

## “Rückenwind” Project – an example of gift-giving oriented social work

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In my thesis „Sharing & Caring. Das Phänomen der Gabe in der Sozialen Arbeit, 2016) I analyzed different forms of reciprocity interactions between social workers and service users and the significance of these forms for the current practice of social work.

Based on human needs-oriented theories (Staub-Bernasconi 2007, Obrecht 2009) the target of social work as a human rights profession is to enable the service user to lead a decent life. Social problems arise when human needs are not being satisfied over a long period of time. Therefore an important task of social work is to ensure access to means which are compulsory to meet human needs. In my thesis I questioned how goods and services are being distributed to satisfy basic human needs.

Thereby I distinguish among three kinds of distribution of goods and services: exchange, gift giving, and alms.

Based on the works of Marcel Mauss (1990), Pierre Bourdieu (1990), Derrida (1992) and Voughan (1997) I developed a set of criteria to distinguish these three forms of social acting in the explicit field of social work. The distinguishing features are the *view of the world*, the *idea of man*, the kind of *interaction* and different *ethical perspectives*.

In the session I will show that the developed criteria can be used as an instrument to analyze social institutions and to start a discussion if the distribution of goods which are offered is done in a meaningful way.

On a best practice example “Rückenwind“ (**Tailwind projects**) organized by the Tyrolian Chamber of Labour I will show how a gift oriented social work initiative works.

In this project young Tyrolean without jobs who are in a transitional phase or a time-out (18-30 years) travel into a foreign country where they take part in an international project, which is thematically oriented (environment, culture, social affairs) from 2 weeks to 12 months:

- No previous knowledge or certificates are required
- there are no costs for the participants (gift giving)
- they live in a small community
- they are challenged to engage in a project (gift in return)
- the result of the project will celebrated as a gift to the community members

They were engaged in following Projects:

**Star Gazy Boat:** making a boat seaworthy (UK), <https://vimeo.com/63317915> 2 minutes

**A step into a better future:** renovating a playground in Spain

**Ohoj, opportunities ahead:** working on an environmental project in Finland

The „Rückenwind“ projects opens scopes for development. The “gift in return”, which happend during the projects promotes the learning of new skills. This helped to developed own goals and future prospects.

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