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Lauritzen's model

In his influential 1993 Potsdam treatise, Peter Lauritzen presented youth affairs as policy, on the one hand, and as a government actor somehow reacting to youth situations, on the other hand. In his opinion, the common needs of youth policy include:

1. legislation that takes youth into consideration;
2. budgetary resources;

jointly with youth organizations, various service providers, and others. Volunteer organizations have considerable budgets; the government undertakes risks and shares its power.

3. *“Laissez-faire” government*: In this case, the government concedes that there are young people and they may have special problems. However, all the others are like this, and therefore it is not necessary to differentiate youngsters from the rest of society.

The minor Lauritzen model

3. a non-governmental infrastructure;
4. an operational training system (both for volunteers and professionals);
5. independent youth research;
6. a governmental advisory body;
7. a local/regional/national communication network of people/organizations/service providers.

According to Lauritzen's classification, there are six potential governmental attitudes to be distinguished in terms of the degree and manner of satisfying the common needs above:

1. *The government as a Superassociation*: In this case, the government intervenes with civil society and for a while behaves as the public conscience. It conducts its own activities and projects, cooperating with NGOs “from above”.

2. *The government as a partner of civil society*: In this case, youth policy measures are discussed and improved

4. *Intervening government*: Here, the government intervenes in urgent problems such as drug consumption by young people, increasing violence, juvenile crime, unemployment among youth, etc. The government's reactions to these problems are always limited in terms of time and are restricted to rapidly achieve spectacular results.

5. *The Nanny State government*: By virtue of its official position, the government does charity work. This role is basically that of the great master; young people need elbowroom to develop; they need to be encouraged and sometimes punished. The relationship of the government with NGOs is asymmetric: a hierarchy prevails, which should be maintained.

6. *The Controller Government*: This government expresses a nervous and uncertain superiority of the state. Actually, it is afraid of how young people will react and requires information on

an on-going basis about what “those people” plan to do next. It does not accept that young people form an autonomous and critical part of society.

The study presents the prevalence of Lauritzen’s model in Hungary, describing the behaviour of youth governments and introducing the minor Lauritzen model in connection therewith – for lack of anything better.

The minor Lauritzen model

At each change of government in the course of the past sixteen years, play-

ers in youth affairs have hoped that youth policy would finally be re-interpreted, with expert, more or less honest professionals capable of leadership being put into positions, and that although the involvement of the government undermines the force of initiatives, youth affairs will take a turn for the better to benefit the age groups affected, real service provider NGOs, and European youth affairs as well. In spite of all this, change has been the only constancy in the public institutional system of youth policy: practically, election cycles have always brought about new(?) solutions. The next table summarizes changes in top government bodies responsible for youth affairs.

The following is an overview of what has been realized in terms of Lauritzen’s expectations in the course of the past four government terms:

Government organ in charge of youth affairs ²	
–1990	State Ministry of Youth and Sports
1990–1994	Prime Minister’s Office
1994–1998	Ministry of Culture and Education,
1995–1998	Prime Minister’s Office
1998–1999	Prime Minister’s Office,
1999–2002	Ministry of Youth and Sports
2002–2004	Ministry of Children Youth and Sports,
2004–2006	Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
2006–	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

Acts addressing the interests of the youth

In 2006-2007 the government’s legislative activity in regard to the youth segment shows deficiencies in many areas. The harmonisation of laws governing child and youth protection (e.g. child protection law, public education law, etc.) has not yet taken place and the youth act – which has been on the agenda for years – has not been drawn up. Despite the drawn out and expensive preparatory work so far carried out in this regard, the content and actual drawing up of this act is utterly uncertain. The still effective Ministry of Youth and Sports (ISM) decree on bodies involved in the expansion of resources and regulating the operational framework of civil representation has been amended several times: all civil seats have been delegated by the legislator to the Children’s and Youth Conference (GyIA, RIT-s and Youth in Action Reviewing Committee), which selected all the delegates representing the civil sector in a public tender.

It is important to note that the Children’s and Youth Conference decided that after the government’s repeatedly failed attempts it will “turn everything upside down”; in other words, since the demands of society should be formulated and change should be initiated by society and the civil sector, it drew up the draft bill for the youth act and launched a professional debate on it.

Sources

HUF million				1999
Planned budget (budget act)				1,383
Approved expenses (closing account act)				o.i.
2000	2001	2002	2003	
1,445	2,232.6	2,432.6	2,725.7	
o.i.	1954	2,296.9	2,703.9	
2004	2005	2006	2007	
4,542,5	3,456,6	3,350	1,138	
1,882.2	o.i.	o.i.		

The funding allocated to youth affairs has been cut for years and therefore one of the major areas – and perhaps the most important one – of education in democracy is gradually being phased out. While some years ago HUF 3.5 billion – which was insufficient even then – was spent on youth policy, in 2007 this amount was reduced to HUF 1.1 billion, one quarter of which was allocated to be spent on property used for youth programmes (among them the Zánka youth centre). Less than HUF 900 million is spent in total on professional development programmes, training, community programmes and camps. In other words, the funds are insufficient and show an overall decreasing trend.

Non-governmental infrastructure

The existence and financing of non-governmental infrastructure is rather incidental: it mostly depends on what kind of relationship the entity con-

cerned manages to establish with the government of a given political persuasion. Entities worth mentioning include youth information and consulting offices established independently from the government but with public subsidies, as well as child and juvenile self-governments in settlements, appearing as a form of child and juvenile interest representation.

Training system

Practically, the training system has no standard basis. In regard to volunteer training, courses are mostly available through Mobility newsletters; professional (youth assistant) training courses are conducted by 12 institutions; graduate (youth expert) training is available at one location. Training has no standard professional basis, nor any curriculum: to put it straight, everybody teaches what they think best. At institutions, it is often hardly perceptible for trainers and mainly students that the youth profession is becoming independent. In the absence of legal regulation and professional consensus, even basic terms remain undefined. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the new National Training Register (OKJ) links youth assistance training to the social field. Only one third of graduate students work in youth areas (source: Hungarian National Youth Policy Report).

Youth research³

The Division of Child and Youth Research, operating at the Institute for Social Policy and Labour Affairs – the background institute of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour –, is the only youth research institution in Hungary with this core activity. Youth research is also pursued at several universities and institutes of science. From universities (e.g. Corvinus University, Debrecen University, Loránd

Eötvös University of Sciences, Pécs University of Sciences, Szeged University of Sciences, Semmelweis University), it is mainly the youth-related research performed at departments of sociology, psychology, and behavioural science that reach professional publicity. In addition, youth research is conducted, among other things, by various research institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (political science, psychology, sociology) and research institutes maintained by the state (operating individually or as a background institution of a ministry), primarily the Research Institute for Higher Education, the National Institute for Public Education, and the National Institute for Criminology.

In addition, a number of market research institutes (e.g. Századvég, Tárki, Gallup, Szonda-Ipsos, GfK Hungária, NRC) conduct public opinion polls on youth issues, primarily on public order or in the framework of international cooperation. There is an established youth research network only in the informal sense, and it is a network of professionals who have been involved in the area for some time. At the same time, the civil sphere can hardly be engaged in research work. The greatest proportion of research work is enabled by governmental resources, and is even carried out by governmental institutions many times; and as there is a strong professional control – for want of a better term – over research projects by the client, it can be stated that most youth research in Hungary is directed and controlled by the government.

Government advisory council

There is no such council; and even if there were signs of such initiatives, they were operating without financial resources. They included the Child

and Youth Codification and Deregulation in the cycle of 1990-94, with party experts from municipalities and the involvement of invited civil experts, or the Child and Youth Legislation Preparation Committee set up in 2003.

Civil communication network

In the Internet era, it is difficult to assess the status of the civil communication network. There are a number of network cooperation schemes; at the same time, these do not surpass the scope of civil cooperation, and do

not extend to the research or public sphere. As regards the paper-based sphere, the *New Youth Review* cannot be disregarded. This is the only nationally available youth professional civil medium. In any case, it can be stated that the civil network, even if it exists, has practically zero power to exert pressure and that its long-term stability is not guaranteed at all.

Since according to these criteria it is impossible to assess government activity, as it is uniformly insufficient, we are compelled to introduce a minor Lauritzen model: we examine to what extent European-standard ideals, values and expectations appear in the civil-government dialogue and in resource expansion bodies with civil delegates involved, that is:

a) Transparency and publicity; in the present case, to what extent the distribution of public funds and the process of government decision-making is transparent. Transparency is

considered to be a value and total publicity is deemed to be an objective (as public funds are involved).

b) Decentralization and subsidiarity; meaning to what extent decisions are made close to the parties involved, and not “above their heads”. It is considered to be a value in this case that decisions should be made as close as possible to those who are forced to bear the burden thereof.

c) Civil participation and control; meaning to what extent government decision-making and resource expansion is based on co-management and co-decision. Values include increas-

ingly complete neo-corporative cooperation schemes, since in the era of mass and election parties, NGOs are the information suppliers to channel through and intersperse society and possibly to forward social problems.

Based on these three criteria, an attempt is made to classify the acts and attitudes of the government in the four cycles since the change of the regime.

Churlishness (1990-1994)

During the period of 1990–1994 the task of youth policy was taken over by the Secretariat for Youth Policy of the Prime Minister’s Office (MEH), and then later by the Secretariat for Youth Coordination. The governmental harmonisation of youth work theoretically took place (would have taken place) in the Cabinet for Youth Policy, however, in practise youth af-

fairs came under the authority of five different ministers. In 1991 the government’s youth policies were formulated in a three-year programme. However, the financial resources and the institutional system to realise this was not provided and even the government at the time recognised that what was expressed in the plan had not been implemented successfully. During the period discussed the government did not turn its attention to refining the content or to defining youth policy objectives. This was attributable to the fact that regardless of its restructuring the governmental coordination of youth affairs remained an unsolved problem in the first governmental term after the change in the political system in Hungary.

Transparency-publicity

In this period the institution system for youth included the Central Youth Fund (KIA), established in 1988, and the National Child and Youth Foundation (NGyIA), established in 1990. At the time when it was set up the latter of these had considerable movable and immovable assets at its disposal, but its activity in regard to supporting youth organisations was not important. Up until 1992 numerous properties came into the ownership of foundations for children and youth that had been established in the meantime at county level. The Committee for Education, Youth and Sports, set up in 1992, was made responsible for negotiations on youth affairs at parliamentary level.

Since practically nothing was realised from the governmental programme, nor was there any forum where those from the civil sector and the government would have been able to debate youth affairs, and furthermore there was no publicity re-

garding the expansion of resources (peculiarly enough the archives of KIA – and only the two rooms where they were housed – burnt down after the change of government in 1994) there was therefore no transparency in this period worthy of note.

Decentralisation-subsidiarity

During this period there was no division or decentralisation of government power worthy of note. It was during this time that a great many of the youth information and advice offices as well as the municipal child and youth self-governments came into being which although independent of the government nevertheless received government support. The youth offices operated as local government institutions or within the contractual framework between civil organisations and local governments, while the objective of the municipal child and youth self-governments was to work in close cooperation with a particular settlement’s adult body of representatives to represent voters’ interests and to organise ties between and across age groups. (Beke–Ditzendy–Nagy, 2004).

Civil participation-control

Following the dissolvment and restructuring of the communist youth organisations and their successor organisations the organisations of the national youth with the aim of to establishing the Youth Council for the Reconciliation of Interests but the government delegates had no mandates at the negotiations. After this the youth organisations made several initiatives to establish a trilateral (government and youth organisations and those working for them) Council. In answer to this the government set up the so-called Information Forum (barely providing any other opportu-

nity for an exchange of opinions), in which problems affecting youth were raised. From this point on no reconciliation of interest took place in this period and organisations affiliated with the political right wing terminated their cooperation in MISzOT on the government's initiative.

Evaluation

The period up until 1994 was characterised by government action struggling with the withdrawal of support from the voters, and these circumstances left a deep imprint on the development of governmental participation in youth affairs. The government's involvement in youth affairs was characterised by overhasty, nervous uncertainty (e.g. five ministers supervising youth affairs), orientation problems (see: the failure of the youth programme), the generation of conflict because of political preferences, (e.g. destroying MISzOT), and the inability to effectively deal with problems on a macro level, thus according to the classification by Lauritzen, the most suitable description of this period would be the Nanny State.

Squabbling over the spoils (1994-1998)

During the second governmental term in office in the period after the change in the system the dilemma relating to the content of youth policy was very far from being solved. Following the forming of the government in 1994 the Ministry of Culture and Education (MKM), directed by the smaller governing party, and within the ministry the newly formed Head Department for Youth took over the running of youth affairs. At the end of 1994, the Prime Minister's Office (MeH) acted independently of the head department and set up a new organisation within itself, the Child

and Youth Coordination Council (GyIKT), the task of which was the government coordination and the organisation of the reconciliation of interests of children and youth. In 1995 Mobilitás Youth Service came into being as a national office facilitating the EU's youth programme. The task of Mobilitás was to deal with the EU's programme to announce and manage tenders as well as to organise and arrange the educational and development programmes related to them. The Budapest Youth Centre also opened in 1995, which formed a part of the youth and Sports Directorate of the Council of Europe.

Transparency-publicity

In 1995 Parliament passed the resolution which made it the government's task to prepare and submit the report on the changes that take place in the situation and living conditions of children and youth and the government measures taken in connection to these, which without doubt facilitated the transparency of government action.

On an initiative by the youth organisations the Child and Youth Council for the Reconciliation of Interests (GylÉT) was established, which similarly to the mechanism for reconciliation in the world of work, operated in a trilateral system. Its members consisted of the Governmental Negotiating Group, the Age Group Negotiating Group, representing youth and children's organisations, and the Negotiating Group of Support, which channelled the views of the (professional) organisations supporting child and youth age groups. In the latter two – where civil organisations were free to apply – representatives were selected by the organisations themselves.

At the same time, the distribution of resources did not satisfy even the most

minimalistic requirements of publicity and transparency. The overwhelming part of government support was only received by a clearly delineated group of youth organisations.

Decentralisation-subsidiarity

During this period – at which point there were no planning-statistical regions – the idea of a regional structure was not pondered.

The government's action only included their initiative to involve the civil sector in the decision-making

process but subsidiarity did not fit into Bokros' busy agenda.

Civil participation-control

The government managed to find a solution to the ailing problems of structural issues that had long existed: important measures were taken in regard to the dialogue between the civil sector and the government as well as the financing of youth affairs. An act was passed on the participation of civil organisation in the resource distribution processes, on the Child and Youth Fund, financing youth programmes, the National Children and Youth Public Foundation (the legal successor to the National Child and Youth Foundation). In addition, a decision was made on how the property assets used for youth projects in Zánka should be handled.

GyIÉT, which operated as a national forum for the reconciliation of interests, had the right to propose motions in regard to the government's tasks to address child and age group affairs and, as stipulated by a government resolution, it had the right to express an opinion in all the draft legislation pertaining to all age groups.

The civil representatives were delegated to the various bodies in the system of youth institutions (Mobilitás Advisory Board – which also tended to the tasks of the Selection Committee of the Youth for Europe programme –, the Council for the Child

want) to observe the substance of democracy beyond its forms. The work of the GyIÉT could not really be called planned, systematic or reliable. In time the institutional system which was given over to the civil sector reached the level of elite youth policy in a closed, oligarchic system operating in an environment of nepotism. This institutional system could not operate independently of the direct governmental changes, and thus severe deficiencies surfaced in regard to the civil self-operation and operation as well as to genuine tripartite decision-making. As a result, the dialogue between the civil sector and the government assumed asymmetrical proportions. During the three years of its operation the structure of GyIÉT did not become stronger and perhaps was not capable of so doing. Neither the government, nor the non-governmental negotiating groups had the chance to learn how the new democratic decision-making process, which involves those affected by its decisions, actually works. Together with the above, from a structural viewpoint the “civilised” Hungarian youth affairs could be said to be unique in the whole of Europe, but the attitude of the government was not characterised by democratic habits but – as it could be seen – by the behaviour of a benevolent Nanny State.

Ministry for Shoddy Cheapness (1998–2002)

After the change of government in 1998 the state management of youth affairs underwent significant change. Based on a parliamentary decision the Committee for Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Youth and Sports (ISM) were established and a new institutional system was set up to carry out the new government tasks. As a

result of the restructuring of the system of the reconciliation of interests, the ministry withdrew from the Council for the Reconciliation of the Interests of Children and Youth (GyIÉT), virtually making the council inoperative, and established a strategic partnership programme, in which it selected its partners from the civil sector. Between 2000 and 2002 the ministry signed and annually renewed an agreement of co-operation and support.

Transparency-publicity

The legislative work that began in the above government term in office placed youth affairs even more into the political horizon. The professional and social discussions concerning the youth act, which was prepared and opened up for social debate in 2000, surged ahead at the beginning but the initiative tapered off and the youth act was not drawn up despite the marketing activity that was supposed to promote it. The government stopped the co-operation which was based on civil participation, and the publicity of the decision-making process was also limited: the strategic and high priority partners (and only they) had the right to comment on the draft version of rules in regard to youth affairs and it was they who had the opportunity to submit proposals to the government organs in charge of youth affairs. At the same times certain guarantees were incorporated into the process of expanding resources: it was the first time that a decree stipulated that the details of organisations that receive public funds be made publicly available. This was also the time when - after the change of the political system - youth research took off, which however was handled by the government as its own “internal affair” the results of which it felt free to manipulate.

and Youth Fund, the Supervisory Committee and Advisory Board of the non-profit organisation that operates the camp in Zánka, and the Advisory Board of the National Child and Youth Public Foundation) by GyIÉT and some of its non-governmental negotiating groups.

Evaluation

In actual fact none of the players were prepared to operate the institutional system: neither the civil sector, nor the government. Although the model was democratic in the formal sense of the word, in its operation it failed to apply the democratic rules of the game and in practise it was definitely unsuitable. Those in GyIÉT and in civil society were far from capable of accepting the excess government legislation and communication, and were not always able (or did not

A network of regional offices of youth services has been set up and the Children and Youth Fund (GyIA, formerly called the Central Youth Fund) to provide professional, methodological and financial support for youth communities, organisations and youth work. Decentralisation was begun in the financing of youth programmes. The government established the network of regional youth councils (RIT), which supported local initiatives drawing the funds from the budget of the Children and Youth Fund. The scope of tasks to be performed by Mobilitás was expanded: methodological, information and research functions, as well as the operation of the regional service providing system were added to its already existing tender management task. (Mobilitás was also entrusted with all the tasks that were removed from the ministry's scope, including drug prevention and the Central Sports School.) Unfortunately, the regional system had almost no guarantees built into it, which is well demonstrated by the fact that a regulatory decree stipulates that at most 70 percent of the GyIA's resources can be spent in the regions (hence it is the ministry's decision whether this percentage should be 70 percent or 0 percent in a given year).

Civil participation-control

The Zánka Children and Youth Centre Educational and Holiday Non-profit Organisation authority was also moved under ISM and the institutional system included the National Children and Youth Fund. At the end of 1999 the Hungarian Youth Conference (MIK) and the Agora Carpathian Basin Information and Service Provision Network were established to deal with information exchange and agreement in regard to the Hungarian

youth living beyond the borders. MIK was set up with the objective of promoting youth and cross-sectoral co-operation. Agora's objective was to strengthen the relationship between Hungary and Hungarian young people living beyond the borders, and it was established to facilitate the relationship and co-operation in the areas of youth and cross-sectoral co-operation. Youth, scout, church, school and student organisations participated in the work of the Hungarian Youth Conference in the nine regions beyond the borders. The ministry entrusted the Standing Committee of the Hungarian Youth Conference with the task of writing up and evaluating the tenders aimed at supporting youth organisations beyond the borders. In the spirit of the Orwellian concept of "some are more equal than others" those participating in the strategic partnership programmes were able to participate in the work of MIK, the Hungarian Youth Conference, as well as in the organisations in charge of resource expansion (GyIA, RIT, NPT).⁴ The ministry annually signed agreements of co-operation with the more equal partners (the strategic partners), in the framework of which it provided support for the organisations involved and – on a quarterly basis – conducted consultations with them.

Evaluation

The increased role filled by youth policy in Parliament was indicated by the establishment of the Committee for Youth and Sports by Parliament in 1998, which controlled the government's work performed in connection with the children and youth age groups. Although the extension of the institutional system went along with the increased scope of government

tasks, youth affairs continued to include only a narrow segment and failed to have an impact on youth policy and thus a fundamental influence on the life conditions of young people. The new youth ministry continued to have little ability to represent the interests of the sector in inter-ministerial co-ordination. The fact that state initiatives – especially those in regard to the policy of support – did not constitute a unified development concept posed yet another problem. At the same time, the youth ministry – which was "given as a graduation gift" to the youngest min-

ister of the government (who was also the last to earn a degree) was deemed to be a highly successful one, at least in the government's interpretation of how public offices should function. The tactic of all-out attack was virtually developed to the highest point of sophistication by the ministry: not only did they not provide financing for the opposing parties but they even managed to paralyse operative civil organisations rendering much needed services or they kept these organisations at the bare minimum level of support. They also applied the legally extant tenet – which goes against the norms of communal coexistence as well as the spirit of the constitution – that violation of the law and the declaration of such violation represent two legal categories. This is based on the reasoning that while the violation of the law is the result of bypassing and neglecting legal statutes in the better case scenario and their open

violation in the worst case scenario, the declaration of such violation is the competence of the jury and generally occurs three years after the violation had taken place.

Despite some good ideas, the ministry, which had an inclination to interfere whenever it could did not accomplish anything, and the unfinished projects that yielded no results therefore virtually did not improve the situation of youth affairs. The government's reaction to problems has always been limited by time constraints and never amounted to more than producing fast and seemingly

spectacular results. However, a major problem here is that instead of drawing up a roadmap of issues to sort out, the ministry created "showbiz", and instead of process management it set up awards. In the meantime, it knew precious little about what the youth sector's needs were. In their Audi spaceships the leading functionaries of the ministry did not actually drive to Hold Street (the location of the Ministry of youth and Sports) but instead ventured to the Moon.

Ministry of Supersonic Idleness (2002–2006)

The government that entered into office in 2002 – similarly to its predecessors – did away with the previously used structure of dialogue with civil youth organisations but did not replace it with a legitimate one. In order to prevent the squandering of the

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last penny the ministry made the prime source of funds given to civil youth organisations inoperable, i.e. the Council for the Children and Youth Fund, in the first four days of its being in office. It took four months to subsequently re-establish the same organisation but the highly defective decree that was supposed to govern the operation of the Council was not amended in effect for four years.

It did no favours to the youth sector that the establishment of the Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (ICSSZEM) in 2004 actually curtailed the capability of the field to represent the interests of the youth sector, despite the fact that by the end of the government's term in office a government commissioner for youth affairs, a youth minister, a political state secretary responsible for youth affairs, a ministerial commissioner for youth affairs as well as a separate Youth Department, set up directly under the state secretary for public administration, dealt with youth affairs. During this government term three ministers and three deputy state secretaries took turns. The government's handling of youth affairs was slowed down even further after the area was included in the larger ministry and a new government structure and division of tasks were introduced. Overall, this period was stigmatised by constant uncertainty in regard to the institutions.

Transparency-publicity

Although the strategic-partnership programme was terminated, the government did not amend in effect the structure of resource expansion bodies. What is more, in addition to GyIA the ministry began to operate a separate tender system, which ran parallel – and unnecessarily – to the

already existing system and cannot be seen as a measure to develop a public and transparent operation.

The results of the *Youth 2004* large sample survey, financed from public funds, were practically handled by the government as confidential and were not released publicly for almost two years. The comprehensive studies could not be published even after repeated attempts and the publication of the detailed database was hindered at every turn.

Decentralisation-subsidiarity

Although the system of youth organisations did not expand in the period between 2002 and 2006, the ministry made a conscious effort to develop the youth network when it financed local offices of youth services operated in the framework of co-operation between the civil sector and the local governments through tenders. Although an attempt was made to set up a network of youth officers in the micro-regions, an operative and permanent system could not develop due to the lack of funding.

Civil participation-control

The ministry did not renew its strategic partnership agreements and contracts of support that it had annually signed between 2000 and 2002 with the sixteen youth organisations. To replace these agreements, the ministry decided to set up a structure containing five elements, i.e. it tried to establish agreements of co-operation within the civil, student, church, political and cross-border segments. The three operative youth umbrella organisations (National Child and Youth Parliament, Hungarian Child and Youth Council, National Child and Youth Association) announced a joint call for co-operation in regard to the representation of the civil segment. The

Child and Youth Conference (GyIK) was set up. In 2004 the ministry signed an agreement of co-operation with GyIK (civil segment), as well as with the National Conference of Student Self-governments (HÖÖK, student segment) and promised that it would involve them in the preparatory legislative work in regard to youth affairs. Despite its activities representing the interests of the children and youth, GyIK is only partially able to fulfil its role as an umbrella organisation.

Evaluation

Youth affairs have clearly been accorded a status of low priority in the government structure. It was largely because of this scaling down that reform initiatives (youth act, strategy, action plan, restructuring, ombudsman, etc.) in the government term were doomed to failure. The ministry did not accomplish anything significant apart from some superfluous and high-sounding actions, such as the investigation into the previous government's suspicious and bizarre affairs (these suspicions were actually justified) and reporting them to the authorities as well as taking about 1,500 children to the holiday camp in Zánka and organising conferences where the ministry's experts all agreed that they were the top of the pops – but nothing of lasting value was actually achieved.

The ministry's leaders announced on several occasions that they regarded the task of organising the representation of the civil organisations as the internal affair of civil society. They also asserted that if civil organisations managed to set up an integrated youth representative body, the ministry would regard it as their partner and involve it in the preparatory legislative work; it would also grant it the right to delegate members to bodies that ensure the civil control of the

system of youth institutions and provide the necessary financing for its operation. However, the ministry that acted as if it were a Super Association safeguarding the public interest of civil society did not provide support for the organisation of the integrated youth representation. Instead, it was a kind of accomplice with those who had depleted the sources of the youth sector in the previous four years and it was bent on “weeding out” any attempts at co-operation. As a result, the civil organisations found themselves in a vacuum after the oppressive atmosphere created by the previous government.

The Kronos programme (2006–

Since after the general elections the same government stayed in power, the representation of youth affairs in the government continued to be pushed to a lower level and the number of public servants was further decreased. ISM's deputy state secretariat had a staff of 14-18, ICSSZEM's head department employed 8-12 people, and the youth department of the Ministry of Social Affairs (SZMM) had 4-6 full-time employees. While at the ministerial level it is currently the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour that is in charge of child and youth protection as well as of the implementation of child and youth policies and civil strategy, these areas are “sealed off” from the others within the ministry. Mobilitás – even though it had its own profile – merged into three already existing state institutions: the international area and regional network operates as part of the Public Employment Service as Mobilitás National Youth Service; youth research continues to be conducted within a departmental framework in the National Family Policy and Social

Institute; and project management is performed by ESZA Non-profit Organisation.

Transparency-publicity

The achievement of the 17 years that have elapsed since the change of the political system was that the decision-making process and the decisions have now become public; however, civil organisations still have to fight to gain access to expert opinions. Unfortunately, this publicity is not guaranteed by a legal framework and those

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practical solutions through which publicity could actually be achieved are not in place (a counter-example of this, however, is NCA, in which anyone can search the web for the organisation's winnings). Thus nobody knows how many Zuschlag affairs are still to be exposed.

Decentralisation-subsidiarity

The regional tasks of the youth service system are performed by the Regional Youth Service Offices (RISZI) operating as part of the Regional Youth Councils and Mobilitás. The local level of the youth organisation system is made up of youth officers at local governments and so-called youth information points. The task of the former is to co-ordinate measures introduced by local governments in regard to the youth, while the latter is operated by various institutions and

non-profit organisations to provide relevant and accessible information to the young generation.

Civil participation-control

In 2007 the ministry responsible for youth affairs amended the decree regulating civil representation: all seats allocated in the civil sector were given to the Child and Youth Conference (GyIA, RITs and Youth in Action Reviewing Committee), which elected the delegates representing the sector in a public tender. This solution is of

course not without its faults but it is nevertheless more considerate than the practice in the past when the government appointed its civil partners. At the same time, the system of resource expansion remained unaltered, no guarantees were added, and the total sum of HUF 270 million is voted on by 100 decision-makers (11 members in 7 regional bodies, and 14 members in the GyIA Council).

Evaluation

Youth affairs are primarily a human investment and not a physical one. In the case of the present government the problem does not primarily concern property to be used for youth purposes but rather the way of thinking held by those in positions of power. Unfortunately, the present “*Laissez-faire*” government does not even invest in human resource with

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slogans, and does not address the issues pertaining to youth age groups as a special entity. The government's actions suggest that young people do not need to be treated as a separate group within society.

Summary

In summary, it can be concluded that throughout the 17 years that have elapsed since the change of the political system the civil youth organisations in Hungary tended to their tasks in an environment in which the institutional system of youth policy was constantly undergoing restructuring, tasks, responsibilities and the scope of authority were divided between various government institutions and institutional levels, and decisions were influenced by party politics. Governments and political parties in this period strove to set up institutional systems that would give preference to youth organisations within their scope of interest. The repeated restructuring of the institutional system of the youth sector by each new government significantly curtailed the efficiency of the system as well as the feasibility of the implementation of youth policies.

Of course no government's performance corresponds completely to the theoretical model of the classification set up by Peter Lauritzen. However, all that was said above might provide an outline of what solutions various governments gave to the problems that arose in regard to the youth segment. Hungary has seen governments that demonstrated the following attitudes: that of Controller (1990–1994), Nanny State (1994–1998), Intervener (1998–2002), Superassociation (2002–2006) and “*Laissez-faire*”. The classification categories defined in the Lauritzen model do not fully represent

the characteristics and trends of the governments' attitude to youth affairs but perhaps make it easier for outsiders to interpret the separate periods.

When will youth policy, youth work and youth research be handled as three components of one organic unit?⁵ When will the professional, the civil and the government sides start a genuine debate about youth affairs? When will the innovations of the youth sector that are barely surviving at present – such as youth strategy, the youth action plan, the National Youth Information and Documentation Archives, the New Youth Review, the Annual Civil Youth Report, the Society of Youth Professionals, the Settlement and Youth Conference, etc. – be granted significant, reliable and permanent help?

It could be observed that Hungarian governments have tried all the categories with a negative connotation and there was not one government whose performance could be classified into a category with only positive characteristics. When will the day come when the Government will be a genuine partner for civil society?

NOTES

- 1 In memoriam Peter Lauritzen (1942–2007)
- 2 Taken from the Hungarian National Youth Policy report for the Council of Europe.
- 3 Taken from the book titled Youth assistance: Youth Problem or Opportunity, Budapest 2007.
- 4 Council for International Programmes – the Selection Committee of the Youth programme in Hungary
- 5 Gábor Kátai: Thoughts on Youth Policy and its Instruments (Gondolatok az ifjúságpolitikáról és eszközeiről) (fig. 3: How youth policy, youth research and youth work are interrelated when applied to the whole of society)