Youth in Action - access and competence development

Research-based analysis and monitoring of Youth in Action: master theses 2009/2010/2011

Petra Ganthaler, Julia Hasforter and Alexandra Rosenthal
Editor: Kathrin Helling. Research project direction: Lynne Chisholm

'Youth in Action'
Access and Competence Development

Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Youth in Action
Master theses 2009/2010/2011

Synthesis report
of University of Innsbruck Institute of Educational Science
Master theses by

Petra Ganthaler

Julia Hasforter

Alexandra Rosenthal

Synthesis report editor:
Kathrin Helling

Youth in Action Research-analysis and Monitoring project direction and
Master thesis supervision:
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Lynne Chisholm

Innsbruck, May 2011

Education and Culture
Youth in Action

Jugend in Aktion >>>
Österreichische Agentur

Bundesministerium für
Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend

This study was originally written and published in German and then translated into English.

Table of Contents

1. The Youth in Action Programme

The European Union's Youth in Action Programme (YiA) covers the period 2007–2013. It is aimed at young people between the ages of 13 and 30, regardless of the country or culture from which they come or their social background. YiA aims "to awaken a sense of active European citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future" (European Commission, 2010, p. 4). Core elements of the programme include youth mobility in Europe, non-formal and informal learning activities and intercultural exchange. In this way, Youth in Action can be a key instrument for developing basic competences among young people (ibid., 2010).

Box 1 – Youth in Action – Objectives

The following general objectives are laid down in the legal basis of the Youth in Action Programme (European Parliament and Council, 2006, p. 32):

- To promote active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular among young people
- To develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people, particularly in order to strengthen social cohesion in the European Union
- To foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries
- To contribute to improving support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field
- To promote European cooperation in the youth field

The objectives of the YiA Programme are implemented through priorities followed up in specific YiA projects. These priorities include: promotion of European citizenship (and the awareness of a European dimension), participation by young people in their daily lives (active citizenship), promotion of cultural diversity (breaking down racism and xenophobia), and involvement of young people with fewer opportunities. These standing priorities are supplemented by annual priorities, which vary from year to year. In 2010, for example, these included combating poverty and social exclusion, particularly through the involvement of young people with disabilities and young people from migrant backgrounds or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, confronting the issue of youth unemployment, and raising awareness of global challenges (European Commission, 2010).

The YiA Programme is characterised by several additional features that permeate all Actions (cf. Box 2) and projects. Firstly, these involve the acquisition of competences through non-formal and informal learning within a European dimension, outside the formal education system or through learning processes that take place in daily activities, at work or during leisure time. YiA supports the documentation and recognition of competences gained in non-formal and informal settings by means of the Youthpass, a certificate that describes and validates certain competences. Other key aspects of YiA include its multi-lingual character (i.e. the exploitation of linguistic diversity and encouragement to learn foreign languages and learn about other cultures), anti-discrimination and equality between men and women (ibid., 2010).

The YiA Programme is funded by the European Commission, more specifically the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), and is coordinated by the respective National Agencies of the member states. In Austria, regional offices in each federal state also offer a direct local point of contact for participating organisations, project promoters, youth workers, and young people.

Box 2 – Youth in Action – Actions

The Youth in Action Programme consists of five Actions, some of which contain additional sub-Actions (cf. European Commission, 2010).

Action 1 – Youth for Europe
1.1 – Youth Exchanges
1.2 – Youth Initiatives
1.3 – Youth Democracy Projects

Action 2 – European Voluntary Service (EVS)

Action 3 – Youth for the World
3.1 – Cooperation with neighbour countries of the European Union
3.2 – Cooperation with other countries worldwide

Action 4 – Youth Support Systems
4.1 – Support to bodies active at European level in the youth field
4.2 – Support to the European Youth Forum
4.3 – Training and networking of those active in youth work and youth organisations
4.4 – Projects promoting innovation and quality
4.5 – Informational activities for young people and those active in youth work and youth organisation
4.6 – Partnerships,
4.7 – Support for the structures of the Programme,
4.8 – Adding to the value of the Programme

Action 5 – Support for European cooperation in the youth field
5.1 – Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy,
5.2 – Support for activities to gain better knowledge of the youth field,
5.3 – Cooperation with international organisations

In the following section, we will examine Action 1 – Youth for Europe, the sub-Action Youth Exchanges (Box 3) and Action 2 – European Voluntary Service (Box 4) in greater detail, as these are important for our understanding of the subsequent sections.

Box 3 – Action 1 – Youth for Europe (Excerpt from the programme handbook for Youth in Action, European Commission, 2010)

Sub-Action 1.1 – Youth Exchanges
Youth Exchanges offer an opportunity for groups of young people from different countries to meet and learn about each other's cultures. The groups plan their youth exchange together around a theme of mutual interest.

Objectives
Youth Exchanges allow one or more groups of young people to be hosted by a group from another country in order to participate together in a joint programme of activities. These projects involve the active participation of young people and are designed to allow them to discover and become aware of different social and cultural realities, to learn from each other and reinforce their feeling of being European citizens.

What is a Youth Exchange?
A youth exchange is a project which brings together groups of young people from two or more countries, providing them with an opportunity to discuss and confront various themes, while learning about each other's countries and cultures. A youth exchange is based on a trans-national partnership between two or more promoters from different countries. Depending on the number of countries involved, a youth exchange can be bilateral, trilateral or multilateral. A bilateral youth exchange is justified especially when the promoters are participating in their first European project, or when the participants are small-scale or local groups without experience at European level. A youth exchange can be itinerant, implying the movement of all participants at the same time, throughout one or more countries participating in the exchange. […]. Fundamental principles of non-formal learning are reflected throughout the project.

Box 4 – Action 2 – European Voluntary Service (Excerpt from the programme handbook for Youth in Action, European Commission, 2010)

The aim of the European Voluntary Service (EVS) is to support young people's participation in various forms of voluntary activities, both within and outside the European Union. This initiative allows young people to take part individually or in groups in non-profit, unpaid activities.

Objectives
The aim of the EVS is to develop solidarity and promote active citizenship and mutual understanding among young people.

What is an EVS project?
The EVS allows young people to carry out voluntary service for up to 12 months in a country other than their country of residence. It fosters solidarity among young people and is a true 'learning service'. In addition to benefiting local communities, volunteers learn new competences and languages, and discover other cultures. […]. Basic principles and practices of non-formal learning are reflected throughout the project. An EVS project can focus on a variety of themes and areas of intervention, such as culture, youth, sports, social care, cultural heritage, arts, civil protection, environment, development cooperation, etc. […].

EVS activity
An EVS activity has three essential components:
The service: the volunteer is hosted by a promoter in a country other than her/his country of residence and carries out voluntary service for the benefit of the local community. The service is unpaid, non-profit-making and full-time.

EVS training seminars: the promoters involved in the EVS activity must ensure that each volunteer participates in:
- pre-departure training
- on-arrival training
- mid-term evaluation (for service duration of 4 months or longer)
- evaluation of the activity

Ongoing support for the volunteers: the project promoters must offer support to every volunteer taking part in the activity, in terms of personal needs, their responsibilities in the projects, in terms of language and administrative difficulties.

2. Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Youth in Action

In conjunction with the Interkulturelles Zentrum[1] and the regional consultancy firm ÖAR[2,] the Institute of Educational Science at the University of Innsbruck is part of Austria's national agency for Youth in Action. Lynne Chisholm heads the research monitoring of the YiA Programme in Austria, which began in 2007.

Within the framework of research monitoring activities, three Master theses have been completed at the Institute of Educational Science. They analyse a number of dimensions of the YiA Programme in the context of the programme's stated goals. The following three chapters contain a summary of these three Master theses (see Box 5, 6 and 7 for an overview of the issues they cover).

Box 5 – Alexandra Rosenthal's Master thesis (2009)

Title: *Empirical Study of Access to the Youth in Action Programme*
Submitted by: Alexandra Rosenthal, 2009
Supervised by: Lynne Chisholm, with the assistance of Helmut Fennes

In her Master thesis Alexandra Rosenthal examines the extent and nature of access that youth centres and their youth workers have to the Youth in Action (YiA) Programme, focusing on the Action 'Youth Exchanges'. In addition to issues of motivation and information, she also explores concepts of dissonance theory and the general parameters supporting the involvement of youth centres and youth workers in the Youth in Action Programme. The study sought the views of youth workers, beginning with a qualitative expert interview that fed into a questionnaire survey. The results show satisfactory levels of awareness and availability of information about the YiA Programme and accompanying advice services. The principal reasons found for non-participation in the programme were the time and effort required to apply for and take part in a youth exchange, as well as – in the view of the youth workers – lack of interest on the part of the young people themselves.

---

[1] http://www.iz.or.at
[2] http://www.oear.at

Box 6 – Petra Ganthaler's Master thesis(2010)

Title: *Developing and extending competences through the 'Youth in Action': the European Voluntary Service*
Submitted by: Petra Ganthaler, 2010
Supervised by: Lynne Chisholm, with the assistance of Helmut Fennes

Petra Ganthaler examines the extent to which the Youth in Action (YiA) Programme, through its European Voluntary Service (EVS) Action contributes to competence development among its young Austrian participants. With particular focus on intercultural and social competences, and within the broader context of formal, non-formal and informal learning processes, the study employs qualitative interviews together with analysis of contributions to an internet forum and diary entries to determine *which competences* the young participants developed or extended, and *how* this took place. She also analysed the correlation between expectations of participation in the EVS and actual experiences. The results are based on self-assessment by participants. It emerges from the research that participants in the EVS experienced further development (extension) of competences (e.g. intercultural, social and foreign language competences), particularly through non-formal and informal learning processes, such as interaction with other EVS participants as well as with colleagues in their chosen social or environmental project, and through the accompanying EVS training and language courses.

Box 7 – Julia Hasforter's Master thesis (2011)

Title: *Social Change among Young Europeans: Non-formal and Informal Learning Structures in the 'Youth in Action' project, based on the example of the European Voluntary Service*
Submitted by: Julia Hasforter, 2011
Supervised by: Lynne Chisholm, with the assistance of Helmut Fennes

Julia Hasforter analyses the outcomes of the Youth in Action (YiA) Programme, based on the example of the European Voluntary Service (EVS), through a qualitative study of EVS participants from other European countries coming to Austria. The results of the study show *what was learned, how and where*. Participants recorded positive development, particularly in terms of improving professional competences, personal skills and civic skills. Informal learning contexts during work and leisure periods played a vital role, while group activities and exchange with participants from other countries broadened participants' perspectives on their own culture, on other cultures and on Europe.

3. Empirical study of access to the Youth in Action Programme (Alexandra Rosenthal, 2009)

3.1. Introduction

In order to receive funding for participation in Action 1.1 – Youth Exchanges of the Youth in Action (YiA) Programme, interested youth centres must submit an appropriate application to their national agency. In the course of research monitoring of the YiA Programme, the Institute of Educational Science at the University of Innsbruck had registered that most of the youth centres operating at regional level in Tyrol do *not* take part in the programme. This raises the question: what motivates youth workers to decide for or against applying to conduct a funded youth exchange at their youth centre?

The activities of the Austrian YiA national agency are largely focused at national-level dissemination. This study thus began from the assumption that information on the YiA Programme is not sufficiently available to youth workers at local and regional level, and that as a result access to the programme is restricted.

This empirical study considers issues of motivation, perception and socio-psychology, as well as approaches to educational guidance and counselling. The study analyses whether and to what extent the assumption that the YiA conducts insufficient regional or local informational activities is correct, and what other factors influence youth workers' decision to take part in the YiA Programme. The results of this study hence lead to proposals that could improve access to the YiA by youth centres.

3.2. Theoretical background

This section presents issues of motivation, perception and socio-psychology that help to explain decision-making processes. It further includes discussion of concepts of educational guidance and counselling that could support youth workers in their decision-making.

3.2.1. Psychological aspects

The psychology of motivation and decision-making

According to Rheinberg (2008), motivation is composed of a variety of phenomena and sub-processes. The interplay of internal, personal factors (e.g. urges, instincts) and external, situative factors (e.g. stimuli) is what motivates people's behaviour. Lewin (1931, in Rheinberg, 2008) regarded the relationship between individual and environment in terms of conflict theory. In other words, human behaviour is influenced by three types of conflict: (1) appetency conflict (choice between two positive situations, leading to loss of attractiveness of the rejected alternative); (2) aversion conflict (choice between two negative situations, leading to inactivity); and (3) appetency-aversion conflict (situation with positive and negative aspects – the closer the perspective on the situation, the more the negative aspect is perceived, leading to avoidance behaviour). However, according to Jungemann, Pfister and Fischer (1998), human decisions – meaning the choice between different options in a given situation – are based on two central components: the judgements and choices made. Furthermore, Atkinson (1957, 1958) states that the motivation to perform a particular action is connected to the likelihood of success or the

incentive to succeed. By choosing an achievable objective (establishing the aspiration level) a person may influence the likelihood of success. In this case, too, personal characteristics and situational factors influence the choice of objective.

Psychology of perception and advertising

Taking in information is controlled by the mechanism of selective attention; i.e. important information is received and irrelevant information rejected. Those who design information media, including advertising materials, need to take this fact into consideration (cf. Mangold, 2007). The AIDA model proposed by Lewis (1898, in Moser, 2002), describes how advertising should be structured in order to bring about a purchase decision by a potential customer. The advertisement should (1) attract attention, (2) awaken interest, (3) create a desire (motivation) to buy, and (4) as a consequence bring about the action of buying. The key factor in the perception of advertising is, in every case, the stimulus (physical, cognitive, emotional) that triggers the process of perception (cf. Mayer, 2000).

Cognitive dissonance

Festinger's (1987) theory of cognitive dissonance describes how dissonance – a psychologically unpleasant state – develops from the simultaneous existence of incompatible cognitions (knowledge, opinions, attitudes, convictions, etc.). For example, people may experience dissonance if forced to choose between two positive alternatives: they must decide in favour of one alternative and against another, although they are aware that the rejected alternative is also positive. As a consequence, people act in such a way as to reduce the dissonance. In order to achieve this, a change in the cognitive element of behaviour and environment is required, for example, by avoiding taking note of certain information or contact with people who support certain views. A change in the cognitive elements of behaviour may be impeded by certain factors, as, for example, when the change is associated with a certain loss, when the current behaviour is experienced as satisfactory or when one has no opportunity to adopt an alternative mode of behaviour.

The significance of psychological factors for access to Youth in Action

The psychological factors outlined above help to account for what influences access to the YiA Programme.

From the perspective of the psychology of motivation, youth workers make the decision to take part in the YiA Programme in order to overcome the discrepancy between a given and a desired state (cf. Jungemann et al., 1998). One positive aspect that influences the decision-making process is the possibility of receiving funding or rather the high expectation that the planned youth exchange will be a success. Contrasting with this are the negative factors that ensue from the necessary investment of time and possible uncertainty in relation to the ability to meet the demands. The contradictory aspect of the situation is resolved by the decision for or against participation in the programme. As a result of the decision, cognitive dissonance may arise: if, for example, a youth worker decides against participation in the YiA Programme, but nevertheless conducts the youth exchange with funding from another source, the dissonance that has arisen (created by the positive aspects of the YiA Programme that was nevertheless not taken up) can only be reduced by changing the cognitive elements of behaviour (e.g. by specifically seeking out information in favour of the chosen funding source and against YiA). Future decisions for or against the YiA Programme will be influenced by this process. The design of target-group-specific and user-friendly informational and advertising materials for the YiA Programme, taking into account aspects of perception psychology, can help to ensure that the positive aspects of the

programme are more clearly perceived from the start, thereby motivating youth workers to choose the programme.

3.2.2. Concepts of educational guidance and counselling

Guidance and counselling for education and learning

The aim of guidance and counselling defined as a multi-layered process of interaction between someone offering and someone seeking advice, is jointly to discuss and reflect on a problem, with the aim of finding a solution (cf. Sauer-Schiffer, 2004). In the field of education there are several different concepts of guidance and counselling, which are directed to different target groups. According to Sauer-Schiffer (2004), guidance and counselling for learning concerns overcoming learning difficulties and the individual support of learners. The aim is to make learning processes more effective by equipping learners seeking advice with appropriate learning methods. Educational guidance and counselling, on the other hand, focuses on providing support to individuals in selecting and developing their education, qualification and career pathways. In this case, those seeking advice are given information on available options for further and continuing education and professional development. This kind of guidance and counselling is set to expand in the future.

Coaching

Coaching is a form of counselling and support that focuses less on specific learning processes or educational decisions, and more on generally supportive and preventive measures for solving problems and developing the capacity for independent action, for example in the areas of personnel and organisational development. Coaching may also imply active intervention in the events and processes that are the subject of the coaching relationship (cf. Hubner, 2007).

The significance of educationally-oriented guidance and counselling for access to Youth in Action

In the context of access to the YiA Programme, the advice-seeking target group are youth workers who are in the process of deciding whether to participate in the programme. Guidance and counselling concepts, particularly the coaching of adults, should be considered within the context of the YiA Programme because existing national and regional information and advice services for youth workers comprise a key factor for the successful implementation of the programme. Staff at the regional YiA information centre in Innsbruck, Tyrol, confirmed that one of the main responsibilities of advisors is to make information about the programme available (i.e. to explain the general conditions and formal criteria governing the programme). Youth workers are also offered practical back-up support, for example when applying to or communicating with the National Agency. The information and advice services the regional centres offer can only be effective in widening access to the YiA Programme if youth workers make use of them in the first place and if the services are appropriate for their needs and demands, whether in terms of how youth exchanges are organised, in terms of the role of youth workers in such activities as multipliers, or in terms of how to incite young people's interest in participating in such projects.

3.3. Research questions

With the above factors in mind, this study explored the following hypothesis:

> *The National Agency promotes the Youth in Action (YiA) Programme only at national level and not at regional level. That is why regional institutions have been denied access to the YiA Programme.*

This hypothesis was pursued via a core research question and two supplementary questions:

Core research question

"How can access to the Youth in Action Programme for Tyrolean youth centres be characterised?"

This research question looks at how many people and youth centres have access or the opportunity to participate in the YiA Programme, and which factors influence non-participation.

Supplementary questions

- How well known is the Youth in Action Programme?
    - Are there sufficient sources of information (information material, website, advisory services)?
- What reasons do youth centres have for not making an application for a funded youth exchange project?
    - Are the reasons linked with the design of the application, the effort associated with the application process or the National Agency guidelines, or are they linked with other factors?

3.4. Methodology

Research design and instruments

The research design for this study of YiA access in Tyrol employed both qualitative and quantitative elements. In addition to a qualitative semi-standardised guided interview with an expert (youth worker as representative of the target group), a quantitative survey (questionnaire-based) was conducted among youth workers in Tyrol. The outcomes of the qualitative interview fed into the questionnaire design. The questionnaire itself was implemented as an online survey using the free and open-source application LimeSurvey[3]. The results of the online survey were evaluated using the statistical program SPSS with analysis of frequencies and contingency tables.

Sample

The basic population of this study consisted of all youth centres in Tyrol (n= 36). The target group of the survey were the youth workers in these centres. The response rate was over 50% (n = 19).

The survey instrument (online questionnaire) was constructed in such a way that five different sub-groups within the population were addressed: people (1) who already knew or (2) do not

---

[3] http://www.limesurvey.org

know about the YiA Programme, who (3) had conducted or (4) not conducted a youth exchange already, or (5) who do not wish to conduct a youth exchange.

3.5.   Results

Interest in youth exchange

With respect to their overall interest in embarking on a youth exchange project, half of the survey respondents stated that they had at least once considered conducting such an activity. Asked whether an international youth exchange had in fact been undertaken at their youth centre, the pattern of response displayed greater nuance: 44% reported that they had wanted to organise a youth exchange but had not done so. The remainder – the majority – reported in equal measure either that a youth exchange had been undertaken through YiA or another programme or that there was no interest at their centre in undertaking youth exchanges.

Awareness of the YiA Programme

Over half (56%) of the sample were aware of the YiA Programme. 58% of those aware of the YiA Programme reported that the National Agency a regional information office (e.g. Infoeck Innsbruck) or the regional consultancy firm ÖAR GmbH are their main source/s of information. A further 17% had heard about the programme from other youth workers. The media, friends/acquaintances and the website of the European Commission were only occasionally cited as information sources.

Reasons for conducting a youth exchange (with YiA)

Those respondents who had conducted a YiA-funded youth exchange were asked to indicate their reasons for choosing the programme based on a four-point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree) in relation to a set of given statements. All survey respondents strongly agreed with the statement that their positive experiences with the programme and its accompanying information and advice services constitute the reason for their participation in YiA. 60% (agree or strongly agree) also indicated that the high probability of receiving funding influenced their choice of programme. The amount of time and effort required to submit an application was generally rated as a negative factor: 67% (disagree or strongly disagree) of respondents take the view that the application process involves considerable time and effort. Those respondents who had reported at the outset of the questionnaire that they would like to conduct a youth exchange but had not done so were also asked to explain why this was so. All these respondents (agree or strongly agree) gave lack of time as a reason. Seven in ten also confirmed (agree or strongly agree) that undertaking youth exchanges demands much effort and equally as many cited (agree or strongly agree) lack of interest on the part of the young people with whom they work. Lack of information or doubts about the socio-educational objectives of a youth exchange were not cited as factors.

Difficulties associated with undertaking youth exchanges

The youth workers who participated in the survey were all asked whether it would be/is easy to conduct a youth exchange with the young people from their centre. The level of difficulty in undertaking an exchange was once again estimated using a four-point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). The response option "no opinion or cannot judge" was also included. Two-thirds of the respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement that it would be easy to undertake a youth exchange. Youth workers also had the option of providing an open answer, detailing the reasons for their response to this question. In addition to

lack of interest and motivation among the young people, respondents here cited structural deficits (lack of resources, time required, and lack of support from management) as reasons why it would be difficult. The role played by the socio-economic status of the young people concerned remains open to discussion. However, it is worth mentioning that two-thirds of the respondent youth workers report that they work in centres where up to a quarter of participants can be described as disadvantaged youth.

Results in brief

- Half of the youth workers stated that they were generally interested in conducting a youth exchange.
- More than half of the youth workers were familiar with the Youth in Action (YiA) Programme.
- The main sources of information on YiA are the National Agency, the regional office and the regional consultancy firm ÖAR.
- The reasons given for conducting a youth exchange through YiA were positive experiences with the programme, the accompanying advisory support, and the strong chances of receiving funding.
- The main reasons given for not conducting an exchange were lack of time, the effort required, and lack of interest among the young people.
- Approximately two thirds of the youth workers surveyed reckoned that it would be difficult to conduct a youth exchange with the young people at their centres.

3.6. Discussion and consequences

The main research question in this study concerns access by Tyrolean youth centres to the Youth in Action (YiA) Programme. Based on the assumption that information about the programme is in the first instance available at a national level, and hence do not have much impact at regional level, this study set out to investigate the level of awareness of the YiA Programme, and reasons for participating or not participating in the programme.

The level of awareness of the YiA Programme may be rated as moderate: almost half of the youth workers responding to the survey were unaware of the programme. The central hypothesis of the study could therefore be confirmed in part: sufficient information about YiA does exist, but clearly many potential participants do not access or register this information. From the perspective of advertising psychology, it is worth considering whether the information material is sufficiently well-tailored for and communicated to its target groups. With regard to the decision to participate in the YiA Programme or to conduct a youth exchange with a different programme, the results of the study suggest that the main demotivating factors are lack of time and the expected effort associated with making an application.
A simplified application process for the YiA youth exchange would counteract these factors. The advisory support services for the YiA Programme – which many of the survey respondents cited as appropriate and helpful – can also be considered as a positive factor. Considering the psychological factors involved in decision-making that were outlined earlier, it is certainly feasible to suggest that the youth workers surveyed judged the effort involved in participating in YiA to be too high, and therefore decided against taking part. The findings of this study also suggest that targeted information and advice services not only in advance of an application, but equally accompanying the application and implementation process themselves – including coaching to help youth workers manage their time and resources – would carry particular relevance for increasing the number of applications for youth exchanges through the YiA Programme.

---

4. Developing and extending competences through the 'Youth in Action' Programme: taking the example of the European Voluntary Service (Petra Ganthaler, 2010)

4.1. Introduction

The focus of this study is the competence development of young people in different areas. It examines which competences are gained through participation in the Youth in Action (YiA) Programme, particularly Action 2 – European Voluntary Service (EVS). Additionally, it explores which learning processes best support the development of competences, and to what extent participants' expectations of the EVS were met. The theoretical background to this study is outlined by a definition of the concept of competence; eight different areas of competence are described: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression (cf. European Union, 2006). It also looks at formal, non-formal and informal learning processes, and examines these in terms of their significance for intercultural learning processes.

The study is situated within the overall framework of research based analysis and monitoring of the YiA Programme, conducted by the Institute of Educational Science at the University of Innsbruck. Through its qualitative survey of competence development among EVS participants, this study contributes to an evaluation of YiA Programme objectives, in particular those of Action 2 – European Voluntary Service. Against this background, suggestions on how to improve the implementation of the EVS are discussed.

4.2. Theoretical background

4.2.1. Competences

Drawing on various definitions of competence from a range of academic fields (cf. for example, Thenort and Tippelt, 2007; Erpenbeck and v. Rosenstil, 2003; OECD, 2005; Weinert, 2002) this study assumes "that the term competence presupposes a situation of confusion that needs to be overcome. Competences are a totality of resources (talents, proficiencies, knowledge, attitudes, etc.) that are employed by the individual in motivational, volitional and social readiness, in success-oriented and responsible actions aimed at overcoming the above-mentioned situations" (Ganthaler, 2010, p. 10). Competences (as a disposition to achieve) can be distinguished from qualifications (the result of formal and informal learning and testing procedures) (cf. Heyse and Erpenbeck, 2004; Gnahs, 2007). Similarly, according to Gnahs (2007) and Maag Merki (2009), we can distinguish between specialised and domain-specific competences (e.g., mathematical competences) and non-specialised competences such as methodical, social and personal competences.

Eight key competences

The European Council, as part of the Lisbon Strategy, is pursuing the aim of making the European Union "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world" (European Council, 2000). Part of this process was the identification and definition of eight "key

competences for lifelong learning" which are "necessary for personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion and employability in a knowledge society" (European Union, 2006, p. L394/13). These eight key competences are: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression (ibid., 2006, p. L394/14-18).

Social and intercultural competences

In line with the European Union's eight key competences, social and intercultural competences represent a specific form of social skill and are thus given particular attention in this study.

Social Competence: the European Union (cf. European Union, 2006, p. L394/16) defines social competence as respectful, appropriate and value-free behaviour towards people in various situations and contexts, for the good of the individual and society. There is a discernible relationship between social and civic competences – in terms of active and democratic involvement in society (cf. Faix and Laier, 1991). According to Kanning (2003), social competences can be distinguished across three domains: perceptive-cognitive, motivational-emotional, and behavioural. The perceptive-cognitive domain comprises self-awareness, perception of others, adoption of others' perspectives, empathy, locus of control, decisiveness, and knowledge. The motivational-emotional domain is characterised by traits such as emotional stability, pro-sociality, and plurality of values. The behavioural domain contains behaviour patterns and traits such as extraversion, assertiveness, strategic flexibility, communication style, conflict behaviour and self-control. Social competences may therefore be understood as a collection of different skills and behaviours, which, according to Faix and Laier (1991), cannot be learned theoretically, but are developed through interaction within a community.

Intercultural competences can be defined by the United Nation's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) definition of culture: "[...] that in its widest sense, culture can be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (Deutsche UNESCO Kommission, 1982). Intercultural competences are understood as the ability "to grasp, respect, honour and productively use cultural conditions and factors in perception, judgement, feeling and behaviour, both in oneself and others, as part of a process of mutual adaptation marked by tolerance of incompatibilities and the development of synergetic forms of cooperation, co-existence, as well as effective patterns of orientation in relation to one's interpretation and shaping of the world." (Thomas, 2003, p. 143). According to Erll and Gymnich (2007) intercultural competences can be sub-divided into cognitive components (knowledge relevant to intercultural encounters); affective components (attitudes towards people from other cultures, empathy and tolerance of ambiguity) and pragmatic-communicative components (suitable communication patterns and problem-solving strategies) helps us achieve a greater differentiation of the concept of competence. The acquisition of intercultural competences takes place through long-term and lifelong processes of development and can be described according to Erll and Gymnich (2007), as a 'spiral of learning'. Through intercultural encounters, associated positive and negative experiences, and reflection, based on existing knowledge, on other cultures, individuals can increase their levels of competence in this area.

Significance of competences within the context of the EVS

Voluntary activities enable participants to expand and further develop their vocational and social competences, solidarity and social skills through informal and non-formal learning processes (cf. Section 4.2.2.), and they also support active participation in society (cf. European Union, 2008). Through the EVS Action, the YiA Programme pursues the objective of supporting young people to develop competences in these areas. It focuses on the attainment of intercultural competences. Through voluntary work within a social or environmental project in a European host country, volunteers have the opportunity to confront other cultures. The interaction with people from a different cultural background and reflection on these experiences in the accompanying training courses are central elements of this process. In terms of the spiral of intercultural learning (cf. Erll and Gymnich, 2007), these may be interpreted as initiating factors.

4.2.2. Acquisition of knowledge and competences

The acquisition of knowledge and competences occurs through various forms of learning and related learning processes. Given the importance of lifelong learning, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) defines lifelong learning as "a cumulative process where individuals gradually assimilate increasingly complex and abstract entities (concepts, categories, and patterns of behaviour or models) and/or acquire skills and wider competences. This process takes place informally, for example through leisure activities, and in formal learning settings which include the workplace." (European Commission, 2005, p. 12). The distinction between forms of learning contained in this definition is specified in more detail in Table 1, in accordance with the current description of formal, non-formal and informal forms of learning. Molzenberger and Overwien's (2004) contrasting approach shows, this tripartite division has established itself in the context of the politico-educational objective of the European Union.

Significance of formal, non-formal and informal learning forms for the EVS

Intercultural learning is one of the most important objectives of the EVS. Non-formal and informal learning forms play a particularly important role in the acquisition of new competences and the further development of existing competences. Non-formal learning activities that take place within the context of the EVS include, for example, the accompanying training sessions, in which participants reflect on the experiences gained through EVS activities, and language courses attended by the participants. The informal learning processes are related to the experiences gained through the EVS project working on social or environmental projects and interacting with people from different European cultures.

Table 1: Types of learning

Formal learning	Institutionalised or organised education; aimed at the conscious conveyance of learning content and objectives (Dehnbostel, 2004); takes place in institutions of general or vocational education, is conducted by professional staff, and is evaluated and leads to certification (European Commission4; Gnahs, 2007)
Non-formal learning	Intentional learning processes that take place in institutions of general or vocational education, based on structured learning objectives, within a formal schedule and with learning support (European Commission[4]), for example youth work; educational processes for personal development, group-based learning and experiental learning are typical features of non-formal education (Fennes and Otten, 2008)
Informal	Learning processes that do not take place within specific educational

---

[4] http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc52_de.htm

learning	events and institutions, but rather through immediate application in certain situations (Dohmen, 2001); places of informal learning include, for example, the workplace, family and social circles, leisure activities (European Commission5), and the learning process may either be non-intentional or intentional and self-organised (Wittwer, 2003)

4.3. Research questions

This study examines three central research questions in order to establish how young people develop certain competences through participation in the European Voluntary Service (EVS).

- Which competences are gained through the EVS, particularly which intercultural, social and professional competences?
- How are these competences gained? Which learning experiences are they based on?
- Which ideas and expectations about the EVS do the young people have at the start of the project? To what extent are these expectations met?

4.4. Methodology

Research design and instruments

The research design employed a range of qualitative methods for determining the development of competences by EVS participants. The assessment of EVS participants' competence development and experiences in their host country was carried out using interviews, together with observation of the EVS training and evaluation cycle, and analysis of of diary entries and contributions to an internet forum. A system of categories was developed based on the key research questions of the study. In addition to the competence categories (intercultural, foreign languages, social, sense of initiative and independent learning), the study also recorded participants' knowledge about their respective countries and about Europe; their expectations, responsibilities, difficulties, learning experiences in the social or environmental project, motivations, doubts, and sense of personal enrichment through participating in EVS. The results were coded using the computer programme MAX.QDA 2007.

Interviews: The main survey instrument consisted of two semi-standardised interviews (cf. Flick, 2007), which were conducted immediately prior to participation in the EVS and two weeks after returning from the exchange. The first interview focused on existing competences and experiences, including participants' expectations of the EVS activity. In the second interview participants were asked about the competences that they developed or extended while taking part in the EVS.

Observation: In addition to interviews, EVS participants were observed in two separate training sessions: the preparatory seminar prior to commencement of the EVS activity, and the final seminar when participants returned to Austria. The observation was, based on the approach of Lamnek (1993), as a scientific, unstructured, open, direct field observation with partially active, partially passive participation by the researcher.

Internet forum and diaries: An internet forum and diaries were used for the purpose of gathering data about participants' experiences during the period they were serving abroad. The internet forum was only accessible to participants of the study in which they were asked in numerous threads to describe their experiences in the social or environmental projects, and to self-assess their competence levels. Participants also had the opportunity to describe the contacts and any cultural impressions made. The forum was seldom used by the participants, and no discussions took place

between the participants. Diary entries were submitted at the beginning of the study by all participants (e.g., in the form of an e-mail report). Thereafter, entries were received by participants on an irregular basis.

Sample

Seven participants (6 females and 1 male, aged between 19 and 27) took part in the study of the EVS. Contact was established in most cases during the preparatory seminar, which was compulsory for all EVS participants before embarking on their stay abroad. The EVS participants differed in terms of age, background, professional status, the duration of their voluntary service (between six and twelve months), and the European country in which they conducted their service. All of the EVS participants who took part in this study came from Austria (from six different federal states, one participant was from a migrant background). Three of the participants were attending school prior to taking part in the EVS, while the remaining four participants were already in employment. The sample was not representative of all Austrian EVS participants.

4.5. Results

The following summary of results is based on the categories used in the content-oriented analysis. The results are based on self-assessment by participants, based on the interviews conducted before and after the EVS activities. Information from the field observations and the posts to the internet forum added to the description. Selected examples from the results are also presented (each in a separate box). The results refer only to the participants surveyed for this study, and to their experiences, and cannot be generalised to YiA *Action 2 – European Voluntary Service.*

Intercultural competence

Further development of intercultural competence was observed among all of the participants. A learning spiral can be identified (cf. Erll and Gymnich, 2007), in which participants build on prior experiences with other cultures and self-reflexively align these with the new impressions. By living together with EVS participants from other European countries, through involvement in social or environmental projects, through trips and sightseeing in the host country, and participation in daily life in the host country, the study participants repeatedly interacted with people from a variety of different cultures. In terms of the cognitive components of intercultural competence, it was established that participants, to varying degrees, discovered new aspects of the culture and history of their host country (for example, by visiting important cultural sites). They also reflected on differences between, on the one hand the mindset and cultural features of the host population (e.g., general outlook, day-to-day activities), and their own culture, on the other. The affective component of intercultural competence relates to attitudes. All participants reported an open-minded attitude to other cultures prior to taking part in the EVS activity, which was reinforced by taking part in the EVS activity. They were also able to accept experiences in the host country that contradicted their own systems of values and norms.

Sarah, 4th month, internet forum Section 25: "… I've also learned to live and work with 11 different nationalities, to respect their boundaries and cultures, and to make sure I get on well with everyone"

With regard to the pragmatic-communicative competence, it was noticeable that knowledge of English (and in some cases French) was important for the development of patterns that were suitable for communicating with people from other European countries. Particularly at the start of the EVS activity, when some participants had no knowledge of the language of the host

country, both English and non-verbal communication offered a suitable alternative strategy. The difficulties resulting from cultural differences were greatly diminished as the EVS activity progressed.

Foreign language competence

Study participants developed various levels of competence in the language of their host country prior to their EVS activity. For some, the chance to learn a foreign language was a motivation to take part in the EVS. Three of the study participants had no prior knowledge of their host country's language, while others either had basic knowledge, or – in the case of one participant – native fluency. The remaining participants attended a language course, either in preparation for or during the EVS activity. At the end of the EVS activity most participants reported that they had acquired basic knowledge of the respective language, mostly through their work in the social or environmental project, through socialising, travelling and in daily life. Only one participant reported that she continued to experience a language barrier at the end of the EVS activity. The language skills acquired varied in terms of reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills. Three participants expressed the desire to maintain and improve the language skills they gained by attending language courses.

> *Daniel, 11th month, second interview, Section 30: "fairly good, especially considering I didn't speak any Spanish at all before I went, so I'm quite happy the way it is. My biggest problem is understanding. I'm fairly good in speaking, reading and writing. Sure, I'm still lacking quite a lot of vocabulary, but it's enough to be able to communicate."*

Social competences

In line with the European Union's definition of key competences (cf. Section 4.2.1), the category 'social competences' was divided accordingly into personal and interpersonal factors.

At the personal level, note was taken of participants' shyness and strengths, as well as personal and social well-being. In self-assessing shyness, two of the participants claimed that they were not shy at all, while the remaining participants reported sometimes experiencing shyness, depending on the situation. Following the EVS activity, several participants reported that they felt less shy. This was justified by the experience that shyness was a barrier to achieving the desired goals of the EVS activity, and that an extrovert attitude was thus required.

> *Eva, second interview, Section 49: "...Because I noticed in Russia that if you want something from people, no-one asks you, are you okay, do you want anything, do you need anything, you have to say and you have to say it five times, so you really can't be shy. I saw that with other people, they'd go yeah, yeah, and forever beating around the bush, and I just thought, that doesn't make you feel good, so I just stood up and said, yeah okay, I need that and that, and so there I came out of myself more, and got away more from being shy."*

When asked about strengths possessed before taking part in the EVS activity, most participants reported personal and interpersonal competences and characteristics. Typical terms used by participants to describe themselves included: good listener, reliability, adaptability, friendliness, self-confidence, openness. The participants asserted that in many cases these strengths were reinforced by the EVS activities. This was an explicit objective of some participants, and indeed some reported the intention to pursue these areas further following the EVS activity, for example by retraining in a social profession.

> *Maria, second interview Section 117: "What I'd say are my strengths now [...] I think my openness is now my greatest strength, well I've always been open, at least I think so, but now after my EVS ... I'm a lot more open now, in a positive way (laughs)."*

Apart from minor physical (e.g., toothaches, skin rash) and psychological problems (e.g., home-sickness) participants did not report experiencing any significant health-related problems during the EVS. Any such problems experienced were resolved by visiting a doctor, returning to Austria earlier than intended, or through the support of roommates.

At the interpersonal level, the study also examined participants' experiences with other people; for example new friends, colleagues in the social and environmental projects, EVS mentors and local people in the host country. Participants found opportunities to develop new friendships through common living arrangements, socialising and working together, as well as through the EVS training seminars before and during the EVS activity. Participants reported that establishing contact with (local) colleagues in the social and environmental projects was often more difficult. In two specific cases, participants reported experiencing communication problems due to misunderstandings within a team or a culturally divergent approach to making contact. However, in both cases the participants in question had a contact person within their team to whom they could turn for advice and support. Contact with the EVS mentors was broadly reported as positive; in just one case a participant experienced conflict with a mentor, which also affected EVS participants from other countries. Moreover, one participant expressed that she would have preferred a female mentor, as she often felt that her male mentor did not understand her concerns. Participants experienced their greatest difficulty in establishing contact with local people and participating in the daily life of their host country. The main reason cited by participants was the language barrier. However the situation improved in this regard over the course of the EVS activity as a result of participants' improved language skills. Participants cited travel and socialising, visits to youth centres and participation in language courses or sports as opportunities to make new contacts and increase their involvement in the host country.

All participants stated prior to their EVS activity that they avoided situations of conflict, and in the event that such situations arose, would try to resolve them through discussion or mediative behaviour. Almost all of the participants experienced minor – and in two cases serious – conflicts with another person during their EVS activity (e.g., with colleagues in the social or environmental projects, roommates or mentors). Despite their preferred strategies for resolving conflicts, in both of the cases where the conflict was serious, the participants did not bring their concerns into the open; one of the affected participants adapted her strategy, judging it more appropriate to control her feelings and accept that she had limited power to change the situation.

Sense of initiative and ability to work independently

Most of the EVS participants surveyed had the opportunity during their EVS activity to implement their own ideas into action, in small and larger projects. In doing so, participants were able to apply existing competences. In the course of their work, participants developed new competences and improved on existing ones, particularly intercultural competence through the process of working with people from different cultures; foreign language competence through communication in the language of the host country; social competence through interpersonal interaction, and professional competence through their work in a specific field of work. Examples of smaller projects that the participants carried out independently, include an Austrian Evening at the Youth and Senior Citizens' Club, the planning, organisation and documentation of a YiA youth exchange (Action 1.1), the organisation of parties and outdoor activities, and art and crafts lessons for children.

> *Eva, second interview, Section 19: "Right, the art and crafts idea was mine, because I knew that when you have a language barrier it's better to work with your hands so you don't need language as much, you can set it up beforehand, and you also get into close contact with the children and they also have nice stuff and memories, and so then I'd prepare things on my own, on topics like Mothers' Day, Easter, holidays, summer, or I'd bring Austrian stuff with me, so I just went to them and asked if that's okay, if I can do it, and so they said sure, that's fine, so they know what to expect, but yeah, it was all my own idea."*

On a personal level, participants often acted independently and used their own initiative when it came to carrying out day-to-day tasks and organising trips.

> *Sarah, fourth month, internet forum, Section 25: "If I think back on what I've learned up to now, what definitely comes to mind first is that I learned to look after myself ... it may sound strange, but here I really have to do everything myself, starting with cleaning up the flat and shopping, right up to cooking etc. ... I have to make sure I 'get by' with the (sometimes little) money I get, and I just have to do everything myself."*

Europe

During the EVS activity, participants improved their knowledge about the host country and Europe in general. They found out about a range of different schemes offered by the European Union to sponsor and support young people, such as other Actions within the YiA Programme. By living and working with people from different European countries participants had the opportunity to discover the cultural diversity of Europe. Through trips and travel opportunities they discovered and learned to appreciate various aspects of Europe's cultural heritage. The participants also improved their knowledge of Austria which was emphasised by one participant. Conversations with people from other countries and research she conducted herself on Austria prompted reflection on conditions in her own country and to explore differences between Austria and her host country.

> *Sarah, second interview, Section 53: "Like at lunch, or over coffee, we talked a lot about different things, like the school system, politics, things like that, and I realised that in Greece I really learned a lot about Austria, because there were lots of things that I'd simply never questioned, that's just how it was, and so I started researching stuff on the internet, or when they asked me questions and I had no idea because it didn't interest me before, or whatever reason, so I really did learn a lot about my own country."*

Learning to learn

In terms of the learning that took place within the project, participants cited non-formal and informal methods of acquiring knowledge. These learning processes led both to the acquisition of new knowledge and the gradual improvement of existing competences. Some participants expressed the desire to continue certain learning processes even after the end of the EVS. In the area of non-formal learning, the language courses that participants took part in prior to or during the EVS, as well as the accompanying EVS training seminars, were central elements in knowledge acquisition. Self-reflection and evaluation of activities in the social and environmental projects – in addition to the training seminars – were key priorities within the EVS training and evaluation cycle. In one case, EVS participants from a particular host country organised a petition to campaign for the introduction of training seminars during their EVS activity.

In contrast, several participants questioned the value of the EVS training seminars. The reasons given included a lack of specific content and repetition of certain content. This was, for example, the case where EVS participants from another country had not attended a preparatory seminar,

and therefore certain content from the preparatory seminar was introduced again in the first training session in the host country.

Verena, second interview, Section 88: "Yeah, sure, they could have left out the mid-term training as far as I'm concerned, because it was just two days, and on the first day we just, they just asked us what we were doing in our projects, that was all. And on the second day we went to the village with the old wooden church, that was it."

Informal learning took place for most participants in ad-hoc situations, for example during daily activities, at work, during leisure time, and through contact with other volunteers and friends, etc.

Sarah, second interview, Section 9: "There was one very hard-working kid, he was really determined to teach us Greek, he said things that we had to say, and he said, this is called so-and-so, repeat it, and so on. (laughs) He was five years old, I suppose that's why, yes. […]"

In order to facilitate the documentation and recognition of competences gained during the EVS, participants were given a Youthpass. The Youthpass included participants' personal data, provided information on the European Voluntary Service (or other YiA Actions that the young people have participated in) and also contained a description and evaluation of the learning outcomes.

Social or environmental project

The EVS aims to promote the social and professional integration of young people. The search for a suitable project is supported by a comprehensive database, and by the regional YiA office. Prior to the start of their EVS activity, most of the participants expressed uncertainty about the tasks that they would be performing within their assigned project; however, during the EVS, they reported that their tasks were clearly defined, realistic and well balanced. The participants found that they could draw on existing competences, for example specialist professional knowledge. However, in some cases the tasks to which they were assigned did not meet their expectations.

Daniel, 11th month, second interview, Section 11: "Well, more or less. I trained as a carpenter and wood technician, so that sometimes came in handy at the centre when they needed someone to do small jobs, paint something, fix a lock, or put up shelves...but it was also important that I was open-minded and can think logically, because it's good to be able to improvise when you don't understand the language."

Verena, second interview, Section 12: "Yes, but not entirely. I actually thought I'd learn more about plants, about the particular ones that grow there, about cultivation, and wouldn't just be pulling weeds, that I'd also be doing more with the people there, that I'd help plan the excursions, the tours for people who come there to see that place, that I'd just be more involved in the whole process."

The tasks given to the participants in the projects largely supported (as intended by the EVS Action) – participants to establish and maintain contact with the local community in the host country. The effects of participation in the EVS were not limited to the participants, and in at least one case these were made public in schools and youth centres through a targeted dissemination campaign.

The work in the social and environmental projects is voluntary and because of this participants received only a modest allowance. Participants reported in some cases that the way the money was distributed was a learning experience.

European Voluntary Service

The majority of participants were informed about the EVS through friends, though some were also specifically looking for a funded opportunity to spend time abroad. For many, the main motivation for taking part was the desire to spend time abroad and to learn a foreign language. Participation in the EVS included three obligatory training seminars – before, during and after the stay abroad. Reservations and expectations were discussed in the preparatory seminar. Common reservations included communication problems, uncertainty about participants' tasks within the social or environmental projects, the extent to which they would be able to make new contacts, and the ability to cope with crises or disappointments. A common expectation of the EVS activity is that participants will gain competences, particularly with foreign languages, as well as social, intercultural and professional competences. Most of the participants agreed that involvement in the EVS would be valuable for their future career. The EVS is further viewed as an opportunity to gather impressions and experience in a specific professional field.

> *Maria, second interview, Section 111: "Definitely my professional career. Well, I noticed that it's a lot easier for me and much more appealing to work with people than to sit in an office in front of a computer for 24 hours doing some kind of calculations, and I think the EVS just put me on a different track. And that what I'm doing right now is not the right thing for me, that I enjoy my work a lot more when I'm working with people."*

After returning to Austria participants reflected on their experiences and what they had learned during the EVS in a final seminar. They discussed the competences gained, and how these could be presented when applying for a professional position. All of the participants had different experiences of returning home. While some participants were well prepared, others found it difficult to leave their host country and return home. The participants expressed the view that it would make sense to extend the duration of the EVS to a minimum of one year, because, particularly at the start a lot of things are new, participants are disoriented and struggle with language barriers.

4.6. Discussion and consequences

The EVS is a very intensive period for young people, one in which they are confronted with many new challenges and behavioural demands. The results of the study indicate that young participants in EVS gained the opportunity to develop a new set of competences or extend existing ones. The competences developed are in keeping with the eight key competences defined by the European Union (see 4.2.1). It is worth noting that it depends greatly on the personalities of participants, whether participation in the EVS delivers long-term and sustainable outcomes. The EVS Action of the YiA Programme provides a framework, however it is the responsibility of the participants to act constructively within this framework. This starts with the choice of a project; social or environmental the choice of host country and participants' behaviour during their stay abroad, as well as their participation in public life. Because it is not possible for all European young people to take part in the EVS, possible options for developing competences within domestic learning contexts should be considered. These include internships or voluntary work at institutions with an intercultural background, accompanied by foreign language courses. It emerged from the research, that the individual motivation and initiative shown by the young people is a key element in the success of any such project. To realise this, it is therefore essential that the young people are informed about the relevant options available.

This study also revealed weaknesses in the YiA *Action 2 – European Voluntary Service*. These relate to the specific experience of participants with the overall concept of the EVS and the general

conditions in the host country. It was shown to be important to inform all actors in the host country who work with the EVS participants about the YiA Programme and the EVS Action in a timely and appropriate manner, in order to avoid misunderstandings and to make things easier for participants at the start of the programme. This should be facilitated through the ongoing availability of a mentor in the host country, and by providing access to the youth workers in the participants' home countries. These persons should be personally familiar to the participants, and should, if possible, remain consistent throughout the duration of the EVS. Furthermore, the early phase of participants' activities in the EVS can be facilitated by providing language courses that are specifically tailored to spending time abroad; i.e., with emphasis on situational language and day-to-day communication. With regard to the accompanying EVS training seminars, it is desirable that the content is similarly designed and arranged in all participating countries, in order to avoid overlapping of content between the preparatory training seminars and the training seminars given in the host country. In the current study, most of the individuals involved possessed higher educational qualifications, which may be a reflection of the general profile of participants. This aspect should be examined and more attention and consideration paid to the involvement of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds when selecting participants for the EVS and distributing information on the possibility of participating in the EVS.

Finally, it is important to conclude that the feedback received from the study participants in interviews, diary entries and forum posts were predominantly positive; with all of the participants agreeing they would recommend the EVS.

5. Social change among young Europeans: Non-formal and informal learning structures in the 'Youth in Action' project, based on the example of the European Voluntary Service (Julia Hasforter, 2011)

5.1. Introduction

Participation in Action 2 – European Voluntary Service (EVS) is intended to help young people develop competences for active citizenship. The aim of the programme is to promote a feeling of solidarity and common European identity through cross-border mobility in Europe and networking between young people from various European countries and cultures. Competence development – in terms of the eight key competences defined by the European Union (European Union, 2006, p. L394/13) – is increasingly important in order that young people can adapt to changing social demands. The changes in social individualisation processes described by Hurrelmann (1994), combined with the increasing heterogeneity of status transitions and lifestyles have led to the increased complexity of these demands. Mobility is one of these demands; it accompanies the chance to gain learning experiences in intercultural contexts and the necessity of not losing one's bearings in the multitude of possibilities on offer. According to Alheit (1992), biographical experiences are necessary in order to experience social structures by observing day-to-day phenomena. In the following pages we will look at learning structures in the 'second Modernist society' – at access to individual subjects and within the context of the education policy concept of lifelong learning – while taking into consideration formal and particularly non-formal and informal learning contexts as are found within the EVS.

5.2. Theoretical background

Social change, as it applies to the youth of Europe, is related to the institutional changes affecting adolescence and career, and the associated effects on patterns of behaviour in phases of transition and the development of life and career pathways. According to Kohli (1985; cf. Dommermuth, 2009; Sackmann, 2007), career pathways are a social phenomenon which is particularly influenced by three institutions: the education system, the labour market and social security systems. At the same time the normal career path is also a social institution, consisting of temporal phases, in relation to which individuals can orient their way in life. Sociological research (cf. Chisholm, 1996) has shown that these phases, increasingly, are being postponed, and the adolescent phase, in particular, extended; this is now overlapping with the phases of childhood and adulthood; patterns of transition are expanding and are increasingly individualised (cf. Chisholm and Kovacheva, 2003). Sennet (2005) points out that strategic planning of career paths is becoming more difficult, and is increasingly characterised by chance disorientation. Trust in institutions is one factor that counteracts this trend. This presents a challenge in light of the precarious working conditions in the global labour market; further education and acquisition of additional qualifications become essential. According to Weymann (2004), education is acquiring a new role in people's career paths: while in the early modern era knowledge and skills were passed on from the older generation to the younger generation – often within the family – modern society is characterised by complex structures, in which the demands placed on the individual are rapidly growing and changing. Particularly in the field of technology, the knowledge of the older generation is often outdated and lifelong learning and continuing education is the necessary consequence (cf. also Chisholm, 2005).

Non-formal and informal learning processes play a decisive role in this regard. According to Colley, Hodkinson and Malcolm (2003), the distinction between informal learning processes and formal learning may be drawn less on the conceptual level, and more in relation to the different learning contexts. This study will examine the validation of informal learning processes and their individual application. The following text will use the European Commission's (2001) definitions of formal learning (i.e., goal-directed and structured learning in educational institutions, leading to certification), non-formal learning (i.e., systematic, goal-directed learning outside of schools and institutions of education; the place and duration of learning are not prescribed; the learning process ends with a certificate of competency), and informal learning (i.e., unintended, unplanned, situative, unstructured leading in day-to-day and professional life, and outside of institutions of education; cf. also Zürcher, 2007). The education and youth policy of the European Union (cf. European Commission, 2001; European Parliament and European Council, 2006) supports the empowerment of citizens to use non-formal and informal learning situations in order to ensure ongoing acquisition of competences, enabling citizens to partake in a global society. Based on reflection of the term competence, as defined by Chomsky (1969), Habermas (cited by Brödl, 1992), and Rychen (2004), this study uses the definition provided by the European Union: *"competences are defined here as a combination of knowledge, skills and contextual attitudes. Key competences are those competences that all people require for their personal development, social integration, active citizenship and occupation"* (p. 15). Based on Zürcher's approach (2007), the study examines the relationship between career paths and non-formal and informal places of learning, and their significance for the development of competences: (supra) regional places of learning need to be flexible in accommodating different biographies, and need to offer users freedom of action; transitions between educational and working contexts are therefore facilitated. With this in mind, and based on the recommendations of a Europe-wide expert group, the European Commission (2007) defined eight key competences that have central importance for European citizens in today's society: (1) communication in the mother tongue, (2) communication in foreign languages, (3) mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, (4) digital competence, (5) learning to learn, (6) social and civic competences, (7) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and (8) cultural awareness and expression (cf. Chapter 4.2).

5.3. Research questions and hypotheses

Hasforter's (2011) qualitative study explores the following key questions: in which ways does the "development of a European identity" – an objective of the EVS – benefit an individual? To what extent does this involve the development of an identity that does not imply any geopolitical allegiance and contains "relative de-nationalisation"? How does this relate to the objectives of the EVS, which aim to create intercultural learning contexts, in which young Europeans learn emancipatory competences in terms of developing a personality as active citizens free of regional limitations? In this context, how important is one-year voluntary service in another European country for young people? Within this context of formal, non-formal and informal learning structures the following core research question arises: which competences and skills are fostered through participation in the EVS? *What* is learned, *where* and *how*?

Hypothesis: it is assumed that, by being confronted with foreign cultures, young people reflect on their own cultural background in a new light. This initiates a process of critically analysing one's own identity and the new environment. Ideally, this leads to the realisation that a person demonstrates tolerance, solidarity and curiosity towards other cultures despite being emotionally anchored in their own home country, and has a multitude of lifestyle options. This implies that respective attitudes, knowledge and skills are developed further.

5.4. Methodology

Research design and instruments

A qualitative approach was adopted which employed participant observation and focus groups to obtain relevant data material. The focus groups were conducted in English and translated into German (English is generally used as the *lingua franca* in such contexts).

In the participant observation, the slight age difference between the researcher and the target group (EVS participants) made access easier; at the same time however, it was necessary to maintain a certain distance in order to avoid jeopardising the scientific integrity of the study. The field notes were based on the methodology of Emerson, Fretz und Shaw (1995): active participation and observation were separate from the note-taking phase.

The focus groups were conducted with interested participants using structured guidelines; video recordings of the discussions were transcribed and subjected to a qualitative content analysis (based on Mayring (1993)).

Sample

The sample consisted of young people from foreign countries who were taking part in a voluntary activity in Austria under the auspices of the EVS. The researcher had access to this target group during two three-day training courses that EVS participants were obliged to attend. The first training seminar (on-arrival training or OAT) took place at the start of the EVS project and was oriented towards getting to know the other participants and dealing with any questions. The second training seminar – which took place in the middle of the EVS period (mid-term meeting or MTM) – allowed participants to discuss their experiences to date. The analysis took into consideration the ways in which participants developed between the two training seminars (e.g., in relation to attitudes). The researcher's participation in the training seminars was facilitated by the Austrian national agency for Youth in Action.

5.5. Results

The analysis of data from the participant observations and the focus groups highlighted three central areas of competence, fostered by the EVS: professional competence, individual competence and civic competence. The results of the analysis were classified according to the following research questions: 1) what was learned?; and 2) how and where did the learning take place?

What was learned?

Professional competence includes skills that are relevant for successful professional activities. This relates to the eight key competences (cf. European Commission, 2007) – particularly communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, and sense of initiative and entrepreneurship – but certain aspects of other competences may also be involved. The development of professional competence occurs in a goal-directed manner and participants expected positive benefits for their future careers from the EVS.

Focus group, MTM: "The main reason I decided to take part in the European Voluntary Service is that I have completed my studies and now need to gain career experience. […]. It's also a good feeling to be a volunteer. You're doing something good. Win-win situation, you know."

There was a noticeable improvement in professional competences over the course of the EVS activity, as evidenced between the two training seminars. Observation showed that the majority of participants achieved positive benefits from their experience in the projects, for example in relation to specific areas of work, such as social/educational work with children or young adults, use of computers, and agricultural work. A particularly high degree of development was observed in the area of foreign language competence, partly through the requirement to speak German in the project in order to communicate and enjoy the work.

Focus group, MTM: "When I think back to the OAT, I think of a black hole of German. I was able to say, ja, nein, bitte, danke. I can't believe that I'm sitting here now and can speak in German using full sentences."

Individual competence relates to a person's ability to consciously direct their thoughts and actions. Individual competence allows people to insert their personal values into situations, to satisfy strategic and meaning-related needs, and to set and achieve realistic goals. According to Klieme (2003), individual competence is a "disposition that allows a person to cope with concrete challenges, and expresses itself in the performance, the actual result" (p. 72). Of the eight key competences (cf. European Commission, 2007), social and civic competences are especially connected to individual competence.

The experiences of participants in the first few weeks of their EVS activity did not conform to the 'dream' they had before commencing their stay abroad; they become aware that change would take place as part of a lengthy process. At the start (during the OAT), therefore, a certain level of disorientation was observed. This was often connected to lack of knowledge of German, and tested participants' personal limits. Particularly in situations of conflict, participants were required to confidently communicate in a foreign language. During the MTM it became clear that participants had managed to improve their knowledge of German over time and had increasingly integrated themselves into social networks. One particular example illustrated that integration into social networks and the accompanying positive attitude in a person who had previously described themselves as shy, led over time to increased self-confidence in dealing with other people, and helped in overcoming introverted patterns of behaviour.

Focus group, OAT: "I have the feeling that everything's happening very slowly. I can only speak three sentences in German, and I haven't gotten to know anyone. I often feel very alone. But I'm enjoying my walks and the surroundings and the food. It's all very new to me, but I know that I just need a bit more time to settle in."

Group discussion, MTM: "I always thought that I'm a very very shy person. […] But now I have the feeling that I'm more laid back.. ... I organised everything on my own and I'm proud of that."

In connection with these processes, we can assume a positive influence on individual competence, particularly on self-confidence. However, positive developments were also observed in relation to flexibility, self-assurance and professional activities. The development of individual competences occurred largely through informal learning; during work and in day-to-day dealings with other EVS participants, or through organising leisure activities.

The participants expected this positive development to extend beyond the EVS and they described a feeling of increased self-efficacy (cf. Bandura, 1997) in terms of what they expected to be able to achieve in the future. This perception was strengthened by experiencing their own abilities in a specific working environment during the EVS – even among young people with special needs.

> *Field notes, MTM: "I don't know exactly, but I have the feeling that I've more faith in myself now. I think about interviews I'll do when I'm back home, and I'm not nervous about that anymore. I also think that the EVS is a good reference for getting a job."*

Citizenship competence is connected to the concept of active citizenship, the promotion of which is one of the explicit goals of the EVS (cf. European Parliament and European Council, 2006; European Commission, 2010). Active citizenship relates to education in political democracy and involves, in a broader way the idea of living together in solidarity within a community, building relationships between people, and developing a collective identity[5]. It also concerns political involvement and participation, at national and European levels, through involvement in political, non-commercial initiatives – based on occupational competence aimed at multicultural coexistence and a tolerant approach to one another (European Commission, 2010; Jütting, 2003).

By engaging in common activities the EVS participants – all from different countries – developed a sense of solidarity and common cause that is independent of nationality. Europe as a region thereby becomes tangible.

> *Field notes, MTM: "Five of us volunteers took a trip to Slovakia in a car belonging to an Austrian friend. We were stopped at the border. The men at the passport control office seemed confused because each of us came from a different country. Somehow that felt great."*

Where and how does learning take place?

Professional competence was developed in the workplace where the EVS participants spent between 24 and 40 hours a week. Competence development was aided in the case of most participants by a mentor, who acted as a direct point of contact at the workplace, and introduced participants to their tasks – including the duties within and outwith their fields of responsibility.

> *Focus group, MTM: "If I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do, for example if I didn't understand because my German isn't that good, then I ask Anita [name changed], my mentor. She also always corrects me if I say something wrong in German. I like that, because it helps me learn the language. We talk a lot, I feel good and as a result I can work better."*

The development of professional competence also occurs at both non-formal and informal levels. The EVS projects and compulsory training sessions formed a non-formal learning arrangement, in which participants, on the one hand, followed job instructions and carried these out largely autonomously, and on the other reflected on their activities and development with colleagues and other participants. A similar process of reflection took place with friends and acquaintances during participants' free time, and this can be largely ascribed to the area of informal learning.

---

[5] http://www.politische-bildung.at

Focus group, MTM: "What we're learning here, not so much at the OAT, but at the MTM. We're in projects and do this and that without even noticing, we just do it. But here you're forced to write down the positive aspects of your work that you've done, and to write down your problems, and in various exercises to talk, talk, talk, ... about what you've done and sometimes you've done something but you haven't thought about it, that it was really something great, and if you tell someone here about it, the answer is: Wow, you really did a good job, and then you understand: Yes, may I really did! […]"

Individual competence was mostly developed through informal learning; i.e., in day-to-day situations in professional and private spheres, at work or while organising and taking part in leisure activities.

"In the beginning every day was an event. Everything was new. It's still like that, but different. It's not as hard for me, you know, you don't have to think about what you're going to do today. And with whom. That just happens by itself now. I've made quite a few friends."

Citizenship c competence was developed not only in the EVS projects – many of the participants took part in or initiated other projects within their social vicinity (e.g., environmental group, choir, funeral assistance). These activities emphasise the high level of willingness among the participants to participate in their surrounding communities. The close friendships that developed between EVS participants from the different European countries also supported multicultural experiences, for example during common trips taken within Austria.

Focus group, OAT: "I'm more familiar with the squares, museums and restaurants in Vienna than in my home city, even though I've only been here two months. If you're only living somewhere for a limited time you have to see everything, as quickly as possible. And I want to feel the culture."

In the focus groups, participants also discussed political issues related to their future roles as European citizens, and to cultural diversity within Europe. They further reflected on the fundamental idea underlying the European Union.

Focus group, MTM: "That's the new idea of the European Union, that's very new, and this programme is a strategy to unite the countries of the European Union, and other countries. I don't know if the original idea to do that was really genuine. I mean, they're spending a lot of money on this programme, and I'm asking myself if this is about politics, the strategy of making some countries stronger than others, or if it's really about the idea of bringing people together, but I don't think this idea was very strong 20 or 40 years ago, but I do think it's good to expand people's horizons.

5.6. Discussion and consequences

Altered, complex social demands, changes in the structure of the labour market, and accompanying changes in individual career paths and patterns of transition increasingly require European citizens to pursue lifelong learning and competence development. Programmes by the European Commission aim to support the acquisition of competences, particularly those in the fields of non-formal and informal learning. Specifically, it can be shown that participation in the EVS supports the acquisition of professional competence, individual competence and civic competence, particularly through reflection on participants' own value systems and culturally determined habits and structures. Cultural diversity is experienced as an asset through the exchange with EVS participants from other countries; moreover, a European context and a sense of solidarity are imparted and experienced. Socially disadvantaged young people, who experience

a difficult transition from the education system to the labour market, find support and motivation for future career plans by taking part in the programme.

6. References

Alheit, P. (1992). *Leben Lernen? Bildungspolitische und bildungstheoretische Perspektiven biographischer Ansätze* (Werkstattberichte des Forschungsschwerpunkts Arbeit und Bildung, Vol. 16). University of Bremen.

Atkinson, J. W. (1957). Motivational determinants of risktaking behavior. *Psychological Review*, 64, pp. 359–372.

Atkinson, J. W. (1958). *Motives in fantasy, action, and society.* Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control.* New York: Freeman.

Brödel, R. (2002). Relationierungen zur Kompetenzdebatte. In E. Nuissl, C. Schiersmann, H. Siebert, Horst (ed.), *Kompetenzentwicklung statt Bildungsziele? Report Nr. 49.* Available at http://www.die-bonn.de/esprid/dokumente/doc-2002/nuissl02_02.pdf (accessed 31 May 2011).

Chisholm, L. (1996). Graffiti Life: Junge Erwachsene zwischen Phantom und Realität. In A. Walter (ed.), *Junge Erwachsene in Europa. Jenseits der Normalbiographie?,* pp. 39–52. Opladen: Leske+Budrich.

Chisholm, L. (2005). *Generationen des Wissens, Wissensgenerationen und Wissensgenerierung.* Leopold-Franzens University Innsbruck. Available at http://www.uibk.ac.at/fakultaeten/bildungswissenschaften/bildungstage/downloads/chisholm.pdf (accessed 1 June 2011).

Chisholm, L. and Kovacheva, S. (2003). *Exploring the European youth mosaic. The social situation of young people in Europe.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Colley, H., Hodkinson, P. and Malcolm, J. (2003). *Informality and formality in learning: a report for the Learning and Skills Research Centre.* University of Leeds, Lifelong Learning Institute. Available at http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/EuropeanInventory/publications/concept/lsrc_informality_formality_learning.pdf (accessed 1 June 2011).

Dehnbostel, P. (2004). Kompetenzentwicklung in der Arbeit als Alternative zum organisierten Lernen. In B. Hungerland and B. Overwien (ed.). *Kompetenzentwicklung im Wandel. Auf dem Weg zu einer informellen Lernkultur,* pp. 51–67. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Deutsche UNESCO Kommission (1982): *Erklärung von Mexico-City über Kulturpolitik. Weltkonferenz über Kulturpolitik.* Available at www.unesco.de/2577.html?&L=0 (accessed 1 June 2011).

Dohmen, G. (2001). *Das informelle Lernen. Die internationale Erschließung einer bisher vernachlässigten Grundform menschlichen Lernens für das lebenslange Lernen aller.* Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (ed.). Bonn: BMBF Publik.

Dommermuth, L. (2008). *Wege ins Erwachsenenalter in Europa – Italien, Westdeutschland und Schweden im Vergleich.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I. and Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Erll, A. and Gymnich, M. (2007): *Interkulturelle Kompetenzen. Erfolgreich kommunizieren zwischen den Kulturen.* Stuttgart: Klett.

Erpenbeck, L. and v. Rosenstiel, L. (2003). *Handbuch Kompetenzmessung. Erkennen, verstehen und bewerten von Kompetenzen in der betrieblichen, pädagogischen und psychologischen Praxis.* Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel.

European Comission (2001). Communication from the Commission. *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality.* COM(2001) 678. Brussels. Available at http://eur-

lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2001:0678:FIN:EN:PDF (accessed 1 June 2011).

European Commission (2005). *Commission Staff Working Document. Towards a European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning.* Available at http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/consultation_eqf_en.pdf (accessed 1 June 2011).

European Commission (2007). *Key competences for lifelong learning – European Framework.* Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf (accessed 1 June 2011).

European Commission (2010). *Youth in Action Programme Guide.* Available at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc/how_to_participate/programme_guide_10/guide_en.pdf (accessed 1.6.2011).

European Union (2006/963/EC). *Official Journal of the European Union. Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning.* Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:en:PDF (accessed 1 June 2011).

European Union. (2008/C391). *Official Journal of the European Union. Council Recommendation of 20 November 2008 on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union.* Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:319:0008:0010:EN:PDF (accessed 1 June 2011).

European Council (2000). *Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000. Presidency Conlcusions.* Available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm (accessed 1 June 2011).

European Parliament and Council (2006). *Decision No. 1719/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the 'Youth in Action' Programme for the period 2007 to 2013.* Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:327:0030:0044:EN:PDF (accessed 1 June 2011).

Faix, W. G. and Laier, A. (1991). *Soziale Kompetenz. Das Potential zum unternehmerischen und persönlichen Erfolg.* Wiesbaden: Betriebswirtschaftlicher Verlag Dr. Th. Gabler.

Fennes, H. and Otten, H. (2008). *Quality in non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work.* Available at http://www.salto-youth.net/download/1615/TrainingQualityandCompetenceStudy.pdf (accessed 31 May 2011)

Festinger, L. (1987). *Theorie der Kognitiven Dissonanz.* Bern: Huber.

Flick, U. (2007). *Qualitative Sozialforschung. Eine Einführung.* Fully revised and enlarged edition. Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag.

Ganthaler, P. (2010). *Aufbau und Erweiterung von Kompetenzen durch das EU-Projekt „Jugend in Aktion" am Beispiel des Europäischen Freiwilligendienst.* Diploma thesis. Innsbruck.

Gnahs, D. (2007). *Kompetenzen – Erwerb, Erfassung, Instrumente. Studientexte für Erwachsenenbildung.* Bielefeld: Bertelsmann.

Hasforter, J. (2011). *Junge EuropäerInnen im sozialen Wandel: Nicht-formale und informelle Lernstrukturen durch das Projekt „Jugend in Aktion" am Beispiel „Europäischer Freiwilligendienst".* Diploma thesis. Innsbruck.

Heyse, V. and Erpenbeck, J. (2004). *Kompetenztraining. 64 Informations- und Trainingsprogramme.* Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel.

Hubner, M. (2007). *Coaching als Aufgabe der Erwachsenenbildung.* Münchner Studien zur Erwachsenenbildung. Vol. 3. Berlin: LIT Verlag.

Hurrelmann, K. (1994). *Lebensphase Jugend: Eine Einführung in die sozialwissenschaftliche Jugendforschung.* Weinheim, Munich: Juventa Verlag.

Jungemann, H., Pfister, H.-R. and Fischer, K. (1998). *Die Psychologie der Entscheidung. Eine Einführung.* Heidelberg, Berlin: Spektrum.

Jütting, H. (2003). *Freiwilliges Engagement von Jugendlichen. Eine empirische Fallstudie über AbsolventInnen des European Voluntary Service.* Münster, Hamburg, London: LIT Verlag.

Kanning, U. P. (2003). *Diagnostik sozialer Kompetenzen.* Göttingen, Bern: Hogrefe.

Klieme, E. (2003). *Zur Entwicklung nationaler Bildungsstandards. Eine Expertise.* Berlin. Available at http://www.bmbf.de/pub/zur_entwicklung_nationaler_bildungsstandards.pdf (accessed 1 June 2011).

Kohli, M. (1985). Die Institutionalisierung des Lebenslaufs – Historische Befunde und theoretische Argumente, *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, No. 37.*

Lamnek, S. (1993). *Qualitative Sozialforschung. Methoden und Techniken.* 2nd revised edition. Weinheim: Beltz.

Maag Merki, K. (2009). Kompetenz. In S. Andresen, R. Casale, T. Gabriel, R. Horlacher, S. Larcher Klee, J. Oelkers (ed.), *Handwörterbuch. Erziehungswissenschaft,* pp. 492–506. Weinheim, Basel: Beltz Verlag.

Mangold, R. (2007). *Informationspsychologie.* München: Elsevier.

Mayer, H. O. (2000). *Einführung in die Wahrnehmungs-, Lern- und Werbepsychologie.* Munich, Vienna: Oldenbourg.

Mayring, P. (1993). *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Grundlagen und Techniken.* Enlarged edition. Weinheim: Deutscher Studienverlag.

Molzberger, G. and Overwien, B. (2004). Studien und empirische Untersuchungen zum informellen Lernen. In B. Hungerland and B. Overwien (ed.), *Kompetenzentwicklung im Wandel. Auf dem Weg zu einer informellen Lernkultur,* pp. 69–85. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Moser, K. (2002). *Markt- und Werbepsychologie. Ein Lehrbuch.* Göttingen, Bern: Hogrefe.

OECD (2005). *The definition and selection of key competencies. Executive summary.* Available at http://www.pisa.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/61/35070367.pdf (accessed 1 June 2011).

Rheinberg, F. (2008). *Motivation.* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Rosenthal, A. (2009). *Empirische Untersuchung über den Zugang zum Programm Jugend in Aktion.* Diploma thesis. Innsbruck.

Rychen, D. S. (2004). Key Competencies for all: An overarching conceptual frame of reference. In D. S. Rychen and A. Tiana (ed.), *Developing key competencies in education: Some lessons for international and national experience.* UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Paris.

Sackmann, R. (2007). *Lebenslaufanalyse und Biographieforschung. Eine Einführung.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Sauer-Schiffer, U. (2004). Beratung in der Erwachsenenbildung und außerschulischen Jugendbildung. In U. Sauer-Schiffer (ed.), *Bildung und Beratung. Beratungskompetenz als neue Herausforderung für Weiterbildung und außerschulische Jugendbildung* (pp. 9–65). Münster: Waxmann.

Sennett, R. (2005). *Die Kultur des neuen Kapitalismus.* Berlin: Berlin Verlag

Tenorth, H.-E. and Tippelt, R. (ed.) (2007). *Beltz Lexikon Pädagogik.* Weinheim: Beltz.

Thomas, A. (ed.) (2003): *Handbuch Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kooperation.* Göttingen.

Weinert, F. E. (2002). *Vergleichende Leistungsmessung in Schulen – eine umstrittene Selbstverständlichkeit.* In F. E. Weinert (ed.), Leistungsmessungen in Schulen (pp. 15–31). Weinheim, Basel: Beltz.

Weymann, A. (1998). *Sozialer Wandel: Theorien zur Dynamik der modernen Gesellschaft.* Weinheim, Munich: Juventa.

Weymann, A. (2004). *Individuum – Institution – Gesellschaft, Erwachsenensozialisation im Lebenslauf.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften/GWV Fachverlage GmbH.

Zürcher, R. (2007). Informelles Lernen und der Erwerb von Kompetenzen. Theoretische, didaktische und politische Aspekte. *Materialien zur Erwachsenenbildung, Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, No. 2.*