

## 21. The early years of innovative approaches to youth information and counselling

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### Introduction

This chapter focuses on the innovative services set up for the specific purpose of giving social support to young people by means of information and counselling, in other words youth information and counselling services. These innovative services originated in the mid-1960s. In this chapter, we will first analyse the circumstances determining the coming into existence of the innovative services in the 1960s in the United States, Canada and western Europe. Following this introduction, we analyse the discussion themes that were central to this youth service in the 1970s. To conclude, we highlight the working principles, which remained to a large extent unchanged through the years, and have a look at staff characteristics and some organisational models.

In the mid-1980s, youth information and counselling was an important topic on the agenda of the 1st European Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth (Strasbourg, 1985), which included youth information and counselling among its priorities for future action and co-operation at the European level. As a result of one of the recommendations of this ministerial conference, the Council of Europe established, in 1986, the Committee of Experts on Youth Information in Europe. This is also the period in which the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) was established (in 1986). Marc Boes (in this volume) has already elaborated on ERYICA and the historical period from the late 1980s up to today, in the previous chapter. This chapter is limited to the period from the origin of the youth information and counselling centres in the 1960s to the mid-1980s. This chapter is based on our knowledge of the field in which we had been engaged from 1965 up until 1991. Our analysis draws on the documentation of the International Centre for Advancement of Innovative Youth Information and Counselling Services in Ghent, Belgium, and the findings of an international survey of “The aims, methods and organisation of youth information and counselling centres in Europe”, which we carried out in 1987-88 on behalf of the Committee of Experts on Youth Information in Europe of the Council of Europe (Faché 1987, 1990).

## **Determinants of the origin of innovative youth information and counselling services**

It is not easy to discover the reason for the emergence of these innovative services. Why did these services come into being, and why then? The fact that partially different factors play a role in different countries makes things even more complicated. From the analysis of the literature on the inception of these innovative services and the interviews we had with the founders of these organisations, we think we can discern four determinants that played a role in the period of inception. For some services, certain determinants (for example, social criticism) played a role in their inception, whereas other determinants played a role in the course of their development. Other innovative services drew their inspiration from existing “models” when they came into being (Lascombes 1973). Depending on the degree to which a specific determinant plays a decisive role, an innovative service fulfils a supplementary role with respect to existing assistance services (for example, a service created because of the need for youth-specific provision) or it is a competing form of assistance (such as an initiative created because of criticism of existing forms of assistance).

## **The need for specific provisions for young people in problem situations**

This was the determinant that inspired the Young People’s Consultation Centre in London in 1961. Probably the first walk-in centre for young people in Europe, which “offers [adolescents] the opportunity to talk to a professional person about problems that worry them” (Halpin 1967). “We chose, according the founder Laufer of this centre, a name which would be neutral and all-encompassing, and avoided any words which would give the impression of a clinic, or of illness. In order to assure a service which would be able to deal with those immediate problems for which adolescents sought help, and also be able to detect signs of more serious pathology, the intervening staff of the Centre consists of professional people who have all been trained in psychoanalysis and who have had previous experience in work with adolescents. There is also a psychiatric social worker, a medical adviser, a psychologist, and a legal adviser ...”. “The idea of having a ‘walk-in’ service, with professionally qualified staff, was based on the premise that there are many adolescents in the community who are in immediate need of help, but who would not seek help from many of the existing agencies. Adolescents are very frightened by the thought of mental illness, and agencies which are somehow linked to ‘illness’ or ‘trouble’ will not often make contact with those adolescents

who may be in serious need of help. Our belief was that if we created the opportunity for adolescents simply to come in and talk with somebody, we would be able to meet many adolescents at a time when intervention of some kind could well prevent serious social or psychological trouble later on in their lives” (Laufer 1964). The “walk-in” concept or “open door” concept of the Young People’s Consultation Centre in London appears to offer facilities which meet the needs of young people. In the second half of the 1960s, the open-door concept inspired the founders of the Centre for Youth Information and Counselling, Info Jeugd, in Ghent, and the Advice Centre for Young People (Jongerenadviescentrum) in Amsterdam.

### **Criticising the established, traditional assistance for youth**

The creation in 1966 of the Centre for Youth Information and Counselling, Info Jeugd, in Ghent, and in 1969 the Advice Centre for Young People (Jongerenadviescentrum) in Amsterdam was inspired by a fundamental criticism against the then established, traditional youth assistance. This criticism was formulated in a creative way by developing an alternative. The notion of “alternative” was re-calibrated by these social innovations. The noun “alternative” now entered the language as an adjective meaning “based on entirely new principles, aimed at a set of other than the prevailing methods”. Their criticism concerns, among other things, the bureaucratic method (waiting lists, by appointment only), the official character of the assistance (start the counselling by asking the person’s name, address, age, daily work, etc.), the psychiatric-medical model of assistance, etc. These alternative assistance services developed not as complementary but rather as a competitive form of assistance with regard to the prevailing assistance (Faché 1990).

### **Innovative answers to new social problems**

New somatic and psychological problems appeared among youngsters in the 1960s in the United States, Canada and western Europe. These problems seemed to be related to the new lifestyle of a considerable part of middle-class youth.

These middle-class youth saw themselves as participants in a cultural revolution rejecting a sterile, excessively consuming, overly technological, and alienating social order (Holleb and Abrams 1975). “Prominent among the standard-bearers of this revolution were the masses of freaked-out kids who began to invade the cities in the summer of 1967. These ‘hippies and freaks’ gathered in that summer in Boston and San Francisco like a convention of Gypsies to

smoke dope, drop acid, make love and listen to music". This youth were, according to a US research report (Glosscote et al. 1975), often unwelcome at traditional helping facilities, and clearly made to feel so:

The movement for alternatives in mental health and counseling arose as a part of and as a response to this time of changes. The founders of these first alternative services were in a unique position to bridge the gap between the two cultures. They were dropouts who had not completely dropped out. (Holleb and Abrams 1975)

Thus, alternative services sprang up. The free-clinic movement was born in Haight-Ashbury (San Francisco) in 1967. In the same period, walk-in counselling centres, hotlines, runaway houses, etc. were also started (Corner et al. 1972). According to the "Interim report of the Canadian Government's Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs" (1971), in Canada too innovative services started. These services were described as (ibid. p. 417):

a human response to the social problems directly associated with the various life styles embraced by large numbers of Canadian youth. Some characteristics of this style are: a desire to travel, a disinterest in material things in and for themselves, less than usual concern with conventional standards of health and sanitation, and sexual and drug experimentation.

In the same period Release was established in London (1967). Release aimed at helping those young people who had been arrested for alleged drug offences (Coon and Harris 1969). This was a time when a number of drugs, especially cannabis, were gaining popularity with a particular segment of young people, giving rise to new social problems. Problems, as far as the police and courts were concerned, were about the question of how to treat this new kind of offender, but from the offender's point of view, were about securing their legal rights. In a direct response to this situation, Caroline Coon and Rufus Harris founded Release (D'Agapeyeff 1972). Release grew into a "life-support system" for at least a certain percentage of the typically young clientele coming to them. Linked with this it was the persuasion of Glosscote (1975, p. 3) "that we would find that getting into trouble with drugs is almost always a symptom of other serious kinds of problems in living – sometimes intolerable environmental circumstances, sometimes because one's 'head is not together', sometimes both". In all these countries, innovative services came into being attempting to provide, through innovative means, social, material and psychological assistance for young people with problems, who were not seen before and/or who were not dealt with properly .

## **Criticising the problem-causing societal structures**

In 1969, in The Hague, the Sosjale Joenit originated from the so-called Experimentele Maatschappij, a flower-power youth group with radical-anarchist traits (Mulder-de Bruin 1978). At about the same time, the Bond voor Vrijheidsrechten in Amsterdam stimulated the

establishment of a local Release (1970), more or less after the London model. The Bond was an organisation of academics who were worried about the increasing intolerance of the “right” (De Kler and Van der Zande 1978).

Both organisations were of the opinion that assistance must lead to an insight into the freedom-hampering situations in society which, in turn, must result in actions in order to change the problem-causing societal structures and to prevent the causes of the individual problems (Arendshorst 1972; Moerkerk 1973).

### **Specific need of young people for comprehensive information**

In the late 1960s in several countries, youth professionals argued in favour of comprehensive youth information centres in order to meet the need for information of young people that results from the following situation:

We live in a complex society that offers so many possibilities and choices. In this society young people need information and assistance to understand what is available and how they can use the services which exist. Without such assistance, many will not have the opportunity to live effective lives and contribute to their community. In order to try out new roles and experiences, young people have a tendency to distance themselves from adults, like their parents. While this distancing is important to the exercise and acceptance of independence, it often removes young people from advice and support which would assist them at this important stage of their development to independency. This fledgling autonomy must be supported by offering information and counselling in a setting which young people accept or in a language and format which take into account the problems of transition to adult life. We live in an information era. While a lot of information is available, it is usually written or presented in a way in which it is difficult to understand, and is not always relevant to the new members, the newcomers to the society. Moreover, the available information is very fragmented among numerous organisations and services. (Faché 1972, p. 9)

In Hilversum (the Netherlands, Jongeren informatie centrum) as well as in Munich (Germany, Jugendinformationszentrum (JIZ) 1967; Baumann 1988), the city youth service established a youth information centre on the basis of this motivation. The Centre d’Information Jeunesse in Paris was also established, in 1969, on the basis of this same view. It became the first centre of a network of 25 centres throughout France. This initiative of the French Ministry of Youth and Sports followed the finding in a national survey of young people in 1967 that there was a need for a comprehensive information centre where youngsters “can find information on all possible areas affecting their lives”.

### **Mutual influences**

The history of innovative approaches to youth information and counselling services is a chronicle of change and exchange. The initial visions of the founders have been revised and revised again. One important factor that has produced the programmes’ redefinitions are

contacts with other innovative organisations. For example, Info Jeugd in Ghent drew from the start on criticising the established, traditional assistance of youth and the individual casework model. In line with a move to tackle the causes of clients' problems and thanks to the contacts with Release in London and Amsterdam and JAC Amsterdam, growing attention was paid to the societal causes of problems and social action.

At the international level, there were different conferences and meetings where people could exchange information. The 1st European Conference on Youth Information and Counselling Centres took place in 1972. This conference was not located in one place but travelled from Munich and on to Erlangen, Essen, Amsterdam, Amersfoort, Utrecht, Santpoort, Ghent, Mons and Brussels, where each time youth information and counselling centres were visited. The participants came from Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and Austria (Faché 1973). In 1975, at Tihange (Belgium), the 2nd European Conference on Youth Information and Counselling Centres was organised by the Centre National d'Information des Jeunes (Brussels).

In 1985, the Centre d'Information et de Documentation Jeunesse in Paris organised the first European Colloquium on Youth Information Centres in Marly-le-Roy. The French organisers used this international conference mainly to propagate and export the French concept of youth information centres. The French wanted to obtain international recognition of the concept and protect the logo (composed of the letters I and Y). During the colloquium, an International Liaison Committee was established, composed of representatives from different countries. This would lead to the creation of ERYICA in 1986, the secretariat of which is located in the Centre d'Information et de Documentation Jeunesse in Paris. Under pressure from the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK, counselling was included in the name of this network, which changed into the European Youth Information and Counselling Association, ERYICA. This international association, which was subsidised by France, continued to carry out the tasks of the centre in Ghent (see chapter by Marc Boes in this volume). Also international comparative studies stimulated the exchange of ideas and concepts during the 1970s and 1980s (Faché 1973; Keil 1982; Deichsel 1987).

### **Issues of debate in the 1970s and 1980s**

There were three questions at issue during the 1st European Conference on Youth Information and Counselling Centres in 1972 that continued to be discussed throughout the 1970s:

- 1) advantages and disadvantages of a comprehensive service against subject-specialised services;
- 2) the differences between, and strong points of, three assistance concepts: youth information centres (YIC), youth counselling centres (YCC), and services that integrate youth information and counselling (YICC);
- 3) the social action of the youth information and counselling services.

### **Comprehensive or specialised services?**

In order to provide adequate coverage, a comprehensive youth information or counselling agency will usually be necessary as a first resort or a last resort, somewhere to go when you do not know where to get information or help, or somewhere to go when other sources fail. In the 1960s comprehensive services came into being in the United States, Canada and western European countries. They are comprehensive according to the target population of young people. Such population-specific services are comprehensive as far as subject areas are concerned (Faché 1972; Deichsel 1987). This principle of comprehensive provision means that any young person may walk in with any problem. This important working principle concerns the intake criteria. This means that youth information and counselling services offer help to anyone in the whole range of psychosocial, medical, juridical, and various practical questions and problems of life. The result being that the client does not need to make a self-diagnosis before calling upon a youth information and counselling service. This is not always the case with subject-specialised services, in which every request for assistance has to be as precise and clear as possible. The current intake criteria of specialised services are “persons having questions or problems in the field of ...”, followed by a restrictive list of fields, such as sexuality. As most youth information and counselling services have very broad intake criteria, they are faced with a wide variety of persons and problems. This immediately raises the question as to how these counsellors are able to handle the great variety of questions.

### **Youth information or counselling services?**

There are, depending on the kind of social support – information or counselling – three different types of comprehensive youth services: youth information centres (YIC), youth counselling centres (YCC) and services that integrate youth information and counselling (YICC).



Before dealing with the differences and the arguments in favour of each of these types, it is necessary to make a distinction between informing and counselling. Counselling means discussing with the person seeking assistance a problem formulated by this person in order to increase their insight into the problem. The counsellor helps the client explore thoughts, feelings, behaviour, and reach a clearer self-understanding, and then find and use their strengths so that they can cope more effectively with life by making appropriate decisions or by taking relevant action. In this context, counselling does not mean recommending something to someone, dissuading someone from doing something or persuading someone to do something, but is aimed at reinforcing the capacity to take action of the person seeking assistance. The discussion must enable this person to decide for themselves in matters that affect them and their situation (Lawton 1984). In this context, informing concerns so-called “social information” youngsters require to be able to act adequately in concrete life situations, in other words to be able to function socially and societally. Young people, in particular, encounter a lot of problems because they are “new” in our society.

In youth counselling centres, the focus is on counselling as it is described above. In youth information centres, workers give information via the telephone, letters, online or in face-to-face contact. Youngsters can also consult info-stands and databases on their own. A number of organisations consciously strive to integrate both kinds of support (information and counselling) in one service. For the public, some of the integrated youth information and counselling centres seem to be only information centres; they also call themselves such because that name implies a lower threshold for young people (for example, Info Jeugd in Ghent, Belgium).

Youth information centres can mainly be found in France, Spain, Portugal and Greece. In other European countries, counselling centres for young people or centres that integrate youth information and counselling in one service are found more often.

## **Social action**

Problems become apparent in the life of the individual, but the causes of these problems are not always, at least initially, bound to the individual. Clients’ problems are frequently rooted in the society in which we live (for example, shortcomings in the situations as regards working, housing, school and leisure) and not in supposed individual inadequacies. In other words, many of the problems that young people experience are in fact collective as opposed to exclusively individual problems.



Youth information and counselling centres differ greatly in their vision of their role in relation to these societal causes of personal problems and thus in their conceptualisation of social action. Four different roles can be distinguished throughout Europe:

- Assistance to young people and social action are integrated. In a first approach, the workers should, over and above the giving of information or counselling, make their clients aware of the societal causes of the clients' problems. They should motivate and involve, when possible, their clients in social action, through which societal changes may occur. The workers regard their clients as people who report societal shortcomings and as potential collaborators in social action. Therefore, they are mainly interested in those groups of clients that report societal problems (for example, Sosjale Joenit in The Hague) (Mulder-de Bruin 1978).
- Assistance to young people and social action run parallel. To bring about societal changes is a difficult and complex process. From a second point of view, it is not justified to involve clients in this action because they already faced their personal problems. Indeed, clients will feel even more powerless if social action fails. But the defenders of this point of view feel that, in the long run, counselling only makes sense for the client and the counsellor if at the same time efforts are made to weaken or eliminate societal shortcomings. If not, it may be feared that counselling will operate as an alibi for the continuation of these societal problems. Contrary to the first viewpoint, social action is regarded as an activity that runs parallel to individual help and is undertaken by the counsellors without the clients' involvement (for example, Info Jeugd in Ghent and most JACs in the Netherlands) (De Turck and Martens 1978; De Beer 1980). If the clients in this approach are made aware of the societal basis of their problems, this is not in order to motivate them to social action, but in order to help them in their process of internalising new rights and opportunities (emancipatory help). It is known from experience (cf. women's emancipation) that people who have adapted to deprivation or discrimination oppose changes even if they will benefit in the long run.
- Assistance to young people and drawing attention to societal problems as a parallel task of workers. In this approach, counsellors should in the first place concentrate on helping the client. Yet the counsellor should report back to other appropriate organisations on which effects of their policies and societal structure are impairing the development of young people. This feedback function is seen as an additional function running parallel to the helping process.

- Only assistance to young people. From a fourth point of view, the only function of youth information and counselling centres is to give assistance to young people. The youth advocacy function, the feedback function, or social action are then the job of other agencies (most youth information centres).

All four of the above-mentioned approaches are to be found in youth information and counselling centres. However, they do not occur together in one centre. They constitute a basic choice. Most centres in Europe express their preference for assisting young people and, parallel to this, “putting pressure” by drawing attention to societal problems, but not including the client in social action (model 3).

### **Working principles of youth information and counselling services**

Bringing youth information and counselling services under a common heading means that all of these services have some key features in common. These alternative forms of youth assistance differ fundamentally from established services of care, because of their low threshold. This low threshold is enhanced not only by the comprehensive service, but some other working principles contribute to the accessibility of youth information and counselling services: youth-friendly opening hours, immediate help, no fees, anonymity, confidentiality, client-centred approach and the informal attitude of the workers. We explain some of these principles in more detail and also focus on some other principles that grew out the innovative work in many centres (self-determination, prevention, outreach) (Faché 1987, 1990).

- Immediate help when the client asks for it: potential clients can just drop in and are helped. Many established services only provide help on an appointment basis. To provide help when help is desired, opening hours at youth information and counselling centres have been adapted to the students’ and working youth’s leisure time. This means being accessible in the evening as well as on Saturday afternoons.
- Confidentiality: many young people fear being caught in all kinds of dossiers and files. This fear is strong enough to keep them away from help in order to avoid identification. Therefore most centres provide anonymous help.
- A client-centred approach: instead of fitting the client’s question within the help offer of the service, the counsellor in a youth information and counselling centre takes their cue from the need of the client, and, together with the latter, tries to find a solution to it in a creative and innovative way. This also involves the client being the real principal, even

when minor clients are concerned and “parental authority” becomes an issue. A client-centred approach also means that the definition given by the client to his problem operates as a starting point for informing and counselling. It also means that the client will have to choose a possible solution, and that the first steps in the right direction lie with them.

- Self-determination: Biestek (1961, p. 103) provided a definition that is congruent with the definition of most workers: “The principle of client self-determination is the practical recognition of the right and need of clients to freedom in making their own choices and decisions .... The client’s right to self-determination, however, is limited by the client’s capacity for positive and constructive decision making, by the framework of civil law and by the function of the agency.”
- Preventive interventions: youth information and counselling centres have developed a variety of primary preventive interventions targeted at large numbers of young people. Some youth information and counselling centres have developed and disseminated “do-it-yourself information” in the form of leaflets on contraceptives, unemployment benefits, rental acts, drugs, etc. Next to these comprehensive youth information booklets, there are also more specialised leaflets or booklets dealing with one problem category (study grants, living alone in lodgings, unwanted pregnancy, etc.).
- Outreach: in Germany youth advice and counselling was for a long time seen as an integrated part of youth work in youth centres. These youth workers in youth centres and clubs are frequently approached by young people in trouble, but they do not always have the information or skills to help. In these cases, they must be able to use the staff at youth information and counselling services as consultants. This approach has also gained ground in other parts of Europe.

## Staffing

Youth information and counselling centres range from those with a small group of volunteers providing a service one or two evenings a week to more substantial agencies staffed either by paid full-time and part-time personnel, or by larger teams of agency-trained volunteers coordinated by paid workers. The selection of both paid and unpaid workers greatly differ in the various agencies. According to the most extreme point of view, no selection is needed. In opposition to the advocates of no selection, the majority of the agencies operate standards of

selection, for example, professional training in psychology, psychiatry, social work or youth work. The structure of teams obviously varies according to the kind of service provided. In agencies focusing on counselling, there is a predominance of social workers, psychologists, and educators. The staff in information and documentation centres (for example, the CIDJ in Paris) primarily consist of documentalists, computer specialists and related professionals.

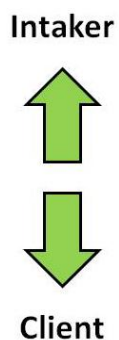
Consequently, the youth information and counselling services have shown some attempts to increase the participation of young people by using peer-group counsellors, successfully backed up by a network of professional counsellors (Mercier 1984).

There are also youth information and counselling centres exclusively staffed by young people indigenous to the youth communities they serve. Their requirements for staff have little to do with formal education and training programmes. They come close to being self-help groups.

### **Organisation of information and counselling activities**

The following three models serve as a basis for the organisation of information and counselling activities:

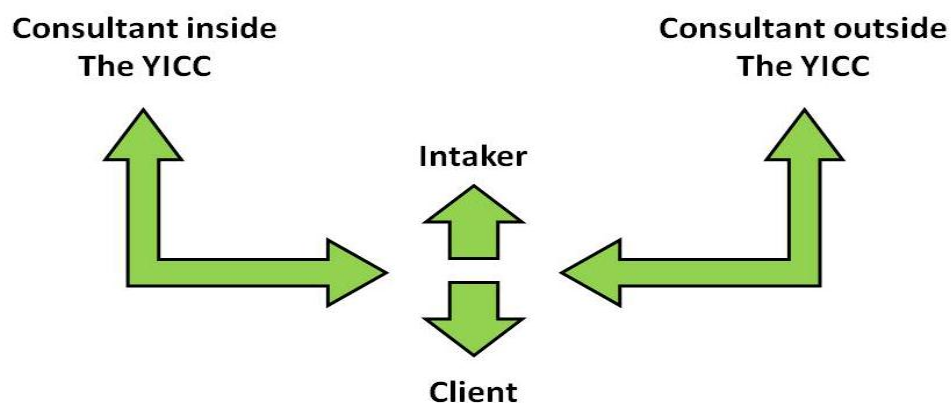
- A team of front-line workers operates on a rotational basis when clients arrive with any problem that they might have. The counsellor must work together with the client to achieve an effective amelioration of the client's problematic situation. Due to continuous training and constantly updated documentation and knowledge, these workers often succeed in helping their clients in an effective way.



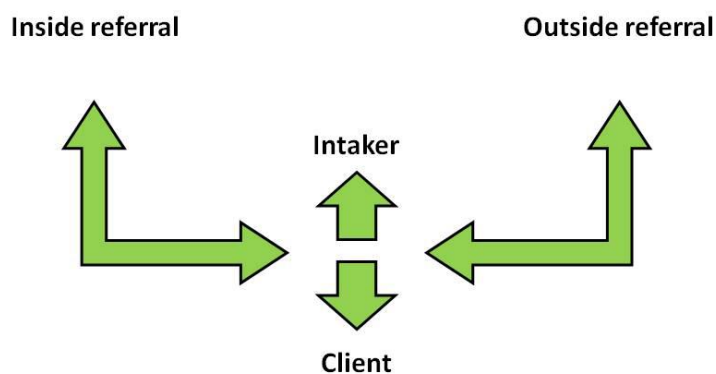
But the diversity of problems facing workers at a youth information and counselling centre sometimes leads to the situation that their knowledge or skills are insufficient to offer effective help. Problems regarding social law, for instance, mostly require an up-to-date

knowledge of legislation. Medical, psychiatric or juridical problems mostly require professional expertise.

In a second organisational model, a consultant is used by the initial contact person in order to help them with some aspects of a problem. The front-line workers make an appeal to the consultant when they become aware of the fact that they lack the expertise to offer effective assistance. The consultant can be a colleague with specific expertise (for example, a lawyer, a psychiatrist, a physician) who works in the same agency or a consultant from another helping agency.



- When the contact person feels unable to provide appropriate assistance, then they can refer the client to a more experienced colleague inside or outside the agency. This is mostly the case for medical, legal, psychiatric, drug and employment problems.



In the youth information and counselling centres, referral shows some specific characteristics. Firstly, innovative centres never refer a client to an agency but always to a particular person. Secondly, the initial contact person remains responsible for the client, when referring them to a specialist. The decision to refer the client is a joint one. If this referral does not yield the anticipated result, the counsellor must be “on hand” to receive the client again and to go

through things a second time in order to find an alternative solution. In this way, it is possible to avoid the client getting lost. Therefore, the youth information and counselling centres make an agreement with outside helping agencies that the client may be referred back to the worker if the agency is not able to offer effective help to the client. In this respect, youth information and counselling services differ from established services that constantly refer clients to another service without referring them back to the original service. Moreover, the worker in a youth information and counselling centre tries to sustain an open relation with the client he/she refers to a specialist by telling the client that they can always return “if it does not work out”.

The above-mentioned organisational models do not play the same role in the helping strategy of each youth information and counselling centre. The degree to which one of the models is dominant strongly depends on the expertise of the contact team, the scope of the intake criteria, and the policy of the agency. In certain centres, referral of clients occurs so frequently that they operate rather like a switchboard in the network of helping services. In order to limit referral as much as possible, other services invite specialised professionals (such as lawyers, physicians, career counsellors) to come once a week, on a fixed day and time, and help young people with specific problems. In the leaflet distributed by the centre, the days and times this assistance is directly available in the agency are mentioned.

## **Evaluation**

If we were to evaluate youth information and counselling centres during the early years, we could say that these agencies introduced many innovative elements into informing and counselling young people. This is due to the fact that the fundamental point of departure of most comprehensive youth information and counselling centres is that they are client centred rather than method centred. Instead of fitting the client’s question within the method of the agency, counsellors in the youth information and counselling services take their cue from the needs of the client, and, together with the latter, try to find a solution to the client’s problem in a creative and innovative way. Innovative services are open to experimentation with different methods. They are not constrained by tradition (Faché 1989).

The following innovations are illustrative: immediate assistance when it is requested, whereas it was normal to make appointments for a specific day and time; anonymous assistance instead of the traditional questions about name, address, and age; the client (even if they are a minor) is the one who defines the task of the worker, whereas it was normal that the parents of

the minor did so; assistance free of charge; attention paid to societal causes of particular problems instead of looking for individual inadequacies and adapting the client to the demands of society; the continuing responsibility of the worker in case of referral of the client instead of being content to simply refer the client elsewhere; treating the client as an articulate and competent person in relation to their own life situation instead of being patronising; not using too specific intake criteria; and systematic attention paid to preventive strategies.

As the workers enjoy a large degree of freedom of action and are exceptionally responsive to the needs of their clients, it is the youth information and counselling centres that have drawn attention to specific problems and the societal causes of particular problems that have been ignored by traditional helping agencies. They have also enlarged the scope of the service to youth in distress.

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