

Dr. Veronika Salzburger & Dr. Wolfgang Sierwald, SOS-Kinderdorf e.V.

### Background and Aim of the Study

### Design, Sample and Methods

What do youths in care need to manage to cope well with transition to independent living as Care Leavers?

- Theory: **Capability to Act** is a personal meta resource for coping with unknown and challenging situations, esp. in the process of leaving care
- Capability to Act develops due to experiences in life events
- Based on: Sense of Coherence, Self-efficacy and Resilience

*She (care person) made me do it myself, gave me the applications to fill them in as far as I could and then she helped me with the open fields.  
(female, 22 y)*

Multi-method panel study, data since 2011; questionnaires every two years; interviews in intermediate years

#### Topics in Questionnaires and Interviews:

- Person: e.g. Capability to Act, health, well-being, strengths, deficiencies, life satisfaction
- Relation: e.g. peers, mate, family of origin, caregivers, friends, social networks
- Environment: e.g. school, vocational training, employment, social system, finance, housekeeping

**Sample:** 234 Care Leavers with data in and after care, still ongoing (1500 youths in care)

#### In Care

Supportive for Capability to Act: biographical work, participation in crucial points matters, acknowledgement of effort and success, good relationships to with family and caregivers

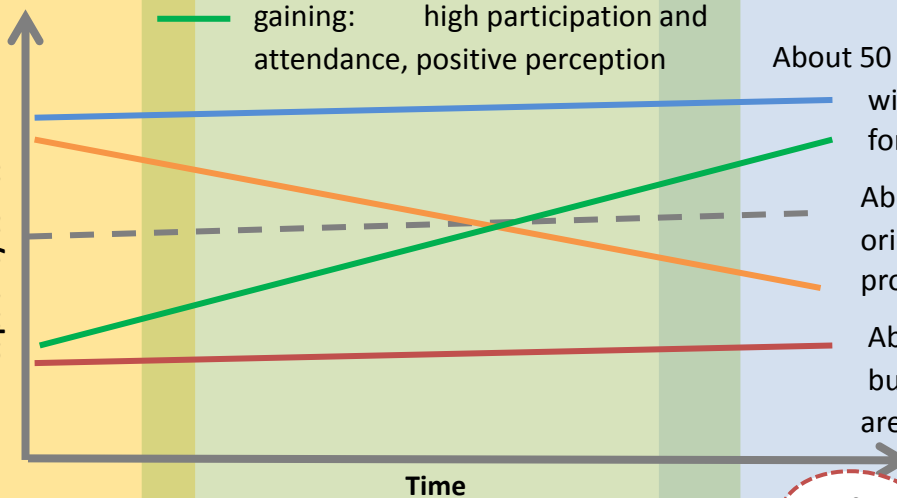
Capability to Act is lower than average; wide range and dynamics over time

Types of expectations on care leaving: high time to leave; ready to go; mixed feelings and not yet prepared; thrown out

#### Leaving Care – In Transition

- staying high: good attendance
- loosing: low attendance
- staying low: low participation and attendance, negative perception
- gaining: high participation and attendance, positive perception

Capability to Act



Participation and professional attendance are crucial for the perception of transition

#### After Care; Care Leavers

Positive relations and a good network seem to be crucial for a positive development as well as higher education

- About 50 % are on a good way with positive perspectives for their future: network
- About 30% are still in orientation or with minor problems: counselling
- About 20% seem to be burdened in several areas: further attendance

*So my mother (CV) never disappointed me, I'm proud of her. I like her bearing with me for so long, for I wasn't easy educating, I would say. (...) She never doubted, that's what I like. (male, 22 y)*

### Conclusions

### Recommendations for Practice

- **Capability to Act** proves to be a helpful resource for coping with challenging situations
- It can be supported by means of social education during care (participation, good relations, biographical work etc.)
- It can also be corrupted by difficult experiences like an unattended forced care leaving process
- The process of care leaving with needs of support starts early in care and extends into time after care

- Preparation for the transition should start early, focusing on basic skills equally on meta resources
- Youths should not be forced to leave care early  
Transitional facilities help to cope with leaving care, there should be a stable, professional attendance during transition and afterwards
- Care Leavers should have clear options for counselling and support even a long time after leaving care