

## Preface

Dear readers,

in your hands you are holding a book that would like to take you into the world of a very special offer within the framework of educational support within Europe: We invite you to explore the world of Individualised Social Pedagogy work with young people beyond the borders of home countries. For this purpose, we have compiled a wealth of contributions in this book that are suitable for approaching the meaning, the possibilities and the opportunities of these services.

The publication is divided into three parts.

The individual passages in the first part of this volume, some of which are very moving, tell about the challenging work that carers undertake with the young people in the stationary placements. They illuminate the microcosm of Individualised Social Pedagogy support measures and aim to give an understanding of what Individualised Social Pedagogy work means in practice and how it is experienced by the people involved.

In this context, we can imagine each individual support measure as a room in a “design hotel”: There is a common roof, but no two rooms are alike, because each room must be tailored and equipped to the individual support needs of the young person who is being cared for.

If we go on a journey of discovery in this house, we can read stories that give courage and confidence. We can visit rooms where we witness developments that were hardly imaginable before.

All these rooms and the stories associated with them belong to people. People who have persevered, supported and participated when young people’s biographies threaten to fail (irrevocably). Our special thanks go to all those who had the courage to provide us with the description of their personal room in this book.

The second part informs about framework conditions and aspects that – in addition to the direct work with the young people at a project site – are to be seen as a necessary scaffolding and common roof for successful help processes.

We understand this framework as a kind of macrocosm: Our authors inform and position themselves. They take a stand on political as well as professional issues, for example on schooling opportunities for stays abroad, on qualifications of pedagogical staff, on the effectiveness of educational support far away from home or on the European dimension of educational interventions and services.

Finally, in the third part, we provide a legal opinion commissioned by the Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V. [*Federal Association for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy*] from Prof. Dr. Dr. Reinhard Wiesner in 2019. Until 2010, Wiesner was head of Department 511 for legal issues of youth welfare in the German Bundesfamilienministerium BMFSFJ [*Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth*]. During his active time there in 1991, as head of the department, he was responsible for the reform of the German Youth Welfare Law, the context which gave individual case support in Germany and abroad a legal framework and thus legitimacy for the first time.

The expert report primarily sheds light on the complicated relationship between the legal foundations of the German Youth Welfare System and the European Regulation “Brussels IIa”. This regulates access to educational support measures within the European framework by reservation of authorisation of the host country.

The report was produced as part of a comprehensive intervention strategy of the Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik [*Federal Association for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy*] on the reform process of SGB VIII, which was concluded in June 2021 under the name „Kinder- und Jugendstärkungsgesetz KJSG“ [*Act to Strengthen Children and Youth*]. Under the title „Masterplan – Damit Individualpädagogik bleibt“ [*Master Plan – Ensuring the continuation of Individualised Social Pedagogy*], the be had previously been intensively and specifically involved in the professional and political debates in Germany over a period of two years and has campaigned for the preservation of this form of support.

This publication now aims to enrich these debates, especially on an international level. It aims to encourage and invite mutual understanding, dialogue and fruitful discussion in a field that is controversial, especially in political terms:

Despite its great successes, this form of support has been and continues to be controversial. Sensational stories comparing Individualised Social Pedagogy with “holidays under palm trees” encourage envy and a lack of understanding. At the same time, scandals and dramatic events repeatedly find their way into the public eye in a

polemical way and cause a stir, incomprehension and outrage. If it were not sufficiently scientifically proven how highly effective and efficient this form of support is, it would have been abolished in Germany long ago. However, this form of care has already “survived” a whole series of amendments to the law and continues to be practised effectively and successfully.

Nevertheless, this book is also written for people to whom the “Individualised Social Pedagogy Cosmos” of cross-border educational support is still largely unknown. We have taken care to ensure that the language used in this publication also reaches people who do not come into contact with this field of work on a daily basis. If we have not succeeded in doing so at any point, please do not hesitate to contact the authors or editors. We will be happy to answer your questions and are at your disposal personally, but also in a larger context, e.g. within the scope of an event.

In this publication, we want to analyse facts, but also discover and develop the next steps. We want to contribute to making interaction and cooperation in Europe even more agile and effective, and to help ensure that all the advantages of this valuable habitat are used!

We want to tell how amazing it has been so far, despite some stumbling blocks, to support young people in their development across borders.

Because Europe – that’s us. There are many of us. We have space – and so many different places, conditions, opportunities ... for each and every one of us.

And the last decades have shown us this: we can create opportunities in our Europe. Even for those who struggle with great burdens. For those who have not (yet) been able to succeed in turning the lever in their home country. We can do it together. We can make it possible for everyone to lead a successful life in, with and even for Europe.

Let’s talk about it!

This book is the result of a cross-association cooperation: the Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V. (be) [*Federal Association for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy*] and the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Individualpädagogik e.V. (AIM) [*Federal Working Group for Individualised and Experiential Pedagogy*] have joined forces and resources for this project. The authors each represent one of the associations, and the editorial group is equally represented. The work that begins with the publication of the volume is also jointly supported and taken responsibility for.

Our thanks go to the two umbrella organisations for their trust and full support.

Special thanks go to the members of the editorial group who tirelessly thought through and discussed all the topics with us in many meetings until we were sure: Now it is perfect! – at least for the moment ... Eva Felka, Monja Heinz, Michael Karkuth and Sven Riegler: Without you, this book would not exist!

The editorial work benefited particularly from Monja Heinz's meticulous preliminary editing. She reviewed and commented on each contribution, sometimes several times. Her expertise and linguistic proficiency have enormously enriched the creation of this book.

We are also pleased and grateful for the very professional and committed support of our lector and proofreader Peter Schuto ([www.einfach-fehlerfrei.de](http://www.einfach-fehlerfrei.de)).

Our “hottest” thanks, however, go without a doubt to all our authors, who made this project possible and made it shine with their diverse contributions!

*Heike Lorenz*  
*Michael Brendt*

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