

# Schools in Europe

Their needs in the 21st  
century

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# Initial position I

- School systems in Europe are strongly influenced by history and national mentalities
- Schools are a picture of the construction of society
- Especially the role of family influences the structure of a school system and vice versa

# Initial position II

- The position and policy of the teachers' labour union influences the pace and extent of reform
- The catholic church - especially in Austria - is very powerful and runs a lot of schools with special values
- Also important is the self-concept of how politics work (or not...)

# Challenges for European societies

- Differences within the population are increasing, especially because of migration and social distinctions
- Many European countries became some kind of multicultural society, sometimes it is not seen like that
- The question is how to include people with a migration background and how to give enough support

# Challenges II

- Declining birth-rate requires to arrange the best child care
- That means: A high quality day care for all children of **all ages**
- Parents must have the possibility to combine occupation and child care on the basis of a legal claim

# Changes in childhood

- Family ties decrease, modern families are small, often no siblings
- Children lack role models, they grow up very individualized and they don't learn how to adapt to a group
- Not few of them suffer from loneliness and behavioural disorders

# Childhood II

- Basic skills of too many children are underdeveloped at the age of 6
- That refers especially to social skills: to express themselves in their mother tongue, have some association with numbers, solve problems, give some attention to...
- The pace and status of development becomes more and more different

# How to educate our children?

- First of all: our children need relationship, attention and love
- We have to give them respect, identity, personality and confidence
- We need time to be together and to let relationships grow
- We have to identify talents and offer incentives for learning

# And our schools...

- have to give back the responsibility to the children
- have to be places where you can feel comfortable
- have to encourage the individual's personality and self-esteem
- have to develop a kind of learning-aptitude and the ability to solve problems

# The structure of school has to change:

- No classes, no lessons, no subjects:
- Instead of "homogeneous classes" we should create "modules", e.g. age 4 – 8, age 9 – 12, age 13 – 16
- Instead of single lessons we should teach more and more in epochs
- Instead of single subjects we should create fields of knowledge
- School should provide a good mixture between learning and recreation time

# What about our teachers?

- The role has to change:
- They have to become coaches for the learning process
- They have to identify the needs of their students and give the necessary support
- They must be able to establish a relationship with the children and to be a role model

# Teachers II

- They must be very well educated, highly motivated and well paid
- Last but not least: He/she must be a professional, didactically up-to-date and have a developed personality, always ready to reflect.

# How to steer the system?

- The single school is the most important cell. Every possible decision should be made by the schools themselves
- Therefore schools need a highly developed leading system and a modern supportive staff.
- Permanent external evaluation maintains high quality and make schools able to solve their problems

# And politics?

- Should be aware, that schools are the basis for the future and are always important
- Should assure the financing of the system
- Should provide the global targets, but not too many details
- Most important: To back up schools and to give teacher esteem