Political Education in Germany

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Biographical Notes

- born 1958
- Political Scientist/1988 M.A.
- 1979 – 1989 German/German-Exchange
- 1988 – 1998 Youth Political Education & Exchange
- since 1998 Director of Academy „Haus am Maiberg”
- editorial board „Journal für Politische Bildung”
- editorial borad „Non-formale Politische Bildung”
- borad of three national umbrella organisations
- international activities

Term “Political Education”

- Different terms = different ideas & concepts
- Civic Education (USA)
- Citizenship Education (GB)
- Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC)
- Human Rights Education
- Charter on EDC & HRE of Council of Europe (2010)
- Global Learning
- Education for Sustainable Development of the UN
- Political Literacy
- study of citizen-behaviour = Staatsbürgerkunde
- Political Education = Political Education

Post War Germany

- Necessity of Re-democratization after 1945
- US-American post war “re-education” politics
- Many grassroot-initiatives in (Civil-)Society
- Implementation of Political Science in Universities
- Federal Agency for (Political/Citizenship) Civic Education (Bundes- und Landeszenträlen für politische Bildung)
- Programs for public funding of political education
- Role of Civil Society (subsidiarity)
- Churches, Trade Unions, Political Parties, Youth Organisations, Citizen Rights Movement
Structure of Political Education

- The federal states ("Bundesländer") are responsible for education and culture not the national level
- Many groups and initiatives are involved in non-formal youth and adult political education, according to the idea of freedom and pluralism
- Bundesausschuss Politische Bildung (www.bap.de) is the national umbrella organisations for youth and adult political education
- National funding programs: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung for adult education and Ministry for Youth is supporting Political Education of young people (Kinder- und Jugendplan des Bundes/KJP) (20 Mio €)

Aims of Political Education

- See - Judge - Act
- Developing information, knowledge and understanding about all kind of political and social questions (political literacy)
- Making people capable of independent political judgment
- Animate people to take part in any kind of political and decision making process in their surrounding and in democratic processes
- Support people who are engaged in such processes
- Prevent any kind of totalitarianism and extremism = educate democratic citizens

Principles of Political Education

- In the so called “Beutelsbach Consensus” (1976) basic principles were committed which are almost accepted in adult education nowadays
- No indoctrination!: It’s not allowed to hinder participants forming their own independent judgment
- Controversy rule: Questions which are controversial discussed in intellectual and political affairs must also be taught as controversial in educational process
- People must be brought in a position to analyse political situations as well as their own interests and the public welfare

European Citizenship Education

- The rich experience in non-formal adult Political Education in Germany can contribute a lot to develop European Citizenship Education
- Trainers and Pedagogues in this field should widen their European view by co-operating with institutions in other European countries
- We should not forget, that this strategy must include a cosmopolitan view at the end (consequences of globalisation and the problem of euro-centrism)

Perfect Political Educator ☺

- Political person with political interest and experience
- Social-/Political-Scientist
- Experience in methods of non-formal education
- Mission for democratic participation
- Internationale experience
- Self-reflected & able to take criticism (kritikfähig)
- Team-orientated

References

- German: http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1262132/130_PoY1-DE.pdf