about 50% of young people aged over 18 and 45% of those aged 15–18 leave residential care without any follow-up support being provided (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014a). This can be interpreted as a trend towards encouraging independence which begins at an early age in residential care, sometimes even before the age of 18. It means that when transitions into adulthood are compared, there are clear differences between young people growing up in their families and those growing up in public care. With this in mind, leaving care can be seen as a status passage in young people's biographies during which the public welfare system institutionalises accelerated transitions into adult life and thus restricts the space and time available for individual transitions and processes of development.

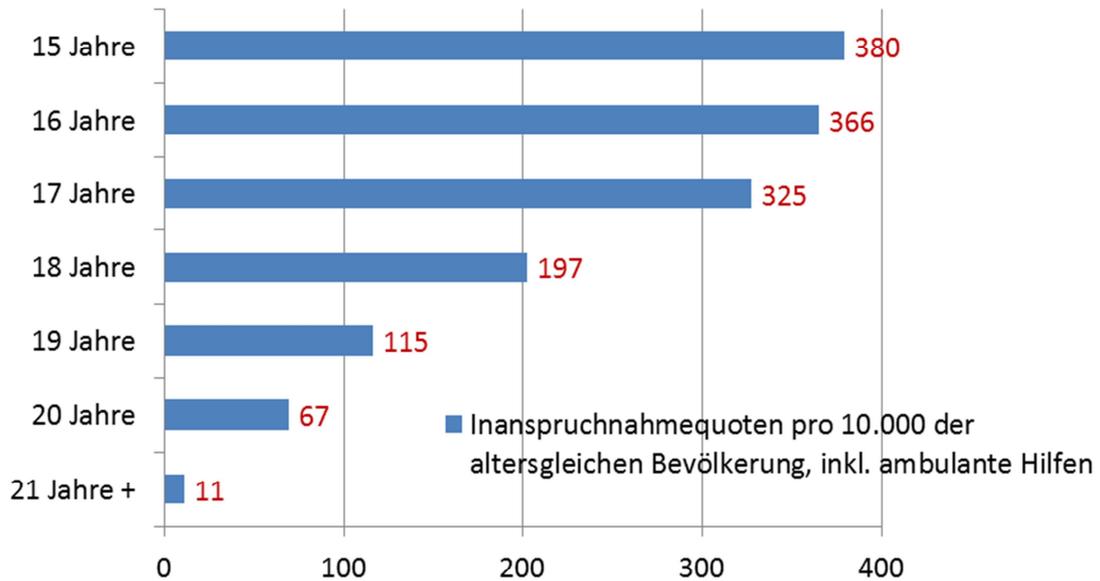
As of 31 December 2014 there were 11,043 cases in Germany in which residential care was provided to young people aged over 18 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014a). Young adults (aged 18 to 27) only made up a small number of those receiving support: just 904 young people aged 21 to 27 were in residential care on the day of the census (31 December 2014). Out of 10,139 schemes for 18 to 21-year-olds which counted as residential, roughly 15% were being carried out in the young adults' homes (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014a). Reaching the age of majority thus evidently has a powerful effect as a formal criterion for support or in setting objectives (see Nüsken, 2013, Pothmann, 2011).

The following graph underlines the fact that there is a clear drop in young people exercising their right to social care as soon as they turn 18. Whereas 325 out of 10,000 17-year-olds receive social care, only 197 18-year-olds do so, which is a drop of about 40%. This trend continues at roughly the same rate between ages 18 and 19 and again between ages 19 and 20.

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<sup>3</sup> Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (2012): Familienreport. Leistungen, Wirkungen, Trends. Berlin, p. 38.

## Hilfen zur Erziehung nach Lebensalter



Arbeitsstelle Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistik: Monitor Hilfen zur Erziehung 2014, S. 12  
 Datengrundlage: Bestandserhebung zum 31.12.2011, eigene Darstellung

1

Fig. 1: Young people receiving social care, by age

It seems as if, within the practice of providing support, young adults are generally assumed to develop linearly, and are not seen as “in need of care” when they turn 18. In this context, the practice of applying for support for young people coming of age, which is also necessary if support currently provided is to continue after their 18th birthday, also creates a formal “bottleneck” for young adults exercising their right to care.

One aspect which has also proven particularly critical for young people leaving residential care is the situation that when support comes to an end, there is hardly any useful follow-up support, or young people “get lost” in the transition jungle. As the following graph illustrates, for 57% of young people aged over 18 there is no follow-up support after residential care – i.e. there is evidently not even any subsequent non-residential assistance by the child and youth welfare services. This raises the question of how transitions can be designed and support provided to young people in care even on a rudimentary level, starting out from this basis.

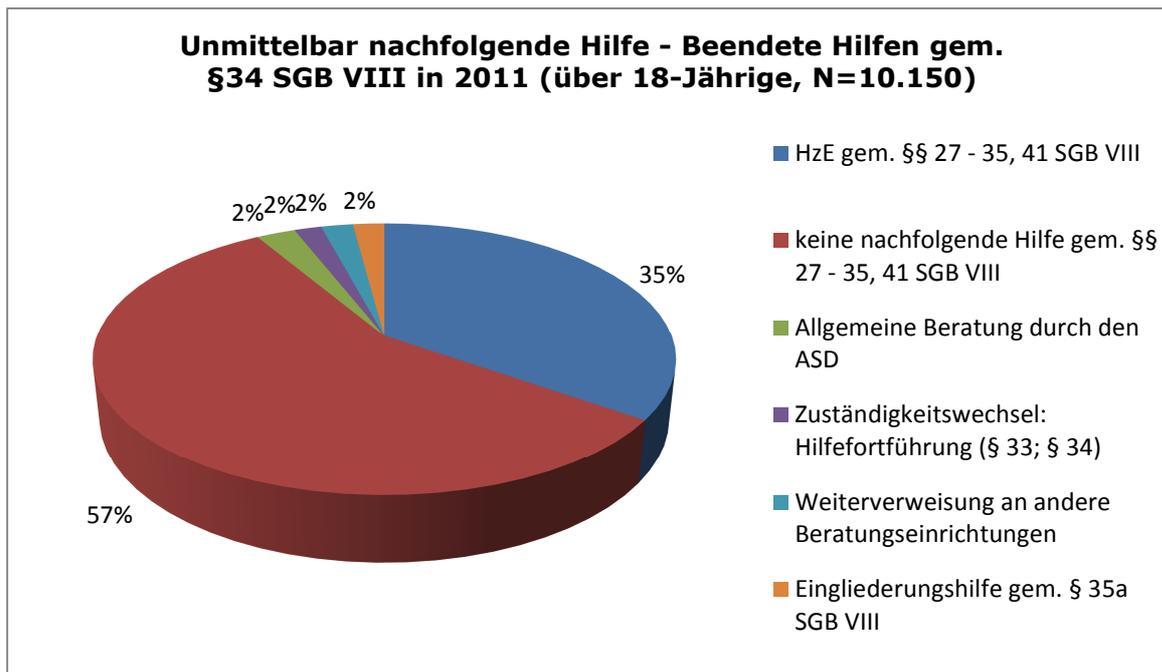


Fig. 2: Direct follow-on support / support coming to an end in 2011 as defined in Section 34 of SGB VIII (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2011, cited in Nüsken, 2013)

Even among 15- to 18-year-olds, follow-up support is only provided in 46% of cases; 10% are sent for general advice from the youth welfare department and 7% of schemes come to an end due to a change of responsibilities. In just one third (33%) of cases, follow-up support is set up by the child and youth welfare services. In other words, the fact that follow-up support is not generally provided even among 15- to 18-year-olds indicates that continuous assistance following residential schemes is not yet an established arrangement. The growing number of under-25-year-olds receiving support for the homeless (see Evangelischer Fachverband Wohnung und Existenzsicherung e. V., 2012) could be an indication that young adults are leaving the youth welfare services too quickly, without consistently being passed into the hands of other support systems.

For the German context, however, it has to be said that it is not possible to analyse transitions to subsequent forms of support precisely, as statistics are only gathered on those which fall under SGB VIII. Statistics on child and youth welfare do not describe support initiated under other systems or transfers to other types of guidance such as debt advice services, support for the homeless or pediatric and adolescent psychotherapy (see Nüsken, 2013). It can nonetheless also be said that these related social services cannot generally examine the transition to independent living as a whole; they are frequently specialised support services (focusing on employment, training or psychiatry) which do not tackle the complicated requirements for independent living. Equally, these are rarely programmes for continuous assistance which explicitly examine the challenges of adolescence and young adulthood. Involvement in longer-term educational and life planning is also harder to achieve outside residential care. Moreover, current forms of follow-up support cannot usually guarantee the availability of familiar attachment figures and the provision of family-

like support networks, though German and international studies have shown convincingly that social ties play a key role in successful transitions from residential care to adult life.

According to the transition to vocational education the national education report from 2010 shows that especially disadvantaged young people are affected from social exclusion in the period of transition from general educational schools to vocational education. Young people without graduation, but those who finished lower secondary school the way into the dual educational system or an educational training is difficult. In 2008 75% of all young people searching for an apprenticeship place entered the vocational transition system – 48% of them with a lower secondary school graduation. Young people with a migration background have a higher risk to fail the access into a vocational education: 88% of those without graduation don't find a vocational apprenticeship place.<sup>4</sup>

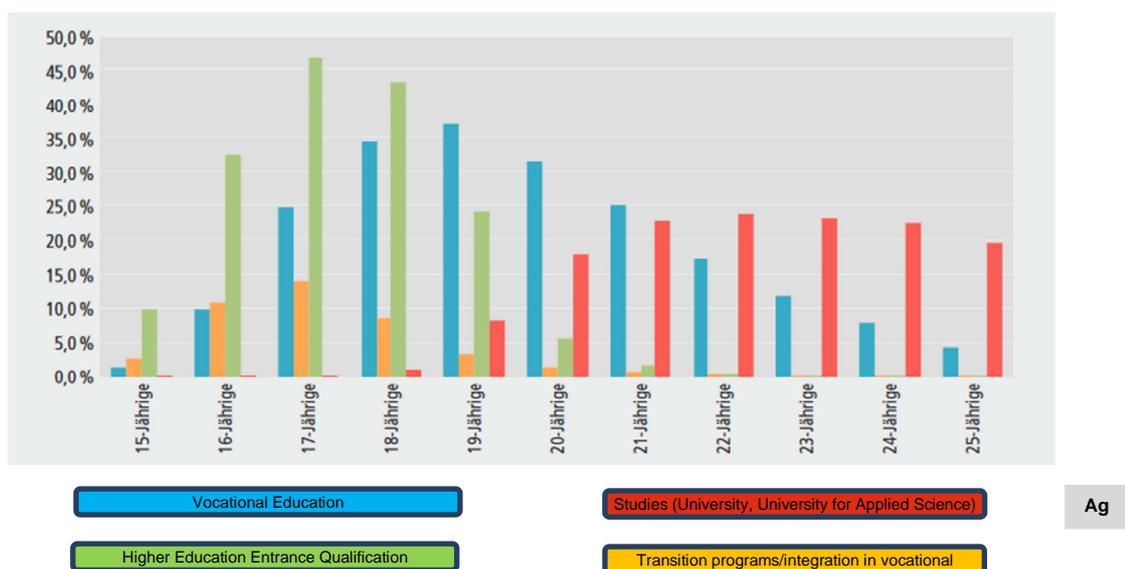


Fig. 3: Pathways through vocational training, studies, higher education and transition programs/integration in vocational education, by age<sup>5</sup>

The average age of apprentices finishing the vocational training was arising during the last 20 years. They stay longer in middle school level, in general more of them achieve higher graduations and more of them stay longer in the vocational transition system. 1993 the average age at the beginning of a vocational training was 18,5 years<sup>6</sup>. In 2012 it increased up to 20 years. In comparison young people with migration background are even older when they start an apprenticeship: Average at the age of 20,5 years (in 2011). Considering the high

<sup>4</sup> Bildung in Deutschland 2010. Ein indikatorengefügter Bericht mit einer Analyse zu Perspektiven des Bildungswesens im demographischen Wandel, www.bildungsbericht.de.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.bildungsbericht.de/daten2014/bb\\_2014.pdf](http://www.bildungsbericht.de/daten2014/bb_2014.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> In general the legal age for apprenticeship and for employment is enshrined in the “Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz (JArbSchG)” (youth employment law). According to this a young person is allowed to work or to begin an apprenticeship at the age of 15 (Section 2 of JArbSchG).

account of vocational training seekers with a lower secondary school graduation it indicates the difficulties and long term transition into the vocational system.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally statistics show that in 2014 approximately 46% of the youngsters between 15 and 25 years are gainfully employed.<sup>8</sup>

Although statistics are stated a high risk of difficult pathways to vocational education among disadvantaged young people, there are no data on the situation of care leavers in vocational training. 2005 was the last time data were gathered on the situation young people were in when residential care provided by the child and youth welfare services came to an end.

Table 3: School/ Training at the time of the completion of assistance (Section 34 SGB VIII; 2005)

AGE GROUP	SCHOOL	PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	NEITHER
15–18	61%	19%	20%
18–21	25%	43%	32%
>21	10%	46%	44%

It is a telling sign of the political attention paid to care leavers that the question about schooling and training was thereafter left out of official statistics.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bibb.de/datenreport/de/2014/19511.php>

<sup>8</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2014b): Daten zur Arbeitskräfteerhebung; Bevölkerung, Erwerbstätige, Erwerbslose, Erwerbspersonen, Nichterwerbspersonen nach Altersgruppen.

## 6. Statistics

The available data have been included in the text. There are also major regional differences. Another table follows.

Table 4: Young people (16-26) in care (foster care and residential care) by gender (Germany; 2013; completed residencies)<sup>9</sup>

AGE	YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE*	MALE	FEMALE
<b>Number</b>			
<b>0-17</b>	34423	18129	16294
<b>16-17</b>	10592	5461	5131
<b>18-20</b>	3946	2072	1874
<b>21-26</b>	937	501	436
<b>Percentage</b>			
<b>0-17</b>	100	52.7	47.3
<b>16-17</b>	100	51.6	48.4
<b>18-20</b>	100	52.5	47.5
<b>21-26</b>	100	53.5	46.5

\* accommodation according to Sections 33, 34 without 27.2 of SGB VIII

<sup>9</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt: Statistiken der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – Erzieherische Hilfen; 2013; compilation and calculations by Arbeitsstelle Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistik (<http://www.hzemonitor.akjstat.tu-dortmund.de/>).

## **PART 2 : YOUTH WORKER EXCHANGE – FEEDBACK AND ANALYSIS**

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## 7. The youth worker exchange's feedback

### 7.1 Invitation Meeting and environment of the foundation and the exchange program<sup>10</sup>

The week-long visit to Germany was centred on the towns of Unna and Dortmund, both of which are in North Rhine-Westphalia. The KJHK (Child and Youth Services Concepts) in Unna had the main responsibility for the programme for the visit. In addition to the KJHK's own programmes, the youth workers from Poland also informed themselves about other residential and non-residential educational care services with an emphasis on transitions to training and work, training opportunities for underprivileged adolescents and also special programmes for young refugees.

### 7.2 Introduction to the work of the KJHK Unna, its history and its areas of responsibility

The Child and Youth Services GmbH (KJHK), founded in 2008, has independent responsibility for assistance services for children and adolescents and has its headquarters in Unna. The institution has two pedagogic senior staff members, 14 social workers plus trainees. All types of educational care are organised through the local Youth Welfare Offices in Unna or by the district Youth Care Office. In the course of care planning discussions (as in Section 36 SGB VIII – Social Code) the need for support is ascertained and put into effect in line with the conceptional standards of the institution. The procedure leading to organisation of assistance can be summarized as follows:

Care Planning: Conference with the young person, usually involving the parents, the child and the Youth Welfare Office, the care institution and in some cases another relevant stakeholder. A member of the Youth Welfare Office looks for a suitable accommodation for an adolescent.

1. A young person or his or her parents asks for help or someone else draws the attention of the Youth Welfare Office to the possible need for help in a family.
2. If care is likely to be needed, the Youth Welfare Office asks the chiefs of the KJHK if they are able to take care of this adolescent.
3. A care planning meeting is organized. The participants are: the member of the Youth Welfare Office, one chief and one employee of the KJHK, the adolescent, and - where appropriate - the parents.
4. At the end of the meeting every participant – but especially the young person (!) – has to decide if he or she can suggest a care agreement requiring cooperation of the young person.
5. If everyone agrees to the care plan the transition of the adolescent into care of KJHK has to be planned.

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<sup>10</sup> Schedule of the exchange program in Unna and Dortmund see at the end of the document.

6. As a next step the young person moves into a flat rented by the KJHK.

### 7.2.1 The programs of the KJHK Unna

The programs of the KJHK Unna are divided into three categories:

- › First there is residential educational care for adolescents and young adults from the age of 16 onwards. These are young people who for differing social reasons are no longer able to live with their parents but who – perhaps because of their age or their biographical experiences – are not able or willing to be housed in a residential group or foster family. The KJHK offers a form of residential assisted living arrangement for these young people. This ‘group avoidance’ programme involves accommodation and support (care code approx. 1 carer for 3 adolescents or young adults) living in flats rented by the KJHK in single or so-called tandem accommodation where the young people can live either alone or with one other person. All flats have a built-in kitchen and the living/sleeping area is furnished. A washing machine and TV are provided.

The recipients are fully looked after and receive support and guidance in all aspects of their lives. They receive so-called targeted support which involves exclusive support times. The young people receive support enabling them to become gradually independent and responsible in managing their day to day lives. This entails going to school or to work, doing their daily housework (cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc.), buying food, healthcare, visit to doctors if necessary, overseeing and managing their own finances and also cultivating social relationships. The family of origin has a special role here. What is also desirable is close cooperation that encourages close personal interaction with the adolescents and young adults.

- › The KJHK also offers residential educational care for families. This is aimed at both or one parents who are of age and have the custodial care of their children. This programme involves living-in guidance to families in so-called training accommodation. The families receive support in the areas of housing, finances, health, dealing with various administrative authorities etc. The programme also implies support for the adjustment of parental upbringing measures and stabilisation of their personal situation.
- › And lastly the KJHK has a programme of non-residential educational care. This kind of support can come prior to any residential programmes so as to extend the period of transition to residential support and thus make the transition easier. Normally non-residential support comes after any residential programme. Following transition to an autonomous rental arrangement the young adult can receive a limited period of non-residential follow-up support in consultation with the Youth Welfare Office.

In addition to these regular programmes the KJHK has also recently acquired a clearing house. This is organized in a residential group setting and has 10 places for unaccompanied male refugees aged between 15 and 18. These young people have been taken into the custody of the Youth Welfare Office and can undergo a clearing process regarding their

situation. The duration of the clearing process is dependent on individual requirements, circumstances and individual care planning (as in Section 36 of the SGB VIII - Social Code). Usually this will take around three to six months. The clearing house is located in the centre of Kamen (some seven kilometres from Unna) in the direct vicinity of accommodation for around 100 refugees. Support (care code 1:1,6) is given by all-day, year-round pedagogic staff plus one member of the housekeeping staff, (professional) interpreters and volunteers. The group of unaccompanied, underage refugees belong to the care leaver category notwithstanding some special regulations in child and youth services. They come under the aegis of child and youth services if there are no accompanying relatives or adults to whom they are attached. There are, however, special issues that affect them as regards their experiences during their flight, preceding educational routes and knowledge of languages; ultimately it is primarily the restrictive regulations in aliens law which come into effect after they reach the age of 18 which apply and these make support, protection and education options fragile.

### **7.2.2 Groups of people involved (youth workers, care leavers, most important stakeholders, others)**

In Germany we don't have nationwide structural anchored offers of supporting transition from school to vocational education and employment especially for care leavers. Some care institutions combine child and youth care with educational trainings for this target group, but these are single local initiatives to create special support for young people from child and youth care. Normally the transition management from school, trainings and additional opportunities to follow an assisted apprenticeship for example or to finish school outside the regular school system is a complex infrastructure in every municipality for all disadvantaged young people. It depends on the local networks if there are arranged good networks between child and youth care, different offers of vocational support for young people with or without special handicaps and the public administration for vocational and employment support.

In Unna, a small city with about 60.000 inhabitants, there are good relationships between the different institutions, which makes it easier to arrange close networks to the different child and youth service offices, to schools and other educational institutions. In the child and youth services area the KJHK initially deals with the responsible youth welfare offices. In the district of Unna there are seven locally autonomous youth welfare offices and the youth welfare office of the Unna district that functions in three other local communities as the public sector body responsible for youth welfare, as well as local youth welfare offices with whom assistance planning for the individual young people and their families is administered and with whom decisions are made on the type and scope of assistance. But the KJHK also has dealings with superregional youth welfare offices that refer assistance to the responsible agencies; this makes for an additional five youth welfare offices (incl. three local communities in the Unna district as one youth welfare office) and two integration assistance bodies of the Westphalia-Lippe regional association

As far as supervision of the young people receiving support in training and work is concerned, good contacts exist with schools and cooperation arrangements with organisations such as the Vocational College Workshop Unna and the education provider IN VIA e.V. (see point 8.3) Students at these training and education establishments can, for

instance, acquire school leaving qualifications and at the same time practical work experience in the form of a traineeship. An example of this is the Vocational College Workshop Unna (see below) which offers as part of its preparation for training the possibility of acquiring a lower secondary school certificate in one year. To do this students have to attend the college for two days and do a traineeship for three days. The traineeship placement must be within one of the following occupational fields: food & housekeeping, metal, wood or construction technology with emphasis on colouration/design or business and administration. There are further educational programmes offering the possibility of a school leaving qualification run by other educational bodies or by the various different training programmes offered by the three vocational colleges in the city of Unna. Attending the Unna municipal Further Training College could also be an option. Here there is the possibility of choosing between morning or evening courses. The educational bodies, including schools, are always coming up with new cooperation programmes with training options that change on an almost yearly basis (Werkstattjahr, Kurs & Projekt, "JUDIKA", etc.).

During the Youth Worker exchange we visited some of these actors. The training provider IN VIA e.V. in particular has no workshops of its own for the practical parts of training programmes and concentrates on practical in-company training. The KJHK regards this as a useful reality check (dealing with colleagues with professional and general experience, no peer group in the company, etc.) and is used for care leavers. Skilled employees benefit from cooperation between the actors involved since they know a lot about each other and can coordinate well. In specific individual cases this cooperation becomes very real and the young people get individual support through resource-oriented cooperation and division of tasks.

The KJHK has recently also become active in supporting unaccompanied underage refugees. For the young refugees there are still less structures for their transition to education and employment. Their opportunities in between the educational system depend on their age (under 18 year old young people are obliged to go to school) and on their residential permission. Although the intake of refugees is not new it is obvious that the educational integration needs leaves a lot of questions. Till now was a strong focus on the arrival situation of unaccompanied young people, but now since the figure of refugees who come to Germany arises really high the German educational system and the labour market need uncomplicated solutions to integrate people in the German society. In that period a lot is happening in the mode "learning by doing". A lot of new partnerships are developed during that time between schools, care system and companies, volunteers and so on. For the care system and for care leavers as well this could be a chance to improve ways of transition to education and work for disadvantaged people in general, because people out of the care system are also aware and interested in good ways of matching young people and for example businesses. In this context further cooperation partners such as preliminary registration offices, health bodies, clubs and organisations involved in migration and other cultures (of origin), local bodies, integration centres, etc., play an additional role in the KJHK.

Concluding, there are no formal procedures of cooperation. In every case youth workers have to create individual collaboration with other professionals and bring the different positions of social support and vocational support and the needs of the vocational and labour market together. That makes it necessary for youth workers to be good networkers and communicators to bring different tasks of transition from care to adulthood and from

school to apprenticeship and other individual needs like therapeutical treatments together. In Unna at the KJHK this challenge is done by weekly three hours team sessions in which the staff members discuss conditions of work in general and single cases as well.

### 7.2.3 Environment: Discover the organisation of the structure (system, pedagogical aspects)

KJHK Unna programmes are basically covered by the Children and Youth Services Act and can be described by the term mobile support. On the whole this form of residential support that is not located in one institution is a special form of assistance that cannot be found across the whole of Germany. Because of the intensity of the programme it is seen as a live-in measure even when the young people are not accommodated in a residential group or home and are not supported during the night. The flats in which the young people live are rented by the KJHK, meaning that they do not appear as autonomous tenants. At the same time they receive intensive support in the form of numerous weekly meetings and an on-call system during the night guarantees that there is always someone to approach if an emergency occurs outside of office hours.

In some cases they can, after a training phase, also take over the rental contracts entered into by the KJHK with private landlords and housing associations. This means that they do not have to move as soon as their residential support ends. As soon as they become the main tenant their residential support ends but they can stay in their habitual surroundings and continue without interruption with the skills they have acquired and familiarity with a lifestyle oriented towards autonomy. At this point the young people can continue to receive non-residential support. Currently 53 young people in 50 flats rented by the organization are receiving support based on this concept. Of these an average of five flats are rented by the KJHK. The plan is that the rental contracts can be taken over by the young people as part of the transition process from residential support.

There are indications that this support environment also stabilizes transitions to training and work because

- a) the transition from the residential setting is already designed as a real exercise in autonomous living,
- b) preparations for adult life really are guided by individual needs and not by institutional regulations, as is often the case and
- c) the formal preparations (application for electricity, registering with Registration Office, informing authorities of new address, etc.) have been completed before support ends and
- d) the reconcilability of autonomous accommodation arrangements and the training perspective is in this phase already part of transition preparation and testing. In Germany – in contrast to Poland – continuation of educational care while attending training is theoretically possible by law (Section 41 SGB VIII) but is not the rule. This means that many care leavers in Germany must prepare themselves while receiving educational care to obtain a vocational qualification on their own or seek support for this from an alternative source to educational care. Only less people cared for at the KJHK Unna are in a vocational training. It depends on their access to the vocational and labour market. Young people in care often haven't finished school at the age of 18.

## 7.3 The meetings with youth workers and youngsters

During the exchange in Germany we met 20 youth workers. Most of them we could talk to are working at the KJHK. We also had the opportunity to observe interactions with young people and we took part in discussions/counselling of cases during the team meeting. In the clearing house for young refugees in Kamen we talked to two youth workers about their work with young unaccompanied asylum seeking refugees during their first months in Germany.

On the second day we went to Dortmund to GrünBau gGmbH, an institution working in one training offer especially on preparing young people from child and youth care for vocational education or the labour market (not less of them are searching for a job without any vocational education). There we met three youth workers, one of them (care leaver herself) counselling care leavers in any topics. The other two were concerned with the vocational training for care leavers – young refugees as well.

In the afternoon we went to a school for disadvantaged young people. There we met one youth worker, responsible for the school and three teachers, two of them new at the school and one of the founders of the school.

On Wednesday we took part in the team meeting of the KJHK where we had the opportunity to follow the discussions about cases and organizational topics. During this meeting we could ask questions to the staff members and their experiences in the field of transition of care leavers and about the cases they presented in the meeting. In the afternoon we could accompany a youth worker during a visit at a youngster's flat.

On Thursday we visited IN VIA e.V. who explained their vocational support, no exclusive offer for care leavers, but for disadvantaged young people in general.

Altogether we could interview five young people in care.

### 7.3.1 Interviews with care leavers

We met with care leavers while talking about their experiences in residential assistance programmes, their educational plans and educational perspectives and also in transiting from support programmes.

- › Care leavers emphasise during discussions that in view of their previous personal experiences, it can be helpful to have some flexibility and alternatives on ways to achieve educational and training certificates and qualification. If a young person decides to open up about his or her personal situation in talking to teachers or during in-company training, this could smooth out any detrimental effects. This could prevent someone giving up school or training altogether by, for instance, substituting school attendance with a traineeship or a way of extending training duration and special support (i.e. by trusted supervisors).
- › Support must be firmly anchored within the residential educational care programme. This could, for example, take the form of special kinds of homework supervision and private tuition. In larger establishments it should be ensured that training planning is carried out by specially trained skilled staff and that other actors in the education field are involved. Some youth welfare services don't bear the costs for private tuition and young persons living in residential care are also not included in the target

group which receives public grants (in Germany so-called “Bildungs- und Teilhabepaket”) like for tuition. That is why the access to additional tuition often is refused.

- › It would be useful to have an entitlement to a regular contact person/supervisor/mentor who can give qualified assistance during preparation for examinations for the duration of training. Often those responsible in training companies can play a key role in assisting care leavers during training.
- › If someone is undergoing in-company training and already earning money during this period, this should not be penalised. The money can either be offset against residential educational care or used as an opportunity to allow care leavers to occupy a flat of their own and then no longer receive financial support from an assistance programme for children and adolescents. From that point in time the situation of care leavers becomes more difficult and this can have negative effects on their training path.
- › Support for the training objectives of care leavers during the residential support period is a key factor for any later training successes. It is particularly important to create a positive training environment during residential assistance:

Illustrative excerpt from an interview:

*“Well, I did my A levels (Abitur) and first I didn’t get much support in the residential group because they didn’t know the situation, so actually I wasn’t so well supported because in the home there were only average or special needs students, whatever. I think one of them had done a secondary school certificate – I never came across a high school student, there weren’t any. For me it was quite simple, I wanted to do my A levels and get some reasonable training or I even wanted to go on and study. But I no longer did this. I got no real support. My supervisors had no idea of what I was doing at school because I did my A levels in business studies. I then got private tuition through the Youth Welfare Office so that at least I got a bit of support. I then just managed to scrape through the A levels. It is tiring. You don’t have peace and quiet in a place like that, that’s the way it is. The others want their own way, they want to listen to music at full volume or think they have to stamp around in the corridor, and if you’re sitting there and have to study for your A levels, it’s really hard, it simply doesn’t work like that. And I had to look for a trainee position myself, my supervisor wanted me to do a social year and I said I didn’t want that. I didn’t want to do anything social.”*

- › When someone is starting in-company training, it can be useful to try and gain understanding for the young trainee and maybe look for any regular contact persons or mentor there may be there who can monitor training from the perspective of the training company and maintain contact with a supervisor or vocational school teacher:

Illustrative excerpt from an interview:

*“Well, in the company where I started my training they said afterwards that I took a very long time to open up, because of my past. I’m quite cool about that now. When I’m criticized I say, that’s the way it is. I used to freak out and couldn’t stand being criticized. Until you have built up trust. That has now changed.”*

## 7.4 The meetings with external stakeholders and partners on professional integration

Two meetings took place with external stakeholders on professional integration: the Werkstatt Berufskolleg and IN VIA e.V., both located in Unna are especially concerned with educational topics.

## 7.5 The good practices

- › The KJHK is a child and youth care institution with high professional standards. In comparison to the Polish system they work with a big confidence in the capacities of young people and the resources which could be developed with them. In their daily work they exude a lot of motivation to support young people. They act flexible regarding the needs and circumstances they are concerned with every day. That makes their work efficient and clear for the young people and other partners. They really esteem the young people they are working with and have a lot of respect with each other. The quality of their work was represented during the team meeting for example in structured and sophisticated case analyses. They get professional supervision by an external coach either. That shows their understanding of reflective idea of social work.  
We discovered an open, friendly atmosphere in the Clearinghouse, despite cultural and linguistic barriers. The staff members did their best to perform the clearing house to a home on time.
- › At the GrünBau gGmbH we realized how important is a good atmosphere for any questions of care, transition and preparation for vocational training and

employment. Young people have the chance to be taken care for and to be an apprentice/trainee. Both parts are included in a holistic concept of support for young adults. Additionally they have a place where they can come together every day: They can have shared meals for less money in a friendly and creative atmosphere. We took part in such a diner situation and were really excited how familiar they are coming together. Also alumni take this opportunity to come back for a meal, get advice or meet friends or their former youth worker. This model is a good and low level basis for a shared place to get to know the stories of others and to attend continuous relationships.

- › The Werkstatt Berufskolleg was a really professional organization to prepare young people for the labour market. It is a successful school to offer individual learning arrangements in small groups for disadvantaged people and the needs of young refugees (for example to learn the language first and then the fluid integration into the school systems via special classes for refugees which they can leave whenever they are prepared enough to change into a regular class).

## 7.6 Concluding Meeting

During the concluding meeting we discussed the specific conditions for care leavers in Germany in comparison to the situation in Poland. First of all, the leader of KJHK and the youth worker coordinating the exchange explained that most of the young people who were supported by KJHK are not very successful in school and could not gain a transition to a regular vocational training in a company or a vocational school during their stay in care. In these cases first of all gaining a school degree is a main task regarding educational aims during care. A collaboration with institutions like IN VIA e.V. or Werkstatt Berufskolleg could be very helpful, because they offer alternative ways to get a school degree or a vocational orientation and pedagogical support as well.

In general in Germany the educational goals and opportunities of young people in care are very heterogeneous. A part of them needs assistance and after child and youth care they get good support in the rehabilitation and integration system for handicapped people. Those who would fulfil a higher education are confronted with a lot of barriers in the care system, because the child and youth care office tries to avoid long term school careers of care leavers. That makes it easier to let care end at the age of 18 when they fulfilled their school obligation. If these young people are interfered to an apprenticeship or assisted vocational training child and youth care seems to be not necessary anymore. After that the system of vocational support is responsible then. The focus in this system bases on training and demand. The emphasis is not on care, but on integration into the labour market.

So the German child and youth care is not obliged to offer support till the end of vocational education. That makes it difficult for care leavers to pursue an individual vocational education. The transition from care often takes place in between a lot of biographical decisions, especially during the period of vocational orientation. This could be seen as one

reason for the educational failure of care leavers. They miss a continuous support during their – often later than their peers – gain of school degrees and during their (attempts of) vocational education. This situation longs to an actual German discussion about better educational opportunities for care leavers and about better collaborations between social services in this period of transition.

## 8. The vocational integration

### 8.1 What does the structure to help the professional integration of the young care leavers?

Generally speaking it is obvious that the education system in Poland is very different to that in Germany. In Poland there are no in-company training programmes. Care leavers can go to university which is attended by around 50% of school leavers. There are also school training routes. Most care leavers do not study at university which means that they can be rated as additionally disadvantaged in regard to educational opportunities, given the high percentage of those who study.

As part of educational care most of the young people aim for an intermediary education qualification (advanced technical certificate). Certificates lower than this tend to reduce the likelihood of dual training openings. Depending on the age of the young people when starting residential assistance, it is first necessary to obtain preliminary education qualifications. But attending school is often an important topic in the family of origin and some young people have not attended school regularly for a long time prior to starting on residential assistance. This is also often an indicator for them being accepted for the programme. Individual concepts need to be worked out in individual cases with the schools, parents and possibly with colleagues so as to re-integrate school-weary or truant adolescents into the school system. The chances of being successful on the labour market are good with an intermediary school leaving certificate. Possible with a lower secondary school certificate after Grade 10 as long as basic skills such as punctuality, diligence and honesty are demonstrated. Qualified transition management is especially difficult for older adolescents aiming for a higher education entrance qualification (advanced technical certificate or A levels). It is always extremely complicated for these young people to obtain funds. Funding from a job centre is generally not possible, the reliable cooperation of parents is required for an application for BAFöG (federal support for education). In addition to this BAFöG is not generally sufficient to fund an autonomous life and must be applied for on a yearly basis; processing by the authorities takes up a lot of time during which funding – and hence a secure livelihood – is jeopardized. Staying in a residential assistance programme is often then only possible because of inadequate financial backup and not on the grounds of an increased requirement for educational care. The different Youth Welfare Offices have differing views on this point, however. It can generally be claimed that residential assistance for young people works well (including as regards school leaving qualifications, obtaining qualifications and finding a training position.) if assistance can be started early and is not delayed until the resources of the family of origin are depleted and truancy is already being displayed. Youth Welfare Offices and agencies should also have enough time at their

disposal before funding is exhausted. The processes of becoming independent and self-efficacy require above all time. Scope for experiencing periods of succeeding and not succeeding are important for young people and young adults and also require trust and time.

Typical cases involved getting a school leaving certificate and placement in one of several consecutive training measures. By then the young people often already young adults and they themselves or the Youth Welfare Office aim for an end to residential assistance. Adolescents and young adults receiving residential support care have usually experienced troubled personal situations before residential assistance was initiated. This means that it is often expected of young people with troubled personal situations that are so serious that residence assistance is required should start training at an age that is statistically much younger than the average in their age cohort.

## 8.2 The role of the youth worker

The youth worker in residential care we met in the institutions during the exchange in Germany can be seen in different roles while preparing young people for their transition to adulthood.

Often the care work and treatment is prepeded. Educational support like help with homework or tutoring isn't seen as a superior topic in care. This task often is attributed to the school systems or other actors in the educational system. But youth workers are role models for young people regarding their attitude toward educational topics and vocational decisions. If youth worker motivate young people in care and support them in school affairs they could develop more confidence and aspiration.

Additionally youth worker have the responsibility to collect information about the school and vocational system when the decision about the future after school has to be prepared. They have to build up contacts to special services for vocational counselling and training. They are coordinators of knowledge about the vocational educational system and the requirements of the labour market.

A third role of the youth worker is the one of a supervisor or coach. They have to help young people in care to find out more about their interests, strengths and opportunities when they make their planning and decisions about their transition to vocational education or employment. This is a part of care work which could not be underestimated. Like the group work and care leaver camps are part of an assessment and "Selbsterfahrungstraining" also in everyday work young people in care should get the chance to reflect and to identify their interests – also in a playful way. Youth workers have to be a guide in this challenge.

At last youth workers also have to be gatekeeper for care leaver. They should, like parents would do it, use their personal networks and contacts to bring the young people in contact with potential employers, companies or vocational trainers.

## 8.3 The different partnerships of the structure

### 8.3.1 KJHK Unna residential and non-residential Clearinghouse

After being introduced to the history and areas of activity of the KJHK Unna, it was time for a visit to one of the KJHK Unna's more recent work projects. Since November 2015 the organization has maintained a clearing house for unaccompanied underage refugees in the Unna region. According to German law, young refugees who enter Germany without their parents or another adult to whom they are attached automatically come under the auspices of children and youth services.

Since 15.11.2015 the KJHK provides a fully residential service for up to 10 young males aged 15-18 in the Unna district in order to implement the clearing process stipulated in Section 42 ff. SGB VIII (Children and Youth Services Act) in association with the legal tenets on residential educational care (Section 27, 34 SGB VII). In the clearing process the agencies involved, under the direction of the Youth Welfare Office, clarify details of the age, stage of development and education and the health of the child or young person. The clearing house is responsible for accommodation and safeguarding physical and mental basic needs. This includes medical treatment, education programmes, teaching the German language and hence a start to accessing the education system.

Those involved are unaccompanied underage foreign young adults seeking protection who, following provisional custody, are referred to the residential clearing process via one of the Youth Welfare Offices. An additional programme was set up as from 1.12.2015 whereby the so-called non-residential clearing process is open to unaccompanied underage refugees. During the clearing which lasts for about three months the staff members will have to clear the situation of the young people (age, land of origin, family situation, health condition, therapeutic and pedagogical needs, educational perspectives and so on). After this clearing period these young people could go further to a regular child and youth care institution for young refugees or to a non-specialized institution.

The mainly Syrian, Afghan and Moroccan adolescents have high integration motivation and respond to their social environment with many positive social skills. The young people report that after the long and debilitating experiences of their flight, they then feel safe and welcome.

### 8.3.2 GrünBau gGmbH<sup>11</sup>

As part of our weeks' visit we also called on cooperating providers in the town of Unna and the GrünBau gGmbH as an innovative provider of services to children and young adults offering special programmes in the area of educational care and support for young people plus vocational qualification and integration in the training and labour market.

The GrünBau gGmbH is a non-profit provider of child and youth services in Dortmund with a total of 135 employees from various occupational categories. In all it makes available 340 occupational assistance and support positions for long-term unemployed and adolescents /young adults. The GrünBau gGmbH has two main areas of operation:

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.gruenbau-dortmund.de/dienstleistungen/jugendhilfe/jawoll-mob-beruf-und-wohnen/>

### › Labour market services

These consist of (non-profit) services in the following areas: employment openings for the unemployed, vocational qualification measures, preparation for employment and counselling, coaching and job placement.

### › Child and youth services

As part of the vocational employment and qualification services, additional stabilising assistance in the residential and non-residential sectors (assisted living etc.) are available to young people in need of special support and also assistance for those who are tired of school. The economic and social corporate sections are integrated into a holistic operational concept:

- vocational qualification of unemployed men and women
- social stabilisation of participants
- Employment orientation and market activity through the provision of useful products and services.

GrünBau gGmbH describes itself as a “social vocational support company” and does commissioned work for the entire Dortmund municipal area and the surrounding district.

GrünBau gGmbH offers a wide variety of different kinds of assistance for young people. The area of particular interest as part of the visit programme linked to the Abeona project and one that was dealt with in some depth in the presentation was the activity called “Jawoll-Beruf und Wohnen”, meaning something like “Job & Housing – No Kidding!” GrünBau gGmbH has run this activity for the past 20 years. It is a residential educational care programme based on the legal tenets of Sections 27ff. SGB (Children and Youth Services Act). The main pillars of the programme are daily structured vocational orientation and assisted living, building a basis for autonomous living. The programme targets in particular German adolescents and young adults and unaccompanied underage refugees who are school-weary or who refuse to go to school.

One of the strong points of this activity is its high degree of professionalism in the vocational preparation of care leavers. The participants in the programme are expected to reciprocate with strong commitment. The goal is to prepare young people for living in their own home, enable them to develop their own perspectives and to develop with them viable transitions to training and work. Young people can live in flats owned by the provider. There are 12 places in mobile assisted flats available for this (cf KJHK Unna). What is important here it to look at all aspects of life and create scope for development through suitable programmes:

- There are provider- owned programmes for vocational orientation and qualification and assessments of own ability. The creation of a structured day in relation to work is a key element in monitoring and preparing the young people.
- The provider carries out projects on commission in the construction and subsidiary construction sector during which the young people experience real developments in the world of work but can still safely prepare themselves for the demands placed on them.

- The adolescents and young adults can obtain certificates which will be useful for them in starting a job, i.e. driving licence for construction vehicles.
- The provider also has a Youth Services Centre (a contact and counselling office) where an inexpensive, warm midday meal, coaching and leisure activities are on offer.
- Young people continue to be supported through the “Jawoll! programme helping them to find vocational training and work.
- In order to prepare young people to participate in social life, participation options form a firm part of the programme and are organized and developed with their cooperation. GrünBau gGmbH has, for instance, a youth parliament and a theatrical group in which care leavers actively participate.

This programme dovetails with other more or less intensive support formats. There is, for instance, non-residential follow-up support after residential assistance ceases. There is preparation for an autonomous life for young people who reject intensive support and also specialised programmes for unaccompanied underage refugees in which the main focus is on confidence building, individual promotion and educational/vocational qualification. GrünBau gGmbH also offers special consultation sessions for care leavers who have experienced flight which is conducted by qualified care leavers.

Coaching programmes directed at young refugees and others with a migration background can also give model incentives for the vocational integration of care leavers as a whole:

Young people who come to Germany as new immigrants are regarded as having above-average motivation to start training and learn a profession so as to be integrated into society and live a life of economic independence. Although this is possible regardless of residence status, young refugees and new immigrants often meet with a number of obstacles. This project is intended to support young refugees and new immigrants who seek a suitable training opportunity or vocational qualification, lack of skilled labour and demographic factors being among the underlying incentives.

The programme is directed at those whose languages skills and educational level can meet the standards of a dual training system. It spans the full process, from the decision on a suitable recognised trade, the application phase and then support measures after training has been successfully commenced

In detail this means:

- analysis of the wishes and abilities of the potential trainee (profiling/potential analysis)
- where it is appropriate to insert a preliminary qualification module or practical training before starting training , we assist with finding something appropriate.
- the acquisition of training companies in direct cooperation with the Chamber of Crafts and Chamber of Commerce.
- preparation of application documentation together with the applicant (photos of applicant may be included) and preparation for the interview.
- accompanying and supporting participants during dealings with authorities (aliens’ registration office, employment agency, welfare office).
- we help with the recognition of any foreign education qualifications .
- support with applying for vocational training assistance in cases where an entitlement exists.

- support needs arising after training commencement, i.e. to arbitrate in any conflict between trainer and trainees or to improve language skills.

Demonstrably the variety of programmes at GrünBau gGmbH opens the way for individual assistance. Its networking with other social services, education institutions and the good infrastructure, i.e. with the Youth Services Centre or the Youth Parliament, create a strong bonding effect, including for former participants. During our visit, for instance, we witnessed how young people no longer in care sometimes dropped by the meet up with others in familiar surroundings.

This can be the opportunity to receive any advice needed and has a strong stabilizing effect just by offering the opportunity to go back.

### 8.3.3 Vocational College Workshop (“Werkstatt Berufskolleg”)

The Vocational College Workshop in the Unna district has existed since 2012. It offers (renewed) access to obtaining a school leaving or training qualification to young people with uneven personal histories, with or without school leaving certificates, with or without disabilities, from special needs schools and for the reorientation of people with learning difficulties. The Vocational College defines itself as an inclusive school. All teaching staff members have other qualifications apart from their teacher training and come from private enterprise. The Vocational College Workshop aligns its instruction to the real lives of its students; all students are entitled to individual tuition or special tuition in small groups with intensive support. In the normal education system disadvantaged young people and/or those with special needs find difficulty in pursuing their vocational objectives – especially in the area of vocational training, with 1000-2000 students in a vocational college unit. For this group of people the Vocational College Workshop is a school that offers an alternative form of schooling adjusted to their special needs and individual requirements. The College started in 2012 with 180 students. Now there are 420 students being taught by 32 colleagues and a school social worker. There is also well-functioning cooperation with outside social services, for instance a psychologist comes to the College once a week to assist refugees who have experienced traumas. The education standard of the refugees is very disparate. There are refugees who had already started to study in their homeland and who have to start again with learning a language and at the other end of the scale young refugees who first have to learn to read and write.

For young people who have experienced flight, there are several grades in the language entry-level classes which can lead to obtaining a school leaving certificate or supply vocational preparation. There are also various forms of vocational training (vocational schools for various areas of activity) and also a dual training programme in which both practical in-company training in warehouse logistics and the accompanying theoretical tuition is provided by the Vocational College Workshop.

In the vocational preparation classes students can choose between five vocational fields:

- Nutrition and home economics
- Metal technology
- Wood technology
- Construction technology with specialisation in colouring and design
- Business and administration

The young people are supported until they can gradually become autonomous in their vocational, social and private spheres. They are actively involved in what is happening in the vocational training, education and labour markets. Their experiences and personal worlds are taken seriously and trained staff work together with them to identify how their qualification can be reconciled with their vision of working and their future professional life. The objective is to work together to achieve integration into the labour market.

In this process they can try out all vocational areas and do their lower secondary school certificate after Ninth Grade. Those who have this as their objective can also be prepared for a lower secondary school certificate after Tenth Grade.

If the young people under supervision do not attend vocational preparation classes but fulfil the other requirements, the Vocational College Workshop also supports traineeships (2 days school, 3 days in-company) with an employer of their choice. This is already possible after they have completed their 10 compulsory school years

Students who wish to obtain a lower secondary school certificate after Grade 10 but who have not yet decided on their vocational training goals have the opportunity of attending the College's vocational training school. There are three vocational training areas available for trial:

- Nutrition and health care management
- Metal technology (with possible additional qualification of fork lift truck licence)
- Business and administration

They have the opportunity of testing whether the area selected suits them in two companies offering training.

There are an average of 17 students in a class at the College. Generally speaking students can be accepted from the age of 16 on. In exceptional cases or when social-pedagogic support is on hand, younger students can also be taught at the Vocational College Workshop. It is planned to also conduct classes in the French or Arabic languages to enable refugees to be better integrated. Some programmes are funded by the Youth Welfare Office. But there are other fund suppliers, i.e. the federal government and the state of NRW.

### 8.3.4 IN VIA e.V.<sup>12</sup>

The name IN VIA e.V. Catholic Association for Social Work for Girls and Women is explained by its history and initially the group only supported this group. Since then IN VIA has acquired a broad range of programmes and also caters for boys and young men. They run institutions in different cities in Germany now. IN VIA Unna is active in school social work, vocational assistance, and offers further training and integration courses. It also runs a counselling programme for those interested in doing a voluntary social year.

The association now has a focus on counselling and integration support for young migrants of various ages and nationalities, international education and leisure programmes, cultural facilities and the supervision of unaccompanied underage refugees.

The area of counselling, supervision and training of young girls and women on their way to shaping their own lives from school to work and in their search for appropriate social

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<sup>12</sup> [www.invia-unna.de](http://www.invia-unna.de)

services continues to be one of IN VIA's main focuses. IN VIA programmes aim at helping women in particular to develop their strengths, look after their interests and find their own way. The Advice Centre for Youth and Employment is a particularly important base in the Unna region for assisting young people on their path through training and work.

The Advice Centre for Youth and Employment addresses the needs of adolescents and young adults who require individual support in their transition from school to employment by the provision of:

- counselling oriented towards the individual case
- one-to-one discussions
- support in overcoming job-related and personal difficulties
- discovering personal strengths and use of available resources
- involvement of and social-pedagogic support for parents
- networking with all individuals, institutions and organisations involved
- vocational orientation and job interviews, help in compiling interview documentation
- provision of information on various occupations
- accompaniment to advisory bodies, training establishments, companies and authorities

#### *A short list of interesting structures / methods / attitudes in working with young people in care*

**KJHK:** *Enables youth to live independently in the flats; approaches to each care leaver individually; conducts supervisions for workers, discusses the ideas and progress of work with a ward, uses the tools of coaching; The company is composed of young, full of energy and ideas team of social workers led by experienced leaders; KJHK has at its disposal adequate infrastructure (about 40 flats – single/double rooms, office, cars).*

**Clearinghouse:** *Has been created in response to the need of the specific moment, as a friendly venue for youth where the experience of openness and understanding for refugees' situation is possible; it emphasizes classes of the German language and enjoyable time. It would be fair to pay attention to the mobility of the team, methods, and potentialities of the fundraising. On the basis of available resources it was possible to launch a brand-new institution.*

**GrünBau gGmbH:** *It is a place, organization which has a patchwork structure. It brings varied people and offers multifarious customized programs. That is both work on the premises, art as well as practice in gardening companies and integration. The entire community take part in creating very unique atmosphere of this place.*

#### *The main tasks and aims in the different visited institution*

**KJHK:** *Foster care combined with emancipation through habituation of living independently in the flats, child welfare, their affairs, domestic duties.*

**Clearinghouse:** Care of young people separated from their families during data collection, documentation in the refugee procedure

**GrünBau gGmbH:** Integration, supporting people who find it difficult to live in the society and not to get lost in the legal articles, rules, to use their skills in the labour market.

## 9. Analysis of needs

### 9.1 Need of support for the youngsters

If transitions into training and a successful conclusion of training are to be successful for young people receiving residential educational care in Germany, better structurally embedded support measures after reaching the age of majority are required.

Furthermore, individualization, work on priorities, on what it is independence, responsibility and bear the consequences of their actions; valuable seems training of practical skills, such as writing a CV, preparing for an interview, familiar with the duties and privileges. It is important to use the patterns and example of people who have already gone through a similar path.

### 9.2 Need for formal structures in the care system

Young people who leave residential educational care programmes need the chance to be able to return there after assistance has ceased. Re-visiting this holistic, individual form of support, particularly if problems and crises occur during vocational training, can help bring stability back into the lives of these young people and help them achieve their vocational qualification. This need for support is completely normal up to the third decade of life and should in the first instance be supplied by the educational care with which the care leavers are familiar if the young people want a continuation of educational care /support for young adults by the assistance for children and young people programme.

After leaving residential educational care and particularly during vocational training, the financial situation of care leavers is very fragile. Sometimes even foregoing training and opting for full social benefits to safeguard livelihood can be a more secure financial basis. The varying funding sources from which trainees and students finance themselves and the lack of legal entitlements to additional payments during training (i.e. for a laptop, study materials, etc.) causes great material uncertainties which can jeopardize achieving a vocational qualification. In this area better financial provision for care leavers during their training or the possibility of saving money during the care period would be important steps to improving training and education outlooks.

Lower thresholds at contact points for care leavers with differing counselling requirements in all local administrative units could make for better transitions from support.

The youth workers who were interviewed were of the opinion that workshops for care leavers on various different topics could improve preparation for leaving residential educational care. In this context group settings and specific rehearsing of skills by means of exercises and role games could contribute to a reflected critical involvement with the challenges of taking responsibility for one's own life. The following workshop topics serve as examples:

- what should I watch out for when signing contracts?
- how should I go about telephone calls and discussions with authorities?
- how do I look after my health care (make doctors' appointments, etc.)?
- how can I take the initiative when I need information?
- how can I avoid getting into debt?

### 9.3 Need for skills for youth workers

Since the training system and the options for vocational support are very complex in Germany, youth workers need to have a good overview of the local services and the people to contact. Without good networking of the actors involved in transition management but also with the general and vocational school and training companies already, there can be no guarantee that young people give sufficient thought to their career perspectives and go about choosing the right career and applying for a trainee position or a place at college successfully.

We appreciate the personal approach to the individual. From the Polish perspective it is very clear in Germany. However, taking into account the developmental tasks, it has to meet the adolescent, such as building a sense of belonging, positive identification with a group, a sense of acceptance, safety, an urgent need appears to be the creation of groups of young people having common goals, overcoming similar difficulties. Take advantage of the potential of incentive groups in gaining independence and professional integration.

## 10. Conclusions and good practices

**KJHK:** It is a very dynamic, ambitious, brilliant, inventive, well-educated young people specialized in the social work. The inexperience is their weakness and strength at the same. On the one hand it means that there is a need to continuous learning, on the other it allows to have a fresh, non-routine approach. Their work is hard and demanding. Being backed up by the team makes caring out given mission possible.

**Clearinghouse:** The employees are very open. They have a professional knowledge about forced migration; despite having troubles with communication they are able to create friendly atmosphere which in turn makes for the complacency.

**GrünBau gGmbH:** While the openness and commitment of the entire staff are visible yet peacefulness affects each person going through the gateway. The work is done on the resources of each of the charges.

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## 12. Appendix

### Schedule for the Abeona Youth Worker Exchange between the Robinson Crusoe Foundation Warzaw and the KJHK Unna GmbH

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>MORNING 9-12</b>	Welcome at the KJHK Unna with Frank Vogt and Jasmin Flake	Visiting Grünbau GmbH Dortmund	Team-Meeting KJHK Unna	9-11: Visiting "In Via" Unna Social Service for girls and women, special projects for supporting education, also for refugees	10.30- 13: Accompanying youth workers of KJHK in their care work
	Introduction into the organization structure				Visiting the social pediatric center in Unna Königsborn <sup>13</sup>
	The tasks of the institution				
	Local environment				Meeting families who are in care at the KJHK
<b>Lunchtime</b>					
<b>AFTERNOON 14-18</b>	12.-15: Visiting Clearinghouse (house for refugees)	Visiting "Werkstatt Berufskoleg" Unna <sup>14</sup> School for disadvantaged young people without graduation: School, vocational learning and pedagogical support from one hand	Interviews with social workers, Explanations about the KJHK and the German school system	14-18: Supporting Care Leaver in practice: Accompanying youth workers of KJHK in their care work	15.00: Traveling back
	17.00: Interview with Julia (Care Leaver)		16.00: Interview with Anna-Lena (Care Leaver)	1. Care Leaver - counseling interview - "exclusive time": going for a walk and to a coffee → to get in contact with Care Leaver  2. See different flats	
<b>EVENING PROGRAM</b>		17:00 Guided tour through the light art center Unna <sup>15</sup>  Restaurant with Frank Vogt	Kuba departs at 18:30		

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.lebenszentrum-koenigsborn.de/sozialpaediatrisches-zentrum-koenigsborn/>

<sup>14</sup> [www.werkstatt-im-kreis-unna.de](http://www.werkstatt-im-kreis-unna.de)

<sup>15</sup> [www.lichtkunst-unna.de](http://www.lichtkunst-unna.de)

# Abeona

AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE  
TO CARE LEAVERS' PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION