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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL EDUCATORS
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES EDUCATEURS SOCIAUX
ASOCIACION INTERNACIONAL DE EDUCADORES SOCIALES

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CONTENTS

1	EDITORIAL	2
2	AIEJI'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING	2
3	MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT	6
4	NEWS FROM THE WORLD	8
4.1	USA	8
4.2	URUGUAY	9
4.2.1	<i>Social Education and children's poverty in Uruguay</i>	9
4.2.2	<i>No shelter but the night. Developping survival strategies in critical contexts in Latin America.</i>	11
4.3	GERMANY	12
4.4	SPAIN	13
4.4.1	<i>IV Social Educator's State Congress</i>	13
4.4.2	<i>II European Symposium of Social Educators' Profesional Associations</i>	13
4.5	DENMARK	14
4.5.1	<i>Treatment of drug abusers</i>	14
4.5.2	<i>Economic thinking in programmes for children and young people at risk</i>	15
5	LET'S KNOW EACH OTHER	17
6	GET INVOLVED	18
7	AGENDA	21

1 EDITORIAL

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report has been recently presented. The report states “facing cultural diversity is one of the main challenges” the conclusion is quite obvious: no country has developed because of closing its frontiers. In certain countries the professionals of social education have been facing such challenge for a long time and most of us (perhaps all of us) agree on this conclusion.

As in previous reports, there is a chapter on global data that reminds the insulting difference between the poor ones and the rich ones. Nowadays there are 1100 million people (more than 68% in Eastern Assia and Subsaharian Africa) who survive on a basis of less than 1 dollar a day.. Thinsg are hardly changing at all, the previous report was talking of 1200 million people. And the tragedy does not end here

According to UN 831 people are undernourished and 104 million schoolage children do not go to school. Again the most affected areas are Southern Assia and Subsaharian Africa.

At this pace.., will it be possible to achieve the goals to erradicate poverty and primary school for all scheduled by 2015?

The report is available and can be downloaded freely at <http://www.undp.org/>

2 AIEJI'S EXECUTIVE COMITTEE MEETING

Venice 19th to 22nd May 2004

The last meeting of the Executive Comitee took place in Venice. Our colleague Paola Scarpa current president of the National Association of Professional Educators (ANEP), as our profesion is called in Italy, was in charge of the organization of the meeting.

The meetings took place at Santo Giovanni e Paolo Residential Hall, which is part of IRE's (Institution of Care and Education). network of resources and services It is a very particular building currently taking in non self-sufficient elder people. It has 450 beds for old people in need. They let us use a room where we held our work sessions.

After the new by-laws of our organization came into effect, the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo are not part of the Executive Committee any longer because of lack of participation, work and payemnet of fees: As it was agreed at the previous meeting of the Committee, the President contacted the next more voted candidates in Barcelona and for the first time Thomas Vollmer from Germany has been in our meetings. Thomas is an individual member of our asociation, he has a degree in Social Pedagogy in Feiburg University, and for the last three years he is the coordinator

of (Yes FORUM) , a network for organizations and professionals working with youth at social risk.

We must also inform that Mary Claude Saget from France, an individual member, resigned her position at the Executive Committee.

The working sessions started with the directors of the regional offices presenting the different activities and works of the **regional offices**. Toni Julià introduced the activity report and the working plan for 2004 of the European Office, he is in charge of. He introduced the following points:

- II European Symposium of Social Educators' Professional Associations to create the common platform of criteria for free mobility of social educators without compensatory measures. Further information on the working commissions created for the elaboration of professional competencies and the commission on the construction of Common Ethical Guidelines
- Promotion of the II Symposium and continuation of the initiated works.
- Continuing with the research and contacts with different European professional associations
- Participation in the European Network for Quality Assurance in Study Programmes in Social Professions (ENQASP). Remark that 5th March the agency signed its constitution act and it is currently in process of registration and accreditation as a consultative body of the European Union
- Articulation with other European organizations: participation in Paolo Marcon's Prize promoted by FESET (European Federation of Social Educators' Training)

Next turn was for Jorge Camors in charge of the Latin American Office and member of the secretariat organising the XVI World Congress. He presented the framework proposal for such Congress. It will take place in Montevideo 15th 18th of September with the subject **Social Education, participation and inclusion, ethical, technical and political challenges**

The goals for that Congress are:

Concerning the International Association:

1. To join Social Educators from all countries, without distinction of functions and respecting their own convictions.
2. To contribute to the life-long training of social educators.
3. To contribute to the consolidation of the profession
4. To promote the organization of social educators
5. To develop and advocate for education in general and social education as a right base of respect for human beings.
6. To contribute to the knowledge on rights, needs, interests and problems of childhood and youth, at national and worldwide level.
7. To facilitate the contact of the members with different educational experiences all over the world.
8. To promote the access and exchange of documents and papers concerning childhood and youth.

Concerning Latin America:

1. To promote the basis and objectives of AIEJI within the region.
2. To promote the development of the Social Educators' profession and the profesionalization of all who run socioeducational functions.
3. To contribute to the social education's conceptual frame of reference by means of systematizing the practice and the theoretic-methodological contributions of what is called social education within the region
4. To promote the organization of social educators by means of representative associations
5. To coordinate by means of the regional Office the actions of AIEJI's members in Latin America, thus all other organizations in the vast field of socio educational actions.

Concerning Uruguay:

1. To promote the development of the social educator profession and the profesionalization of all people performing socio-educational functions.
2. To strengthen the referential framework of social education within the country.
3. To contribute to the life-long training of social educators.
4. To strengthen the organization of social educators by means of their representative associations.

Jorge also presented the calendar of the Congress, some of the locations where it will take place held, as well as leisure and cultural activities that we will all have the chance to share. The proposal of holding the General Assembly Thursday 17th of November within the framework of the Congress, was unanimously accepted, that will give the new elect president the possibility of taking part in the Closing acts of the Congress if the organizers will to do so.

As for the Latin American office, they presented their website: <http://www.aiejilatinoamericana.org>

They are writing a newsweek together with representatives from Chile, Venezuela and Brasil that you can find in the above mentioned website.

Emmanuel Groupper first Vice-president and responsible of the **Middle East Office** reported briefly a project to develop together with Walid Sahid representative of Palestina, they intend to organize a Workshop for Educators.

Herb Barnes responsible of the North America Office explained the work they are developing with the University of Connecticut, which together with other Universities are programming Social Education studies as an own entity, and not as a subgender of Social Work.

You can have further information in News from the World.

Treasurer's report

Jean Marc Rothlisberger reported the current figures of our association. We do have a healthy economy, but limited resources.

Together with Jordi Usurriaga, he took the chance to present a proposal of reduction of fees for certain countries, particularly countries in Latin America, Africa, India and Palestine. The fees would be reduced to a third. It was unanimously voted for, and it will be presented for aprovation in the next general Assembly to take place in Montevideo.

General Secretary Report

Lars Steinov presented and reporte the correspondence exchanged with different associations, he remarked the proposal of collaboration with FICE (International Federation of Educational Communities) as well as the works and difficulties of the website of our organization.

Saturday morning we shared experiences with Italian social educators of the National Association of Professional Educators (ANEP). Our Italian colleagues who made the effort to take some time off for us, and come from different Italian cities were:

Marco Corrente, national adviser for international affairs and ANEP's webmaster
Laura Zenob, ANEP's national adviser for international affairs
Mari Rita Venturini, national adviser and delegate for union affairs
Donatella De Mori, president of the regional section of ANEP in Veneto
Monica Longhi, Vicepresident of the regionalsection of ANEP in Veneto

They explained t us the different relations with trade unions, certain kinds of labour contracts, the strucuture of Social Education Studies at present run by and depending on the Health Branch, and different particularities of the profession in this country.



Members of the Executive Committee together with our Italian colleagues
Foto: Jordi Usurriaga

3 MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

XVI World Congress – Montevideo, Uruguay – November 15-18, 2004

Are you making plans to attend the XVI World Congress in Montevideo, Uruguay, November 15-18, 2005? I encourage you to plan ahead for this educational and cultural experience of a lifetime.

In the May AIEJI Board meeting in Venice, the Board heard first-hand from Jorge Camors an excellent report on the progress being made to date for the planning of this exceptional Congress, the first time to be held in Latin America. The Congress promises to be one in which there will be an excellent opportunity for collaboration between colleagues from around the world, as well as being able to observe first-hand cultural activities relevant to the area. If you've never been to Latin America, visiting Montevideo, Uruguay in November 2005 is a great way to have your first experience.

Those of us that live in Europe and the North American continent will be pleased to learn that this Congress is very much within our budget. While the plane ticket can be expensive to travel, the registration fee for the Congress is \$90 (U.S.) and hotels and lodging are extremely inexpensive at \$30 to \$35 per night in a very nice hotel. Attending the World Congress in Montevideo, Uruguay probably will cost less than what a Congress of a similar nature would be in the United States or Europe. So, please plan ahead to join your colleagues in November to discuss the "Social education: Inclusion and Participation – Ethical, Technical and Political Challenges in the Social Educator Field."

New Board Member

The AIEJI Board welcomed a new Board member, Thomas Vollmer, to the Board at the spring, Venice, Italy meeting. (Thomas was next in line for a Board seat from the election in Barcelona if a seat opened up.) Thomas has been studying at Freiberg im Breisgau and has a German degree in social pedagogy and now resides in Stuttgart, Germany. Thomas helped to build Y.E.S. Forum from scratch which is already present in 10 EU countries. Y.E.S. Forum is innovative in many ways. It is running its own leading edge virtual platform under www.yes-forum.org which serves as a communication tool, as a resource center and offers facilities for virtual project management. We welcome Thomas to the Board and express our appreciation in his willingness to contribute his personal time to the advancement of the mission of AIEJI.

U. S. Schools of Social Work Recognize Social Education

Don't miss the article in this newsletter by Herb Barnes, the North American Bureau representative, on the development of three schools of social work in the United States to include social education as a distinct social work discipline in the field of social work. The three schools are: The University of Maine, Providence College, Rhode Island, and Barry University, Miami Shores, Florida. Herb Barnes, along with the new executive director of ILEX, Jeff Johnson, need to be commended because as many of you may know, it is very difficult to get universities to change the curriculum to include

other disciplines. The schools of social work in the U.S. actually were founded originally on a social education foundation.

Social Education / Pedagogy Network

AIEJI member David Lane from England is providing leadership to try to establish a social education / pedagogy network in order to provide a means for wider debate and serious consideration of the introduction of social education / pedagogy in England and Wales. David has been a tremendous advocate over the last few years of social education and has been a pioneer in the establishment of a children's web magazine on the Internet to connect social educators from around the world. The new social education / pedagogy network when established will be sited on www.childrenwebmag.com.

I know David would be pleased to hear from those of you who have creative ideas to assist him in accomplishing this important project. He can be reached at DCL@DavidLane.org.

Collaboration of International Associations

In September FICE will be holding a congress in Glasgow, Scotland under the title "Creating a Place for Children." Your AIEJI president, along with other presidents of associations, will attend this congress and will have the opportunity once again to explore ways in which international associations can collaborate on special, unique projects. In this regard, this will be the third time that FICE and AIEJI leadership will discuss this important collaboration.

XVII World Congress

Once again, in Montevideo, it is important that we announce the location of the 2009 XVII World Congress. The Board continues to extend an invitation to the membership at-large for the hosting of the 2009 Congress. As mentioned in the previous President's Message, a World Congress is a major undertaking by a regional or local association. So, you might find it beneficial to join some other conference under the umbrella of the World Congress event in order to meet the economic and planning challenges an international congress requires.

Next Board Meeting of AIEJI

The next Board meeting of AIEJI will be held in Lausanne, Switzerland from November 10th to November 13th. If there are agenda items that you, as a member, would like to see the Board address, please e-mail me at nessa@starr.org or the General Secretary, Lars Steinov at steinov@enghaven.dk. The Board appreciates hearing from you.

Arlin E. Ness
President

4 NEWS FROM THE WORLD

4.1 USA

Herb Barnes

Development of Social Education in the U.S.A

First is the creation of a critical mass of interest and action on extending the present boundaries of Social Work education and practice to include Social Education. This is not merging Social Education into Social Work. Rather, it is identifying Social Education as a distinct Social Work discipline. In fact, for the U.S. it's a missing ingredient in the present definition of Social Work, an ingredient that, rather than being new to American Social Work, actually returns it to its roots.

Three Schools of Social Work are working with the ILEX program on developing this: University of Maine; Providence College, Rhode Island; and Barry University, Miami Shores, Florida.

These efforts will derive considerable support from work done by the European Bureau (of AIEJI) under Toni Julia's direction toward developing, throughout Europe, a consistent definition of Social Education. As AIEJI President Arlin Ness said, "It will be easier to engage American interest when this information comes from not just an individual country or from ILEX but from an overall European approach." We hope too that these developments will put U.S. Social Work/Social Education professionals in a position of being more active participants with colleagues internationally.

The second item of interest, one that is significant to enhancing this development, is the formation of a joint consortium for training which includes the three university partners mentioned above teamed with three European partners currently providing education for the profession. They are the Plantijn Hogeschool in Anvers, Belgium; Peter Sabroer Seminariet in Aarhus, Denmark; and Ramon Llull University in Barcelona, Spain. This consortium has submitted an RFP to the European Community (EC) which, if awarded, will: put in motion a cross-national (Europe/U.S.) exchange of professional students and faculty; a beginning of transatlantic sharing in curriculum development and; a major step forward in furthering the plans noted above for development of Social Education in the U.S.

An additional development was reported by Jeff Johnson, the new director of ILEX. With his leadership, and at his suggestion, Youthorizons, Inc., the parent corporation of ILEX of which Jeff is Executive Director, at its January 2004 meeting authorized the creation of the F. Herbert and Liese Barnes Institute for Social Education, with a mission of developing and supporting efforts to integrate concepts of Social Education into our social service system through education, cultural awareness and consortium building as a means to create a new direct care practice model in the United States. Among its stated initial goals are: furthering Social Education practice among direct care practitioners, educators and program administrators; promoting the development/expansion of Social Work curricula to include core concepts of Social

Education thereby broadening the scope and definition of Social Work; and being a resource to universities, colleges, agencies, associations and professionals, both nationally and internationally, in the effective utilization of knowledge.

The Barnes Institute joins its companion program, ILEX, in being a clear voice for the need to recognize direct care practice as a unique and complex human services discipline requiring an educated and professionally oriented workforce.

Herb Barnes expressed great thanks to Jeff Johnson for taking this innovative step saying, "My whole professional career has been focused on developing direct care practice to the level it should be as a specialized, highly complex work that should have its practice informed by clear concepts. In that context, it had become clear to me that the Social Education of Europe had real relevance for us and that its philosophical underpinnings and basic concepts for practice were surely transportable internationally, hence the establishment of ILEX twenty years ago. Now it is an honor to have this new Institute created to carry this work forward in new ways and a very humbling experience to have it created in my name and that of my wife without whose active involvement and support, I never could have stuck to it. I think it holds great promise for the future and I hope to continue my involvement with it for a long time."

4.2 URUGUAY

4.2.1 Social Education and children's poverty in Uruguay

Fernando Estevez
Social Educator

I would like to share with you two situations that worry me in my everyday practice, at the same time they also encourage our professional group to be more creative and to go in depth in our professional training.

Uruguay is suffering an important economical crisis for the last 10 years, its peak was in the middle of 2002 with a strong financial crisis where the unemployment rate reached 17%. The major impact has been suffered by the more vulnerable sectors of our population, specially children and youth. We must indeed understand this crisis not as a specific one but a structural one, the present situation cannot only be blamed on the terrible 2002 crisis, either on "the draught", either the food and mouth disease or the rise of the oil prices, which in fact had an significant impact in our country. The economical model that has been carried out in Uruguay for the last 20 years has driven us in 2004 to over 23% of Uruguay's population being in situation of poverty. Our children and youth have suffered the most the effects of this structural crisis.

In 1968 there was a proportion of 2 poor children per every person over 65, these figures raised up to 7 children in 1994 and 1995, being in 2003 of 9 poor children per every adult over 65, so we can say poverty has a child's face.

One of these days we were reminding the time we were planning our activities for 2001 in our Youth Centre at the ONG Movimiento Volpe, we had the idea of creating an

activity where the youth could prepare an afternoon snack which would provide an educational situation, with plenty of values such as solidarity, companionship, respect, tolerance etc. They would share an afternoon snack made of flour based food together with chocolate milk or juice, and they would offer those products to their mates. At that time we would have never imagined that such afternoon snack would become the basic ingest of food to bear the hunger suffered by the youth. You just have to observe their spirits when they come to our organization: they are expecting anxiously the “afternoon snack”, many of them offer themselves insistently voluntarily to prepare “the snack”, like that they reduce the waiting time. Taking part in the preparation of the meal makes the waiting time much shorter and taking back the different educational activities

Last UNICEF’s report on “State of the rights of childhood and youth in Uruguay” presented at the beginning of the year, confirmed some terrible data that we had been detecting in our everyday practice. In our country half the children live in poor homes, nearly 47%. It means there are more than 110 000 children who do not have direct access to food, goods or basic services in a country with more than 3,3 million inhabitants.

To this situation we must add the uncertainty that our youth have on their future, moreover we can see many of them in a situation of indigency. In the different talks with the youth we have picked up some elements where we can clearly note the following facts: not enough food, due to the difficulty to get food in a priority system where “first it is my little brothers and sisters who eat and therefore it is me”. Note most of the youth that come to our centre are not street youth, they have clear familiar references but most of them, as we had already expressed come from the most unfavouridshed parts of Montevideo.

Another situation that worries us is the alarming number of youth that come to our centre, in whom we have remarked the abuse of a drug called “base paste of cocaine” (*The tin* as it is called by its users) this substance has had strong acceptance among users of the poorest townships of the capital city. This situation is explained by its low cost, much less than cocaine (1.8 dollars ½ gram, against 5 dollars approx of cocaine regular or bad quality) and the fact that it has a highly addictive effect, the effect is very quick but does not last long, which makes the user to repeat doses in a simultaneous way, at the same time it quickly produces considerable damages, being the most obvious a fast important loss of weight among their users.

The substance results from the middle of the elaboration process of cocaine’s carbohydrate, it has addicted an important number of youth, causing serious damage, irreversible ones in some cases because of its chronic use, we are very worried about this situation. That makes us take several strategies to face this troublesome situation. One of them is to search more information to face the subject, to contact with different specialists, to take courses, to gather didactic and pedagogic documents, etc... On the other hand to create room for the youth to communicate where we can talk about of the problematic use and abuse of drugs, their different symptoms, effects and risks, we are convinced that the more information we can provide the less the risks will be. For that reason it is very important the use and support of the different health resources we count with for orientating and paying attention to the youth involved in this problematic situation.

To end with I would like to tell you that despite all our spirits are very high, we are positive that we can work to improve this situation, specially in this current difficult times, we are very much looking forward to working. We are confident in ourselves and our colleagues and and we are hoping for a change that we believe it is possible, moreover we have the satisfaction to know that we are doing and trying our best for our children and youth.

4.2.2 No shelter but the night. Developing survival strategies in critical contexts in Latin America

Rodrigo Ayarza
Social Educator

While some privileges are favouring half the children and youth in Uruguay and make them trust a model that is for conformisme, highly competitive and boaster of a perfect funtioning, the other half are disturbed by all kind of difficulties and frustrations as Cesar tells us, he sleeps under the shelter of the night, he says to his colleagues Marcia and Fernando “ the setreet teaches you how to live there but not how to leave it”

These young people have been in different educational contexts, from the internation to the open centres. Structural violence has shaken them, some of them more than the others. But when they think of their future and what to do to carry on with their lives in an autonomous way, they all face the same difficult situation to sort out: access to a place to live and a decent job- autonomy time-.

Our challenge is to develop a transforming and alternative work, a bridge from being on the world in a dependent way towards the creation of strategies that allow the young people to relate autonomously.

Our proposal is to sustain these strategies taking forward a propopsal that works from a conflict approach, not avoiding or denying conflicts. We advice consensus decision making, strenghtening dialogue and accepting the other, their interests and worries, as a guanteeing expression of their rights.

While we were creating a space for goup participation, several youth felt the interest to do something together, to meet and know the difficulties that they will have to face when accessing to the labour market. “ Luis 15 says: “We went to unload trucks in the market and then we loaded fruit boxes in the fairs “ Pablo comments that with no income is not easy to get on a boat to go fishing.

After that, they are invited to participate in the project of making a short film in order to continue building their proposal.

Once the project starts, they propose that the script could explain their experiences. Javier says: “the first boss that I had was the worst, he would always tell me: do not talk I talk for you, I think for you, just do what you are told to” many of them pass on an endless list of orders and commands in their lived experiences.

When writing the rol to play, new ideas and encouragements come up to go ahead in difficult times. Commitment in decision taking, confidence and solidarity were the real

fruits that they all gathered together in that new group, when they were acting, filming, choosing characters or writing the script, it was evident that those were essential tools. The educational proposal of the short film is untitled "Everything belongs to everybody" making reference to the cooperative work, the mistakes made and assumed by everybody, to the laughs and the deep joy of seeing themselves moving their mouths and hugging each other on a big screen and particularly for all the effort, the respect and the will to do something all together.

It was difficult to support a process full of hope, ups and downs and to obtain a final product so far away and different from the reality they face, since often what you get when being autonomous is again having the night as the only shelter. Pablo near the boats, or Marcia wondering in Montevideo streets, or Cesar who is at present living his sustainable autonomy depending on whatever happens, under the shelter of the night in Brasil

This article is dedicated to all the young people who shared the above mentioned experiences and who keep on developing survival strategies

4.3 GERMANY

Heike Beermann

Violence and aggression in educational settings

The VEGJD e. V. - the Germany branch of AIEJI has conducted its annual workshop from 4.5. to 7.5.2004 in Rendsburg.

Educators are more often reporting about aggressions and violence they experienced in their day-to-day work. The reports - rarely made public - are evidence enough for the increase of aggressive behaviour in residential group settings. Aggressive behaviour can not only be observed among peers but also between caretaker and staff and became part of nonverbal and verbal communication.

The workshop was also concerned with the effects of media and computer games on the young's person individual development. The question was raised which impact aggressive behaviour simulated in computer games has on the young person.

A growing fear of educators can be observed being confronted with violence and aggression in a group setting in the light of the growing size of residential groups in order to deal with budget restrictions.

The workshop was concerned with the consequences an atmosphere, which is characterized by aggression and fear, have for staff and young people. It was asked how these problems could be faced, prevented and dealt with and what methods and structures might be appropriate.

The workshop was exploring causes and reasons of violence and aggressions and possible strategies to cope with. To do so, groups in educational settings and school

class were used as example. And it was intended to look also at other factors that might allow for the development of aggressions and violence.

4.4 SPAIN

Toni Julià
Jordi Usurriaga

4.4.1 IV Social Educator's State Congress

Under the subject "Social educational policies, challenges and proposals for XXIst century" and with AIEJI's support, it will be held the IV Social Educator's State Congress, from 30th september to the 2nd October in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia.

Professionals of the social field need to integrate sometimes forgotten norms and legal aspects in our capacities, that will help us to situate ourselves according to socio educational theories and the policies that place our professional practice. Only from this junction we will be in better situation to provide as professionals of change as we are, a political view of social education, and an educational interpretation of social policies that improves our action –intervention and therefore social reality.

Social educators together with other professionals plan, develop and evaluate projects and programmes in the framework of socio educational policies. We must therefore offer and suggest guidelines that can orientate the legal framework, in order to improve the quality of the services and practices of the public administration and private entities.

This meeting therefore provides a space for reflexion, professional and socio political analyses, on the thesys that founds the models and experiences in the fiels of our professional competencies.

4.4.2 II European Symposium of Social Educators ' Profesional Associations

Aiming at presenting the Social Educators Common Platform (set of common criteria) to the Euroepan Comission for the free circulation of professionals within the European Union in the firt semestre of next year. The European Office of AIEJI, under the direction of Toni Julià is organizing the II European Symposium of Social Educators Profesional Associations to take place in Barcelona end of November to carry on with the works that were started last year.

The specific objectives of this meeting are as follows:

- To define the contents of the Common Ethical Guidelines.
- To define the contents of the document on profesional Competencies.
- To offer a meeting point for professionals of Social eeDucation in Europe.
- To complete the outline about the different levels of profesisonal qualification in different European countries.

4.5 DENMARK

4.5.1 Treatment of drug abusers

By Asbjørn Agerschou, Social Policy Officer in the National Federation of Social Educators, SL

(translation by Ghita Hjarne, International Secretary, SL)

Eight years ago – on 1 January 1996 – the responsibility for the treatment of drug abusers in Denmark was changed - including the visitation. Instead of being the responsibility of the local authorities it now became the responsibility of the counties. This change took place, because the parties of the Danish parliament had recognised that for quite some years the treatment of drug abusers had been insufficient and incomprehensive - for instance programme of prescription of methadone. Along with this change, 340 million DKK were granted to the area over a period of four years to improve the treatment measures.

If it can be agreed, a county may delegate its responsibility for treatment in this area to a local authority. This has happened in five cases. The Danish parliament stated that there should be close collaboration between the local authority and the county about the organisation of the preventive measures and about the measures for the individual drug abuser in the social follow-up, where the local authority plays an important task.

In 2002 a total of 10,980 drug abusers were in a treatment programme. Day treatment usually takes place at county centres of treatment, whereas 24-hour-residential treatment is purchased to a large extent from private services.

From 1 January 2003 a guarantee of treatment was introduced. It means that if a drug abuser contacts the authorities with a request for treatment, a treatment programme should be initiated within fourteen days. Further, a freedom-of-choice scheme was introduced, which means that a drug abuser may choose another similar programme than provided by the local authority.

Denmark is divided into 268 local authorities, one regional authority (Bornholm), 13 counties and two local authorities in the capital (Copenhagen and Frederiksberg). They carry out both ordinary local authority tasks and county tasks. At the moment we are discussing a new local government structure with larger local authorities and less and thus larger counties or regions. 213 of the 268 local authorities have a population of less than 20,000. There are many discussions now about the plans for a new structure. One of them is about where and how the specialised social tasks should be placed in the future. Should the responsibility be placed in the new local authorities or in the new regions? The area of drug abuse is thus also included in these discussions.

As mentioned above, the structure of the drug abuse area was changed quite recently in order to place the treatment in a more sustainable framework. Since then the measures have been given higher priority. Probably even relatively big local authorities have difficulties in carrying out qualified visitation and offer relevant treatment programmes – also considering the guarantee of treatment. Add to this that in order to maintain and develop a differentiated number of treatment programmes a very large population is required. All in all this speaks for placing the area in the new regions.

4.5.2 Economic thinking in programmes for children and young people at risk

By Mette Grostøl, Social Policy Officer in the National Federation of Social Educators (SL)

(translation by Ghita Hjarne, International Secretary, SL)

The priority of programmes for children and young people at risk up till now

In Denmark the number of placements of children and young people has been steadily increasing during the past 10 years. This is primarily due to the increase in birth rate, but also the frequency of placements away-from-home of children and young people has also increased a little during this period. The number of alternative programmes to placements offered to children and young people and their families has increased a lot during the period. These measures have actually doubled from 1993 to 2002.

The local authorities and the Danish Parliament have given political priority to the children and young people who need special support – both in regard to placements and in regard to alternative and preventive measures.

All together, the increase in expenses for children and young people at risk has been relatively high compared to other public areas of operation. Further, due to the increase in birth rate one would expect that the expenses would continue to increase in the years to come. During the past couple of years the increase of expenses in the area, and not least the expected future increase, have made both the government and the local authorities make strong attempts to introduce economic thinking in the child and youth area.

The idea is to introduce economic thinking in the measures through an economic discourse in the areas and through tools for economic management of the area.

The economic discourse

The economic discourse is seen by the fact that economy and the need for economic thinking in the area is promoted on all occasions. Analyses of the economic development are initiated; agreements are made between the government and the local authority organisations about stopping growth; the press and platforms are used, etc. A very unrealistic projection of the economic development stating that the expenses to children and young people at risk will exceed the expenses for day care in general in Denmark within the next ten years is both a conclusion of the development and a means to introduce the economic discourse. Recently, in December 2003 the Ministry of Social Affairs sent a letter of intent to all local authorities proposing tools for economic management of the area.

The economic tool

An important tool in the introduction of economic thinking is modified financing of the expenses in the area. An important element in the priority of the measure up till now has been the fact that the expenses in the area used to be shared between local authorities and counties. The expenses for the local authority or the county have not charged the budget with the full expenses. From 2002 this financing has been modified so that local authorities and counties are each responsible for fully financing their services. However,

this should be understood in the way that the local authorities pay a fixed basic rate, when they use services provided by the county.

Is the economic thinking successful?

These years there is great pressure on the measures for children and youth at risk in Denmark. The question is whether the government and the local authorities will succeed in introducing economic thinking in the area. The modified financing of expenses in the area is still in a transition phase, but the question is still relevant. There are two aspects to the question: First, it is a question whether the development will change. Will there be fewer expenses in the area? Second, it is a question whether economic resources will be accepted as a factor in the decisions about the children and young people at risk - which they have not been up till now.

Fewer resources?

We do not know yet, whether fewer resources are spent on children and young people at risk now. The National Federation of Social Educators (SL) made a survey in October 2003. At that time it seemed that the development had turned. It seemed that several years of priority to the measures for children and young people at risk had been replaced by a changed attitude and fewer and less expensive placements. But we do not know yet. The official figures for the most recent development in Denmark are from 2002, and we are still waiting for new figures.

It is still the professional assessment that counts

If the economic resource as well as the professional knowledge were to be used as a basis for a decision on a measure it would be a substantial change of the attitude in the area. In 2002 in consultation with the parliament the Danish minister of social affairs stated the following, "According to the Act on Social Services it is the need for special support in the form a placement away-from-home which decided whether the service should be offered. It is even very far from the Act and the intentions of the current child regulations to let economic considerations dictate that a child cannot receive such support, if a certain economic limit has been reached in the local authority". And she goes on, "In my opinion it is against the law to take children and young people out of their placement merely for the sake of saving and without agreement with the plans that have been decided in the individual placement case" (from consultation in the Social Committee of the Parliament, 4 September 2002).

In February 2004 the minister of Social Affairs repeated that it is the professional assessment of the child's current needs and how the measure can meet the child's needs that count. The decision must be based on the professional assessment. The minister of social affairs promised to send an addition to her letter of intent (mentioned above) that specifies this conclusion to all local authorities.

The answer to the question about the importance of the economic resources for decisions in the area is thus that this is not acceptable. The professional assessment should decide the measure.

5 LET'S KNOW EACH OTHER

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ANEP is the Italian Association of Professional Educators. It was created in order to promote, develop and defend the social educator's profession in Italy, where it is called professional educator.

It is the only national association of this kind in that country; it is represented by local delegations of all the regions of the country. Every two years the different members from the different regions choose their Regional Executive Committee, and they choose the National Executive Committee, formed by eleven members and the national president. At present, the president is our colleague of AIEJI's Executive Committee, Paola Scarpa.

ANEP represents the educators in every professional and institutional field, it defends and stands for the specialisation of professional abilities in order to promote the recognition of the professional profile and the training process at University level. Communication is one of the basis of this association, involved in gathering and spreading information about the profession, promoting the exchange of opinions and experiences, and enriching the professional community through the diffusion of news and professional experiences.

ANEP has its own ethical code since 2002, (you can find it in the latest AIEJI's newsletter 02/2004), every professional wanting to become a member of ANEP is obliged to stick on it. In the international field, ANEP takes part in the European and worldwide development of the profesison through its presence in AIEJI's Executive Committee and in AIEJI's European Bureau.

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6 GET INVOLVED

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Colombia: Community Education for life

Colombia has a surface 2.3 times larger than Spain. It has a population of 42 million people, mainly young people, especially women, and a multiethnic population (Indian, Black, White, Mestizos and Mulattos). The country has a great diversity of climates, fauna, vegetation and natural resources, as well as a privileged geostrategic position in the American continent (between the Panama Canal and the Amazonian river basin). From this corner of the world, with great climatic, landscape and ethnical contrasts, Colombia's historical paradox arises from the simultaneous construction of creative and conciling practices and violent and destructive ones.

These simultaneous practices of peace and violence have occurred and can be found with higher intensity and expression in different moments of Colombia's History. For example, we have found out that Medellín, one of the world cities of crime and death¹, has a plenty of experiences of community education for life and every year it becomes the cradle of the International Poetry Festival. More than 100 poets come from all over the world and for one week, they recite poems in gardens, bars and open precincts of the city. We find local and regional practices of governability based on participative models much more democratic than others in the world, in a country with a weak and excluding national governability and a human mobility caused by the forced displacement.

To understand the dynamics of violence in Colombia, we must refer to a political, cultural and social conflict, caused by multiple factors that have been accumulated and transformed along Colombia's history. The interdependence of these factors leads to the prolongation, virulence and extension of the war up to now: from the rural areas to the cities, like a direct, structural and cultural own way.

Some of the most relevant factors of this conflict are as follows: historical facts like the existence of a weak and centralist state devoted to personalism, clients and corruption of the political parties; social exclusion and violence performed by most part of the population and by alternative political parties. Some international factors contribute as well to this situation: the external debt and the application of neoliberal measures; drug trafficking, the drug war (The Colombian Plan, which is supported by the United States); the arms traffic; the struggle for controlling natural resources; the struggle for geostrategic interests of the United States; the control over the Andine and Amazonian regions (Colombia is an objective of the United States in the context of the drug and

¹ Of 100,000 inhabitants, 14 violent deaths have occurred in Mexico, 34 in Buenos Aires, 26 in Bogota and 220 in Medellín. (Source: *El Colombiano*. 25/6/2002).

antiterrorism war as an excuse for militar inversions and economic control of the region) and the worldwide antiterrorist war, that difficults the negotiation processes of conflicts.

Behind this multiplicity of factors, there are several armed actors involved, they can alter, and in some cases, they become interconnected along history: although historical confrontation has been between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, in the middle 60's some guerrilla bands arose², justified by the political and social exclusion suffered by most part of the population. In the 80's, the strategy of defending the established power with irregular methods started up, they were known as paramilitary forces and were joined by several landowners, livestock farmers, industrialists, dealers and drug traffickers to fight the guerrillas.

In this context, and as it happens in all nowadays wars, civil society is the greatest loser. Dynamics of the armed actors involve pressure, territory control and the submission of the social tissue, which implies the use of terror strategies, which divide desintegrate and scare all the population. But in the last years, civil society, further than being a victim, has increased its resistance answer to war and the proposal capacity for the construction of local and regional peace initiatives. The economic crisis, in a country country with plenty of young people, war becomes an easy and close source of income. There are many examples of creative **and conciling history, resisting the use of the violence**, (women, natives, Afrocolombian, participative governabilities, resistance communities, etc.), among them we emphasize the **community organizations** born in the more excluded and deprived districts of different cities in the country (Medellín, Bogota, Cali, Cartagena), organizations that are linked to each other. In order to present them we will just focus on the 14 community organizations in Medellín called the "**Network of community organizations**". These organizations were born about 25 years ago as a spontaneous initiative of the neighbours who wanted to improve the conditions of life in their quarters, mainly regarding security. They lived day to day the disordered growth of their quarters with the arrival of displaced people escaping from war; their quarters excluded from the development plan of the city; coexisting with the drug traffick; later with the guerrillas and, nowadays, the paramilitary forces settleing in. In conclusion, their children and young people were growing in a deprived context, surrounded by negative references and by the possibility of making easy money if they joined an armed group or to the drug traffick chain. Furthermore, because of the logics of the different armed groups a distrustful and frightened social tissue is being generated. Along the years the community organizations, despite the hostile atmosphere where they develop their activities, they have achieved to become a referential of worthy life and confidence among the population of the quarters, they have created own commercial circuits, they are participating with an own voice in the Development Plan of their city and they are demanding the improvement of public services. They are community organizations who work with different sectors of the quarters to promote and consolidate the social tissue of children, young people, women, retailers, schools, in order to develop alternative mass media, training processes, organization and participation that can generate confidence among the different neighbours, critical conscience of what is happening in the district and in the country, and advocate for public policies of their city that improve of their lives.

² From 1965 different guerrillas have been arising and disappearing. At the moment the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) of Marxist inspiration, and the National Liberation Army (ELN) of Guevarista inspiration remain.



Some of the more innovative projects they develop in the field of the community action are the Festival of Life, the travelling mass media school (TV, radio, press) for people of all ages, the street play centre, etc.

For instance, the **street play centre** consists of a set of Colombian traditional games that are scheduled every weekend in different streets of the district, giving priority to those streets where there is more distrust among the neighbours.

First the educators appear with their playful and cultural proposals and invite children, young people and adults to participate. Educators by means of the mentioned dynamics elaborate a map of the street (positive and/or negative leaders, existing conflicts) that serves them as a base for later identifying positive leaders that, in a progressive way, will be able to take in charge the dynamics of the street play centre. This strategy tries to increase and strengthen the formation of positive leaders within the quarter who can be co-ordinated in order to promote training and co-operation spaces in different fields (education, commerce, alternative communication, health, etc.) and the construction of participation spaces to influence the Development Plan of the city in favour of the more impoverished areas.

In spite of the armed and social conflict the neighbours are living in their districts, community organizations are real seeds of human values based on confidence, tolerance, dialogue and inclusion. They are really joining together neighbours who would be scared on their own, but being together, transform their fear into a positive strength to face difficulties of their every day's life with creativity, persistence and talent from a collective approach of the city and the country.

The ethical force of these initiatives is turning them into a symbol of hope and is offering the people a new view of their city and their country from a culture of peace. The challenge is to avoid becoming a military target and, at the same time, to maintain the daily capacity of training the citizens and strengthening a tolerant and inclusive social tissue so that together with other peace initiatives, they can create an environment ready for taking a path of social peace and justice in their country.

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