

Lasse Siurala | Beth Dierke | Laura Mäkelä

Siurala | Dierke | Mäkelä: CHASING POLICY OBJECTIVES, STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES

Publications 01/2010

NEW PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES - BEYOND EUROCENTRISM

It is generally wondered why the US government is one of the few not ratified the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). This study takes a closer look at this intriguing debate. It all boils down to the US sensitivity to parents' rights, a degree of mistrust of youth and to the polarized Conservative - Democrat power struggles in USA. In contrast, European youth policies celebrate youth autonomy and participation as well as the CRC and other similar policy texts as the backbone of national and local youth work and policy design. However, despite the differences, the comparative look of the study finds space for mutual learning. A critical look at the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches suggests new paths to follow.

In those European countries with a strong public service structure (like Finland), it is generally believed that professionalism is equal to a public sector employee with an academic degree. For example, in youth work there is certain hesitance among municipal youth workers to accept the idea that voluntaries and /or people without respective professional training can work with 'demanding clients' like youth at risk. The study explains how a US non-profit organization (Bolder Options) recruits and trains voluntaries to successfully work with very vulnerable young people! This provides interesting food for thought for the celebration of the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

Europe has been hit by increasing demands to cut the public expenses. Municipal services and NGOs have reacted by saying that it is impossible to keep the amount and quality of their services, if the public funding is further cut. The study raises another option. How about essentially improving the recruitment, training and motivation of volunteers? How about systematically engaging in fundraising strategies? The study provides inspiring examples that work in both the youth and cultural fields.

CHASING POLICY OBJECTIVES, STRUCTURES, AND RESOURCES

- US and European practices in youth and culture fields

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FOREWORD

A critical and reflective study on the history of youth work and youth policy has emerged in Europe. Most recently, Council of Europe publications "History of youth work in Europe" (volumes 1 and 2; 2009, 2010) have gathered scholars around Europe to ponder "how the future was created yesterday". The basic idea has been to reflect and renew current youth work and policies through analyses of their roots in history. Are we prisoners of historically determined practices, concepts and discourses? In order to understand how we could develop and change today's youth policy thinking, structures and services we need to 'step outside them' – looking at them in a historical perspective. Another way of 'stepping outside' is a comparative cultural approach. This study of US and European (largely Finnish) youth work, youth policies and cultural practices represents such an effort, taking the outsiders view on their weaknesses and strengths: How are we prisoners of our political and cultural frameworks in our efforts to develop youth and cultural policies and practices?

European youth work and youth policies are characterized by their value basis in International and national policy documents and often by a large public responsibility to fund, co-ordinate and deliver services for youth. The study calls this a value-based service model. The strength is public support to youth facilities, youth organizations and services. The weakness is the lack of flexibility and dependency on a single funding source. The North American approach is called the issue based programs model, typically a conglomeration of fixed term ad hoc youth projects and programs created to tackle pertinent youth problems. The strength of such programs is that they often are well targeted, planned, managed and evaluated, carried out in broad partnerships, they attract funding and tend to produce good practices. The weaknesses include lack of continuity, youth work becoming problem focused instead of opportunity oriented. The study examines the elements of these models and through a comparative look at their advantages and disadvantages suggests a third model. The responsive youth policy model combines 'a minimum package of opportunities and experiences' to which young people should have access with a capacity to establish programs on emergent youth needs.

As to the point of service youth work and cultural services the most striking differences concern the use of volunteers and funding practices. Even if strong public funding and a relatively large number of state and municipal youth and cultural workers guarantee continuity and professionalism in Northern Europe, the US practices in recruiting, training and motivating volunteers and the practices of fundraising and measuring effectiveness are in a totally different class compared to those in, say, Finland. To make these transparent the study presents two case studies. The first case is an organization called Bolder Options working with youth at risk in Minnesota. The other case looks at funding structures and strategies of selected arts institutions and NGOs based in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Both cases make it clear that the Europeans, in particular those in countries with strong public support to youth work and arts, have a lot to learn from the respective US practices.



The study is based on interviews with 27 people in the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis as part of my assignment as the 2009 Howland Endowed Chair at the University of Minnesota.

The authors want to thank all the people we interviewed (appendix 1) for their enthusiasm and open attitude to discuss youth and cultural policies with us. A crucial facilitator was the Extension Center for Youth Development at the University of Minnesota: For contacts and valuable commentary special thanks goes to Professors Dale Blyth, Joyce Walker and Byron Schneider. They introduced me to a variety of local NGOs, youth workers, youth programs, post-graduate classes at the UM, researchers, faculty professors, foundations, policy makers and politicians in Minnesota, as well as the UM Extension in Duluth. I still have this feeling that I heard more than I could humanly digest.

Many of the people we interviewed, like Dave Gagne from Urban Boatbuilders, Laura Lacroix-Dulluhn from Youth Community Connections and Carol Thomas from Minnesota department of Education, really took their time to familiarize me with the US practices through additional meetings - like those over the unforgettable corn pancakes with honey -breakfasts.

Professor Joyce Walker was very kind to gather for me a reflection group (called 'The Lasse Group') to discuss youth work in Minnesota. The group consisted of young professionals from leading NGOs, local government, McKnight Foundation and doctoral students. The positive enthusiasm of this group was not only a cognitive learning process, but also an emotional remembrance. I hear that in some form The Lasse Group still exists.

I am also very grateful to the staff of Bolder Options for interviews, material and the opportunity to visit training sessions to see the genuinely inspirational work of the organization – and, of course, for letting me drive that Harley-Davidson.

Ms Colleen Byrne from the Extension Centre helped us through a variety of administrative and organizational questions, not forgetting her guidance at the use of the public transportation system of Minneapolis.

Lasse Siurala and Laura Mäkelä also wish to thank Ms Riikka Aho and the US Embassy in Helsinki for their help and support in linking us with the VOLVIS-program and for very flexible and kind service.

On behalf of the authors

Lasse Siurala





**I REFLECTIONS
ON YOUTH
POLICIES IN
USA AND EUROPE**

Lasse Siurala

1. No Youth Policy System is Perfect: "The American Dilemma" vs. the European "Implementation Gap"

The Forum for Youth Investment, a powerful Washington based lobby organisation for youth policies, summarizes "The American Dilemma" in youth policy as follows: "Competing priorities, fragmented services, unstable funding and low expectations combine to create complacency" (Ready by 21 Challenge, 2008, p 2). According to this criticism there is a lack of shared objectives, nobody coordinates services provided by a broad variety of non-profit organisations, private service producers and the different public sector layers, and funding is too heavily dependent on short term private funds. For some strange reason people still feel complacent: self-satisfied accompanied by unawareness of dangers of deficiencies in the system.

In Europe youth policies have a long history and structures nonexistent in the USA. First of all, there are shared policy objectives and the structural framework called integrated youth policy. In the European context the objective of youth policy is "to increase the probability of a successful integration of young people in society, ideally, to help them to become active citizens in the social, cultural, political and economic fields of the society." Integrated youth policy may be defined as "a conscious and structured cross-sectoral policy to co-ordinate services for youth involving young people themselves" (Siurala 2006). Ideally such a policy should include (1) commonly shared objectives and (2) an implementation structure. The objectives may consist of politically adopted conventions, charters, White Books, recommendations, policy programs or even of legislation. The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an example of a political document which is intended to guide policies to promote the welfare, living conditions and aspirations of children and young people. Implementations structures refer to the mechanisms through which the objectives are cascaded down to operational levels. In its strictest form it means strategic management, while it may also mean co-ordination bodies based on voluntary participation.

The European advantage is that in the level of international organisations, governments and often on local level there is a body responsible for youth affairs. However, European youth policies have been criticized for their "implementation gaps": "In youth policy it is time to go beyond rhetoric and models that do not work. European governments have launched a huge amount of documents praising integrated youth policies, youth participation and non-formal learning. Plenty of national and local level youth policy plans have been carried out, member countries have established youth parliaments – in France only there are 1700 of them – and there are no youth minister Conferences which have not emphasized the importance of recognizing and linking non-formal learning to formal education. However, not many youth policy plans have actually been satisfactorily implemented, young people still feel their voices are not heard and there are extremely few examples of non-formal learning being linked to formal education." (Siurala 2009)

No system is perfect. European youth policies are good at setting common goals and priorities and agreeing on key policy areas and general approaches. The challenge is to cascade all that down to the point of service. The US strength is on innovative grass root programs, in terms of their contents, funding and recruiting volunteers. The challenge is their sustainability and co-ordination. To some extent The US and European youth policies have complementary strengths and weaknesses. There are

things to be learned from each other and both are in need of serious reflection of their approaches. Perhaps a comparative, although selected, look could promote to that reflection. The material of this report is based on structured interviews with 27 people in the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis in the State of Minnesota during May and June 2009 (appendix 1).

This comparative reflection looks at the objectives and implementation structures of integrated youth policies in Minnesota and Finland – existing practices, lack of them and the potentiality of them: How are policies and programs for young people legitimated? What kind of possibilities are there for shared objectives? Are there cultural assumptions, norms or traditions which limit or shape youth policy options? What is the potentiality for broader co-ordination? Which role do the young people themselves play in setting the agendas and implementing the policies and programs? How do non-profit organizations fund their activities and recruit their volunteers? What are the funding strategies of organisations and institutions in the cultural field?

2. Searching for common ground: Youth rights and other policy frameworks

European youth policies tend to be built on shared international and national political objectives, which are fed in national legislation, policy programs and activity plans with the respective implementation mechanisms (see for example Siurala 2006). This chapter will start by looking at the objective setting. It does not need much research to maintain that neither public administration nor the youth field actors in the USA have come up with shared politically adopted objective setting for integrated youth policies. "The United States has a myriad of youth policies, but it lacks a coherent policy agenda for young people making the transition from childhood to adulthood. And it certainly does not have a policy agenda that has young people's development, as opposed to their detention, at its core" (Pittman, Irby and Ferber, 2001, 3). Even if there are excellent youth programs and activities there are no comprehensive frameworks. Walker and Blyth from the University of Minnesota conclude: "Addressing youth issues in 'bits and pieces' keeps the system going but without the benefits and possibilities for larger success inherent in approaching youth issues from a more comprehensive framework and perspective" (Walker & Blyth 2008, 3).

This state of affairs was clearly acknowledged by local youth policy actors in Minnesota: "At the political level, the federal level we have absolutely lacked vision of Youth Development for my lifetime. We have our first opening now under Obama...we are [also] hampered by the lack of support from state" (representative of local youth coordination body). However, Minnesota seems to be a state with efforts and discussions towards integrated youth policies. The Early Childhood Caucus, the Youth Caucus and the 2nd Shift Initiative serve as examples (to be discussed later). Also "Minneapolis as a city has had a fairly developed look. There has been some attempt some years ago to change the Education Department to the Department of Children and Families, but it lasted only for 4 years" (interviewee above). According to some criticism the reason for the lack of continuity and success of these efforts seems to be lack of leadership: "not visible bold leadership enough to say we should all be responsible for all children" (director of a non-profit organisation in the youth field). That might be a fair assessment, but one should also ask why is 'leadership' in the USA not attracted by shared objective setting and broad policy agendas on youth. Possibly structural factors like strong conservative dislike of social policies, political struggles between the Democrats and the Republicans, weak public sector and the emphasis of the existing youth programs on targeted youth at risk groups makes it difficult for leaders to jump on broad policy programs (Chapters 2.2 – 3, for a more detailed account, see Walkers & Blyth 2008).

A current political debate which well highlights these difficulties is the question of the adoption of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. As mentioned above it is regarded as one of the key children and youth policy framework in Europe, but in the USA it is a very controversial subject (Chapter 2.1.).

2.1. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child

The Year 2009 was celebrated as 20th anniversary of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). The article 12 on the right of the child to participate on matters concerning him/her has been well received as the core of the Convention. However, among those two countries which have not ratified it, The USA and Somalia, it is this very same article that has become extremely controversial. The Clinton administration tried to adopt it but failed. The Obama Administration has stated that "it will likely conduct a legal review of the treaty". The question of U.S. ratification of CRC has generated contentious debate.

Opponents argue that U.S. ratification would undermine U.S. sovereignty by giving the United Nations authority to determine the best interests of U.S. children. Some are also concerned that CRC could interfere in the private lives of families, particularly the rights of parents to educate and discipline their children. Supporters of U.S. ratification, on the other hand, hold that CRC's intention is not to circumvent the role of parents but to protect children against government intrusion and abuse. Proponents emphasize what they view as CRC's strong support for the role of parents and the family structure. Additionally, supporters hold that U.S. federal and state laws generally meet the requirements of CRC, and that U.S. ratification would strengthen the United States' credibility when advocating children's rights abroad.

Looking it from the viewpoint of people working in the youth field in the state of Minnesota, what are the political and cultural conditions in which the CRC (if adopted) would land? Or, in other words, what are the chances for a value-based framework for youth policy?

"That's one of the hardest nuts to crack politically." (Valley Varro, Mayor's Office, St. Paul)

The CRC is a political issue because it is a financial issue. The Congress always closely looks at the budget implications of policy decisions. During tight budgets new commitments become priority setting issues, and difficult to solve. "I'm hearing that the CRC is a holistic picture of how children and kids should be valued and resourced. It would need to take a drastically different shift in how we slice up the federal level, then at state level, and down to cities and municipalities." (Varro, Mayor's Office, St. Paul) This approach reflects a cultural difference between Europe and USA. European governments are accustomed to produce normative documents through international organisations, typically through European Union and Council of Europe. Most of them are understood as guiding principles, not as financially binding decisions. That is how also the CRC is used in Europe – as a politically important guideline to promote the welfare of children and young people.

Another political reservation concerns the cascading down of the CRC. Being a government commitment it would fall within the responsibility of the public administration (together with the non-profit organisations) to trickle it down. This immediately creates the discussion about "The Nanny State" and the "already too large responsibility of the government". It is particularly the conservatives who maintain that public administration should be as light and non-directive as possible, because it is the individuals, the family and the non-profit organisations which should be responsible for good life of the children. And, after all, today "people watch out for their own kids" and the state is not needed to do it.

"Signing CRC would be a Kiss of Death to parental rights and to parents' control over their own children" (National Center for Home Education, www.ewtn.com/library/ISSUES)

Googling CRC produces a large amount of lobby-groups which are strongly opposing the US ratification of the Convention. These groups tend to make it a legalistic issue maintaining that it goes against the legislation which provides the parents the right to educate and discipline their children. Interestingly, in Europe article 12 of the CRC has not appeared as an issue of parental rights. Instead of being seen in this negative light, in Europe it is seen as a positive contribution to child and youth development.

Making the ratification of the CRC a legal issue is of course a conservative lobby strategy, but it also reflects an intensified awareness of legal implications of everything. One interviewee thought this is a typical US reaction: "Legal panic' is our name". For example, there is a heightened concern about the legal consequences of unsuccessful upbringing to parents. Adolescence is experienced by parents as a risk, and thus, parenting becomes risk-management. As a result the way people talk with young people can escalate into unproductive conflicts. One of the educationalists we interviewed went as far as saying: "We've lost ability to talk productively with young people and have them talk productively with us." The strong negative assumptions about youth lead people to address young people as potential trouble makers, which do not create conditions for open dialogue.

The sensitivity to adults' rights can lead into incapacity to enter into a mutually respectful dialogue with children. "The felt insecurity in relationships with kids does not contribute to allowing them rights ... Parents use 2 hours on the road and do not have time to have nice dinner and eat together and when the family is at table – parents discuss and kids don't"(special education teacher). One of our interviewees talked about "The phenomenon of talking past each other" – adults and children have developed their own life-worlds which do not communicate with each other. A recent study by Lochner, Allen & Blyth (2009) revealed that parents and the young people had very divergent expectations on youth programs. Furthermore, even if the parents maintained that the leisure of their children is under their control, Carol Thomas, a panellist in the launching event of the study, casted a doubt: "I would like to know more about those parents who say that things are under their control".

As a result "we don't trust youth to make decisions... We adults get in the way all the time – we're real barriers ... I think it's indicative in families how we treat young people – typically at family gatherings there's an adult table and a kids table. At a dinner table kids aren't used to a reciprocal conversation with parents, more used to texting with their friends" (program director of a large non-profit organisation). In the absence of trust to children and young people to make their own decisions and sharing power with them, there is the risk of upbringing becoming a controlling task. "[I] get that feel from policymakers that [young people] are still to be dealt with, controlled, told what to do, it's a very paternalistic view of young people...it's an energy of young people that I think scares people" (special education teacher). A youth worker from the Twin City area points out the controversy of how young peoples' rights are interpreted: when young people under 18 years have great ideas about improving services, the adults do not care because "they are just kids", but when the same kids violate the law, they are immediately treated as adults. "You can be treated as older if you do something bad, but not if you do something extraordinarily well". In this sense, there is not perceived to be much inherently good about youth.

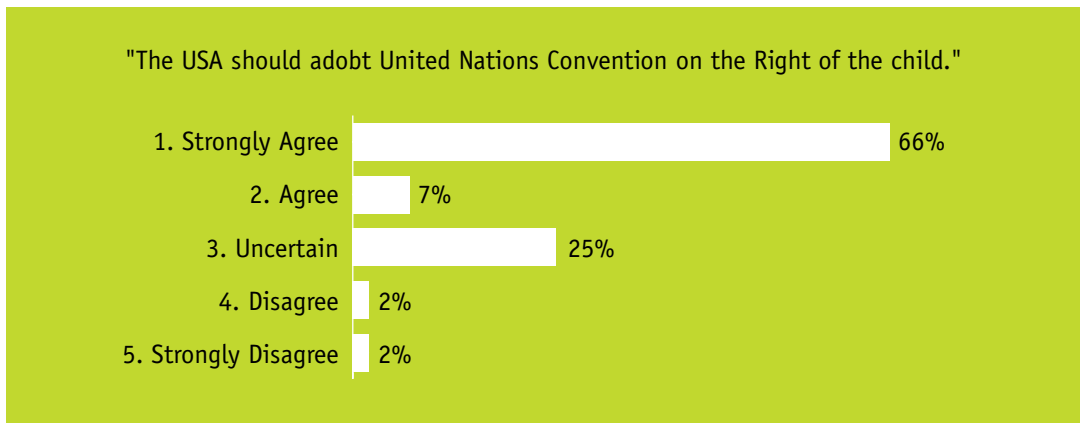
A manager from the Education Department encapsulated all this in the words: "We do not really think that young people have rights". There seems to exist cultural constraints to think of youth rights (in the USA). An indication of the difficulties of discussing youth participation – the key youth right - is

the lengthier debate in one of the group interviews we carried out, where people started to ponder how to formulate the youth rights question in a politically more acceptable way. It was Professor Byron Schneider from the University of Minnesota who proposed that perhaps it would be easier to promote the concept of youth participation (and CRC article 12) in the US by talking about the 'responsibility' of young people to have a voice, instead of the 'right' to have a voice. The assumption was that it would be more acceptable for the parents to allow 'responsibilities' for their children than it would be to give them 'rights'.

**"Finding ways for young people to be recognized and have rights is a way I'd like to see"
- What do the youth field professionals think about the CRC? ¹**

Cultural change may perhaps be headed by people influential in a given field. The youth field of Minnesota is consisted of dedicated and well networked professionals in non-profit organisations, public administration, political structures, the University of Minnesota and in both foundations and private companies funding youth programs. What do these people think about the need and usefulness of the CRC? The figures below are based on a survey carried out at the 2009 Howland Symposium (University of Minnesota, May 8.2009) among the audience consisting of a good representation of 65 youth field actors.

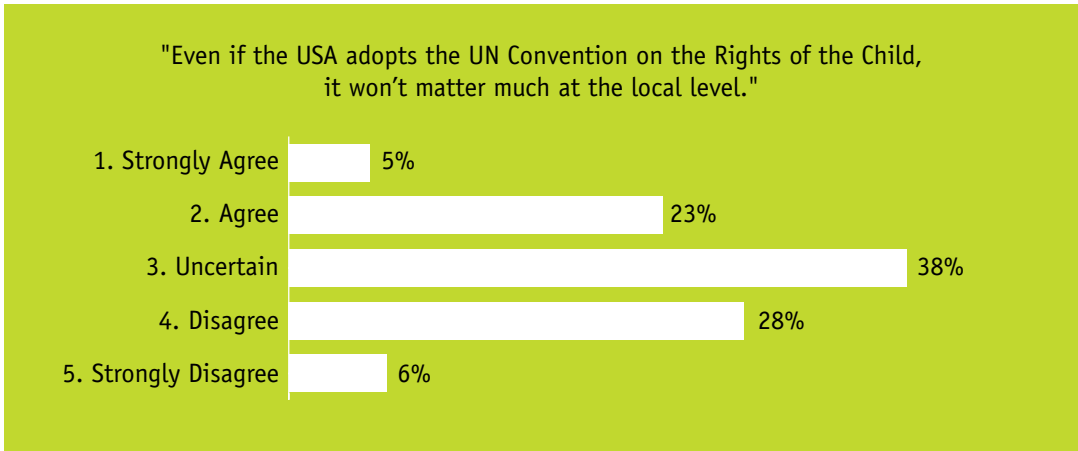
Figure 1. Opinions of the youth field representatives on adoption of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.



The results show that a majority of respondents (66%) "strongly agrees" that "The USA should adopt United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child". Only a few people (4%) disagreed. One fourth was "uncertain". Discussions which followed the voting revealed that surprisingly many did not know what the CRC was. Possibly they established a good part of those "uncertain". In sum, the youth field professionals of Minnesota clearly felt the need of CRC to support the work that they are doing. The result seems to reflect the need for a political framework, a shared set of objectives for youth programs and possibly an expectation of a more coordinated youth policy. At the same time, the youth field people position themselves in stark contrast with those conservatives which strongly oppose the adoption of the CRC. Whether they want or do not want, the youth field people become in this sense drawn amidst a fierce political debate.

¹ Youth worker, Twin City Area

Figure 2. Opinion of the youth field representatives on impact of the adoption of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child



The respondents were also asked to reflect the potential usefulness of the CRC to their local level work. Even if people wanted the Convention to be ratified, they did not equally often think that it would be of help to the actual local level work. As much as 28% agreed that the adoption of the CRC "won't matter much at the local level", while 34% were optimistic and disagreed with that statement. Interestingly the most typical reaction (38%) was to be "uncertain" about the statement. The hesitancy and pessimism (of two thirds of the respondents) on the usefulness of the potential adoption of the CRC suggest that even those who strongly feel the need for such a document realize that its implementation faces administrative and political obstacles.

A representative from a Twin City youth co-ordination body put it very concisely: "People own their kids". Conceptualising children as parents' property to be protected, guided and controlled is very far from, for example, the Swedish youth policy objective to promote the autonomy and political and economic independence of young people. Clearly, different assumptions lead to different policies. In the Swedish case emphasis is on giving young people more opportunities to decide on matters that concern them, supporting youth organisations, improving low-cost housing opportunities and improving working life integration, while the parents' rights -oriented US youth policies prioritize family and community involvement, learning the value of hard work and the respect and responsibility for parents. Both approaches also have their weaknesses. The Swedish youth policies could be criticised for their over-optimistic reliance on the capacities of young people to make decisions on their own, while a doubt could be cast on the over-protective attitude and mistrust of parents towards their children in the USA. The general pursuit of parents to control young people was criticised for hindering their development: "The fact that parents cater for too long and too strongly for their children could even become an obstacle for them to take on hobbies and opportunities to learn to become an active citizen" (interviewee above 21.04.2009).

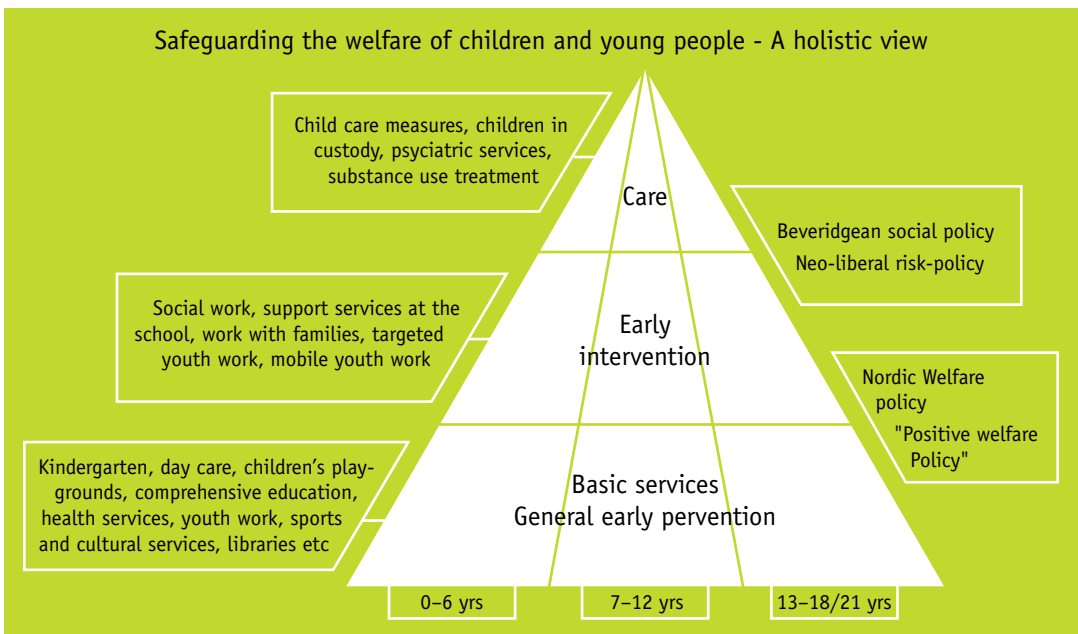
Without going any further in the debate of the different cultural conceptions of youth, the point should be made that the US hesitation and sometimes even hostility towards the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child is linked to the specific relation between children and their parents, a cultural difference which could be deeply embedded in the development of the family conception. Recognizing this, there are limits to which the ratification of the CRC actually can function as a shared objective for, say, integrated youth policy programs.

2.2. Emphasis on targeted intervention programs at problem youth

Instead of broad political objective setting, in the USA, there is a strong emphasis on targeted programs on problem youth or youth problems. As one of the interviewee said: "Things around youth are around families who can't support themselves. Youth policies are not about the majority of young people, but about the high end of the Bell curve; youth policy is about problem youth." (a representative of Twin City youth co-ordination body). The programs that are there tend to be focused on poor young people. "We are all focused on children below the poverty lines – not that other children are not important, but we need to focus on where there's the greatest gap ... for us it's around poverty – maybe it's really about race" (a representative of a large non-profit organisation funding youth programs). Non-profit organisations, which are running youth programs, are, to a large extent, running social policy programs for identified risk groups.

In Finland youth policies and youth work are based on, primarily, providing basic services for all children and young people, secondarily, establishing targeted intervention measures for those at risk and thirdly, making available care for the marginalized young people. This approach materializes itself in the Helsinki City's "Welfare Plan for Children and Young People 2009-2012" (figure 3). As a starting point for jointly produced services for children and young people, the youth, social, health and education field have agreed that the main emphasis should be on base of the triangle (also visually the largest element). In long term, one should invest in universal services for all in order to minimize risk trajectories. We also need early prevention measures for those at risk and care services for the children and youth most in need (like those taken in custody or those in need of psychiatric treatment). But as the triangle signals, these two should not be the first priority. Of course, when the budgets get tight, one has to make priorities and the looser tend to be the universalistic welfare services.

Figure 3. The framework of the Helsinki City "Welfare Plan for Children and Young People 2009-2012"



Youth work at the City of Helsinki is built on two basic elements. One is a versatile system of supporting youth organisations (organisations run by young people). The other is a network of low-access youth centres as a basic service. Both are seen as universalistic services which are expected to function as general early prevention. The Finnish and Helsinki examples may spark off discussion on the possibility to move to a similar direction also in Minnesota. How to break out of the concept of youth programs as only targeted at youth problems?

On this issue the people interviewed in the Twin City area quickly adopted a broad perspective. "The larger social structures are the barrier. How do we overcome our capitalist structure, the individualist responsibility culture; I just wrote checks for over \$2000 to keep my kids involved over the summer, to keep them enriching and safe. But I'm privileged [because I could pay for it]. We know that every kid needs access to all that stuff. What we do not have is early prevention...we are up against our social structure that is kind of everyone for themselves (the family, the kids) to do the best with what they have, but [what we need] is an overhaul" (a representative from a local youth co-ordination body). The use of the word "overhaul" signifies that drastic changes are felt to be needed to go ahead. Many other people that we interviewed had equally broad expectations for the changes needed. "We think that in the state of Minnesota we care about children – we are more people-oriented, more like Scandinavia. But in fact, one that's going backward now is that every family is for themselves because people are so desperate. When you can't trust the public institutions to take care of all the kids, then even those who believe in taking care of all kids can't take care of their own. There is a cultural war going on right now in Minnesota and in our minds" (another representative from a youth co-ordination body). A youth worker from the Twin Cities area agrees on the need for "fundamental shifts", but is pessimistic about the prospects: "I don't see people willing to change...we are talking about fundamental shifts in peoples' paradigms". To move towards "paradigm shifts", we "really need a movement. If you think about changing social norms, can't just go to the youth, [one has to] think about core beliefs of communities". There is the belief that the USA does not have decent early prevention programs for all young people, because people do not in the end care for young people: "We really have to tell people to care about young people. We're on a hunt for caring adults." This analysis created a collective burst of disdain and frustration within the group interviewed in the youth co-ordination body: "How come, seriously, we're at this place - to have to convince people to care!"

In sum, there was a wide-spread awareness of a broad set of issues to be addressed and of the profound nature of the changes needed.

Even if the youth workers wanted to target their services for all young people in a given area, those who fund the programs often insist on targeting at those most in need to get the best return for the investment. The logic seems to be that 'normal' young people (and their families) manage their life, but it is the problem youth that do not and which cause costs to the society. Regional Educator Rebecca Meyer working for the 4-H Youth Development wanted to run a service learning project (The Incredible Change) in Duluth open to any young people in the City. She had to go through a long set of difficult negotiations with the administration to finally be able not to target the activity to problem youth only (interview in Duluth, 22 April 2009). Professor Dale Blyth, from the UM Extension Centre for Youth Development, has pointedly noted that 'youth development' tends to mean 'target group development' while it should mean 'human development' to retain its original broad meaning (Speech at a UM seminar, 1 May 2009).

Generally, however, funders expect numbers. They want the programs to cover many young people, even the ordinary young people, and not only small special needs groups. Thus non-profit organisa-

tions might claim that their programs cover also ordinary young people. However, as an interviewee from local youth co-ordination body noted: "closer analysis showed the programs were focused on youth at risk." This suggests that for some reason, which could be 'working tradition', most youth programs in the end do not reach 'average youth'.

Apparently this situation of targeting services to problem youth is a result of many policy pressures to that direction. In a similar manner, there are policy pressures in the Nordic countries to general youth policy services for young people. To take an example, the City of Helsinki provides municipal low-threshold youth services for all young people. One of the rationale behind is the tradition and culture often expressed as the "Nordic Welfare Ethos". This Ethos is comprised of the ideal of (1) equality, (2) strong public responsibility in service provision and (3) generalist services (priority on welfare services for all citizens). Those ideals are much weaker in the USA and the atmosphere in moving to that direction is not necessarily favourable. Even the word "welfare" which in the Nordic countries is a very positive one, a widely esteemed value, in fact, is a negative expression in the USA referring rather to "a regrettable misuse of taxpayers' money by people who should take care of themselves". For example, the perception of the reasons behind poverty is very different in the USA and the Nordic countries. World Value Survey (table 1) shows that in the USA typically the explanation is "laziness, no will-power", while in Sweden and Finland it is that "the society treats people unjustly".

Table 1. Perception of the reason for poverty in the USA, Sweden and Finland.

"Why are there in this country people who live in poverty?"

	USA	Sweden	Finland
Laziness, no will-power	47 %	17 %	20 %
The society treats people unjustly	22 %	61 %	66 %
DNK	31 %	22 %	14 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

Source: World Values Survey

In the Nordic countries people think that it is also the society which is responsible for the citizens' welfare. There is also an acceptance of paying taxes as a return of the services of the society. A survey representative of the Finnish adult population included following statement: "Although it costs a lot to keep up good social security and other public services, a Finnish welfare society is always worth its price" (table 2). The majority of respondents agreed with this statement. There was even an increase of the proponents of the welfare services from 1992 (61% agreed) to 2004 (81% agreed). The welfare society system is highly justified, even if it means higher taxes.

Table 2. Justification of the Finnish Welfare society

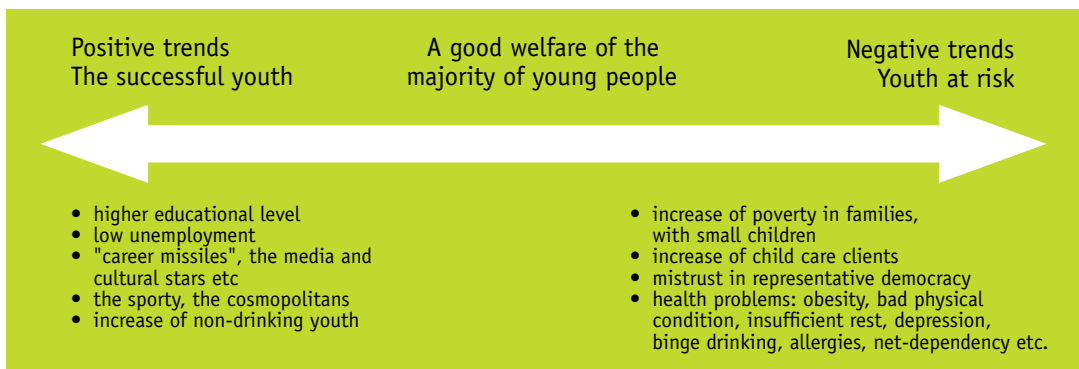
"Although it costs a lot to keep up good social security and other public services, a Finnish welfare society is always worth its price"

	1992	2004
Agree	61 %	81 %
Do not agree	24 %	11 %
DNK	15 %	8 %
Total	100 %	100%

Source: Torvi & Kiljunen 2005

Extensive research on the welfare of young people in Finland shows (figure 4) that the welfare of the majority of young people is very good and has improved over the years. However, at the same time there is an increasing amount and variety of young people which are doing better than average and also those who are doing worse than average. This has led to the "polarisation debate", which maintains that young people are becoming divided in two groups; the winners and the losers. All young people are said to wind towards either of the two opposite ends of the welfare dimension. Young people are becoming polarised. A policy interpretation has been that we must concentrate our resources and services to youth at risk and those excluded. That, however, is based on a wrong description of the reality and could lead to undesired consequences. First of all, the polarization argument gives the impression that all young people are becoming either success stories or losers. The data clearly shows that even if there are increasing numbers of people at both ends of the welfare continuum, the large majority still is doing fine and even improving their welfare. Secondly, strongly increased investments to only heavy prevention measures and measures at excluded youth could result into weakening of the basic social services. This is said to have happened even in countries like Finland. This type of policy will only result into even more youth problems in the coming 10 or 20 years. The right question concerning figure 4 might not be "why do young people become polarized?" but rather "why is it that the majority of young people are doing fine and that their overall welfare is improving?" The latter question can only be answered that it is because of the good general welfare services for all young people.

Figure 4. Welfare of children and young people in Finland



Source: The Welfare of the Finns, Stakes 2008

The City of Helsinki youth services are concentrated on early preventive services (figure 5). The largest volume of staff, premises and activities are in this column. There are a number of targeted programs for those who do not know what to do in their life (work shops, street work, counselling) and for those who have problems to complete the school, health risks and behavioural problems like aggressive behaviour (personal reintegration plans). The youth sector does not provide services for the worst-off children and young people. That is for the social, health and employment sectors to work out.

Figure 5. The Service structure of the Helsinki City Youth Department

Social inclusion through youth work (Helsinki City youth service)		
Early general prevention	Targeted intervention	Care, Reintegration
Youth centres and other specialised centers (virtual&IRL)	street work (virtual&IRL)	
cultural youth work	counselling (virtual&IRL)	
support to youth NGOs and action groups	work shops (production schools)	
youth work in multimedia context	supporting Roma youth complete compulsory education	
Participation opportunities	Personal reintegration plans for youth at risk (cross-departmental)	
Youth information		

The difference of thinking in the Nordic countries and in the USA is in this respect very obvious. In the Nordic welfare countries the question is how to guarantee access of all young people to public youth services to minimize in beforehand risk behaviour, marginalisation and human suffering. In the USA one tends to think that the society should not intervene until it is necessary. Prior to that one should rely on the individuals and families to take care of themselves. To put it polemically, the US public sector question is "How bad does it have to get until we intervene?" (Dale Blyth, interview 11 June 2009).

However, also in Europe, including in Finland there has been a tendency "from social policies to control policies" (Harrikari & Hoikkala 2008, 193). More emphasis has been put on youth problems, children and young people taken into custody, youth behavioural disorders and the like. This has meant increasing investments in targeted measures at youth at risk and budget cuts in general welfare services.

2.3. Other factors hampering shared objective setting

The difficulty to get the school onboard

People interviewed made it very clear that the school as the most powerful educational institution is not likely to go beyond its own core objectives. The main task of all schools seems to be the promotion of academic skills and the academic career. Even the large variety of public and charter school in the USA with sometimes drastically different didactic approaches still aim at the same broad educational objectives. Situated in a low-income area in Minneapolis with over 90% students of African-American or Latino background the KIPP school has as its goal "to prepare all of our students for success in college and beyond. To do that, we are focused on ensuring our students develop both the academic skills and the character necessary to help them define what they stand for". Thus, the bottom line objectives of the alternative schools are the same as those of the mainstream schools: efficient learning of academic skills.

Youth work and its non-formal learning approach highlight other educational objectives; learning communication skills, social responsibility and other citizenship skills and competences. It is not only the differing conception of knowledge and learning but also a different understanding about 'youth' which demarcates school and youth work. The school sees young people as recipients of curriculum contents, while youth work understands young people as active citizens to be provided with more space of their own. As a youth worker from the Twin Cities area said: "I do not see education changing...seeing youth as moldable clay vs. human beings to share the space". As a result education and youth work seem to inhabit different cultural spaces. So different, that they are not likely to join an effort to stipulate new, common objectives for the entire formal and non-formal education field? This is apparently a global phenomenon.

The complexity of administrative structures

Another difficulty in trying to bring youth policy actors around the same table is the complexity of the public administration. The State of Minnesota with 5 million inhabitants is a small administrative part of the Federal State with 307 million inhabitants. Minnesota is further divided into 87 Counties with 301 Municipalities. On the City level services may be provided by the Federal State, the State, the County or, of course the City itself. Building an integrated youth policy program is much easier in Helsinki where all the major services for the young people, like youth programs, parks and recreation, social services, health and all education services (except the Universities) are provided by the same administrative unity; the City. In Minneapolis the co-ordination of those services would need to have a very large amount of people from very different administrative levels and lines around the table.

The business community can move fast

Best Buy is a large multinational electronics retailer company having its Headquarters at Minneapolis. It has its corporate responsibility program "@15" (www.@15.com) targeted at youth. Based on a large study among 15-year-old in the USA, the company has designed a youth program with the objective to "help young people use their current interests, talents, and passions—their sparks—to grow networks of support and understand how they can ignite those sparks in the ways they live, lead, learn, and love in the world." Why is Best Buy running this program? Tim Showalter, the Public Relations Manager of the Best Buy, says that "it is not only because we know that teens drive trends and that we do reputation and brand building, but because we want to provide young people with

opportunities to express their assets" (Interview 28 May 2009). The program consists of activities to empower young people become active local citizens. It sounds like a good youth program. People in the youth field have realized that this is another example where actors should work together: "Best Buy is launching a marketing campaign to say that people at 15 have assets – Best Buy thinks they need to persuade us – put resources into idea that people at 15 should be voice in community and contributing – and we're being silly in not using that" (administrator, Education Department). In the USA companies understand that they need to take young people seriously; they make studies and create programs which might not be that far from educational youth work approaches. They also invest in their programs and are open to other partners joining in. It would be "silly" for the youth field not to make use of the offer. The challenge is to link agendas and manage timing of the plans of the variety of actors providing services for youth. Compared to European countries and particularly those with a strong public sector, the potentiality of the private sector as a partner to the public youth policies is very much an untapped resource. The public sector tends to keep the private sector at arm's length, mainly because of the suspicion that companies would use their involvement only to promote their own business interests. Private public partnerships, when they exist, are normally limited to sponsoring or to concrete projects. The idea that corporate citizens would be partners with the public sector and the third sector ('people sector') in setting youth policy objectives or broad programs is still many bridges away.

The recession may create pessimism to develop new programs

A further obstacle to youth policy development is the recession. Shared goals and youth rights do not mean much when the recession hits and the government has the habit of cutting expenses and putting priority on other than youth programs. It seems to create pessimism towards developing the field when one expects to see cuts to programs that would help protect children and youth. "Even if we have a values system that says we will pay for [youth] – still going to cut education instead of raising taxes (same for healthcare to kids); still going to cut services for people in jails instead of raising taxes. In 2003 we were in another recession and we saw a 25 – 30 million budget reduction on youth programs alone – talking about direct services to youth. Recently, we were just about to recover from that...we lost 11 million in the after school funds, we had no more increases of state money until 2007. We got only 5.3 million back in 2007. That's the pessimism" (Director, non-profit organisation in the youth field).

US youth policies are not only challenged by the lack of shared policy objectives and excessive focus on youth at risk programs. There are also cultural barriers to be crossed over (the inward oriented school), structural constraints to be dealt with (administrative complexity), circumstances to be adapted to (the recession) but also opportunities to be grabbed (increasing interest of the business community in youth). Many of the latter challenges are global in nature; youth policies and programs in Europe have also to find better ways to link with the school, co-operate with other sectors, develop broader funding strategies and build broader private-public partnerships for mutual benefit.

2.4. The role of research

In the absence of political guidance for youth policies, other sources of guidance become more noticeable. Research is one such a source. Non-profit organizations have the habit of using research in setting their agendas. Kathy Lenz, Director of United Ways, a Minneapolis based non-profit organization, describes her strategies: "When we put our plan together, we spent about 6-9 months doing research and talking to people in each of those areas. Planning and research dept. – government funding analysis/trends. Then brought donors, we ask what are critical issues? What's important in your life? Then youth focus group, the stakeholder input, called experts and members of Youth Community Connections. Survey of agencies that have programs we fund – survey executive directors and clients to figure out issues and concerns. Surveys in MN (student surveys – we buy questions on) put data in a grid to see where we matched up with what we need to focus on." It is an ambitious planning process in which research plays a crucial role.

In a similar manner the private sector makes extensive use of research on youth. The above mentioned company Best Buy designed its youth program @15 using research as its basis. A nationally representative study of 15 year olds, "Teen voice 2009 – the untapped strength of 15-year-olds" helped the company identify the objectives and actions needed to promote young people's motivation and involvement in matters that concern them (Teen voice 2009, p 32-34).

In the USA there is a high quality University and College system, which is often oriented toward the concerns of working life and dedicated to serve the community. In the case of Minnesota there is a large University with an Extension Centre for Youth Development. The Extension Centre works in close co-operation with 4-H (one of the most powerful non-profit organisations in the field of youth), other public, private and non-profit organisations in the youth field. The Centre carries out research relevant to the youth work, develops quality standards, supports networks and non-profit organisations, acts as an interlocutor, makes youth policy initiatives and promotes the youth field in the State and the Cities. Recently (spring 2009) it joined a Minneapolis City initiative to combat youth delinquency. For more information on the Centre, consult: www.extension.umn.edu/Youth. Clearly, the Centre for Youth Development provides an important basis for policy design in Minnesota. In fact, it played the leading role in convening people to draft the Minnesota Youth Caucus - a comprehensive youth policy plan, still in process.

A Nordic equivalent to the UM Centre for Youth Development is the national and Nordic youth research networks and their activities. The Nordic Youth Research and Information Network (NYRI, see www.nyri.org) links youth researcher across Nordic countries and even Europe. The network has organised biannual multidisciplinary conferences since 1989 and it is responsible for a scientific journal called YOUNG, published by Sage (see <http://you.sagepub.com>). Finnish Youth Research Society serves as a good example of national level organization. Established in 1988 it promotes cross-disciplinary youth research and scholarly co-operation, as well as to disseminates information. The Society aims to offer a forum for co-operation between youth researchers and other people who are interested in questions concerning young people. The Society develops national and international networks for youth research. It publishes a national register of youth researchers (today with about 100 names), supports and disseminates information regarding various research activities and maintains an electronic discussion forum for youth related issues. It also works together with various official bodies and organizations within the field of youth work. Together with the Finnish Youth Co-operation Allianssi, the Youth Research Society jointly publishes the scientific journal Nuorisotutkimus (Youth Research), for more information, see <http://www.nuorisotutkimusseura.fi>. The Youth Research Network, founded in 1999, offers a multi-disciplinary research environment, in-

cluding projects, seminars, data-cooperation and publications, as well as post-graduate courses and peer support. Research projects are carried out in cooperation with universities, research institutes, vocational institutes, municipalities and various professionals in the field of youth work and youth policy. The main areas of research have included, e.g., youth cultures, youth work, ethnic relations, marginalization issues, health concerns, political participation of young people, and education and employment issues. In addition to academic objectives, one important aim of the Network is to produce research-based information that is relevant from a youth policy viewpoint and can be utilized in practice.

Finnish youth researcher and the director of the Youth Research Network Leena Suurpää uses the term "triangulation of scientific and practical engagement" to refer to "the dialogue across fields, actors and standpoints, all contributing to producing and using knowledge...by creating an interactive...space between research and practice" (Suurpää 2009). She further outlines three dimensions of this relationship. First, 'academic research on youth work' aims at "developing theories, concepts, empirical findings and scientific methods". Second, 'critical research on youth work' focus on inequality, discrimination and power struggles. "Critical thinking may also be directed to the research or practice itself". Questioning public youth policies could also be included in this second critical dimension. Third, 'practical engagement toward the research on youth work' refers to "the research on youth work practices where the researcher's role is to mobilize the development of some chosen issues in the field of youth work...Or it may refer to a more integrated process where the roles of the researcher and worker become blurred, and research is accomplished in and through practice (development and research)."

Using this typology we may look at the differences between the US and Finnish research structures, or, those between the University of Minnesota based Centre for Youth Development and the Finnish youth research networks. The Finnish networks are predominantly committed to promote academic research and dissemination of its results. Thus the first dimension, 'academic research on youth work' describes closest their "space between research and practice". However, the network does studies linked to practical youth work, organizes seminars and net-based discussion targeted at youth workers and carries out research on topical youth policy issues – things belonging to the third 'practical engagement' dimension, but the main focus and research orientation still is on the academic dimension. The 'practical engagement' of the Finnish Youth Research Network may be partly explained through their funding structure: essential part of the funding comes from the Youth Work Unit of the Ministry of Education. This may also explain why the Network or the Finnish Youth Research Society (also funded through the Ministry) as a rule do not engage themselves in the second, 'critical thinking' dimension in the sense of criticizing government youth policies. In UK the youth research community – which is not dependent on funds from the youth ministry - is very quick to react, often in a very critical way, at government youth programs and legislation. In Finland the youth research networks do not take on this role. It is the municipal youth work which in Finland represents the critical voice of government's youth policies – again, possibly partly explained by the fact that the government funds constitute only 4% of the average municipal youth budgets.

The Minnesota based Centre for Youth Development is deeply engaged in the development of practical youth work and local youth policy programs. The Centre co-operates very closely with the key non-profit organizations providing youth programs, it runs research and development work on youth work methods, quality assessment, impact studies and has an active role in local youth policies. Also, and importantly, a good part of people working in the Centre are practitioners from the youth field. The focus is clearly in the third dimension; 'practical engagement toward the research on youth work'. The funding structure of the Centre is very different from that of the Finnish youth research

networks. An essential part of the funds come from private sources; Foundations dedicated to youth development (like the McKnight Foundation) and individual donors (like the Howland Endowment). Often these funds are earmarked to youth work development.

2.5. Observations

"I don't understand this fear of doing something that works somewhere else as somehow being un-American"

The US debate about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child reveals the extremely polarized and politicized thinking on youth. At the one end we have the Republicans, the conservatives and the proponents of family rights and the protective family, while at the other end we find the youth field people, the researchers and probably a good part of the young people themselves. The conservative family ethos with its emphasis on protecting young people from having the possibility to decide on matters relevant to them is indeed very far from, for example, the writings of the grand old lady of University of Minnesota, Gisella Konopka (1976). She said that "Our main task is to let young people learn to make decisions on their own and trust them, without expecting that they will always make the right decisions, or the decisions we consider right. We must let them try". The problem with polarized views on youth is that they easily stagnate the development of youth policies. The fact that the US is with Somalia the only country not having ratified the CRC is an illustrative example of the standstill. Some people we interviewed were worried about the quickness that new ideas became politicized, partisan issues. For example, a US effort to look at how Europeans do things is very quickly labelled by the conservatives as 'socialist' or 'un-American'. This led a youth worker from the Twin Cities to say: "I don't understand this fear of doing something that works somewhere else as somehow being un-American". This, of course, is an exaggeration which to some extent describes the effects of the polarized thinking in the USA, but it does not concern everybody. For example, the youth field people and the researchers that the author had the opportunity to meet were extremely interested in and open-minded about European and Nordic experiences in youth work and youth policies.

Another debate which tends to create polarities is the conception of poverty and the role that the society or the public sector should play in combating it. The social policy thinking of the 'generalist welfare services' of the Nordic Welfare Societies is very opposite to the US policy based on the individual responsibility. The youth field people seem to be in favour of drastic changes in this regard. If the general policy thinking to this regard is not changing, there will be less opportunities for the US youth field to enlarge its recognition from being a fire brigade of youth problems constantly fighting for resources and desperately trying to justify its programs through positive outcomes to school achievement. In this sense the debates around President Obama's efforts to enlarge public responsibility in the health area, possibly has an impact on discussions about public responsibilities in the youth field, as well.

"Political will" drives changes, particularly when rooted in political strategies and budgetary processes

As Valley Varro from St. Paul Mayor's Office describes it: "The hardest thing about change is the political agreement – once that happens, it's easy for the political people to come together to do the work." When the political will is there, like in the case of initiatives launched by a strong Mayor of St. Paul, things start to move on. "Here in St. Paul, our libraries and the department of parks and recreation have not worked together. Not that they didn't want to, but that they have never been asked to do so. Mayor says here are some measures that we're working on and I'd like you to share

these. Now libraries and parks and recs (recreation centres) work on sharing services and knowledge and professional development."

Another example: the above mentioned St. Paul's Mayor Chris Coleman has set up a multi-agency Commission "2nd Shift" to co-ordinate out-of-School programs. The rationale behind is that "we have an educated workforce, we can attract businesses, help kids to graduate, go to college and come back through bringing people working with kids together" (Varro). The 2nd Shift is an ambitious plan to promote non-formal learning and youth development through an integrated approach. The key elements of the plan are (1) to establish a multi-agency private-public partnership body to co-ordinate the programs, (2) to change the way adults working with young people can become youth development workers and (3) to create an open process to grow and transform public will in favour of a comprehensive out-of-school learning offer. The 2nd Shift is an example of an integrated youth policy plan based on a clear political objective. It remains to be seen how the process gets wind under its wings, how it is affected by the recession and political decision making. Its development is closely followed by all the actors in the Twin City area endeavouring to promote integrated approaches for youth.

The St. Paul examples show how important the political will is to create co-operation and integrated services. The risky element is that the political will has relatively narrow basis. What if the Mayor changes? What if the City Council is not committed to the schemes? What if the republicans win next elections and say that the 2nd Shift co-ordinating scheme is an effort to enlarge public sector responsibilities and costs?

Europe and Finland have a long-standing history in integrated youth policies, and have faced the same problem: how to see to it that the political will carries through? The Finnish government launched in the early 70s the concept of municipal youth action plans. A large number of Finnish municipalities drafted these plans. Towards the end of the decennium an evaluation study of these plans concluded that in many municipalities the youth sector was able to promote its visibility, but very few actually carried out the policy proposals of the action plan. Very soon the plans simply died out. In a study (Sörbom 2003) on 10 municipalities in Sweden which have volunteered to participate in a follow-up study on the implementation of national youth policy objectives, most have carried out a local youth policy action plan or are aiming to do so. The positive effects have been that youth policy has entered the general policy agendas and that municipal activities related to youth have started to realize the importance of listening to young people themselves. However, the study concludes that even if political decision makers and civil servants across other sectors express, in the process of drafting the plan, their good will, it does not necessarily mean that 'the good will' carries over to the implementation phase. Based on a 1993 'decree on local youth work policy plan' the Flemish Government in Belgium expected the municipalities to draw their policy plans. The experience shows (Schillemans et al. 2003), that it was difficult to involve young people in the entire planning process, that leisure-oriented issues dominated their thinking and that the municipal authorities also felt that "the broader [integrated] perspective is a very good idea, but often still 'one bridge too far'" – the political will did not carry through. In the Finnish, Swedish and Belgian cases the key weaknesses could be identified. First, the political will behind the plans was not broad and strong enough. The City Councils were not well enough involved in the process nor were the plans part of the strategic plans of the City Council. Second, the plans were not integrated in the municipal budget processes.

The Youth Department, the Education Department, the Health Department and the Social Affairs Department - all part of the Helsinki City administration - have drafted a "Welfare Plan for Children and

Young People 2009-2012". This plan has tried to overcome past weaknesses of co-ordinated youth policies. First, the members of the political boards of the said departments and members of the City Council have held two seminars to develop the plan, the top direction of all four sectors have worked intensively to agree on the objectives and programs and finally the City Council has integrated it into its four-year strategic plan.

The key challenge is to create political will. Under the conditions of the US two party system, it is preferable that the City Council involves both democrats and republicans in the planning process early enough – for them to feel that it is their plan. The St. Paul and Helsinki examples show how important it is to have the administrative leadership of the City behind the changes. And finally, in the ideal case, all this needs to be integrated in the City's strategic planning and budget processes.

Top-down political guidance is not enough, also bottom up and flexibility is needed

Basically there are three administrative ways of running integrated programs. One is the top-down model that was discussed above, where the 'top' can be either the national level (like youth legislation), the state level (like a Minnesota Youth Caucus) or the City level (like the 2nd Shift Initiative). A second way could be to stay on the local or the community level: "local level is where the money is going to be sustained – close to the schools, community, and businesses that are the backbone and tax base of communities" (Director, non-profit organisation in the youth field). The third possibility is to act "under the radar" of City and State direction, making use of networks of like-minded administrators and the budget heads and project funds under their personal discretion – and doing good things that might otherwise risk becoming 'political', and thus torpedoed.

Most people interviewed clearly felt that the ideal would be to run broad programs under the guidance of the political will. In addition, many said that there "has to be both top down and the bottom up approach". Ideally this means that, either it is the youth field professionals (and young people) who prepare the plans, like the Youth Caucus and then try to find political acceptance to it, or the political level takes the lead setting general objectives and cascading them down, like in the case of the Swedish government setting overall objectives for youth policy (Government Bill 1999:115) followed by the state youth agency concretising them and the municipalities implementing the plan. The problem with the Swedish procedure was that the municipalities did not like the fact that not enough resources came along the plan and that the municipalities were not part of the process of designing the objectives (for more details, see Siurala 2006, pp 23-24). To learn from these experiences, the ideal would be to create a process in which political decision-makers work in close co-operation with the professionals and the young people.

In addition to the idea that one should try to integrate a bottom up element into an integrated youth policy program, the people interviewed were also quick to add that any such program should be flexible enough to allow latitude for versatile action. In practice this means that any broad youth policy program should not be a detailed long-term action plan which does not provide room for innovation, grass-root ideas or possibilities to address unexpected or emergent youth issues. In the youth field this is a very feasible remark. Young people have the tendency to be unexpectedly hit by social and economic changes and they also have the habit to come up with surprising youth cultural phenomena.

Why is it that difficult for the public sector to take the lead?

Perhaps the most striking difference between the Nordic Countries and the USA was the attitude at the public sector and role it was expected play. It is natural and self-evident in the Nordic countries that it is the public sector which takes on the responsibility to initiate and co-ordinate policies, while in the USA there was strong resistance to give that role to the public sector and in practice it stayed very much behind, and, as we will discuss in the next chapter, this has also led to a extremely fragmented and even chaotic situation where nobody co-ordinates anything. It may be a stupid question, but if the Governments takes hold of one of the largest private companies, the GM, (through its 61% ownership during spring 2009) and outlines the main objectives on how it should be re-organised, how it should be managed and what kind of products it should manufacture, why can't the Government or the State take hold of the living conditions of young people and set objectives on how the youth field should be organised, run and what actions should be taken to help them integrate in the society and change it?

3. Implementation and co-ordination structures

"People are territorial – they never think about children beyond their own sector – but children have to have food, do homework at library, then play in gym." says Valley Varro from St Paul's Mayor's Office. Sectorization and departmentalization are problems in all organisations, in bigger organisations like often public organisations, in particular. A related phenomenon is the fragmentation of services. Attempting to function efficiently problems are narrowed down into isolated concrete responses with the drawback that the jungle of responses become difficult to master, especially by those who need to use the services. At the same time the big picture and links between the services disappear. In the USA non-profit organisations like The American Youth Policy Forum (www.aypf.org) and The Forum for Youth Investment (Pittman et al 2007, 2008a-c) are strong vectors in promoting a co-ordinated approach in youth policy. In Europe international organisations and national governments promote 'integrated youth policies' or 'comprehensive youth policies' (see Siurala 2006 and 2008). The next chapter will look at these challenges as they are experienced by people working in youth work in the Twin Cities (Minnesota).

3.1. Why do we need co-ordination?

Fragmented non-profits and programs

Laura la-Croix-Dulluhn, Executive Director of the Youth Community Connections, which 'connects people and ideas' for a more coherent offer of afterschool activities, says: "The models of running a youth programs, the funding structures in particular, are so diverse that it is difficult to co-ordinate the actors". It seems to be easy to create a non-profit organisation in Minnesota. According to some sources there are 25 000 non-profit organisations in the state. Perhaps because there are no strong public services and no one to be responsible for, say, youth services, that the first reaction when facing a youth problem seems to be to establish a non-profit organisation to meet the concern at hand: "a lot of people look into creating a non-profit when seeing community needs", said an interviewee from the business community who also added that "we have a lot of unneeded infrastructure". Questions were also raised as to the quality and sustainability of services which such a variety of organisations provide. It was felt that better coordination is needed - both top down and bottom up.

Another dimension which needs co-ordination is the diversity of scope: some organisations have a broad scope including health and employment programs in their repertoire, while others are much more limited to areas like leisure. It is an additional challenge to co-ordinate organisations with differing scopes.

Organisations also do lobbying work, to promote their own work or the field more broadly. For example United Way, a strong intermediary funding youth programs yearly with 80 million dollars (2007) does its own "influencing up the governor, legislators, and how to use our business people to do that" (Kathy Lenz). The problem is that the huge amount of non-profits may deliver inconsistent messages. Perhaps co-ordinated lobby efforts could be more effective than everyone coming out one by one. Youth field is a small field and to get results as an entity it could perhaps be more efficient to send simple and clear messages to decision-makers.

Furthermore, things are too much dependent on whether there happen to be people who would be in favour of youth policy and its co-ordination. Or, there may be youth field friendly people at either the level of elected officials or at the level of bureaucrats, but if these do not co-operate, things do not move forward.

Fragmented funding

Funding systems are very fragmented. As will be discussed later in this report non-profit organisations which have the main responsibility running youth programs have an extremely diverse and unsustainable funding basis. Non-profits typically apply funds from public sources, private donors, companies and foundations, in addition to trying to maximise income through own activities (chapters 5 and 6). A relatively small non-profit can have 20-30 private funding sources. McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based philanthropic organisation, has funded over 100 youth programs in 2008. Even if both sides do have co-ordinating bodies (MN Council of Foundations and MN council of Non-profit organisations), there is a limit to which they can align the actors or agree on joint youth policies or do a proper co-ordination job. Another complexity element is the existence of intermediaries (like the United Way), which do extensive fundraising, function as 'subcontractors' of foundations and corporate funds, and fund programs. If you add to this the difficulty to align public sector funding from education, homeland security, housing, employment, parks and recreation, etc, it is evident that co-ordinated use of funds is a big challenge.

Fragmented administration

One interviewee put it in a straightforward manner: "We silo the resources that are serving youth". This seems to be taking at least two forms. First, we find administrative siloing, which effectively starts with top management and political leadership. "New governments point new commissioners, which appoint people under them and when government goes all the structure goes. During the time in power, each administration tries aggressively to develop itself, and sees other sectors rather as competitors or enemies, but certainly not as co-operative partners" (Administrator, Department of Education). Indicative of this is the case of special needs education. Students with problems at school necessarily need support from various agencies; the health services, social services, human resource services and so on. The only way to build a respective co-ordination team of the needed experts from the other service structures was to apply for an external fund to hire people with these backgrounds (for a fixed term). In principle this type of service should be an integral element of the existing services, not a project. Another example of administrative siloing is the way different departments define their areas of jurisdictions. As the departments seldom consult each other they are very much overlapping. Children and young people seldom perceive the boundaries. "Kids I know don't think of Minneapolis and St. Paul as separate universes. Thinking in jurisdictions of other side of river – doesn't make sense to me, doesn't make sense to kids...Maybe we should think about what kids' reality is like" (a representative from a youth co-ordinating body).

A further form of siloing is the way children are compartmentalised according to the competences; academic (formal education) vs. social and moral (non-formal learning) competences – siloing, which is not limited to the Twin Cities or the U.S.

Fragmented identity

The above forms of fragmentation do not cover the entire field of fragmentation issues, like for example the fragmentation of knowledge production of youth, the fragmentation of professional

ethos, educational background of youth workers, and the fragmentation of youth itself. However, the perception of fragmentation is wide enough to lead one of the respondents to ask: "Who are the youth development people? Do they have an identity? A definition? How do you co-operate with others if you can not say who you are – in a way understandable to others? If we can't even have a common definition of what the hell we're doing, so when you talk with, for example, our employment folks – how do we describe ourselves?"

3.2. The efforts to integrated policies "are not yet there"

The Youth Coordinating Board, a non-profit organization, has as its objective that "all Minneapolis children enter kindergarten ready to learn, succeed in school, have access to quality out of school time opportunities and have opportunities to prepare themselves for the responsibilities of an active civic life." (www.ycb.org). It has its focus on Out-of-School-Time (OST), but aims at broader coordination. It is an effort towards integrated youth policies. The scope is not as grand scale as the European ideal, but its *raison d'être* is "having different jurisdictions sitting on YCB – where we want to reach integrated response. Not there yet – still fragmented with county, school, parks, etc. -but YCB is vehicle in place to do that." (Gail Dorfman, Hennepin County Board of Commissioners). The problems is to get actors aligned due to fragmented administrative structures and lack of state (political) support: "Struggle to get there". Minnesota in general is experienced to have a good atmosphere for co-operation; "we like to play together". This provides "great potentiality that has not been realized. We have a strong advocate mayor, but somehow the city per se has not identified that at this point." "[We] don't have enough authority invested in our structure or our staff...not build another." It was felt that more connections needed to be made; with the municipalities, with Metropolitan Council (a co-ordinating structure of the metropolitan area), the parks and recreation department, the communities, the business community etc. (Pam McBride, Project Director for Youth Development, YCB). The organization (YCB) also runs a Minneapolis Youth Congress (MYC) with the compelling mission statement "No Decision About Us, Without Us!" established 2007. The YCB partners were "thrilled about the youth congress" but had to confess that "it is difficult to figure out how its proposals could fit into my work". In sum, the YCB is "not there yet", feels that its full potential, like its political and community connections, administrative capacity and the Youth Congress, has not yet been fully utilised.

The Youth Community Connections is a "state-wide afterschool alliance" with a following mission: "Ensure systems, supports and resources to be in place so Minnesota communities can successfully provide quality out-of-school time for children and youth " (www.YouthCommunityConnections.org). A representative of the organisation explains that "the YCC is representative of a movement to show the value that youth programs have in the state, but also an alliance [of] the people who belong to it." The organisation has a large array of activities and a good reputation as a co-ordinating body, and it can afford also self-critical reflection: "Everybody's got their own opinion on how this should work [but] if you stay fragmented and don't have anything to bring you together – you'll stay fragmented...we've had a fragmented approach in identifying and acknowledging programs that happen outside of school day." The organisation has had meetings with state government representatives, including the Governor, but there was the feeling that "not much actually followed". Furthermore, concentrating efforts to persuade the top political leadership " was putting a lot of eggs in one basket". An interviewee from the formal education thought that the YCC has concentrated its efforts too much on the afterschool agenda and lost its credibility as a broader youth policy co-ordinator. To sum up, neither is the YCC "there yet". Despite its excellent lobby strategy and material and a broad

network of partners, the challenge is still there to convince the decision-makers about the benefits and the necessity of the non-formal learning activities and their coordination.

In addition to the above mentioned work to streamline out-of-school learning, there have also been some efforts to create broad scale integrated policy plans; the "Early Childhood Caucus" and the "Youth Caucus". This report has not been able to dig into their histories and satisfies only to reflect them through the voices of some of the people interviewed. "Early Childhood Caucus – hasn't been very successful...The failure has nothing to do with its arguments. The economical arguments of investing in early childhood are indisputable. It is rather a question of political dividing lines: democrats usually sink initiatives by republicans and vice versa. To be successful a proposal needs to be from both – shouldn't be partisan issues. Too often we fall to the issue that it becomes a partisan issue – it is either too Democrat or too Republican issue." (Varro, St. Paul Mayor's Office). This problem to get broad political support to a youth policy plan was also faced by a more recent initiative; The Youth Caucus. Walker and Blyth (2008, 3) summarize this U.S. problem: "The process of coming to a policy consensus in the U.S. on almost anything is very complicated. It involves the ability to mobilise people across party lines and constituent groups to develop and move a vision or solve a problem amid the complex layers of national, state and local governments with overlapping powers and mandates as well as confusing jurisdictional boundaries – all in times of budget deficits."

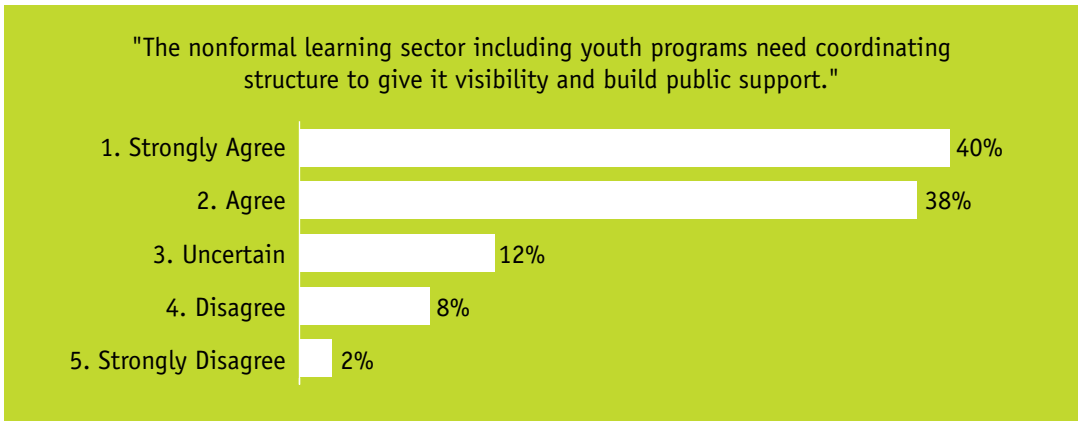
Many think that integrated youth policy programs like their European ideal are too many bridges away. Instead, daily challenges, concrete and feasible opportunities feel more urgent. There was a touch of frustration in the way one of the interviewees finished the discussion on the prospects of a comprehensive youth policy in Minnesota: "I'm interested in broader perspectives, but there are other basic things first – [persuade] the business community to give money toward efforts that make sense, like to provide opportunities for buss communication. To all come together...we're not quite there yet, Lasse, but 5 or 6 years ago we didn't even have the alliance. Step at a step" (Jack Tamble, Minneapolis Community Education).

3.3. Decentralisation and fragmentation – strengths and weaknesses?

Co-ordinating structures are perceived useful

Youth field actors have a largely shared understanding that the field could benefit from some sort of a co-ordination structure (figure 6). An overwhelming majority of the youth field people (78%) agreed with the statement "The non-formal learning sector including youth programs need coordinating structure to give it visibility and build public support"

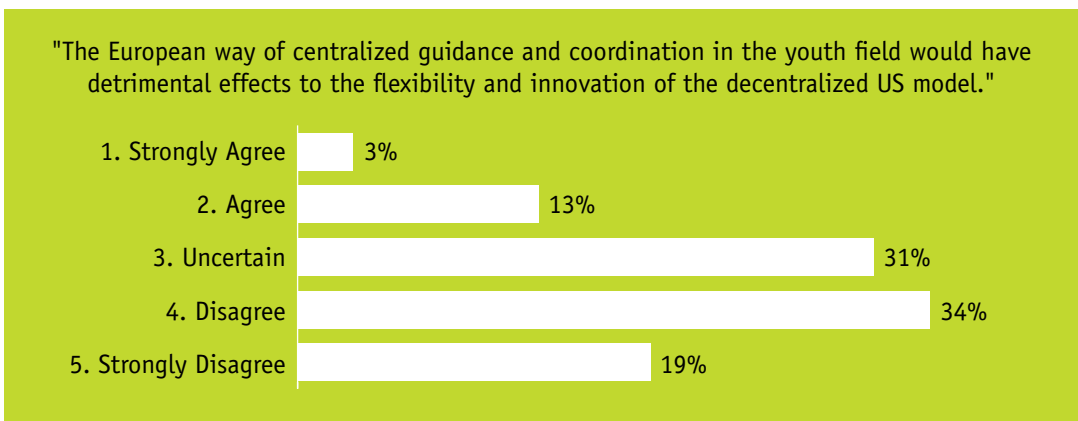
Figure 6. The need for coordinating structures as perceived by youth field representatives



Source: a survey carried out at the 2009 Howland Symposium (May 8) among the audience consisting of a good representation of 65 youth field actors.

'Co-ordination' is a vague concept and may refer to either loose, voluntary structures or to a centralised structure with mandated power. In the latter format it becomes a form of centralised management. To make the respondents think also on the latter dimension and the negative elements of centralised structures they were asked to respond to the statement: "The European way of centralized guidance and co-ordination in the youth field would have detrimental effects to the flexibility and innovation of the decentralised US model" (figure 7). The respondents in favour of coordinating structures were reduced from 78% to 53%. At the same time the share of those

Figure 7. Centralizations vs. decentralization as perceived by youth field representatives



Source: a survey carried out at the 2009 Howland Symposium (May 8) among the audience consisting of a good representation of 65 before mentioned youth field actors.

"Uncertain" increased from 12% to 31%. However, the fact remains that only 16% of respondents felt that "centralized guidance and coordination" would have detrimental effects to "flexibility and innovation". "The decentralized US model" did not find many supporters among the youth field professionals.

The Conservative criticism of centralisation and co-ordinating structures

It is unquestionable that the youth field is very fragmented and that there are very few centralised programs or structures. The debate is rather about whether this state of affairs is perceived as a strength or as a weakness. Many voices within the youth field (as we saw above) and some within (democrat) politicians would like to see more public authorities-driven policies; shared political objectives, policy programs, strategic management to implement them and better coordination to improve the impact. But there is also the conservative argument that non-profit organisations are more efficient than public services and that public programs, central guidance and co-ordination structures are not feasible measures.

From the conservative point of view the key element of the American model is that "the government here is less strong and less intrusive – in non-profit and for profit ... If this table were filled with good strong right-wing conservatives they'd argue that the government already has far too much responsibility ... this is a distinctively American contribution to the world – it is in our DNA – something we should maintain" says Mitch Pearlstein, President of "American Experiment", a conservative lobby organisation. Accordingly, President Obama who is strengthening government guidance on car industry and health policies is criticised for "moving us toward a European direction."

In Europe it is thought that the government's commitments, like conventions, recommendations and charters adopted through international organisations - the UN, Council of Europe and European Union – should be seen as important guidelines for national policy-making. Furthermore national legislation, policy objectives and political programs are expected to be reflected in the local level, even under the Nordic conditions of 'municipal autonomy'. There is a shared ethos of public policies that relevant guidelines come through political levels. It seems that the conservative thinking in the USA, like Mitch Pearlstein above, rejects this very idea of a top-down public policy-making. The reasons may be varied.

First, as an ideology "questions of freedom and liberty are stronger than those of equality" (Pearlstein). More important than government social policies to combat inequality, is that these policies do not in any way restrict the freedom and liberty of individuals and families to themselves build their own lives and solve their own problems. This is related to the long-standing American debate about the causes of poverty and equality: are people poor because they do unwise things or do they do unwise things because they are poor? The conservatives (or neo-liberals) tend to think that as the root of poverty and social problems is the unwise decisions people have made, we should press on more responsibility on the individuals and families to get their lives organised than make poverty a public responsibility and endorse social policy programs ("War on Poverty"). As an example Mitch Pearlstein argues that one of the most pertinent problems in America today is the breaking down of families. Acknowledging that part of the remedy is governmental, he still maintains "that more of the problem has to do with culture than policy, that is, what people believe to be right and wrong and not policy programs, if we're going to make progress in dealing with the fact that US has more fragmented families than any place on earth ... Talking about serving youth – very best thing we can do is make sure that moms and dads are getting along and not beating each other."

Second, complex societies like the USA are just too difficult to manage.: "The country is too big, problems too complex [and that is why we have] the history of decentralization...I don't have the least bit of confidence that anyone in Washington or St. Paul is strong enough, potent enough, to say this is a key issue, why or how to address it" (Pearlstein). This approach is accompanied with the perception that "we can get better service out of NGO's and nonprofits than we can through the government". This line of argumentation is based on the idea that the point of service actors are so close to the variety of the issues and problems of people that they are in the best position to find the best means and measures to answer them. Furthermore, it is the face to face encounter which is the key: "Helping people is about hand to hand, face to face, hug to hug – people from churches and NGOs [are] in better place to do that." (Pearlstein)

'Co-ordination' and 'co-ordinating structures' represent another form of unnecessary administration to the conservatives. "By spending too much time co-ordinating, you wind up focusing on the co-ordination but not the services delivered...the last thing we need is official [co-ordinating] structures" (Pearlstein). The essence about co-ordination is not a structure but making people talk to each other and find the solutions. As Mitch Pearlstein says: "What is preventing those folks who want that [co-ordination] just to get together for breakfast and go from there. I'm a decentralized guy where all that is concerned."

Through their emphasis on grass-root action, the non-profit organisations and the church, the conservatives seem to become proponents of non-formal learning. They do not believe in the ability of large public institutions, like the school, to solve young peoples' problems. Mitch Pearlstein points out that, according to the statistics by Chester E Finn, students only spend 9% of their time at the school: "So when we talk about trying to turn around lives of kids by what we do for kids in schools is only a fraction. People who work with kids and serve kids outside of school are the important people." Thus, an important element of non-formal learning is to create strong experiences of success (in sports or other cultural activities) which contribute to self-confidence and persistence in life. Pearlstein also stresses, through references to Alex Tocqueville and Robert Putnam, the role of non-formal learning activities in building social capital. This line of thought perhaps provides common ground for proponents of non-formal learning in the youth field and the conservative approach to strengthen youth development programs and activities?

3.4. Observations

Towards better co-ordination, and being aware of its limitations

The Twin Cities youth field strongly feels the need of co-ordination. They are well aware of the fragmentation of non-profit organisations, the programs, the funding streams, the administration and, in the end, of the fragmentation of their own professional personality – who are they? They are also aware of the good efforts towards better co-ordination and their shortcomings. Despite the feeling that "we are not there yet", the interest among a variety of actors to create common platform for co-ordinated youth policy is still rising. Even small organisations like the Urban Boat Builders with annual budget of 200 000 dollars and 3 permanent youth workers, clearly feel that one cannot develop the work itself nor can promote the field without developing broader platforms and networks. "We cannot possibly help these kids without a much larger network that helps push them through school, juvenile justice, families...we cannot possibly keep them from all of this that has much greater impact – there has to be a more coordinated effort ...we are like bandaging a bullet wound and not getting rid of the gun" (Dave Gagne). On the other hand, the field need broader justification and co-ordination: "I think we need somebody bigger than them (YCC and YIPA), the agencies, the

health, the families, schools – bring them together – has to be some coordinating of that". All the excellent youth work non-profits carry out, they have to, again and again, justify among their partners, but it would certainly help to have a more general and wide-spread acknowledgement of the capacity of non-formal youth programs to efficiently help young people. That would also contribute to continuity, or as Dave Gagne put it "the carrot for us would be sustainability".

Furthermore, communities have very many non-profit organisations working on similar fields. They might be able to make use of a joint umbrella organisation to support and align funding, in particular, as big funders and intermediaries seem to prefer to fund bigger organisations, or combinations of such and as funders (also the public sector, school, employment) are asking for services for larger groups of young people (150 and the like). These pressures also suggest that larger (local) networks be established.

Another argument for better coordination is increasing efficiency. Kathy Lenz, Director of "Children and Families Community Impact" at the Greater Twin Cities United Way sees this clearly: "The different elements supporting children should be brought together to look at how it could work more efficiently as a system"

Moving towards better coordination one has to be aware of the reservations raised around such efforts. First, there is the conservative criticism: Should we increase the government's and public sector's responsibilities? Are coordinating structures such top-down public policy making structures which inhibit the innovation, expertise and thrive of the individuals, families, neighbourhoods, non-profit organisations, churches and volunteers? Are 'coordination' and 'coordinating structures' ineffective means of solving problems?

Second, co-ordination also means delegating power to another structure, standardisation and restrictions to local creativity? Smaller organisations are proud and cognisant of their flexibility and innovative capacity. Sometimes great ideas just spark off from informal everyday situations: "we sat in the backyard eating hamburgers and said we are going to start this organization" (Dave Gagne). Getting ideas and making them work could be hampered due to increased organisational size and complexity. "The problem when you get bigger [is] that everything gets standardized. How do the really creative organizations get squelched by these big organizations for the sake of efficiency."

Third, even those who were working in the youth field and felt that changes were needed, did not always think that co-ordinating structures might not be a sufficient solution. As one of the interviewees said: "Don't just build a bureaucracy or structure to run it. We really need a movement. Keep it alive – get those blips – how do we keep them going? YCB – brilliant structure – focuses on systems and bureaucracy, but we really don't have community there." Instead, the emphasis should be on empowering the community and keeping positive developments going on.

The Finnish Youth Work Development Network – Creating a learning cycle.

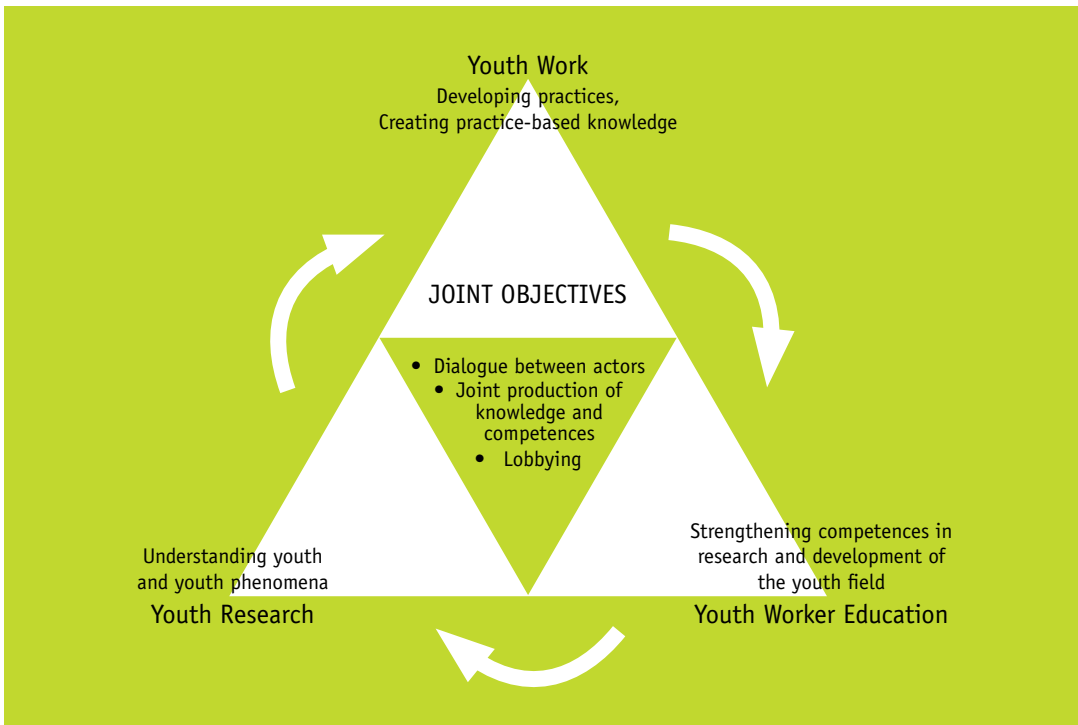
Annually about 400 studies, including about 20 doctoral theses, on youth are carried out in Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland. The subjects of most of the studies are developed within the respective disciplines and often they are perceived by the practitioner's void of relevance. At the same time the practitioners face in their daily work increasing amount of issues and questions that nobody studies. A national network of Applied Sciences youth worker education institutions felt the need to better link their curriculum to what is going on and needed at the point of service. There was a need to better identify research and R&D needs, channel them to the research

community, and stimulate mixing of the roles of the researcher and the youth worker and involving the education institutes in R&D. As a response to these expectations the Finnish Youth Work Development Network was established (in 2009).

The network is comprised of representatives from the networks of the youth research community, the youth worker training programs in University of Tampere and in the Applied Universities (Humak), and representatives of the networks of youth work (municipal youth work, youth organisations, the Church).

The network is set to function as a focal point for knowledge and competence creation (see figure 8). It stimulates the practitioners to identify research and R&D needs in their daily work, gathers them to be further evaluated and developed. The network feeds them into the research community or the educational institutes. At the same time the researchers are encouraged to run the project in close co-operation with the practitioners, even to mix their roles. Some of the issues raised may not be scientific, but a policy or a political issue in which case the network is committed to take on the lobbyist role. In fact the network represents all the key actors of the youth field and carries considerable weight.

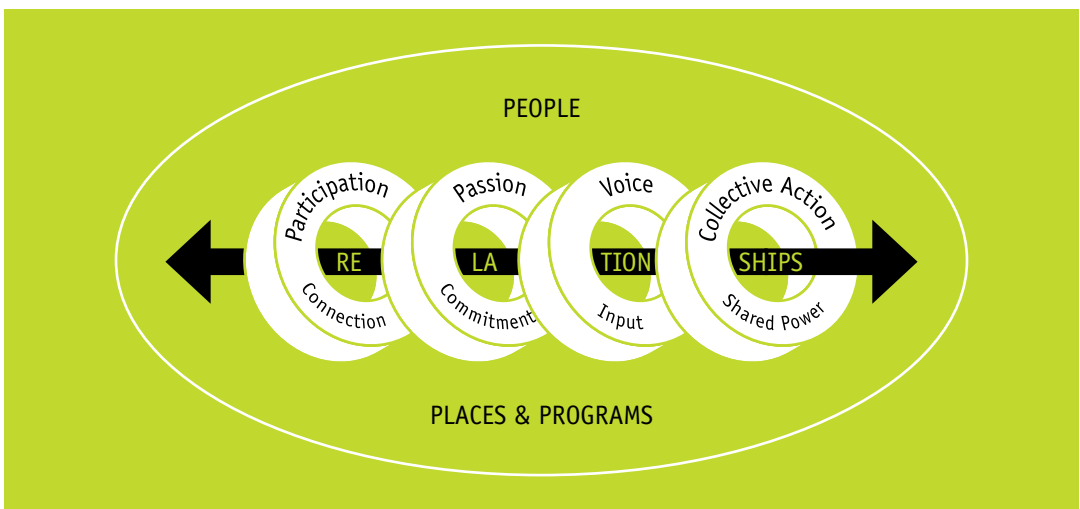
Figure 8. Finnish Youth Work Development Network



To conclude: Convergent issues make differences relevant

European or Nordic models of creating a shared, value-based youth policy program are not directly transferable to the USA or Minnesota, or the other way around. There appear to exist too many cultural differences; the relationship to international commitments (like the CRC), the perceived implication of youth rights to parental rights, the role of the public sector, the division of responsibility between the government and the non-profit sector, the perception of youth programs as either means to tackle youth problems or as early prevention means for all young people, the family and children and young people, the difference of administrative structures and so on. Due to these differences youth policy makers and youth workers on both continents easily conclude that there are no reasons why they should be interested in each others' experiences. However, there are two grounds to look at comparative experiences. First, seeing a different approach may spark innovation. For example, seeing how a university based youth research institute (the UMN Extension Centre) co-operates with the youth field community around, helps develop a knowledge production system modified to Finnish or European conditions. Second, if the US and Nordic youth policy systems are on a convergent path, it would make sense to learn from each other. There are indications of such convergences. The youth field people in Minnesota would very much like to see the USA to move towards stronger national political recognition of youth rights (like the adoption of the CRC), state and city level youth policy guidelines and comprehensive policy programs (like the Youth Caucus) and changing emphasis from isolated problem-oriented youth programs to a broader offer of programs to all young people (like the St. Paul 2nd Shift initiative). At the same time in Finland there is an increased interest to promote the responsibility of parents as educators (as parents seem to have unreasonably 'delegated' that responsibility to public educators and authorities) and, as urban segregation and ethnic issues are emerging phenomena, there is a need to know more about targeted youth work with risk groups like ethnic minorities, urban gangs and youth criminality – practices well developed in the USA.

Figure 9. Rings of Engagement



Source: Theresa K. Sullivan, Rebecca N. Saito, August 2008, University of Minnesota, Center for Youth Development



YOUTH **II**
PARTICIPATION

Beth Dierker

As we interviewed more practitioners, foundation leaders, and policymakers, the idea of youth participation took on many different forms and possibilities. When asked how youth might be involved in shaping youth policy, many interviewees lamented about barriers to youth participation in decision-making. Yet they also had very specific experiences and visions for meaningful youth participation. Before exploring the range of responses, it is important to first establish a clearer understanding of how the Finnish and the U.S. conceptions of youth participation differ. Youth participation in Finland is broadly conceived as youth being involved in decisions that affect them. Youth serving on governmental committees and organizational boards is a formalized version of youth participation. There are about 200 municipal youth councils linked to the administration (out of the total of 350 municipalities). In Finland, most "youth organizations" are led by youth with youth making organizational decisions, seeking government funding, and participating in trainings and committees to improve their practice and enhance their voice in the youth sector.

In the U.S., such organizations would be called "youth-led organizations," making clear their uniqueness from organizations created and managed by adults with programming intended for youth. While a range of organizational structures exist U.S. and in MN, the adult-led program for youth is most common. So what, then, does youth participation mean in the U.S. context? For many, participation has come to mean attendance and/or involvement in youth programs. As many researchers and practitioners alike realize that valuable youth development requires "more than just being there" (H. Weiss, citation), a more nuanced model for youth engagement has gained recognition. Saito's (2009) model emphasizes the interlinked and dynamic nature of the types of engagement that draw youth to meaningfully engage in an activity. In this model, participation, or being there and connecting to what's going on, is one step. When combined with passion, voice, and shared power, meaningful engagement is possible.

So what does this mean for the purpose of this study? It seems that, at present, youth participation in Finland incorporates many rings of engagement both in theory and in practice. This explains the existence of political structures and organizations led by youth and giving voice to youth. U.S. youth programs are increasingly working to foster the rings of engagement in practice. Several U.S. city governments have integrated youth committees or boards in some way into their processes but the amount of power and input these groups have and the clarity of their role in larger government structures varies significantly.

Many of the people we interviewed lamented the state of youth participation in their organizations while referring to the broader obstacle of society's treatment of youth. One interviewee from a large non-profit organization expressed helplessness and frustration, "When you talk about involving young people themselves, it's very difficult for us in the U.S. to do. We don't know how to do that...we've not, from little on, including them in what we're thinking about and what we're talking about." Another interviewee from the Education department stated more broadly, "I don't feel that yet that they're [youth] a part of the discussion. There might be some of that happening locally, but I don't get that feel from policymakers. [Youth are] still to be dealt with, controlled, told what to do, it's a very paternalistic view of young people. It might be changing...their real value and what they can do...it's the energy of young people that I think scares people."

These broad ideas translated into specific experiences in practice related to youth involvement. Reflecting on a previous experience of having one college student sit on the board, an interviewee recalled, "it was not a very meaningful relationship. The adults didn't know how to relate to her." While logistics of early morning meetings also posed a challenge, the issue of sharing power with youth surfaced as well. Drawing on an example when the board asked youth to review RFP's (requests

for proposal) but then took the RFP's back again, she stated regretfully, "We don't trust youth to make decisions...We adults get in the way all the time – we're real barriers."

A practitioner interviewed took the following position in working with youth: "when we're with youth, it doesn't matter what the age of the kid is, when we have the staff member there, we are 'in parentus'" (educationalist, Minneapolis). An organization taking this position may have multiple meanings for "in parentus" across situations, but the legally based response reflects the difficulty in the U.S. of seeing youth as independent people capable of contributing meaningfully rather than in need of protection.

One interviewee from the Department of Education pointed out the lack of youth voice in both formal and non-formal learning settings, "What we haven't gotten into yet is general understanding that as youth age they should have more voice, real voice, even in relation to formal education. So we'll say, you should be doing community service. We'll make room for that...you should be doing career planning... [and] in non-formal learning programs, especially when they're closely tied to schools, we adults have good ideas of what you kids should be doing and we'll try to persuade you to do those things." One practitioner offered school-based service learning as an opportunity for youth to become more engaged in their communities. "[Service learning] does so many things that are excellent approaches around youth development. It plays up youth choice, youth voice, interaction, engagement, both youth-to-youth and adult-to-youth and youth get the choice of what they do. If you embed it within the school day through teachers, you have such strong engagement."

The majority of those interviewed shared their previous experiences with youth boards and committees. Many were advocates of this type of involvement and expressed energy and initiative for growing youth voice and learning from experience. Some of those interviewed shared experiences that had taught them that sustained participation and input from youth was difficult to achieve for a variety of reasons.

One practitioner whose organization is based on the full and active participation of young people to run programs and maintain youth center acknowledged that their approach was "radical" and often required "translating" from his organization's language and way of being to the way grantors, state and local agencies, and others perceive young people. The practitioner recalled how youth were asked to co-create opportunities for youth with adult staff in Community Education. The youth quickly noticed the cultural differences between their own organization and community education. The practitioner summarized, "We're trying to develop Citizenship and get young people involved in the creation and planning and policy. Whereas Community Education programs are designed and promoted to parents and kids as consumers. We want to deal with young people as citizens, not consumers." But since this was the first time such a collaboration had happened in years, the youth jumped on the opportunity. Unfortunately, however, budget cuts caused the group to quite meeting and the initiative was set aside.


Another individual recalled attempts at youth participation within a large coalition. The youth council that was created drew upon youth from various youth organizations to. When the group was asked to think about ways to promote the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the efforts crumbled due to the young people's distrust that adults would support their efforts in addition to fact that the adults from the youth organizations who were responsible for bringing youth to meetings considered the work "too political" and couldn't support the idea. The coalition that brought the youth council together recognizes their limited capacity to bring the youth together, yet they continue to entertain ideas such as hiring youth staff to represent regions and the youth issues they face.

One of the clearest and lasting examples of youth participation in government is a Youth Congress in Minneapolis. The staff member who works most closely with the Youth Congress expressed the necessity and value of authentic youth voices in policy discussions. "Now kids are saying we need to do something because adults are not doing anything for them – if you add more of the challenges – families that are homeless, etc. – people need to step up to try to make life better." As one interviewee from the Youth Coordination Board, also a mother, said, "[they're] not listening to us, so maybe [they'll] listen to my kid.". The staff member added, "if I have congress members talk to people in schools, in parks, etc. if they talk to someone on council – they'll get quicker response and faster results – when young people talk to young people – work happens quicker...Youth do it – better than adults. Young people move it with less barriers and boundaries. The staff person also shared that parents express surprise about their children being involved in the Youth Congress and "having access to these people." She acknowledged that much work remains in "figuring out how YCB can connect all [local youth organizations] and at the same time honor those groups...be a vehicle for voice and leadership."

The potential and power of youth demonstrated by the YCB's experience paired with the surprise that many parents express in having youth involved with policymakers illustrates a clear disjuncture in expectations and definitions of youth. Eric Billiet, a youth worker, explored the depth of this divide as he considered options for youth policy and youth participation. "This is where I become a bit more radical and not helpful to this whole process...idea of youth – beings in becoming rather than human beings. Finding ways to corral and domesticate them through more agencies is not something I'd want to be a part of. Finding ways for young people to be recognized and have rights is a way I'd like to see the process work. So it starts with at this idea of what is a young person. What is the role they have/we have to actualize and express themselves. ..or is it to control?... There has to be some shared idea of where we're going to be and where we're not going to be."

"We had a lot of kids from Youth and Government here. I asked one of them why isn't the voting age lower. One of them wrote a bill to lower the voting age. That bill was defeated. Because they decided teenagers were not responsible enough, or intelligent enough, or knowledgeable enough to know enough about government. He said, 'But we're youth in government! We know more than most people and yet you're saying because we're under 18 we're not capable!' That struck me, even young people who know more than I do about procedures of our local government don't feel like they're competent to vote because of their age. It's just such an ingrained idea. The fact that they voted it down themselves...their idea of youth is so engrained that they are not capable that they didn't realize their own capacity" (a representative from the Youth Coordination Board).

Stating the need for a shared definition of what a young person is takes this section on youth participation toward a full circle. Practitioners, government officials, and coalition and foundation leaders alike addressed the detrimental views society has about youth while sharing their successes and challenges in fostering youth participation in decision-making. As previously discussed in this article, many people turned to the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a possible launching point to improve young people's status in society, with article 12, specifically, legitimizing their participation. However, a group can have legal rights, but without the public or political will to ensure and promote those rights, they are powerless. So the deeper issue of what it means to be a young person and acknowledging all that youth contribute to society must be the overarching struggle for organizational efforts and priorities.



III BOLDER OPTIONS

**– an innovative
example of a non-profit
organization working
with youth**

Lasse Siurala

Organizations working with youth are of prime importance both in the USA and in Finland. The difference is that in the USA they are called non-profit organizations generally run by adults for young people, while in the European scene they are typically called non-governmental youth organizations (NGYO) run by young people for young people. Finnish and European youth organizations are well networked on national and European level. On national level National Youth Councils existing in most countries function as umbrella organizations for national youth organizations. They are strong lobby organizations for youth affairs. In a similar manner, European youth organizations and their umbrella organization European Youth Forum are closely linked to European Union through 'structured dialogue' and to the Council of Europe through 'co-management'. In Europe and in the Nordic countries, in particular, NGYOs are substantially funded by public money, while in the USA non-profit organizations rely very much on private funding and a large mix of funding sources. On both sides of the Atlantic Ocean volunteers are the key to the functioning of the said organizations. It seems, however, that in the USA the methods of recruiting, training and motivating the volunteers are most developed. To highlight the specificities of US non-profit organizations working with young people, Bolder Options from Minnesota is taken as an example on how to manage funding and use volunteers to produce high quality youth services.

Bolder Options is a youth mentoring program that works to reduce truancy and juvenile delinquency by using running, biking, academic goal setting and volunteerism to build self-esteem and encourage healthy habits in 10-14 year old youth in the Twin Cities. The organization "currently serves 120 youth annually from Minneapolis and Saint Paul who are truant or at-risk for educational failure, dropping out of school, or getting involved in criminal or delinquent activities. Participants are referred by probation and diversion agencies, truancy or juvenile court, schools and community organizations, because they are either truant or have committed a crime and are system involved" (A Position Paper, Jan 2009, 4). Each youth is matched with an adult mentor for 12 months. According to an external evaluator (Summary of 2008 Evaluation Findings) of the organization's activities youth learn health habits, exhibit positive behaviors and have improved academic success.

1. Recruiting, training and motivating volunteers

Participants are referred to Bolder Options by court systems, public schools, and other social service agencies. The young people meet with their mentors on a one-to-one basis at least 2-4 hours a week, approximately 200 hours a year in addition to program activities and group events in the community. "During the year, youth will: 1.) Participate in running/biking and academic activities with the mentor; 2.) Make 3 goals and action plans for academic, athletic, and community success at the beginning of the program and again at the midpoint of the program; 3.) Train for and complete three to twelve community races or rides; 4.) Complete two to twelve volunteer activities in their community; 5.) Attend group events; and, 6.) Participate in a variety of community activities that match their interests and abilities. Youth will also attend educational meetings addressing healthy behaviors and positive choices that are facilitated two Thursdays each month. This curriculum provides youth and program staff a forum to discuss topics such as health, nutrition, anger management and tolerance, communication and relationships, chemical health and risky behaviors, violence prevention, diversity, and education" (Bolder Options 2009, 15).

As the target is 120 youths matched a year, the organization has to have an effective on-going recruitment process and support to existing mentors to manage through the year. The organiza-

tion expects to recruit 160 volunteers a year. According to Bolder Options statistics (March 2009) the most popular routes to becoming a mentor is through friends (25%) and Bolder Options events (24%). The rich and well-designed website addressed to volunteers has led to the recruitment of 16% mentors. Interestingly, only a very small percentage of volunteers come through advertisement in the local newspaper (Star Tribune) or radio.

As to managing the dropout problem and supporting and motivating the mentors, Bolder Options has developed various strategies: screening the applicants, training them and providing continuous support during the year.

Mentors must be at least 21 years of age. In addition "An application must be completed and three written references must be provided. A national, state, and county criminal background check, sexual offender check, and child and domestic abuse checks are completed, as well as a driving record and insurance check. All interviews, orientations, and trainings must be completed, the 3 written references must be returned in the mail, and all background checks must be submitted to the Bolder Options Volunteer Coordinator before the mentor is deemed acceptable to be matched with a youth and the information is passed to the Program Coordinator (Bolder Options 2009, 17)." Each volunteer is also interviewed prior to acceptance. After the mentor is matched to a youth, he or she is then required to attend a 2-3 hour training going with the organization's 70-page Mentor Manual. Additionally, every other month there is a "Coaches Corner" to provide additional support and information, monthly social activities for the mentors and a bi-weekly check-in with the mentors by the Bolder Options Program Coordinator. In any case of emergent help or advice the mentor has the phone number to the support staff.

A noticeable cultural difference between the USA and Finland in terms of mentoring is that in the former it is a widely used approach in youth development with a lot of organizations, literature and practice, while in the latter, it is a virtually unknown approach, with very few organizations, no literature and only occasional practice. In the USA there are numerous organizations, like the Bolder Option, not only utilizing mentors, but also specializing in promoting mentoring and providing training material. The training methods have even been developed and customized to different target groups, like "men" (Stephanie Blackman www.emt.org/MentoringProgramResources/userfiles/blackman.pdf) or "African American Males" (David Miller www.urbanyouth.org/docs/AfricanAmericanMalePerspectiveOnMentoring08.pdf). At the same time Finland is the only country in Europe which does not have a member organization in the European Mentoring Organization. There is hardly any literature on mentoring in the Finnish language.

Apparently, in Finland the overwhelming role of the public sector in youth and social work has squeezed voluntary work into a margin, both in terms of scope and recognition. As the field of youth support is taken over by trained professionals, there is a tendency to regard voluntary service as "non-professional". In fact, there is a whole discourse of "professional youth work" to refer to work carried out by the public sector, suggesting the implication that the respective work carried out in non-profit organizations by volunteers is "non-professional". The positive side of this state of affairs is that in Finland volunteers are an untapped resource for youth development.

Another interesting feature of US mentoring is its innovativeness. Bolder Options is a good example of an ingenious way of using sports (running and biking) combined with rigorous pedagogical approach as a method to work with youth at risk. In Finland youth work, social work and the sports seem to inhabit their own fields of practices without much overlapping initiatives.

2. Funding

There is no single funding source for Bolder Options. Annually it has to depend on a large variety of funding sources.

Income budget 2008 (Bolder Options)	
General campaigns	6%
Special events	4%
Foundations	44%
Government	16%
Special fundraising activities	8%
Other income	1%
Earned income	21%
Total	100%

The actual income budget for 2008 shows that the main source of income comes from about 30 foundations totaling 44% of income. The second largest source is "earned income" (21%) and government's funds (16%). These 3 forms of income amount to 81% of the entire income budget.

Bolder Options depends on contributions from corporations and foundation grants in order to provide continued programming in our communities. The biggest segment is the foundations. Annually 20-30 foundations like the McKnight Foundation, Cargill Foundation and General Mills Foundation contribute to the organization's budget. There is a general expectancy for the foundations to continue funding over 2-3 years. "Earned income" refers to charitable gambling pull-tab site, which the organization has in Minnesota. Government funding come from a variety of sources with Federal funds for programs as the biggest one (14%). The budget head "special fundraising activities" include individual contributions (5% out of all incomes) which are based on traditional means like personal asks and annually sent direct mails to supporters asking for their continued support. An evolving source of individual contributions comes through contacts in Bolder Options website, email messaging and social media like Facebook. An innovative and important source of Bolder Options income is its Destination Marathon Training Program. Participants train for and run a marathon while raising a minimum of \$3200 for Bolder Options. In 2008 the money raised amounted at \$87,500.

This quick look at Bolder Options funding structure reveals interesting element when compared with similar organizations in Finland (see also table 3). In comparison, public funds cover 16% of the income budget of Bolder Options while the respective average figure for youth organizations at the City of Helsinki (in 2009) is 60% and in the City of Vantaa 80%. Non-profit organizations in the USA are dependent on a large variety of sources and consequently developed a very sophisticated arsenal of fundraising strategies. "Even if we have so many fundraising activities, all of them are important and provides us with flexibility" says Ryan Foss, Bolder Options Development Manager. Respective Finnish organizations normally receive substantial public support, but are additionally dependent on one or two major contributions from sources like the State lottery organization (RAY). The problem is that when the lottery fund is denied or stops, there is not much to compensate that loss.

Typically the US non-profit organizations use studies and statistics to convince their funders and

volunteers that they are doing good job. Bolder Options utilizes a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study by the Wilder Research Centre and the University of Minnesota to show in dollars that their youth intervention program is an excellent investment. For example, considering the costs of juvenile crimes and school dropouts to the society it was calculated that an investment of one dollar to the Bolder Options program leads to a return of \$ 13.22 (Bolder Options 2009, 8). Another type of argumentation is assessing the outcomes through research or quality studies. Bolder Options has contracted ACET Inc. specialized in evaluation to show how well the organization has reached their objectives. The assessment study concerning the year 2008 indicated that 74-95% of the young people of the program reported healthy behaviors, 81% indicated that now they were able to resist peer pressure, 88% reported that they thought that the program can help them in school, and the like (Bolder Options 2009, 19-20). In Finland organizations reporting back to the funders are not expected to use external evaluation studies nor SROI measures. It is enough to produce a budget report, statistics on numbers of activities, visitors or members or occasional client satisfaction surveys. Clearly, in the US case, there is a higher level of transparency and accountability.

The strength of the Finnish system of supporting youth organizations and organizations providing services for young people is that it is well resourced and provides reasonable continuity for the activities. There is also a trust in organizations, which means that they do not have to invest that much money or other resources to prove that they are doing a good job.

"A sound investment

According to the most conservative estimates, individual and community investors can expect a social return on investment of at least \$4.89 for every dollar invested in youth intervention programs.

The social impact of a donation to Bolder Options is even greater when the cost of putting a youth convicted of shoplifting through a Juvenile Correctional Facility (\$40,200) is compared with the cost of one year with Bolder Options (\$2,000). Moreover, instead of simply returning the youth to the environment that brought them to trouble in the first place, Bolder Options is a long-term solution, teaching youth life skills and facilitating supportive friendships in the midst of their challenging environments. By donating to Bolder Options, you can also feel confident knowing that you're investing in a program that works. Over 80 percent of the youth who graduate our one-year program do not return to the system from which they were referred."

quotation from the Bolder Options webpage

The weakness of the US funding system is its unpredictability. For example, The McKnight Foundation which has had an extensive youth funding program has in 2009 declared that it will change focus on new priorities (ecological farming) and consequently will drastically reduce its other funding priorities. Another general problem is that organizations, which have developed a good practice, face difficulties to run it on more permanent basis, as it has yearly to produce new innovative programs to appeal funds. The public sector is too weak to be able to provide continuity for even the most successful programs. This clearly is where the welfare societies like Finland have the advantage of being able to transform good practices into permanent services.

3. Discussion

The table below summarizes some of the strengths and weaknesses of non-profit organizations working in the youth field in USA and Finland.

Table 3. Comparison of strengths and weaknesses of organizations working with youth in the USA and Finland.

Strengths	
USA	Finland
not dependent on one-source funding	high level, security and permanence of funding
versatile and sophisticated funding strategies	public funding softens impact of recession
pressure to innovation	continuity of activities
pursuit for transparency and accountability: measurement of effectiveness, calculations of SROI	
good practices of recruiting, training and motivating volunteers	
Weaknesses	
USA	Finland
unpredictability of private funds	dependency on few sources of funds
recession can hit hard	volunteers as low-recognized, but untapped resource
subordination to formal education performance criteria	undeveloped funding strategies
competition between funding applicants	bureaucratic and slow processes of public funding agencies
lack of continuity, incapacity to transform good practices to basic services	

The differences between the roles that non-profit organizations play in the two countries may go back to the differences of youth policy approaches. Finnish youth policies may be described as a value based service model, with public sector taking a strong responsibility in providing activities and support for young people as a basic generalist welfare service for all young people. The US approach may be seen as an issue based programs model, which builds on effectively designed programs targeted at emergent youth issues carried out by non-profit organizations with volunteers as the key resource. These models then reflect the differences in thinking about youth, in the meaning of the youth period, in individual and social responsibility and in the role of the public, business and third sector. However, as has been earlier argued, these differences should not keep us from learning from the two systems. The case of Bolder Options provides an inspiring opportunity for respective Finnish organizations - non-profit, public and private – to learn about the recruitment, training and motivation of volunteers for work with young people, not to forget about the variety of strategies to co-operate with private donors, foundations and companies.



**IV PUBLIC-
PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIPS
AND THE ROLE OF
THE PRIVATE
SECTOR IN THE FIELD
OF CULTURE AND
THE ARTS**

– observations from Minneapolis

Laura Mäkelä



This reflection is based on the interviews made on the funding structures and strategies of some selected arts institutions and NGOs based in Minneapolis/St. Paul². The standpoint is in the role of public and private sectors in funding of arts institutions and in setting the agendas in the field of culture and arts.

The arts scene of Minneapolis/St. Paul is exceptionally wide, rich and lively. The city has a number of important cultural and arts institutions with ambitious programming as well as a diverse field of independent artists and cultural organisations.

The striking element in the U.S. culture and arts scene from the European perspective is the very modest role of public sector and the high level of private funding. E.g. in Finland the share of public (state and municipal) funding of the arts institutions (that are subsidized by law) is app. 70-80% depending on the institution and its background. The rest is earned and raised income.

In the U.S. the role of public sector is not at all as significant as in most European countries. The share of public funding in art institutions' income structure varies between 0,5-3%. This creates a totally different starting point for the institution and its work when talking about the artistic decision making, management, fund raising, development, public relations, communication and marketing of the institution and its productions and services.

In general 30% -40% of institutions' income is raised from different sources (corporations, individuals, foundations, government, membership fees) and 60%-70% of the income is earned (ticket sales, fees, shop, food service, facility, rental, other).

This means that institutions have to have a very professional and sophisticated method for fund raising and development, capability and willingness to create partnership and sponsorship relations with corporations and foundations. The cultural actors are forced to position themselves within the local business circles. They have to be open, aware of and interested in different partners' interests and points of view.

² The following institutions, foundations, non-profits and companies were interviewed: Springboard for the Arts/Laura Zabel and Betsy McDermott Altheimer, The Guthrie Theater/Antay S. Bilgutay, MacPhail Center for Music/Meg Gehlen Nodzon, COMPAS/Lynne Beck, Walker Art Center/Christopher Stevens, The McKnight Foundation/Laura Zimmermann, BestBuy/ Tim Showalter, Twin Cities RISE/Kathy Lawrence, Mentoring Partnership's Training Institute/Polly Roach

1. The role of individuals

Giving

App. 50% of the contributions given by individuals, foundations and companies, comes from individuals. This is an awesome figure. It means that people have a strong sense of belonging and are willing to contribute to the development of their community. Again viewed from the European perspective this is something extraordinary. On the other hand, people pay higher taxes in European countries in order to provide those very same services. In the U.S. model citizens decide themselves to which services and purposes they want to give their money, in the European model this is done by democratically elected decision makers and politicians through taxation. Challenge according to the interviewees is to make individual contributors pay more year after year. They might be loyal but people want more and more benefits for their money and it is especially difficult to get new individual contributors.

Individual giving can be delivered in different ways; in stead of annual/monthly contribution, one can support the activity through reservations, donations, in-kind gifts or through their wills or other estate plans. Individuals and families can e.g. support the institutions through their own named endowment funds that provide an ongoing source of income for the arts institution.

2. Volunteering

Another way of contribution by individuals to institutions or NGOs work is volunteering. In stead of money they give their time to the activity they want to support. Again, volunteers' contribution can be and is of great significance to the not-for profit company/ arts institution. Volunteering gives a possibility to participate and contribute to the activity citizens consider important to their community. Volunteers working in an arts institution can serve e.g. as greeters and ushers, provide general office assistance, assist the staff in special projects or at the store.

For example, Guthrie theatre has over 450 volunteers who contributed more than 12 000 hours of time for the theatre during the fiscal year 2007-2008. Volunteers receive volunteer rewards for the work they do. With reward tickets they can "buy" tickets to performances. They also get special discounts and bonuses.

Compared to many European countries, the culture of volunteering seems to be much stronger in the U.S. The atmosphere and possibilities for volunteering are not as developed in Europe as in the U.S. Interestingly, the European Commission has noted this and has given its proposal for a European Year of Volunteering 2011. Anyhow, one could conclude that there are unused and uncovered possibilities and aspects in the role and potential of individuals that are not taken note of in European arts institutions.

3. Corporation giving and sponsorship

There were a number of questions that were discussed during the interviews. Like: what does the partnership offer to the clients, to the organisation, to the volunteers and to the company? What are the problematic elements? What is the competitive edge of a successful partnership? How are ethical principles considered? What is the difference between sponsorship and philanthropy? What are the biggest challenges at the moment?

Philanthropy

There is a very strong and long history and culture of philanthropy in Minnesota. According to the interviewees the level of corporate giving in Minnesota is exceptionally high even within U.S. The region comes second right after New York when looking at spending and investing in culture and the arts per capita. Local companies and nation-wide corporations having their headquarters in Minneapolis have a business circle dating from 1920's. Members of the circle give out app. 5% of their annual pre-tax profit for social, educational, cultural and environmental purposes.

Naturally this enables booming cultural and arts scene and creates a special atmosphere for arts institutions' development and fundraising activities. The level of professionalism is very strong and arts institutions have highly sophisticated and well developed methods of packaging services and benefits for donors and sponsors.

Donators and sponsors are categorized according to the size of their grants and the benefits they receive are classified accordingly. Agreements are generally consummated annually, however, long-term relationships are also common with few main partners that are committed to support the activity on a longer term. A certain donor-fatigue can also be sensed according to some interviewees.

Sponsoring

Emphasis seems to be moving away from philanthropy to sponsorship. In general this means more work for institutions and non-profits receiving the money. The sponsoring money is part of the company's marketing budget and there is a need for clear indicators of results and benefits that are gained with that money. Usually there are also bigger exigencies to gain visibility. One important aspect in sponsorship money is that it the company can do tax deductions if the receiving party is a non-profit organisation.

The shift towards sponsoring forces cultural actors to be even more efficient and profitable. They have to be able to set the targets and define the strategies, to report and analyse their own activities against them and to measure the benefits and investments made and gained by their sponsors. They also have to be creative in seeking new potential partners, operating models and common interests. This all is likely to create synergies and added value between different actors.

Example of the categories of corporate giving and sponsorship in the Guthrie Theatre:

sponsors	> 100 000 \$
associate sponsors	35 000 \$ – 100 000 \$
underwriters	25 000 \$ – 35 000 \$
producers	15 000 \$ – 25 000 \$
patrons	10 000 \$ – 15 000 \$
benefactors	5 000 \$ – 10 000 \$
directors	1 000 \$ – 5 000 \$
pacesetters	500 \$ – 1 000 \$

There are also same type of special categories for institutional (grants from state and federal government and foundations) and individual giving (family foundations and individuals). Each and every category has its own matching gift levels and benefits. This example is just to show how sophisticated the system is.

For example, Best Buy (the biggest consumer electronics outlet in the US) is sponsoring a song writing contest organised by MacPhail Center for Music for teenagers between 13-15 years. Through this activity MacPhail enlarges its activities among the young and eventually finds new customers. Best buy on the other hand reaches its core target group (teens between 13-18 years) and promotes the innovation and creativity potential of the young.

For example, Guthrie Theatre organises "Target Playdays" during the weekends for families. Parents see the play and their children are educated at the theatre by professional artists during the performance. Through this activity theatre gets "new audiences" or rather its old customers back to the audience and Target can fulfil one of its missions in the community, namely making arts and cultural experiences more affordable and accessible for families and children.

Companies can combine social and economic benefit through corporate giving and sponsorship. Benefits can be gained in reputation, competitiveness and marketing, operational excellence and efficiency, employees recruitment and engagement as well as in social aspects. Corporations' active role in their community is an important factor in terms of communication and marketing.

Due to the very fine system of corporate and individual giving, the financial foundation of the arts institutions is very wide and thus vulnerable. At the same time, it seems there are some 10-20 biggest corporations that seem to finance almost every cultural activity taking place in Minneapolis. The representatives of these most important companies sit in the business councils and boards of all the main arts institutions and cultural organisations. Finally, there is a reasonable small group of corporations and people playing a significant role in prioritising and deciding about the financing of the local arts scene.

4. The role of foundations

Along side the corporations there are a number of smaller and few big foundations that fund the arts in Minnesota. The role of foundations is essential for the arts scene. They often represent the continuity and certainty in the financial structure of arts institutions.

One of the biggest and most eminent foundations in Minnesota is the McKnight Foundation. In the field of arts the foundation "uses resources to improve the quality of the arts in Minnesota and to improve access to the arts for all Minnesotans." With its general operating and capital grants for buildings it is the biggest single funder of the arts in Minnesota together with the State Arts Board. This makes its role fundamental to many cultural operators and institutions.

Foundations being active in various fields for years gain a high level of knowhow and wisdom of the activities they support. With their important position and role as funders of different activities they actually are the key players and trend-setters in the field. From the Nordic point of view it seems that foundations, by supporting activities actually define priorities and create policies in the field of culture and the arts. This is usually done by the State in many European countries.

5. General observations

As to the ethics of sponsorship and partnership no bigger problems were mentioned. In general companies and foundations giving money know their role, responsibilities and limits in relation to the activity they support. It is self-evident that the funder must gain benefit from the relationship, however, it must happen in mutual understanding with the cultural actor in question.

The financial basis of cultural actors in the U.S. is comparatively wide. There are many good aspects in it (like mentioned before), however, it can also be found reasonably laborious, for both contributors and the recipient. There is a lot of energy put to different processes of applying funding, reporting, collecting information and evaluating projects and programmes. Sponsors and donators need to be taken care of and served continuously and new ones have to be looked after.

The competition for funding is fierce, and according to some corporate sponsors it seems that there are overlapping activities, inefficiency and lack of coordination specially in the field of non-profit organisations. On the other hand, in the U.S. non-profits financed by corporations and foundations are taking care of the activities that are normally taken care by the public sector in Europe, e.g. social security issues of the artists. Question arises, whether this is the most expedient and efficient way of organising different activities and services.

There is a lack of strong leadership in cultural policy making in the field of arts and culture in Minnesota. Companies and foundations are filling this hole, each of them from their own points of interest. This makes cultural actors and arts institutions very vulnerable, especially in times of economic insecurity. There is a challenge of prioritization and target setting. Corporations and foundations have their own objectives and cultural institutions and actors their own ones. This model functions as long as the targets and objectives meet at least at some level. So far the model seems to have functioned well in Minnesota, however, especially during the recession there is a growing competition for scarce resources. This can already be seen in the field of foundations where many of them are already refocusing their strategic direction.

Like it is stated in the above mentioned Star Tribune article from 23 July 2009: "Nonprofits have been affected by the struggling economy and stock market, making it even more necessary for them to review priorities. To become more accountable to donors and the goals set by their founders, they are becoming more driven to fund efforts that produce tangible, measurable outcomes."



V

COMPARATIVE LEARNING

– concluding remarks

Lasse Siurala

1. The rhetoric tells a story

The graphs on the next spread are produced by a program called "wordle", which describes the frequency of words in a text through the size of the words; the bigger the word, the higher its frequency of appearance. The U.S graph is based on the article of Walker and Blyth on "The Search for Youth Policy in the United States" (2008) and Siurala on "A European Framework for Youth Policy" (2007). As the analysis wants to look at words linked to youth policy, "youth", "young people" and "policy" are omitted from the "wordle" data.

At large, the graph appear similar, but on closer look, the European rhetoric stands out through words like "[Youth] work", "policies", "[European and youth] organizations", "social" and "services" while the U.S rhetoric is characterized by words like "[youth] development", "programs", "funding" and "issues". The frequency of words echoes the priorities and concerns in both continents. In the European scene "European organizations" like the European Union and the Council of Europe establish "policy" frameworks for national government and for local "youth work" carried out by youth organizations or the municipalities. In the latter case they are "social services". In the USA youth policy is characterized by "issue" based "programs" with a general concern of finding the necessary "funding". The programs aim at "youth development" – the U.S equivalent for "youth work".

U.S. rhetoric:



2. The discourses make a difference

Michel Foucault (1977, 1980) says that a discourse is a way of thinking which both reflects power relations and modifies them, for example through defining acceptable speech. The reason for talking about "youth work" (in Europe) instead of "youth development" (in USA), "children's rights" (Europe) instead of "Parent's rights" (USA) and "youth policies" (Europe) instead of "youth programs" (USA) is anchored in differing interests and cultural conventions, political struggles and pedagogical debates. The expression chosen both reflects the power of these underlying conventions, political beliefs and pedagogical paradigms, and guides and limits the space for reflecting or developing alternative approaches.

Basically, "youth work" and "youth development" refer to very similar activities (youth centre activities, after-school leisure activities, camps, youth cultural events, youth participation opportunities etc) and similar pedagogical practices (working with young people as a group, supporting their own initiative, building their self-confidence and improving their life-management skills). In everyday communication between a European and U.S. youth researcher it did not make much difference to use the expressions interchangeably. In a closer look "youth work" in the European context comes down to emphasize active citizenship and autonomy of young people, while the U.S. term "youth development" is rather linked to socialization into existing social order. Youth development is often about improving school performance and making youth "ready by 21". The discourse of "youth development" reflects the (expected) dominance of the society on young people. At the same time it seems to keep other approaches, like the idea of young people running their own organizations, providing decision making power to young people or the policies towards youth autonomy out of sight or at arm's length.

The American debate around children's and parent's rights highlight the role of ideological and political power constellations behind discourses. The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) has not been ratified by the USA mainly because it has created two conflicting discourses around article 12 on the right of the child to participate on matters concerning him/her. The Obama Administration and its proponents hold that article 12 would help promote active citizenship, protect children against government intrusion and abuse, and would strengthen the United States' credibility when advocating children's rights abroad. At the same time there is a large and visible movement against the ratification arguing that CRC could interfere in the private lives of families, particularly the rights of parents to educate and discipline their children. The latter is a strong discursive statement reflecting power structures (supporters of family rights, republicans, conservatives) and striving to define the accepted way of thinking (the fatal consequences of ratification).

In European welfare societies youth policies are often seen as general services for all young people, where the public sector takes strong responsibility in providing support, training and aligning the actors. The services are provided by youth organizations, non-profit (adult) organizations, the church and the public sector. Sometimes the private sector is involved through joint activities or through funding and sponsoring. This may be called a value-based service model. The policies have a shared value basis in the governments' international political commitments (UN, Council of Europe, European Union). Some countries, like Finland, have encoded the rights of the young people to certain basic services in their youth legislation. The strength of this approach is the strong political incentive to co-ordinate services for young people and continuity of funds to youth facilities, youth workers, youth information and counseling and youth organizations. A further asset is a broad clientele of youth work and the perception of youth as an opportunity and not as a problem. The weakness of such an approach is its lack of flexibility, becoming hidebound, being part of a bureaucratic

sectorized organization (a municipality/City) and dependency of one source of funding (through increasingly constraint public budgets).

Then we have the North American approach called the issue based programs model which is a conglomeration of fixed term ad hoc youth projects and programs. Often they are established through pressures from the Government, the City Hall, the media or other types of public concerns to tackle pertinent youth problems, typically those related to criminality, gangs, violence, substance use, school drop outs, youth unemployment etc. The strength of such programs is that they often are well targeted, planned, managed and evaluated, carried out in broad partnerships, they attract funding and tend to produce good practices. The weaknesses include lack of continuity of youth work, youth work becoming problem focused instead of opportunity oriented and 'politicization' of youth work: Programs and services are defined by fashionable media-driven political concerns, but not necessarily the needs of young people.

Discourses tend to keep to themselves. The Europeans and the Americans sticking to their own youth policy discourses might not be that inclined to have a critical look at the disadvantages of their policies and they might not be motivated to look for inspiration from other discourses. However, going beyond discourses, one could look at the advantages and disadvantages of the above approaches and perhaps arrive at a third model. Then, this model should to combine the idea of a minimum set of services for young people with flexibility to run fixed term programs on emergent youth issues and needs. One could agree on a minimum package of opportunities and experiences to which young people should have access in order to promote the probability of their successful role as actors of democracy and to their successful social integration. Secondly, there should be a capacity to establish programs on emergent youth needs, apply for and manage national and international funds and cater for a network of potential partners. The third approach could be called the responsive youth policy model.

There has been a recent interest the history of youth work and youth policy in Europe (see for example Verschelden et al 2009, Coussée et al 2010 and Gilchrist et al 2009). The main focus has not been so much on what has happened in the past, but rather on how could we plan the future based on the knowledge about why are we here. The guiding idea has been "the future was created yesterday". In order to understand how we could develop and change today's youth policy thinking, structures and services we need to "step outside them" to critically reflect them: are the past arguments and condition for their establishment still valid? Are we prisoners of today's discourses of youth work and youth policy? We need to step out of current policies and paradigms of youth work to be able to reflect our future options. To take an example, Griet Verschelden et al (2009) argue that youth work is in identity crisis, which is a result of a historical development of youth work into a divided service structure. NGO activities have gained recognition but reach selectively the better-off youth. At the same time open youth work has wider reach, but has not been able to provide proof for positive pedagogical results. The authors call this "the accessibility paradox" because "the work that works is not accessible, the accessible work does not work". Historical analysis like this has led to critical reflection of "why youth work" and to a search for new approaches and methods.

Another way to 'step outside' and start critical reflection on current policies and paradigms is the comparative approach. Reflection on why is youth policy and youth work so different in Europe and the USA may help question current practices and discourses. This reflection may open 'a third way'. In comparison with the U.S. youth programs, European policies appear rigid, overtly siloed, highly dependent on public sector input and hidebound. There is much to be learned from the U.S. practices of flexible creation of multi-agent programs, collaborative practises, use of volunteers, fundraising and efficiency. In respective comparison with European practices, the U.S. youth programs have

room to improve in trusting youth, building policies with shared value-bases and establishing continuity to youth work. To this end Europe has developed support and structures for organisations run by young people themselves, participation and consultation structures for youth (in relation to public administration in local, regional, national and international level), youth rights –based local and national comprehensive youth policies and support systems (even legislation) for youth work carried out by youth organisation and municipalities. This publication is a modest effort to open that kind of comparative reflection.

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Appendix 1. List of people interviewed in the Twin Cities, Minnesota May-June 2009

Name	Organization	Title
Vallay Varro	Mayor's Office, St. Paul	Education Director
Jack Tamble	Minneapolis Community Education	Director
Carol Thomas	Minnesota Department of Education	Supervisor, Safe & Healthy Learners
Cammy Lehr	Minnesota Department of Education	Evidence Practice Implementation Specialist
Heather Swan	Minnesota Department of Education	Dropout Prevention Initiative Program Specialist
Kathy Brothen	Minnesota Department of Education	Coordinated School Health Project Director
Susan Bishop	Minnesota Department of Education	School Health Education Specialist
Deb Loy	Minnesota Department of Education	School Health Education Specialist
Ann DeGroot	Youth Coordinating Board	Executive Director
Pam McBride	Youth Coordinating Board	Project Director, Youth Development
Gail Dorfman	Youth Coordinating Board	Board Member; Hennepin County Commissioner
Lynne Beck	COMPAS	
Christopher Stevens	Walker Art Center/	
Jan Fondell	City of Minneapolis	Youth Policy and Program Specialist
Jane Leonard	Youth Coordinating Board	Strategic Coordination Manager
Rebecca Meyer	4-H Youth Development, Duluth	Regional Educator
Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn	Youth Community Connections	Executive Director
Dorothy McCargo Freeman	Extension Center for Youth Development	State 4-H Program Leader and Assistant Director
David Cagne	Urban Boat Builders	
Eric Billiet	The Garage, City of Burnsville	Recreation Supervisor
Dale Blyth	Extension Center for Youth Development	Director
Mitchell B Pearlstein	Center of the American Experiment	President
Kathy Lentz	Director, Children and Families Impact Area	Greater Twin Cities United Way
Tom Miller	McKnight Foundation	
Tim Showalter	BestBuy	Public Relations Manager
Kathy Lawrence	Twin Cities RISE	
Polly Roach	Mentoring Partnership's Training Institute	

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