



Between Ages



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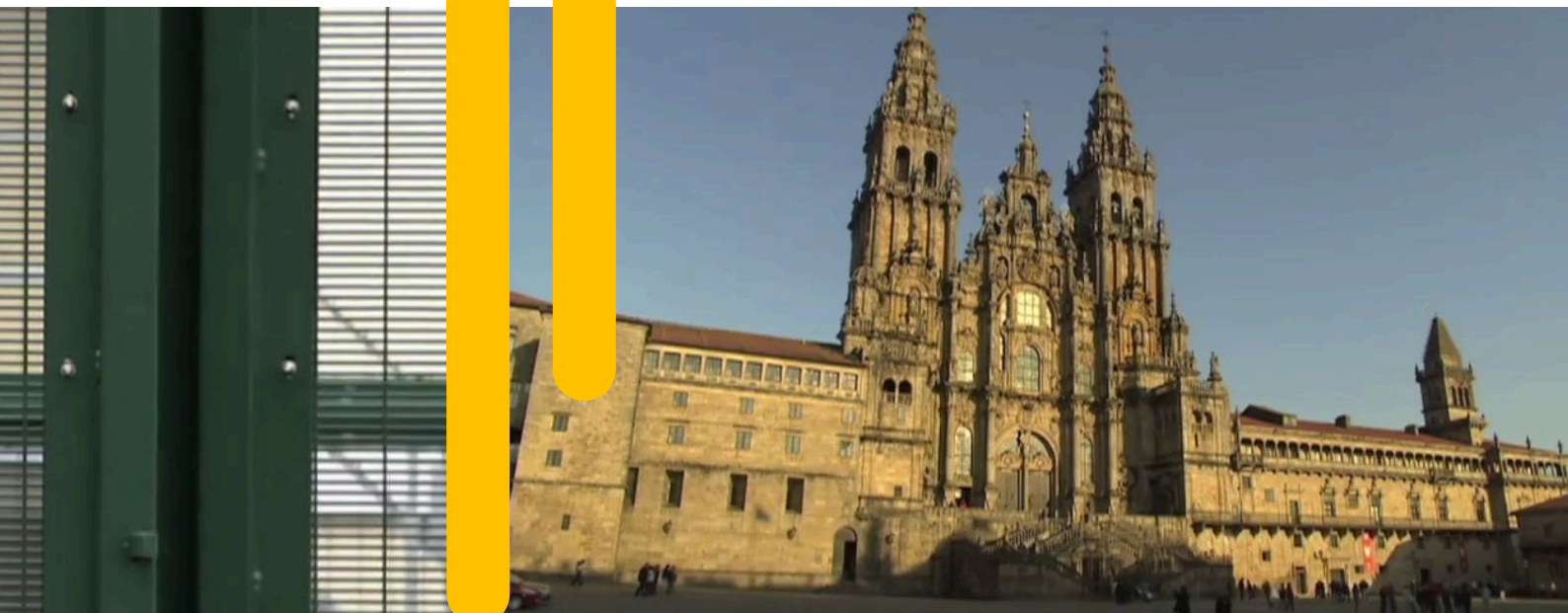
 **Erasmus+**

White Paper to Force Walking as an
Instrument to Work with NEET's
and Young Offenders in Europe

Output 13

Between Ages:

Network for young offenders and NEET



Sven Enger / Ansgar Hoffmann /
Karsten König / Jacques Nouvel

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Between Ages:
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Leadpartner: Fachhochschule Dresden (FHD), Germany

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Editor:
Dipl.-Soz. Karsten König
Fachhochschule Dresden
Günzstraße 1, 01169 Dresden
www.fh-dresden.eu
Translation: Elisabeth Orrison

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Fragments from the book : De Aguirre Phara & Vermeulen
Stefaan. (2012). *"Ik dus naar Compostela. Jong geweld op
zoek naar een uitweg."* Lannoo, Tielt.

Between the Ages: Socio-Pedagogical Walking Tours as a Perspective in European Youth Work

There are too many sorts of people as that one might have ready-made answers in store for all of them.¹

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Herewith you are receiving the final document of a three-year research and networking process on the European level. In the project: “Between the Ages: Network for Young Offenders and NEET”, initiatives have been interlinked and developed, in which modern socio-pedagogical work with disadvantaged and delinquent youths avails itself of historical pilgrimage routes for the development of self-confidence and a perspective for the future. At the core of the project are socio-pedagogical paths developed by the Belgian organisation Alba, the French organisation SEUIL, and the Saxon Jugendstiftung in order to show alternative life blueprints to disadvantaged and delinquent young people.

These pedagogical approaches, originally created and implemented on the national level, show a rather wide variety in their implementation, a remarkable methodical variety, and, most of all, national traditions of various lengths, whose duration differs between several decades and a few months.

What unites the projects, however, is the ongoing struggle for those young Europeans who, for the most diverse reasons, independent of socio-economic backgrounds, and for the most part outside of national educational careers, have placed themselves at the peril of permanent withdrawal from their national legal and social systems due to delinquent or asocial behavior. The Erasmus+ document at hand makes a contribution to the European cooperation in the realm of crime prevention planned by the European Union Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) which, aside of the topic area of youth crime, also focuses on the international transfer of knowledge. The aim of the European project was to interlink the national initiatives, to document their work, and to make it comprehensible. Simultaneously, the transfer of the process knowledge developed with the support of the Italian Ministry for Justice and tested by two newly founded social ventures in Italy, thus accompanying the development of new

¹ Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469 - 1536), Dutch theologian, philologist, and humanist

initiatives. These initiatives have an experimental character and have been possible thanks to a private donation (the case of Associazione Lunghi Cammini) and the interest of RAI - the Italian public television (the case of the experience in Rome).

This way, these projects are making an ongoing contribution to the preservation of our constitutional order: “Whosoever attacks life, freedom, health, honor, property, or capital, endangers our constitutional order.

“I think about the walk every day.
It was the beginning of my life.
Before, I had no life.” (*Marc VD,*
1965-hike 1982)

Punishment is to create redress. Its purpose is a combination of retributive justice, prevention, and re-socialization for the respective offenders. [...] Nowadays, the legal profession as well as legal philosophers consider punishment reasonable as long as retributive justice and prevention are given sufficient room and, by the same token, re-socialization is not made impossible. Retributive justice as the purpose of punishment is important for satisfying the community, particularly after spectacular crimes. This way, the cry for revenge and self-justice can be prevented.”² Educative walking tours are widely unaccepted as punishment and, so, may initially be seen as “performance of services of an educational nature“.³ In this context, educative walking tours are employed devoid of any religious or spiritual orientation, but still in all their other facets, as a method for opening up developmentally supportive opportunities and framework conditions for young people.⁴

However, the method of educative walking tours also allows for retributive justice by taking in consideration the fact that all young delinquents are confronted with the respective victims of their criminal acts. From a societal perspective, the needs of the victims must foremost be considered interests and concerns worth protecting. Regarding the here described educational measures before this background from a more legal perspective, it soon becomes evident that they meet the requirements of this matter to a rather special degree.

Walking tours with delinquents or disadvantaged young people command markedly high intervention potential, beyond including substantial removal potential. Despite all the structural differences, the quality of removal can be compared to a short youth arrest or rather a short prison sentence. Young people who are on an educative walking tour due to a judicial order

² Radio programme of the BR: Prinzipien des deutschen Strafrechts, By: Volker Eklkofer / Programme : Daniela Remus 10/10/ 2014 |State of Archive :10/05/2018
<https://www.br.de/radio/bayern2/sendungen/radiowissen/soziale-politische-bildung/strafrecht-deutsch-102.html>

³ Ökumenischer Pilgerweg, Publisher Ev. Luth. Landesjugendpfarramt Sachsen, 2nd. edition 2003

⁴ Hereto also Output 2 on: <http://www.betweenages-project.eu/results.html>

find themselves first of all removed from their everyday life, their familiar surroundings, and therefore frequently also from their harmful contacts. This may not only be seen as developmentally supportive from the pedagogical perspective but as able to make a relevant contribution to the prevention of renewed delinquency in the sense of tertiary criminal prevention as well since “the majority of the delicts, particularly delicts by young people, have local formation conditions. A large part of everyday delinquency and an especially large part of typical youth delinquency is opportunistic delinquency, i.e., it is triggered by finding criminal opportunities and criminal stimuli, locally”.⁵

Opposite conventional prison or arrest, the here described educative walking tours display unique characteristics, thus having excellent crime-preventing potential. No doubt, traditional deprivation of freedom constitutes a considerable

“Those four months of walking gave me space in my head, a space where my good experiences are. I can resource there when things are not going well.”
(bov. 1975-hike 1990)

intervention of a highly retributive character. However, it cannot simply be understood as a crack in the milieu. Structurally, it integrates young people anew in an environment marked by crime and institutionalization. As a rule, the sensible milieu change hoped for is only striven for after the prison sentence has been served and is, unfortunately, often not followed through.

In contrast to conventional prison sentences, the here described socio-pedagogical walking tours stipulate that the young people apply themselves to the above mentioned milieu change from the first day on as well as on every other day while underway. What has just been said is valid not only for young people who, by their behavior, justified a penal response, but more broadly for all those who, during their adolescence, are confronted with severe difficulties (social, family, psychological, pedagogical...) and who, as a result, have been taken in care by social institutions. It happens frequently for this institutional support to fail or be defeated by the young person himself. So the educative walking tours are aimed at a much wider audience defined as "young individuals in difficulty during their adolescence", which also includes young people without criminal misconduct but in a situation of social distress.

With the aim of proving themselves as law-abiding as possible, the young people on the walking tour are forced to apply themselves to completely altered living conditions and world views. This conceptual basic module of educative walking results in a broad learning field as well as

⁵ Heinz, W. (2004): Kommunale Kriminalprävention aus wissenschaftlicher Sicht. In: Kerner, H.-J.; Marks, E. (Hrsg.): Internetdokumentation Deutscher; Präventionstag. Hannover.
http://www.praeventionstag.de/content/_praev/doku/heinz/index_9_heinz.html

diverse opportunities for encounters. The aspect of encounters may be perceived from several perspectives. The confrontation of the young offenders with a completely new and unfamiliar environment has top priority. This may at first be felt by the participants as “being in an alien place” and be well experienced as a crisis, which, in the best case, may turn into a source of learning. This situation of rupture, as well the sharing of life, day by day, with an adult, the guide, dedicated to the young people, plays an essential role.

“I definitely changed through this walk. Actually, from the very moment I wrote that letter to Oikoten. That was a difficult task. From that moment I started to change already, in my way of thinking, not yet in my actions. I knew already at that moment that it could not go on like that” (boy, 1983-hike 2006)

One part of this new environment is also that the young offenders, who in many areas of society had experienced personal rejection due to their delicts, are now met with unexpected hospitality. So, for example, the personal and deliberate eye contact as well as the welcoming handshake upon arrival is a new experience of appreciation for many, a sign of equal dignity adherent to all human beings, independent of origin and biography.⁶ In long-term educative walking tours, it is

common for young people of different religious or philosophical origin (Muslim, Christian, agnostic or atheist) to discuss topics of this nature either with their guide or with encountered individuals. These exchanges are beneficial to the young person, provided not only that he is respected as an individual, but also that the people met along the way show respect and empathy. In particular, the guide is requested to observe strict neutrality.

Another encounter aspect explains educative walking tours as such as well as also that in some approaches of social-pedagogical walking, the overnight stays take place at a church-based educational facility. While making contact and diving into the atmosphere of such a facility, the young offenders may come in touch with other people and their spirituality, which may cause some confusion and feelings of otherness. At the same time, the participants will most likely become confronted with other interpretive patterns, world views, and opinions. This happens mostly through contacts with other guests they get in conversation with or through some offers they participate in jointly during their stay. This way, the encounter contains a two-sided effect: For the guests, the encounter with the young offenders may also be a learning experience, broadening their horizon. Ideally, in this case, the connection leads to learning as a two-way street. Meeting with other populations than those of the prison environment or taken

⁶ Cf Ziemons, M. (2003): Lernen an Krisen in der Erwachsenenbildung, (= Grundlagen der Berufs- und Erwachsenenbildung, Vol. 37), pp. 125-126

in care by social institutions is certainly a very beneficial element. In addition, two others elements of educatives walking tours are to be noted : the concrete practice of walking, which is physically and mentally beneficial, especially when the duration of the walk is long; and the educational follow-up provided by the team in charge of the youngsters. Educative walking with young offenders is a highly specialised pedagogical procedure that may have a considerable effect on the selected participants. Still, it is no mainstream approach, remaining rather out of the ordinary. Nevertheless, from concepts such as this, something might be derived for working with the problem of youth crime in general. From approaches of this kind, a definite ideological opposite pole may be set up to counteract the rather rightwing political decisions by which the public's needs for more inner security and more drastic punishment are taken in consideration.

Educative walking tours are certainly not another ideological affirmation opposed to the common "right and order" demand - such a confrontation with the phantasma of public opinion, most of the time, does not lead to convincing the opposing party - but a pedagogical and educational answer of social relevance to the problems youth in difficulty must confront. Nevertheless, they contradict the usual prejudices which may thus be deconstructed. Thusly, pedagogical approaches of this sort do not only support the cautioning of the experts yet point out alternatives at the same time.⁷ Educative walking project does not intend to give a global answer to the problem of all young people in difficulty; it is the use of a pedagogical medium with proven educational virtues, namely walking in an orderly and controlled context for a specific population.

That represents a perspective of criminal prevention and constitutionality that corresponds to the concluding quotation: "Therefore it is also necessary to create some awareness for the limits of crime-preventing measures: total security (...) not only is it unattainable, it is not even desirable, because it would only be achieved at the expense of the freedom and the inalienable personal rights we all price so highly (...) if we lose distance and privacy, we will end up in a total surveillance state which throws overboard the very values it pretends to protect (...) beyond the aims (and the limits) of what is to be attained and permissible along the lines of prevention requires an open and fundamental discussion."⁸

⁷ Cf Prof. Dr. Heribert Ostendorf, Warnung vor dem neuen "Warnschussarrest", ZIS 12/2012 S. 608 ff. (609) with further references.

⁸ Heinz, W. (2004): Kommunale Kriminalprävention aus wissenschaftlicher Sicht. In: Kerner, H.-J.; Marks, E. (Hrsg.): Internetdokumentation Deutscher Präventionstag. Hannover.
http://www.praeventionstag.de/content/9_praev/doku/heinz/index_9_heinz.html

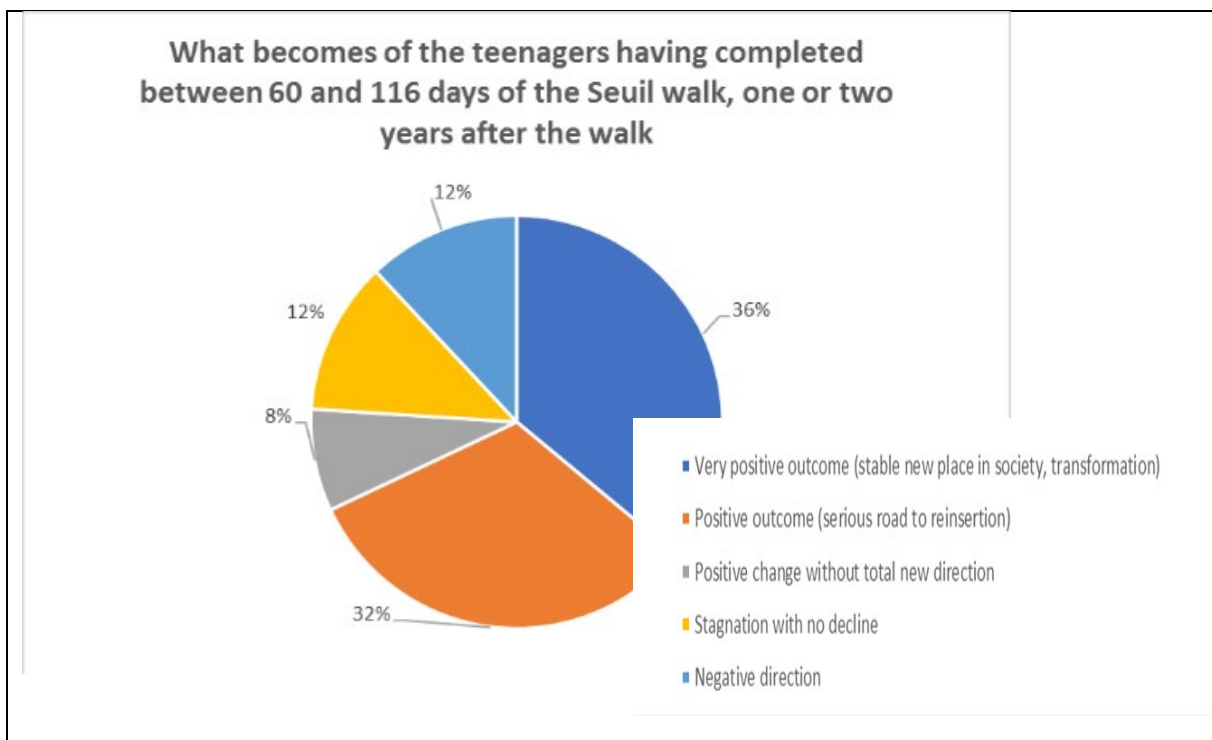
Steps into the Future

More than 2000 young people from Belgium, France, and Germany had the opportunity to participate in a social-pedagogical walking tour during the past 15 years. The large majority of them completed the tour successfully, and first findings indicate that most of them profited from this experience in their future life.⁹

This development was carried out by three, then, non governmental initiatives which developed the respective projects in Belgium, France, and Germany: Alba, Seuil, and the Saxon Jugendstiftung.¹⁰ In the meantime, numerous initiatives in other European countries have adopted the concept and carried out similar programmes.¹¹

As the following picture shows, participants describe the results of the way two to four months after the walk as mainly positive. Two third of the participants at Seuil see a positive ore very positive personal outcome (see pic 1.)¹².

“On such a trip there is always a lot going on. What will happen, you cannot predict . That is also the strength of it.” (Walter Lombaert, companion of 3 hikes and a working project)



Pic. 1: Outcomes of the walk at SEUIL

⁹ See also Output 9: <http://www.betweenages-project.eu/results.html>

¹⁰ The projects of these organisations are described in Outputs 7 and 8 and comparatively depicted in Output 3

¹¹ See Output 5: <http://www.betweenages-project.eu/results.html>

¹² See also Ouput 9: <http://www.betweenages-project.eu/results.html>

Each one of these initiatives plays a role in finding answers for young people who, up to now, had been suspended on the fringes of society, perhaps not having developed any perspectives for the future, thus being denied the opportunity for equal participation in societal life. Thus the projects do their contribution to the new European Youth Strategy, which emphasizes on empowerment, participation and works against social exclusion (see pic. 2):

- Enable young people to be **architects of their own lives, build their resilience** and equip them with life skills to cope in a changing world;
- Encourage young people to become **active citizens, agents of solidarity and positive change** for communities across Europe, inspired by EU values and a European identity;
- Help prevent **youth social exclusion**;
- Improve the **impact of policy decisions on young people** through dialogue and addressing their needs across sectors.

Pic. 2: Aims of the new European Youth Strategy¹³

These are aims, on which the Idea of social-pedagogical walking on European Way is based. Targeting young offenders and NEET's starting this "marche de rupture" or pilgrimage, is the first step do become architect of one own's live, the contact to the companions shows active citizenship and all helps to prevent youth social exclusion. There are three things that we deem essential in regard to supporting this societal commitment to the young people at the fringes of society:

- Legitimate and organize national spaces for development are essential to enable these alternatives to traditional offers when working with delinquents and disadvantaged youths. These spaces for development must be created and, where they already exist, be preserved and expanded. The aim should be to develop these alternative measures into alternatives equal to the already available possibilities in the youth corrections system or in the work with disadvantaged young people.

Connected to this is the necessity for sufficient financial resources for model projects and already established alternatives. As the project has shown, there is positive evidence that the intensive support provided by the Belgian-French project has even shown cost advantages in a direct comparison with measures of the stationary correction system. Thereby, in addition, the possible long-term savings, which accrue when the projects

¹³ Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy; Brussels, 22.5.2018; https://ec.europa.eu/youth/sites/youth/files/youth_com_269_1_en_act_part1_v9.pdf

actually contribute to somewhat reducing the high recidivism rates in the traditional corrections system, ought to be taken into consideration: In France, for instance, two-third of the costs of a Seuil educative walking tour are financed by the government or city councils; for the rest, private funding must be found. Taking care of young offenders in prison or closed specialized centers costs the State between 1.5 and 2 times the expense of a Seuil walk, not to speak of much less recidivism. In particular, it is extremely important for Seuil to focus on the most disadvantaged or in difficult position young people and not just on those whose care would be less expensive.

- The enormous asset of socio-pedagogical measurements in an environment of youth crime and poverty is shown, e.g., by the Perry Preschool Study, which assumes ten dollars per each invested dollar¹⁴. The juvenile court judge of Dresden also assumes that the costs of the German five-day-walking tour will amortise when even only one of the youths does not become delinquent again, later-on.¹⁵ On the other hand, in practice, this means that public funding ought to be made available in every European country. Furthermore, procedures need to be found for standard financing to finance the respective institutions permanently and independent of the actual number of walks and their success, since only via stable and permanent financing can respective professional teams and offers be set up lastingly.
- Thirdly, it calls for an intensive development of a culture of recognition and support in the work with delinquent and disadvantaged youths. Particularly when delinquent behaviour is understood as the expression of a search for recognition and social appreciation,¹⁶ some approaches based on recognition and trust need to be found for the work with youths in problematic life situations. The prejudiced view prevalent in society prefers placing young people more in the role of the ‘to be supervised’ rather than that of the ‘to be empowered’, which calls for a different awareness. In their different forms, Alba and Seuil, as well as the German project “Zwischen den Zeiten”, are excellent and obvious proof of disadvantaged and delinquent young people’s ability to master tasks and take on responsibility for a societally approved life. These examples should therefore be documented, propagated and discussed. Furthermore, it need also include comprehensive public relations activities as well as new networking and research

¹⁴ <https://highscope.org/de/perrypreschoolstudy> (15.6.2018)

¹⁵ Contribution at the conference in Dresden on (14.3.2018)

¹⁶ Honneth, Axel (1994): Kampf um Anerkennung, p. 197

projects to prepare the ground for the further development of the work with disadvantaged youths.

This way, particularly in the realm of socio-pedagogical walking with delinquent and disadvantaged youths, societal responsibility would be given more room so that the European youth hovering on the fringes of society would not be excluded from participation any longer but be guided and sent on their way into the heart of society. Especially in times when upheavals are being observed and basic values are being challenged, it would appear essential to understand the “interwovenness of individual action with societal structures“ and lead to conducting the work with disadvantaged and delinquent young people in a meaningful and subject-oriented way as well as respectively altering “social places” so that the idea of re-socialization, which arose already toward the end of the 19th century, might gain further impetus.¹⁷



Pic. 3: Starting at the Bischof-Benno-Haus Bautzen, Germany (Foto: Enger 2017)

¹⁷ Cf. Kawamura-Reindel, Gabriele/Schneider, Sabine (2015): Lehrbuch Soziale Arbeit mit Straffälligen, p. 67 and 84.

Also available in this project

<http://www.betweenages-project.eu/results.html>

Youth in Stress – Prerequisites for European projects in regard to socio-pedagogical walking	Output 1 English
Jugend im Stress – Voraussetzungen für europäische Projekte zum sozialpädagogischen Pilgern	Output 1 German
Pilgrimage as starting point in a process of encountering, discovering and perceiving oneself	Output 2 English
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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