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Danish Youth Policy

The Danish democracy is built upon its youth

Every generation must reinvent democracy. Democracy is not a form of government that is invented once and for all, but is a way of life that every generation must discover for themselves and come to deeply understand. Our youth bear the future of our democracy, and that is why it is so crucial that they develop an intuitive appreciation for the fundamental ideals that democracy entails.

Bertel Haarder

The Danish Government has not instituted a specific youth policy with a certain defined purpose. Every sector has its own field of responsibility regarding measures and policy for young people. However, the individual sectors dealing with young people all support initiatives that create a foundation for forming young people who are capable of leading independent lives and of putting these lives into a broader perspective and, at the same time, helping these young people become active, democratic citizens who can participate constructively in the development of society, while also giving them real influence and responsibility in matters that concern them.

The Danish youth policy is not an isolated, self-contained system within Danish legislation and policymaking. It is an integrated part of the general policies that support Denmark as an enlightened and open, democratic welfare society that is based on social coherence and strives to give everybody equal opportunities to obtain an education, a job and social security, thus creating the basis for the participation of young people in society.

Therefore, the responsibility for the Danish youth policy lies within the relevant national, regional and local authorities, as well as within the many voluntary (youth) organisations that

receive substantial funding from the Government.

Generally speaking, the Danish youth policy is a continuation of the Danish method of raising children, which provides the child with a safe environment, combined with possibilities for development and opportunities. Additionally, it is based on a method of teaching that emphasizes enlightenment and shared responsibility and a non-authoritarian education system that actively involves the young people. Moreover, Denmark is committed to establishing a knowledge-based society, with the aim of securing 95 % of all young people a youth education and half of all young people a higher education by 2015.

The youth policy is a vital part of our endeavours to create a strong economy and full employment, securing welfare, education and job opportunities. It is taken into consideration in our housing policy, which seeks to enable young people to find a place to live; as well as playing a role in the justice, social and integration policy, aiming to prevent crime and the social marginalisation of young people and to aid in successful integration. Apart from implementing the four EU objectives to improve active citizenship for the young people in the EU – i.e. information, participation, voluntary work and a greater knowledge about youth, – Denmark participates in a number of

international organisations dealing with youth policy.

All young people must complete a youth education

The Danish Government has made it an objective that all young people in Denmark should have a youth education in order to be prepared for the labour market and for further education. Young people should either undertake some form of vocational training or a general and vocational upper secondary education.

Presently, almost every young person enters a youth education, but many drop out. The drop-out rate is especially high for vocational training programmes. It is, therefore, the aim of the Government that by 2015 at least 95% of all young people should complete a youth education. At present the figure is 80%.

Young people that complete a vocational training programme have a high employment rate. And much of the vocational training gives young people high-level skills. However, the vocational training programmes also have many weaknesses. A dual vocational training system will always be sensitive in relation to demand and supply of practical training places. The situation is quite positive for the time being as the number of training places is very high and almost all students are able to find a practical training place. A few trades, though, are much in demand and students will have to look for other options. Other trades have severe difficulties in attracting students for training. The availability and contents of the educational programmes are not fully developed to match the new demands of the labour market.

The objective that everybody should have a youth education can only be reached if everybody involved with the education process lives up to their responsibility. The qualifications of the pupils from compulsory schools must be improved. The pupils, as well as their parents, must understand the importance of a youth education. The municipalities must be responsible for young

people enrolling in and finishing a youth education. The employers must secure a number of practical training places. The vocational schools must ensure a high standard of quality. The drop-out rate must be brought down for both the vocational training programmes and the general and vocational upper secondary educations.

The vocational education programmes must be divided into levels in order to cater to both the skilled and the lesser skilled students. Also, in the future, it must be made easier to cover more employment areas with relevant education programmes than at present and to adjust the supply of these programmes more swiftly in order to meet the new demands of the labour market.

To ensure the goal of securing 95 % of all young people a youth education by 2015, the Government has developed a strategy comprising 38 initiatives to implement all of the above mentioned intermediate aims, which will, hopefully, provide the necessary tools for all the players involved in this considerable task.

Apart from securing an education for the vast majority of well-functioning young people, we must also make an effort to involve the less fortunate young people. Therefore, the Danish Parliament has recently passed a law giving young people with learning disabilities a chance to finish a youth education that qualifies them personally, socially and professionally to live an independent and active life in the labour market, in their spare time and in the family.

The programme is aimed at young people with special needs who cannot finish an ordinary youth education, even if offered support or specially arranged teaching. Among others, the group consists of young people with severe motor-skills handicaps, multiple handicaps, and young people with autism, ADHD or other mental disabilities, as well as young people who have suffered brain-injuries.

The programme lasts three years; it is full time and free of charge for the individual young person. It is

designed according to the young person's qualifications, maturity and interests. The programme consists of a general educational part, aimed at improving the young person's personal and social development, and a specific educational, goal-directed part, aimed at improving the development of the young person's interests, abilities and special skills. Moreover, practical experience designed to develop and test the young person's opportunities outside the teaching environment are included. And, finally, guidance is also an integral part of the programme.

The programme can comprise elements supplied by vocational schools, production schools, continuation schools, home economics schools, workshops and other institutions. When the young person has completed the education, he or she will receive a letter of competence describing the qualifications obtained.

Creating a democratic youth by turning our young people into active citizens

As I mentioned above, we are striving to create the basis for a good youth culture and to endow our young people with a democratic mindset that enables them to enter and to carry on our open, democratic welfare society and to constantly develop it further. In the following lines I will try to describe how we are doing it.

A successful democracy needs active citizens. One of the most successful ways of democratizing our young people in Denmark is the great number of voluntary organisations within sport, leisure, politics, culture, religion, and social and humanitarian purposes that the vast majority of Danish children join. Participation in these organisations is based upon the desire to come together with like-minded people in a common cause, and it stimulates the children and youth socially and teaches them to cooperate with other people in organized and regulated forms, and, eventually, how to think and navigate in a democratic context.

Apart from child education and our widely-diverse organisations, Denmark is making a great effort to turn young people into active citizens by implementing the Danish Government's policy and the common EU objectives for information, participation and voluntary activities for young people, and by providing more information about young people. As the Danish youth policy system is based on a strictly decentralized model, the responsibility for providing information and for young people's participation and voluntary activities involves the relevant national sectors on the regional and local level. Furthermore, substantial funding is provided for non-governmental organisations active in the youth field. This applies especially to the Danish Youth Council (an umbrella organisation for approximately 70 national youth organisations), which receives funding and is also responsible for distributing government funding to both member and non-member organisations. The funding provided is not subject to politically determined pre-conditions, i.e. specific objectives, targets etc.

The following authorities (national, regional and local) and NGOs are responsible for providing information to young people in Denmark, and for their participation in voluntary activities in society, thus helping them to become active citizens:

The Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education has taken two important steps to improve the quality of and access to information for young people in recent years:

- 1 A number of public websites containing different kinds of information about education have been created. In order to improve access to these websites – and, thus, to improve access to information about education and other relevant subjects – the Ministry of Education has systematized these websites into a network of five main web-entrances:

- www.uvm.dk – information about

educational policy, rules, publications, etc;

- www.ug.dk – “the Education Guide”, which is a national guidance portal that provides information about education, training and careers;
- www.emu.dk – an electronic forum that provides information and inspiration to teachers, students, parents and professionals who work in the education system;
- www.sustystyrelsen.dk – the website of the Danish State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme Agency;
- www.ciriusonline.dk – the CIRIUS website (now under the auspices of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation), which provides information about the internationalization of education and training in Denmark.

These five main web-entrances all contain relevant information provided by the State about educational-related matters in Denmark.

- 2 Counselling activities in the education system and information about educational and vocational matters are closely connected, as well as given high priority in Denmark. To this end, the Danish Parliament adopted a new act on guidance in 2003, with the intention of making it easier for young people in the education system as well as those outside the education and employment spheres to make realistic decisions about learning opportunities and careers.

In accordance with the new act on guidance, two new types of guidance centres, which are independent from sectoral and institutional interests, have been established: 46 Youth Guidance Centres, which are to provide guidance in relation to the transition from compulsory schooling to youth education programmes, and seven Regional Guidance Centres, which are responsible for guidance from youth programmes to higher education. The counsellors from both types of centres are obliged to provide counselling and establish guidance activities at locations

close to the young people, i.e. at schools as well as at different neutral locations, i.e. public libraries, in order to ensure that geographical distance does not prevent people from getting access to relevant guidance services. Furthermore, they are obliged to establish contact with and provide counselling to young people who are outside the education system and labour market. The guidance activities consist of dialogue between young people and counsellors, student logbooks, workshops, seminars, career fairs, “café meetings”, individual and group guidance, etc.

Furthermore, a national guidance portal has been launched – www.ug.dk (the “Education Guide”), which provides information about all levels of education and training programmes, occupations/professions, labour market issues and learning opportunities abroad. It also includes an email based enquiry service; the possibility of developing an interactive personal educational plan; an internet-based guidance tool facilitating the choice of education; occupation and career relevant links, etc.

A further objective of the new act on guidance is to raise the quality level of Danish guidance, including improving guidance counsellors’ qualifications and competencies. This has been achieved by replacing a large number of short, sector-specific further training courses with one common training programme. Furthermore, a virtual centre specifically designed for guidance counsellors has been established, www.vejledningsavisen.dk.

The Ministry of Education also plays a central role in increasing young people’s participation in society, and the education system especially has a huge responsibility in the following ways: 1) educating pupils in the way democracies function, i.e. the political system and active participation in a democracy; 2) democracy in concrete teaching situations – it is implicit in the education system that students have a responsibility for their own learning; 3) participative attitude in teaching – the students are trained to be non-authoritarian, to adopt critical attitudes, and to

stand up for their rights and opinions; 4) influence on the everyday life of institutions and programmes of study – representative democracy, for instance, students have the right to elect teaching environment representatives to look after their interests. In addition, by focusing on the importance of participation and democracy, the Danish education system makes sure that young people who do not belong to any youth organisation are also active participants in the processes.

The Danish Parliament

Another initiative to improve the access to and quality of information to young people about Danish politics and the democratic processes taking place in the Danish Parliament was introduced by the Danish Parliament in 2003 when they launched a new website especially directed at young people (and their teachers) – www.ungtinget.dk (the Danish Parliament's website for children and young people). The website contains information about the Danish Parliament, Danish politics and democratic processes in general. Moreover, the website contains a debate forum for young people, relevant links, a lexicon, archives and a monthly interview with a young Danish politician.

Furthermore, the website provides information about another initiative taken by the Danish Parliament, namely the interactive centre called “Politician for a Day”, which is an exact copy of the real Parliament that the highest classes of primary schools can visit and – through role playing – the students can experience the daily life of a Danish politician and of Parliament. The purpose of the interactive centre is to provide inspiration for active participation in Danish democracy and to offer school children the opportunity to realise, through the experience, that they can make a difference.

The website also has a link to the Youth Parliament website – www.up.ft.dk – which contains information about Youth Parliament arrangements for Danish 8th and 9th form level students that

take place every second year (NB the Youth Parliament arrangements do not have an actual participatory structure, but should rather be regarded as an exercise in parliamentary democracy). The Youth Parliament website also contains a debate forum for young people, as well as information about earlier Youth Parliament arrangements and their outcomes.

The Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs

In 2002 the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs started a campaign “Brug for alle” (“We Need All Youngsters”), which is still running. One of the primary aims of this campaign is to improve the access to and quality of information for young people with non-Danish ethnic backgrounds about education and job opportunities – and, thus, to improve these young people’s knowledge of the different opportunities in the Danish education system and labour market. To achieve this objective, the following activities have – among others – been initiated as a part of this campaign: a youth hearing for young people of ethnic-minority backgrounds from all over the country; four advisers have been appointed to provide information and counselling for young people of ethnic-minority backgrounds and their parents, who are to cooperate with counsellors at schools and employees in youth associations in order to arrange education bazaars, etc. A role model team has been established, which consists of young people of minority ethnic backgrounds who have done well in the education system – the team members visit schools, youth clubs, ethnic-minority associations, etc and talk about their experiences.

Currently, the Ministry of Education is running a pilot project in cooperation with DGI (Danish Gymnastics and Sports Associations), the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration, the Ministry of Social Welfare, the Danish Refugee Council and the Municipality of Copenhagen. The project is called “Idrætsguiderne” (“the Sports’ Guides”) -www.idraetsguiderne.dk – and is a group

of volunteers who – among other things – provide information to minority families about different activities that sports' clubs offer. Often ethnic minorities do not get in contact with the sports' clubs simply because they do not know they exist. Thus, the Sports' Guides help to improve the integration of ethnic minorities in association activities by making it easier for young people with ethnic-minority backgrounds to get information about and in this way access to sports clubs.

Danish Youth Council (DUF)

DUF (the Danish Youth Council – www.duf.dk) is the umbrella organisation for about 70 voluntary children and youth organisations, including political youth organisations, scouts, church organisations, student organisations, cultural organisations, organisations for the disabled, youth clubs, etc. All its member organisations have democratic structures where the leaders are elected by the membership and at least half of the members must be below the age of 30. State support to young people is channelled through DUF.

One of DUF's main objectives is to provide information to young people about – and thereby increase young people's knowledge and understanding of – democratic processes and Danish politics. DUF has undertaken different activities at the national level to improve the access to and quality of information to young people.

In 2004 DUF arranged a 24-hour National Youth Convention in cooperation with the Danish Welfare Commission. The convention included 60 young people between 16 and 21 as well as a number of politicians. Among other things, the convention aimed to provide information through debates and workshops in order to increase young people's knowledge of and interest in the Danish welfare system. Another initiative by DUF has been improving the information to young people about the European Union and the European Parliament by arranging information campaigns in connection with elections to these institutions.

DUF is one of the main actors when it comes to activities that have been undertaken by NGOs at the national level to improve participation by young people in civic life and democratic processes. On an overall basis, DUF is both the spokesman of its member organisations and of young people in general. Thus, DUF has undertaken activities both to improve participation by young people in relation to its member organisations and in relation to Danish young people in general. Among other initiatives, DUF has increased its focus on how to enhance participation by young people with special needs, primarily by supporting and helping its individual member organisations to start projects and activities with this aim as the main objective. For instance, DUF launched a new integration pool in 2004 (in cooperation with the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs), which supports such projects.

DUF has increased its effort to help its individual member organisations with recruiting new members, keeping their members and, in general, increasing young people's participation in association activities. This has primarily been conducted by providing counselling on how democratic processes in the organisation should be organized in order to involve young people more directly in decision-making. Also, DUF encourages its member organisations to exchange ideas and good practice.

Denmark has a long tradition of involving youth organisations, i.e. DUF, as formal consultation partners in Danish legislation. Therefore, DUF is represented in more than 30 consultation committees in a range of fields covering education policy, legislation concerning the activity of associations, human rights, the Ministry of Education's special EU committee, etc. Also, DUF is a member of the European Youth Forum.

Danish Football Association (DBU)

DBU (the Danish Football Association) is another organisation that has initiated activities at a national level to improve information and

participation for young people. In 2005 DBU initiated the development of youth “councils” in the individual football clubs. By allowing the young members of the clubs to have influence – through youth these “councils” – on decisions about relevant activities, DBU hopes to improve young people’s participation in the clubs as well as to decrease the number of young members leaving the clubs. An objective is to improve the dialogue with young club members and, in this way, to increase the joint influence of these members. Young members should be allowed to participate in improving and developing the clubs to a higher degree than previously has been the case.

The Council for Socially Marginalized People

This Council (The Government’s advisory council on matters in the field of voluntary social work) is another organ that has brought participation by young people into focus. From 2006 on, active citizenship and voluntary work in relation to young people has been given a high priority by this Council. Primarily, activities will be initiated that can increase students’ knowledge as well as their desire to participate in active citizenship and voluntary work. Moreover, the Council will encourage more cooperation to take place between schools and voluntary social organisations.

NAU

NAU (the nation-wide organisation and network for youth councils – www.naunet.dk) is the umbrella organisation for approximately 70 local youth councils that exist in Denmark. The network is a member of DUF. The local youth councils are very different in structure; some are directly elected by and from among young people in the municipality, others are composed of representatives elected by educational institutions, etc., and others take the form of youth fora that are open to all interested parties.

Moreover, many young people who are engaged in sports are members of DIF (the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark – www.dif.dk) or DGI (the Danish Gymnastics and Sports Associations – www.dgi.dk). In these organisations – as well as in Danish recreation and youth clubs in general – great emphasis is placed on young people’s influence regarding the organisation of activities in order to give them an experience of democratic participation in society and the courage to practice it.

Other measures to increase voluntary work

The Government and the municipalities are presently discussing ways to improve the mechanisms for coordinating the strategies for volunteer work. One of the ways in which this can benefit young people is by weighting voluntary work equally with other kinds of experience when applying for employment in the public sector. In addition, all young people will be given, when relevant, an opportunity to participate in voluntary work as part of their education. This could, for example, take the form of voluntary internships in an association or in a public institution. By directly inviting young people to participate in voluntary work, the government hopes to reach a larger number of young people and to get them involved in active citizenship.

Strengthening the connection between active citizenship and voluntary work by increasing young people’s awareness of and involvement in voluntary activities requires specific knowledge about the different aspects of the lives of young people. Therefore, the government departments continuously monitor youth issues, in close cooperation with several prominent research institutes and experts, including CFSA (The national Volunteer Centre, which is an independent institution under the Ministry of Welfare); SFI (The Danish National Institute of Social Research, which conducts research and carries out commissioned projects in the area of welfare state policies, and disseminates the results); CEFU (The Danish Centre for Youth

Research); and The Board of Voluntary Social Work (which advises the Minister of Welfare and the Danish Parliament on the development and possibilities in the field of voluntary social work, "frivillighedsradet.dk").

Implementation of European Youth Programmes

The Ministry of Education has been the responsible National Authority for both the YOUTH programme (2000-2006) and the Youth in Action programme (YiA), which runs from 2007 to 2013. As a national agency, CIRIUS has been carrying out the practical implementation of the two programmes, in close collaboration with the Ministry.

For both programmes, an advisory committee, also functioning as the selection committee for projects, was set up early in the process. This committee consists of most of the relevant organisations and bodies within the youth field in Denmark -- The Danish Youth Council, NGOs in the youth field, professional youth workers and youth researchers -- and is thus secured a consistent link to developments in the sector.

The activities of the Youth Programme fit in with the structures of the non-formal Danish educational system and have promoted internationalization and offered participants opportunities they would otherwise not have received. Activities have been complementary to the national system. The Youth Programme makes a substantial and solid contribution to developing attitudes of understanding, acceptance, tolerance, international appreciation as well as to the personal development of the young people who participate. Additionally, it has helped to improve language competences, collaboration skills, creativity and intercultural understanding.

Juvenile justice and delinquency prevention

Preventing and fighting juvenile delinquency is one of the most crucial priorities of Danish justice

policy. In the area of delinquency prevention, local cooperation between schools, social authorities and the police – the SSP collaboration – is the cornerstone of the delinquency prevention policy targeting children and juveniles in the municipalities. The objectives are to build, use and maintain a local network that has a delinquency prevention effect on children and juveniles.

The SSP collaboration makes it possible to recognise danger signals and incipient tendencies towards crime and to make changes in the living conditions of the juveniles in time for the authorities to intervene and thus prevent the young people from becoming career criminals. At the same time, the SSP collaboration is extremely valuable in evaluating whether or not the local actors can perform valid delinquency-preventive work. Moreover, the SSP collaboration can contribute through projects and programmes designed to prevent the rise of juvenile gangs and criminal behaviour.

The SSP collaboration also includes young people older than 18 years (SSP+) and is, therefore, a vital factor in the prevention work to cooperate with local enterprises to find apprenticeships for young people in need of specific support.

In recent years, the number of young people who have not committed a crime seems to have increased. On the other hand, there has been a rise in the amount of serious types of crime committed by young people. We now see a larger polarization between the many law-abiding young people and the fewer hard-core criminal ones. This indicates a need to reflect on whether or not the effort towards juvenile crime should be conducted in a more comprehensive way.

The Government has, therefore, decided to establish a commission with the objective of conducting an overall study of the efforts aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency, and, on the basis of the results of this study, providing suggestions to the Government on how to strengthen this effort in order to make it as powerful and efficient as possible.

Marginalization and social programmes

The transition from childhood to youth is often associated with a process of significant change, and, unfortunately, not all young people have the necessary backgrounds to make the right decisions in order to secure a safe transition to adulthood. A relatively large portion of the Danish youth does not attain a level of education beyond compulsory lower secondary school. That is an important matter – especially seeing as education in modern society is becoming still more decisive in determining your chances in life. Some never enrol in education; most do, but eventually have to give up. This often results in young people dealing with self esteem issues, lack of support from their parents, social isolation, and also more complex problems such as crime, drug abuse and psychological issues.

Obviously, these young people are at risk of becoming socially marginalized in society. Therefore, a focused effort to prevent this is necessary. The Ministry of Social Welfare contributes to this effort mainly in two ways: Legislation and research/development groups.

The Consolidation Act on Social Services provides multiple tools for the local municipal authorities to use in the effort to assist young people at risk of becoming marginalized: consulting assistance, practical, pedagogical support in the home, family therapy or specific treatment of the young people's problems, residential accommodation, relief care, appointment of a welfare officer, placing the young person in a care facility outside the home and many other offers of support designed to provide counselling, treatment and practical or pedagogical support.

These measures can only be implemented following a thorough examination of the young person and his or her background, i.e. family, network, health conditions, social development and so forth. The range of these measures underline the importance of having a flexible social system in which it is possible to create tailor-made solutions for the individual young person.

Young people at risk of becoming socially marginalized are also a main point of focus in the recent government proposal named "Equal Opportunities". The proposal contains a number of activities designed to ensure that all children and young people in Denmark have the personal resources necessary for taking advantage of the many opportunities provided by the welfare society. The initiatives concerning young people include strengthening of substance abuse treatment, strengthening of the support provided to students of non-Danish ethnic origin enrolled in vocational education programmes, and a number of network initiatives.

Integration policy and migrant youth in Denmark

The Danish youth policy is very focused on integration issues. In the field of young people of non-Danish origins, the main effort is placed on education. It is crucial to secure equal opportunities because we know from several studies that the employment rates are equal for all – independent of ethnic origin – after having received an education.

Therefore, the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs launched an education campaign in 2002 with the aim of being a pioneer in regard to the challenge of putting more young people through a youth education program. This ongoing campaign has led to the establishment of a role model corps that goes to the schools and meets the young people in order to make them realize the importance of getting an education. The initiative has been a huge success and has, therefore, led to a role model corps aimed at the parents. Moreover, the campaign has established more than a hundred homework aid cafés and a Task Force to reduce the drop-out rate from the vocational education programmes. This Task Force has made arrangements with the vocational training centres and helps the schools strengthen the guidance of the bilingual young people. This has helped, and we are now seeing an increase in the number of young people with non-Danish ethnic backgrounds getting trainee jobs.

Experience from recent years has shown disturbing tendencies in terms of young people feeling themselves outside of or alienated from Danish society, and of some even becoming radicalised and extreme in their religious views and attitudes towards democratic societies. The Danish Government has, therefore, decided to emphasise the moral side of the effort in order to secure more successful integration, focusing on respect for democratic values and equality between men and women. It is imperative that we prevent extremist attitudes and radicalisation among young people.

Danger signals of radicalisation must be detected quickly and dealt with very early on. The Government will present a plan for preventing extremist attitudes and radicalisation among young people, and focus on further developing the above mentioned SSP collaboration in order to improve the ability to act faster and earlier. Education in democracy and fellow citizenship and the use of role models must be improved, as must the dialogue regarding Danish involvement in the Middle East. The Government will provide education in citizenship for imams and other religious leaders and improve the understanding and ability of the students in primary and lower secondary schools to participate as democratic citizens. Danish Muslims must be helped to develop a code to prevent extremist forces from infiltrating mosques and Muslim culture centres with the intent of recruiting members and spreading undemocratic attitudes.

Furthermore, it is a goal of the Government to prevent discrimination and to improve the possibilities for lodging complaints in cases when the laws against discrimination are violated in order to enhance the well being of the young people of non-Danish ethnic backgrounds.

Youth related research in Denmark

In January 2000, The Danish Centre for Youth Research was established through the initiative of The Danish Youth Council and is affiliated with Roskilde University. An association, which was

established prior to the centre, representing members from central institutions, organisations, and enterprises, supports the centre. The Danish Centre for Youth Research entered into a partnership with Learning Lab Denmark at The Danish University of Education in the summer of 2004. This cooperation provides the Centre with optimal conditions for the innovative and experimental knowledge creation and communication activities so principal for their line of work.

Given that traditions fall apart, the behaviour, consciousness and identity of young people today differs in many ways from those of previous generations. A complex pattern of change marks the educational institutions, democratic organisations and the labour market. Therefore, the objectives of the Danish Centre for Youth Research are to decode these patterns and changes by initiating research with and on youth in order to gather and coordinate the existing Danish youth research and communicate this research to a wider audience consisting of educational institutions, decision-makers and organisations as well as to document young people's attitudes and behaviour through statistical material.

Conclusion

The youth policy in Denmark begins with the Danish attitude towards childhood education allowing the individual child a great deal of latitude but also giving them the responsibility for his or her own education and participation, thus laying down the foundation for a democratic attitude. This attitude is nurtured throughout the educational system, enabling young people to take a stand and make their own decisions, and it is strongly supported by the children and youth participating in the large variety of voluntary children and youth organisations, eventually creating the foundation for well-rounded young people and shaping them into democratic citizens. Besides these cornerstones of Danish youth policy, we are committed to turning young people into active

citizens by implementing the common EU objectives and the European Youth Programmes, as well as participating in the several other international youth fora. We have also developed programmes to prevent juvenile delinquency and social marginalisation, as well as an integration

policy securing equal opportunities for all.

The result of these joint efforts forms the framework of our Danish youth policy, which aims to create a basis for young people who are well-rounded, democratic citizens.

La politique de jeunesse danoise

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Le gouvernement danois n'a pas institué une politique de jeunesse spécifique associée à des objectifs définis. Chaque secteur a son propre domaine de compétences touchant à la jeunesse, avec pour responsabilité la mise en œuvre de toutes les mesures et politiques appropriées. Parallèlement, ces secteurs apportent ensemble leur soutien à des initiatives dont l'objectif est de poser les bases nécessaires à la formation de jeunes capables de vivre de façon autonome et de resituer leurs vies dans une perspective élargie. Par ailleurs, ces initiatives visent à aider les jeunes à devenir des citoyens actifs et démocratiques, en mesure de participer de façon constructive à l'évolution de leur société, et leur octroient un pouvoir et une responsabilité réels eu égard aux questions qui les concernent.

Au Danemark, l'un des principes fondamentaux de la politique de jeunesse est l'approche particulière de l'éducation des enfants, qui confère à chaque enfant une grande latitude

ainsi qu'une responsabilité concernant son éducation et sa participation. Cette approche sème ainsi chez les enfants les graines d'une attitude démocratique. Cette attitude est cultivée par le système éducatif, qui permet aux enfants de prendre position et d'être acteurs de leurs propres décisions, ce que vient soutenir efficacement leur participation à tout un éventail d'organisations qui œuvrent bénévolement en faveur de l'enfance et de la jeunesse. Celles-ci favorisent le développement harmonieux des enfants et les forment à leur rôle de citoyens démocratiques. Qui plus est, le Danemark s'est engagé envers les objectifs communs de l'UE et les programmes européens en faveur de la jeunesse et participe à divers forums internationaux pour la jeunesse. Par ailleurs ont été lancés au niveau national des programmes pour prévenir la délinquance juvénile et la marginalisation sociale, ainsi qu'une politique d'intégration destinée à promouvoir des chances égales pour tous.

Die dänische Jugendpolitik

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Die dänische Regierung hat keine spezielle Jugendpolitik mit einem bestimmten und definierten Zweck formuliert. Jeder Politikbereich hat eigene Zuständigkeiten in Bezug auf Maßnahmen und die Politik für Jugendliche. Jedoch unterstützt jeder einzelne Politikbereich mit Zuständigkeit für die Jugend die Initiativen, die die Grundlage für das Heranwachsen junger Menschen schaffen, die in der Lage sind, ihr Leben eigenständig zu leben und dieses Leben in eine größere Perspektive einzuordnen, und dabei gleichzeitig diesen Jugendlichen helfen, aktive, demokratische Bürger zu werden, die sich konstruktiv an der Entwicklung der Gesellschaft beteiligen können, während sie gleichzeitig echten Einfluss und Verantwortung in sie betreffenden Fragen erhalten.

Die Jugendpolitik in Dänemark beginnt mit der dänischen Einstellung zur Erziehung von Kindern, der zufolge das einzelne Kind ein großes Maß an Freiräumen, aber auch die Verantwortung für die eigene Bildung und Beteiligung erhält, wodurch

die Grundlagen für eine demokratische Einstellung gelegt werden. Diese Einstellung wird im Bildungssystem gefördert und versetzt Jugendliche in die Lage, Position zu beziehen und eigene Entscheidungen zu treffen. Sie wird von den Kindern und Jugendlichen, die sich an einer großen Zahl von nichtstaatlichen Kinder- und Jugendorganisationen beteiligen, nachdrücklich unterstützt und schafft letztendlich die Grundlage für eine ausgewogene Persönlichkeit von Jugendlichen und erzieht sie zu demokratischen Bürgern. Neben diesen Eckpfeilern der dänischen Jugendpolitik ist Dänemark entschlossen, junge Menschen zu aktiven Bürgern zu machen, indem es die gemeinsamen EU-Ziele und europäischen Jugendprogramme umsetzt und sich an verschiedenen anderen internationalen Jugendforen beteiligt. In Dänemark gibt es ausgebaute Programme zur Prävention von Jugendkriminalität und sozialer Ausgrenzung sowie eine Integrationspolitik, die die Chancengleichheit für alle sichert.