



Between Ages

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Socio-pedagogical Walking as an
European Alternative in the Work with
Young People in NEET and young
Offenders

A Theoretical Perspective

Output 03

Between Ages:

Network for young offenders and NEET



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1 Introduction

Social pedagogy in Europe was “important and widely misunderstood“ wrote one of the founders of a European science of social work, Walter Lorenz, in one of the first studies about social work in Europe.¹ In every individual case of social work, the cultural variety of the continent and the quality of life of all European citizens was at stake.² Thus, the European professionalisation of social work, especially of social pedagogy, was required, and this might succeed via comparative European publications and initiatives for international description on the conceptual as well as on the practical level, Kornbeck writes.³

All in all, four central strategies for dealing with young offenders in Europe are described which are influenced by the political cultures, respectively, finding a different expression in the different countries: welfare-orientated interventions focusing on assistance to people in emergency situations, justice-based interventions orientated on the legal standards of the adult world, custody-orientated interventions simultaneously focusing on deterrence, and so called alternative measures (diversionary interventions) by which young people are to be safeguarded from criminal and custodial measures.⁴

Currently, globalisation and growing cost pressure rather seem to support sanctionising methods in the work with disadvantaged and criminal young people, thus marginalising supportive, auxiliary measures⁵. Before the background of communicatively conceived social work, every socio-pedagogical intervention must be understood as a practice of civic commitment (practice of social citizenship), where society and disadvantaged young people meet.⁶

Likewise, Kawamura-Reindl and Schneider define the resocialisation idea as a societal task which cannot succeed between criminal young people and professional opponents (judges, enforcement officers, social workers) but in the confrontation with society: “Resocialisation grows out of the

¹ Lorenz 2008: Paradigms and Politics. In *British Journal of Social Work*, vol. 38, no 4, Sp. 625, cited in Kornbeck, Jacob/Jensen, Niels Rosendal: *The Diversity of Social Pedagogy in Europe*, p. 227.

² Lorenz 2005: Towards a European paradigm of social work – Studies in the history of modes of social work and social policy in Europe. Page 208

³ Kornbeck, Jacob/Jensen, Niels Rosendal: *The Diversity of Social Pedagogy in Europe*, p. 227f.

⁴ Muncie, J. 1999: *Youth and Crime. A Critical Introduction*. Cited in: Kornbeck, Jacob/Jensen, Niels Rosendal: *The Diversity of Social Pedagogy in Europe*, p. 106.

⁵ In France, with regard to the prevention-repression couple towards juvenile delinquents, during the last fifty years emphasis has been placed alternatively on prevention or repression. The call for more repression has undeniably been noted over the last twenty years, and this tendency, more or less followed by successive governments, can be explained by the general feeling of insecurity felt by the public, but also by the doubt focused on the benefits of a prevention policy. The question of the comparative costs between a policy of repression and a policy of prevention does not seem to be decisive (a policy of repression can be very expensive, but better tolerated by the public opinion).

⁶ Lorenz 2005: Towards a European paradigm of social work – Studies in the history of modes of social work and social policy in Europe. Page 207

cooperation of a society which, based on its fundamental attitude, committed individuals, and existing services offers assistance and support for offenders with the aim of an unpunished reintegration into society.”⁷ Particularly in this context, the projects incorporated into “Between Ages - network for young offenders and NEET“ can be understood as a part of the European development of social work. These are projects which address persons in great difficulty or young offenders, offer them an alternative in relation to their past, their actions and their environment, making use of hiking as an educational medium. In short the young participants go out on a long walk in the direction of an important aim – such as Santiago de Compostella. The participants are accompanied by a guide or social worker and develop new ideas of live and behaviour during this long way. The idea was first developed by the Belgian organization ALBA/OIKOTEN in 1982 and brought then to the French organization SEUIL around 2002, later (2012) the German organization ‘Sächsische Jugendstiftung’ (SJS) developed a similar idea. In 2015 the European Project “BA-Nework” was created by these partners and coordinated by the German Fachhochschule Dresden (FHD) in order to develop and disseminate this idea of social work. In order to give more countries the chance to develop, the Italian Ministry of Justice and the two Italian organisations L’oasi and Lunghi Camini where part of the European Project⁸. Detailed descriptions of the three approaches are available as separated papers, but in the following table (table 1), we give a short overview about the frame of the projects. After this, the pedagogical ideas behind the projects will be discussed in this paper.

⁷ Kawamura-Reindl, Gabriele/Schneider, Sabine 2015: Lehrbuch Soziale Arbeit mit Straffälligen, p. 70

⁸ For more information see: <http://www.betweenages-project.eu/home.html> and <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/9534e3bf-0a87-46a6-a315-27f45e0673ec>

	Belgium ⁹	France ¹⁰	Germany ¹¹
Target group	under 18 years	under 18 years and exceptionally young adults (under 21 years)	over 18 years
Group	One or two participants and one guide	One participant and one guide	Groups of 10 participants and two social worker
Admission	Judicial or administrative decision voluntary	Judicial or administrative decision voluntary	Judicial instruction/ administrative decision not voluntary
Start	Preparation week	Preparation week	No preparation
Route	1600 – 1800 kilometres	1800 kilometres	80 kilometres
Time	3 months	3 months	5 days
Aim	Walking → Active accompaniment	Walking → Active accompaniment	Walking, working, ethical training lessons → education
Trainer	Non-professional companion with a professional team in the background	Selected trainer with a professional team in the background	Professional trainer: social worker with a professional team in the background
End	Celebratory reception, reflective conversation after a few weeks	Celebratory reception, reflective conversation in a team after the walk	Reception by the juvenile court, no reflective conversation

Table 1: Structural differentiation of the walk

All these projects pick up aspects of punishment, compensation, and reflection, deliberately placing them in a societal context, in which young people are not separated but encounters are organized and enabled. At the same time, the project contributes to a European exchange about the fundamental attitude of social work since from conceptual structures to actual behaviours, the methodical process is compared via theoretical anchorage. This comparison has proved to be very tedious as frequently a common understanding among the project partners was perceivable, yet it

⁹ Output 7c: Walking to the future; http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07c_BE_eng.pdf

¹⁰ Output 7b: Walking to break with the past: the French way; http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/BA_Network_07b_FR_eng.pdf

¹¹ Output 8: Fünf Tage zwischen Haft und Santiago de Compostella Sozialpädagogisches Pilgern in Sachsen; http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/BA_Network_08_ger.pdf

was hardly possible to express it in clear terms. Particularly in the realm of a pedagogical attitude, which plays an essential role in the projects, it was necessary, to explain the concept via the description of concrete examples.

The most outstanding example hereby is already the term concerning the activity the projects are based upon. The terms “walk”, “hike”, or “march” employed by the French and Belgian partners are seen as unsuitable by the German partners as “walk” or “hike” are terms of an all-inclusive free time movement, whereas “march” is foremost understood as a military term. Both are levels from which social work seeks to isolate itself, so that in German the term ‘pilgrim’ is used which expresses a genuine search, although in the context of the here introduced projects, it is not meant in a religious sense.¹²

Beyond these conceptual difficulties, the here introduced projects are based on a fundamental understanding of social work which distinctly isolates itself from existing enforcement measures, although it, itself, is based on clear rules and most of all looks ahead to the future. If these projects were to be assigned into a discourse of professional social work, the action requirements in the area of conflict of a double reference to subject and structures on the three levels fundamental attitude, support strategies, and structural development would have to be reviewed.¹³ In the following, the projects in Belgium, France, and Germany will be compared in reference to their theoretical backgrounds and concrete implementation.

2 Target group

The target groups of the projects are all young people in critical life situations: The projects are aimed at teenage boys and girls between fourteen and eighteen with social and psychological problems who have in some way compromised all other family or institutional solutions. Some have joined the projects due to criminal proceedings. These teenagers are taken into care by the Social Welfare for Children (the Belgian Agentschap voor jongerenwelzijn, French ASE, German Sozialamt), the Legal Protection for Minors Department (French PJJ, German Jugendgerichtshilfe)

¹² Cf. Intellectual Output 02: Pilgrimage as starting point in a process of encountering, discovering and perceiving oneself: http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_02_eng.pdf; But there are similarities between the approach of Oikoten and the traditional ideas on ‘pilgrimage’, detached from the religious or spiritual context in which this concept is conventionally understood. This includes “the aspect of healing or becoming whole and the process of self-transformation, empowerment and stress reduction.” (Houtteman, Y. (2016) Pilgrimage as a way to deal with vulnerable youths. What can we learn from Oikoten?, in: Tuija Suikkanen-Malin & Mina Veistilä (eds.), *Fostercare, childhood and parenting in contemporary Europe*” Publications of Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences. 74-83.)

¹³ Kawamura-Reindl, Gabriele/Schneider, Sabine (2015): *Lehrbuch Soziale Arbeit mit Straffälligen*, p. 75ff

or by the Certified Charity Sector (French SAH¹⁴, German Träger der FreienJugendhilfe).¹⁵ Concretely, among others, this refers to:

- Difficult family life situations,
- difficulties in school,
- deviating or delinquent conduct,
- contact to delinquency-orientated peer groups,
- problematic free time conduct, or
- other personal social or psychological problems.

The starting point is the erratic life of the young people involved; this goes some way to explaining the situation they are in, their behaviour, their acting out¹⁶ and potential delinquency, together with an inadequate, deficient, even pathogenic background (family, neighbourhood, gang, peers...). Before initiating or completing any educational programme, it is important to implement a detachment strategy. It is a spatial and temporal separation, that can double up with restrictive measures that break bad habits and noxious practices. Hence it is definitely a question of breaking away from places, people, habits, codes.¹⁷ Sometimes, this project is a last chance for young people to give their life a new direction in order to be able to manage the transition into adulthood.

Thereby, all thus far offered measures have been evaluated as insufficient so that a further worsening of the situation is to be expected. As a rule this negative prognosis is derived from a difficult course of life up to this point and less from possible serious crimes, i.e., in reference to delinquent young people, the participants as a rule were not convicted on the basis of a serious crime such as murder or rape. At the Belgian ALBA, youths may be between the ages of 16 and 18 and at French SEUIL between 13 and 18, exceptionnally up to 21 („jeunes majeurs“) for participating in a walk. There, the parents give their declaration of consent and confer their responsibility upon the individuals accompanying the youths on the walk. Up to now, the German program of the SJS has been addressed to young adults who are of age 18 to 24 since in a larger group, the supervisory responsibility for individual adolescents cannot be exercised.

¹⁴ Social Services – Aide Sociale à l'Enfance (ASE) ; Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse (PJJ) and Secteur Associatif Habilité (SAH)

¹⁵ SEUIL: Contribution to IO 3, p. 2

¹⁶ Acting out: a psychological term from the parlance of defense mechanisms and self-control, meaning to perform an action in contrast to bearing and managing the impulse to perform it. The acting done is usually anti-social and may take the form of acting on the impulses of an addiction (Wikipedia.com cf https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acting_out March 2016)

¹⁷ SEUIL: Contribution to IO 3, p. 1

At ALBA, youths who had been housed in stationary juvenile institutions or care facilities for a long time participate in the walk. They originated from dysfunctional families, having had a childhood marked by neglect, physical and sexual abuse, or other traumatic experiences. These difficulties frequently led to psychological and behavioural problems and to criminal conduct, often in combination with drug abuse and/ or truancy. In addition, most of these adolescents had difficulties dealing with their feelings and impulse control while trying to find their own identity. Admission to the walking project takes place via the juvenile judge, the Support Centre for youth care, or via hospitals. At SEUIL, the adolescents are first looked after by the Social Welfare for Children (ASE), the Department for the Legal Protection of Minors (PJJ), or the Certified Charity Sector (SAH) operates upon order either of ASE or of PJJ. They are young people who are endangered, committed juvenile offenses, or had been dealing drugs. Long-distance projects such as the walking project may be recommended in the beginning, during, or at the end of an educational programme. Applications for the participation in a walking project may be obtained from the social workers of the different administrations. Every adolescent who would like to go on a walk with ALBA or SEUIL must verbalise this and then confirm it in writing, regardless of his/her criminal/ social situation. At SJS delinquent and convicted adolescents participate in the walking route geared to offenders, i.e., the adolescents do the walking route on account of a judicial directive in the framework of art.10, par.1 no. 6 juvenile court law. The juvenile judge sentences the adolescents to participation in a special social training, here, the work and walking route, additionally having to absolve 60 hours of charitable work. These adolescents often exhibit dysfunctional family conditions, a drug abuse problem as well as a problematic school and free time conduct. Similar projects are carried out on a voluntary basis with young adults in other crisis situations as, e.g., permanent unemployment. Several projects also worked with underage school truants.

3 Fundamental attitude

As the essential professional fundamental attitude in the social work with offenders – as well as likewise with other disadvantaged young people – a basically humane attitude and the search for methods “better than punishment“ are described.¹⁸ The Belgian initiators at Oikoten were inspired by a Native American tradition, the ‘caravans of the last chance’ of the American organization ‘Vision Quest’. In 1982, Oikoten organized the first hiking project. They asked permission to take two teenagers out of a closed institution and walked with them from Vézelay in France to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Santiago was not a religious choice, but they felt it was important to have

¹⁸ Kawamura-Reindl, Gabriele/Schneider, Sabine: Lehrbuch Soziale Arbeit mit Straffälligen 2015, Sp. 76

a symbolically powerful destination.¹⁹ The idea can also be related to the concept of outdoor adventure pedagogy:

The concept of using outdoor activities to transform and heal fits in with a long tradition of outdoor learning going back to the German educationalist Kurt Hahn and even before to ideas proposed by J.J. Rousseau in his “*Emile, ou de l’éducation*” from 1762. The main focus in these approaches is that nature is the best environment to learn in and that action methods are more conducive to learning than merely talking. For Hahn “*it is the sin of the soul to force young people into opinions – indoctrination is of the devil – but it is culpable neglect not to impel young people into experiences*”.²⁰ Hahn’s main goal was to build ‘strength of character’ and he believed outdoor activities were the best way to reach that goal. Hahn’s ideas have been developed over the years and have taken on many forms, such as the outward Bound School.²¹

In all the projects, the emphasis of the socio-pedagogical intervention lies definitely on practical activities (route, orientation, provisions) with the focus on supportive intervention and suggestions for reflection.²² The aim of the intervention, however, is to encourage the participants to reflect upon themselves. While experiencing nature and silence, the physical and mental efforts and successful experiences of reaching targets are to strengthen self-confidence and relationship competency so that the participants will be able to actively plan their life after completing the walking route. Reflection is inherent to the activity of long-distance walking, but it is also encouraged during the entire process in the work with the youngster. At ALBA and SEUIL it starts with writing the letter for the selection procedure and the following interview. It is crystallized in the agreement between the organisation, the participant, the parents and judges. Reflection is also affirmed by the rituals especially at beginning and end of the walk. During the walk the lonely moments of walking, the discussions with the companion or the encounters with local people or fellow pilgrims are opportunities for reflection. The weekly reports and the use of slow communication, like writing letters, is another way of stimulating reflection. By not taking mobile devices and music players space for this process of reflection is created.²³

¹⁹ Cf. Intellectual Output 07c: Walking to the future - Concept of the first developed way in Belgium, page 5. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07c_BE_eng.pdf

²⁰ Hahn, Kurt (1965): Harrogate Address on Outward Bound, page 3. <http://www.kurthahn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/gate.pdf>, updated 7.09.2018

²¹ Cf. Intellectual Output 07a: Pilgrimage as a way to deal with vulnerable youths. page 7. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07a_BE_eng.pdf

²² Ibidem

²³ Cf. Intellectual Output 07c: Walking to the future - Concept of the first developed way in Belgium, page 9. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07c_BE_eng.pdf

Important is also the development of social competence through self-organisation “which is required during the entire process and, e.g., comes into play while organising the luggage and the equipment (such as suitable footwear), while shopping for supplies in the evening, managing their own strength and the time on the walking route, and rationing and managing money. Also, there is a daily schedule: the route and also distinct rules are preset. Necessary consequences are carried by the adolescents themselves, which leads to the strengthening of action responsibility, anticipatory action, and self-competence.”²⁴

4 Walking

The first is mobility. Whatever the means, whether it be walking, sailing, sledding, crossing the desert or the ocean, climbing mountains, teenagers find a balance when everything around them is moving and they are part of this movement. The activity of walking is chosen in the projects, because of its accessibility for everyone, its simplicity and its inherent invitation for introspection. There is not only the physical movement, but while moving, the context and our mental status is moving along. Physically and mentally it makes us stronger.²⁵ This on the first sight “easy” starting-point allows an experience of self-responsibility and the ability to take the future in their own hands. This is fundamental for the empowering approach of the projects.

It is very important to describe the attitude which makes the difference between, “just walking” and the idea of a sociopedagogical walk on a long distance: The up-rooting character of the projects means that the participants are temporarily and radically taken out of their familiar surroundings. They are challenged to take up a role with totally different social expectations, i.e. the pilgrim on his way to Santiago versus the incorrigible delinquent. The minor, by actually taking up this role, gets the chance to come to another definition of himself and how others perceive him. Jan Masschelein (1996)²⁶ describes the uprooting effect as that what impedes us to remain the same, that what activates us, so new relationships become possible and experiences shine with a new light or perspective. It is not the developing of a new identity, nor the acquiring of new capacities or insights,

²⁴ Sächsische Jugendstiftung: Zwischen den Zeiten – Kriminalpräventive Pilgerwege für Junge Menschen an der Schwelle zum Erwachsenwerden. https://www.saechsische-jugendstiftung.de/files/sjs/dokumente/Sa%CC%88chsische%20Jugendstiftung_Zwischen%20den%20Zeiten.pdf (14.6.2018), p. 19

²⁵ Cf. Intellectual Output 07c: Walking to the future - Concept of the first developed way in Belgium, page 8. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07c_BE_eng.pdf

²⁶ Masschelein, J. (1996). De strategie van de ontwapening. Een antwoord op de (zogenaamde) perspectiefloosheid? Transcription of a lecture held in Leuven titled Perspectives amongst youngsters in Special Youth Care.

but something more simple, less observable or controllable, yet not less important. It is a wake-up call, a call for change.²⁷

One of the fundamental values of a “long walk”, is that, while it is certainly possible to look at the scenery, it is impossible not to think about oneself, whether it be in relation to past, present or future events.²⁸ It is this fundamental feature that gives all its value to the philosophy of the projects. Referring to Rousseau or the humanist world view places the projects in a tradition based on a positive image of man.²⁹ To reach this condition, a long time period appears necessary for the projects at ALBA and SEUIL: In order to enable the adolescent to significantly distance him/herself from past negative habits and to develop new ones, a walk operates over a relatively long period of time (three months). Thus enabling the construction or reconstruction of a personal psychological space. The project at SJS includes pedagogical units to reach these effects in a shorter time, but also ALBA offers shorter term projects, if this is useful in a certain pedagogical context.

5 Structure

Especially striking are the structural differences of the three projects. In Belgium and France, the adolescents walk 1700 to 1800 km in 90 days, covering 25 km per day. The long walking route is to distance the young people from their familiar surroundings for a long time. The youths and their companions spend the night in tents and occasionally in pilgrimage hostels. Aside of their personal belongings, their equipment also includes a tent and cooking utensils. This long walking distance aims at a structured daily rhythm, which creates room for reflection and development:

The hike provides an ‘open space’ to explore new aspects of the self, to experiment with new behaviours, to create new perspectives, to bring distance into complex relationships. That’s why ‘long term’ projects are offered with a lot of possibilities to experiment and take responsibility. The unpredictable and the uncertain are essential features to the process of uprooting. Goals are not predefined, except for the expectations and hopes the youngster and his surroundings set for themselves.³⁰ Varied events, give rhythm to a day’s walk. They complement the “living together” aspect: stages on the walk are shared with others who come from the four corners of the world,

²⁷ Cf. Intellectual Output 07c: Walking to the future - Concept of the first developed way in Belgium, page 7. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07c_BE_eng.pdf

²⁸ Cf. Intellectual Output 07b: Walking to break with the past: the French way, page 8. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07b_FR_eng.pdf

²⁹ SächsischeJugendstiftung: Zwischen den Zeiten – KriminalpräventivePilgerwegefürJungeMenschen an der SchwellezumErwachsenwerden. https://www.saechsische-jugendstiftung.de/files/sjs/dokumente/Sa%CC%88chsische%20Jugendstiftung_Zwischen%20den%20Zeiten.pdf (14/6/2018), p. 19

³⁰ Cf. Intellectual Output 07c: Walking to the future - Concept of the first developed way in Belgium, page 8. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07c_BE_eng.pdf

discussions take place despite any language barrier, meals are shared in a friendly atmosphere, notes are made in the log book, there may be time for reading, stretching, relaxing, thinking about how the day went and preparing for the next. All these rituals contribute to creating a calming environment that carries the teenagers forward. They can thus take advantage of the dynamic created by walking to think about life after the walk. They can project themselves in concrete terms into their preferred direction of “reinsertion” and through succeeding the Walk project, find the drive necessary to get involved in plans for the future and find a new place in society.³¹ Thus for the young person, this is a quite personal project, since each companion supports one youngster, and only one. They will have to live together for nearly three months, in close proximity. It is an essential element of the educational project. For this the route has to offer moderate challenges, without getting too extreme. The possibility of encounters with locals and/or fellow pilgrims is a plus and a strong symbolic destination is important. The pilgrim routes to Santiago de Compostela and the Via Francigena in Rome are the most frequently used, but a lot of alternatives have already been experimented with.³²

In Germany, the adolescents walk 80 km in five days, spending the nights in pilgrimage hostels, where they can prepare their own meals as well as carrying out the charitable work. Special features of the projects in Germany are, on the one hand, the working hours which must be absolved in the hostels and, on the other hand, the pedagogical units which are integrated into the walking route. This includes a dilemma discussion and the development of moral judgment. Dilemmas are discussed with the young people for who they will have to make a decision on the basis of their own moral judgment.³³ Furthermore, “lectures” concerning special topics are worked on. In Germany, young adults as a rule are simultaneously sentenced to charitable working hours, which they are to absolve at the lodgings.³⁴ These serve as compensation towards society, are however understood by the participants as expense allowance for the lodgings. But here also the meeting of other people during the way is an important aspect and for the last part of the way, usually some members of society (Judges, Educators, Lawyers) are invited to accompany the group.³⁵

³¹ SEUIL: Contribution to IO 3, p. 8

³² Cf. Intellectual Output 07c: Walking to the future - Concept of the first developed way in Belgium, page 12. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07c_BE_eng.pdf

³³ See Output 10: Handbook. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_10_eng.pdf

³⁴ In most cases 60 workinghours on the basis of art.10, par. 1, no. 4 juvenile court law.

³⁵ Sächsische Jugendstiftung (2016): Zwischen den Zeiten, p.18. https://www.saechsische-jugendstiftung.de/files/sjs/dokumente/Sa%CC%88chsische%20Jugendstiftung_Zwischen%20den%20Zeiten.pdf (16.7.2018)

6 Accompaniement and encounter

The second is being in constant presence of an adult. Who sets boundaries, certainly, but in a naturally benevolent, reassuring and empathic way. The impermanent nature of the location is compensated for by the permanence of the bond.³⁶ In the organization of this accompaniement we see some differences in the three approaches: ALBA is working with carefully selected non professional guides, since most of the young people grew up in institutions, where they developed a resistance to professional educators. In his/her relation to the young person, the companion should come across as an authentic person and not behave like an expert. SEUIL works together with paid workers, which are often professional educators. In both concepts the guides are paid for the walk, but do it as a break in their own work and life. The most important element is to be authentic and close to himself and to respect the differences in values and way of life of the youngster. To be in constant presence and support also means he has to be aware of his needs concerning self- care and recuperation possibilities. They must also have a balanced personality, capable of empathy, and know how to make decisions in difficult situations. They are instructed carefully and prepared for the walks with the adolescents by the respective organisations in reference to reacting adequately to difficult situations (running away, violence, criminal actions, etc.). In both concepts, the guides are supported by a strong professional team at home. The entire project is accompanied and “monitored” from the background by a professional team. The pursuit of the route and the personal progress as well as the physical and psychological difficulties are accompanied as well as safeguarded daily by the team of educators from ALBA and SEUIL via written reports and regular telephone calls. The pedagogical team consists of social pedagogues and psychologists. They visit the pilgrims on the route on two different occasions.

In German Projekt (SJS), the pilgrim trainers are educated as pedagogical professionals and are working regularly in the project. There are legal requirements specifying that whoever works with children on behalf of the SGB VIII needs a qualification in social pedagogy as a social worker. Furthermore, a part of the walking route is accompanied by a godparent. Individuals involved in the juvenile criminal procedure, e.g., the juvenile judge, the probationary service, the juvenile court assistance, social workers/ social pedagogues in independent sponsorship can be godparents. Godparents thus can approach the adolescents within another context.³⁷ The trainer carries the

³⁶ SEUIL: Contribution to IO 3, p. 2

³⁷ Teichert, A. & Papke, R. & Schnute, J. & Witte, M. & Zelder, W. (2015). Ergebnisbericht zum Programm: Zwischen den Zeiten Modul Arbeitsweg. Pilgern und Arbeiten mit jungen Menschen. Dresden: Sächsische Jugendstiftung. P. 22 f.

responsibility for the walking project. The juvenile court assistance is available as contact partner, however, does not get involved.

A theoretical consideration in respect to the comparison of volunteers and professionals points to the following: Professionals are not only obligated to their clients but also to the legally assigned mission. To do justice by the respective interest is a "tension-filled balancing act". The double mandate by Böhnisch and Lösch (1973) includes the double mission: representing the interests of the clients and those of the state at the same time. Therefore, the dimension of closeness and distance in professional social work is inseparably linked to the topic of power. If the critique points volunteers and professionals cite towards the respective other support group, then it becomes evident that the competence question is a central aspect in the relation of the two support groups. The volunteers criticise "the technical approach and the bureaucratic thinking of many professionals. They complain about the lack of closeness to the clients and their problems."³⁸ Professionals fear a worsening of the work quality and tendencies towards deprofessionalisation. Furthermore, the volunteers' lack of distance to the clients is brought up, which, from a professional viewpoint, does not coincide with a conscious action organisation of social assistance. The basic problem between professionals and volunteers in respect to competencies is that there is no clear boundary. The problem of competency overlapping must be considered when organising the work relationship between professionals and volunteers. The reciprocal cooperation of both support groups must orientate itself to their respective strengths."³⁹ Altogether, the differences in the forms of accompaniment are the expression of the "double reference to the society and the individual"⁴⁰ and different interpretations about how the confrontation of the participating young people with themselves and the society may best be supported.

Often these youngsters have lost their feeling of belonging to society and the development of constructive relationships with others can be an important factor in their reintegration. There are a lot of opportunities during the project to meet other people. The encounters with other pilgrims or local people they meet on the road offer unique experiences that can be very enriching for the youngsters. It also happens that people are invited to join the walkers for a couple of days or a week. This brings new energy in the group and in the relationship of youngster and companion. It

³⁸ Wessels, 1997, p. 227 zitiert nach Jäger, D. (2001). Konkurrenz oder Kooperation? Aspekte der Gestaltung von Arbeitsverhältnissen zwischen „Professionellen“ und „Freiwilligen“ in der Sozialarbeit. Hannover: BlumhardtVerlag., p. 36 f.

³⁹ Otto & Schindler, 1996, p. 59 zitiert nach Jäger, D. (2001). Konkurrenz oder Kooperation? Aspekte der Gestaltung von Arbeitsverhältnissen zwischen „Professionellen“ und „Freiwilligen“ in der Sozialarbeit. Hannover: BlumhardtVerlag., p. 37

⁴⁰ Kawamura-Reindl, Gabriele/Schneider, Sabine: Lehrbuch Soziale Arbeit mit Straffälligen 2015, p. 74

can be of great support for both youngster and companion. These 'co-walkers' can be ex-companions or friends or family of the companion or the youngster. New companions are expected to participate as co-walker as a preparation for their own trip.⁴¹

7 Motivation and rules

The three projects are all assigned to compulsory contexts, but designed differently: whereas the majority of the participants themselves apply to the projects ALBA and SEUIL, the participants at SJS are committed to participation by juvenile judges, or certain institutions (Arbeitsagentur). In both cases, during the walking route, there exists the option of canceling participation in the project at any time, whereby as a rule, however, other forms of sanctions (juvenile prison sentence, financial sanctions) may follow in case of delinquency. Looking at constrained contexts theoretically, so Wolf describes constraint as "material, social, and interpersonal freedom to decide and possibilities to act, regardless whether the boundary is intended or not."⁴² The definition of constraint in the law corresponds to a narrow understanding and is limited to constraint, which is brought upon people from outside and against their will. If therefore a young person receives a judicial directive for walking, this would have consequences in case of non-compliance, possibly the revocation of a suspended sentence. The research results by Teichert et al.⁴³ show high encroachment intervention. Nevertheless, it is interesting that before the background of social work claiming to act without constraint, the question yet arises of how a sustainable and productive work association can come about in spite of encroachment interventions so that even unwanted help and support can ensue.⁴⁴ Constraint would thus be welcome educational support.⁴⁵ The perception and the central experiencing of the young people participating in the walking route must likewise be understood: is a constrained context a burden or perhaps even a relief for those concerned? Being taken out of the familiar surroundings may constitute a rebuilding phase, symbolically. Teichert et al. speak of a "biographical time-out".⁴⁶ Context alterations can further new ways of thinking. And constructive constraint - here due to an accompanying walking project - takes place in a controlled setting. In the three countries, constraints in form of clear rules are described as elementary elements of the projects. Apart from respect for generally valid laws and therefore, of course, the

⁴¹ Cf. Intellectual Output 07c: Walking to the future - Concept of the first developed way in Belgium, page 13f. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07c_BE_eng.pdf

⁴² 2008, AK HochschullehrereInnen Kriminologie, 2014, p. 115

⁴³ Teichert, A. & Papke, R. & Schnute, J. & Witte, M. & Zelder, W. (2015). Ergebnisbericht zum Programm: Zwischen den Zeiten Modul Arbeitsweg. Pilgern und Arbeiten mit jungen Menschen. Dresden: Sächsische Jugendstiftung. P. 26

⁴⁴ Kähler, 2005, p. 14 cited according to AK HochschullehrereInnen Kriminologie, 2014, p. 115

⁴⁵ Schwabe & Evers & Vust, 2006, p. 14 cited according to AK HochschullehrereInnen Kriminologie, 2014, p. 122

⁴⁶ Teichert, A. & Papke, R. & Schnute, J. & Witte, M. & Zelder, W. (2015). Ergebnisbericht zum Programm: Zwischen den Zeiten Modul Arbeitsweg. Pilgern und Arbeiten mit jungen Menschen. Dresden: Sächsische Jugendstiftung. P. 16

prohibition of theft, bodily harm, and other offenses, while on the walking route, private telephone calls, alcohol, and illegal drugs are strictly prohibited. Besides – according to the general pilgrimage rules – the route may only be negotiated on foot; neither hitch-hiking nor bus or train rides are permitted on the route. Beyond that, the shorter route at SJS is structured much more strongly by guidelines from the trainer. So, the route, including the overnight stays, training units, and mealtimes are for the most part preplanned and thus given a firm structure, in which the participants can adhere to their tasks. At SJS, the young people have 10 euros pocket money to last them the entire distance. If a young person breaks the rules, the pilgrimage project ends, and he/she must return home. The trainer has no contact to the family. At ALBA and SEUIL, a fundamentally voluntary decision for participation is taken for granted.

A Seuil Remote habit-breaking walk must have the teenager's personal support. Success essentially depends on his/her interest in the project, a strong desire to move on and an inherent sense of challenge. It imposes a strict framework that 'breaks' with the known context: no telephone, no music, no contact with usual contacts, family or friends, while walking in a foreign country whose language the teenager does not understand.⁴⁷

Actually, there is a great deal more leeway on the route in regard to the exact walking stages and overnight stays. The provisions and contacts are organised jointly by the trainer and the participants. On the route, the young people and the guide have 15 euros each per day at their disposal for lodgings and provisions. In addition, they receive 3 euros pocket money each. A special budget is held in readiness for expenses with added cultural meaning. If a young person breaks a rule, one tries to give him the chance of making amends and of regaining his companion's trust. Most of the participants were repudiated so many times in their life - with the project, they are to experience a contrasting model.

8 Pre- and post-processing

In all three projects, diagnostic parts are consciously refrained from in favor of solution-orientated work.⁴⁸ Neither the accompanying social pedagogues at SJS nor the voluntary companions at ALBA and SEUIL require a specific diagnosis of the respective life situation. Nonetheless, before the decision for participation in the project is made, it is determined by all three projects, whether the young people are even capable of withstanding the physical and psychologic demands of the project. In the context of working with delinquents in the German projects, the decision rests on the

⁴⁷ SEUIL: Contribution to IO 3, p. 3

⁴⁸ Kawamura-Reindl, Gabriele/Schneider, Sabine: Lehrbuch Soziale Arbeit mit Straffälligen 2015, p. 77

juvenile court assistance. In France besides the caretaker team, also a physician and a psychologist are involved in making an advance diagnosis.

A different approach in relation to individual and society is also visible referring to the family and personal background of the participants. While the project of the German SJS addresses the participants as young adults and does not include a direct contact to the family. In the projects of ALBA and SEUIL there is a paradoxical aspect of leaving the home-context, but trying to get in a closer contact during the walk: The families are visited before, during and after the project by the team. The family is closely involved in the planning of the walk and also in the “project” what the youngsters start after the walk if possible. Family relationships are often complex and conflictual. The time out created by the distance paradoxically offers chances to open up to each other and creates a different relationship between the youngster and his family. In the beginning parents often don't believe their child will succeed in this project and sometimes they have even completely given up on them. But the project triggers everyone's curiosity and the hope that this project might finally make a difference, can make parents open up to their child again. Project leaders from the Oikoten staff essentially have a professional attitude of multidirectional partiality. This consists of empathic turns towards each member of the family in which both acknowledgement and expectation are directed at them. It requires an appreciation of each person's point of view.⁴⁹ The companion or rather the organisations ALBA and SEUIL inform the family at home about the young person's development. This is to create a bridge between the participant and his/ her family. The youths are being motivated to keep in contact with their family via handwritten letters. This form of slow and written communication promotes the reflection upon what they would actually like to write about and prevents impulsive reactions in the communication.⁵⁰

Different pedagogical approaches also become evident in the preparation of the projects: At SJS, the adolescents receive only some brief information in writing in respect to the meeting point and equipment for the route. At ALBA and SEUIL, the youths and the companions are prepared for the long walk during a preparatory week. Skills are trained as, e.g., setting up a tent or cooking, and it is tested if the adolescents are capable of leaving their surroundings. Likewise, the relationship between companions and participants is built. A number of different aspects and rules are discussed, e.g., how an emergency or difficulties might be handled. During this week, or rather at the end of the week, the adolescent himself/herself may finally decide if he/she will participate in the walk. The preparation week ends with a farewell celebration. This way, the projects in Belgium

⁴⁹ Cf. Intellectual Output 07c: Walking to the future - Concept of the first developed way in Belgium, page 8.
http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07c_BE_eng.pdf

⁵⁰ Ibid.

and France take transitions into account, on the one hand, by marking the transition from everyday life to the walking, at the same time marking a possible transition from the formerly problematic life strategy to a new period in life. Whereas outwardly, a transition to life with a tent and backpack is prepared, inwardly a disengagement process from the former role behaviour takes place, which may be equal to managing a critical life situation, requiring new competencies of action.⁵¹ Similarly, the end of the project differs between the Belgian-French model and the German model. In Belgium and in France, the participants are solemnly welcomed back by the organization and the family. The walk ends with a feedback phase. In this phase, the participant, together with the companion, analyses the tour, possible changes, and how he/she envisions the future. In Belgium, a talk takes place between the youngster and a specialised independent therapist. In this method, the participant is asked about his/her previous life, his/ her dreams, and the future. Two witnesses are invited to listen to the talk. The participant receives a CD of this interview and a letter from the therapist. This is to promote the integration of this experience in their life story. In the German projects, the participants are received by the juvenile court assistance or another commissioning authority after five days. The participants receive a certificate and have thusly fulfilled the judicial directive. This is followed by saying goodbye to the trainer. There is no subsequent talk.

⁵¹ Böhnisch, Lothar. (2011). Sozialpädagogik der Lebensalter. Weinheim: Beltz, p. 64ff.

9 Conclusion

At first glance, the here introduced projects from ALBA, SEUIL and SJS have the same target group and the actual location of the intervention, a somehow symbolic route, in common. Differences consist in the distance, the group and some general conditions (table 1). During the project, there were also discussions about the role of trainer or guide, the relation between guide and participant, structured or occasionally reflection, aspects of proximity and distance and the importance of rules and sanctions. Some discussions were focused on the differences and very special solutions, which were found important in any of the project. Using an adventure-pedagogical structure (table 2) we see in the end, that there are only slight differences in the philosophy of the three projects.

Term ⁵²	Belgium ⁵³	France ⁵⁴	Germany ⁵⁵
Environment: more or less risky or abnormal	The route should be challenging but not extreme	The foreign language and daily challenges are important	Nature as the realm of appreciation and challenge
Activities: structured or not, more or less complex	Monotonous walking as a chance for meeting oneself	Monotonous walking forces personal analysis and new encounters	Monotonous walking enables quiet thought, overcoming corporality and pain. experience of self-effectiveness
Reflection: incorporated or not	Reflection takes place rather randomly and is not forced but encouraged throughout the whole project; biographical interviews are done after the walk.	Reflection takes place rather randomly and is not forced but encouraged	Conscious reflection exercises
Context: incidental or structural participation	The walk takes place in close agreement with families, judges, and social pedagogues	The walk takes place in close agreement with families, judges, and social pedagogues	Clear structures but with random encounters along the Conscious distance to the home milieu
Aftercare: more or less intensive	The walk replaces the imposed punishment. A follow up trajectory by another social service	The walk can replace the imposed punishment. A follow up trajectory by another	As a rule the walking tour satisfies the imposed punishment.

⁵² Categories from van der Ploeg, J. D. 2011. *Ervaringsleren. Theorie en praktijk*. P. 19

⁵³ Cf. Intellectual Output 07c: Walking to the future - Concept of the first developed way in Belgium, page 8. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07c_BE_eng.pdf

⁵⁴ SEUIL: Contribution to IO 3, also Output 7b: Walking to break with the past: the French way; http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/BA_Network_07b_FR_eng.pdf

⁵⁵ Sächsische Jugendstiftung: Zwischen den Zeiten – Kriminalpräventive Pilgerwege für Junge Menschen an der Schwelle zum Erwachsenwerden. https://www.saechsische-jugendstiftung.de/files/sjs/dokumente/Sa%CC%88chsische%20Jugendstiftung_Zwischen%20den%20Zeiten.pdf (14/6/2018), p. 18

	is prepared during the walk	social service is prepared during the walk	Further support by other projects.
Guidance: more or less qualified	Accompaniment by non-professional volunteers who meet the participants as human beings; supported by pedagogical team.	Accompaniment by experienced educators or non professional guides who meet the participants as human beings; support by experts	Accompaniment by experienced trainers, complimentarily, volunteers participate in the route
Period: short or long	Developmental processes take a long time so that the walking tour lasts three months	Developmental processes take a long time so that the walking tour lasts three months	Didactic abbreviation to only a few days filled with long walks, respectively
Goals: broad or small	The target is clearly to reach the end of the route, goals are formulated by the youngster and his family in the agreement	The participants are actively supported to reach the route's target.	Aside of managing the entire route the developmental processes are definitely measurable.

Table 2: Adventure-pedagogical differentiation of the route

Beyond the different practical implementation of the projects at ALBA, SEUIL and SJS, however, there is a common understanding of a humanist pedagogy, which believes in the ability of young people to develop: A lot of suffering, pain, aggression and frustration is based on the belief that we are not as good as we ought to be, that we should be different, better, wiser, more handsome, etc. ALBA, SEUIL and SJS have developed an approach in which vulnerable youngsters have the chance to take on a new role and explore new possibilities of being in the world. They learn to accept themselves the way they are and at the same time, they learn to accept the other and the world as it is. A vulnerable youngster doesn't change for the better by drilling him or her and having them comply with rules, but by bringing them into an environment which enables them to open up and accept themselves and others.⁵⁶

The central aspects of the concepts are the importance of walking in unfamiliar territory, the interaction with other people connected to this (trainer and group), and the self-reflection by participants and caretakers. All this gains significance because it goes far beyond the familiar experience and becomes a challenge to the young people, which leads them to the boundaries of all they have thus far achieved. This is the very experience in reference to emotional experiences

⁵⁶ Cf. Intellectual Output 07a: Pilgrimage as a way to deal with vulnerable youths. Page 15. http://www.betweenages-project.eu/files/BANetwork2018/Outputs/BA_Network_07a_BE_eng.pdf

in an interpersonal context that Albert Bandura expects will make an essential contribution to the learning of self-regulation: “In maneuvering through emotionally arousing situations, people have to take charge of their inner emotional life and regulate their expressive behaviour and strategically manage their modes of adaption. ⁵⁷ So, the two concepts in their different ways of connecting emotional experiences and inclusion in a social setting (in Belgium and France foremost companions and team, in Germany the social group) as well as the social situation of a chosen route would make learning experiences possible which, in the end, would benefit the self-regulation of the young people. Especially in the reflective handling of paradoxical situations between freedom and rules, the double reference to society and individual, and the learning-theoretical knowledge it is based on⁵⁸, the professional role of social work shows itself in the here discussed projects.

And even if the youth falls back into former habits, he or she always remember the project as a positive period in their lives to which they can return in times of crises. As Marc testified:

“Almost every day, I think back to the walk. This was the beginning of my life. Before, I had no life.”⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Bandura, A., among others, .2003: Role of Affective Self-Regulation Efficacy in Diverse Spheres of Psychosocial Functioning. In: Child Development Volume 74, No 3, page 780

⁵⁸ Cf. Kawamura-Reindl, Gabriele/Schneider, Sabine: Lehrbuch Soziale Arbeit mit Straffälligen 2015: p. 73f.

⁵⁹ de Aguirre, P. & S. Vermeulen 2012. Ik dus naar Compostela. Jong geweld op zoeknaareenuitweg. Tiel: Lannoo. Page 301

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Youth in Stress – Prerequisites for European projects in regard to socio-pedagogical walking	Output 1 English
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Pilgern als Einstieg in einen Prozess der Selbstbegegnung, Selbstfindung und Wahrnehmung von Selbstwirksamkeit	Output 2 German
Socio-pedagogical Walking as an European Alternative in the Work with Young People in NEET and young Offenders. A theoretical perspective	Output 3 English
Sozialpädagogisches Pilgern als Europäische Alternative in der Arbeit mit benachteiligten und straffälligen jungen Menschen – eine theoretische Einordnung	Output 3 German
Walking to break with the past – the 3 month way from Belgium	Output 7a English
Walking to break with the past: the French way	Output 7b English
Walking to the future – Concept of the first developed way in Belgium	Output 7c English
Five days between imprisonment and Santiago de Compostela Social educational pilgrimage in Saxony	Output 8 English
Fünf Tage zwischen Haft und Santiago de Compostella Sozialpädagogisches Pilgern in Sachsen	Output 8 German
Report on the results of walking with NEET's and offenders	Output 9 English
Ergebnisbericht zum sozialpädagogischen Pilgern mit Menschen in schwierigen Lebenslagen	Output 9 German
Requirements for the route - Handbook for socio-pedagogical walking tours with delinquent and disadvantaged youths	Output 10 English
Voraussetzungen für den Weg - Handbuch zum sozialpädagogischen Pilgern mit straffälligen und benachteiligten Jugendlichen	Output 10 German
In die Zukunft gehen – ein Projekt für Straffällige und Menschen in schwierigen Lebenslagen (Videodokumentation)	Output 11 (Film) Dutch/French/German/ Italian/English
Strategy for re-engagement of young offenders and NEET	Output 12 English
Sozialpädagogisches Pilgern als ein neues Instrument für die Arbeit bin benachteiligten und straffälligen jungen Menschen Anregungen für Politik und Gesellschaft	Output 13 German
White paper to force walking as an instrument to work with NEET's and Offenders in Europe	Output 13 English

Selected texts are also available in French, Dutch and Italian

Project aim is the development of alternative methods and measures to imprisonment of young offenders and increase the chances of NEETs for social inclusion. *Between ages* evolves strategies towards juvenile crime prevention via the implementation of a platform for policies and practices. The network combats social exclusion, prevents recurrence and early school leaving, promotes social security in community and contains crimes related to petty crime, promotes commitment and empowerment of young people and positive initiatives into adulthood, and enforces last but not least public spending with regard to health issues, welfare and judicial affairs. The overall objective is hence to promote the Europe2020 strategy in the field of youth and the creation of a European association for coordinating pilgrimage activities for young offenders and NEET.

Seit 2011 wird in Sachsen das Pilgern als moderne Methode der sozialpädagogischen Arbeit erprobt und entwickelt. Als spezielle Form des „Sozialen Trainingskurses“ werden Maßnahmen erarbeitet, bei denen Jugendliche und junge Erwachsene in schwierigen Lebenssituationen die übliche Beratungs- und Trainingsumgebung verlassen und sich auf einen längeren Fußmarsch begeben. Diese begleiteten Wege dienen der Reflexion und Selbstwirksamkeitserfahrung und werden mit Arbeitseinsätzen und methodengeleiteten Reflexionen flankiert. So wird den Jugendlichen und jungen Erwachsenen außerhalb ihres gewohnten Lebensumfeldes die Chance zu einer Neuorientierung und einem Neuanfang gegeben. Allgemeines Ziel des Vorhabens ist die (Weiter-) Entwicklung, der Transfer und die Umsetzung von innovativen und bewährten Verfahren im Bereich Jugend bzw. Jugendstrafrecht und NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Im Rahmen des Projektes „BA-Network“ wurde die Forschung zum sozialpädagogischen Pilgern auf europäische Dimension ausgedehnt und Daten aus der langjährigen Erfahrung von Oikoten (Belgien) und Alba (Frankreich) einbezogen. Seit mehr als 20 Jahren führen diese zwei Partner Pilgerprojekte mit straffälligen Jugendlichen durch, die bis zu drei Monate unterwegs sind und mehr als 2000 Kilometer zurücklegen. Aus Italien sind zwei Partner dem Projekt beigetreten: zum einen unterstützt das Justizministerium Italiens bzw. die Abteilung für Jugendjustiz (DGM) die Partner dabei, die anvisierten Ziele zu erreichen und insbesondere den Zugang zu den europäischen Institutionen zu öffnen. Zum anderen wirkt die non-profit Organisation „L'Oasi Società Cooperativa Sociale“ und „Associazione Lunghi Cammini“ mit, um das Pilgern für junge Menschen zu testen und in Italien einzuführen.

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Between Ages: Network for young offenders and NEET

