

Strategic orientation of children and youth work in 2020

Strategy of Styria

Children and young people have to face an increasing pressure concerning their education and the constant competition for career-opportunities. They are expected to be self-confident, flexible and adaptable for any sort of situation. Next to the parents' educational work and education in schools, youth work seeks to be a third, additional component in order to provide young people with all social and pedagogical support they need in order to successfully face the challenges of their lives.

Extracurricular education as provided in Styria, has a long tradition and is meant to offer a diverse range of activities, provided by a broad spectrum of professional institutions.

According to the following vision we have come up with a strategic orientation of child and youth work in 2020: Children and young people should be able to face current and future challenges self-responsibly and, according to their age, self-determined. They should be provided with ideal surrounding conditions to be able to develop their own personality according to their individual interests and notions. Children and young people should be regarded as independent individuals with all their diversities. Their individual needs should be taken into account, as well as their regional circumstances. Children and youth work is struggling every day to make this vision come true.

The official youth work in Styria will focus on the following six thematic areas:

Life-worlds: Children and young people in Styria should be provided with experimental spaces, which are designed according to their needs and offer them the opportunity to develop freely. They are regarded as equal partners to the adults concerning the shaping of these areas and they are offered the opportunity to participate in social developments.

Information on how to include children and young people into this development are being passed on to multipliers and decision-makers. This will create a basis for the participation of children and young people in the social developments surrounding them.

Within the different regions of Styria there are youth-managers who will pass on the specific needs of children and young people within their area on to the local decision-makers. They also connect the regions to the Styrian youth-management and the specific services available.

Youth-information and counseling: All children and young people have sufficient access to information. They know how to deal with this information and they can evaluate it. By this they are able to make self-responsible and self-determined decisions that fit their own goals and interests.

Children and young people are being questioned about their favorite form of information (internet, flyers,...) and the information offered is being adapted to their ideas. Furthermore a process will be started, that enables us to adapt to changing needs.

A specific focus will be placed on offers for children and young people with special needs. This mainly targets special situations as far as mobility, language and media-access are concerned.

Protection of minors and prevention: Children and young people can evaluate risks and dangers self-responsibly. They know about the effects of their decisions. Prevention-activities will strengthen children and young people in their dealing with risks and dangers.

Adults, parents and decision-makers in economy, education and society are aware of their responsibility. They are well informed and able to cope with children and young people's urge to take risks.

Youth-culture and creative expression: Children and young people should be strengthened in living and communicating their specific cultures. Non-formal education should motivate them to express their interests and needs in their contact to the social environment.

Special impulses should be given in regions where there are not yet existing offers to children and young people to express their culture. This should help to reach new areas and target-groups.

Socio-political education and participation: The given offers in the area of socio-political education and participation help young people to develop their judgment-skills and the competence to self-determined political opinions. They participate in political processes self-responsibly and actively.

Sustainable offers to participate should be installed in regions and communities (e.g.: manifestation in the mission-statement, seats in committees).

Educational and professional orientation: Children and young people discover their vocation and are able to turn it into a profession. They are being supported according to their potentials and talents and can access high quality offers of professional and educational orientation.

Offers of professional and educational orientation will be presented online in a way that is easily accessible und understandable for children and young people.

Communicators working in the open youth work will be qualified to help with professional and educational orientation or to provide contact to specific offers concerning these topics.

The aim is to provide activities in all regions of Styria, which concentrate on all of those six thematic areas. So it is this set of clearly formulated priorities that should guide the Styrian youth work. Especially in times, where we have to face financial difficulties it is important to give clear directions in order to make efficient youth work possible.

Finally it is of vital importance to keep children and youth work as dynamic and permanently adapting to new situations, as it has been in the passed years. Only the willingness to stay flexible and to openly face every new development in young people's cultures and problems makes the realization of our vision for 2020 possible.