

# **Leaving care; Transition to independent living**

**Dialogue Series – Session 2**

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# Structure

- Some remarks:
  - International comparisons
  - Leaving care to adulthood
- Forms of support for care Leavers in different countries
- Young people receiving child and youth care services in Canada and Germany – some figures
- Workingphase/Questions

# Some remarks

## □ International Comparisons

- International comparisons need to take into account the historical, political, social, cultural and economical background of a country.
- It needs to be considered that forms of help have developed historically and on the background of a specific system:
  - e.g. UK: high proportion of children in care live in foster care, many of them with relatives (kinship care)
  - South East Europe: in some countries children still live in big institutions (tradition of communist countries), many systems are in the process of de-institutionalization
- Youth unemployment rates in different countries influence the practice of transition support.
- Big varieties in social systems:
  - Transitions from care in highly sophisticated social welfare systems versus transitions in systems where there is hardly any or no further social support available outside the family of origin

# Some remarks

## □ Leaving Care to Adulthood

- For most young people today this journey takes place over time and includes a number of different but connected and reinforcing pathways:
  - moving into accommodation of their choice
  - entering further or higher education or training,
  - finding satisfying employment,
  - achieving good health,
  - developing positive sense of well-being
  - and for some young people becoming parent.

It is usually a time of expectation and excitement as well as apprehension and uncertainty.

(Mike Stein 2012: 7)

# Forms of support for care leavers in different countries

1. Care Leavers – in some countries a specific target group für child and youth care:
  - Special agencies and organisations working for care leavers
  - Lobbying / Campaigning for care leavers
  - Guidance and information for supporting the transition process
  - Pathway planning in the care process
  - Educational support / support for the transition process in school / training / work
2. General issues regarding the process of leaving care:
  - Supporting the self organization / networking activities of care leavers
  - Offering places to meet and to ome back to
  - Offering long term relationships in care (e.g. mentors, persons of reference)
  - Taking into consideration what is typical youth behaviour
3. Strengthening and supporting the rights of care leavers, advocating for care leavers

# **The Situation of Youth Leaving Care** **in Canada**

**Total population: 32 million people**

**About 8 million youth**

**1/94 young people in care= 80,000**

**Although < 5% of the total population is  
Aboriginal, 30-40% of the youth in placement are from  
First Nations communities**

# Challenges in Canada

- **1) Regional disparities**

- 13 separate jurisdictions with their own legislation, language and unique populations
- Age of protection varies from 16-19, age at which placement ends 16-24
- Extended financial support ranges from non-existent, to until age 24

- **2) Social policies**

High youth unemployment however:

- programs of social assistance provide low income as an “incentive”
- There is an assumption that young people have access to family support to compensate

### **3) Lack of longitudinal data (Canada)**

**A range of programs exist across the country but we cannot conclude which interventions are successful.**

**Some individual youth do reasonably well but overall, there is evidence of extremely poor outcomes: poverty, incarceration, homelessness, early parenthood, unemployment, mental health problems.**



# Young people receiving child and youth care services in Germany – some figures

- In an overall population of 81,8 Million, a total of 24,6 % was less than 26 years old (2010)

(Source: Destatis), 20.1 Million young people

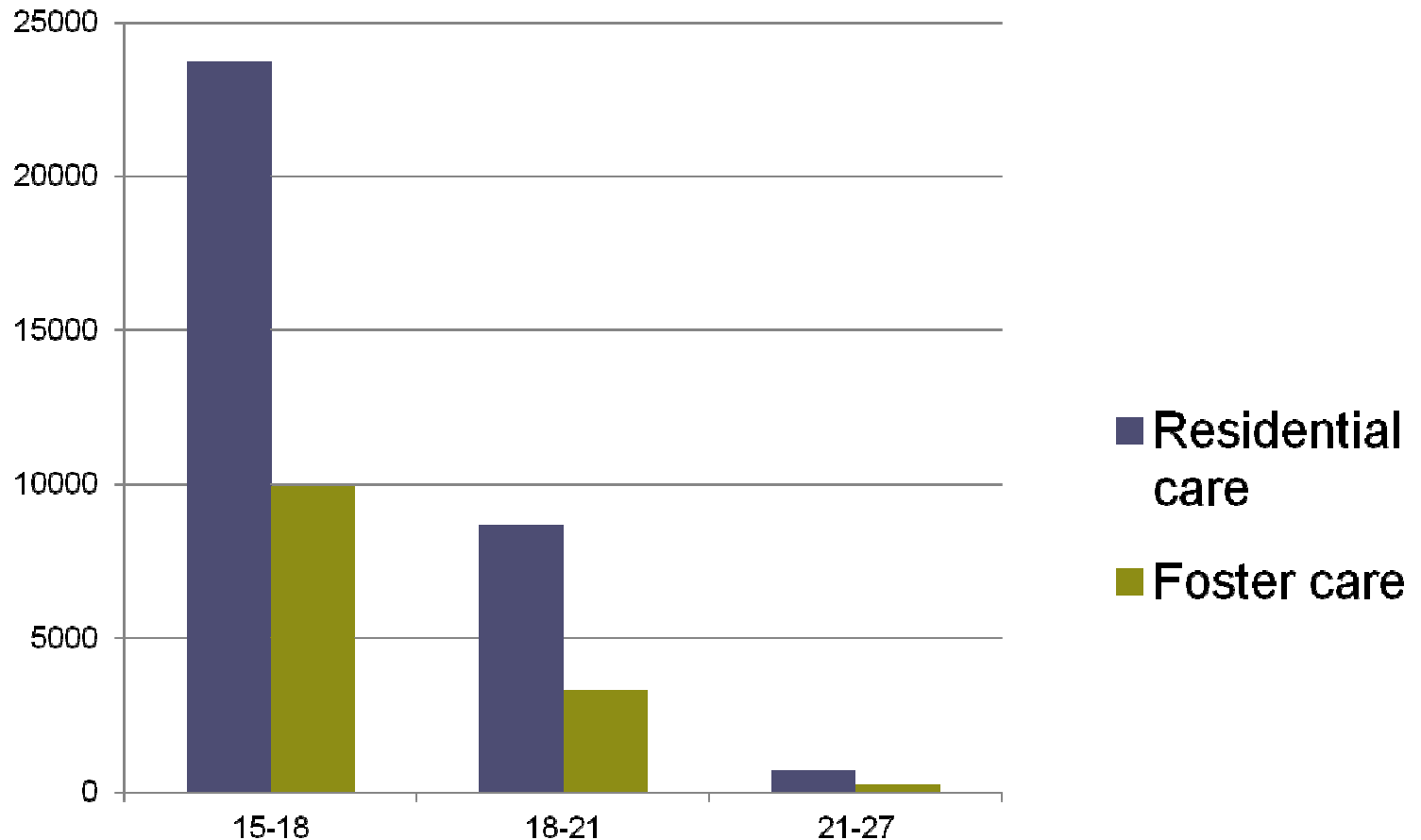
- Nearly 1 Million (998.847) young people and their families receive social provisions for children and families with problems (rate: 6,3% in 2011)

Source: [www.akjstat.tu-dortmund.de](http://www.akjstat.tu-dortmund.de)

Monitor Hilfen zur Erziehung 2012 p. 6

# Out-of-home care by age

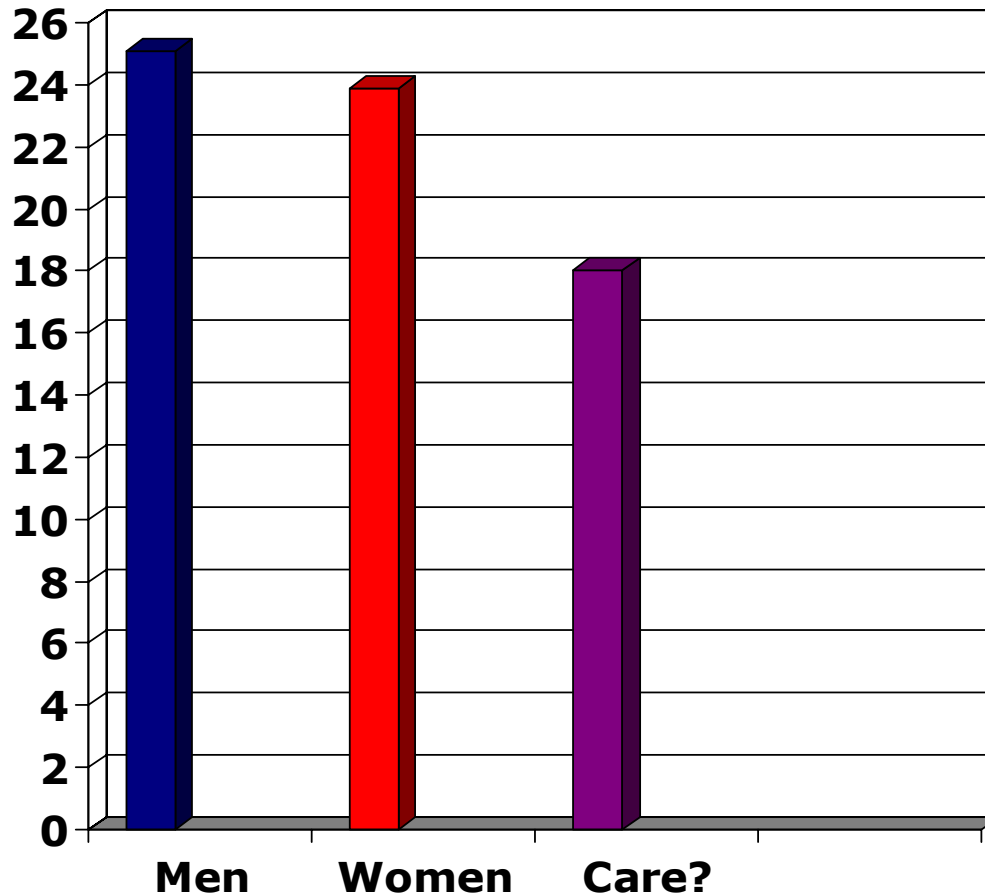
(Germany, 2011, care on Dec. 31) Cases total



Source: Destatis

<https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/Soziales/Sozialleistungen/KinderJugendhilfe/Tabellen/HilfenErziehungAusElternhausMerkmale2011.html>

# Average age when leaving home (Germany 2007)



After termination of care:

- no return to residential care
- little family support
- lacking emotional support
- missing social network
- insufficient financial support
- little support when bringing up own children

Source: Eurostat

<http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/73631/umfrage/durchschnittliches-alter-beim-auszug-aus-dem-elternhaus/>

# Findings: Examples of practice in Germany

- The general type of support in transition from care to adulthood is assisted housing: from residential (seldom foster) care move to accommodation with social worker support:
  - special residential
  - „training flat“ in the residential care facility
  - social work support in an apartment that has been rented by or for the care leaver
  - social work support in flat-sharing community
- Skills trainings covering a range of issues such as finances, health, contact with authorities (labour office, police etc.)

# Care Leavers in Germany

## Key Issues

- Social policy, grant systems and the employment administration do neither perceive nor consider the typical disadvantage of coming of age without family support.
- There is little knowledge and statistical data on the process of transition from care as well as about the whereabouts and living situation of young adults after they have left care.

# Leaving Care – and alone?

- After termination or the dropping-out of care it is mainly up to the individual young person to manage and cope with the transition process.
- There are great regional differences regarding the amount and duration of support for young adults.

**What is your experience?**

**How is the situation of care leavers in your country?**

**How could we improve transitions from care to adulthood?**

# Possible working groups

## Group 1

- Policy making, Lobbying
- Gaps in the national care system
- Self-organization, activities of care leavers

## Group 2

- Legal framework
- General forms of residential and aftercare institutions
- Rights of care leavers
- Procedures to enforce rights for care leavers, advocacy support, ombudsmanship



# Working groups

## Group 3

- Concepts, programs
- Organizations supporting the transition from care to adulthood
- Procedures: e. g. pathwayplans

## Group 4

- Education
- Living skills
- Transition to work

# Leaving Care\_Session 2

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