

Target population: Young carers who are still in school, undergoing training or studying up to 25 years of age.

Mission: To raise awareness of the situation of young carers as a mainly hidden part of the care network in order to garner greater support.

Project partners: The working group JUMP - emerged from an EU-funded project called ToYAC - Together for Young Adult Carers. The members and cooperation partners represent various social and health care organization around Hamburg.

Funding: The work is only voluntary so far, although the plan is to employ staff in future to develop projects, e.g. a model to support school staff. Small donations are received on an ad hoc basis to cover some activities

Context

Young people often provide care and/or support for a parent, a sibling, a grandparent, or other person with a physical, mental, or cognitive health impairment. They take on regular and substantial nursing tasks and bear significant responsibility. Even though the term 'care' is usually associated with body care, mobility or help with eating, young people with care responsibilities also take on tasks such as emotional support and organizational tasks.

A key result of the ToYAC project from which AG Jump emerged was the realization that young carers aged 18 to 24 do not receive sufficient support and services. That's why AG JUMP has reached a broader target group - children, adolescents and young adults, moving from age orientation to life situation orientation.

Governance & management

The working group is part of the NGO "wir pflegen – Interessenvertretung begleitender Angehöriger und Freunde in Deutschland e.V." – the German Carers Organisation. The group is led by a member, but the main official responsibility lies by law in the board of the organisation. The contents are developed by the group themselves and any funding has to be looked for by them. The meetings are normally every 2 months. Guests are invited to broaden the cooperation. Group members have professional backgrounds in the areas of education, care, health insurance, social assistance as well as young carers themselves and students from care sciences.

What the initiative is about

The JUMP working group (AG JUMP) is currently working to raise awareness of the situation of young carers, particularly at the decision-making level, in order to garner greater support. In February 2016 AG Jump hosted a European workshop in Hamburg, carried out by our European umbrella organization EUROCARERS.

In November 2017 AG Jump organized a symposium on Young Carers in Hamburg with the following aims:

- Raising awareness on the topic by presenting the views of young carers themselves, the results from research and practical approaches for support
- Further development of a concept for a pilot project in a school in Hamburg
- Learning from good practice, mainly from the UK
- Broadening the network on Young Carers especially in Hamburg

The event targeting professionals reached about 50 participants, mainly from the region of Hamburg. Participants were impressed with the richness of the presentations and the mixture of experiences of young carers, scientific results from Germany and the UK and the practical tools for support.

A pilot project **Young Carers – The challenges for schools** in Hamburg encourages cooperation between the sectors of education, health and care, which is a prerequisite for a life balance for the young people and their families.

The project targets young carers aged 12-17 but as a whole school approach engaging also peers, parents and all pedagogic and administrative staff. The aims of the project are to raise awareness of young carers and to develop and test various support tools to be used by professionals. School is considered the main place to identify young carers and the best place to start providing information and support. In Germany experts estimate 1 – 2 students per class tend to be involved in supporting a family member, in a care giving situation.

Impact

The pilot school project will be evaluated by a member of the Working Group JUMP, who is part of the staff of the Dep. Of Special Needs and Rehabilitation, University of Oldenburg.

Since the beginning of this year, the German Ministry of Families has opened an online platform "Pausentaste" and has established a network to bring the German initiatives for young carers together to learn from each other. A conference will take place in Berlin in October.

Young carers are increasingly getting active through online offers for peers. They want to help prevent others becoming overburdened or burnt out and share ways to find a balance between the wish to help and the possibility to live a life that is adequate to their age group.

Lessons learned/Insights to the workshop

The media is very interested in making direct contact with young carers, but the young carers often do not want to share their situation publicly. We reach young carers who have finished their engagement (mainly because of the death of the person cared-for). After some emotional distance they are available for story telling. We are eager to learn more about the experiences in other countries and solutions to overcome the barriers.

Future

The pilot The challenges for School has been difficult to implement due to staff having a lack of awareness and training. AG JUMP is therefore currently focusing on producing educational material, in collaboration with a similar project in Berlin.

The school project itself is postponed to 2019. We hope to find some funding as more time is need for cooperation with schools.

