

THE PROJECT

This poster outlines a recent research project, interested in promoting new developments in the scientific understanding of the relationships between trust and education, with special regard to children and youth's citizenship and inclusion.

The project, titled **Trust-citizenship dynamics in the governance of childhood**, is sustained by TRUDY, a European Research Network based at Roskilde University, Denmark
<http://www.ruc.dk/en/departments/department-of-society-and-globalisation-isg/research/networks-and-collaborations/trudy>

BACKGROUND

For decades, pedagogical reflections on education have been connecting children and young people's trust primarily with their trust in adults' guidance through teaching and counselling.

However, empirical research on trust relationships in education indicate a tendency of **trust in distrust**, making distrust the presupposition for social relationship. This generates the need for control while, in turn, policies addressed to protection and control generate young people's social disengagement, as they are more and more dependent on the pressures of social institutions, including education, upon which they have very little or no influence

METHODS

In order to produce a picture of trust dynamics in education, the research analyzes the changes in the relationships between youth and society during the past two decades in Denmark, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. The methodology of the research consists of:

- comparative analysis between countries,
- discourse analysis of policy documents
- ethnographic fieldwork (including observation and interview) in educational settings

PURPOSES

By discussing some results of the research, this poster presentation aims to:

- elicit discussion on the dynamics and impacts of trust on children's education and lives
- improving knowledge about to which extend and in which way different educational systems and policies (including as practiced) are characterized by trust or distrust and about the impact of these trust characteristics on children's citizenship, including rights, participation and identity

An account of the research is offered by a book edited by H.Warming, titled 'Participation, Citizenship and Trust in Children's Lives', Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

RESULTS

The research indicates in all the five contexts an increasing focus on management, efficiency, accountability and performance within a procedural and customer version of citizenship education and young people's rights. Educational agencies struggle to achieve external system validity through various control mechanisms (**D, DK, I, SLO, UK**).

Managerialism can be viewed in part as a response to the discourse of failure that developed in the last three decades where education and welfare services are viewed as failing both to protect young people and educate them as mature citizens (**I, UK**).

While it is true that children and young people do not seem to trust institutions (**D, I, SLO, UK**), the research suggests that the opposite is also true: **institutions do not trust young people**, who are subjected to control, regulation and condescending attitudes (**D, DK, I, SLO, UK**). The intersection between the search for foundational knowledge characterizing the managerial approach to education and social services (evidence-based practices) and the responsabilization of the individual implies more bureaucratic control on education and social work and emphasis on individuals' guiltiness rather than on social spaces, inequalities, power relationships. For this reason, the immediate environment of life, in particular **the family, is the only world which is truly important to young people and which they trust**. The accessibility or absence of a family support network reproduces social inequality and creates a gap between those who are well equipped and those who are not (**D, DK, I, SLO, UK**).

The loss of security, which was once inseparably connected to institutional paths and transitions, means that the risk of mistaken strategies can appear even when a young person follows institutional paths, for example by finishing their schooling (**I, SLO**), which favours **young people's social disengagement**

CONCLUSION

While they are socialized for future entry into citizenship, **the utilisation of narratives of dependence and lack of independence justifies the withholding of trust from children and young people, reinforcing their exclusion from participation in society**. According to Moran-Ellis & Suenker (2013), the main character in late modern society, the independent citizen, sits in opposition to the emphasis on dependency and distrust which characterises the lives of children and young people. However the potential for opening up spaces in which they can engage in a form of personal independence mediated via system confidence is great, as is the scope for developing relations of mutual trust once the actualities of adult-child interdependencies have been fully acknowledged.