

**In Control of their Lives?
Comparing the views, values and experiences of
18-25 year olds in Derby, Hanover and Leipzig
Derby, 20th and 21st April 2001**

Report of Seminar Sessions/Discussions

**Day One: Friday 20 April
Opening Notes**

The Mayor of the City of Derby, Councillor Ashok Kalia, stressed the diversity of the city and the fact that it is 'a city of learning'. Derby is also about to celebrate 25 years of being twinned with Osnabruck. The Mayor welcomed delegates to the city and thanked them for coming to Derby to discuss new ideas relating to young people. We need partnerships, such as those formed during the course of this project, to share our good ideas, skills and experiences: our young people are our future.

Dr Ray Cunningham, on behalf of the Anglo-German Foundation, welcomed delegates to the seminar. He thanked Karen Evans and her team for the hard and valuable work of organising these seminars to see what use could be made of the research arising from this project. He briefly outlined the history of the Anglo-German Foundation, stressed the value of comparative international research and looked forward to 'mutual enlightenment'.

Professor Karen Evans, Director of the 'Taking Control' project outlined the three major aims of the seminar:

- to digest some of the findings from the research
- to set these findings in context by involving participants from a wider background
- to provide time to discuss pointers for the development of policy and practice

Similar seminars have already been held in Hanover and Leipzig and Professor Evans indicated that we had learnt a good deal from these in terms of how to make sense of our data.

Martina Behrens – Overview: A Tale of Three Cities – Derby, Hanover and Leipzig compared

Martina Behrens outlined the historical, geographical, demographic, economic and employment details of the three cities and explained why they were chosen as research centres for the project. All three of these cities have experienced social and economic transformation. There have also been some important demographic changes. There are differences, but these cities share a number of corresponding features.

Research Findings

[Chair *John Elliott*: Rapporteur *Peter Rudd*: Translator *Gisela Greaterex*]

Professor Karen Evans, University of London, Project Director – ‘Taking Control’: Views, Values and Experiences of 18-25 Year Olds in England and Germany

Karen Evans outlined the general findings arising from the project. [In presentations following this one, colleagues will talk in more detail about the findings from higher education, employed and unemployed groups]. The research has been part of a longer project started in 1988 based on comparisons of cities and labour markets. There has also been a special study of ‘smooth’ and ‘broken’ young adult transitions, resulting in the publication *Learning and Work in the Risk Society*. The main project questions were outlined: the word ‘control’ has been featured because both the English and German administrations have stressed the importance of individuals ‘taking control’ of their lives;

- do young adults in Germany feel less ‘in control’ than young adults in England?
- are there common experiences across the three areas of gender, ethnicity and social class?
- do education settings foster greater feelings of control than workplace and training settings?
- do optimism and confidence increase or decrease with age and experience in the labour market?

Karen then summarised the research design, based on surveys and group interviews in the three cities with three sample groups (higher education, employed and unemployed). One further issue was whether young German adults, who experienced longer, more institutionalised transitions, felt more in control. “We looked at young people’s experiences in their work and personal lives and found some interesting differences. We also looked at optimism and pessimism, e.g. females in Derby were found to be more optimistic than males (but the reverse was true in Leipzig).” In all three cities females were more active in relation to the labour market. German respondents were much more aware of social characteristics such as gender, race (‘nationality’) and social class. Young people in all three cities recognised the importance of educational qualifications.

The project had involved detailed examination of feelings of control and agency. ‘Agency’ was defined as follows: “how far do young people believe that they can change their social circumstances by their own beliefs and actions?” For example, the unemployed young people in Derby felt less ‘in control’, but it should be stressed that there was no fatalism. In all groups, but particularly in the unemployed samples, there appeared to be a good deal of ‘frustrated agency’. In concluding, Karen discussed some possible answers to the key project questions identified earlier. Two central questions for the project had been:

- what are the effects of socio-economic environments?
- does Germany’s more institutionalised framework make young people feel less ‘in control’ than their English counterparts?

Jens Kaluza, ZAROF, Leipzig – Learning and Planning Careers? Attitudes and Experiences of Students in Derby, Hanover and Leipzig

Jens Kaluza reiterated previous points that had been made about Leipzig – i.e. that it has had a different starting position in terms of labour markets. Leipzig also faces a birth-deficit problem: and one in three people aged 18 to 29 are thinking in terms of leaving the city. For every two East Germans going west, only one German will go eastwards. There is a three-fold problem now under discussion in Leipzig – ageing, birth deficit and emigration. Politicians are not sure how to react to this problem. One project in the city is trying to encourage ‘social support’ from areas with the lowest unemployment to those with high unemployment.

Jens outlined the characteristics of the Leipzig student sample: for many of these young people the choice was university or apprenticeship. German students were much more likely to say that their own plans played an important part in influencing their current situation. Also, the German students were more likely to see gender, nationality, social class and family background as having a considerable effect on job opportunities. Young people in Leipzig are very much influenced by their social/family background. Many young adults in Leipzig feel that it is important to ‘sell yourself’. Fewer German than English students had confirmed plans for the future. Higher education students in Germany are more likely to be positive about future prospects: in Leipzig there is still a healthy optimism about the future.

Claire Woolley, University of Surrey – ‘Making Their Way’: The Lives of Trainees and Young Skilled Workers in Derby, Hanover and Leipzig (and Key Gender Differences)

Claire Woolley focussed on the experiences of the employed groups and also pointed to some key gender differences in the three samples. She compared the attitudes and behaviour patterns of young employees in the three cities. Certain differences between the locations need to be borne in mind, e.g. in England young people have full employee status. In Hanover and Leipzig most of the sample were in their first job: this was not true in Derby. ‘Interest’ and ‘long-term goals’ were the biggest influences on choice of career in all three countries. German employees had a stronger ‘sense of achievement’ at work and were more likely to ‘feel stretched’. Derby employees, however, were more likely to use their initiative or to make their own decisions. All three samples talked about being stressed at work. Considerable proportions of the sample still felt ‘partly dependent’ on their parents. The most common age for leaving home was 18-19.

Young people in Germany identified a bigger range of personal activities and seemed more likely to make active use of their leisure time. Employed young adults, as with the sample as a whole, saw qualifications as having a considerable effect on life chances. The German respondents attributed more importance to social characteristics. The Derby group, however, were scored more highly on ‘individual attitudes’ and were more likely to be proactive in the labour market.

Claire also outlined a range of gender differences. Awareness was expressed about the gendered nature of the labour market. Across all three areas males experienced more unemployment than females. Contrary to some presuppositions, females were generally more politically active: indeed, there is some evidence of a higher degree of female activity across the group.

Martina Behrens, University of Surrey – ‘Youth With Perspective’: Or Making New Deals in the Labour Market? Young Adults in Industry-wide Training and Job-creation Schemes in Derby, Hanover and Leipzig

Martina Behrens focussed on the unemployed and training groups. In particular she examined the attitudes of young people experiencing the New Deal and JUMP schemes. She looked at translations of the German poem ‘Fourth Trick’ to show how important language perceptions are. Both JUMP and New Deal attempt to ‘widen participation’ and to ‘broaden opportunities’ for 18 to 25 year olds. But these training programmes have different socio-economic settings: the German system is highly regulated and highly institutionalised, the English system is mixed, diverse and unregulated. In Germany you can talk about a ‘training escalator’ and in England there is a ‘magic roundabout’. New Deal was actually the model for the German JUMP scheme (though JUMP is ‘on offer’, with the New Deal young people have no choice).

Martina presented a short overview of the ‘Routes to Qualifying Schemes’: in England the routes are much more diverse. More people in Derby felt that their training was due to their ‘own plans’ than in Hanover and Leipzig. Again, all three groups (students, employed, unemployed/training) saw qualifications as being important, though German respondents attributed more importance to gender, nationality, social class and family background. In all three areas the unemployed/training respondents were found to have ‘little control’ of their present situation.

Louise King, British Youth Council – Comment and Identification of Some Issues Arising for Providers and Policymakers

Louise King identified two main sets of issues for providers and policymakers:

- the implications of the fact that young people had emphasised the importance of educational qualifications
- the implications of the fact that young people on training schemes felt that they had low levels of personal control

The first of these findings is supported by research carried out by the British Youth Council with people aged 15 to 25 in a European context. The key question is ‘do young people currently feel in control of their lives?’ If they do not, then what provision could be made for them? How do we give them a feeling of agency? If they want to achieve qualifications, then how can we assist this? Are there specific factors stopping people from achieving/attaining the qualifications that they want?

Recent changes in the curriculum in the UK have improved things but some young people see the educational system as academic/dictatorial. A more flexible curriculum should be offered along with different styles of learning. We need to encourage students to play a more active role in the learning process. It is also possible that qualifications could be a system of disempowerment: certain groups are more likely to lose motivation and become disaffected. The emphasis on qualifications in itself disempowers young people. Failing to achieve qualifications leads to low self-esteem: the education system favours the academic? The emphasis on qualifications is a

narrow view of the skills needed for the transition to adulthood. Other life skills are needed. Education systems need to allow individual attitudes to connect with the community and to encourage aspects of agency.

The feeling of ‘little control’ whilst on training schemes has important implications. If young people are to be given help to find employment, they also need advice/assistance to help them develop their confidence (in the UK a six-month wait to get on the scheme does not help). Derby respondents had the opinion that unemployment was their fault – but there should not be too much emphasis on the individual: e.g. more use could be made of mentors and the Connexions scheme. Louise concluded that: it is very important that young people do take control of their lives, but they must be given the opportunities to do this in the first place.

Discussion

- **John Elliott** summarised the five sessions given up to this point in the conference.
- **Ray Cunnigham** asked what definition of being ‘politically active’ had been used?
- **Karen Evans** indicated that it was based on joining groups, meetings, discussions: there was more ‘individualised’ activity in Derby. **Claire Woolley** supported this view.
- **Keith Blake, Claire Patterson** and **Susie Rushton** (Derby Student representatives) agreed with this view, saying that in their experience, political activity was more individual and more apathetic. Some of this was down to pressure/lack of money – there is a ‘huge’ student view that they do not receive enough support. Many local people use the Derby colleges because this is financially easier. Students to focus on their degree, on their own work, rather than on their personal lives.
- **Several participants** noted and highlighted the contrast between German young people’s expectations of work and the English view. In Germany, you go into a career, whereas some of the English young people had been in three or four different jobs by the age of 25. In England, certainly, we should emphasise that when we pass on job-seeking skills, there is not necessarily a ‘job for life’. More transferable skills are needed: do not employ to be like it was for previous generations.

Students in English and German Labour Markets

Dr Alan Brown, University of Warwick – Taking the High Road: Graduate Experience, Rewards and Transitions into Career-related Employment

Alan Brown’s paper was based on the following five propositions:

1. Overview: UK graduates have generally bright prospects and soon find career related employment.
2. Expectations of rapid transitions: most undergraduate programmes only last three years and many undergraduates actively seek permanent employment while still in Higher Education.
3. There is weak demand for non-graduate intermediate level skills.
4. Structural shifts in the economy favour graduates: the continuing shift from manufacturing to knowledge-based services favours employment of the highly qualified.

5. Graduate skills are in high demand:UK graduates are in demand because of their perceived better communication skills and ability to learn while working.

Alan noted that there is actually ‘astonishingly little’ graduate unemployment or underemployment in the UK. There are still graduates working in MacDonalDs’, but this is only temporary and gives a misleading picture. There are still some stark differences between graduate and non-graduate employment. Graduates have a better quality of life and higher earnings.

What the UK is witnessing is more active job-seeking by graduates and active recruitment by employers, including Small and Medium Enterprises. Graduate skills are in high demand– i.e. skills, not grade of degree, but subject may sometimes make a difference. The UK system has traditionally had two problems – an ‘unwillingness to train’ and ‘poaching’ – but these two ‘problems’ have turned out to be strengths of the UK labour market: knowledge is moved around faster than it is in Germany. Given the expansion, and the success, of Higher Education, it is ‘appalling’ that some of the new universities are having problems: six universities are in ‘special measures’ because they did not recruit enough students.

Discussion/Questions

- **Louise King** raised the problem of student financing/student debt.
- **Alan Brown** agreed that access to HE has now become a much bigger issue.
- **Claire Woolley** asked for clarification of the term ‘underemployment’ [For graduates this is ‘career-related’, this is largely selfdefined].
- **Dave Finn** asked if New Deal has had any effect on fast tracking graduates into employment? [**Alan Brown** suggested that HE became aware not just of first destinations, but also of continuing destinations. They also became aware of opportunities such as the New Deal].
- **John Rex** pointed out that there may be problems with certain occupations – there are growing gaps between technician training and employment. He also stressed the importance of dropouts from non-degree courses.

Dr Matthias Pilz, University of Luneburg – Higher Education in Germany: Basic and Structural Information

Matthias Pilz provided an overview of the German HE system. What opportunities are there in the labour market after the Dual System and HE? Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Germany include 92 universities and 152 polytechnics. In 1998 there were 1.8 million students in Germany. The quota of students in the age range 19 to 26 is 28.9 per cent. There is still national (or social) service in Germany and the average duration of HE studies is six years. Total expenditure on HEIs (in 1997) was Deutschmarks 13.5 billion. The staff student ratio is 15.9 students to one lecturer. There are no fees, but the universities cannot choose their students. Students get social security and ‘some’ do not work hard! There is a drop-out rate of about 30 per cent.

Graduate unemployment is 3.5 per cent (western Germany) and 5.2 per cent (eastern Germany). As in England, this is very low. There are, however, some variations by subject. At present, German companies want more people with apprenticeships, they

need a lower proportion of unqualified people. In the future more qualified people will be needed.

Matthias took one group of young people as a special example: students who completed an apprenticeship before going to university. In 1998:

- 36.8 per cent of school leavers had the *Abitur*; of these
- 26.3 per cent went into Higher Education in the same year; and
- 52.2 per cent went into Higher Education in the year after this (1999).

31.1 per cent of people who complete the *Abitur* go into an apprenticeship (the Dual System). The percentage of all apprentices with HE entrance qualifications who enter HE after successful qualification in the Dual System is 29.5 per cent. Many 'high potential' apprentices go into banking and insurance. Very few go into, for example, plumbing.

Matthias concluded that this group of people need the 'safety net' of the apprenticeship. Good qualifications mean that they can go back into the labour market if necessary. They have the option of going back into their chosen sector of employment. Also, for four to five months of the year they do not have to be at university, so they may well be able to earn extra money.

Discussion/Questions

- **Herr Forster**, representing a public transport company in Leipzig, added details on how the apprenticeship system actually works. Apprenticeships are only given to those young people who will be of benefit to the company. He supported and confirmed the idea of apprenticeship as a 'safety net'. Employers like graduates with apprenticeship experience.
 - **Herr Schmidt** talked about shortages in the supply of certain types of apprentices. In some industries there are gaps/shortages of people. In the perfect world there would be a balance of supply and demand. Students have no certainty that their particular skills will be in demand: though there is a current project in Leipzig that is trying to deal with the issue of student job security.
 - **Claire Patterson** asked whether certain grades were needed to get into German universities? Is the system comparable to the A level grades/points system? Are there limited courses/places available? **Susie Rushton** suggested that 'we have more say in funding, etc., that would explain why we feel more in control'.
 - **Matthias Pilz** indicated that certain entrance grades are needed in Germany: 30 per cent of all courses need an entrance grade, but this is declining because the numbers of young people are going down.
- There followed some general discussion on the different situations of students in the two countries.

18-25 Year Olds at Work: Opportunities, Challenges and Barriers

Professor Marie Parker-Jenkins, University of Derby – Experiences of Ethnic Minorities

Marie Parker-Jenkins opened her session by noting the difficulty of dealing with the topic of ethnic minorities when we are talking about two different countries and two different systems. 'Ethnicity' will not have the same relevance or meaning in Germany. However, we should be able to raise issues from UK research which our German colleagues should still be able to make sense of.

Marie studied ethnicity – British Muslims – in a UK context. There are at least one and a half million British Muslims, making them our largest ethnic minority [figures are, to some extent, based on the 1991 Census – after this year's Census we will have a clearer idea of numbers]. Examination of how we treat this particular ethnic minority group may reveal some useful messages. 125 Muslim women, aged 18 to 25, were studied in four locations. They were asked 'what would you like to do when you leave school?': and four years later were asked 'are you in the workplace?' One of the main findings from the study was that these women were being discriminated against because of their appearance. Even 'liberal' employers agreed that they would not employ these women because of their appearance: 'if the woman expects to be employed, she will have to modify her dress'.

What bigger issues arose from this study? Despite official equal opportunities rhetoric, these Muslim young women were not 'getting on'. Some of the issues raised apply to all 18 to 25 year olds. What do trainers/employers need to do to make ethnic groups more successful? We need to think in terms of:

- **Opportunities** – adopt a belief and, theoretically, there are no barriers.
- **Challenges** – accept differences and adopt a principle of 'fair play'.
- **Barriers** – the barriers lie within and beyond the ethnic community. However, there are fewer barriers within the community than there are in the workplace and wider society.

Andrew Dixon and Neil Fowkes, Rolls Royce – Employment and Training in a Large Company

Andrew Dixon and Neil Fowkes outlined the structure of training programmes for young people at Rolls Royce. The company has a variety of types of trainees/training programmes, including modern apprenticeships and graduate training. Andrew Dixon outlined some aspects of the graduate training scheme:

- **Entry requirements** – basically an Honours Degree, but we also look at interpersonal skills.
- **Recruitment** – selection through attendance at university careers fairs, use of an assessment centre and particular schemes for particular types of training.
- **Training** – 12 to 18-month structured programme, tailored to individual needs, including on-the-job and off-the-job training.
- **Personal Development** – training in interpersonal skills is very important. The company runs personal development courses and there is a good deal of educational liaison/community development.

Neil Fowkes provided details of Rolls Royce's Modern Apprenticeship scheme. The apprentices are mainly 16 to 19 years old, they have GCSE grades A to C/D,

particularly in maths, science, English and technology. Use is made of day release schemes and mentors. Modern Apprentices do a three year course:

- Year 1: Induction + City and Guilds 201, BTEC First or BTEC National, Part 1
- Year 2: Foundation training to NVQ 2 standard
- Year 3: General training to NVQ 3/4 standard.

The third year includes personal development– and some trainees go on to do HNCs and degrees. There is a European partnership with *Automotive Mannesmann Sachs* (Germany): the aim is to give trainees international experience– five trainees from each country participate. Other objectives are to enhance and enrich the quality of training, to improve employability, to challenge prejudice and to remove artificial barriers.

Poster Session: Opportunities and Variety – Vocational Training in Leipzig
Presented by:

- **Herr Erbst**, Labour administration, Leipzig branch
- **Herr Forster**, Leipzig public transport PLC
- **Dr Schmidt**, Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Leipzig
- **Herr Schulz**, Vocational training association, Leipzig

[**Dr Hans Dietrich**, Institute for Employment Research, on the **School to Work Transition in Germany**, was unable to attend].

Day Two: Saturday 21 April

Supporting Unemployed Young Adults: Lacking Skills or Needing Advocates?
New Deal and Connexions: Making a Difference? John Elliott and David Finn

John Elliott, Department for Education and Employment, gave an overview of these two initiatives. *Connexions* is for 13 to 19 year olds. The statistical context of this includes a steady growth in the participation rates of 16 year olds in fulltime education. Despite this growth, international comparisons are not so appealing: we still need to do more to encourage participation in post-compulsory education in this country. The proportion of NEAT (Not in Education, Employment and Training] people in the UK has been between five and nine per cent in recent years: the proportion of ‘economically inactive’ people has remained at three to four per cent. Six-months ‘status zero’ people are more likely to have no qualifications, be unemployed, be depressed or to believe that a criminal record has impeded prospects at age 21.

Hence the *Connexions* scheme: the aim is the best start in life for every young person. *Connexions* is replacing the current careers service. Why do we need a new service? Nearly one third of young people drop out or fail to achieve their learning goal in full time education. The service has now officially started (April 2001), following a number of pilot schemes. It is therefore too early to tell whether it is making a difference.

How is Connexions different from the careers service? These are the key points:

- it is for the **13 to 19** age group;
- it is a **universal** service;
- each individual has a **Personal Adviser**, a single helper;
- it includes **referral** to other specialised agencies.

The **New Deal** was introduced in April 1998 and applies to 18 to 24 year olds who have been claiming Job Seekers Allowance for more than six months. The introductory phase includes *The Gateway*, where the young person meets with a Personal Adviser, who helps with job-search and other relevant skills. Two thirds of young people who enter *The Gateway* go out of it into work. Those who do not have four options:

- subsidised employment, with training, for six months (about 19 %)
- work placement with the environmental task force, for six months (about 19 %)
- work placement in the voluntary sector, for six months (about 20 %)
- full-time education or training, for twelve months (about 40 %)

The manifesto pledge issued in 1997 was that 250,000 people would be taken off benefits and into jobs in the lifetime of the Parliament: this goal was **actually** achieved in September 2000.

In January 2001:	Entrants to New Deal = 598,000	of which;
	into jobs = 279,000	of which;
	into sustained jobs = 213,000	of which;
	unsubsidised jobs = 186,000.	

Has the *New Deal* programme made a difference? In June 1985 over half a million people were claiming benefits: this was reduced to around 25,000 by October 2000. Research by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research suggests that *New Deal* has made unemployment lower than would otherwise have been the case.

David Finn, Principal Youth Officer, Derby City Council, presented a local perspective on *Connexions*. He started by noting that *Connexions* targets are to do with areas such as truancy, youth crime, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and basic skills. The *Connexions* service priority groups are as follows:

- 9-10 per cent Who would be characterised as having little confidence in their future: they have multiple problems and need intensive, sustained support.
- 40 per cent In-depth guidance for those at risk of disengaging.
- 50 per cent Careers education and guidance, etc.

It is the first of these, the smallest group, the 'disappeared', that needs attention. Derby youth workers found that they 'had to go to them'. David described two types of clients: the 'Chad lads' (from Chaddesdon), who are macho, 'in your face' and involved in the alternative economy; and the 'hermit' types, who stay at home and may be self-excluded. The first of these groups is easier to access, because they are contactable. The latter group, however, because they have not presented a 'problem', do not get attention and are harder to contact.

We need to look at different and new ways of working with these types of young people: the traditional ways have not worked. In particular, the concentration on five GCSEs at grades A*-C has left many of these youngsters behind. They need an alternative curriculum.

David Finn presented the outline plan of the Derbyshire *Connexions* service. The aims of this are to stop the 'revolving door' for young people and to have a holistic support system. There will be a strong emphasis on local determination of the nature and pattern of delivery of the service. Young people have to be involved at all levels. Money that was previously used for careers education and guidance will now be put into *Connexions*, and will be doubled. Derby has been given £ 250,000 development funds to put the *Connexions* structure in place – this will also be used to develop further the pilot scheme that has been operating in the Sinfen area of Derby. The fully fledged delivery plan is set to commence in September 2002. Derby has a long history of pro-active, innovative work, based on participation: last year 11,500 young people used the Derby Youth Information and Counselling service.

Dr Matthias Pilz – Comment and Comparisons

Matthias Pilz made some broad comparisons between the *New Deal* and German schemes such as *JUMP*.

- Germany has a system of *berufs* – longer and broader training (for a range of jobs within one industry). This makes it difficult to compare *JUMP* and *New Deal*.
- In Germany, post-16 education is compulsory: you cannot leave education until age 17 or 18. So some of the 'missing' 10 per cent in England are 'in the system' in Germany: for this reason, it is easy to contact young people in Germany, they are still inside the system. It is easy to give personal advice. (Note also, with reference to the four *New Deal* 'options', that there is no compulsion with *JUMP*).
- We should also compare the quality of each of these programmes. Is there a quality problem? Who is doing the training? In Hanover, for example, there is a big turnover of training staff.
- We should also consider the impact of the labour market on these schemes. The aim should be sustained economic development.

Discussion/Comments

- **Karen Evans** asked about the construction of the 'missing' 10 per cent: is there a statistical problem here? Do youngsters slip out of the system?
- **Herr Schmidt** stressed that it is difficult to make comparisons of the day-to-day experiences of young people. In Germany an attempt is being made to put all the agencies 'under one roof', as in *Connexions*. In eastern Germany 15 per cent leave school without any qualifications. What could be done about this? [E.g. In Leipzig parents pay an £ 800 monthly fine if their children play truant].
- **Herr Erbst** added that in Germany there are some forms of support outside the *JUMP* system, including financial support and other training schemes.
- **Alan Brown** highlighted the importance of quality of provision. Speed of progress is another important issue.

- **David Finn** emphasised that some young people need emotional support and raised self-esteem. There are dangers that (i) the emphasis on good GCSE grades will not change; and (ii) provision will become piecemeal.

Working Groups: Review of Policies and Initiatives of the German and British Governments in Action

Group 1 – Measures to reduce youth unemployment – consequences for Europe. **Karen Evans** summarised the points developed from this group's discussions:

- countries can learn much from each other's experiences in this field, which has been a site of innovation in both countries.
- changes need time to bed in. In England 'initiatives' are changed and added to before they have time to bed down and work, and lessons suggest that this sometimes repeats past mistakes rather than achieving continuous improvement.
- there are difficulties in supporting the 'ten per cent' who are marginalised irrespective of policy. This may be the inevitable consequence of macro socio-socio-economic system of Western industrialised countries

Group 2 – Vocational training in industry, commerce and crafts – fit for the 21st century? **Herr Schmidt** summarised as follows:

- training is, in many respects, still along traditional lines
- key qualities and lifelong learning are required
- give young people a perspective in life

Group 3 – How does the labour market influence structures in vocational training? **Peter Rudd** summarised as follows:

- there are important differences in local labour markets within countries; whole country comparisons can be misleading
- there is also movement within national labour markets this is not always in the same directions. Common effects of globalisation are often overstated
- conceptual/terminological differences are very important in mutual learning and comparison

Concluding Session

Karen Evans thanked all contributors and the organisations funding the conference. She also gave special thanks to Claire Woolley for organising the event. **Dr Ray Cunningham** of the Anglo-German Foundation noted that there had been 'rich and complex' discussion relating to the two countries' systems of education and training. He thanked all researchers and conference participants.

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