Developing inclusive societies for youth
A model for developing coherent youth policies

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Despite many efforts there is no proof yet of successful youth development strategies in any country, making significant improvements on developing positive and fruitful conditions for the optimal development of the child, on the inclusion of vulnerable and deprived youth in societies, and on reducing mental disorders, abuses of many kinds and criminal behaviour by youth at risk. This is mainly due to the fragmentation of youth related policies, in which many ministries in each country are involved: education, youth and family, labour, health, welfare, justice, etc. Many good practices have been developed, in many cases by non-state agencies, but even these cannot make the difference, because of their relatively isolated implementation. It does not need any further argument that the effective inclusion of youth is one of the major challenges of all societies: failure will indefinitely cause significant problems for the more vulnerable and on the longer run also serious societal instability. This article tries to suggest both a *model* and a *pedagogical approach* for developing a more comprehensive and coherent policy on youth development.

A model for enhancing strategic thinking on youth development

An overall comprehensive view on youth development initiatives is important because it helps to require insight and understanding in the many connected aspects that are related to youth development, starting with the pregnancy of the mother, via early childhood care, primary education and secondary education, towards the world of work. For an efficient implementation of all youth related activities it is important to have a thorough understanding of all connected aspects.

Therefore a so called *"Youth Development Chain"* is presented below[1], covering aspects from pregnancy and early childhood onwards. Although youth is generally defined as between the ages of twelve and twentyfive years old, it covers all ages between birth and twentyfive, because many older youth also experience parental issues themselves, and/or their behaviour is influenced by experiences at an earlier age. This Youth Development Chain model could be adapted to local / regional circumstances and conditions. It offers a framework for analysing the initiatives in place, including their cooperation, and for identifying grey spots.

In an ideal context all professional organisations for youth development / youth care work together efficiently: they link their activities, learn from each other, exchange information and methods, organise trainings for professionals in youth development (pre- and in-service), advocate, etc., both preventive and curative, using a "*stepped care*" approach[2]. NGO's / Civil Society, schools (primary, secondary and vocational) and welfare organisations, and the private (business) sector to be included.

The main goal to be the enhancement of a healthy youth development (mental and physical, social, cultural and economical) in a safe context. Methods range from providing information, through psycho-social care, health care, family planning, awareness raising for behavioral change, and job trainings (apprenticeships), to the strengthening of positive social and cultural values. The governmental domains support these activities by providing objectively the necessary financial means. Such an overall comprehensive approach is not the case yet in many countries.

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[1] Rood, Rogier van 't: Evaluation of the EC-funded SNAYDP project on the Netherlands Antilles: EPRD, October 2009 (also: Tabeisa evaluation report for the ECD in South Africa, same author: November 2009).

[2] Stepped care: intervene at the most desired level; sometimes providing information is suitable enough, in other cases therapy or a more robust and/or multi-disciplinary intervention could be necessary.

Youth Development Chain

Age group	Pregnancy and 0 – 1 year old	2 – 5 year old	6 – 12 year old	13 – 16 year old	17 – 24 year old
Identified needs	- pregnancy support – maternity care - parental support - multi problem family support – mental care - crèche – day care	- parental support - multi problem family support – mental care - day care - preschool education – kindergarten	- parental support - multi problem family support – mental care - Primary education in school counceling - after school activities for school boys and girls	- parental support - multi problem family support – mental care - family planning – health issues (incl. HIV/AIDS) - Secondary education in school counceling - drop out prevention - business support, attitudes and skills - after school activities for boys and girls	- multi problem family support – mental care - family planning – health issues (incl. HIV/AIDS) - Higher education - in school counceling and drop out prevention - behavioural and vocational skills for drop outs - apprentice ship programmes - business support, attitudes and skills - inmate rehabilitation