



SPIRAL

INNOVATIVE METHODS FOR ADDRESSING THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF DISADVANTAGED AND HARD-TO-REACH YOUNG PEOPLE

From the international training course

SPIRAL – principles for sustainable youth development rooted in Nature 21-29.05.2021, Gudevica village, Bulgaria

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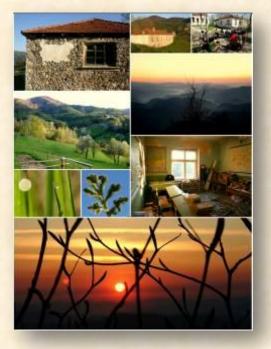


THE COORDINATING ORGANIZATION AND THE PROJECT

Learning for Change Foundation

<u>www.learningforchange.net</u> Facebook





"Learning for Change" Foundation is established in 2016 by experts in the field of education, training and project activities. The main goal of the organization is to provide learning and transformational opportunities for youth. The team of the organization works actively together in the field of Youth work designing and offering activates in different areas: personal development, motivation, youth projects and volunteering, interactive teaching and environmental education, adventure programs based on the methods of experiential learning and outdoor education, sustainability, responsible consumption, spiritual intelligence, training design, anti-globalization, social change and Environmental rights.

Our share values are: solidarity, social justice, the right for education and training, mutual cooperation, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, public and personal responsibility, peace and sustainable development.

MISSION: To support young people in the search of their true life purpose by raising personal awareness, connection to nature, and building sustainable core values.

VISION: To live in a value-driven society that provides opportunities for natural growth and personal development through one's unique talents as an integral part of the global eco-system.

Two main areas of work of Learning for Change are:

- 1. **Ecocentric (soul-oriented) personal development** developmental psychological concept facilitating holistic personal growth;
- 2. **Nature-based experiential learning** reconnection with Nature (inner and outer) using outdoor education and learning by doing in wilderness settings;



SPIRAL is a training course targeting personal development practitioners (trainers, youth workers, social workers, mentors, school teachers and councillors). The main intention of the project is to equip the participants with successful tools and methods to support the individual development of the young people. The training is based on the belief that the modern youth have much more developmental needs compared to one that are covered by the educational system (school and university). This extra needs are not just improperly addressed, but the deficits in their addressing leads to many of the modern society behavioural, psychological and health



deviations (ADHD, social exclusion, mental health issues, violent radicalization, psycho-somatic symptoms, special educational needs etc.)

Some of these poorly addressed developmental needs are:

- **Need for well-being** (need for inner peace, mindfulness, inspiration, joy, happiness, balance)
- **Need for belonging** (need to be included, to be accepted, to be appreciated, to be respected, to be supported, to be recognized, to be trusted)
- **Need for meaningful connection** (need to communicate, to offer compassion, to receive empathy, to cooperate, to enjoy closeness and intimacy)
- Need for confidence (need to feel that you are worthwhile, to feel pride, to show self-love, self-acceptance, to be courageous)
- **Need for authenticity** (need for integrity, to be true to oneself, to live a life based on your values, to express oneself in a genuine way, to choose freely one's own dreams and ways to realize them, to make independent choices that reflect oneself)
- Need for mastery (need to develop competences, find your element, to grow, to be "in the flow")
- Need for purpose (need to have a meaning, need to be motivated, to create, to offer, to rise spirituality)

What these needs have in common is that they are not well covered not just in the educational system but they are neglected in the society at all. There is lack of effective tools and practices available for facilitating natural development in these spheres for the youth.

What we offer in this training are innovative way and methods to address these developmental needs. The approach combines *nature-based methods, mindfulness practices, developmental psychology and somatic practices*.

The abbreviation *SPIRAL* stands for the basic principles that unite the methods included in the Integral approach:

Spiritual development
Positive worldview
Interconnection with all natural beings
Resilience
Active role in the community
Life purpose identification



TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- To develop common understanding about the developmental needs of young people focusing on disadvantaged one (NEET, marginalized, hard to reach, in a risk of radicalization);
- To develop competences that enable youth workers to work with youth on complex personal challenges, thus enabling them to reach their full potential;
- To practice and equip the youth workers with tools and techniques for working with youth (especially disadvantaged one) for their personal development, social inclusion and realization;
- To explore alternative practices for addressing developmental needs of disadvantaged youth;
- To create environment for development of social core values which youth workers can foster with their target groups: compassion, support, unity, respect, empathy, inclusion, acceptance;
- To empower youth workers to adopt and create their own practices based on personal strengths, talents and preferences in the field of personal development.

TOPICS OF THE COURSE

Self-discovery and **resourcefulness** - understanding about ourselves and supporting others' self-development process;

Physical exercises – practices based on yoga and other traditions that can be implemented in everyday life; Meditation and mindfulness – tools for focus and balance of attention, emotions and consciousness; Outdoor creativity and nature – connecting with the self, nature, other people, the outside world, organize open air learning and creativity activities;

Dance and movement – embodiment as a method for deepening connection to oneself and provoking kinaesthetic learning experiences;

Singing and using the voice – experimenting with our natural ability to communicate and connect to the nature (inner and outer) through the very first mean of communication.







DISADVANTAGED AND HARD-TO-REACH YOUTH

(A literature review conducted by Ognian Gadoularov)

DEFINITIONS AND FINDINGS

Hard-to-reach young people - young people who are not engaged with, or are disengaged from the usual range of education or other services for children and young people, activities or constructive leisure pursuits. Hard to reach can also mean the 'underserved', in other words there are either no services available for young people, the current services present a significant barrier to them or young people fail to access the services that are available.

Source: Working with Hard to Reach Young People – A Practical Guide; Author Tam Hendry, Researcher Kate Polson, Produced for the Scottish Government by RR Donnelley B53882

Disadvantaged youth – the term refers to the risk for experiencing - or the experience of - deprivation in well-being throughout the youth life phase, highlighting the important link between past experiences and future well-being outcomes.

Youth at risk: young people who are exposed to risk factors but who have not yet suffered negative well-being outcomes. They require preventive measures.

Deprived youth: young people who already experience deprivation in one or more dimensions of well-being as a result of their exposure to risk factors. They require second chance programmes.

Source: Evidence-based Policy Making for Youth Well-being: A Toolkit; OECD 2017;

Characteristics of hard to reach (challenging) young people (Richardson, 2001)

Hard to reach youth share some common characteristics some of which are the following:

- They experience a wide range of emotions, but struggle to express and manage these emotions in constructive ways;
- They struggle on a daily basis to responsibly meet their basic needs to a) feel like they belong, and b) feel confident and worthwhile (Glasser, 1965);
- They possess the regrettable ability to elicit from others the opposite of what they need (Tobin, 1991); and
- They seldom seek help from adults voluntarily. (Richardson, 2001, p.4)

Source: Understanding Hard to Reach Adolescents: A Bio-Psycho-Social Model of Aetiology, Presentation and Intervention; Ms Jane Emma Herd, Thesis submitted for the award of Professional Doctorate in Social Work, at the University of East London in collaboration with the Tavistock Clinic, October 2014





The quality of life of disadvantaged young people in Europe

The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) examined the quality of life of young people in Europe (2014). Some of the findings shed light on the situation of the disadvantaged youth:

- More young people remained living with their parents, with young men more likely to find themselves living at home.
- Both unemployed young people seeking work and inactive young people would like to work if they could freely choose their working hours. This includes inactive young mothers and fathers looking after their children.
- Unemployed and inactive young people gave a comparatively low rating for their subjective well-being.
- Deprivation had increased for young people of all social backgrounds in nearly all EU countries, especially
 for those who are living in extended families with their parents and their own children; such people were
 likely to be unable to move out of the family home.
- Unemployed and inactive young people were more likely than others to feel socially excluded, to feel lonely, to face a lack of social support and to have lower levels of mental well-being.
- Young people were less likely to trust institutions with the exception of the police, whom they trusted at the same level as before
- Young people were more likely than older people to perceive tensions between ethnic or religious groups, as well as between groups of different sexual orientation.

Adapted from: INCLUSION A TO Z - Published in December 2014 by SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/ (Support & Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme)

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND NEEDS

What is Youth Development?

Youth development refers to the processes—physical, cognitive, and emotional—that youth undergo during adolescence. The competencies that youth begin to gain during adolescence can assist them as they transition to adulthood. Youth who master competencies across several domains are more likely to achieve desirable outcomes, including educational and professional success, self-confidence, connections to family and the community, and contributions to society. These areas of competency include the following: *Cognitive*: Knowledge of essential life skills, problem solving skills, academic adeptness;

Social: Connectedness with others, perceived good relationships with peers, parents, and other adults;

Physical: Good health habits, good health risk management skills;

Emotional: Good mental health, including positive self-regard; good coping skills;

Personal: Sense of personal autonomy and identity, sense of safety, spirituality, planning for the future and future life events, strong moral character;

Civic: Commitment to community engagement, volunteering, knowledge of how to interface with government systems; and

Vocational: Knowledge of essential vocational skills, perception of future in terms of jobs or careers.

Source: Vulnerable Youth: Background and Policies; Adrienne L. Fernandes-Alcantara, Specialist in Social Policy, January 30, 2018

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What is the normal social development of youth?

It would generally be expected that young people's locus of interest and relationships moves beyond parents, family and professional helping adults to that of social peer groups, intimate relationships and wider networks.

Source: Understanding Hard to Reach Adolescents: A Bio-Psycho-Social Model of Aetiology, Presentation and Intervention; Ms Jane Emma Herd, Thesis submitted for the award of Professional Doctorate in Social Work, at the University of East London in collaboration with the Tavistock Clinic, October 2014

Social structures where young people need to be included in

As mentioned above, young people's growth involves being included in other social constructions beyond the family, some of which are:

- group of friends
- class at school
- sports team
- the "adult" world
- the world of work
- the "majority"
- fun and social gatherings (like parties, going to a bar or going to the movies)

How do you know when they have been included?

Young people are included when they:

- Make friends
- Are accepted by the rest of the group
- Smile
- Contribute to a discussion
- Take initiative
- Voluntarily take part in an activity
- Concentrate on a task
- Observe the rules
- Show up on time
- Ask for help
- Help or praise another youngster
- Are not afraid of physical contact
- Show patience
- Are happy

Adapted from: INCLUSION A TO Z - Published in December 2014 by SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/ (Support & Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme)

Needs, wants and fears

Young people need a safe place to have a good time, to stretch themselves and develop new social skills such as teamwork through youth groups, sports and other fun leisure activities. The way in which young people use their leisure time has a big impact on their future. And, it is in the company of others that they experience positive role models or be a role model. Young people need places where they can be themselves, but they also need places where they can develop healthy attitudes to their own well-being and the well-being of others - a place where they can think positively about their education, health, relationships, sexual identity, future employment, the community they live and in their role in that community.

Source: Working with Hard to Reach Young People – A Practical Guide; Author Tam Hendry, Researcher Kate Polson, Produced for the Scottish Government by RR Donnelley B53882



RISK FACTORS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Several risk factors endanger the healthy development of young people. Risk factors are not homogeneously distributed over the life cycle. There are age specific risks that are typically higher in earlier stages of life, with long-term and sometimes irreversible consequences in later stages of life. Recognizing that past experience matters for youth outcomes, and that youth outcomes will influence future outcomes, adopting a life cycle approach allows identifying both the right timing and nature of interventions and the synergies across sectors and ages.

Research shows causal risk factors over the life cycle:

- Around birth and during early childhood, income poverty, poor nutrition, environmental risks and poor care are major causal factors for adverse outcomes, such as severe health consequences and low cognitive and physical development (Engle et al., 2007; Kroenke, 2008; Walker et al., 2007; Wachs and Rahman, 2013).
- During the school years, low availability and quality of schools, lack of parental support, domestic and community violence, and discriminatory social institutions and norms are additional risk factors that can lead to poor school engagement (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2009, 2010, 2011).
- During adolescence and early adulthood, when school is no longer compulsory, and in the absence of a
 protective youth environment, young people may engage in risky behaviours that can then lead to severe
 negative outcomes, such as low school performance, poor non-cognitive skills (e.g. conscientiousness,
 emotional stability, empathy), joblessness, low-quality jobs, or worse, suicide and premature death (World
 Bank, 2007).
- Youth aged 15-17 face particular challenges, as they have reached puberty and legal working age but are still legally minors. Girls are particularly vulnerable to early pregnancy. Moreover, young people in this age group are especially vulnerable to taking up poor-quality jobs, exposing them to health and safety hazards and low pay. While they are of legal age to work in most countries, if they are below 18 and doing hazardous work it is considered child labour according to the ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. This stage in life is typically decisive in how youth transition from school to work and transition out of poverty.
- Youth aged 18-29 confront additional challenges. They are no longer protected by the UN Convention on
 the Rights of the Child and are legally considered adult in most countries.
 However, biological and psychological research about maturity suggests that young people in that age
 group may still be immature and that treating them as adults can lead to worse outcomes, especially when
 it comes to teen crimes.

Source: Evidence-based Policy Making for Youth Well-being: A Toolkit; OECD 2017;

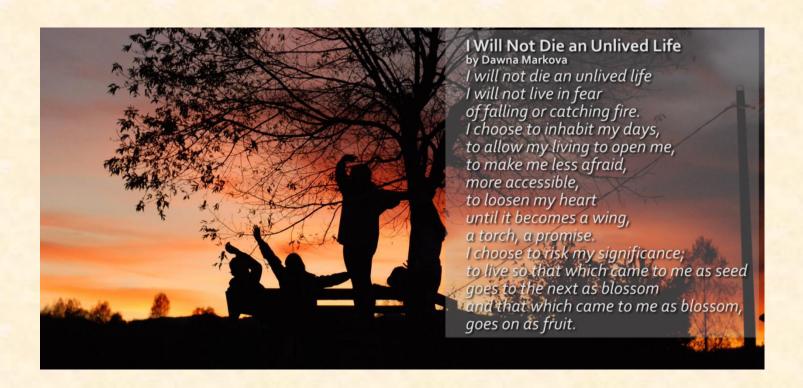


POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Although vulnerable youth experience more negative outcomes than their counterparts who are not considered to be at risk, some of these youth integrate in society and succeed in life. This proves that vulnerable youth can reach their goals if given adequate opportunities to develop positive behaviors, competencies and psycho-physical wholeness during adolescence. This can be achieved through creating environment and providing resources for positive youth development. Thus, resulting in a process that engages young people in positive pursuits that help them acquire and practice the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that they will need to become effective and successful adults regarding their work, family, and civic lives. Furthermore, positive youth development emphasizes that youth can be engaged in their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a productive and constructive manner.

Approaches and methods presented in this Handbook (from the areas of Positive psychology, Ecocentric development and Nature- based learning) are a possible way of providing the space and resources for positive youth development. The models described can enrich the toolbox of Youth workers who are supporting vulnerable and hard-to-reach young people in their daily work by providing alternatives to old and obsolete methods.

We strongly believe that innovation based on modern approaches and methodologies is the path to support young people in the modern fast, technological, and changing world.







PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

Title

Nature Observation

Connecting with nature and oneself

Objectives

- To increase the connection of participants with the natural environment;
- To increase the knowledge about various natural laws, ecosystems and different natural beings;
- To stimulate the general well-being of the participants (mindfulness, inner peace, balance);
- To develop the capacity of exploration and curiosity.

Timing

From 15-20 minutes up to a couple of hours. Ideally 1-2 hours.

Needs addressed

Well-being; Learning

Materials

A watch for keeping the time, proper clothes and footwear for the outdoors.

Setting & Environment

The activity should take place outdoors in a natural environment. It can take place in a garden, park, green area or wilderness. The bigger and wilder the natural environment the better, but any natural spot can work too.

Methodology step by step

- 1. Gather with the participants in a circle. You can introduce the activity by reading a poem or a short story about nature, in order to increase the curiosity and desire to explore the environment.
- 2. Then you can tell the participants that they will have the chance to explore and observe the nature in their own rhythm, led by their curiosity and guided by their senses.
- 3. Once the group feels connected with the activity and eager to get involved you can present the following invitations/suggestions:
 - a. Go out and explore the surroundings led by your curiosity. Go to the places and natural beings that attract you and observe them from distance or closely.
 - b. You can close your eyes and focus on the different sounds that you hear. Try to differentiate all the sounds that you hear.
 - c. Get close to one natural being or place and spend more time there. Observe as many elements and characteristics as possible. Look for connections and relations between these elements. See who else is part of this place/being. Try to observe anything that attracts your attention. Do all these things in a slow rhythm. Allow all the stimulus and information to come to your awareness. Open your senses: Smell different things, touch them, listen to the sounds, taste different objects, look at as many details as possible. Nature observation means observing through all your senses.
 - d. Try to be aware of yourself in this process. Be aware of your emotions, thoughts, imagination, senses and follow your intuition or inner calling towards any destination.
 - e. When the time is nearly up, come back to the departure place. After we gather, we will have a discussion, based on several questions.





You can use the following questions to process the experiences.

- 4. Reflection questions:
 - How did you feel during the process of nature observation?
 - Where did you go? How was the process?
 - What did you observe (see, smell, touch, taste, hear)?
 - What caught your attention? What surprised you?
 - What did you discover about nature and/or about yourself? What did you learn?
 - How can you use this experience/these learning points in your daily life?
 - How can the connection with nature support your personal growth?

Variations/Adaptations/Recommendations

- This activity can be done individually (when each participant is exploring and observing nature alone) or collectively (in small or big groups), as a field trip;
- If the activity is done in large wild areas, there is the risk of getting lost. Thus, it is important as facilitator to know the area well, to explain to the participants the elements of orientation, and what they can do in case they get lost. Having an emergency whistle for each participant is helpful in such situations.





Emotion recycling machine

Managing toxic emotions

Objectives

- To identify one's toxic emotional state;
- To analyze the emotions that participants experience at the moment;
- To learn how to manage the emotions and how to transform the emotional state for the better.

Timing

60 - 90 min

Needs addressed

Meaningful connection; Well-being

Materials

A4 paper or personal journals and pens

Setting & Environment

No specific requirements. It can be implemented everywhere, outdoor or indoor.

Methodology step by step

Lead the participants through the following steps by giving questions and time to reflect and write.

- 1. Identify my emotions:
 - a. How do I feel? (You can give examples or a list to choose from)

Discomfort (boredom, distress, impatience, embarrassment)

Fear (worry, anxiety, indecision)

Hurt (sense of loss, jealously)

Anger (resentfulness)

Guilt (regret)

Frustration

Inadequacy (misery, being unworthy, incompetence)

Overwhelm (grief, depression)

Disappointment

Loneliness (sadness, stagnation)

- b. Am I really feeling this, or is there something more to it?
- 2. Appreciate my emotions:
 - a. Don't resist, accept it.
 - b. Acknowledge and admit it.
 - c. Search for personal meaning and significance.
- 3. Analyze my emotions: Get curious. What is the message?
 - a. What does this emotion offer me?
 - b. What shall I do to make things better?
 - c. What should I believe in to get out of this state and get the outcome I want?
 - d. How can I learn from this to help me do better in the future?
- 4. Get confident: I can handle the emotion
 - a. Determine the steps I will take.
 - b. Choose the emotional response in a healthy and constructive manner.
 - c. Obtain some necessary knowledge and support.
 - d. Recall a time when I successfully handled this emotion in the past.
- 5. Take action
 - a. Take proactive action to transform my emotional state for the better.
 - b. How am I really feeling now?

Variations/Adaptations/Recommendations

During training or a program, you can use this activity at moments when the group experiences strong negative emotions. Otherwise, you can prepare the group for this activity by showing a movie, reading an article or implementing activity that can provoke strong emotions.





30 things I am grateful for

Using clay to reflect on our own resources

Objectives

- To experience gratitude;
- To make a deep introspection on the resources one owns;
- To express gratitude.

Timing 90 min

Needs addressed

Well-being; Confidence, Meaningful connection.

Materials

Clay, old newspaper / magazine / old paper, notebooks, pens, paper, envelopes.

Setting & Environment

A room with tables and chairs in order for the participants to be able to work with the clay. Alternatively, there should be enough space and pillows in order to sit on the floor and work.

Methodology step by step

- 1. Give each participant a piece of clay and a piece of old newspaper/magazine/old paper to place the clay on.
- 2. Tell them to have close to them their notebooks and pens
- 3. Invite the participants to start using the clay, to play with it. Tell them to allow their intuition to guide them rather than their thinking mind. Inform them that they will hear three sentences while they are working with the clay. They need to write down 10 different endings to each sentence. Play some calm music and after a while, give them the first beginning of statement. Allow enough time to work and then give the second one and eventually the third one. The sentences are:
 - a. I am grateful for having...
 - b. I am grateful for being able to...
 - c. I am grateful for being...
- 4. Allow enough time, so that everyone finishes with the clay work. It is possible that some participants will not finish all 30 answers. Tell them that this is ok. This is the beginning of a process of introspection that can go on for a lifetime.
- 5. Gather the participants in a circle and facilitate a discussion:
 - How are you right now?
 - How was this activity for you?
 - What was the most challenging part? Why?
 - What surprised you?
 - What did you discover about yourself?
- 6. Inform them that all the answers that they have written down are their internal and external resources. They can be regarded as an indication, but there are actually endless, if one takes a closer look.
- 7. Ask them to look at their lists and choose a person they feel thankful to. It can also be themselves, God or nature. Invite them to write a letter to this person and express their gratitude. In the end, tell them to put the paper in an envelope. In the future, they should post this letter or read it to the recipient.

Variations/Adaptations/Recommendations

Instead of working with clay, you can also use drawing or land art.





Title Wild Conversations

Talking with a natural being or place

Objectives

- To develop openness and curiosity towards nature, natural beings and places;
- To develop a personal connection with nature and its elements;
- To become open towards personal feelings and inner processes;
- To increase the capacity for self-expression and personal understanding.

Timing

Between 45 minutes and 1 hour (or more)

Needs addressed

Belonging; Meaningful connection; Authenticity; Well-being

Materials

A personal journal and a pen.

Setting & Environment

This activity should take place in a natural environment: a large park, a forest, in the mountains, by the sea etc.

Methodology step by step

- 1. Go with the participants in a natural environment and gather in a circle.
- 2. You can begin the activity by reading a poem or a text about deep nature connection, in order to create the setting.
- 3. Then you can present the following instructions:
 - a. You will have the chance to explore the nature around and get involved in a wild conversation with a place or a natural being.
 - b. Wander around the area, until one place or natural being (it can be anything from tree, stone, flower, river, cloud etc.) catches your attention and you feel called to this place. Don't think analytically but follow your intuition until you find, or you are found by the right place or being.
 - c. Once you are in the place, or near the being, allow yourself to feel its presence fully, by observing it with all your senses, by paying attention to the feelings and emotions that this place/being is awaking in you, by observing your thoughts and the images that come to your awareness. Take it slowly and feel deeply the place/being.
 - d. Once you have done this, you can speak aloud to the place/being about yourself. Introduce yourself and say who you are and what made you stop there. Speak aloud to the place/being about what have you seen in it, what you feel about it and how you experience it. Then let your words reach the place/being. Take it slowly.
 - e. Then you can ask the place/being to tell you something about itself, its life. Get to know it and understand it.
 - f. After a while, you can tell the place/being about how you are at this moment of your life, about your dreams, your worries, fears, questions, intentions, longings etc. Speak about them aloud, with authenticity and honesty.
 - g. Then you can ask the place/being it there is something that you can do for it or if there is something that it wants to tell you, or give you? Don't expect or insist on an answer but fill the space with these questions. Then just observe what is happening around you and inside you, without looking for specific answers.
 - h. You can write or draw in your journal the things you want to capture.
 - i. After this moment, you can slowly prepare for the return. Express your gratitude to the place/being, by offering something (a gesture, a song, a gift, some words etc.). Then you can return to the departure place.



- 4. When the group is complete, form a circle and discuss the experience. You can ask the following questions:
 - How was this activity for you?
 - Where were you? Who did you meet?
 - How was it to engage in conversations with a natural being/place?
 - What have you discovered through this activity, about nature and/or about yourself?
 - How can you use these experiences/these discoveries in your daily life?
 - How can the connection with nature support your personal growth?

Variations/Adaptations/Recommendations

If the activity is done in large wild areas, there is a risk of getting lost. Thus, it is important as facilitator to know the area well, to explain to the participants elements of orientation and what they should do in case they get lost. Having an emergency whistle for each participant is helpful in such situations.

Follow-up suggestions

If you are spending more time in that area (several days), you can invite the participants to revisit the place/being every day and to continue the connection and conversations.







Title Deep Singing

Using our voices to revive old songs

Objectives

- To experience joy through singing;
- To feel connected with the other members of the group;
- To feel connected with our ancestors from different parts of the world and the nature.

Timing 1 hour.

Needs addressed

Belonging; Purpose; Meaningful connection; Wellbeing; Learning

Materials

Setting & Environment Indoors or outdoors in nature.

Methodology step by step

- 1. Inform the participants that you are going to have singing activities. Tell them that we, human, are born to sing, so they should leave any limiting thoughts aside (such as "I don't have a good voice").
- 2. At the beginning, it is good to warm up the body, so choose a song and allow them to move or dance according to it. Remind them to move all parts of their bodies, including shoulders, neck, arms, chest, belly and hips.
- 3. Let them stand in a circle and invite them to enjoy deep breaths, using the diaphragm. You can practice together a few deep breaths.
- 4. Remind them that songs are not just humans' ability. Animals and other beings can produce melodies too. Invite them to think of a particular natural sound. Each participant can make thier sound (and if they want they can combine it with a movement) and then the rest of the participants can copy it.
- 5. Choose or create a non-sense word. Use this word in different ways: for example in high or low pitch, fast or slow rhythm, with different voices. Ask the participants to repeat after you. (You can get inspiration by this video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krhJ 5tNChw)
- 6. You can also get them to repeat rhythms by clapping hands or using different parts of the body.
- 7. Choose one old song from the list below and explore the resources provided. You can even choose an old song from your own culture. Introduce its story and how it has been used throughout time. Teach the melody to the participants and practice it a couple of times. Then sing it together with closed or open eyes. The aim is to really feel the song while singing it.
- 8. Potential songs and resources with songs:
 - We n' de ya ho Cherokee Morning Song https://www.mamalisa.com/?t=es&p=5499
 - Senwa Dedende A song from Ghana https://www.mamalisa.com/?t=es&p=4381
 - https://www.mamalisa.com
 - http://www.soundlincs.org/wp-content/uploads/World-Voice-North-of-England-Residency-Teaching-Resource-2017.pdf
- 9. In the end of the singing, have a little discussion following these questions:
 - How did you feel singing the old song?
 - How was it singing the song all together?
 - What insights have you received?
 - How would you like to apply these insights in your ordinary life?

Variations/Adaptations/Recommendations

If there is an opportunity, invite an elder from your own or from a different culture to teach you a song. It will add a lot to this experience.





Creative Writing

Connecting with the imagination, expanding the creativity

Objectives

- To develop the imagination and creativity;
- To stimulate the capacity to think outside the box;
- To increase the capacity for self-expression;
- To gain trust in one's capacity to create and write

Timing

15 to 60 minutes

Needs addressed

Confidence; Learning; Mastery

Materials

A4 papers or notebooks, pens, pictures.

Setting & Environment

The activity can take place in any kind of space - indoors or outdoors.

Methodology step by step (Giving instructions style)

Below are few creative writing activities that can be done in a sequence or separately according to your needs.

- 1. Write freely for 5 minutes on a "spark word", chosen randomly by the facilitator. Then pair up and share the writings.
- 2. Show a random picture of a person or a cartoon character and invite participants to write freely (for about 5 minutes) about this person, by answering the following questions: Where was this person born? What is he/she doing for a living? What is his/her most hidden secret? Etc. Then invite a few participants to read the story of the person.
- 3. Invite the participants to continue the sentence "Life is like a box of ...". Tell them to give as many details as possible. Let them write for minimum 5 minutes. Then invite a few participants to read their texts.
- 4. Create a few fictional characters (with names, age, occupation) and assign one to every participant. Then invite them to create a monologue for their character. Let them write for minimum 5 minutes. Then listen to some of the monologues.
- 5. Make groups of maximum 10 persons and invite them to sit in a circle. Each person should have an empty white sheet of paper. On top of the sheet they should write for two minutes the beginning of a story. Then everyone passes their sheet to the person on the right. The new person continues the story by writing for two more minutes. After that, everyone again passes the sheet to the person on the right, who continues the story by writing for two more minutes. The process ends when all the sheets reach their initial person. The last person writing should make the end of the story. Then a few stories can be presented in the big group.
- 6. When the activities are over, you can gather the participants and have a discussion, by using some of the following questions:
 - How was this activity for you? / How were these activities for you?
 - What stimulated your creativity/imagination? What helped you in this process?
 - Was there something that made the creative process difficult? What exactly?
 - What is important for being creative and imaginative?
 - How can you use this experience in order to be more creative and self-expressive?

Variations/Adaptations/Recommendations

- You can use any of the short exercises as an introductory activity to a longer session.
- For activity number 5, you can invite the participants to fold the paper once they wrote and then pass it to the right. When the new person gets the paper with the story, they read only what the previous person has written (not the whole story). He continues writing based on the last part. The final story may not be so cohesive and well connected but will be more unpredictable and most often quite funny.





The Whirlpool of Good Words

Exchanging positive affirmations

Objectives

- To increase positive emotions and positive thinking;
- To create focus on positive reflection and consciousness;
- To encourage positive feedback between participants;
- To increase the level of sharing in the group.

Timing

1 h up to a few days

Needs addressed

Confidence; Meaningful connection; Belonging

Materials

Small objects to be distributed between participants (e.g. wooden cubes, stars, small stones, been seeds etc.). Number of objects should be equal to the number of participants multiplied by 3.

Setting & Environment

No specific requirements. It can be played everywhere, outdoor or indoor.

Methodology step by step

- 1. Give each participant 3 small objects;
- 2. Instruct them to observe others in the group for behaviours, actions and words that are beneficial for another person or the group as a whole acts of kindness, help offered, idea expressed, etc.;
- 3. In case of noticing such behaviour or act the participant finds the time to personally and verbally express a positive affirmation, gratitude and feedback towards the person who has done the deed. As a material embodiment of this, the person who makes the affirmation gives one of his small objects a symbolic sign of gratitude;
- 4. The exchange of objects continues on a random pace until the end of the time given. It can be introduced in the beginning of a training program or a workshop and to last until the end.
- 5. Reflection questions:
 - How did you feel when receiving positive affirmations?
 - How did you feel when giving positive affirmations?
 - What did you when you were out of objects?
 - What did you learn that you can use in the future?

Variations/Adaptations/Recommendations

- It is possible to implement the activity as a parallel process during other activities without interfering with the main focus of participants;
- If given in the beginning of long training (as a parallel process activity), remind participants about it every day in order to encourage the game;





A Vision of My Life

Self-discovery and reflection

Objectives

- To reflect upon what kind of life we want;
- To map out one's skills and talents;
- To plan how these skills and talents can be used in order to make one's life happier.

Timing

60 - 90 min

Needs addressed

Authenticity; Belonging; Purpose

Materials

A4 paper or personal journals and pens

Setting & Environment

No specific requirements. It can be implemented everywhere, outdoor or indoor.

Methodology step by step

Lead the participants through the following steps by giving questions and time to reflect and write. In order to motivate participants, create reflective mood and direct their thoughts to use the following quotes:

"The power is within me and to access it I only need to pay attention inward."

"There are no desperate situations; there are only people who despair." Tibetan aphorism

"If we want something, and we think we deserve it, we need to ask for it."

"Postponement kills the chance." Oscar Wilde

"Take a risk!"

"Make sure your inner child is never ashamed of the grown up you have become."

- 1. Invite the participants to reflect on and write the answers of the following questions:
 - a. What do I not want my life to be?
 - b. What do I really want of myself and of life?
 - c. What do I do well? What abilities and talents do I have that make me unique and different from others?
 - d. How do I live happily, conforming or passively?
 - e. What can I do to be happy?
- 2. Make the following statement: "We need to find our strengths, including our forgotten skills." Then ask the group to reflect and share opinions.
- 3. Invite the participants to complete the following tasks:
 - a. To make a list of personal talents and skills.
 - b. To ask other people what their strengths are.
- 4. Make the following conclusion: "Developing healthy egoism will help us stop thinking about: What will people say? What will they do to me? Will they abandon me? Would they like me? Will they love me?"
- 5. Invite the participants for final sharing and a group discussion.

Variations/Adaptations/Recommendations

You can use the motivational quotes by placing them in the room/walls, to present them verbally or to prepare a PowerPoint presentation.





In Search for the Purpose

Self-discovery and reflection

Objectives

- To reflect upon what kind of life we want;
- To reflect and find hints on what one's life purpose is;
- To identify what the direction of one's present life is and to think about the future.

Timing

60 - 90 min

Needs addressed

Authenticity; Belonging; Purpose

Materials

A4 paper or personal journals and pens

Setting & Environment

No specific requirements. It can be implemented everywhere, outdoors or indoors.

Methodology step by step

Lead the participants through the following steps by giving the questions and time to reflect and write. In order to motivate participants, create a reflective mood. To direct their thoughts, use the following quotes: "Your most difficult task is to find out which job is right for you, and then to indulge yourself in it with all your heart and soul." - Rabindranath Tagore

"Patience is the most heroic virtue, and it is precisely because seemingly there is nothing heroic in it."
- Giacomo Leopardi

"Try NOT. DO or DO NOT. There is no TRY." - Master Yoda

"It is very important to do what you are really excited about. Only then will you bless life at the threshold of death." - Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

"The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook." - William James

"Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away." - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

- 1. Invite the participants to reflect on and write the answers of the following questions:
 - a. Where are you heading to?
 - b. Who directs you there? Who leads you?
 - c. Where is your home, your love, your life?
 - d. What meaning do YOU give to your life?
 - e. Are you aware/conscious of what really happens in your life?
 - f. Why do you live? (the purpose of life)
- 2. Make the following statement: "If you find the direction and purpose of your life, you will also define your vision of success and meaningful life." Ask the group to reflect and discuss the following: "How to be satisfied at the end of your life?"
- 3. Present the following fact: "What stands behind success is persistence, specialized training, perseverance, patience, knowledge." Invite the participants for a group discussion.
- 4. Make the following conclusion: "Stay persistent and do not postpone anything for Tomorrow. Because Tomorrow will become Today, which will have its own Tomorrow... that will never become Today... Act Now! Make the first step Today"! Invite the participants to plan their first step and give them time to implement it.
- 5. Invite the participants for a final sharing and a group discussion.



Variations/Adaptations/Recommendations

- You can use the motivational quotes by placing them on the walls in the room, by presenting them verbally or by preparing a PowerPoint presentation;
- If you work with young adults or people who already work you may add the following questions:
 - "Does your calling and profession match?"
 - o "Would you continue to do the same thing if you now receive 10 million euro?"







My First Meditation

A basic guided-meditation technique for beginners

Objectives

- To release stress accumulated in everyday life;
- To enhance self-awareness, self-confidence, purposefulness and kindness;
- To encourage self-control and perseverance;
- To foster developing a focus of mind.

Timing

15 - 30 min.

Needs addressed

Purpose; Well-being

Materials

No special materials needed. Small pillows can be used for sitting. Relaxing music may help to reduce the tension. Printed meditation script for the facilitator.

Setting & Environment

If practiced with beginners it is good to implement it indoors, in a quiet room in order to avoid distraction.

Methodology step by step

Recommendations for using a meditation script:

- Pause frequently. It is very common to read too quickly what seems to be a very slow pace when reading, is not nearly as slow when listening! Take at least two or three breaths between each phrase. Pausing in the middle of a phrase can be effective as well;
- Concentrate on saying each word clearly and slowly, but not so slow as to be distracting (a bit of practice will help you adjust your reading style to your own preferences);
- Read the script with a background music, if you wish. Choose music without lyrics that you find relaxing;
- Read the script at a low volume, adjusted so it is loud enough to hear without straining, but quiet enough to be calm and relaxing;
- 1. Introduce the participants to what will follow. Give them an overview of what meditation is, what the benefits are and invite them to try it with open hearts and minds;
- 2. Invite them to get in a relaxed position and start reading the script:

"This breathing meditation script will guide you to relax by focusing on your breathing.

During this breathing meditation, you will focus on your breath. This will calm your mind and relax your body.

There is no right or wrong way to meditate. Whatever you experience during this breathing meditation is right for you. Don't try to make anything happen, just observe.

Begin by finding a comfortable position, but one in which you will not fall asleep. Sitting on the floor with your legs crossed is a good position to try.

Close your eyes or focus on one spot in the room. Roll your shoulders slowly forwards and then slowly back. Sway your head slowly from side to side, lowering your left ear toward your left shoulder, and then your right ear toward your right shoulder. Relax your muscles.

Your body will continue to relax as you meditate.

Observe your breathing. Notice how your breath flows in and out. Make no effort to change your breathing in any way, simply notice how your body breathes. Your body knows how much air it needs.





Sit quietly, seeing in your mind's eye your breath flowing gently in and out of your body.

When your attention wanders, as it will, just focus back again on your breathing. Notice any stray thoughts, but don't dwell on them. Simply let the thoughts pass.

See how your breath continues to flow...deeply... calmly.

Notice the stages of a complete breath... from the inhale... to the pause that follows... the exhale... and the pause before taking another breath...

See the slight breaks between breaths.

Feel the air entering through your nose... picture the breath flowing through the cavities in your sinuses and then down to your lungs...

As thoughts intrude, allow them to pass, and return your attention to your breathing. (Pause)

See the air inside your body after you inhale, filling your body gently. Notice how the space inside your lungs becomes smaller after you exhale and the air leaves your body. Feel your chest and stomach gently rise and fall with each breath.

Now as you inhale, count silently... one. As you exhale, count...one. Wait for the next breath, and count again... one

Exhale...one. Inhale...one. Exhale...one

Continue to count each inhale and exhale as "one."

(Pause)

Notice now how your body feels. See how calm and gentle your breathing is, and how relaxed your body feels.

Now it is time to gently reawaken your body and mind. Keeping your eyes closed, notice the sounds around you. Feel the floor beneath you. Feel your clothes against your body.

Wiggle your fingers and toes. Shrug your shoulders.

Open your eyes, and remain sitting for a few moments longer.

Straighten out your legs, and stretch your arms and legs gently.

Sit for a few moments more, enjoying how relaxed you feel, and experiencing your body reawakening and your mind returning to its usual level of alertness."

3. Invite the participants for sharing feelings and insights.

Variations/Adaptations/Recommendations

When the group is experienced enough, you can use more complex techniques that include body parts relaxation, visualizations and imagery.





RECOMMENDATIONS

In the recommendations section we provide you with more articles and books, videos and web pages related to the topics of this manual:

Suggested articles

- Council of Europe and European Commission, (2002): T-Kit on Training Essentials http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/t-kit-6-training-essentials?inheritRedirect=true
- Helmut Fennes and Hendrik Otten (2008): Quality in non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-1615/TrainingQualityandCompetenceStudy.pdf?
- Developing Facilitation Skills A Handbook for Group Facilitators Patricia Prendiville; Updated December 2002;
 New Edition 2008; ISBN 978-1-905485-67-3
- Compass Manual for human rights education with young people http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/eycb/Source/Compass 2012 FINAL.pdf
- Experiential Learning: A Best Practice Handbook for Educators and Trainers http://www.amazon.com/Experiential-Learning-Practice-Handbook-Educators/dp/0749444894
- Quality Youth Work A common framework for the further development of youth work. Report from the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems in the EU Member States - http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/quality-youth-work_en.pdf

Suggested books

- The Element Ken Robinson http://www.amazon.com/The-Element-Finding-Passion-Everything/dp/0143116738
- Lateral Thinking: Creativity Step by Step Edward de Bono http://www.amazon.com/Lateral-Thinking-Creativity-Perennial-Library/dp/0060903252
- Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life Marshall B Rosenberg http://www.amazon.com/Nonviolent-Communication-A-Language-Life/dp/1892005034
- The Way of Council Jack Zimmerman http://www.amazon.com/The-Way-Council-Jack-Zimmerman/dp/1883647053
- Emotional Intelligence Daniel Goleman http://www.amazon.co.uk/Emotional-Intelligence-Matter-More-Than/dp/0747528306
- Start with why Simon Sinek http://www.amazon.com/Start-Why-Leaders-Inspire-Everyone/dp/1591846447
- Experience and education John Dewey http://www.amazon.com/Experience-And-Education-John-Dewey/dp/o684838281
- Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice http://www.amazon.com/Multiple-Intelligences-Horizons-Theory-Practice/dp/0465047688/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8
- Plotkin, B. (2008), Nature and the human soul, New World Library, Novato, California, ISBN: 9781577315513
- Plotkin, B. (2003), Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche, New World Library, Novato, California, ISBN: 1-57731-422-0
- Plotkin, B. (2013), Wild Mind: A Field Guide to the Human Psyche, New World Library, Novato, California, ISBN: 978-1608681785





Suggested video

- Top documentaries http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/
- The school of life YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/user/schooloflifechannel
- Ultimate camp resource YouTube channel with lots of videos https://www.youtube.com/user/ultimatecampresource
- How We Learn Synapses and Neural Pathways https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEwg8TeipfQ
- Character Education with Outward Bound (Outdoor education) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFoW-rbXegU
- Democratic schools: Imagine a School...Summerhill https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZE20ylESsY4
- The Forbidden Education documentary https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RBBVL1Saho
- Billions in Change Official Film https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY7f1tgygao
- Ken Robinson on Passion https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M8Hl5MUr8w
- TED-ED Lessons worth sharing http://ed.ted.com/
- Medicine wheel 1,2,3 https://youtu.be/tK-RdmQwlvI; https://youtu.be/3HF1UBY2vjQ
- Heroes journey https://youtu.be/YqIJUJmnc-Y;
- Eco-centric development https://youtu.be/ITWJ3aUJ4jA;
- Shamanism https://youtu.be/BmRhBdNIh1A;
- John Trudell https://youtu.be/q2WEVdNQAxE
- Nature https://youtu.be/Ji6q2HSUNKU
- Rites of passage https://youtu.be/z6y6AtWycao; https://youtu.be/b97HcFYy7AM
- Few presentations of Bill Plotkin:
 - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFodR1XCNYQ&t=267s
 - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITWJ3aUJ4jA&t=2108s
 - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgT2AQ3Yvfs&t=258s

Suggested web pages

- Take free online classes from 120+ top universities and educational organizations https://www.coursera.org/
- Resources, tools, and solutions for teachers, administrators, and parents. http://www.edutopia.org/
- The Heroic Imagination Project (HIP) is a non-profit organization that teaches people how to take effective action in challenging situations. http://heroicimagination.org/
- Ultimate camp resource (collection of games and outdoor activities) http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/
- Salto Tool Box Hundreds of useful tools for learning for youth work and training activities https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/
- Solution Focused Therapy http://www.sfbta.org/about_sfbt.html
- SALTO Educational Tools Portal http://educationaltoolsportal.eu/platform/
- Animas Valley Institute (Bill Plotkin's organization) https://animas.org/
- Animas Valley Institute programs https://animas.org/programs/
- Schumacher College https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/





- The Way of council instructions http://educationaltoolsportal.eu/en/tools/way-council
- Wilderness awareness school resources and courses https://wildernessawareness.org/
- The list of activities for each stage of the Wheel http://natureandthehumansoul.com/newbook/experiential.htm
- The book Nature and the Human Soul http://natureandthehumansoul.com/newbook/
 The book Wild Mind http://www.wildmindbook.com/
- These are two great soul poets:
 - David Whyte http://www.davidwhyte.com/#home
 - Mary Oliver http://peacefulrivers.homestead.com/maryoliver.html
- Joanna Macy:
 - o http://www.joannamacy.net/
 - http://www.joannamacy.net/thegreatturning.html
- Free Guided Meditations http://marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations
- Guided Mindfulness Exercises http://www.freemindfulness.org/download
- Guided Meditations https://www.tarabrach.com/quided-meditations/
- © Guided Meditation Audio http://www.fragrantheart.com/cms/free-audio-meditations
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction https://palousemindfulness.com/
- Free Mindfulness Audios http://www.padraigomorain.com/audio.html
- http://www.ipositive-education.net/
- Spiritual Humour http://www.enlightened-spirituality.org/Spiritual Humor.html
- Meditation and Spirituality http://www.enlightened-spirituality.org/meditation.html
- Articles about shamanism http://www.shamanism.dk/library.htm
- Diagram of Heroes Journey https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/1/1b/Heroesjourney.svg/2000px-Heroesjourney.svg.png
- Articles by Stan Grof http://www.stanislavgrof.com/page-7/

Suggested TED talks

- Sugata Mitra: Kids can teach themselves 2007 http://www.ted.com/talks/sugata_mitra_shows_how_kids_teach_themselves
- Sugata Mitra: The child-driven education 2010 http://www.ted.com/talks/sugata_mitra_the_child_driven_education
- Sugata Mitra Build a School in the Cloud 2013 http://www.ted.com/talks/sugata_mitra_build_a_school_in_the_cloud
- Ken Robinson Do schools kill creativity? 2006 http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity
- Ken Robinson Bring on the learning revolution! 2010 http://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_bring_on_the_revolution
- Ken Robinson How to escape education's Death Valley 2013 http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_how_to_escape_education_s_death_valley
- Jullien Gordon: How to graduate college with a job you love & less debt https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29tJAqc54RA





- The new era of positive psychology http://www.ted.com/talks/martin_seligman_on_the_state_of_psychology#t-1190263
- The happy secret to better work http://www.ted.com/talks/shawn achor the happy secret to better work#t-96586
- Want to be happy? Be grateful http://www.ted.com/talks/david_steindl_rast_want_to_be_happy_be_grateful
- What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness http://www.ted.com/talks/robert_waldinger_what_makes_a_good_life_lessons_from_the_longest_study_on_hap_ piness
- Want to be happier? Stay in the moment https://www.ted.com/talks/matt_killingsworth_want_to_be_happier_stay_in_the_moment?language=en_
- Mindfulness, meditation and the brain https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AqgMo1Po5E
- All it takes is 10 mindful minutes http://www.ted.com/talks/andy_puddicombe_all_it_takes_is_10 mindful_minutes
- Nature, beauty, gratitude http://www.ted.com/talks/louie_schwartzberg_nature_beauty_gratitude
- Life is easy. Why do we make it so hard? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21i_OCNLuYq
- James Doty speaking at TEDxGoldenGateED https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYfQqbL6Zro
- Your happiest days are behind you: Robert Biswas-Diener at TEDxUNLV https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QTVv9tAllE

Suggested Online courses and Resources by Learning for Change

- Online courses https://learningforchange.net/courses/
- Resources library https://learningforchange.net/knowledge-base/





THANK YOU FOR EXPLORING THIS SHORT BOOKLET.

WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED IT AND YOU HAVE FOUND IT USEFUL FOR YOUR WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

WE WISH YOU THE BEST IN YOUR WORK AND TO HAVE A GOOD HEALTH.

Use it

FOR FREE

Distribute it

FOR FREE

Promote it

FOR FREE

Make the world better

FOR FREE

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