



**HANDBOOK FOR PEOPLE WORKING WITH YOUTH GROUPS**  
**NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PRACTICE IN LITHUANIA**

Ž.Gailius, A. Malinauskas, D. Petkauskas, L. Ragauskas



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UDK 316.3-053.6(474.5)  
Ha234

ISBN 978-9955-9781-1-4

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**It is highly recommended to use and spread the content of this book as wide as possible taking into account:**

1. the principle of respect to authors which is not defined by any laws.
2. user's responsible attitude towards usage of theories and methods described.

# INSTEAD OF AN INTRODUCTION



More than 14 years have passed since the “Practical Manual for Youth Leaders” (1997) by A. Mewaldt and Ž. Gailius was released. It has laid the foundation for the development of non-formal youth education and the use of games – pardon... ‘methods’, as effective means of personal and social development in group work in Lithuania. The book was published in Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, English, Russian and Hungarian languages.

The present book is the prototype of the book mentioned. Our initial idea was to supplement and re-issue the book by A. Mewaldt and Ž. Gailius. However, we came to a realization that a creation of the past millennium was no longer sufficient for today. The youth sector has witnessed an emergence of new phenomena: new structures such as the Department of Youth Affairs, the Agency of International Youth Cooperation, the Association of Non-formal Education in Lithuania, the coordinators of youth affairs; there are new notions such as non-formal learning, education, open youth work, etc.; various structures that represent the interests of young people as well as numerous youth organizations, clubs and centres have been established; the circle of people working according to the principles of non-formal youth education has widened significantly; and a new understanding has emerged – youth work supplements youth activities.

The area of non-formal education has come a long way, the youth leaders from the past have become mature and professional and have gone their various ways in Lithuania and the rest of the

world. Only the most devoted ones have stayed in this field. The former leaders are now heads of various youth and youth-related organizations, they are organizers, trainers, educators of other youth leaders and young people.

Our attitude towards education has changed alongside the changes in the world. We have realized that we have accumulated a lot of experience and insights, and have learnt, understood and improved a lot. Therefore, simply re-issuing the book of the past millennium would have indicated a reluctance to acknowledge the changes and an unwillingness to share experiences – we might have exploded as a result of inadequacy of the situation.

What has not changed is the situation, where youth workers do their job ‘outside the classroom’, ‘outside the family’, ‘outside working hours’ and use the ‘KGB’ (*acronym from Lithuanian. ‘kad geriau būtų’, English. ‘to make things better’*), attitude towards young people. While working abroad, especially in the neighbouring countries, we have noticed that youth workers constantly seek a certain starting point for their self-development. We often face questions like “Who are the young people?”, “How do you understand them?” “How do you work with them?”. Youth workers often express their complaint about the lack of methodological literature. These questions and the expressed needs were our starting point for the conceptualization of our experience and an attempt to put it into this book, and we are hoping it will help youth work to become more professional and less stressful.

As the title suggests, this book is dedicated to everyone, who works or intends to work with young people in various contexts, and is willing to improve. This book can be useful to social workers and pedagogues, specialists of non-formal education, sports coaches, cultural workers, educators, mentors, teachers of music and art, and other professionals, working directly with young people or youth groups. We hope that a youth worker (when he/

she appears in Lithuania as a separate profession), will also benefit from this book. We also hope that this book may be a beneficial source of material to other people related to youth policy, such as, members of municipality councils, administrative representatives, coordinators of youth affairs, and specialists of other educational institutions, who take an active interest in youth work in an attempt to better understand youth workers and young people themselves. Figuratively speaking, this manual might be a helping hand in showing the way and consolidating the professional ground for those in the youth work area.

In an attempt to at least partially respond to the existing needs, we have endeavoured to present different aspects of the youth work field starting with the peculiarities of a young person and the overall situation of youth work and have put a greater focus on specific aspects, related to the youth worker himself/herself and his/her 'professional' knowledge and action<sup>1</sup>. This manual presents practically useful theoretical knowledge and models, provides specific principles of attitude and action for a youth worker and suggests specific instruments that facilitate work with oneself as well as with youth groups in different contexts.

During the process of working on this manual we were aware that it does not aim to thoroughly delineate the 'know how' of youth work. Our goal was to provide at least some significant or basic (in our opinion), aspects of youth work, and provoke a willingness in youth workers to go deeper into the matter and improve in this field. We would like this manual to be a starting point for further development of the youth work field. We see our responsibility and our mission to: present what we follow and use ourselves; and to

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<sup>1</sup> We have put the word 'professional' in inverted commas for a simple reason – 'youth worker' as a profession does not exist. It is rather an activity, which can be undertaken by a wide range of professionals, given that they have acquired specific competences.

share what we have learnt, realized, experienced and use in youth work and in working with people in youth work. We leave it up to you, dear readers, to decide what you want to apply and use in daily practice. In this case, let the young people that you work with be the best indicator of the application of your understandings. If at any point you feel that the manual is of no help, feel free to throw it away and let your own experience, knowledge and professional insights be your guide.

In the process of writing we couldn't avoid subjectivity. In fact, we deliberately did not try to avoid subjectivity, that is, we collected, analyzed, synthesized and presented those practical insights, theories, understandings and tools that we use in our work practice. We know them, we use them and we believe in them. Regardless of the variety of experience and knowledge among ourselves, we were glad to represent the European School of Non-Formal Education, which unites us, the authors of the book, but which, for some reason, is still not legitimated.

We will use the word 'we' (meaning, authors), in those instances where we will be presenting our own experience and approaches. 'We' will be absent in places where we present other authors' ideas.

## LOGIC OF THE BOOK

The first part of the book is called '*Useful Things to Know Before Starting to Work*' and deals with general considerations on the changes that have influenced the context of youth work, and which are worth mentioning, because nothing happens in a vacuum, not even youth work. From this point we take a deeper look at the peculiarities of a young person's age, and the external factors that influence his/her behaviour and attitudes. Then the purpose, goals

and principles of youth work are discussed.

The youth work principles are followed by a description of a youth worker's attitude and necessary competences. There is probably no disagreement on the fact that the success or failure of youth work is determined by the relationship between a youth worker and a young person. This manual puts a lot of emphasis on discussing this relationship. Communication is a starting point and an essential tool of relationship building and work. This book shortly presents the consistent patterns of communication as a phenomenon and how it works in human relationships. Further on, the focus is on the most frequent form of youth work, i.e. group work, or work with a group. This includes a short presentation of group theory, process and dynamics with specific impulses that have to be brought up in different group phases.

The chapter ends with a more elaborate description of the 'learning to learn' concept, which is directed at a youth worker's ongoing development and 'professional muscle growing'. This concept stresses the fact that in any job situation involving humans, especially young ones, it is important to realise that one has to understand oneself and the environment, and learn from it constantly.

The second part *'Let's Not Forget About Ourselves. Sharpening the Youth Workers' Tools'* is a natural continuation of the previous chapter, and is dedicated to a youth worker's personal and professional development as one of the 'obvious' component parts of youth work. The herein discussed models help to analyze and evaluate oneself and one's own professional activity with regard to the young person and his/her environment.

*'Useful Things to Know While Working'* is the third part of the manual, and it deals with the practical models or professional approaches that facilitate work with youth groups. We begin by

presenting experiential learning as one of the essential, most frequently used and effective means of learning in youth work. The learning zone model explains prerequisites and conditions which stimulate learning. The chapter on 'learning to learn' presents the importance of this competence in youth work and methodological guidelines for its development, since it is becoming increasingly important in the fast-evolving 21st century. When working with a group of young people it is important to (fore)see the work direction, in order to know where and how to move. For this reason, we introduce one of the models and tools of working with groups – team-centered interaction (German. Themenzentrierte Interaktion). The purpose of this model is to help youth workers to stay vigilant and distribute their attention appropriately in the situations that arise in a group. The model of transactional analysis is provided as a tool which helps analyzing and understanding what goes on between group members.

The value and effectiveness of learning depends on a person's voluntary involvement in the learning process – this premise is discussed in the chapter *'Active Participation'*. Taking into consideration the reality, conventional work traditions and recommendations, it is often the case that there is more than one youth worker in a group setting. Most frequently youth workers work in a team (if they don't – they usually don't last long), therefore here the attention is paid to the specific subject of team work, its advantages and dilemmas.

The fourth part *'For the Pockets. Methods and Games'* is devoted to the enhancement of the youth worker's methodological competence. At the beginning of this part, the concept of game pedagogy is introduced, as well as its derivative educational terminology – methods as specific 'games', which can be used for educational purposes depending on a situation. In order to establish contact and maintain cooperative educational relationships, several

methods/tasks/games are introduced which help youth groups to move forward, reflect and work on relevant subjects. Youth workers can have those means in their 'professional pockets' and 'pull them out' for use at any moment. The discussed methods may be used in various activities, such as daily youth work, local and international seminars, training events, youth initiatives, breaks, even lessons, as long as they can help young people to gain experience.

The list of used and recommended literature is provided at the end of the book.

## **WE WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS SINCERE GRATITUDE FOR THE BIRTH OF THIS MANUAL**

First of all, we want to thank all the young people, who do not let us become sad and stuck and who provoke society to move forward and reflect on things. We thank our wives and girlfriends for their understanding, patience, supportive calls and cutlets; participants of seminars and training events – people who we continue to learn from and all the warriors of the invisible frontier, who are doing a critical job – working with the most interesting group of society, the youth. We thank A. Mewaldt for being a great example, for drawing the guidelines of youth work and agreeing as well as encouraging us to further develop them; M. Taylor for challenging us constantly; D. de Vilder for the methods and secrets of experiential learning; Dr. A. Deltuva for pioneering courage and inspiration. A special 'thank you' to the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and the Agency of International Youth Cooperation, for joining us to help in the writing of this manual (with your support, we feel stronger), and we especially thank G. Tumosaitė, A. Kviklienė and R. Jančiauskaitė for useful comments and feedback. We also thank the members of the Association of Non-formal Education in Lithuania for discussions on the subject of youth based non-formal education during the past 14 years and the network UNIQUE for inspiration and learning to learn. Thank you to all our teachers: P. Freire, D. Charms, C. Rogers, R. Cohn, A. Boal for the attitude; MC for being a rebel; Beata T for creative space; 'almost a doctor' P. Godvadas for extending the context and basic constant understandings and essential features, and A. Kučikas, the Godfather of Lithuanian youth work. Thanks to the academic community for their tolerance and to ourselves for 'giving birth' and being unstoppable.

*Žilvinas, Artūras, Laimonas and Donatas  
The authors*

# 1. USEFUL THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE STARTING TO WORK

## 1.1. WHO GETS THEIR HANDS ON THE YOUTH? – THE CURRENT SITUATION OF LITHUANIAN YOUTH POLICY

Speaking about the area of youth work, we cannot overlook the relevant context and current situation of youth policy, which is closely related to youth interests. Youth policy can be defined as a sum of systems and means, which aim at ensuring the most favourable conditions for a young person's maturity and successful social integration. Alongside young people and their families, youth policy encompasses various structures that influence a young person's situation and socialization. Contemporary youth policy develops into two main directions: 1) **ensuring youth interests in individual areas of public policy** – education and science, culture, sports, labour and occupation, housing, health care and other areas; 2) **development of youth work as a specific area of youth policy**. In practice, both areas supplement each other and overlap.

Today we are glad that every area of public policy, be it social, educational (including physical education and sports), cultural and environmental, pays a certain amount of attention and funds to the youth and considers various possibilities for solving problems and ensuring their purposeful occupation. All of those areas have their own priorities, peculiarities and working mechanisms. One could argue whether their attention to youth is sufficient or not, whether the proposed means are effective and relevant to a young person, but it is not the goal of this book. The most important thing is that attention is being paid to youth. The greatest difficulty, which is worth mentioning, is that due to numerous reasons, the cooperation between those areas is inefficient, since every area works rather individually. This, in turn, makes it difficult for youth work to develop in a qualitative and integral way. The efforts of the Department of Youth Affairs under MSSSL, the Lithuanian Council of Youth Organizations and youth affairs coordinators in municipalities, are not enough to strengthen the integral youth policy on interinstitutional and interdepartmental levels. On a local level, youth representative institutions are also incapable of representing the needs of youth and youth organizations due to various reasons. It is important to mention that currently no official institution represents the interests of youth workers. They are partially represented by the Association of Non-formal Education in Lithuania, but only on those matters which deal with the content and the quality of youth work.

On a more optimistic note, we want to emphasize the fact that youth are represented in all areas of public policy. The Department of Youth Affairs (DYA) under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour makes a special effort to develop youth policy, especially in the area of youth work. As the area of youth work continued to grow and a solid ground was established for open youth work, which, in turn, lead to the establishment of open youth centres and spaces, the need and importance of a 'professional' youth

worker became apparent. This was because youth workers were facing increasingly greater challenges. 'Legally', no institution was responsible for preparing such specialists in Lithuania. It meant that anyone who had anything to do with young people could call themselves a youth worker and engage in youth work.

In 2009, an interdisciplinary working group was formed, which 'installed' youth workers as the main competent professionals for youth work, starting with the definition of a 'youth worker' and finishing with clarifying their functions, responsibilities and competences. In 2010, under the order of the Department of Youth Affairs (DYA), the certification of youth workers' competences was carried out, and the methodology for youth worker certification was created. It was created by the members of the Association of Non-Formal Education Lithuania, who based their work on Lithuanian and foreign experience. Its main goal was to have a system of qualified youth specialists, called youth workers. The system is open to all areas of public policy, which means that anyone who invests part of their time into youth work (for instance, by organizing voluntary activities and events in their local area), has an opportunity to obtain a youth worker certificate, given that their competences correspond to the requirements of the certification methodology<sup>2</sup>. One of the most important aspects of it, is that people obtain this qualification in a non-formal way, that is, they do not need to graduate from an institution of higher education, instead they obtain it by taking part in competency improvement events.

To conclude, considering the afore-mentioned difficulties and dilemmas, the government has recently been paying a lot of attention to the development and improvement of youth work as a separate direction of youth policy (alongside youth activities), starting with educating professionals in this area. What we would

like to see in the vision of youth work in Lithuania is a strong system of youth worker training and youth work being carried out by qualified professionals.

## 1.1. ACTORS IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH WORK

Speaking precisely, these are certain institutions with certain professionals – governmental and non-governmental organizations. We will shortly present some of these institutions and specialists.

Youth organisations make a huge contribution to solving different youth-related problems. These organisations frequently have a status of association and act on local, municipality and national levels. Young people can become involved in programmes and activities that often correspond to directions of public youth policy: education on citizenship and democracy, promotion of voluntary activity and entrepreneurship, leadership education, etc. Their prevailing model is 'youth to youth', which means that most youth workers are below the age of 29. On the national level, there are no specific qualifications or competence requirements for those working in this area. Depending on the particularity of an activity, the right to decide on who's suitable for work and who is not is left to organizations themselves. They can be people with a degree in the social, humanitarian, or technical fields or any other area. People who haven't yet got a degree or don't plan on getting one are also free to become youth workers.

There are some institutions whose work is based on the principle of being 'specialists to youth'. In practice, the work mostly manifests as so-called 'youth services', who aim to provide clearly specified services: information, consultation, psychological or professional orientation, job seeking, etc. It is often the case that institutions of this type also act as youth organizations, i.e. young people gather

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<sup>2</sup> The complete certification methodology may be found [www.jrd.lt](http://www.jrd.lt)

here to look for opportunities, and the focus is on previously mentioned areas. There are more types of youth organizations, but it is hard to define them due to an insufficient legal basis and lack of a clear-cut system because in practice various forms of youth work are intertwined.

Another area of youth work, which is gaining increasingly more ground is open youth work centres. Their main goal is to reach and work with 'unorganized', 'free' youth and offer low threshold services. 'Low threshold' means that there are no requirements or criteria that would limit young people's possibilities of becoming involved in and initiating activities. On the contrary, an effort is made to work with these young people who are neglected by others. These centres are run by people with a social-pedagogical focus, who are most often called youth workers<sup>3</sup>.

One more area of youth activity is the youth initiative which is based on the principle 'youth for themselves'. Here young people have an opportunity to generate ideas, realize their dreams and create projects without or with minimal help from adults. The initiatives are encouraged and maintained by non-governmental organizations and religious communities, institutions of non-formal, culture and sports education.

Experience in non-formal education and learning has extra value for professionals of various areas. This form is very popular among young people. The previously active programme 'Youth' that was held by the European Commission and the current 'Youth in Action Programme', which is administered in Lithuania by the Agency of International Youth Cooperation (JTBA), have contributed the most to its popularity.

Volunteers are usually actively involved in all of the mentioned forms. For youth workers they are both a resource and a target

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<sup>3</sup> See: Concept of Open Youth Centres and Spaces, approved by the director of Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour on the 7th of April, 2010, in accordance to the order No. 2V-38-(1.4); pg. 6

group, which requires separate attention and support. Volunteers can be young, young adults or adult people. The situation of youth work would only be (sadly) harder without them.

Regardless of their form, all of the actors, except those in youth initiatives have a certain 'standard' legal status, which defines non-governmental organizations, and which can be freely chosen by newly established institutions in accordance to the existing laws of the Republic of Lithuania. The most frequent legal statuses are those of public institutions (most frequently various youth centres or other youth institutions), associations (most frequently various organizations representing youth or youth interests), and charity support foundations (most frequently institutions providing specialized youth services). Legal status is granted regardless of the policy domain under which an institution is being established.

This procedure has its positive and negative sides. The main advantage is that the legal status can be freely chosen depending on the activity. The main disadvantage is that it is hard to discern specialization in institutions working in the youth field, that is, it's hard to say what specific activity those institutions are engaged in. There are forms of youth work that are mixed up in their legal status and have not been rectified and thus make it very hard to see the differences and similarities among the institutions.

This uncertainty has a crucial influence on the further development of the youth work area because organizations tend to compete due to the prevalent mechanism of funding, and it is often the case that they duplicate activities in a small territorial unit. It prevents a more efficient (and economic), distribution of services and human resources, and inhibits the improvement of the quality of youth work and its journey to professionalism.

Open youth centres are most purposeful and clear in their establishment and development. They have concepts and principles regarding the activities and receive increasingly more attention from the state.

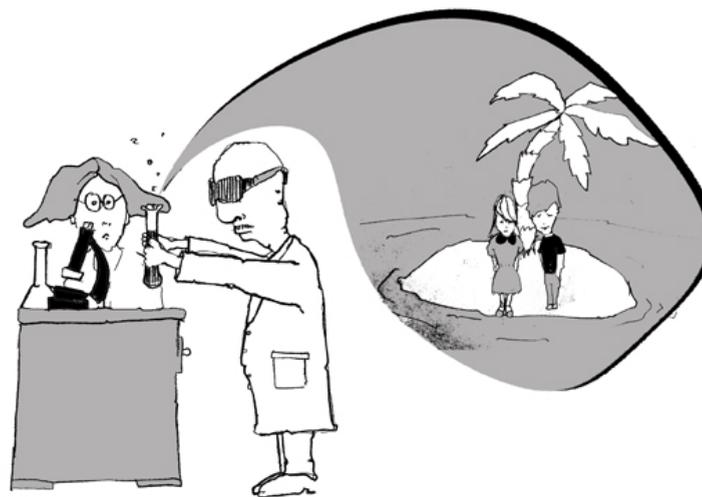
Despite the mentioned difficulties, there are many hope-raising improvements, and most importantly, most youth workers are constantly improving; becoming more competent and sharing their knowledge in order to be more professional in one or another work context. Also, a wish and need for improvement is felt. It is extremely good to know that at the end, even youth work requires knowledge. Our concern is to help people who are willing to deliver more qualitative youth work to improve in this area.

## 1.2. A YOUNG PERSON'S WORLD – CHALLENGES AND CHALLENGES

Before we start talking about youth it is important to mention that youth does not exist as a group that can be defined in unambiguous terms. It may sound provocative, yet if looked at more deeply, we could base this assumption on the history of 'the origin of youth' as well as different terms in which a young person is defined in different countries. There are also various insights of psychological development and the sociological analysis of contemporary society. We do not intend to thoroughly cover this topic in this book, since the broadness of the subject is enough for making a second book. However, we would like to draw attention to several tendencies.

Youth as a specific age group 'came into existence' in the 19th century at the time of the so-called industrialisation period. Before that there were only children and adults. Children would come of age while working at factories together with their parents, since it was necessary to earn for a living. Children of higher social strata had to imitate the adults in their behaviour, interaction and clothing as well as follow their rules and norms. In many cultures a child's transition into the role of an adult used to be accompanied

by various rituals that are nowadays observed in 'primitive' cultures. This transition depended on prevalent social norms and rules rather than individual behaviour and maturity.



It was only after the decision was made to school the children of certain age and to teach them certain subjects till they reach a certain age that the outlines of 'a young person' as a specific social group emerged. Inevitably, this new group demanded attention since the changes of mind and behaviour became the focus of attention along with the changes of body.

The notion of 'youth' signified the state of 'nobody's land', i.e. being in between the worlds of children and adults. At the time, extracurricular activities for children and teenagers who could not afford education came into existence. There was a group of people who started working with this new 'social construct' that was called youth. Compulsory education gradually led to the birth of youth

related activities and youth work.

The 'emergence' of youth brought eternal challenges and worries. To this day adults and young people have to coexist and it will always be this way. Yet, as the practice shows, it is not always easy. Whatever the times might be, one of the specific phenomena associated with youth is rebellion. The paradox of the situation is that young people rebel against adults, while trying to become adults themselves. Adult values, attitudes and rules face serious challenges since young people test and often try to destroy them (e.g. There was a time when a T-shirt was considered a part of underwear that would never be displayed in public. However, nowadays T-shirts are one of the most common pieces of clothing in summer time, among adults as well. This shows that adults also tend to copy young people). However uncomfortable the truth might be we have to admit that this pattern of behaviour will continue to exist forever. This is the way for youth to find their place in the world. Yet we, as educators, have an opportunity to help young people learn, even if sometimes it is hard to resist the urge of bumping the head (not necessarily ours) to the wall.

As we already have mentioned, youth cannot be defined in unambiguous terms. This can be proved by the fact that different countries define youth differently. The definition is complicated by the existence of numerous criteria. For instance, in Germany a young person is legally defined as anyone from 12 to 21 years of age. At this age frame a person is considered as 'young' and is entitled to all youth assistance laws, national social and other kind of support and services. In Germany, according to the psychosocial development and physical maturity young people of masculine gender (young men) fall into the age group of 14 to 25 years, and people of feminine gender (young women) are considered to be those from 12 to 21 years of age. In the USA, some sources define youth as people from 13 to 24 years old, others – from 13 to

19<sup>4</sup>. In the USA the end of youth is marked by the choice to cease attending school, the right to drive a car, get married without permission of parents, vote, buy alcohol and bear responsibility for one's actions. The Lithuanian Law of Youth Policy defines youth as people from 14 to 29 years of age. However, back in 1996 the concept of Lithuanian Youth policy treated youth as people from 14 to 25 years. As we can see, Lithuania shares some common tendencies with Western European countries.

The common tendency is for the uppermost boundary of youth to expand in length. It becomes increasingly difficult to become an adult due to incessant technological development, acceleration of life pace, processes of 'individualisation', pluralism (variety of opinions and meanings) and other reasons.

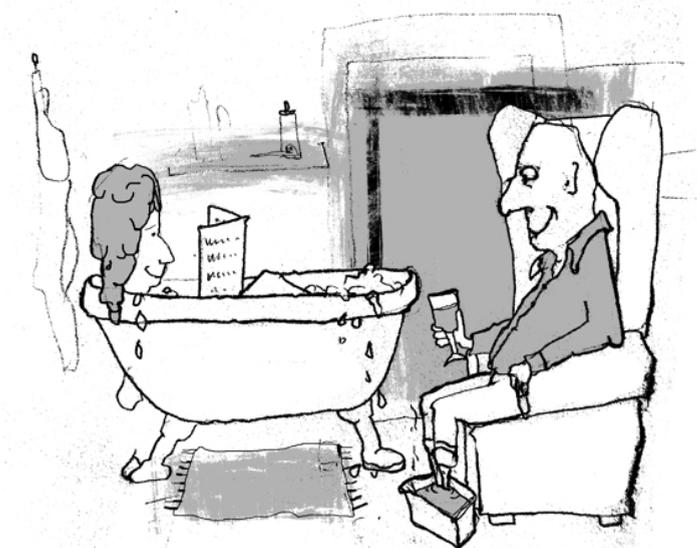


<sup>4</sup> The word "teenager" originates from here: teen is an abbreviation of numbers from 13 to 19 (thir-teen – nine-teen).

Different social, cultural and economic factors influence young people's behaviour, values and thinking and contribute to generating internal tension:

- There is a big change in relationships between different generations. In older days, one would always have to obey their parents. There used to be no discussion allowed on the opinion of parents. The hierarchical-controlling style of upbringing used to be dominant. Nowadays, usually in effort to reject the past, partnership-collaboration style becomes more prevalent, it manifests by taking young people's opinions into consideration, involving them into the process of decision making. It also has downsides, especially if the focus shifts solely onto the opinion of a young person.
- The process of emotional separation from parents is one of the most important tasks at this stage, but it creates a lot of tension. Young people start rebelling at a younger age, create their own 'independent' style of living, yet they are forced to live together with their parents, and after having moved out are still often financially dependent on their parents.
- The confusion among parents can be observed as to the upbringing of their children. There is an increasing loss of the influence and the 'right' models of upbringing. It becomes increasingly difficult to decide what is normal and what is not.
- Changes occur in family structures and models. Different forms of cohabitation emerge: 'patch families', where children come from different marriages and mixed families, which become increasingly frequent due to globalization. There are increasing numbers of illegitimate children; children are taken care of by grandparents or when the grandparents and parents are employed, children are left alone. In the context of social and economic changes parents become increasingly lost regarding the way to bring up their children. The key influencers and the 'right' role models regarding a child's upbringing become increasingly lost – it becomes harder to say what is normal and what is not.
- With its increasing influence media becomes a powerful source of supply of role models. Media is as important in the young persons life as lunch or dinner. TV, audiovisual media, movies, Internet fulfill what belongs to the stage of a young persons life: the focus on the present moment, action, combining disagreements, crossing of boundaries, fictions, etc. Media is where youth can express their opinions, visualize and enforce them, convey them to others and, in a way, get to know themselves. Problems arise when it becomes difficult to distinguish the reality of media from the lifes reality. Sadly, the media often conveys its values and attitudes that are a lot different from those of contemporary education, and this in turn continues to complicate a young person's perception of what is right and what is wrong.
- Youth, as well as the rest of society, become increasingly consumerist as the supply of goods and services continues to expand. Consumption is related to money. If you want to stand out in the crowd – you must have money. This creates constant tension for a young person.
- As the quality of life improves, the social gap expands – some live in an increasingly better life, while others face poverty. This phenomenon forces people to look for different (usually illegal), sources of income to fund their living expenses and their pastimes. Consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other types of drugs increases. The age of consumers has become increasingly younger, since illegal substances are easily attainable.
- Distrust in formal education system increases due to different reasons and it manifests in nonattendance of school.

When someone talks or writes about youth, you will most likely hear words like 'problem' or 'youth problems'. The media is full of negative information about youth. Youth has always been considered as a problematic part of society ("Oh, the youth was different in older days..."). Conversely, the part of youth which complies to the conscious or unconscious image and requirements of society is an exception (e.g. a good young person is an active citizen, creative, involved in youth activities, extra-curricular activities etc.; while the ones who 'do nothing', walk in the streets, look different, have different opinions and act provocatively fall into the list of the 'bad ones').



Therefore, the saying 'youth is a problem' should not be used in the field of youth work (we would make this a forbidden phrase if we had the power to do so). The truth is, the youth have their characteristic problems, but they are not a problem per se. Bearing in mind the aforementioned tension-raising factors we presume that the behaviour of youth is a reflection and indicator (tip of the iceberg), of the problems of society. Adults find it hard to recognize this, therefore they tend to avoid responsibility and delegate it to youth. We get an impression that the whole of society would prefer to send the youth, especially the 'bad' ones, to Mars, or at least to the island of Robinson Crusoe. A lot of nice things could be written on what the youth should be like. But they are who they are. In order to educate the youth and help them integrate into society without losing their identity, we firstly have to get to know them.

## 1.2.1. YOUNG PEOPLE<sup>5</sup> THEMSELVES

There is no disagreement on the fact that the youth are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Different body, mind and social changes are characteristic of this age phase. The main task of this phase is the formation of identity, because it is a period between childhood (which young people want to distance themselves from), and adulthood (which is yet unknown). The search for identity is related to internal and external tensions, also known as critical phenomena, which are often led by conflicts.

The youth phase was defined quite precisely in the middle of the 20th century by criminologist-sociologist F. Exner: "Fantastic hunger for experience, incompatible with legal internal and external satisfaction; excess of physical strength, unsuppressed

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<sup>5</sup> A young person is someone aged from 14 to 29 years old. The law of youth policy foundation.

by spiritually and morally mature persons, spurting to be used; a huge need for acceptance, excessive emphasis of ego; eagerness of development and self-realization, related to persistence and tendencies to revolt against constraint and authority, along with characteristic contrast of insecurity and weakness; behaviour driven by needs; richness of fantasy, courage and hastiness, which do not allow for evaluating the consequences of behaviour, whether it be a romantic adventure or actions that could destroy one's future; instability and changeability, which compete with disciplined educational system; alongside – a strong awakened sexual desire, which takes over the fantasy, since there is no way to legally satisfy it; omnipresent contradiction between wishes,



desires and abilities. It is a hard challenge to a yet unformed personality. It is important to know that these wishes and desires have a totally different intensity than they do among adults. Thinking does not rule, it is being ruled." (F. Exner, 1949).

Young people find themselves in a 'nobody's land' – between childhood and adulthood. It is very hard for them to answer the question "Who am I?" The external world that young people are presented to is often incompatible with their chaotic inner emotional world. The body also changes: a boy becomes a man, a girl becomes a woman. Sexuality

becomes one of the central subjects. The first love is magical and its loss is tragic. It is also the time to choose the field of studies and profession, a change occurs in the attitude towards the future and studying doesn't come easily to all. Parents, teachers often expect young people to do what they often can't and don't want to do. Young people frequently say: "When I grow up, I will do things differently!"

In order to fully understand the development of a teenager's identity, we have to consider the interrelation between numerous developmental processes: physical maturation, social experience, cognitive development. Together with increasingly faster maturation, changes occur in the needs of a young person. We will name a few that apply to everyone, but they hardly satisfy all the needs and desires of young people. They highly depend on conventional dominant social norms and tendencies, upbringing, living place, social status and environment, age, gender, and peer groups. The *need for cognition and orientation (experimentation)* is a characteristic of youth. New experiences in different areas of everyday life are related to the trying of new 'stimuli', getting to know one's abilities and boundaries. Challenges and arising problems have to be solved immediately. They are most frequently related to family, school, professional orientation, sexuality and pastimes. The *need for social acceptance and security* emerges, which manifest as being a part of various social contexts (extracurricular activities, friends, institutions).

The need for an *equal relationship with adults* is also important. One of the objectives of a young person in this period is separation from the family. They orient towards adults and strive to be treated as adults. They want their opinions and attitudes to be respected and seek the same amount of recognition as adults get. Therefore, the experience of equal relationship is crucial. Youth workers have many opportunities to satisfy this need.

Knowing young people's needs and orientating towards them is a huge help for a youth worker. It gives them a chance to 'grasp' situations and subjects that are relevant, meaningful and important to youth. It means that youth workers have to be flexible in their actions, because, as F. Exner observed; young people can be spontaneous and change their behaviour, attitudes and opinions. In regard to the needs, the question that leads youth workers in this case should be: "What is important to a specific young person or a group of young people at this moment, and how can I be useful to them?" In this way the work of youth workers acquires an educational aspect. Youth workers should be wary not to confuse young people's whims and their real needs.

## 1.2.2. SEARCH FOR IDENTITY – THE GREATEST TASK OF THIS STAGE

Currently there exist two main theories of identity. One of them is the classic identity theory by E.H. Erikson (1968), which states that identity is a onetime phenomenon – it is established in adolescence and remains the same for the rest of a person's life. The so-called modern identity theory belongs to German psychologist H. Keupp, who challenged E.H. Erikson's theory. H. Keupp states that a person's identity is constantly changing and building throughout life, but intensifies in adolescence and youth. The principle idea is that identity is made of 'patches' – a person creates it by *combining* different experience from different stages (kindergarten, extracurricular activity, job, other activity), different spaces, environments (family, relatives, classmates, friends), and comparing and assessing different contexts, which are sometimes contradictory and thus bring tension. According to H. Keupp, storytelling and speaking are one of the main instruments of the

creation of self, which help young people to select, 'filter' and connect different experiences into one unit aiming at consistency with the environment and the world (*for this reason, communication takes an important place in this book, since it is one of the main tools of a youth worker, which above all helps in the formation the of a young person's identity*).

We, the authors of the book, join both theories as 'patches', because essentially neither of them denies the singularity of youth as an age stage and its characteristic phenomena.

## 1.3. THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE PEER GROUP

Young people often join peer groups quite willingly: here they meet other young people who take an interest in similar subjects, and problems, they create their language and communication forms.

The phenomenon of the peer groups is universal in almost all communities. Groups of young people can differ depending on ethnic and geographic parameters, but they exist in both Western and Eastern countries and elsewhere in the world. It has been estimated that the intensity of communication with a peer group is proportional to the likelihood of acting outside the conventional norms of society ('inappropriate behaviour'). This fact often overshadows the importance and advantages of peer groups. Deviation of behaviour is not necessarily related to involvement in peer groups. The peer group has a certain influence on some of the forms of 'inappropriate' behaviour, but, as it was mentioned, other social and personal factors also contribute.

Friendship in peer groups is rather fixed. Girls are more likely to create small, exclusive, highly integrated groups. Based on our own memories as well as research on developmental peculiarities, a general tendency is observed that the phenomenon of 'the best

friend' exists among girls, i.e. a peer group among girls might consist of only two members. In choosing a friend they mostly pay attention to social status and tend spend more time together. Meanwhile boys tend to form larger units. Depending on certain sport abilities or special social skills they might overlook social or ethnic differences. Most frequently, teenagers of both genders tend to choose their friends based on the similarity of social layer. Lately (In recent years), some different tendencies of grouping can be observed – regardless of geographic or social position, youth subcultures form where members of a group are united by a certain interest, e.g. music style (hip-hop, punk, techno, emo, etc.); sports activities (kiting, Frisbee, lindy hop etc.), or another social or political basis (anarchists, young bikers). Subcultures have their own characteristic attributes, which stress their identity: a certain hair style, slang, etc. Loyalty and being a part of a group are constituent parts of the general prevailing system of values. However, a common interest is not the only factor which brings young people to groups. The feelings of affinity, safety, and self-worth are also important motifs, which are brought by belonging to a group. In general, peer groups are based on common human values, but sometimes they may be realized in extreme ways. Peers often help each other to establish connections with the opposite gender and frequently perform one of the main roles in sex education, which sometimes results in some rather complicated consequences. Young people's socialization highly depends on society's attitude towards peer groups. When society creates conditions for teenagers to be in peer groups, it satisfies a natural need of young people and so reduces aggressive energy. Youth trends change very fast in modern society. It is important to notice, see, try to understand and recognize them. We are convinced that any form of young people's education (inclusion into the life of society), is only possible without criticism and reprehension. Young people should be accepted the

way they are, by means of non-formal and open communication with them, without using externally imposed behaviour patterns and violence. This is the only way to help young people overcome the challenges of life.

In educative youth work it is important to consider and use the phenomenon of the peer group, because young people spend their free time and learn from each other in a group. This way of learning is non-formal, but it is at the same time very intense. Having set themselves free from the authority of parents and adults, young people increasingly want to take more peer values.

*Therefore, youth work is in almost every case (with small exceptions,) work with groups of young people or in their different forms.*

## 1.4. ORIENTATION TOWARDS THE WORLD OF YOUNG PEOPLE

An important starting point for youth work is young people's physical and symbolic world and the relationships in their social arena. By observing how a young person acts in everyday life, it becomes easier to understand the meaning of their actions and, with the help of reflection, facilitate an adjustment of behaviour and to contribute to the creation of a young person's 'increasingly successful everyday life'<sup>6</sup>. Involvement and consideration of young people's worlds are very important to youth workers, because

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<sup>6</sup> "Increasingly successful everyday life" (German "gelingenderer Alltag") – the term of social work in German speaking countries, which belongs to the so called living-world-directed youth work. It maintains that youth work contributes to young people's ability to independently cope with new challenges and dilemmas that arise in their everyday life. Everyday life here is seen as an environment where young people learn to live. This process is infinite (otherwise it would be successful everyday life).

they help provide a better understanding of them and their life situation. As it was mentioned before, in this case youth workers work with the formed non-formal social networks of young people, also called 'peer groups'.

Subjects analysed in educative group work are directly related to young people's perspectives and interests. The choice of subjects depends on group members. The group should be treated the way it wants to be treated. It is important to try to understand group members as well as their needs and desires, properly and soundly. Desires should not be assessed since a group thinks it's equally important to be able to chat having tea as it is to have a discussion with a politician at a round table.

Subjects are formulated as answers to questions (see: Fig. 1): What do I want? What do I want to accomplish with the group?

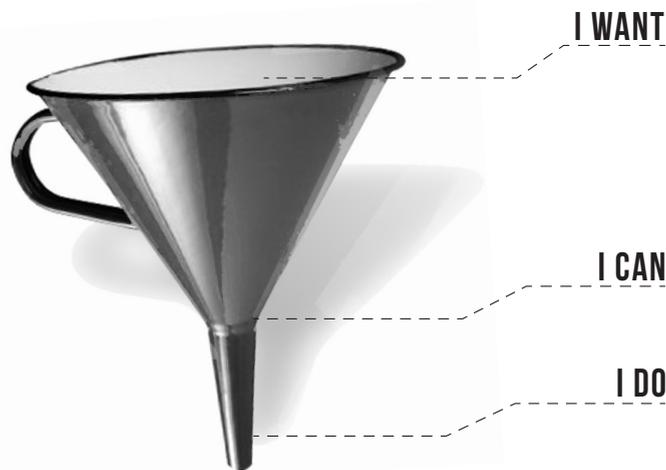


Fig. 1 - Funnel model.

It is not an easy task, therefore in subject formulation, youth workers always have to be methodologically ready to consider the various elements that comprise a young person's reality (parents, home, school, circle of friends, youth organization, church/religious community, professional education, cultural background, environment, etc.).

If the group is not interested (*"but it's so boring!"*), its members cannot make decisions. In that case, a youth worker has to help a group to orient in the situation. It can be done by confronting the group and giving feedback, which allows a deeper insight to be gained into the states of mind of separate group members and processes in the group. The reasons behind unwillingness to act might be an unclear situation or lack of ideas or motivation. In a situation like this, the problem should be named and raised as a subject. The chapter 'Working with a Group' discusses this in more detail.

In youth work, it is important to note that there can be different types of youth. Young people are incredibly different. Also the worlds of females and males differ in terms of upbringing (*socialization*) and awareness of roles. These differences are obvious, they are visible. Therefore, youth work is work with females and males. Females as well as males should have equal possibilities to develop skills that correspond to their personality regardless of the imposed image of roles.

## 1.5. LIBERATING YOUTH WORK

Emancipating youth work is discussed in the 'Practical Manual for Youth Leaders' by A. Mewald and Ž. Gailius, published in 1997. Fifteen years later (the book was written in 1996, by collecting youth work experience of 1994-1995), we can see that the word 'emancipation' is still foreign and the perception of its meaning

is quite narrow. For this reason, we would like to stress the idea of liberation (emancipation) and spread it among youth workers, thus devoting a whole chapter to liberating youth work. By saying 'liberating' we mean mutual liberation – for both young people and youth workers.

## WHAT DOES EMANCIPATION MEAN?

The dictionary of international words defines *emancipation* as 'riddance of superstitious beliefs, all that is old-fashioned and conservative; acquisition of equality'. Yet we are more interested in the socio-psychological definition of emancipation: *'emancipation acts against social dependence, inequality and illegality, conversely – against internal emotional pressures, barriers and internalized unconscious authorities'* (Huppertz, Schinzler, 1976).

The word *emancipation* was used as a political notion for a long time in sense of 'liberation from dependence or restriction'. During the time of the French Revolution, emancipation was used as a term to clarify human rights – rights of individuals were given supremacy over their duties to society and the state. Thus emancipation helps to provoke changes in society, to eliminate one-sided dependencies and social privileges and promote the power of participation in democratic processes.

To be specific, it means equal suffrage, equal opportunities of education, participation in decision making processes in social and state institutions etc. However, democratic structures aren't enough, because democracy depends on social and political settlement and the commitment of citizens. Democracy is never static – it constantly changes and depends on citizens' actions. We think that every generation has to *learn* democracy all over again. We think that in order to be an active member of society one needs to *want to learn*, therefore the process of learning about democracy

raises the following questions: What skills should a citizen have in order to be able to participate in creating democracy? How can these skills be developed and internalized in order to make them part of self?

We see liberating youth work as a pedagogical task, which helps to create and maintain democracy. We think that a liberated society can only be created by liberated people. It is important to understand that one does not become a person capable of living in democratic society in one day – having read a book, having attended a lecture of an intelligent person, having passed an exam or having received a passport. Time and *process* are essential for maturity and becoming a personality.

## WHAT DO WE AIM FOR?

The point of liberating youth work is about the liberation of a personality.

Liberation from:

- Unreasoned external limitations, internalized authorities and interjected values (to develop critical thinking and learning to say 'NO' to authorities);
- Internal limitations (irrational fears, insecurities, complexes).

Liberation towards:

- responsibility;
- meaningful self-expression.

The goal of liberating youth work is to educate conscious and responsible personalities, who are capable of participation in making decisions on important social issues.

Objectives:

- liberation;

- empowerment;
- development of consciousness.

Responsibility is one of the main notions of emancipation and it adds up to personal freedom. Taking responsibility means realistically evaluating the consequences of one's behaviour in personal and social areas beforehand, organizing one's life consciously and meaningfully and engaging in social activities (e.g. helping the poor and unprivileged, protecting the environment, displaying civil courage in presence of injustice and discrimination, taking part in cultural and political life, etc.).

In pursuit of responsibility, it is important to stress two things: first, only a strong 'Me' and a conscious individual can take responsibility, since only a free and confident person is able to take free and conscious decisions aimed at personal and social well-being. Second, taking responsibility is a long term learning process, which requires real opportunities to take part in making a decision. If someone perceives that their decisions are not being taken seriously, they quickly lose interest in the decision making process. This applies to children, teenagers, young, adult and elder people alike. Therefore liberating youth work pays a lot of attention to *group learning*, which educates people as responsible personalities; further, this work offers certain conditions that allow young people to develop and implement their ideas. *They decide* on what is going to be done and what is not going to be done. Since activities are being implemented in a group and social context simultaneously, young people have to elaborately consider different interests and opinions and reach consensus.

Therefore, youth workers face a challenge of liberating young people from irrational, imposed norms, rules and 'values'. We have to develop *critical thinking*, in order to make young people used to asking "is it really this way?" and "how is it related to my experience?"

This is related to one more challenge – we have to be consistent in our thoughts, words and actions. In other words – NOT TO LIE to young people! And first of all, not to lie to ourselves! Not to try to deceive people! And first of all, not to lie to ourselves! Not to try to deceive ourselves. One of the means of testing ourselves is trying to remember what WE were like when we were young – what we cared about, how we saw the world, what we learned from one another, what we learned from adults. How sensitive were we to lies, deceptions, and the double standards of the adult world? How did it make us feel? Where would we direct our energy when faced with injustice?

We would like to refer to the insights of S. R. Covey, who researches the areas of personal development and organizational effectiveness. They coincide with our goals and our understanding of liberating educational youth work. Covey (2004) discusses the liberation idea in stages from *Dependence* to *Independence*. From *Independence* towards *Interdependence*:



Fig. 2 - Liberation idea by S. R. Covey.

These stages are compulsory both for the young people being educated as well as for youth workers. We want young people

to be liberated, independent, free and responsible, capable of making decisions and acting on their own and being responsible for their decisions and actions. However, this is not enough. It is only a transitional level which leads them to *interdependence*. Interdependence requires greater consciousness, broader thinking, deeper self-perception, perception of others, an ability to orientate in an environment, and an ability to recognize and use possibilities. In other words, all that helps to create and maintain mature relationships and opens new space for full and meaningful self-expression.

Youth workers and educators also have to go that way. They need to liberate themselves in order to become independent, self-confident, courageous and active guides and defenders of young people. However, in order to help young people, to protect and empower them, we need interdependence. It is not possible to distance oneself from the external world and ignore it in any way. We have to consider the context, create and maintain cooperative relationship with other partners, institutions, social networks and sectors.

## 1.6. HOW DO WE PRACTICE? OR, WHAT IS NON-FORMAL EDUCATION?

Before the year 2009, non-formal education (NFE) was called youth non-formal education (YNFE), but in our personal work experience we noticed that the same principles and goals apply to work with children as well as to work with adults. Our understanding widened.

Non-formal education is a purposeful educative activity, which helps a person to become a conscious personality, capable of

solving problems responsibly and creatively, and being active in their community.

This is the reason why we use NFE in liberating youth work. We consider NFE to be an essential tool for creating civil society and strengthening it. NFE is also a tool for the implementation of educative goals and youth policy. The meaning of NFE is not to 'harness' young people, having given them the right competences, not to educate them in order to implement goals of an organization, but to *liberate and empower* them so that young people can walk further in every area of life. Freedom + responsibility = meaningful self-expression.

***Where are you heading to in youth work?***

### 1.6.1. GOALS AND TASKS OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Non-formal education aims to:

- Develop a conscious personality, which is able to responsibly and creatively solve own problems and the problems of community. In this way people become active members of society and have necessary competences for leading a meaningful life;
- Develop a person's ability to blend ideas with knowledge and skills and produce creative actions in the ever-changing environment;
- Enhance access to holistic education for a greatest possible number of the educated through variety of methodologies, means and conveyors.

The objectives of non-formal education are to:

- Develop critical thinking;

- Develop skills and apply them in personal, social and professional activities;
- Create conditions where each person can reveal themselves, know their talents and stretch themselves;
- Encourage openness and initiative, consciousness and independence;
- Help a person to understand the changing environment and form a certain outlook.

## 1.7. PRINCIPLES OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

The principles of non-formal education that we provide here are a result of our personal constant understandings and reflections on work with youth groups. The principles were formulated by the Association of Non-Formal Education in Lithuania and we happen to be its active members.

These NFE principles basically coincide with the general principles of youth work, where *free will* is the basis of any process of non-formal education. It is only after we have implemented these principles, that we can expect young people to be *conscious, active (proactive), involved*.

**Voluntary participation.** The educated are free to choose a preferred conveyor and programme of education, participate in activity based on their free will and choose the type of non-formal educative activity, its form and duration.

**Specific environment.** Non-formal education takes place in a specific environment, which has to have certain autonomy (separateness), so that people are safe to experiment and test themselves without any greater chance of harming themselves or others. It should also be an environment where people can take

*full responsibility* for their actions. Even failure or an unjust decision can have negative consequences which could influence the rest of a young person's life. It means that young people have to have a *possibility to test themselves*. Testing yourself enables you to collect more authentic experiences which is crucially important at this age.

**Active participation in the learning process.** People who take part in non-formal education reach certain results firstly through active participation. Activeness is achieved by devoting time to name and perceive one's personal experience. If necessary, it can be achieved by creating artificial situations to acquire new experience and by providing theoretical material for active discussion, creating conditions to question and think of possibilities of application.

**Holistic principle.** This principle means adopting a holistic attitude towards people, educative goals and work methods. Neither feelings, nor mind, nor physiology are ignored and attention is paid to a single person, as well as to the group and the subject. The goal is to relate experience gained during the educative process to reality. Non-formal education combines emotional, physical, intellectual methods that ensure all-round development of a personality.

We practice NFE and believe that a person becomes free from external circumstances, strong inside, self-confident and self-sufficient ("the lord of his own will and a slave of his own conscience", to say it in words of our Teacher A. Kučikas), only after he has realized his unity.

**Learning through experience.** The process of non-formal education is based on experience, which only becomes meaningful when it is well perceived and consciously realized. Therefore experience is discussed (reflected on) and named, conclusions are made, given

sense and applied in real life (for a more detailed discussion on learning from experience refer to Kolb, D. A., 1983).

**Open and non-formal communication.** Non-formal education is a safe process, where people can be themselves by sharing their life experience, revealing their weak sides without fear of making mistakes and acknowledging them. It is also a space for learning from one's mistakes and learning from each other, for the mutual growth of both educator and the learner.

**Creating a non-competitive environment.** The activity of non-formal education is an area where artificial competitive tension is highly avoided.

Competition is what drives the contemporary society. Results (implementing a plan or a task) are a constant demand. Young people are often required to do more than they are capable of, or encouraged to be seen as something they are not. When do they get a chance to just be themselves?

In order to meet the expectations of society (or adults) most young people learn to adapt and survive this way. However at the same time they may hate this society yet, sadly, they neither have strength, nor wish to change it. Therefore non-formal education refuses artificial competition and formal control of results. The experience of process is considered valuable in itself and can be treated as a result.

This principle allows creating a space where participants are not compared to each other, but rather they can assess themselves and how far they have come in their desired way. Here the only comparison that can occur is the one where people compare themselves to themselves – how was I at the start of the educative process and how am I now at the end of the educative process? This process of internal maturity cannot be evaluated in a formal way, because the results may not be visible straight away, but only

after a certain amount of time has passed. (This amount of time is highly individual). Therefore we often speak about the results of NFE as well as the effects of NFE.

**Group oriented learning.** A group in non-formal education serves as a means, as a particular model of society (mini society). A group serves as a setting for solving interpersonal relations, making common decisions, sharing work and responsibilities. Individual learning also intensifies in a group.

The need for individual learning programmes in Western European countries rapidly increases. So far there has been very little discussion on this topic, and if there was, it was only about young people's learning in voluntary service. We often speak about education of volunteers, or work with volunteers. We agree that the task is long and requires consistency. Therefore in our opinion, organizations that, as usual, want to 'harness' young people but fail to devote resources and funds for work with their volunteers, engage in something which is definitely not youth non-formal education.

Those organizations that do engage in educating volunteers know how much effort, time and money this work requires. Apart from the individual learning, volunteer groups, group activities, seminars and meetings are being organized for working with volunteers. Spaces are being established, where groups of volunteers can reflect on their experience, learn from one another, solve difficult situations, assess personal growth and realize acquired competences.

The EU programme 'Youth in Action Programme' has worked in Lithuania towards this direction in the most qualitative, quantitative, organizational and financial sense so far.

## 1.8. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND ATTITUDE

If in this manual we were to talk about youth workers, i.e. specialists of the field, we could come up with endless things that they have to know. But this manual is not devoted to youth workers, but to those working with youth. Here we deliberately avoid the words 'youth worker', we would be ignoring a big group of actors, who are in fact professionals of other areas and to them youth work is only a leisure time or secondary activity, while for 'youth workers' it is a first and foremost activity. There are many people who consider themselves youth workers.

Despite these differences we invite readers to pay attention to several things that apply to both groups of people, since both have to be knowledgeable of what they do with another person, in this case – a young person.

Talking about a youth worker as a certain expert of this field, we cannot conceal the fact that anyone who wants to be a youth worker has to be knowledgeable about certain things. In order for youth work to be qualitative one has to have a certain attitude: a 'professional' attitude, or the so-called '*competence of professional action*'. Understanding the concept of attitude becomes clearer if we refer to the competence model.

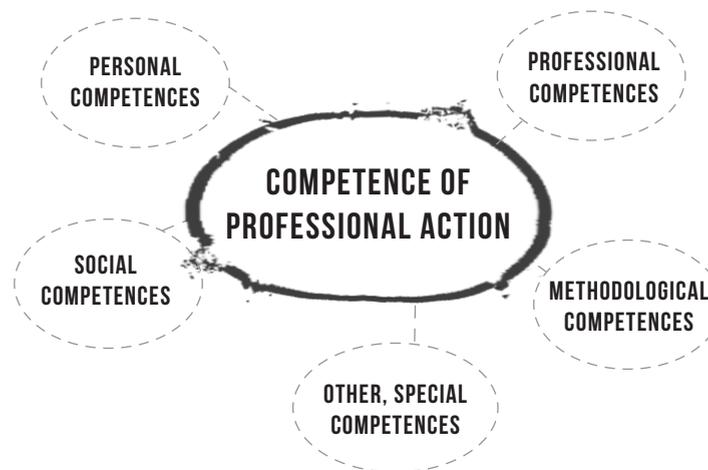


Fig. 3 – Competence of professional action

A youth worker:

- Has to be aware of himself/herself, i.e. of his/her *attitudes* and *viewpoints*. This area encompasses all personal attitudes, acquired through experience: attitude towards self, environment and the people around (men, women, policemen, teachers, politicians etc.), things and phenomena (drugs, alcohol, food, life etc.). Their realization happens through work with oneself and reflection, with the help of oneself and others.
- Has to have certain *knowledge*, theoretical and practical, acquired via non-formal education, development and studies and from the accumulation of their experience. Depending on where, how and with whom they work, they need knowledge about: youth in general and about the ones who they work with in particular; about their behaviour; about groups and

working with them; about methods; about legal matters; about local and broader context; about support structures; about other institutions; about...about...about...

- Has to have certain *skills*. They are learned, exercised and trained. They must be able to: lead the group; step back and grant freedom of decision; be able to stand by or intervene; be equally able to talk to youth as well as to a local politician, or to an old lady at a shop; be able to... be able to... be able to... Tools and methods used in youth work can also be attributed to skills. Don't forget – YOU are, first of all, a tool!!! A youth worker also has to be knowledgeable about different methodologies and so on.

If we attempted to name all the things a youth worker should understand, know, be able to do in detail, we would probably go insane. Our wish and the purpose of this manual is to give everything in small amounts: knowledge, thoughts on attitudes and viewpoints, which manifest in different situations through behaviour, tools methods as well as attitude models, to give something to hold on to while working with young people and groups of young people in real life.

We would be happy if readers would perceive this manual as an introduction to the purification and development of a professional attitude or an introduction to trying the role of a professional youth worker.

Certain questions arise when we talk about work in a group and the role and attitude of a worker group-wise: what kinds of attitudes are necessary to encourage an open, confidence-based group climate<sup>7</sup>. It depends on the viewpoint and attitude you are

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<sup>7</sup> From here to the end of the chapter we referred to the teaching of C. Rogers, A.Mewaldt, Ž. Gailius 'Practical manual for youth leaders', 1997, and own reflections.

exhibiting towards group members, not on the used methods and techniques. As was mentioned earlier – being conscious about your attitude towards people, groups and their members is a baseline before starting to work with them. If you don't respect or trust people, if you are angry and unhappy, you should ask yourself once more if you really need to 'get your hands' on other people.

Leading the group and the style of managing it (i.e. the worker's behaviour towards the group), is influenced by the individual's internal attitude towards them. It is not possible to practice a certain style of leading solely because you have heard that it is beneficial to the group, if it is not reflected in your actual behaviour. Therefore, before starting to work, a conversation with the self usually helps: do people, being in contact with me, have enough space to grow and reveal themselves? This question is derived from the set goals and pursued results of non-formal education, mentioned in the previous chapter. From here arises another question for self-reflection: which of my experiences allows me to pursue these goals and results?

According to humanist psychology and pedagogy, being taken seriously, being understood and trusting the honesty and reliability of others are the factors that contribute mostly to the atmosphere of growth and unfolding in a group.

The most prominent representative of this school and one of our (indirect) teachers is psychotherapist C. Rogers, whose models of work with people and groups of people spread in the area of psychology as well as amongst youth workers. According to C. Rogers, in order for a youth worker to be able to create the atmosphere of growth, three main attitudes, or qualities (possessed or acquired) are important:

- Acceptance (unconditional acceptance)
- Empathy
- Congruence (being consistent)

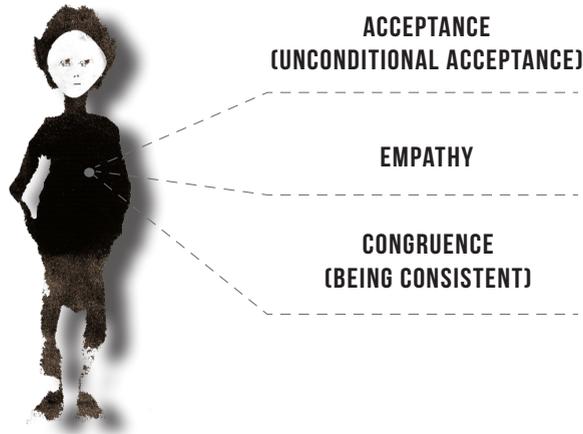


Fig. 4 – principal attitudes according to C. Rogers

### **Unconditional acceptance**

It is best understood by illustrating it with the opposite phenomenon, i.e. 'conditional acceptance': *if you love me, then I will tidy up the rooms; if you are always spontaneous, active, happy, then I will love you...* and so on. We could come up with dozens of examples, because they are familiar from our lives. Conditional acceptance says 'I know what is good for you, I know what you should be; you are right in this case if you accept what I offer or do'. In this case the effect on people is simple – they don't learn and don't understand themselves or their experiences, but only fulfil the demands of others. People like that are not autonomous, i.e. independent.

Unconditional acceptance means:

'I accept you the way you are. I am attentive to you, even when you don't act as I imagine you should. I value you without any

preconditions. I am attentive to your mind, your feelings, your values, your beliefs and your wishes. I listen to you when you express your opinions. I have my own wishes and expectations towards you, but our relation does not depend on whether you fulfil them or not. You are free. I am not indifferent to what you do, but I respect your independence and ability to take decisions, you have your own feelings and experiences. I would like to learn from you.'

The effect of acceptance is: 'I am learning to be confident in myself, guide myself and take responsibility. I can overcome constant fear – so if I do something differently than expected by others I am not fearful of other's reactions. I will learn to be confident with my experiences and appreciate them, use them as a renewable resource for making decisions and taking responsibility'. In other words, acceptance is one of the attitudes which leads us to be conscious and liberated. It is an on-going work with oneself, since if you want to convey that to others or help them to develop, you firstly have to accept yourself the way you are.

### **Empathy**

Empathy means that I am able to identify other people's thoughts, emotions, intentions and personal traits and I am able to react to other people's feelings from my own perspective.

Empathy is closely related to unconditional acceptance – if I respect and accept another person, then I am interested in their world, attitude and life. I am aware that their life differs from mine; therefore I am interested to learn about it and learn from it. A common Indian proverb illustrates empathy as an attitude: "If you want to understand me, you have to walk in my moccasins for one moon".

'I am interested in you; I could understand and describe you. I can imagine being you, I want to perceive you: your situation, thoughts,

feelings, life. I will try to realize what you want to find out with my help. I am wary; I feel your boundaries and accept them. I do not interfere when you say: 'It's none of your business.' This way you can feel that everything is ok. I stay me, and you stay you, but we have a mutual connection.'

Empathy helps to understand and take seriously ('legalize') feelings, wishes and thoughts, and change them or leave them as they are, if there is a wish.

Empathy should not be mixed with emotional involvement. Imagine the following situation: the group leader is crying together with group members, because the problem of group members (bad food for the third day in a row and poor sleep in beds from the soviet times), touched him emotionally. The group leader understands the feelings and thoughts of the group. In this case the leader himself needs some help from outside, because in this case he is caught in emotions and cannot work constructively with the group. Here the youth worker understood the emotions of members and couldn't handle his own so his emotions were not employed in any constructive way<sup>8</sup>.

### ***Being consistent (congruence)***

Unconditional acceptance and empathy are attitudes, directed at 'YOU': "I want to see and be with you this way". Next to these attitudes also belongs the third, which is congruence, or consistency and partially – authenticity, or being yourself<sup>9</sup>. Being

<sup>8</sup> The example is not thorough, but it illustrates the difference between emotional involvement and empathy.

<sup>9</sup> There is a slight difference between authenticity and congruence: being consistent I am myself, but being myself I am not always consistent i.e. my behaviour might be different from the things I say – it's the way I am, in other words, I am being myself, but there is not much consistency in it. In order to avoid mixing different notions in this context we will be using consistency and being yourself as synonyms, since we can see that both are important and compliment each other.

congruent means that my behaviour and my thoughts reveal what I am. My behaviour or speech coincides with the 'inner' me. I try not to pose, not to wear a mask – I am real, together with my weak and strong sides, together with my fears and challenges. An invitation to talk to people via 'me', from the heart is related to this attitude. In other words, if you ask a question, then firstly tell what it means to you. Here we are talking about the transparency of interrelation and conscious acknowledgement that everyone is unique, and therefore *different* from me and can (has to) be that way.

This attitude would be null without the other two. It is only in relation to acceptance and empathy that it can create the atmosphere of growth in the group.

Sometimes congruence can be perceived rather pragmatically: I say all that I feel, think, perceive... regardless of what it means to my 'partners', group members, colleagues, etc. In relation to acceptance and empathy, consistency means: What I do and say has to correspond to what I feel and think. *But* I don't need to say all of what is going on inside of me. I am responsible for myself *and* my 'partners'. I select what, to whom and when I say, do or allow. In other words, congruence is not only channelling of thoughts and feelings, but also being aware that I perceive and feel what goes on inside of me and I put effort into understanding where it comes from. In that case I am free to decide when voicing what is meaningful to me and my 'partner' (youth), and when remaining silent is wiser.

If a youth worker puts effort into integrating those three attitudes into his/her life, there's a big chance that the main goals of non-formal education will be clearer and more tangible to him/herself and to the youth he/she works with. These goals are consciousness and liberation. It sometimes happens that you realize your direction together with the participants. You need that as well.

At the end of the chapter we would like to mention that there

is no 'right' attitude as such, but there is always a youth worker's behaviour and attitude, which more or less fits to an actual situation of a group and the needs and expectations of participants (and the worker).

We also want to stress that the professional attitude can only be employed when you are in relation to someone, in this case, young people. Therefore we will look deeper at the relationship and its meaning here and now.

## 1.8.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP IN YOUTH WORK

### **Full learning**

Inspired by C. Rogers, we would like to start this part (and continue the previous one), with the pedagogical credo of our teacher A. Mewaldt. Andrea conveyed to us the fundamentals of youth work and the aforementioned attitude, which we follow. She was the first non-formal educator to make us passionate about our work, to create a space for reflection, in order for us to realize our vocation. She taught us how to work with groups and value the RELATIONSHIP.

**Full learning** requires my ability to communicate with other people: speak so that I can understand and be understood.

**It** requires me to work together with others and know my power, my boundaries, and my limits of understanding so that I can extend my boundaries, but firstly I have to accept that I have boundaries.

**It** means – not avoiding any conflicts: not trying to run from them, but rather trying to solve them, and also understanding that not all

conflicts can be solved and that conflicts should be taken as they are and integrated into one's life.

**Full understanding** means being able to say "I need you, your help and your support".

**It** is being able to be close to someone without losing yourself and not trying to keep distance.

**It** is being able to get close, which means feeling others and being with them. My openness with others helps me to be open with myself.

**It** means – perceiving your power and your powerlessness, acknowledging fears, realizing your boundaries and your boundlessness; realizing the fact that I will die, but at the same time loving and having joy for life.

**It** is an ability to find balance in being proud of: your intellect and fabulous thoughts, the results of discussion; your feelings and longings; spirituality and religiousness; and caring for your body.

**Full learning** means connection with people who are different from me. They may be weird people, who have different opinions, different social, cultural, religious roots, who might have different values, be of a different age and different health, who ask different questions and find different answers.

**Full learning** is never just a personal matter. I learn for myself, others learn for themselves, but we all learn a common understanding on how to be responsible for ourselves, for our group, our town, our society, our continent, our only world.

**It** is the road of thought, feelings and creativity that leads to greater solidarity, truth, peace and freedom. It is the only way, even if it is very hard and never-ending.

**Full learning** means having hope and being satisfied with little steps, which I can take, but never stop.

Andrea Mewaldt

The relationship is the 'medium' of youth work (and work with other people). There is probably no doubt that the quality of the

relationship is one of the essential factors that determine the youth work results, which are hardly tangible and usually don't come quickly. Relationships are made of interactions, based on verbal and non-verbal communication. There is no doubt that communication is the basis for creating and maintaining relationships. In general, it is not possible to make any stable contact with youth and its environment without the ability to interact. People tend to establish long-term relationships only if they are promised a certain benefit, and the benefit youth workers can share with youth – is the art of clarifying, envisaging and showing. In other words – reacting professionally, and reacting by means of interaction.

## 1.8.2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUTH WORKERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE – AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP?

*“When we do something for our children, we take away their opportunity to learn”  
(According to J. Piaget)*

Let's imagine we want and aim for youth to become liberated and more conscious, e.g. in the field of environment protection. For that reason, we come up with a number of various challenging activities (bike race, camping, collecting trash in the forest, forest clearing, etc.), we frame projects, we get funding and we are very happy about it. When the time comes for the activity, which we have prepared for in theory, we suddenly realize that due to multiple reasons no young person is willing to engage in the activity, because it is not relevant and they do not see any need or benefit in it. The youth worker gets a huge negative emotional charge. The usual reaction is to state: “the youth are passive, unmotivated, uninterested in anything”. Furthermore,

eternal questions arise: “how can we involve unmotivated youth into activities?”, “how can we motivate them?”, “what else can we offer them?” and so on. In short, if a youth refuses to do what I want, they become unmotivated and passive. It's a slippery ground. (*The given example is of general illustrative nature, and provided here for clarity.*)

This example quite clearly and tendentiously reflects a youth worker's initiative and means of pursuing result. That is the worker acts like a car maker – he does things from start to the end himself hoping that a client will buy the car. Unfortunately, this may not happen. The car remains and decays at the car salesroom. You can only comfort yourself by saying: “It's the client's fault, he doesn't know what he's missing...”. But it is *irresponsible* to think of young people as clients, who take or reject workers' offers and carry all responsibility, just because at that moment they are not ready to act how adults want.

The described phenomenon, when workers know what is good for young people and what they need in theory is also called “pedagogical one-way street” (Schmidt-Grunert, M., 2002).

*Note: we certainly do not think that those who are reading this book act namely like this. The example was created based on the experience of authors and other youth worker and, their mistakes (which we are happy about in the sense of learning from them). The mistakes were discussed, perceived and studied and conclusions as well as insights were made which we would like to share. So if readers have recognized the situation in the example they may know what we are trying to convey. If they didn't, we hope that the provoked thoughts would be preventative.*

In youth work, the most important thing is making a car together. That is, both sides work on the common 'product' simultaneously, by together creating a more or less personal and dynamic relationship, based on mutual trust. In this case, the desired result is achieved by equal involvement and responsibility. This relationship

is also called 'partner-like' (equal) and the people who take part in it are called 'partners'<sup>10</sup>. The role of a worker here is to 'assist', 'help' and 'guide' and thus contribute to the pursued result. Their work principle is 'active involvement' in decision making.

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<sup>10</sup> In the German terminology of social work, you can find the term 'coproducers'. There it neutrally reflects the work interrelation, where both participant sides bring in equal contribution to the pursued product or result. In this book, we decided to use the term 'partner', since it is more widely used in the Lithuanian youth work context.

Here we share the daily routine of a youth worker, who works with a group. It might seem that the day is a caricature, but every joke has a little bit of truth. While reading this we invite you to reflect on your experience, your relationships and the roles you have taken in youth work.

## ONE DAY IN A LIFE OF AN “IDEAL YOUTH GROUP LEADER” (IYGL)

06.00 IYGL wakes up with a smile on his face.

06.15 In the shower, IYGL sings a happy song. When hot water appears, IYGL gives up the shower for the first child who woke up.

06.30 IYGL makes breakfast for everybody.

07.00 IYGL wakes everybody up by wishing them a good morning and leads them to the shower.

07.30 Breakfast. IYGL waits till everybody has had their fill, and only eats the food that is left. If nobody offers to wash the dishes, IYGL does it himself.

08.30 Dream interpretation. IYGL helps the children to interpret their night dreams.

09.00 Game time. IYGL gets asked to repeat every game multiple times, he also takes part in it.

10.30 Bath time. IYGL willingly allows to be thrown into water, despite the fact that he is still dry and dressed.

12.00 Lunch. Each child eats his meal.

13.00 IYGL spends his lunch break with children, playing ‘Meow-meow’ and ‘Country-city-river’, and also helps them to write letters.

14.00 Outdoor games are organized after careful preparation. IYGL plays with children and acts 5 different roles at a time.

15.30 There’s a strong burst of outrage, because not all the games have been played. In order to keep kids from fighting, IYGL runs around from one to another and tells them to be disciplined. Later on he buys ice cream for everybody as a sign of reconciliation.

17.00 Time to look for the lost ones it’s time to clear up. All children help heartily. All are busy until they lose the will. But no one is restricted.

17.30 The hour of patients. Neck, head and stomach aches are healed. Little patients have to take prescribed medication.

18.00 Dinner. IYGL manages to call all the kids to dinner. They build a meter high cup tower, and IYGL only gets some hot chocolate for dinner.

19.00 Preparation for a disco. The hall has to be prepared, the equipment has to be brought, girls and boys have to be advised on what to wear and how to accessorize.

20.00 Disco. IYGL is a DJ, dance teacher and the host of the evening. He also heals hurt feet and broken hearts.

22.00 The end of the disco. A tale is told before brushing teeth.

22.30 IYGL prepares a programme for the next day.

23.00 Kids start their night travels. IYGL catches them, calms them down and persuades them that it’s time to go to bed.

00.00 One kid starts missing his home and comes to IYGL’s room. He tells all about his pet rabbit, while IYGL listens attentively.

2.00 IYGL falls asleep at last.

6.00 IYGL wakes up with a smile on his face . . .

### Questions for self-reflection:

- What roles of this group leader could you distinguish?
- What is this person’s relationship with youth?
- What roles do you have to take? What roles would you like to take?
- What is your relationship with a group of young people?
- How would you define your professional attitude in youth work?

## 1.9. COMMUNICATION – THE BASIS FOR ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

To continue the subject of previous chapters, the most difficult and unforeseeable challenge for a youth worker is uncertainty: which specific parts of a common product is he or she responsible for and which part of it is a young person's responsibility? Uncertainty can be overcome by constantly trying to *understand* the young person and *consult* them, i.e. *maintain a dialogue with them*. It is important to want to talk, communicate and consult and not be responsible for everything, or control everything. Certainly, a worker has to have skills to assess the level of young people's responsibility (which is sometimes quite limited), but at the same time be able to accept their strategies, thinking and behaviour models as different, yet *equal*.

It is also important to be responsible for your share of the commitment. In every situation, you should try to work with the potential 'inequality' of interrelation (i.e. the trap of taking responsibility and power), in order to minimize inequality and create a common result and mutual involvement in this process.

In this case, we are talking about professional communication, which is different from an everyday chat with a good friend. Professional communication is purposeful and directed, i.e. it has a certain intention, mostly related to educative purposes. This type of communication, whether we like it or not, is an intervention per se which determines the course and dynamics of further interrelations. Professional communication can be compared to

a creative process, in other words each situation with a young person or group is unique and unrepeatable. In this type of communication, it is more important not to focus on the question "Am I communicating in a right or wrong way?", but rather "What is the effect of my communication on this young person? How effective is my communication?"

The famous philosopher and pedagogue M. Buber describes a key aspect of professional communication, when working with (young) people as being able to act according to the principle of a *dialogue* (ME-YOU). This ability is one of the main conditions if you want to start an activity based on methods.

In order to be more specific about this ability, we want to pay special attention to the following aspects:

*a) the ability to establish stable work relationships.* Work relationships are directed at a target group, in this case – youth. These relationships have a certain (educative) goal. The ability to avoid reacting to situations 'personally' is also critical in a healthy work relationship. Since initial contact is not always made based on free will, it is important for youth workers to be able to evaluate how, when and based on what intention the relationship is established, to know the context, stabilize the relationship, react to positive and negative feedback, and evaluate the quality of relationship.

*b) the ability to create communication encouraging situations.* Professional relationships are always 'marginal', i.e. you can easily lose a 'spirit' (young person) if something goes wrong. Therefore the relationship has to be taken care of, it has to be nurtured and renewed. Each communication happens via multiple channels, it is a rather big challenge to workers – they have to perceive and 'decode' the 'messages' sent by young people.

c) *the ability to understand according to the principle of a dialogue.* Here it is important to know that people (re)construct their realities, and therefore their understanding, subjectively. While trying to empathize with a young person, it is necessary to understand their motives of behaviour and their worries. We often think we 'understand' another person and their worries, when actually we 'diagnose according to ourselves'. This is one of the traps of 'hearing' a real concern or need. It is always useful to check your perceptions together with a young person.

d) *the ability to negotiate and find agreement according to the principle of a dialogue.* It is necessary for a youth worker to have the desire and ability to negotiate and look for answers to relevant questions and dilemmas – In which direction do we want to move? What common goals do we want to set? What responsibilities can each side take? Since youth work is based on cooperation between a young person and an educator (chapter 'Active Participation' discusses it in greater detail), 'pushing forward' your own approach as 'more right' is counter productive to the principles of education, even if it is based on professional argument or right.

e) *the ability to be 'multilingual'.* A youth worker faces not only young people, but also other 'actors' within the youth arena (parents, communities, city councils, other institutions, cultures, different interests). Various interactions (interrelations) occur between them and the youth, sometimes with the help of youth workers, sometimes not. Therefore it is important that the youth worker understands, talks and 'translates' the 'linguistic codes' that prevail among the mentioned groups.

f) *the ability to create communication networks.* Creation of communication networks is a common work of different professional groups for the good of youth. Socially active people

and volunteers can also make a contribution. In Lithuania it is not easy and simple to cooperate and communicate on inter-institutional levels, for different reasons. Providing institutional help systematically is currently one of the greatest challenges, although some positive tendencies are noticeable on the local level.

## 1.9.1. ON COMMUNICATION AS A PHENOMENON

Earlier we talked about the meaning and principles of communication as the main instrument of establishing and maintaining relationships in youth work. In this chapter we would like to look deeper at communication from a theoretical perspective. We want to pay attention to communication as a process and as a phenomenon. The leading question of the chapter is: what happens when we communicate and what influences communication?

There is more than one theory of communication. We will be referring to the most widespread in educative area, and which we would call the classic, 'Palo Alto' (USA) school of communication theory and its experience and insights on communication. We hope that knowledge of communication laws will help youth workers to better understand themselves, young people and what goes on between the two.

According to the Palo Alto school of communication, the main premise of communication theory is that human interaction processes are constant and are perceived as *circulating systems* (see Fig. 5), i.e. they have no beginning and no ending. They can be illustrated by the phenomenal questions "Whose fault is it?" "Who started it?"

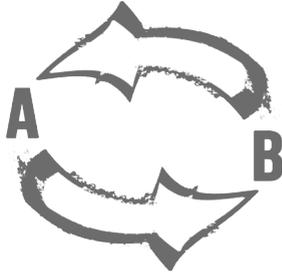


Fig. 5 – Circulating system of communication

According to Watzlawick (2001), we create social realities, to influence each other in different ways. We try to structure our thinking with regard to causative relations, mirroring the classic experiments involving stimulus, reaction and reinforcement. If this process is acceptable to all the participants, they understand each other. But if it is not possible to commonly recognize the causative stimulus – the relationship falls into disarray.

A special phenomenon of communication is a '*self-fulfilling prophecy*'. In other people we *unconsciously* look for proof of our imagination about them. That search selectively directs our attention to those qualities or weaknesses that we expect from other people. These internal processes have a certain influence on other people's behaviour.

For instance, Anselm is convinced that nobody values him. He is angry and unhappy. Unsurprisingly people will probably react negatively to him and thus confirm Anselm's belief. Or a teacher may think: "You are a bad student, you don't make effort and therefore you will get a bad grade" and the student thinks: "I got a bad mark, I am a bad student, so why should I make any effort?"

As you can see from the examples, every side interprets facts in their own way. Both sides interpret their behaviour *as a reaction* to the behaviour of the other side. It is one of the regularities of

communication. Here Watzlawick talks about *interpunction*, which means that one's behaviour is perceived as a cause and the others as an effect. This phenomenon explains conflict situations, when both sides think they are right.

So, even if we think that we are referring to or perceiving facts, in truth, our brains do not deal with facts, they deal with perceptions, imaginations, fantasies and their constructions.

Therefore we can say that the question 'whose fault is it?' can be answered as easily as: 'what came first – the chicken or the egg?'

This is where one of the most essential recommendations to a youth worker comes in – to teach people not to look for the guilty ones, but rather invite a look at what is happening right this moment from a meta perspective, recognize the commonly played game and find new solutions for further being together.

In this case 'jumping' out of a vicious circle would help, by consciously trying not to practice the chain of 'reactive' behaviour. Clarity helps, when you accept that numerous perspectives and approaches exist in the chain of behaviour, and they are all subjectively right. You can ask yourself, 'What do I want to be?', 'How do I want to act?' – and then try to implement your answers.

In this way, you become responsible for your own behaviour. Even if things do not evolve the way you imagine they should (and this is often the case, since common behaviour doesn't change fast), it does not automatically mean that it's someone else's fault. We would like to note that it is **impossible to not communicate**. It means that our behaviour always has an effect and it is impossible not to behave. Even being quiet or ignoring someone is behaviour. People interpret my behaviour according to their own experience and act accordingly. This is where most of the misunderstandings in communication stem from.

What should a youth worker do in order to avoid as many such misunderstandings as possible? It is important to be conscious about what 'message' he wants to convey and do it openly and

expressly. However it must be realised that the way he accepts and perceives the 'messages' of youth is in within the context of his previous experiences, present mood, etc. In this case, interrogative verification might be helpful. In other words, asking questions along the lines like "Do I understand correctly, are you trying to say that...?" might be helpful.

It is a rather hard road, but it creates conditions for open and clearer communication and mutual understanding.

Another principle is – **each communicative situation has aspects of content (subject) and relationship**. Each has a subjective side, but also a more or less expressed intention – how the message has to be understood by the receiver: "You are a dirty pig" says one man to another, while laughing and tapping him on his shoulder. The other man understands that there is no intention to offend him.

In practice, the following variants may be observed:

- The communication partners have different opinions on the level of content, but they understand each other well personally and accept differences in approaches. It is the best form of the differences.
- Partners 'agree' on a subject, but not on a relationship level. There is a risk that the relationship might end if agreement on the content level weakens (many couples break up for this reason).
- Both levels mix. This happens when communication partners try to solve the problem of relationship level on subject level, or vice versa. ("If you respected me, you wouldn't disagree with me").
- It is particularly hard when the perceptions on the content level have to be suppressed in order to save the relationship. A so-called double bind occurs, e.g. when one person asks the other: "How are you feeling?" And the other responds in a quiet and shaking voice: "Great..."

## 1.9.2. MESSAGE SQUARE

The German psychologist Schultz von Thun supplemented this axiom by stating that every sent message not only has aspects of content (subject) and relationship, but also aspects of self-presentation and wish (intention). He developed the model of message square, also known as '**message anatomy**', or the model of 'four ears':

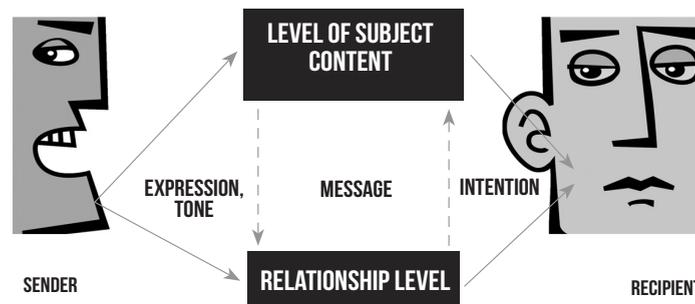


Fig.5 - Model of four ears

The subject content is what I inform about. Every message has information on some subject.

**Self-revelation** (Expression, tone)

Every message carries not only certain content, but also some information about the sender as a person. When we convey a message, we consciously or subconsciously convey certain information about our self and our state of mind. This part of message transferring is both difficult and interesting. In everyday life we constantly try and strive to show the best of ourselves so we do not to come across in any way 'uncomfortable' at that moment. To reach this goal we use different strategies – different self-adoration and 'masking' techniques, which sometimes bring

more damage than good.

### **Relationship**

This is an expression of interrelation between the sender and the receiver. It manifests via the sender's chosen formulation, tone of voice and other non-verbal accompanying signals. The receiver has a very sensitive ear for this part, because here we can detect attitudes directed towards us. In other words, sending a message always means expressing a certain relationship with a receiver; what is being said concerns us personally.

Meanwhile, when the 'revealing' part, from a sender's point of view, has a message about 'ME', the relationship part has 'YOU' and 'ME' messages. 'YOU' refers to what the sender thinks about the receiver, and 'WE' – the relationship between the two.

### **Wish, request**

What is wished to be done (intention); where do you wish to direct the recipient? Almost nothing is said without any intention. All messages have a function to have a certain influence on the receiver. The purpose of a message is to direct the recipient to do, act, think or feel something. The influence can be explicit or implicit. The latter is called manipulation.

*Note: in the context of youth work, words like 'influencing' and 'to influence' are taken quite sensitively, they are highly taboo and their use is 'forbidden'. But from the communication psychology point of view, when we communicate we constantly influence one another and this is a fact that cannot be denied or escaped from. The sensitivity that surrounds these words is mostly related to the aspect of concealed messages, i.e. manipulation, which has negative connotations in our socio-cultural setting and is unacceptable in the field of youth work. Manipulation, in this sense, means that the sender purposefully uses other sides of the message for their own wish or intention, in order to provoke a certain reaction from the receiver ('admire me', 'you will like it there...' and so on).*

We want to once again stress that human interaction is based on the equality or inequality of the partners' interrelation.

Two roles exist in complementary versatile relationships: one partner takes a primary role, while the other takes a secondary role. It cannot be compared to 'good-bad', 'strong-weak', etc. Partners' roles change and shift in the same relationship. Saying that 'a youth worker and a young person have to be equal partners' (and it is one of the main characteristics of the area of non-formal education), is not accurate and true in the sense of communication. It is a generalized pursuit. In a 'healthy' relationship these roles interchange (at one time a young person might take over, another time the youth worker does), and namely this change creates the reciprocity of the equal communication and also the 'fullness' of the relationship and allows staying in contact and maintaining dialogue. On ways to encourage dialogue in group work on a practical level, read the chapter titled 'Active Participation'.

As we can see, communication is an obvious, but also very complicated phenomenon, which depends on different factors: what we say; how we say it; what is relevant in a situation; what occupies our mind at the given moment and how we feel, etc. When communicating with young people, it is important to pay attention to the aforementioned things in order to ensure a continuous 'straightening' of communication and to prevent misunderstanding. We hope that a consideration of these principles and communication processes will not ruin your enthusiasm, but will only encourage youth workers to communicate further and to maintain relationships with young people.

## **1.10. WORK WITH A GROUP**

When we organize educative work with young people, we (most)

often deal with groups of young people. We deal with youth groups, while working in youth centres, schools and camps. A group establishes and lives a certain life of its own. A youth worker's ability to utilise certain group processes for educative purposes is a great strength.

### 1.10.1. WHAT IS A GROUP? WHY WORK WITH IT?

*"A group is more than one person"*  
(Seminar participant's thought)

Knowledge of group processes and the ability to recognize them while working with a group allows one to choose work methods more effectively and organize learning processes more consistently.

Before we start to talk about *groups*, we want to make a distinction between the *notions of group and team*. Being active in the context of youth work we realize that these notions are often mixed. They both have certain similarities, but they are not the same.

- "A team is a small group of people, who have complementary characteristics. They are committed and bear common responsibility for a common goal and methods as well as implementation of tasks." (Katzenbach J. R., Smith D. K., 1992)
- "A group can be defined as: interrelated people, who know about each other and perceive themselves as a group." (AndrzejHuczynski, David A. Buchanan, 1997)

As you can see from these notions both group and team are a certain combination of people. Human reciprocity is characteristic to both of them. People in a team put all their effort into achieving a common goal. They discuss in great detail what they are aiming

at and how they will reach it and they use all the team resources for the pursuit of that goal. People in a group are not focused on the achievement of a single common goal. They communicate; they may cooperate, learn from the experience of common activity and reach agreements together but they often pursue their own personal goals.

In youth work we may encounter groups: in international youth exchanges; via youth initiatives; in youth centres and open youth centres; in community centres; whilst consulting with non-formal youth groups etc. The goals we are pursuing may be different with different groups.

*Orientation towards a group.* Attention is directed towards the creation of a favourable microclimate in the group, in an attempt to create conditions for group members to freely share ideas, try to take certain responsibilities, learn from experience, share feelings and give each other feedback, etc.

*Orientation towards a team.* Attention is directed towards understanding of a common team goal, knowing team resources and definition of work procedures. In other words, asking questions like: 'Who are we?', 'What do we pursue and how we will pursue it?'

Frequently, work with a group and certain team elements are intertwined. For instance, in group formation tasks, which have an encoded pursuit of a common goal, we try to provoke the group to openly share their ideas and realize certain norms that apply to that group, but we do not aim at making a team out of a group, even if the task is quite team-like.

We do not aim at making a team, since this group will not have to implement a common project. Our goal is to tighten the interrelation between group members in order to make them learn about themselves and from each other.

Another example: while preparing a youth group for the implementation of a youth initiative we pay a lot of attention to the knowledge of the resources of a group (here we can say 'team'), perception of a common goal, specific planning of work, and sharing of responsibilities. The youth group functions as a team which implements its idea.

We will discuss team work in the chapter 'Development of Teamwork in Youth Work'. In this chapter we will discuss characteristic group features in the context of work with youth groups.

So what is a group? A group is a living organism. An organism which is born, grows, matures and decays. Many different phenomena take place in a group simultaneously, and they are called group processes. The change in the whole of those phenomena is called group dynamics. The processes of each group have certain regularities, but these processes are always unique and special. This specificity is determined by the differences between people in the group – each group member enters the group with his own experiences, abilities, knowledge, attitudes and personal qualities. And then anything can happen. Group members reveal themselves sooner or later and start interacting: conflicting, going crazy, having elaborate night talks, being happy, crying. A professional youth worker always has to be ready to be surprised and never perceive anything as constant.

Quite frequently in youth work with groups we are asked to compare groups – "How did the others do?," "Did we do better than the other groups?" We try to avoid any comparison deliberately, because it wouldn't be fair group-wise and attitude-wise for us as group leaders. We endeavour to make the group look deeper into their authentic experiences, which take place 'here and now', and not try to compete with some other groups.

Each group's development is different from the other, due to differences in people's origin, gender, culture and subculture, religion, age, education, profession and interests. This difference is a fact and it cannot be ignored, it is not possible to apply the same 'means' to each group, and always be able to fully control the process of a group.

Acting as educators we often have to take up the role of a group leader. A group leader is a person who helps group members to interact and learn from 'what goes on in a group right this moment'. The task of a group leader is to observe, recognize group processes and utilise them for the group's learning.

Being group leaders you can choose whether you take conscious actions to encourage group processes; whether you pay attention to group processes and use them for the pursuit of certain educative purposes. Group development will take place regardless of the group leader's choice. It will take place randomly. From our own experience we can say that a group is a powerful learning tool and working with group dynamics is meaningful, because it has direct influence on the effectiveness of group work, state of mind of group members and the quality of the pursued result.

## 1.10.2. STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Recognizing group processes is one of the most subtle skills of group leaders. A group leader's 'nose' for sensing group processes has to be constantly trained and improved. Strong competence of working with groups ensures a worker's ability to react 'here and now' to group processes and employ those processes for educative purposes. This competence can be trained and improved while working with groups and curiously observing what goes on in a group, how people interact, and what influence a group leader's interventions make.

Interaction among group members, and between group members and the group leader depends on certain regularities, which manifest in a similar way and help group leader to better understand the group process and act accordingly (make interventions: ask, provoke, support, use a certain method, etc.). Group development stages can sometimes unfold faster, or slower, a stage can be surpassed, or the previous stage can be returned to; some group members may remain in one stage of group process, while at the same time others are approaching the next stage.

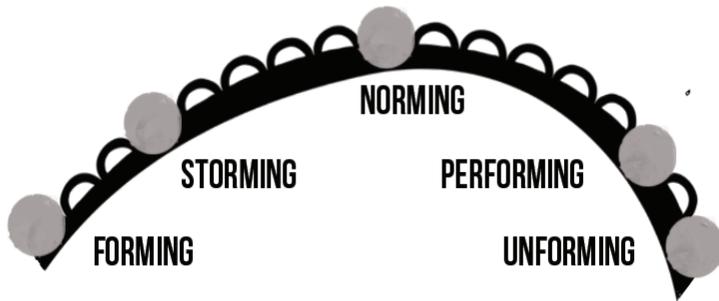


Fig. 6 – Stages of group development

### THE FORMING STAGE: “WHERE ARE WE? WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN? WHO ARE THESE OTHER PEOPLE?” WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE GROUP?

Group members are going through a lot of uncertainty and fears of being misunderstood or rejected. Relationships between group members are hesitant: at first members keep a certain distance in order to feel safe and only display their good traits. Frequently, members of a new group are polite and careful; even if they

disagree with someone else’s opinion they do not voice it and do not argue. However, there are cases when other group members are subtly depreciated or degraded in order to show off. Hesitancy can also manifest via demonstration of silliness or withdrawal. Group members ‘nose around’: explain common expectations, look for common forms and rules (group norms) of being together, yet still do not establish strong relations. Group members look up to group leaders. They generally do not take any responsibility and wait for clear directions and guidance from the group leader.

### THE ROLE OF THE GROUP LEADER

In the orientation (introduction) stage, group leaders have to lead explicitly, since they are expected to do so. They have to properly plan the programme and offer a clear structure. The group leader has to encourage group members to introduce themselves, try to eliminate their worries and offer them a positive experience in a new group. The goal of the group leader is to minimize the existing uncertainty: inform the group on logistic matters (how long the programme will take, when the meal time is, where to live, where the restroom is, etc. – depending on the work context of the group), and also organize introductions in the group – ‘ice breaking’ tasks, name games, introduction tasks. In general, the group leader has to help the group to find answers to the following questions: Where are we? What is going to happen here? Who are these other people? We want to stress that the role of the leader is **to help** the group to introduce themselves and orient in the setting, and not to give his/her *own* answers and adjust the group according to his/her own preferences. A group has to grow on its own with the help of the group leader.

## **THE STORMING STAGE: “WHERE IS MY PLACE? WHOM SHOULD I LISTEN TO? WHY ARE YOU BOSSING ME AROUND?” WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE GROUP?**

Group members have introduced themselves with the help of the group leader. Group members feel calmer, they know each other's names, and can express opinions more freely. The group starts working together. Group members find it easier to express their opinions, which can differ considerably among different members. Group cooperation norms become increasingly relevant, a great need is felt for clarity regarding members' interrelations, decision taking and aspects of leadership.

Group members often express their dissatisfaction with the group work, they criticize the behaviour of other members, and the group leader finds him/herself in the middle of a criticism crossfire. People who can take decisions stand out in the group and they become recognized as non-formal leaders.

Each group member has influence on the development of the group. Doubts appear about what has happened up until now, and what goes on right this moment, therefore a possibility arises to once more decide on the programme, structure and rules of behaviour in the group. The group has to decide on continuing being together and common work.

## **THE ROLE OF GROUP LEADER**

It is important that the group leader pays attention to what goes on in the group and helps them realize what norms (certain agreements) apply to this group. In other words, the group leader should help the group to find out and name what helps them to work together.

The goal is for both the group members and the leader to agree on generally acceptable group norms: how common decisions will be taken, will there be a chance to express possibilities about a different approach in decision making process etc. It means that the group discusses both internal group rules and the role of the group leader.

“Why do we need a group leader?” – The group has to discuss and decide whether they need a group leader and what he/she should be like? Speaking with a group, the leader has to clearly express their own attitude: agree or reasonably disagree with expectations and shortly describe her/his role. Personal and pedagogic self-esteem is negotiable.

The main methods to be used in this stage are developmental tasks of group saturation and sense of teamwork.

## **NORMING STAGE: “YES, WE CAN DO IT!” WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE GROUP?**

Group members are glad about every meeting. It is nice to see each other again and it would be a shame to miss something. The feeling of affinity (the ‘WE’ feeling) increases, interrelationships become more intense – talks become more open and communication flows naturally. ‘WE’ are in a good mood and the ideas are sky-high. Frequently group members start ‘going crazy’ – they do not sleep at night, they lightly (and sometimes not so lightly), joke with the group leaders, enjoy each other and think of numerous ways to express it.

The confidence of the group grows. Group members learn to differently evaluate and tolerate each other. In this group atmosphere, needs are expressed openly and different opinions are exchanged. Group members develop different ideas and are able to decide on their interests and protect them. However, ideas

often fade away, since people and relationships in the group are now a central focus and the group may fail to carry out its tasks.

## THE ROLE OF GROUP LEADER

In this stage of group development, the group leader has several choices.

1. Let the group be, by stepping back. Group members enjoy being together, so one of the leader's choices is non-intervention.
2. Join the group and experience confidence-building processes together.
3. Enhance the feeling of confidence in the group by offering various methods, which encourage confidence among group members. Confidence enhances self-awareness and satisfaction. Group leaders can offer something that forms and maintains confidence in a group. At the same time the boundaries of separate group members have to be accepted and defended unconditionally.

Regardless of the decision you make, it is important to be watchful and supervise the security of group members. Ideas grow sky-high in the confidence stage and they aren't always safe. The group leader has to stop the group in time, if she/he sees that ideas are becoming dangerous. In this stage, group members get to know each other intensely. Life stories and plans are shared and skills of self-discovery as well as relationship clarification via feedback can now be the content of work with the group.

Also, topics that require an atmosphere of confidence in the group (e.g. sexuality, fear, meaning of life, death, belief and spirituality, etc.) might arise. In any case, the group decides on the topics. It is the time when group members are given increasingly more

responsibility for what goes on in the group.

In this confident stage, the group is very reluctant to accept new members. If a new member joins, in order to achieve his/her full integration into the group, the first two stages of group development should be repeated.

## PERFORMING STAGE: "WE'VE ALREADY MADE IT! LET'S DO MORE!!"

### WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE GROUP?

The group's wish to act is unstoppable. It engages in small and big projects. If difficulties arise, the group looks for solutions jointly. Usually success leads the group, but even a failure doesn't stop them. The group wants to expand connections: it establishes contact with other groups and sometimes wants to represent their interests politically. Each group member finds his place in the group. Group members acknowledge one another as different personalities having individual abilities that are all significant. Everyone can make their contribution to the group work. The group communicates fluently, personal and group interests become equally important, the group is efficient. Group members take responsibility for further group work (self-organization).

## THE ROLE OF GROUP LEADER

This is the guiding principle at this stage: what the group can do themselves, they should do themselves. Now the group leader takes up the role of group advisor. The group leader creates a space for group reflection; gives feedback depending on how she/he sees and feels the process of the group is progressing; supports the group in conflict situations; advises the group methodically

and ensures conditions and the means required for group work are in place (or the group ensures them themselves).

## UNFORMING STAGE “ALL WILL SOON BE OVER. WE WILL SAY GOODBYE”

### WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE GROUP?

Time is up. It seems that group members have nothing left to say. It becomes increasingly hard to look for solutions, therefore no results are achieved. The amount of dissatisfaction increases, everybody gets bored, the blame is put on others. Some group members will leave the group soon. Others reminisce about the days that have passed and are now unreachable. But this cannot continue!

We would like to mention several reasons for the disintegration of the group:

Groups break down because it's the end of being together, which was foreseen from the start (training groups, summer camp groups, groups of international youth exchange, etc.). Groups break down because they start focusing on other matters. In new living conditions, the group cannot remain in the usual space, or the group is no longer given the same meaning and significance. Changes may arise due to professional learning or studies, change of the living place or a search for other forms of pastime and new contacts.

The disintegration of the group is emotionally hard, because separation is related to sadness. At first nobody voices the obvious fact “Our group is disintegrating”. Everybody feels the end approaching and that the last meeting of the group is near. Yet nobody speaks about it, they try not to think about it, because group members can feel separation coming. For this reason,

conflicts emerge in the group, behaviour patterns characteristic to the previous group stages re-emerge (regression).

## THE ROLE OF GROUP LEADER

The task of the group leader is to create conditions for the constructive process of disintegration. The group leader has to make a subject of the group's disintegration. At first it may be in the form of feedback to the group. This way the group members and leader come closer to the topic of separation; individual emotional states arise.

The group determines the moment of separation, and sets the time for the last meeting of the group. Also, the following questions have to be discussed: What do we want to do together now? What can remain unchanged? What did we experience and achieve together? How do we want to say goodbye?

It is important to raise those questions in advance, when the exact time for the last meeting is known, so that group members can purposefully decide on the use of the remaining time together.

The separation process finalizes the content of the group, expresses emotions and suggests discussing the relationship once more. It influences the farewell of group members, leaves good memories and creates conditions for new contacts and relationships.

*“You cannot come back to the same group twice”*  
(quotation of a seminar participant)

## ROLES AND ATTITUDE OF THE GROUP LEADER GROUP-WISE

In work with youth groups we often find ourselves in different situations which we did not necessarily plan ending up in. Anything can happen: we are often surprised, confused, happy, sometimes

we get scared and we even don't want to name the whole lot (since there is so much), of feelings and emotions which we face in our work. The important thing is that every situation in work with groups is a valuable source for our learning, but it is necessary to place yourself in a standpoint which will provoke the most learning of the group. We want to stress that it is not about 'teaching and giving a lesson to people in the way that seems right to us', but rather being able to provoke and maintain independent learning of others. Attitude is key for the appropriate behaviour of a group leader. The leader's approach towards the group has to be versatile and range from close contact to deliberate confrontation. The attitude and role of group leader depends directly on educative purposes, group situation, context of educative event, leader's personal qualities, etc.

Depending on the aforementioned factors we often 'juggle' these approaches and roles, therefore being together with the group can mean:

- Developing relationships with the group members at the personal level;
- taking care of feelings of safety and confidence inside the group (maintaining the emotional climate in the group);
- understanding group members and their relationships;
- seeking common ground with the group;
- focusing on positive qualities of group members;
- consulting and supporting group members;
- communicating in a non-formal manner, aiming at a playful atmosphere;
- learning from one another together with a group (growth together).

Neutral relation with the group can mean:

- maintaining a work atmosphere;

- setting landmarks and guidelines;
- preparing and structuring work and organizing time;
- leading the group and taking decisions together;
- offering methods;
- preparing material and tools;
- authentically providing capabilities, expectations and experience;
- initiating events, actions and teaching according to personal example.

Distance group-wise can mean:

- interaction with the group on a cognitive level;
- maintaining your leader's position;
- bringing new aspects into group discussions;
- giving feedback;
- raising questions, training the ability to listen and think independently;
- being a reflection of the group;
- deliberately confronting the group;
- opening conflict;
- being able to compete for 'power' in the group;
- analysing group processes, being able to give a clear picture of the analysis to the group;
- reconstructing personal boundaries (in preparation for the group's disintegration).

It is important for the group leader to be conscious about her/his role and realize what and why she/he is doing. The leader is responsible for the whole process, especially when the group transfers from one stage to another. He/she also has to try to give increasingly more responsibility to group members, in order for them to achieve their independence and be empowered to act.

# 2. LET'S NOT FORGET ABOUT OURSELVES. SHARPENING YOUTH WORKERS' TOOLS

In this chapter we invite youth workers to look at themselves – not at young people, not at different methods, but at themselves. As it was mentioned in previous chapters, methods are not the most important thing since they are only used when they are really needed. The most important thing is the human relationship between young people and the person working with them. The main tool that we use in youth work is ourselves: our abilities, emotions, feelings and attitudes. These tools tend to get worn out due to intensive work as well and by not taking care of ourselves. Youth workers experience lots of pressure – actors in the youth field demand them to be the most intelligent, insightful, sensitive, and flexible, etc. The environment changes faster than we would sometimes like: young people's ways of living, their problems, and the whole area of youth work is constantly changing. For these reasons, youth work would be hardly imaginable without constant renewal and 'refreshment' of a youth worker. Curiosity, constant interest and personal, professional development are friends that should always lead youth workers. Here we provide several tools that may help to better understand oneself as a learner, as a creator of relationships, as a professional of this field.

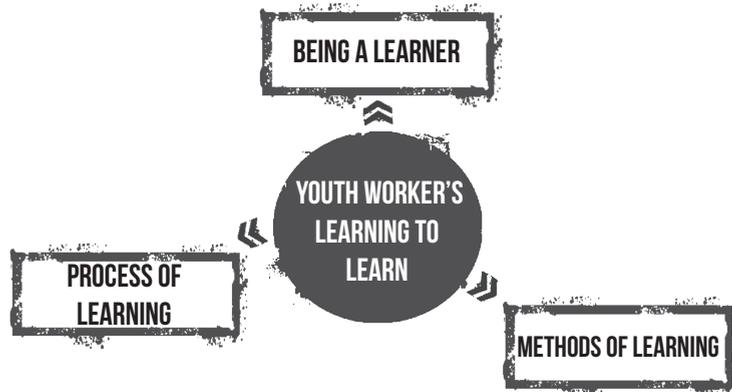
## 2.1. YOUTH WORKER'S LEARNING TO LEARN

We remain faithful to humanist philosophy and psychology and, as Carl Rogers states, we believe that each human being is trustworthy and he himself knows better than anyone else which direction he is heading in and how he has to improve. Our goal is to encourage youth workers' conscious choices related to their personal and professional improvement; therefore here we will pay more attention to the improvement of the learning to learn competence. Research ('Learning to Learn'<sup>11</sup> project, 2010) on conditions of learning to learn competence improvement showed that educators are often a certain ideal or a living example to the group they work with. "It would be hard and unauthentic to develop young people's educative competences without having realized more about us as learners." (Ragauskas, L., 2010). Throughout life we experience different learning experiences: some of them are associated with unforgettable, inspiring moments and others with stress and feeling of meaninglessness. We invite youth workers to be watchful, and constantly reflect on their improvement processes. Do what seems to be meaningful, appropriate and effective in the context of work with people. Meaningful and purposeful learning can sharpen our work tools and at the same time save energy for learning solely the things we need in the most suitable and efficient manner.

We introduce the 'Learning Interview' as a useful method. Its purpose is to help a person to understand what, how and why they are learning. The method was created during the 'Learning to Learn' project, where the Association of Non-formal Education Lithuania was one of the partners.

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<sup>11</sup> Project implemented by the Association of Non-Formal Education Lithuania and international partners.



## „LEARNING INTERVIEW“



**Purpose** - develop the learning to learn competence.



**Group size** - groups of 3-5 people.



**Needed tools** - paper, writing utensils.



**Duration** - 2-3h.



**Course of action** - all participants receive the questionnaire of the interview. It is crucially important to stress that it is not necessary to answer all the questions, and that the interviewer can add some questions if they feel that they might help to create better understanding of the essence of the learning processes. Questions are directive and mostly meant for inspiration.

The group decides on everyone's role in the first stage. There are three possible roles: one person is the interviewer, the other is the interviewee and the third person writes down the answers. During the task all people have a chance to switch roles. The person writing down the answers has to do it in a clear and decipherable manner, so that the material can be used by the author of the answers. The interview notes are given to the author of the answers and that person can look them through and comment on them.

### Questions for discussion after the task:

- How did you like answering the questions/ asking questions/writing down the answers?
- What did you find out about your learning?
- What did you find out about your colleagues' learning?
- What similarities and differences did you notice?
- What ideas did you get for further improvement?
- How was this interview useful to you?

**Comments** - if the group consists of 4 persons, the fourth role – observer – may be introduced. The observer gives feedback to the interviewer on question formulation and how they conducted the interview and to the interviewee on their answers, non-verbal clues, intonation, etc.

**Attention!** Interviews on learning touch very personal matters, be ready for that. Do interviews with people with whom you feel comfortable and are able to openly talk about yourself.



## QUESTIONS IN THE LEARNING TO LEARN INTERVIEW

### BEING A LEARNER AND LEARNING PLAN

#### BEING A LEARNER

- .....> To what extent do you see yourself as a learner?
- .....> How does that show in your attitudes and actions?
- .....> Is 'being a learner' a conscious choice for you?
- .....> What are some positive results of being a learner?
- .....> Do you feel like a learner in general?
- .....> How would you describe 'being a learner'?

#### PLANNING

- .....> To what extent are you clear about what you want to learn (for example from being in a project)?
- .....> Do you set objectives?
- .....> Or a direction?
- .....> Or do you think you are just 'open to learn'?
- .....> Would planning your learning more help you?
- .....> if yes: How?
- .....> if no: Why not?
- .....> What or who could help you in better planning your learning?
- .....> To what extent do you feel that learning can be planned for you?

#### DOING IT

- .....> Can you recall moments where you felt 'Yes, now I'm learning'?
- .....> Can you describe that moment?
- .....> Did you realise you were learning at that particular moment or only later?
- .....> Do you feel you learn better in international groups?
- .....> What kind of moments do you recognise for yourself as learning moments?  
(NB: consider the following activities: listening, reading, doing, discussing, walking)
- .....> What do you need for something to become a 'learning moment'?
  - a certain atmosphere
  - a challenge
  - safety
  - to be on your own
  - others
  - 'new input'
- .....> How do you know you learned?
- .....> What makes you decide 'now I've learned something'?
- .....> Do you set criteria? In what way?
- .....> Is it more 'something you feel'?
- .....> Do you give 'words' to it? How?
- .....> Do you write it down? How? Where?
- .....> Do you tell others? When? What?
- .....> Do you need proof for yourself? How?
- .....> Do you test it out? How?
- .....> Do you ask others for confirmation?

## OTHERS

- .....> Do you need others for your learning?
- .....> How do others help you in your learning?
- .....> Do you actively search for others?
- .....> What do you need those others for?
- .....> o feedback/ other perspectives/ confirmation/ challenge .....
- .....> Who are those 'others'?
- .....> o peer learners/ friends/ experts/ trainers/ facilitators/ animals

## YOUR WAY AND THE IMPACT

### IMPACT OF YOUR LEARNING

- .....> Do you immediately implement what you have learned?
- .....> Do you first reflect and evaluate?
- .....> Do you share your learning with others in your organisation? How?
- .....> Do you involve others in implementing your learning? In what way?
- .....> How do others know you have learned something?
- .....> Do you plan 'follow up' / further learning? How?
- .....> In your last project: was the impact of your learning that you got answers, more questions, or maybe both?

## YOUR WAY OF LEARNING

- .....> How would you describe 'I learn best'?
- .....> What makes learning a positive experience for you?
- .....> Are you satisfied with 'how you learn'?
- .....> What would you like to add to your 'learning repertoire' or the ways you learn?
- .....> How do you manage to overcome any difficulties when you learn?
- .....> How do you explain your idea of 'learning to learn'?

We hope that this interview will help youth workers to know themselves as well as their colleagues better, since interviewing involves at least two people; the best is having three or four people in it.

## 2.2. MODEL OF CORE QUALITIES

We believe that better self-perception helps us make conscious and responsible choices to improve and see new possibilities, therefore we suggest you to have a look at a very meaningful tool called the 'Model of core qualities.' It is designed to improve knowledge of yourself and your relationship with others as well as to determine the directions of your improvement.

**A core quality** is part of personality, which takes a long period of time to form and constitutes a considerable part of a person's entity. It can be a certain set of abilities, behaviours and attitudes. A core quality is something that would make one person a different person if it was taken away. Knowledge of your core qualities can help you use them better in and outside a work environment. According to this model, you can also determine:

- What the possible dangers are of having a certain quality (pitfall);
- A possible direction for improvement and what other qualities can be valuable to a person (challenge);
- What qualities or features a person hates in themselves and in others (allergy).

The author of this model D. Ofman (1992) emphasizes that a core quality is not a character feature, but rather a certain potential of a person, which can be employed if applied consciously. That potential is always inside of a person and cannot be 'turned on' or 'turned off'. The difference between qualities and competences is that a core quality comes from inside, while a competence is acquired from outside. A core quality can help us properly use competences we possess. We suggest youth workers take a deeper look and use this tool for a better understanding of self and others.

Every core quality (a person can surely have more than one of

them), also has three related qualities, which all together make a core quality square. Each related quality is very important since it gives guidelines for self-development

1. Core quality
2. Pitfall
3. Challenge
4. Allergy

Questions provided next to each element can help to clearly determine each part of the square.

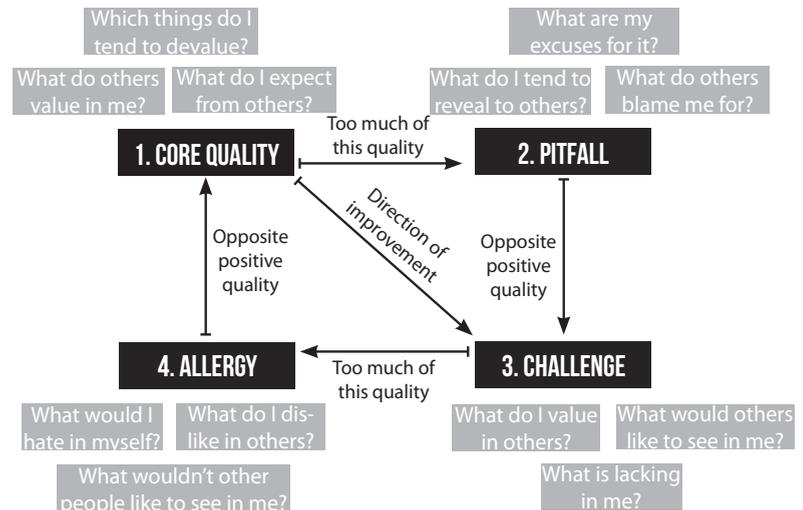


Fig. 7 – Core quality square

**Pitfall.** Each core quality can become a weakness if it is overdeveloped. In this case a person falls into a kind trap, where they can do harm to themselves and to others. For instance, the pitfalls of over developing the core quality of rationality is being too cold and indifferent and ignoring emotions. Pitfalls can be recognized

by remembering what things we are blamed for by others and what things we tend to justify in ourselves (e.g. “I will not give in to emotions – I have to stay calm, since staying rational is the most important thing”). Pitfalls are not contrary to core qualities, but rather a certain distortion of them. If the quality is rationality, then the trap will not be illogicality. A pitfall is often a quality that other people notice in us and reproach us for it. But by recognizing your trap, you can also find out your core quality. There are people who find it difficult to determine their strong sides, but they are quick to name certain weaknesses. This way the person can begin with their ‘pitfall’ and proceed to the following stage.

**Challenge.** Each core quality also has a related challenge. A challenge is a quality that is positively opposite to a pitfall. A challenge is also a quality which a person finds hard to apply. Following the previously provided example, if a person’s core quality is rationality, and the pitfall is coldness and indifference, then the challenge can be sensitivity and empathy. The quality of challenge supplements the core quality. By strengthening their own challenge, a person becomes more able to avoid their pitfall. The key to effectiveness is using a core quality together with the quality of challenge. So in our example it would be important for the person to maintain rationality, and to develop sensitivity and empathy.

**Allergy.** Each core quality also has a related allergy. An allergy is an excess of challenge. Each person has an allergy to their challenge, especially when this quality manifests itself in other people. For instance, if a certain person’s core quality is rationality and sensitivity is a challenge, then the allergy is manifested when sensitivity is expressed too strongly, e.g. oversensitivity, being overly emotional, etc. An allergy is a quality which a person cannot tolerate in themselves or other people. The important thing is that

an allergy is enhanced by those qualities that are very useful for a specific person, since an allergy is directly related to the challenge. The positive, opposite quality to an allergy is a person’s core quality.

The model of core qualities is a great tool for getting to know yourself better, but it is useful in analysing your relations with other people. When you’re facing an annoying person (i.e. a person who you are allergic to) you can recognize your challenge and strengthen your own core qualities. It is also important to understand that the quality in other people’s behaviour that makes us allergic is their trap. Therefore, in relation to another person, the squares of core qualities are the following:

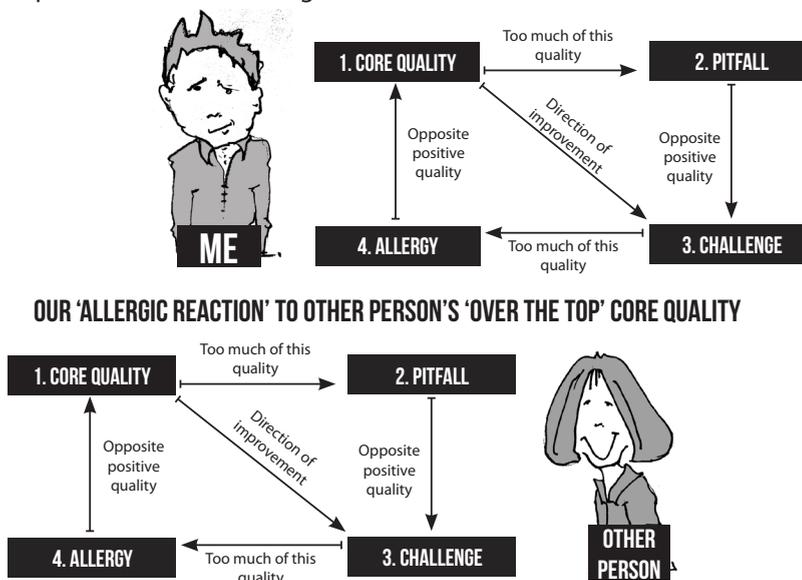


Fig. 8 – Interaction between two persons according to the model of core qualities

It is often the case that a person conflicts with themselves or others namely due to certain core qualities. The problem is that usually a person is allergic to the 'over the top' quality of their challenge (which should be the person's pursuit). This kind of allergy manifests itself through intolerance to that person. We can look at this process from the perspective of other people's reaction towards us. The other person starts to confront us when we display a quality, which they are allergic to. The more we react to this confrontation, the deeper we fall into our own pitfall. For instance, we have to work in a team with another youth worker, who is a sensitive and empathic person. They can become annoyed by rationality and cold thinking, and the ensuing tension can make us act even more coldly and indifferently. So we fall into our trap just as the other person does, due to a stressful situation. This creates a vicious circle and provokes never-ending conflicts, and both people become allergic to each other, even though they both have highly valuable qualities. Perhaps in this case the oversensitive person should be more rational, and the rational one more sensitive.

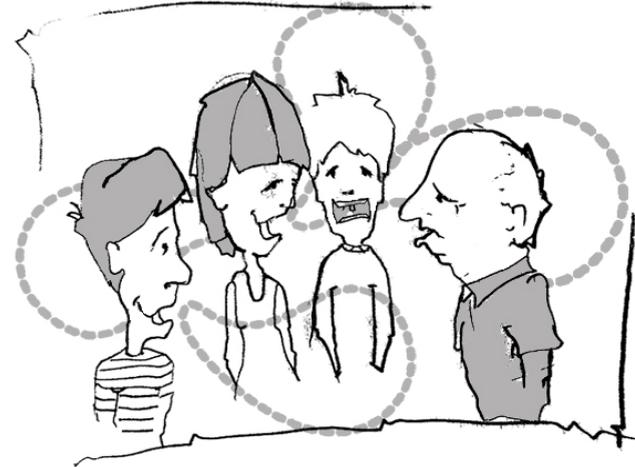
The solution is looking for the pitfall into which you have fallen in relation to the other person. If you succeed in determining your own and other person's pitfalls, which were provoked by going over the top with a core quality, then the relationship may change, because you may start valuing what the other has (their core quality) and learning from them.

## 2.3. INTERVISION

We present another tool – intervision – which is used for personal and professional improvement. We would like it to become part of the 'psychohygiene' of youth workers. Intervision is a method of consulting. Intervision means "seeing from the inside". It is a 'case' (difficult, unclear, emotionally unresolved situation) analysis

without a supervisor (consultant).

Intervision is helpful when youth workers find themselves on the verge of professional blow-out or when they face work situations which they are not capable of resolving themselves, when they have doubts about their actions or attitudes or are stuck in a relationship and unable to resolve it constructively.



### Structure of intervision

1. 'Registering'. A circle is formed and everyone shares feelings, moods, thoughts, etc. This way the participants' emotional state is checked.
2. A case is chosen. If more cases are 'brought', they need to be put in order of priority. Usually the case 'on fire' is chosen first. Analysis of one case in an intervision group takes from one to one and a half hours.
3. Case analysis. (A more detailed description is provided below).

4. Organisational questions. Agreement on the date, venue and time of the next activity is made. There can be a discussion on the choice of next topic so that there is enough time for preparation. But the most important task is deciding on the moderator of the next activity.
5. 'Unregistering'. Group members' feelings and thoughts about the whole activity are elicited. (What do we walk away with? What state are we leaving in?).

### **Structure of case analysis**

1. A person presents a case (a difficult, unresolved situation or a question they want to get advice on). It is important to consider what we want the group to help solve or discuss.
2. Questions for clarification. Other participants ask questions in order to understand the given situation more clearly. Here it is important that the question does not contain an encoded answer or opinion. Take your time with conclusions! The more you clarify at this stage, the more useful the 3rd and the 4th steps will be.
3. Group members talk about what they heard. All reactions and interpretations are given. Interpretations can be very different. Sometimes metaphors are very useful, for instance, the film, play or fairy tale the situation reminds someone of. Emotional reactions of group members are also very useful – the feelings they felt while listening and what those feelings suggest to them. Sometimes finishing a sentence, "If I was you, I would..." is useful.
4. A person reacts to what they heard from colleagues and especially those contributions that were the most 'touching', important, useful, etc.
5. Each one of them tells what they take from the discussion of this case. It is important to realize that one person's case can

be beneficial to everyone. By analysing it, a lot can be learnt and in this way one's own work can be constantly improved

*Note:* The case analysis method does not necessarily provide clear-cut and precise answers. What it really provides is a broader and deeper view of a situation and highlights a person's role in that particular situation. A clearer view of a situation renders possible solutions and approaches.

All stages of intervision are equally important. They cannot be skipped, interchanged or ignored. We want to pay special attention to the start and the end (registering and unregistering). On average, these parts take one fifth of the time of the activity. Sometimes they can take one third of it. The recommended amount of time for the activity is 2-3.5 hours, but it can vary according to the need of the peer group. We know from experience that it is not possible to investigate more than 2 cases in one meeting. If two cases are analysed, it is necessary to make a break between them.

### **The importance of the intervision process**

- The communication and cooperation of the intervision group members can be considered a case in itself, especially when emotions arise. It is a sign that the process has to be stopped and attention must be paid to what is going on between us and the case must be solved.
- Intervision is a lengthy process, which consists of continual meetings. It is recommended to schedule 10 meetings. The first meeting is devoted to purification of goals, expectations, subjects, work forms and agreement on common work. The last one is for a discussion on how cooperation went and what results were achieved. Therefore, you will have 8 meetings between the first and the last one, where each group members

will have a chance to discuss at least one case. The bigger the group, the more meetings it will take.

- It is recommended to check the need, expectations and personal involvement of intervision every 5 or 10 activities, and only then renew the contract (the agreement on further participation).
- **It is extremely important**, that the intervision activities are attended by **the same group of youth workers**. An intervision group is a psychohygienic tool and an exercise of professional skills. Therefore activities should not be skipped. If a new member joins the group, the process has to be started all over again. It is only through a continuous and uninterrupted process that trust and better understanding are built as well as a certain communication culture of the group. Group participation and group leading skills are also developed. Only a process like this ensures the growth of the group as a whole and its individual members.

### **Moderator's functions**

- At the appointed time (e.g. 5 or 3 days before) it is important to remind group members about the approaching intervision group meeting.
- Take care of the meeting place (enough space for sitting in a circle, water, tea, coffee).
- Conduct the meeting according to the structure provided above. The most important function of the moderator is to structure the group's work. It means conducting the activity according to scheduled points and steps of case analysis. If the moderator has a case 'on fire', it is better to switch with colleagues and ask them to moderate.
- Observe the process and help members to get back on track if they stray. It can be achieved by observing and naming what

goes on right at that moment.

- Structure the time of activity.
- Make sure that a different moderator will take the next meeting.

From our experience we can say that is very useful for each intervision group member to experience the role of a moderator. As the Lithuanian folk song goes: "without having been a soldier, you won't be a good ploughman." In the context of intervision: without the experience of being a moderator, you won't be a good participant. The experience of moderation allows one to notice processes that occur in the group, be more sensitive to what occurs and participate more consciously. You will see how this group grows and its work becomes more constructive and productive.

# 3. USEFUL THINGS TO KNOW WHILE WORKING

In this chapter we describe a number of theoretical models and methodological approaches, which we use for educational purposes with young people. These models and theories reveal and validate the logic of educational process. Figuratively speaking, it is the 'kitchen' of non-formal learning in youth work and frequently revelation of these models helps learners to come to an understanding. It becomes clearer to everyone what we engage in and why our attitude as leaders is namely like this. And we want to stress that there are no theoretical models that are more significant or right. We use them because we have tested them in multiple educative contexts. They work, help, educate and empower.

## 3.1. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING<sup>12</sup>

Experiential learning is the main form of youth work that we use. In order to develop young people's independence, creativity, participation, citizenship and other important qualities we have

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<sup>12</sup> Based on: Social skills formation programme of 'Caritas' project of Vilnius archdiocese 'Creation and implementation of a model, means and services of integrating convicts and persons released from imprisonment and their family members to work market' and programme of Development of conflict management skills.

to let them try. They must try their luck, experience failure, try to find answers and learn life lessons that young people will apply THEMSELVES in THEIR everyday activities. The experiential method allows us to work not only with young people's knowledge, but also with their skills and attitudes within the context of the surrounding environment and their participation in the life of society.

### **Why learning through experience?**

The main feature of experiential learning is that the learner here is not treated as an object for teaching or instructing, but rather a learning subject. In other words teaching is not treated as help of an informed to the uninformed. Experiential learning is considered as cooperation between a teacher and a learner in an attempt to enhance individual learning, encourage personal discoveries and conclusions. Youth workers here are mostly responsible for the organization of the teaching process and learning conditions and the participants are mostly responsible for the learning results and their own discoveries and final conclusions. However, both organizers and learners influence the learning process and its results. Meanwhile, a more traditional teaching (giving instructions) works better in situations where the learning content is more objective and unambiguous, where 'this and no other way' answers are possible. In a case when the learning object is subjective (e.g. conflict solving), experiential methodology works better and allows finding answers through one's own specific experience. Participants act in the 'here and now' context, understanding and defining phenomena in their own words, since there is almost no objective content in learning conflict solution skills. There is no model which would explain how to solve conflicts in a right way. But even if we had one universally acknowledged pattern of conflict solving, then the way each person will apply it will still remain very individual. It means that each person has to find a way of solving conflicts that is most suitable to him or her.

### So what is experiential learning?

Experiential learning is a process, in which participants acquire knowledge and skills through certain experience, and later on are able to use them in everyday activities. It is important to mention that experiential learning is not only based on various methods that are used for the purpose of learning. *Experience based on methods* is one (but not the only one) of the sources of experiential learning. Each young person has a lot of *authentic life experience* that can be discussed (reflected on) and used for learning. Therefore a young person's experience is one more source of learning and it can be used for educative purposes.

*Presence and interaction in a group* is also a powerful experience, and is often used in pursuing learning goals. Experiencing group processes – forming, storming, norming, performing and un-forming – provides lots of material for discussion and allows making valuable decisions, which can be used in a young person's social life.

Frequently while working with youth groups we employ all three sources of experiential learning, we use them in variation and look for connection between them. We have to keep in mind that the goal of experiential learning is to apply derived conclusions in young person's real life.

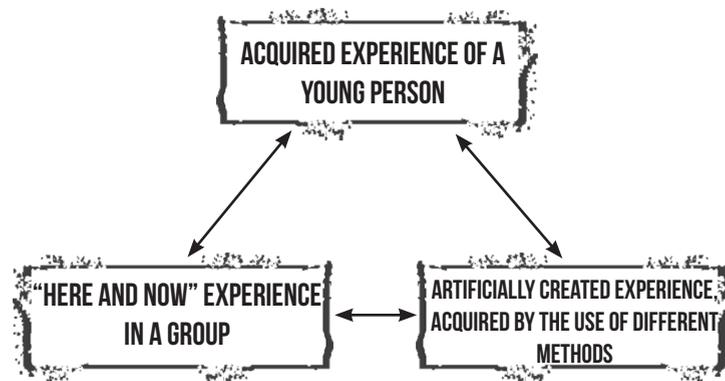


Fig. 9 – Sources of experiential learning

Working in an experiential manner, learning results are unique every time, because they are obtained based on the experience of a specific group of people, i.e. each group and each person learns what is most relevant at that moment. Knowledge acquired during the programme is not academic, and specific results are not projected in advance.

Experiential learning is the oldest means of learning and it is the closest to human nature. Learning occurs through personal discoveries, not through instructions. Experiential method enhances basic competences: independence, responsibility for one's own learning results, interpersonal competences. The greatest attention is paid to the learner's experience here and now, therefore learning is particular.

We will discuss four main steps or stages of the experiential method:

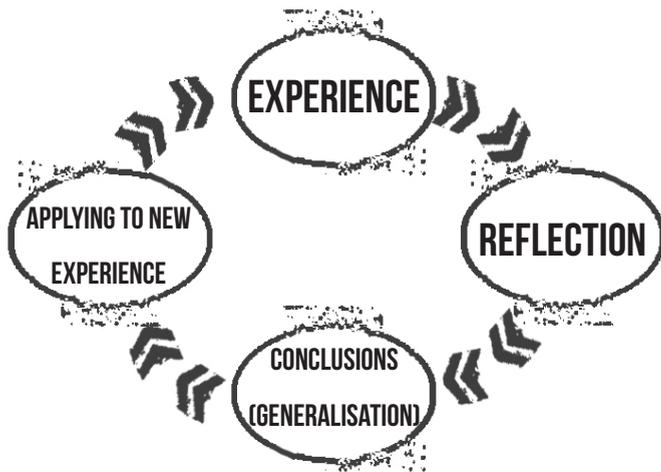


Fig. 10 – Model of experiential learning

## 1. Active experience

In youth work we often use active tasks, which help to create an educative experience. Given tasks are often active, unusual and contain challenging elements. Such tasks help us to recognize the peculiarities of our own behaviour encourage creativity, initiative and cooperation and reveal new powers. Active tasks require active involvement from participants. Cooperation, care for others, confidence in self and others, sharing functions and much more is experienced through doing a task. Unusual tasks create a context where participants can see themselves, their relationships and cooperation with others in a different light. We often organize experience in nature, where we create a certain unusual setting: sometimes we work in silence, other times blindfolded, etc. Tasks with challenging elements intensify experiences. It allows the participants to clearly realize their possibilities and the peculiarities

of cooperation and interrelations.

## 2. Discussion on acquired experience. Reflection

Many of us know the word **reflection**. But it can be perceived in different ways, and reflection itself can happen differently. We want to share our perception and provide several steps to illustrate how we do it. We use reflection as a tool, which allows raising awareness. To us reflection is an essential part of experiential learning. Possible stages of conducting a period of reflection:

### a) Emotional reactions.

We invite people to voice reactions, states of mind – how participants (learners) experienced a specific experience. We ask how they feel after everything is over. In this stage it is important to make sure that participants will voice their thoughts, but it is equally important not to allow discussion or arguments. There are no ‘wrong’ responses. Every emotion experienced is real and extremely valuable; it is important to hear them and try to understand. We have noticed that sometimes participants find it hard to name certain emotions. Frequently the question “How did you feel or what emotions did you have?” is answered with “We felt ok, all is fine”. There are no ok emotions. All emotions are grouped into two major groups – positive and negative. Perception and naming of their own emotions is not an easy process for the participants, it is a separate competence (emotional intellect) that has to be trained. In this stage it is important to get the participants to describe their emotions as precisely as possible, since they are the best indicators of a specific experience, but you should not ‘overdo’ it, since participants might not yet be ready for this challenge.

*Note:* if participants cannot name their emotions precisely, ask them a question: “Were the emotions more positive, or more

negative?" This question can help find a 'hook' for knowing more specific emotions.

A possible method: if a group continuously finds it hard to name specific emotions, you can give them a task to search and make a list of emotions, which can later on be used in discussions.

*b) Debriefing of process. Situation reconstructions – how things went.*

We usually invite everyone to share their 'story'. Here it is important to listen and HEAR, without trying to argue or discuss. If you succeed, it often becomes a strong learning/educative moment, because people have heard 'other people's truths', and by sharing different perspectives they develop sensitivity and enrich one another.

The task of youth workers is to help people realize which of their and other people's actions evoked these particular emotional reactions. It doesn't matter if they are success or failures, or 'positive' or 'negative' experiences.

Steps a. and b. can be interchanged depending on the type of activity, intensity of experience and educative purposes.

*Note:* if you have doubts about how people felt or feel (step 1) – ask! It really helps!

Our efforts should be directed so that people can see the consequences of their behaviour and actions (what did I do, how did I and others act that made me react in that way at that time?).

### **3. Conclusions about the relationship between acquired experience and life situation**

In this step a space is created for participants to make conclusions, insights, lessons, discoveries, understandings, recommendations. It can be done individually. Inviting people to reflect and write down the most important things is very helpful. It is not obligatory

to share all insights and discoveries with the group. Yet from our experience we know that when participants do share them, it enriches everybody.

It is very useful to relate the experience with real life situations. Behaviour of group participants is further developed according to specific experience. For example, "I have doubts when faced with an unfamiliar thing or phenomenon in real life as well", "In real life, I am afraid of taking responsibility. If you notice this, please tell me..."

### **4. Applying conclusions in real life**

This step does not necessarily have to happen at once. Sometimes it takes time to be with one's own experience and conclusions, 'sleep on them' or at least 'digest them'. Sometimes it is useful to postpone the 3rd step, especially when the experience is very intense and emotionally charged. It depends on many things: whether the group will be together for short time or long-time; what stage of group dynamics you are in; what educative goals you have in mind etc. Yet again, from our own experience we know that it is useful to ask people – what happens next? How will we live further, brothers and sisters? And what will we do next with our conclusions and understandings? Development and empowerment of awareness is a process which requires time and certain guidance.

Usually, participants firstly apply their conclusions in further educative activity in order to make sure that they 'work', and then later in real life according to a scheduled plan. When we say 'in real life' we mean outside educative activities, i.e. in a different setting, different social contexts. Educative programmes are still frequently highly structured and therefore experience is acquired in artificial situations. Even professional youth workers, who often create a certain hothouse atmosphere for the group, cannot always mirror the reality where life can be much harder.

If the occasion arises, experiential learning can happen by asking young people questions about their acquired life experience, by discussing it, making conclusions and trying to apply them.

### **Principles and mistakes**

While using the method of learning from experience it is important to consider several practical principles:

- In experiential learning, a non-directive, open relationship between the leader and learners is important.
- Experiential learning is learning from personal experience, and most importantly – learning by acting, not by theorizing.
- In experience-based programmes, the leader lives through an experience together, and beside, the participant. Together; because he demonstrates equal relationship and carries out long-term tasks together with a participant. Beside; because he respects the subjective nature of a participant's experience and helps the individual make sense of it.
- Work should be based on mutual agreements; mutually accepted conditions of being together have to be defined.

Practical mistakes often occur when the method of experiential learning is applied in practice. It is important to pay attention to each of the possible dangers discussed below.

#### **For the leaders:**

- Poor preparation and competence. The leader of an experiential learning programme has to have technical as well as pedagogic preparation. It is also important that the leader himself has carried out the tasks that he gives to participants.
- Attachment to results instead of openness towards them. In programmes of experiential learning it is important to define what the learning will be about, but you should not define

'what things will be learnt'.

- Manipulation or the use of experiential learning for 'illustrating' what needs to be learnt.
- Hidden goals and formal not open communication between the leader and participants.
- Absolution of experience or work forms. It is frequently thought that the most important thing in experiential learning is exercises and various attractive forms of experience, but the manner of working with numerous forms of experience is of no less importance.
- Distancing from a group. Since the leader has to allow a lot of freedom and give responsibility to the learners during the application of the experiential learning method, there might be a danger of excessive distancing from a group. It is important to avoid it, since the group constantly need support, consulting, discussions, etc.
- Excessive care and structuring. You should not overdo taking care of the group, because then the experience becomes meaningless.

#### **For the participants:**

- Overrating the importance of circumstances and/or the leader. Participants often think that changes can only be achieved by a change in circumstances or by the leader, group, etc., while every change is also the result of personal efforts and abilities.
- Seeing and valuing others instead of yourself. Participants often tend to firstly value and talk about others, but not about their own behaviour; they firstly expect changes in others rather than in themselves.
- Impatience in the process of looking for answers and conclusions.

- Depreciation of own opinions, feelings, observations in communication with the group or the leader.

*“Once the mind meets a new experience, it never comes back to its old cave”*  
 (We’ve learnt this saying from our teacher Dirk de Vilder).

### 3.2. ZONES OF LEARNING (CHANGE)<sup>13</sup>

This model analyzes certain “spaces”, where young (and other) people learn most efficiently.



Fig. 11 – Zones of learning and/or change

First of all, let’s define the space where we learn the least. We

<sup>13</sup>Based on John L. Luckner and Reldan S. Nadler, (1991). “Processing the Experience: Enhancing and Generalizing Learning”.

experience the fewest lessons in a place where we have already learnt a lot. It is our comfort state. For instance, people who have been driving a car for many years do it ‘automatically’ and to them driving is no longer a challenge or a learning process. The comfort zone is a space which is familiar to us; we know its rules and norms. In the comfort zone we can think of what we already know and understand. In this state we feel calm, nice and sure, but without any changes, feelings of monotony and meaningless take over.

John L. Luckner and Reldan S. Nadler (1991) maintain that real learning only takes place outside the comfort zone. We enter an unfamiliar space, where we face certain challenges. Frequently, before entering this space, we are nervous; we doubt our abilities and feel that we will have to mobilize many of our resources in order to overcome the challenge. It is a learning space. It is also a space for testing your strength in new situations, testing and applying new knowledge, experimenting, acquiring new skills and improving in different ways.

It is important to mention that we experience lots of doubts, we depreciate ourselves and sometimes start whimpering, grumbling and shirking when we transfer from the comfort zone to learning (challenge) zone. In the comfort zone we don’t need to mobilize resource and put in lots of efforts to carry out an activity. It is comfortable and stable in there. The real learning happens when we agree to accept challenges, try new things, reflect and make conclusions.

Our goal in youth work is to extend young people’s comfort zone. When people accept challenges and overcome them, they begin to realize what they are capable of. Activities that previously made them uneasy or doubtful now look manageable. For example: if you implement several international projects, you acquire a great amount of knowledge and skills that you are able to apply later on. This way implementation of international projects enters your comfort zone from your challenge zone.

It is important to mention that if you stay in the comfort zone too long, it tends to shrink (contract). The stableness of comfort zone makes you dull. By doing solely what we know well, we lose the skill of learning.

The panic zone exists behind the challenge zone. We enter it when we overrate our strengths and possibilities. In the panic zone we lose control and try to come back to the comfort zone as soon as possible. Frequently, having lived through panic and come back to the comfort zone we want to stay there for longer before we collect enough courage to accept any new challenges. For us youth workers it is important to realize that each person has very individual comfort, learning and panic zones. One young person can feel comfortable talking in front of twenty people, while the other might find it panicky.

In youth work it is important to realize and deeply assess the situations that we put young people into. Are our pedagogic interventions sufficiently challenging to young people, or maybe too much? In order to realize these peculiarities you have to know the people you work with well and constantly refresh your knowledge as well as have certain **pedagogic sensitivity**.

This model gives us certain knowledge and awareness about our own (and our learners') learning and conditions necessary for learning to happen.

By using this model in practice, we have realized that our business as youth workers is to create challenges, and young people's business is to accept them (or not) and overcome our or their own challenges. We have noticed that people who have learnt to accept challenges and use them for learning and improvement 'have no problems' in life. The word 'problem' is deleted from their vocabularies and minds. If you name certain things as 'challenges' it becomes much easier to find internal resources and energy to overcome them.

### 3.3. LEARNING TO LEARN

The ability to formulate learning goals, to choose the means of learning, to learn and to self-assess one's learning process and its results are extremely important abilities for young people as well as for those who educate them. The learning to learn competence is one of the essential competences necessary for thriving in the fast evolving world.

Learning to learn is not an everyday term. We will start with what it is and why it is important. Philip C. Candy (1990) maintains that learning to learn means absorption of content and meanings of improvement. The most innovative forms of learning to learn allow the reaching of critical awareness of premises, rules, conventional norms, society's expectations, which influence the way people perceive knowledge, the way they think, feel and act while learning.

**LEARNING TO LEARN PROVIDES ATTITUDES, UNDERSTANDINGS AND SKILLS THAT ALLOW A PERSON TO BE MORE EFFICIENT, FLEXIBLE AND A BETTER ORGANIZED LEARNER IN DIFFERENT LIFE CONTEXTS.**

The dynamic environment of nowadays and the need to be a rather universal person puts this competence to the top of essential life competences and makes it an essential part of non-formal education.

In the context of youth work we can look at the learning to learn competence of a youth worker as well as his ability to help young people develop this competence. In this chapter we will mostly focus on the latter part, and you can find out more about a youth worker's learning in the *'LET'S NOT FORGET ABOUT OURSELVES. Sharpening Youth Workers Tools' chapter of this book*."

Increasingly greater attention to learning to learn and self-directed learning means that we have to closely review conventional attitudes towards the educator and the learner, review methods used and assess their potential and limitations. Improving the learning to learn competence requires a specific mind set of the educator and changes in methodological choices:

- During education the learner is the centre of attention. Instead of asking “What can learners learn from this activity and the educator?” we ask “What do learners want to learn and how can the educator, youth worker, help them?”
- Responsibility for educational content is switched from the educator to the learner. In youth work this switch can be a long-term process, since it is related to development of young people’s self-directed learning abilities. We encourage trying various different methods and constantly checking how much responsibility groups of young people are ready to take. They are often ready to take more than we think!
- In choosing activities and methods it is necessary to evaluate the fact that each person in a group has diverse needs for development and different learning preferences. For this reason there will never be a method that is ‘suitable always and for everyone’. It does not mean that we are destined to failure. We just have to accept the reality that individuals realize and learn different things from a certain activity, and also the intensity of each person’s involvement can differ.

In order to see these changes we have to work on our (educators) attitudes, which can help us to improve young people’s learning to learn competence. We must have:

- A genuine wish to help the learners in their unique process of improvement.
- A belief that learners know their needs and feelings best.
- Empathy and openness in educative relationship (encompassing

goals, conditions, possibilities and boundaries).

- A broader understanding of non-formal education – what a youth worker does with a group of young people is part of a broader life-long learning context. The offered educational activity for a young person will often be a transitional step, and not the start or the end.

Learning to learn is very closely related to a person’s attitudes towards the process of improvement which should include:

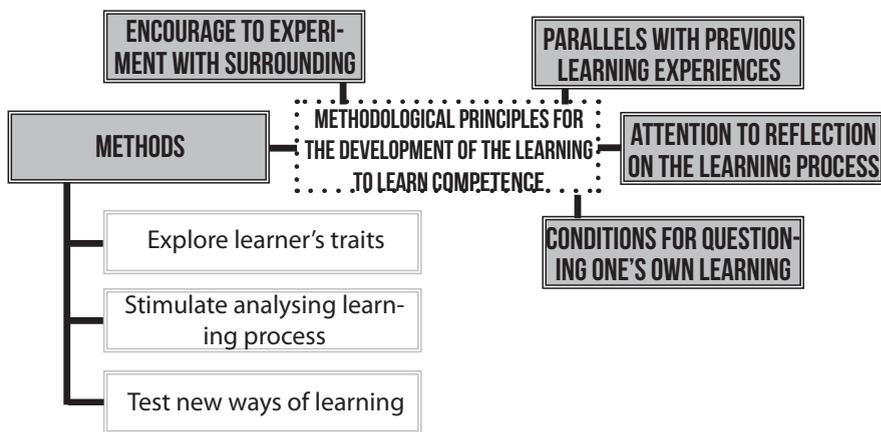
- *Patience and resolve during the learning process which helps to overcome problems and challenges that arise in the process of learning.* The principle of a safe environment is extremely important in the development of this attitude. In a safe environment young people can experiment, make mistakes, try again, be unafraid of being judged for mistakes and expect help from youth workers in dealing with arising difficulties.
- *A positive attitude towards learning and an internal wish for change.* In order to have this wish in youth work, it is important to devote enough time and space for making sense of learning, for naming expectations and personal goals of improvement. Feedback is important here, it should recognize a young person’s efforts, encourage them to move forward, achieve more, try themselves in new activities and take increasingly more responsibilities.
- *A desire to help others in their development process.* This aspect is very important, since learning is also a very intense social process. We believe that people who learn in a group and take responsibility for their own learning process and results, also improve their social skills and skills of active citizenship (B. Hoskins and R.D. Crick, 2008).

Devoting more attention to young people’s learning to learn process is beneficial to young people and their environment.

A person with a developed learning to learn competency more clearly

perceives their goals and ways of achieving them in learning and other contexts (work, family, organization etc.). Personal potential, strengths that can be used in different areas, are also perceived more clearly by such people. The person can use complicated or critical situations for their own personal development, they see a challenge as a possibility to experience something new and learn from that experience. Constantly reflecting on yourself and your environment develops critical and analytical thinking.

**Methodological principles and advice for the development of the learning to learn competence:<sup>14</sup>**



- Draw parallels with previous learning experiences of young people. If necessary, create conditions (giving time and space), or choose methods that allow a person to understand what packet of knowledge and skills they have and how to fill it with things they need or even empty it and put in new (perhaps

more useful), things. For instance, people come to non-formal education activities being used to being passive listeners at a lesson or lecture, while things are quite the opposite in youth work – people are encouraged to actively work with material, assess it critically, change position in space, interact and cooperate;

- Devote time and space for reflection (individually and in groups) on what and how a young person learnt, what was an obstacle and what helped them to learn;
- Create conditions for young people to question different premises about the learning process and try different learning methods. For instance, if the activity deals with intercultural issues in the local community, offer the group different ways of researching the topic: searching information on the internet, calling parents and others knowledgeable about the subject; going to institutions that work on this topic; searching and watching films; simply discussing together and looking for common insights.
- Use different methods, which:
  - Stimulate a young person's increased understanding about their own learning preferences, weak and strong sides;
  - Stimulate and help individuals notice the learning process of peers and leaders;
  - Encourage a person to confront the usual learning methods. For instance, if a person states that they learn best when they write things down, you can challenge them by offering to draw things and talk about it with peers.
  - Encourage individuals to test themselves in new situations, learn in unusual ways.
- Create the environment, which encourages learners to

<sup>14</sup> Taylor M., Kloosterman P., (2010).

experiment, explore, question, discuss their learning in different ways (e.g. by drawing, writing, moulding, filming, photographing, talking in pairs, in threes or in groups etc.).

### 3.4. THEME CENTRED INTERACTION (TZI)

Theme centred interaction<sup>15</sup> is a live-learning method based on an axiom that every person is independent (autonomous) and, at the same time, inter-dependent on the world surrounding him/her. The objective of non-formal education is to enable an individual to be conscious, independent and aware of the interdependencies. The more one is aware of interactions, conditions and regularities, the easier it is to make decisions and become free.

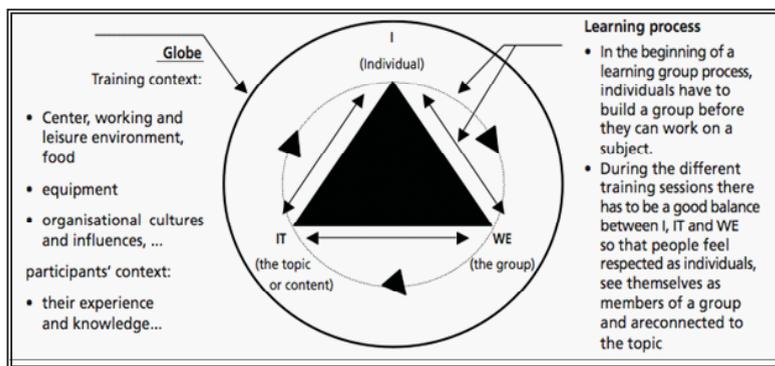


Fig. 12 - A model of Theme centred interaction, adapted from Ruth Cohn, 1981  
Source of the figure: "T-Kit nr. 6 "Training essentials", 2002"

'I' refers to each group member, his/her expectations and wishes

<sup>15</sup> Further on referred to as TZI (from German Themenzentrierte Interaktion) as suggested by Ruth Cohn, 1981.

as well as thoughts, feelings and experience with regard to the chosen topic ('It'), other group members ('We') and from the point of view of his/her life-story or situation ('I').

'We' refers to the group, its members being together and interacting, the atmosphere inside the group and its norms as well as the division of the roles and influences, etc.

'Globe' refers to external conditions required for working with a group, e.g. place and rooms, expectations of the organizations, institutions, financial partners, neighbours, parents and educators, material supplies and others, as well as participants' real-life, daily-life and their sense of existence in the world.

The TZI model combines work on a specific theme (angle 'It'), work in a group (angle 'We') and personal improvement (angle 'I') into a dynamic group-work model. According to this model, the topic ('It') is supposed to be the focus. Work on a specific topic is based on personal ('I') motivation and one's personal relation to the topic and the rest of the group ('We'). Following the TZI model, a person working with the group should be constantly focused on keeping balance among the elements 'Theme' - 'I' - 'We', depending on the influential conditions ('World').

During the learning process, problems often arise because of the lack of balance among the four elements. To illustrate, if one of the members is not fully involved into group-activities and does not show interest in the topic, this will gradually come out through dissatisfaction, tension and conflicts inside the group. A simple way to deal with it would be devoting some time and space for group-building before starting to work on a specific topic or getting everyone involved into common activities.

A 'balance' for a person working with youth means taking account of: 1) the individual; 2) the need to deal with what the group is experiencing right here and right now and 3) the learning process, understanding that not everything has to and can be taken into

account at the very moment. Instead, it is possible to consciously devote more attention to an angle of the triangle that needs it most.

With reference to this model, R. Cohn presents postulations and auxiliary rules for improving the interplay of the group, though these are aimed at the young person's responsibility for his/her own work (learning) on a specific topic, interaction inside the group and his/her input.

#### Postulation 1: **Be your own chairperson**

Take all the responsibility for yourself and your actions inside the group. Consider your own expectations and what you can offer in return. Clarify your motivations and don't expect that others will do it for you. Be aware of your own feelings, thoughts and actions. Trust yourself, represent yourself and what you really want, do not only react to what the others expect from you.

*For reflection: How can I reach this level of responsibility and awareness in the group? What methodological interventions are required to reach the desired level?*

#### Postulation 2: **Disturbances first**

Stop the group if you feel you can no longer participate in it. Stop it if you are busy doing something else, if you can no longer focus and if there is something that interests you more. Stop if you are tired or not accepted, if the atmosphere is bad for you, if you feel nervous, if there is something you do not understand or if you feel misunderstood.

There is danger, though, that other group members or youth workers may not state their opinion due to some cultural or personal reasons in order to maintain harmony and 'peace in the world'.

*For reflection: How do you create an environment where people can*

*feel free to talk about the things that bother them inside the group?*

Auxiliary postulate rules:

1. Speak for yourself. Talk about 'I' and avoid being impersonal or using the form 'We'. Transmit more 'I' – information and not 'You' – information.
2. When asking a question, explain why you are asking it.
3. Give preference to other conversations. They are disturbing, but also important – otherwise there would not be any.
4. Try to have one person speaking at a time.
5. While communicating, be sincere and selective. Be sure of what you think and feel, and decide what you are going to say and to do.
6. Talk about your feelings or reactions and be careful with interpretations.
7. Pay attention to your body signals and to others.

*For reflection: What can you do to make group members feel secure and safe to follow these rules?*

The TZI model teaches us how to pay sufficient attention to each individual in the group, then how to focus on the interaction of the participants and how to constantly follow what is important for the group at a specific point of time. How do the group members feel? What are the interactions within the group? How is a specific topic related to the participants' thoughts and needs? R. Cohn's postulations can be a powerful tool for making group members more aware of their own involvement and to help them take responsibility for themselves, the others and the processes taking place.

### 3.5. TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

Transactional analysis can be a helpful tool for identifying the processes discussed in the TZI model and taking place on the side 'Me – Group'. We want to present you a simplified model which helps us get a better insight in to what our role is, both working with young people individually and with groups of young people. We hope you will also find this model helpful in seeing and understanding your roles, identifying and analysing situations, looking for ways to 'unfold' the relation in order to make it equal and cooperative. The creator of the transactional method is E. Berne (1964).

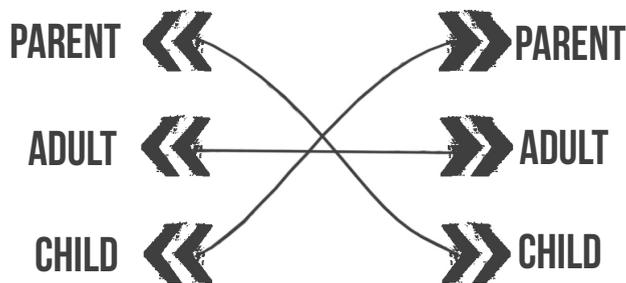


Fig. 13 - The roles in transactional analysis

Each of us takes one of these roles regardless the age. This is totally normal and logical. However are we always, especially when working with youth, aware of the role? The transactional analysis model helps us understand how often we unconsciously fall into one of these roles. And often, we are not satisfied with the role, we feel the relation is 'crooked' and not as we want it to be, but we do not know how to 'straighten' it.

If another person, for instance, a learner, is behaving like a 'child', we unconsciously adopt the role of the 'parent'. And vice versa, if someone is acting like a 'parent', we unconsciously fall into the role of the 'child'.

If you do some deeper analysis, you will be able to identify yourself in a specific situation. Typical characteristics of a parent are condescension and care, which are often exaggerated. Parents think they are smarter than children, they believe they know things better and, therefore, should teach or even order, direct, control and punish. How do children behave when they are treated this way? Obedient children adapt to the situation because they want to please their parents, and the naughty ones protest. In both cases, the relationship is not respectful or equal.

Meanwhile, in the context of working with young people and elsewhere where cooperation is necessary, our efforts and energy should be aimed at creating and developing respectful relationships of equal value.

Constructive and equal relationships are only possible between two adults. By referring to an adult, we mean a mature person, able to: make decisions; take responsibility for their actions; negotiate; make compromises and share duties and responsibilities, etc. The challenge for those working with young people is to stay alert, to consciously reflect on things and to be aware of their own role. A competent youth worker should not only be able to identify situations (and roles), but also to name them for the learners.

Despite the roles of other people, we always need to behave as adults in our work and to continuously put effort in to help young people become more mature. As our experience shows, when we become too 'parental' or too 'childish', we cannot expect constructive, productive or equal communication. When we are senior and formally responsible for young people, we may fall into the trap of unconsciously adopting a parents role and assigning the young people the role of a child. They will certainly behave

childishly and we will certainly get angry with them. An even greater risk is to start controlling young people, to start thinking and doing things for them and instead of them. All our work (as well as this book) is intended *not for the ones working for youth, but for the ones working with youth.*

### 3.6. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

This section discusses why active participation is important when working with youth, what kind of participation it is, and what are the basic principles for making sure young people will actively participate.

The adjective 'active' is very important when working with young people because youth workers want a young person to be conscious, autonomous, free and creative. In this context, active participation means that young people voluntarily get involved and start creating things they are interested in. The space and form of active participation may be very diverse, starting with the founding of a music band at school and ending with participation in decision-making processes on a political level. We are talking about participation when a young person is not a passive observer, but an active creator, willing to realize their own ideas. The better conditions for active participation a youth worker can offer, the closer she/he can get to the aim – consciousness and freedom for young people. When selecting the methods for working with young people, a natural question arises: how is it practically possible to encourage a young person take responsibilities, realize their own ideas and stand for the interests of their peers and their own? One of the most important functions of a youth worker is to give a young

person different opportunities to *learn to participate*. What do we actually mean by that? We refer to knowledge, different skills and attitudes necessary for making a young person active in their own community, able to actively create things and form an "acceptable possible solution as well as take important decisions related to youth"<sup>16</sup>. Active participation as a topic is already fully discussed and there is a variety of theories and tips on how to encourage it. However, we still want to present a model which, based on our experience, is a good tool for selecting methods that help encourage young people to get involved and actively participate. When organizing activities and trying to create an environment where young people could get actively involved and would have an opportunity to learn to participate, it is important to find the balance between their interests, abilities and the possibilities. Belgian (Flemish) youth workers Marc Jans and Kurt De Becker<sup>17</sup> have named this model the 'Three C's of Active Participation' (*Challenge, Connection, Capacity*). Let us firstly discuss each of the angles of this triangle in more detail:



Fig. 14 - A model of successful participation.

<sup>16</sup> Evelina Taunytė, from a report at LiJNA conference 'Jaunimo dalyvavimas ir įgalinimas' (Youth Participation and Capacitation), October 26th, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Marc Jans, Kurt de Becker, Youth (-work) and Social Participation. Elements for a Practical Theory, Flemish Youth Council - JeP!

**1. Challenge** – this is a specific topic or area that makes a young person interested and willing to get involved in activities they are not yet familiar with in regards to that specific area. The role of a youth worker is to identify these topics and to think of what kind of activities, and of what complexity, is challenging enough for the young people to start feeling competitive and willing to prove to themselves and others that they can create opportunities or have influence in decision-making. Getting involved in challenging activities or methods means that a young person wants to try new things and leave their daily comfort zone. This stimulates relatively intensive personal development, great involvement and desire to continue developing. Rebellion is a feature mostly typical for teenagers and the rest of the youth. It is expressed through specific means that are less tolerated by the society in order to attract the society's attention to the problems faced by young people. A tendency to rebel can be used constructively when working with



young people: their desire to realize a problem, to firmly state their own opinion and to get involved in a dialogue with governmental structures and other social groups can be harnessed. Civil disobedience, criticism towards the existing system or a wrong political system looks pretty challenging and can motivate a lot of young people to take active participation.

**2. Capacities** – when selecting methods or specific activities, it is important not to make the challenge too high. Young people must be able to believe they can use their power to change the environment and realize their own ideas. Capacities mean knowledge and skills, so the person working with youth must try to find out what the young people in that environment are capable of in order to know what kind of activities and challenges would make them interested. Learning to participate means developing skills required for participation. When a youth worker notices that their group members do not have the required skills, she/he can work on this to create the conditions for developing them.

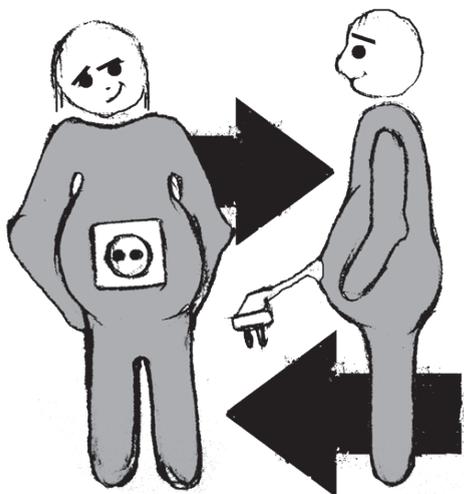
The relationship between these two aspects is important when working with youth. If the challenge element is missing, a young person might consider the activity as meaningless, boring and not that 'catchy'. A young person who has no skills to realise their idea feels helpless and unwilling to get involved in this kind of activity. Working with young people means encouraging them to



experience success and increase their self-confidence. If young people act more and more successfully, they will get involved in more sophisticated initiatives and forms of participation.

**3. Connection** – young people have to see how their interests and hobbies are related or connected to groups, organizations or movements that might be helpful in satisfying their interests. The role of a person working with young people can be helping them notice and make sense of the connections of youth group members or links among organizations with similar goals. A person working with young people usually has an active social life and knows the best organizations or institutions to be involved with. Therefore, they could be the first link to helping young people discover useful connections within their environment. With regards to participation, the young person must find involvement meaningful and the area of participation must be related to his interests. All in all work with young people (and selection of methods or activities), requires looking for common challenges or interests for the whole

group, giving opportunities to develop the skills of active participation and strengthening relationships of a youth group with people from their environment.



## 3.7. WORKING WITH YOUTH AND DEVELOPING A SENSE OF TEAMWORK

When working with youth, teamwork is usually reflected in two ways:

1. We work with youth groups in order to help young people develop the skills of working in a team.
2. We work in teams ourselves to create, realize and assess education programmes.

As we have already mentioned, *a team is a group of people with the same goal and using all the competences to reach it.*

In order to work in a team successfully and to help young people develop their skills of working in a team, it is important to understand the features that define an effective team.

### Features of an effective team<sup>18</sup>

**1) Comprehension of aims and tasks.** No group of people can work in a 'team mode' if it is not clear what they have to do and why. Team members must fully understand the specific goals and tasks of the team. All members are involved in the process of definition and realization. The time that team members spend discussing the common goals and actions is quickly compensated when it comes to fulfilling plans as a lot of misunderstandings are avoided.

**What could be helpful?** Team members can sit in a circle and start a discussion to find out the aims of the team and, if necessary, talk about them and frame them once again. It is especially important for the team members to understand the aims in the same way. As

<sup>18</sup> Based on "Praktinis vadovas Lietuvos nevyriausybinėms organizacijoms" (Practical Guide for Non-governmental Organizations in Lithuania), 1999

our experience shows, it is usually very useful, and often essential, to revisit the aims, the tasks and the actions.

### **2) Positive interpersonal communication, confidence in team members.**

As there are relationships among team members, there is also the relationship of an individual member with the whole team. Each person is emotionally related to the group. This strong relationship is an essential power supply when a team of youth workers (or a team of young people), is trying to reach the goals and is working on the tasks. Team members interact in an open, simple manner. Each of them has a chance to explain his point of view, can constructively state personal opinion about team work and accept other opinions (feedback skills). Team members actively listen to each other and encourage confidence in each other.

**What could be helpful?** Getting to know team members better. It is good to learn each other's expectations about common goals and other members. It is also good to know more about each other's experience in the field of youth work (as well as other relevant experiences), get to know each other's strong and weak sides. Teams often go through a stage when the collaborating individuals are looking for suitable connections with each other. Our experience shows that teams usually reach a high level of efficiency when they face difficulties and manage to solve them or when they fail in something and learn from this to use their experience effectively in the future.

**3) Clear common work procedures.** A team has to define activity methods to help it work. It is essential for a team to decide how to make decisions, share information, schedule work and share responsibilities. For example, a meeting agenda can be very helpful for planning team activities during a meeting. A schedule for some tasks can help the team manage common activities. When creating agendas or activity schedules and distributing responsibilities, it is

important to involve all the members so that each of them has a chance to state his point of view.

**What could be helpful?** Gathering together to discuss work procedures. It is good to talk about teamwork experiences each individual has had and hear how they would like to work in a specific team. It is also helpful to record each member's responsibilities, to plan the work steps and agree upon the deadlines.

Prepare for the meetings in advance; try to predict the course, possible questions and the topic. Inform everybody in advance and ask them to be ready to share opinions about the challenges. Meetings are usually more effective when there is a guide (a chairperson or moderator).

**4) Courage to solve conflicts.** Conflicts are to be treated calmly; they have to be clearly explained and constructively solved avoiding any sudden unsolved agreements. Conflicts are normal and unavoidable. It is first important to understand they cannot be avoided and then to see them as an opportunity for creation. When discussing conflicts, team members disclose their deep views on things like: work quality, the meaning of interrelations in the team, seeking help and sticking to deadlines, etc. This kind of discussion helps develop the team's common consciousness, which is very useful for further tasks. To constructively solve conflicts, follow the conflict resolution steps and encourage others to do the same.

**What could be helpful?** (Conflict resolution steps). The first thing to do in order to resolve a conflict is to acknowledge it. When we consult teams working with youth, we often notice situations when a conflict exists but people are trying to escape it and pretend everything is normal. It is important to understand that a conflict is stimulated by a problem, which is the whole team's business. There is no need to look for those who are 'guilty' – it is only important to clearly communicate what needs are still left unsatisfied and what specific behaviour of a team member you have an issue with.

Steps that help solve conflicts:

1. Organize a meeting. Do not try to solve conflicts in a hurry. It is most effective to have a special meeting and sufficient time devoted to it. If people are informed about the meeting in advance, there is time to consider the situation and think about the ways to solve it. You can calm down and get prepared for a constructive dialogue. When you work with a group you must firstly stop the process (activity, proceeding) and have the conflicting sides sit down for a discussion.
2. Let the steam OUT. Describe what you feel. Say everything. You cannot start looking for a solution all the time there is something unsaid (from the both sides). When talking about feelings, it is important to be constructive. It is recommended to name the emotions with reference to the specific actions of other persons. A good example would be: "I feel angry when you do not finish your tasks on time". A bad example is: "You are useless because you cannot do anything the way you are asked to". Sometimes this step is enough to solve a conflict since team members may not have been aware that their actions evoke such feelings. If people are responsive to the opinion of others they may change their behaviour immediately.
3. Name the situation. Say how you see things and the situation. State what you consider to be the reason of the conflict.
4. Check how you have been understood.
5. Hear the other side and ask people to be more specific if there is something you do not understand.
6. Check how you have understood each other.
7. Talk about wishes: what does each side want? What do we want from each other? How do we want things to be? (Sometimes wishes can be the same – we may all want an egg, though some of us want the shell, and others the yolk).
8. Have a plan of action. Have responsibilities divided. If we only

want one side to change, we go backwards and the situation remains unsolved.

Conflict resolution inside a team is closely related to the ability to give constructive feedback. Feedback is one of the most informative sources for helping the other person understand themselves and their behaviour better. It is important to give feedback at an appropriate time and in an appropriate manner.

### **Advice for giving and receiving feedback:**

When giving feedback:

- ask the person to whom your feedback is addressed if she/he wants and can listen to you now;
- be as specific as possible and refer to the behaviour that makes you unsatisfied in a certain situation;
- be honest and respect the person without ignoring the possibility you might be wrong;
- clearly state that these are your subjective remarks and feelings;
- avoid evaluations or interpretations and do not analyze, but simply reveal the situation;
- do not impose your opinion – only offer it.

When receiving feedback:

- say what you would like to hear;
- think if you have already heard something like that elsewhere before;
- do not try to immediately defend yourself; listen calmly and let the feedback affect you;
- share your feelings and reactions.

The skills of receiving and giving feedback are used not only to solve team conflicts, but also when working with youth groups.

Giving constructive feedback is an important skill of a youth worker. The rules are the same. A youth worker who gives feedback to a youth group or a young individual becomes a mirror giving that particular individual or group a chance to see themselves from another person's perspective and to learn from the information received.

When working with youth groups, it is often necessary to simply confront, stop the process and draw everybody's attention to some specific details.

**5) Shared leadership.** People will not work as a team if they are folded together as a flock of sheep and the decisions are made by one leader or someone from the team. Teamwork is only present when the leadership is shared by all the members. It means that each member takes responsibility for two basic things: 1) achievement of goals; 2) interaction among team members and support for each other.

**What could be helpful?** In order to reach goals, it is necessary to encourage discussions and action, explain the goals and actions, make summaries, look for solutions and give information. Team members are supported by encouraging them and involving them in activities and discussions. It is necessary to gauge and guide the team mood (both good and bad), and to look for solutions in case of conflicts.

When leadership is not clearly defined, misunderstandings are possible, as people do not know who is responsible in general and who the leader is. If a team is still not capable of sharing leadership, it has to be decided who takes the biggest responsibility and who the rest of the team is accountable to.

*Individual and common responsibility.* Common responsibility develops from common goals. Many people are careful about teamwork since it means taking responsibility for others or accounting for one's own work. When all the members of a

team agree upon common goals and make common decisions regarding their activity, they automatically start taking common responsibility.

**6) Regular teamwork evaluation.** Teamwork evaluation is the main tool in a team's learning process and development. From time to time, a team has to discuss and evaluate its work and interactions. This helps the team understand what has already been done, what the obstacles were and what was helpful as well as what needs to be changed. A team finds it difficult to continue working successfully if there is no constructive evaluation.

**What could be helpful?** We offer a 'PPP' evaluation model (Katzenbach J. R., Smith D. K., 1992) that we use ourselves and recommend to others when evaluation of team-work is necessary



Fig. 15: A "PPP" model for a successful team

According to the 'PPP' model, an essential element for guaranteeing team's efficiency is the balance among the angles of the triangle. It is important for all the members of a team to have a common understanding of the complete shape.

Additional questions for evaluation of team-work:

### **The Persona's angle**

Have the needs, interests and capabilities of the team members been sorted out?

Has there been any space for the team members to discuss their wishes, feelings, willingness to work, problems, etc.?

### **The Procedure angle**

Have the team members agreed upon the ways of making decisions, dividing responsibilities, discussing conflicts, etc.?

Have the methods and principles of communication been agreed?

### **The Product angle**

Did all the members of the team clearly know what the common goal was?

To what extent has the goal been achieved? Is everybody satisfied with the result?

It is important to mention here that there might be more than one product when implementing educational activities with youth groups. For instance, when making an international youth exchange, the possible products for evaluation could be as follows: achievement of educational goals (acquisitions, discoveries), common activity, implementation of logistic tasks, etc. It is important for the team members to name these products before the evaluation.

**The "PPP" model in practice.** We firstly recommend each team member to evaluate his/her work in the team individually. This means evaluation of each angle of the 'PPP' triangle. It can be

evaluated by giving a grade from 1 to 10 (1 – these aspects have not been reflected in our team activity at all; 10 – these aspects have been fully realized). In the stage of self-evaluation it is important to look at work in the team from a distance, to be honest and critical. In the second stage, all the team members meet to present their individual evaluations and to discuss them. The final stage is to agree upon the common evaluation (what grade is given by the team to each angle of the triangle). It is important to end the evaluation with recommendations on what to do in order to pay attention to each angle and to treat all the angles equally as all the three aspects and the balance among them is critically important.

Cooperation in a team is successful when:

- the common goal is more important than the interests of individual team members;
- self-realization of a team member is satisfied when it is adequate in a certain situation (e.g., one member insists on presenting some specific results);
- a dominant member's desire to lead is used productively;
- competition is replaced by constructive cooperation in order to reach the common goal;
- individual's feel able to 'flirt' or 'make fun' during personal informal conversations;
- a team's success is taken as each member's personal success.

A team's usefulness and additional value comes from the different motivations that individual team members have and that add up to the common success.

*Our motto:*

*Tasks are grabbed and not pushed away in a good team!*

# 4. FOR THE POCKETS: METHODS AND GAMES

## 4.1. PEDAGOGY THROUGH GAMES AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Back in 1938, Johan Huizinga from Holland introduced the *homo ludens* (from Latin *a playing man*) concept, based on the idea that games help a man develop his skills. It is a way for a person to discover his characteristics and therefore useful for one's personal development. A game is the same as freedom of actions and it emphasizes specific thinking. In other words, *homo ludens* becomes himself *through personal experience*. This is a brief discussion of Huizinga's philosophy. It paved the way for foreign (Germanic) countries to develop a new branch of pedagogy – pedagogy through games, often offered as post-graduate studies.

A game is the main (basic) way to express one's activeness as it releases creativity, energy and power. Therefore, a game has a hidden potential to "break" the pre-set structures and encourage innovation, which is not only necessary in daily life, but also in this current context. A game is one of the few human techniques that make it possible to change the elements of some specific situation to create something new and unknown, and to find solutions for "unsolvable" situations. A game also helps players to actively learn

to adapt to the environment.

Due to the playfulness of situations, there is less fear of taking risks, which is often present in daily life. It is mainly because the games are controlled and structured, their complexity is reduced and the interaction is made easier by limiting the actions (by rules).

In short, games significantly contribute to encouraging and strengthening the development of one's personality. A game in a group gives a reason to start and develop conversations on specific topics based on common or similar experiences.

Games are often given another name in the context of non-formal youth education. For example, they are referred to as methods, tasks or exercises. This is also a cultural thing since, as everybody knows, Lithuanians (and not only them) attribute games (up until now) to world of children which grown-ups distance themselves from. However, the new drive of table-games and outside-games that started a few years ago is already changing the attitude of the grown-ups. But a method in the context of education is a technical term for "using a game for educational purposes". Talking about non-formal youth education, its content's frame is a variety of games that help people (*homo ludens*) discover how to become what they are becoming, i.e., games offer experience that is later on reflected on and perceived.

Therefore, we want to encourage the readers to have no fear of the terms "game" or "method", since they both come from the same cradle and are based on the same principles. But we use the term "method" in this guide – not because these are not games, but because we have been taught this way and we are used to this term.

## 4.2. USE OF METHODS IN YOUTH WORK

Quotations of participants of training courses: *“Cool method – let’s do it”; “It has worked the last time – let’s do it again”; “Shall we try some new simulation?”*

This is exactly what you should not do.

Different methods help a youth worker do specific pedagogic interventions. Methods are tools one needs *to know* how to use and *to be able* to use. There are no good or bad methods. A method is only effective when it is used at the right time and in the right place.

In order to select methods and to successfully use them, it is necessary to have clearly formed the goals of the group and/or the team of group leaders. The goals need to be adapted to the present situation (here and now). If there is no clear objective, group members find it more difficult to accept the method because they cannot understand its purpose. Often, when the purpose of a method is not clear, the method is treated as a game and the pedagogical objectives of an educator are lost. Adopting a method means understanding its purpose, participating and gaining new experience. When working with young people, methods are used for individual development and social learning.

A method itself is by no means a goal and is not only a game. A team of group leaders and group members must take methods seriously as space for learning and experimenting. When putting methods into practice, a work atmosphere must be always maintained. A work atmosphere means a safe atmosphere where team members are able to get rid of their fears, gain new experience and learn from it. In order to learn, it is important to discuss the gained experience. Sufficient time must be devoted for reflection as discussion is the main part of a method – it helps the participants perceive the experience gained and is the key for making the learning process

successful.

When selecting methods and preparing a programme, it is recommended to consider these aspects:

- What are your specific educational goals, what are you trying to achieve?
- What topic are you working on? Are the links between the method used and the objectives of the activity clear?
- What experience do we have in using similar methods before?
- How specific is the youth group you are working with? What kind of experience does it have? What is its current situation (phase of development)? What interests and needs do the team members have?
- What are the conditions for using the method? Is the space and the environment suitable for work? What materials do you need and have? Will there be sufficient time?
- What educational activities/methods did you use before with the same group? What are you going to do after?

It is much easier to use a method if a person has experienced how it works him/herself. It makes it easier to understand what the group members are experiencing. But we encourage you to be brave enough to carefully try new methods – this is the only way for us and for the young people to gain new valuable experience. If you are not sure about the method you are using, you can be honest with the group and invite it to try a new method, then, discuss its advantages and the ways to apply it in the future.

The selection of methods must correspond to the principles of individual holistic learning. During the selection stage, we recommend considering the learners’ intellect, feelings, imagination, spirituality and all the senses, including sight, smell, touch, sound and taste. When we use different methods, we eventually collect a whole range of them. Sufficient experience

of selecting and applying methods often makes us capable of transforming the methods in the way we want or creating new ones.

Before putting any method in practice, it is worth considering if the method is really necessary. As long as we do not have experience, we try to hide behind the methods to somehow “kill time”. This is normal and typical for those who only start working with young people. But experience brings an understanding that a method is not the main thing. We hope you will discover this yourselves.

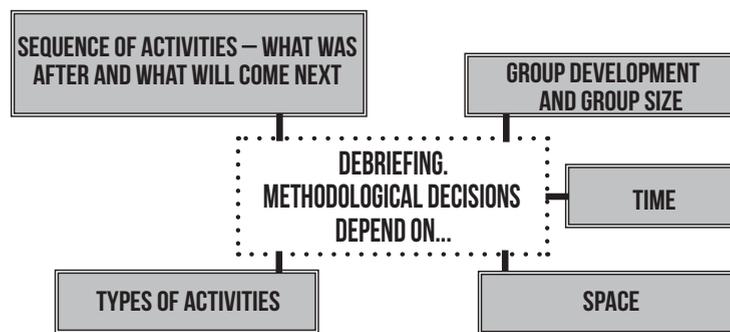
### 4.3. GUIDING DEBRIEFING

The majority of methods discussed in this book include the debriefing part. Debriefing an experience is a particularly important part for a youth worker. We have already mentioned the importance and meaning of experience in the section about experiential learning. It is time now to give some tips how to structure and guide the debriefing after a group has gained some important experience. Your decisions regarding the way you are going to guide the debriefing depend on many factors that need to be evaluated beforehand and at the moment the discussion is ready to begin.

- **Group development and group size.** Try to identify the dynamic stage that the group is in; how open people are to talking and what the level of confidence is among the members. The more time group members spend together, the easier it is to communicate, to pay attention to the processes inside the group and to look for insights from personal experiences. Group size is also very important for defining the duration of the debriefing. If you work with a big group, try to give the members a chance to reflect on things in small groups and then let them share their revelations with the whole group.
- **Time.** Think of how much time you can devote to a debriefing

and when it should take place according to your plan of activities. Consider how tired the group might be after the activity and how much time it might be willing to spend debriefing the gained experience. Ensure that other parts of the activity will not last too long and therefore leave less time for the discussion, as this part is when the most important revelations about oneself and the others are made.

- **Space.** The space where debriefing take place might have a big impact – it might help or hinder. As you know the space where you are going to work, you can consider how it could possibly be used for reflection time (chairs, windows, benches and nature) and judge the limitations (noise, open-air, discomfort, etc.).
- **Type of activities.** Think about the activities that take place before the debriefing and consider how dynamic, relaxing, creative, serious or fun the discussion part should be.
- **Sequence.** Evaluate the activities that take place before the debriefing and think about the activities that should follow it. This is important for forming debriefing questions and deciding what things to emphasize or how to help the participants make their experience meaningful.



This book discusses the importance of the “here and now” moments when we work with groups of young people and reactions to the processes currently taking place. These moments cannot be foreseen and we have to stay alert to notice them and to react immediately by asking young people to pay attention to the things happening in the group. Such reflections are not pre-planned, but, depending on some basic factors, you may decide how to debrief things important for the group.

### **Decisions Regarding the Sequence of Debriefing**

We recommend planning a discussion to be made with a group and deciding what the sequence of the discussion should be in advance. We offer you some questions to help you plan the debriefing and select the appropriate methods.

- What stages should there be?
- What sequence should they follow?
- What should the pace of the debriefing be?
- Should the planned sequence be repeated during the debriefing several times?
- How strict should the sequence be?
- How dynamic should the discussion be?
- Who must take these decisions? How should these decisions be taken?

### **Possible Sequence of Elements**

It is often impossible to involve all the mentioned elements, but all of them are rather important in the educational/experiential learning process. If you have started working with a new group, people might find the process of debriefing weird or unusual. Therefore, you can decide to consistently introduce new elements for debriefing such as:

- An explanation of the aim and the process of discussion
- The perspectives of the past, the “here and now” and the

future

- Pros, cons, interesting things (balanced time for each).
- Personal and group perspective towards what has happened (“Me” and “We”)
- Feedback elements
- Opportunities to involve people with different learning styles/preferences
- Discussion of the discussion (in order to improve the discussion process in the future)

We often notice that people who work with young people consider “learning from experience” as equal to “learning from mistakes”, “correcting mistakes”, or “eliminating blocks and barriers”. According to Dr. Roger Greenaway who has spent many years investigating reviewing techniques, it is often focused on things that interfere with learning or group efficiency. This is one approach but is by no means the only way to help people learn from their experience.

The basic tool for guiding a discussion is a question that helps a person reveal and review his/her experience. We feel there is a tendency in educational work with young people to give failure-oriented questions. Even neutral questions may lead to a discussion of negative experiences. It is sometimes worth considering if the question is more about “digging a problem” or about reviewing good experiences and strengths of a person or a group.

These are a few examples

A given question: What went wrong?

Alternative question: What went right?

A given question: What are the things you should improve?

Alternative question: What are your strengths?

A given question: What have you learned not to do next time?

Alternative question: What have you learned to do better?

A given question: What does this group lack?  
Alternative question: What makes this group successful?

We suggest selecting questions carefully and consciously, considering what they may lead to. We consider all experiences of a young person to be valuable and revealing, but highlighting the successful ones may significantly strengthen a young person making him/her capable of seeking more in life. The followers of positivism state that every person tends to grow when s/he receives good evaluation and when his/her strengths are acknowledged.

Based on [www.reviewing.co.uk](http://www.reviewing.co.uk)

## 4.4. A SET OF METHODS

We have devoted this chapter for describing a series of methods that we have been using for a long time when working with youth groups. A description of each method includes the following aspects: the objective of a method, materials needed, recommended group size, duration, course of action and comments.

As we have already mentioned, a method is only a tool in your hands that needs to be used with purpose and at the right time. For this reason, the methods described in this chapter are divided into eight categories according to the specific group situations when they are most frequently used.

There are methods to help you “warm the group up”, learn the names, get to know each other, to build self-confidence and trust, encourage communication and collaboration of group members, work on specific topics, to look into oneself, do self-reflections, evaluate the work done and farewell.

Use them flexibly and consciously, bearing in mind that your group’s experience is only as important if it has been understood and perceived as such. Good luck!

## 4.5. ICE-BREAKING AND WARMING-UP

These methods are intended to help group members relax and start communicating. Usually they are used in newly formed groups to encourage interaction of group members and to get them try to know each other.



**OBJECTIVES**



**GROUP SIZE**



**MATERIALS NEEDED**



**TIME**



**COURSE OF ACTION**



**COMMENTS**



**DESCRIPTION**

## „FROM 1 TO 20“



Improving concentration, getting a better sense of the group



8–15



None



About 10–20 minutes (depending on how well group members manage to concentrate)



Group members stand in a circle. The task is to count aloud until 20. Somebody has to start with “one”. Another person has to continue with “two”, yet another one with “three”, and etc. If the same number is said by two persons or more, everybody has to start counting from the beginning. If the group is not yet well-formed, it is enough to count until 20. Later on the number can be increased. This exercise can be done frequently, for example, each time before starting group work.

## „SMELL IT“



Getting to know each other, feeling more comfortable in a group.



8–35



Strong chairs that are stable on the ground. The number of chairs depends on the number of people participating in the task.

Alternative materials: a sheet of paper (A4 format) for each participant or a string put on the ground and formed into a circle.



About 20–30 minutes



Group members stand in a circle on chairs (sheets of paper or string). It is important to arrange the chairs making it possible to step from one chair to another without touching the ground.

The task is to stand in a row in some sequence, for example, according to the month and day of birth, the first name letter (according to the alphabet), the zodiac sign, etc. without touching the ground. If done in a circle, another rule can be introduced, members are only allowed to move clockwise.



Additional variation: the task must be done without talking. Before getting on the chairs, group members usually take their shoes off – and this is where the name of the method comes from.

## „CHANGING PLACES IF...“



Getting to know each other, feeling more comfortable in a group



Unlimited



Chairs arranged in a circle. There has to be one chair less than the number of the participants.



10–15 minutes



Group members have to sit in a circle. One person has to stand in the centre and say something about him/herself. A participant to whom the mentioned feature applies has to move from his/her chair looking for a new place to sit down (e.g. a person says “I like vanilla ice-cream”, and the participant who also likes it has to move to look for a new place to sit down). Additional variation: you are not allowed to take the seat of your neighbour.

## „MIXED HANDS“



Relaxing, playing, warming-up



Unlimited



None



10 minutes



Participants have to stand in a close circle with their backs facing the centre. They have to raise their hands up and slightly lean them backwards. Then, without looking and totally by chance, they have to reach for someone else's hands, keep them tight and, finally, try to disentangle it all to have everyone standing in a circle.



This game can be started by lying on the ground. The participants raise their hands above the head, reach for someone else's hands, and then try to stand up and disentangle it all. A few smaller circles are possible at times.

## „RAIN IN THE FOREST“



Warming-up, coming back to the group, concentrating



Unlimited



None



7 minutes



The group leader asks everybody to imagine they are in a forest. Little by little, the wind gets stronger, it starts sprinkling, then it turns into heavy rain and finally it climaxes in a big thunder-storm. After a while, the thunder stops, the storm becomes milder, the rain is no longer that strong, there are only a few drops and the wind dies down.

The group leader starts some action and then, one by one, all the participants start repeating it in the clockwise direction. It is similar to making a ‘wave’ in a stadium. There is no need to watch the group leader and to start repeating his action immediately. You have to watch your neighbour on the right and when you notice she/he has changed his/her action, you have to change your action accordingly.

- Rubbing palms (the wind is starting);
- Rubbing palms stronger (the wind is getting stronger);

- Tapping a palm with a finger (sprinkling),
- Tapping with 2 fingers;
- 3 fingers;
- Clapping hands;
- Stamping feet;
- Stamping feet and slapping thighs with palms;
- Stamping feet;
- Clapping hands;
- Tapping a few fingers;
- 3 fingers;
- 2 fingers;
- 1 finger;
- Rubbing palms (at this stage – intensely);
- Rubbing palms slower and quieter (the wind is coming down);
- Rubbing hands very quietly until there is total silence.



If the neighbours go outside to see if it is not raining – you have done everything right.

## „A DRAGON AND A SHIELD“



Warming-up, creating a playful atmosphere in a group



Unlimited



None



15 minutes



Each participant selects one person to be his/her dragon and one person to be his/her shield. Those people are not aware of the selection since it cannot be said. When the start is announced, everyone has to take such a position so that she/he is far from the dragon and behind the shield (your shield has to protect you from the dragon – to be between the dragon and you). If the shield is moving, you have to move accordingly.

After a while the group leader says “Stop!”

The ‘Stop!’ command means that everybody has to freeze and the group can see how well every person managed to hide behind his/her shield. This can be repeated several times by choosing another dragon and another shield.

Discussion is not necessary, unless group members feel like discussing it (there may be questions why one has chosen someone as the dragon or the shield). The roles of the dragon and the shield are a sort of feedback.



It creates a lot of chaos, physical contact and a good mood

## „VOLLEYBALL WITH A SCARF“



Warming-up, coming back to the group, having some fun time



12–24



A silk scarf, a net or a string



10-15 min



A group is divided into two teams. The string (the net) is stretched out a little bit above the participants, at the height of about 2 metres. The scarf is used instead of a ball and it needs to be blown. A team has to blow the scarf so that it falls on the other team’s side and win a point. The team that collects the most points is the winner.

The groups can discuss the rest of the details e.g. how many times you are allowed to blow, where to start from, how long to play for, what final score the teams are playing for, etc.



The good thing about it is that it is possible to create your own rules and improvise.

It intensifies the breath, gives energy.

Variation:

If a group is big and there is enough space, more than one scarf can be used at the same time.

## „A CHAIN OF LAUGHTER“



Relaxing, getting rid of tension created during group work.



Unlimited



None



13 minutes



The participants lie down on the ground, each of them putting his/her head on another person's belly. It starts with one person lying down and another person lying down and putting his/her head on the first person's belly. The third person puts his/her head on the second person's belly and so on. The person lying at the beginning of the 'chain' starts chuckling loudly and laughing. Shortly, the laughter passes through the whole 'chain'.



This game is more suitable for finishing day's activities or as a free-time activity.

## 4.6. LEARNING NAMES

These methods are used for helping learn the names of the group members. We recommend spending sufficient time for learn-

ing names in order to establish a personal relationship with each group member and to encourage interaction among the members themselves.

## „THE MEMORY SNAKE“



Learning each other's names



Unlimited. However, if there are more than 40 people in a group, the game should be started from the beginning after half of them finish it. And if a group is particularly small (5–7 people), the method is not that effective.



None



Everything depends on the size of the group. Usually it lasts as many minutes as there are members in the group.



The participants have to stand or sit in a circle. It starts with one person saying his/her name. A person next to him/her repeats the name and says his/her own name. The following person has to repeat the previous names and say his/her own name and so on.



This method is based on repetition. ('Repetitio est mater studiorum' – repetition is the mother of studies). There is a great chance that the participants will really remember each other's names after the whole circle has said their names.

The group leaders also take part in the process so that they can address the participants by their names later on.

## „NAME AND ACTION“



Learning each other's names



Unlimited. However, if there are more than 40 people in a group, the game should be started from the beginning after half of them finish it. And if a group is particularly small (5–7 people), the method is not that effective.



None



10–15 minutes



Group members have to sit or stand in a circle. One by one, each member says his/her name and makes some movement at the same time. The rest of the group have to repeat the name and the movement.



This method is based on saying the name out loud. It is important to articulate the name clearly and loudly – especially in an international / intercultural environment.

It is not usual to express oneself with a movement, so the group leader may need to start and show an example. Two group leaders may sit next to each other. One of them can start the circle and the other – finish it. It gives the second group leader a chance to make the group move, for example, by starting moving around the room. It is a good idea to finish the game of learning names and start the phase of warming-up (e.g. with the 'Atoms and molecules', 'Greetings', etc.). Everybody will start repeating the group leader's movement and so there will be no need for the group leader to ask the group to stand up (if the participants have been sitting), in order to make them move.

## „THE BALL OF NAMES“



Learning each other's names, feeling more comfortable in the group



Recommended – up to 40



Soft balls (at least 2)



About 15 minutes



Everybody stands in a circle. The group leader explains the task. When somebody gets the ball, she/he has to throw it to another person saying aloud his/her name at the same time. The ball cannot be thrown to the same person twice during the same round (a round is finished when everybody has received and thrown the ball once). The ball has to come back to the group leader as she/he was the one who started throwing it. After the first round, the group leader explains that the ball has to be thrown in exactly the same sequence as the first time saying each other's names aloud. Then the ball is thrown in the reverse order. Finally, the second ball is involved and two balls are being thrown at the same time: the first one in the usual order and the second one – in the reverse order.



More than two balls can be used. In this case, additional throwing methods can be used. The most important thing is to always loudly say the name of the person to whom the ball is being thrown.

## „SAY THE NAME FASTER“



Memorizing the names faster



12–24



A newspaper



15 minutes



Group members sit or stand in a circle. One person stands in the centre. Somebody has to say the name of another person and the one who is standing in the centre has to hit (but gently) the person whose name has been said with a wrapped newspaper on the head. The person whose name has been said must say another person's name before she/he is hit with a newspaper. Anyone who does not manage to do this in time or makes a mistake has to go to the centre of the circle.



The group leader should be mindful of those persons who are slower and who may not be able to say names as fast as the others. If the group leader knows there are people like that in the group, she/he should not suggest playing this game. There should not be any winners or losers in this game – it is not about winning, but about learning the names.

This game is fun and escapist. If you play it before starting work, it might be difficult to get people concentrated. It may be better to play this game for memorizing names during free-time or during the breaks between different stages of work.

## „A BROOMSTICK“



Learning names



16–24



A broom or a broomstick



7–13 minutes



Participants have to stand in a circle. One of the participants has to stand in the centre holding a broomstick in a vertical position with one end touching the ground. This person has to say aloud another participant's name and remove his/her hand from the broomstick. The broomstick starts falling and the person whose name has been said has to catch it before it falls on the ground. This is how another person gets in the centre of the circle. It is then his/her turn to say another person's name and so on.



This is a good morning activity for repeating names and making sure everybody knows them (if the participants have been learning names the previous day). Another option is to play it during another activity when the participants might have forgotten some names.

## 4.7. GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

The methods for getting to know each other may be a continuation of the warming-up and name-learning processes. However, it is possible to start group processes straight away with these methods. It depends on your educational purposes. We have separated these methods for getting to know each other from the warming-up and name-learning games as these help you get more information about group members. There are many factors that define how deep or shallow this information is going to be, including: the aims of the group leader, the way the task is framed, group members experience and preparedness, the time devoted for getting to know each other, etc. Methods for getting to know each other are a helpful tool at the beginning of group processes (in the phase of getting to know each other). Judging from our experience, as long as group members do not know each other and the group is not yet well-formed, it is very difficult, or even impossible, to move forward.

There is no need to use the methods for getting to know each other if group members spend some time living together. They find out more details about each other naturally and automatically get to know each other better. Methods for getting to know each other may function as an accelerator making the process faster and paving the way for further communication and interest in each other.

### „ATOMS AND MOLECULES“



Getting to know each other, noticing each other's external qualities and discovering internal qualities



Unlimited



Music player



About 10 minutes



Group members move with music chaotically as atoms. When the volume is reduced, a personal quality is mentioned and the atoms have to form molecules – groups of people who come together because they share the same quality. For some time, group members may stand holding hands. When the volume is increased again, the molecules break into atoms which continue moving chaotically.

Qualities may vary. Usually, the game is started by mentioning external qualities and ends with internal qualities. This game can be used to discover any organizational issues to avoid coming back to them later, for example, who has still not settled in a room, who is a vegetarian, etc. You could end by mentioning the state of readiness for work.



This method can also be used as a warming-up activity.

## „NAMES ON CARDS“



Learning the names of group members, feeling more comfortable in a group



16–40



Cards with names, paper, writing materials



20 minutes for action  
20 minutes for presentations in a circle



Each participant needs a card with his/her name written on it. If there are more people with the same name in the group, they should put some symbol next to their name to make it easier to distinguish them.

Then the cards with the names are collected, mixed and distributed. The task is to present the person whose name is written on the card to the group. Group members have to communicate trying to find out as much information as possible to be able to present the person. You are allowed to talk to everybody but the name of the person who you will present to the group must be kept in secret. When presenting the person in the circle, you must firstly present the information you have collected and only then mention the name, or the name can be guessed by other members. After the presentation it is possible to specify some details or to ask questions.



We recommend asking the members to guess which person is being presented. It helps to create some kind of intrigue. People become more attentive and memorize the information better.

## „A NAME AND AN ANIMAL“



Learning names, getting to know each other



12–24



Paper, writing materials, markers, crayons



30 minutes



Group members sit in a circle. One by one, group members say their names and define themselves as an animal they would like to be (e.g. “My name is Arthur. I would like to be a hoary marmot”). Then, every person takes a sheet of paper, writes his/her name in big letters and draws the animal she/he has chosen. The papers with the names and animals are put on a wall.



Suitable for an international/intercultural group.

This method makes it easier to memorize the names. It also helps to reveal something about one’s character. If it is an international group, it is important to pronounce the name clearly, to teach how to pronounce individual letters and to explain the origin and the meaning of the name. The group should repeat every person’s name several times.

Variations: You may decide to talk about plants, colours, pieces of music or works of literature instead of animals.

## „ABOUT MYSELF“



Getting to know each other better



8–12



Paper, writing materials



10–15 minutes for individual contemplations and taking notes  
45 minutes for sharing



Participants are asked to fold their sheets of paper (A4 format) several times to make 8 squares. The paper is torn (or cut) on the fold to make 8 cards (the cards could be prepared in advance).

People are asked to write something that is currently important for them in their life on each card.

Then the participants are asked to share their ideas in a circle.



Despite its simplicity, this method is stunning. It gives a chance to quickly get a deeper insight; to see things that people are concerned about and things that make them happy. It helps to reveal their worries, values, attitudes regarding the world, attitudes towards themselves and others, etc.

People interpret things that are important for them

differently. Some people focus on problems, others – on values or on free-time activities and so on. But this is also sort of charming. It helps to get a better sense of a person.

If group members are not very mature, the task can be made more specific by explaining what exactly we want them to write down.

It could also be made simpler by asking participants to write down only 3 things but then that the insights will not be that deep.

## „YOU NEVER KNOW“



Getting to know each other



Unlimited



Toilet paper (perforated, torn by into pieces)



3–5 minutes for sharing the paper  
15–20 minutes for introducing oneself in a group



Group leaders bring with themselves a roll of toilet paper. They send it from one person to another so that every person tears as much paper as she/he needs.

The group leader says: “You never know... you can never be sure of what is going to happen, what is waiting for you ahead, it is better to be prepared”.

And then asks the participants to say as many things about themselves as they have pieces of paper. If you are working with a big group and it is difficult to listen to each participant, the group should be divided into smaller groups for the discussion. It is good to later on bring the knowledge from the smaller groups into the whole group by telling the most interesting facts so that everybody can hear them.



It is a playful activity. It helps to get rid of tension and create a playful atmosphere.

It could be used during the first meeting when people still do not know anything about each other.

## „DOSSIER“



Getting to know each other, memorizing each other's names



Unlimited



A sheet of paper for every person, writing materials, materials for sticking the papers on a wall



About 20 minutes



A group is divided into two smaller groups.

1. Two circles are formed using the same number of chairs. One circle has to be faced outwards, and the other has to be faced inwards towards the centre. People from different groups sit down in different circles so that people facing each other are from different groups.
2. Each person has a sheet of paper (dossier) and puts his/her name at the top of it.
3. People are instructed to change places so that everyone has a chance to talk to a different person from another group. For example, the inner circle has to move 5 chairs clockwise and the exterior circle – 3 chairs counter clockwise.
4. The people facing each other have to exchange their sheets of paper and start the interview. They draw each other's 'photo'. At the end, every participant gets his/her 'dossier' back.

According to the procedure described above, the dossiers must be filled in with this information:

- Where is the person from and where does she/he live?
- What are his/her 3 favourite things?
- What are his/her 3 least favourite things?
- What is his/her secret purpose for coming to the seminar?

Several minutes are devoted for the discussion of each point.

To make it more entertaining, the participants can tell each other their favourite joke or a funny story from their life.



This method is limited as there is no possibility for a person to talk to all the participants. Therefore, we recommend using additional methods for hearing and learning the names of all group members (e.g. 'The Memory Snake').

## „COLLECT THE SIGNATURES“



Making the participants move and getting them ready for collaboration, creating friendly atmosphere



Unlimited



Sheets of paper with a table of tasks. The tasks may be very various, e.g. saying 'good morning' to 3 people, giving somebody a compliment, hugging 3 people, smiling at 2 people, and so on.



20–30 minutes



The participants are given the papers with the tasks. Cheerful music is put on and the participants have to move around trying to collect the signatures and to fill in the table.



You can be as creative as you like regarding the tasks. You might ask people to collect signatures of the people who can reach their nose with their tongue or who can bite their elbow. In order to make group atmosphere more entertaining, the participants can be asked to present the filled tables in a circle and to prove their abilities (to demonstrate them).

## „INTERVIEW“



Getting to know each other, finding out specific information



Unlimited



Instructions for each group



10 minutes for the action plus time for presentations, depending on the group size



Select the information that might be useful to obtain (both for the participants and the group leaders), according to the nature of the activity.

A group is divided into groups of 4 people and each group gets instructions or a question:

1. Which members have experience in the field of youth work?
2. Which of them have ever organized events?
3. Which members have participated in events related to youth activities?
4. Which members have experience of project implementation or organization?
5. Which members have experience of participation in projects?
6. Which members belong to registered youth organizations?

When the start is announced, groups start a general survey. Everybody has to be interviewed, including the members of the same group. Finally, members have to present the results to each other.

## „THE LEAF ON A HEAD“



Getting to know each other, feeling more comfortable in a group



Unlimited



A sheet of paper for every person, writing materials, materials for sticking the papers on a wall



About 15 minutes



Everybody stands in a circle with a sheet of paper (A4 format) on their head (with a name written on it). When a sign is given, everybody starts moving around the room. While moving, the leaves will fall down (and if not, you have to do something to make them fall). When a leaf falls down, a person cannot lift it him/herself – the participant can only get their leaf back on their head with the assistance of another person. When another person tries to help raise the leaf, his/her own leaf falls down as well (and if not, you have to do something to make it fall). The participants take each other's leaves and, before putting them back on the head, they ask each other a question – any question they want. They write the responses to the questions on their sheets of paper. Then they *put their leaves back on the head* and go ahead to lose them again.



It is important to give clear instructions because participants often get confused – they write their answers on wrong sheets of paper or put another person's paper on the head and then the method will not work.

When the time runs out, it is good to go back to the circle to share the things that have been written.

Variations:

1. When the time runs out, the task is stopped and every person from the circle has to present the last person she/he has talked with.
2. The group leader may collect all the papers and distribute them randomly so that the participants have to present other people from the circle. There is a specific learning aspect when people do a presentation about somebody else – a person hears new things about him/herself. Questions may arise, e.g. did I communicate it wrong or was I simply misunderstood? What does this say about our communication? What kind of communication do we want?
3. In order to encourage everybody to be more attentive, people are allowed to say one lie (no matter if a person is talking about him/herself or some other person). This way intrigue is created, people listen more carefully, and the atmosphere is more playful. Having finished the presentation, other participants have to guess which of the facts was a lie.

## „SILHOUETTES“



Getting to know each other better



12–24



White and coloured paper, felt-tip pens, thick thread of different colours, glue and scissors



Step 1 – 30 minutes;  
Step 2 – 30 minutes;  
Step 3 – 30 minutes – 1 hour



Step 1: SILHOUETTES.

Group members are divided into pairs (or small groups). One person has to lie on the floor and the other one has to draw his/her silhouette. Then they change places. When both silhouettes are drawn, the partners talk in pairs. Their task is to get as much information about each other as possible.

Step 2: DECORATION OF SILHOUETTES.

After the discussion in pairs, the partners have to decorate each other's silhouette. They can use various symbols and different means to emphasize important details and to reflect the things they have learned and heard about each other.

Step 3: PRESENTATION OF SILHOUETTES.

The participants have to present the silhouettes to the whole group. Every person talks about his/her partner's silhouette that she/he decorated. It is important not



to talk from your own perspective but to talk as if you were that person ('I am...').

The person who is talking cannot be interrupted or stopped – even if she/he is giving some wrong information. Facts can be denied or specified after the person finishes talking.

The group leader must structure the process; she/he may give some specific questions for the partners to discuss in pairs. These questions may be related to some specific topic. It is very important to give everybody a chance to talk. Therefore, it is important to devote more time for this task so to the activity is not stopped before everybody finishes talking. This method is a beginning point of social learning. Every person gets a chance to see how other people see and accept him/her and to have a chance to give and receive feedback.

The advantage of this method is that the silhouettes remain during other group activities. They can be stuck on the wall. It makes a room look 'alive'. Notes about each person as well as thoughts one may want to address him/her can be constantly added to the silhouettes.

If you work on different topics, these silhouettes should not take all the space of the room where you work.

If you meet with the same group after some time, these silhouettes can be used for the discussion of the group work, especially at the end of the process when you want to record the changes.

## „AIR-BALLOONS“



Finding out the expectations of the participants



Unlimited



Air-balloons drawn on large sheets of paper (1 sheet of paper with an air-balloon for 4–5 participants), stickers, writing utensils



20–30 minutes, depending on group size



The group is divided into groups of 4–5 participants. The participants are given 10 minutes to use the stickers for writing down their expectations, fears, other things they would like to share with the rest and ideas how they could contribute to the group (one thing on one sticker). The ideas are shared inside the group and the stickers are put on the air-balloon: the hopes and the expectations (things that lift us up) are the balloon, things that a person can offer to the group (the input) is in the basket and the fears (things that pull us down) are the sand sacks. These air-balloons are stuck on a wall and are presented to the whole group.

## „A TREE“



Finding out the expectations and fears of the participants of the seminar



Unlimited



A large sheet of paper with a tree drawn on it. The drawing must consist of three clear parts – the branches (the top), the trunk and the roots.



20–30 minutes, depending on the group size



Each group member has to individually think about his/her attitude towards the activity with regard to these aspects: hopes (What do I hope from this activity? From myself? From other participants? Good weather, etc.); fears (or things I would like to avoid) and input (how can I contribute to the process of the seminar? What can I offer to the group? Etc.)

Each aspect is written on a sticker and is stuck to the tree in the following sequence: hopes are placed on the branches, the input is put on the trunk and the fears on the roots.



These notes are then reviewed and read out loud. You can think of your own systems as regards what to put on the branches, the trunk and the roots.

## 4.8. SELF-CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN OTHERS

**Attention!** It is very important to use these tasks for self-testing only with the group members who are willing to do that. Do not forget this is not a competition and do not try to find out who is stronger, braver or better. Nobody has a right to force, push or violate another person's personal limits.

These tasks require silence, concentration and effort as well as energy of the participants. Concentration is essential here. Having fought their fears and having felt group power, the participants may start taking risky decisions or actions. Therefore, the group leader has to monitor how things are going and cannot relax for a second. It is better not to do these tasks at all if the group is not in the mood for doing them. Moreover, confidence tasks should not last too long as the participants might simply get bored or tired. It is only recommended to do these tasks if they are related to further group work.

### „STONE HEDGE“



Raising self-confidence and confidence in others, feeling one's own body



Unlimited



None



7 minutes



People are divided into teams of 3 persons. One of them has to lie down and stretch the muscles. She/he has to lie still as a huge oblong stone. The other two persons have to lift this 'stone'. The person who is lying is usually taken by the shoulders with his/her back kept straight and, if she/he is well-stretched, it is not really difficult to put him/her on the feet.



This task can be an introduction to the following set of confidence tasks. It helps to feel one's body better and to warm-up.

## „THE CIRCLE OF CONFIDENCE“



Raising self-confidence and confidence in others, feeling one's body better and developing a sense of responsibility for oneself and the rest



8–12



None



15–20 minutes for the activity  
15–20 minutes for the discussion



Group members are standing in a close circle. One of the members has to stand in the centre, close his/her eyes and stretch the muscles. Other members slowly push him/her into different sides trying to catch and hold him/her so that the person does not fall. Those who want can go to the centre to try this out. It is recommended to have a discussion about the new sensations, feelings and thoughts immediately after the activity.

## „THE SWING“



Raising self-confidence and confidence in others, developing a sense of responsibility for oneself and the rest



8–12



None



20–30 minutes for the action  
20–30 minutes for the discussion



1.2.3

Introduction: “Probably everybody knows the saying ‘to carry in arms’. To understand its meaning we have look back at the childhood (when I am looked after and when people carry me in their arms, I feel very safe). If anybody tried to lift another person now, for example someone from our group, she/he would see this is a rather difficult task. However, it could be done very easily if the whole group tried to lift one person.” One of the participants has to lie down and close their eyes. The rest put their hands on him/her pressing gently for some time until the person gets relaxed. Then, very slowly and without taking the hands away, the hands are put underneath the person and the person is slowly lifted up. It has to be done in total silence without talking. The group will decide itself how high a person should be raised. It could be the height of lowered hands, the height of head, shoulders or raised hands. It is important to hold all the parts of

the person’s body (legs, pelvis, back, shoulders and head) straight in horizontal position. When the person is lifted to a safe height, she/he can be slowly rocked. After this, the person is lowered down and put back on the ground as slowly as possible. Everyone who wants can try this out.

Group members will have a chance to experience that some things are only possible to do as a team. The best option after such an intense emotional experience is to sit in a circle to discuss what was happening and hear the revelations and the experiences of every person. It is very important to name the feelings.

## „WALKING ON CLOUDS“



Raising self-confidence and confidence in others, developing a group's concentration, encouraging creativity in the group



8–16. If a group is bigger, it can be divided and the task may be performed in parallel.



Sufficient space.

Length of space: a number of big steps equal to 1 ½ times the number of group members. E.g. if there are 10 persons in a group, the distance should be some 15 big steps (about 15metres).



20–30 minutes for the activity, depending on group size

20 minutes for the discussion



The group is split into 'small clouds' which have to lift a member of the group. This person starts his/her journey from point A to point B (these could be tables at the opposite sides of the room or some carpets). If the activity takes place in nature, some signs can be put at both ends of the distance that the person has to travel.

The task is as follows: at least 8 people from the group (or all of them if you want) have to reach the other side in 8 different ways without touching the ground, i.e. by walking on clouds.

It is important to mention that the clouds cannot carry a person – the person has to move him/herself.

If an additional challenge is required, at least 1–2 people have to finish the distance with their eyes closed and at least 1–2 people– in total silence.



Members are up to 10 times more likely to take risks in the confidence development phase (it is the time when they truly enjoy being together). The group leader should interrupt and pause the process if she/he sees that the way to travel through the clouds is unsafe or too risky. It could be challenging to encourage the members be more creative and find another solution – a safer one.

When group members do not know each other well they may be afraid of (or avoid) physical contact. It is highly likely then that they might not be able to hold the person travelling through the clouds, so the leader must manage this potential risk.

Variation: it is possible to make it like 'walking on water' if there is an option to do the activity in a swimming pool with the level of water up to the waist. The rules are the same. But here, the person walking (or moving in any other way) must always stay above the water. A person looking from another side should get the impression that the person is walking on water and not drowning.

## 4.9. COMMUNICATING AND COLLABORATION

The methods in this section will help you in reaching educational goals: self-confidence and confidence in others; development of group concentration, sense of teamwork ('spirit of the team'); and receiving and giving feedback. When we refer to teamwork, we mean the development of communication and decision-making skills as well as skills of sharing work and responsibilities, planning and working together. The methods for group concentration and team-formation ('spirit of the team') are a sort of pedagogical intervention. They are used to provoke situations to make group members confront new tasks and challenges. Group members do not always manage to finish them successfully. And may it be. There is nothing wrong with this. It is not a problem if the group members do not succeed, especially the first time. There might be certain reasons for that. The important thing is to discuss and to understand them.

The methods in this chapter are also tools for conflict prevention. These tasks help create rather artificial situations where anything might happen, including anger, quarrels, disagreements and misunderstandings. This can evoke negative emotional reactions. It is good that these situations are only artificial and not real.

**This type of method gives a very intense experience which must be discussed!** During the reflection and when discussing emotional reactions and the reasons for them, people get new insights and come to new conclusions about working together, about sensibility, understanding and the ability to communicate. It is also important to discuss positive emotional reactions, to understand the reasons for them and to draw conclusions. All these things will be necessary when the group is mature enough to deal with real activities and real tasks. Each method can be discussed by giving situation-specific questions but we recommend paying attention to the previously given sequence of discussion steps and elements.

### „A LITTLE BALL“



Learning to collaborate, learning to plan one's work and then to do the work according to the plan, making conclusions and recommendations for collaboration in the future



8–18



A ball (it could be a tennis ball) and a chronometer for being able to count time accurately



5 minutes for consulting  
10 minutes for experimenting  
10 minutes for the discussion



A group is shown a ball and it is explained that all group members must touch the ball in as little time as possible. Two or more people cannot touch the ball at the same time.



This method is good for encouraging the participants to accept challenges. It is a way for participants to learn to create goals and to reach for them. They can be allowed to have a discussion, to practice and then to create a challenge for themselves for example a time limit for finishing the task.

## „CHAIRS WITH TWO LEGS“



Learning to share ideas, to concentrate, to adjust actions, to get a sense of other group members, to make group decisions, to share responsibilities and to collaborate.



8–35



A chair for each participant (chairs must be with backrests)



About 30–45 minutes, depending on group process



The chairs must be put in a circle, some 30–40 centimetres from each other. Group members must stand outside the circle (behind the backrests of the chairs).

Instructions for the participants:

Each participant has to hold a chair with one hand touching the backrest part so that it stands on two legs (leaning the chair forward).

Task for the group:

All the members have to move around the circle and none of the chairs must fall down (the chairs must touch the ground with two legs only). The participants are not allowed to touch two chairs at the same time or to touch a chair with any other part of the body (except for a hand – left or right).

Group members must find a way to do the task. If any chair falls down as they proceed, the activity has to be started from the beginning.

## „SEA-STORM“



To gain experience of working together as a group  
Getting to know each other



Unlimited



String (12 people need about 6 metres of string)



20 minutes



A circle is made using the string and the task for the group is to get into the circle. After some time the circle is narrowed every time leaving less standing space. The aim of the group is to be able to stand in a circle which is as small as possible.



Instead of the string it is possible to use a big sheet of paper. At the beginning you can join 2 whiteboard paper sheets, and then reduce it step by step. Every time the storm snaps off bits of the float gradually making it smaller.

The task requires physical contact. Be sensible, consider the age, group experience, and cultural peculiarities of the participants.

## „MAGIC STICK“



Learning to collaborate  
Learning to concentrate, to get a sense of other members of a group



10–20



A thin, light stick – its length has to be half the length of a row formed by group members (standing side by side touching each other's shoulders). A thin bamboo stick would be very suitable for this activity. An extended measuring meter (2–3 meters long) can also be used. You can make the stick from paper, rolling it and joining separate parts into one piece.



20–120 minutes (depends on how well group members listen to each other)



Members stand in two rows facing each other and every member spreads both of his/her forefingers in front of himself/herself. The stick is laid on the outstretched fingers. The task for the group is to put the stick on the floor without withdrawing a single finger.



The task must be strictly monitored in case the members are seen to be cheating, i.e. if a member withdraws fingers from the stick. Usually at the beginning it appears that the stick rises up itself. This task can take quite a long time and it is recommended to ask the group if they want to continue the task.

This task helps develop self-support, responsibility and a conscientious attitude within the group members, therefore the group leader is recommended not to control how the group complies with the conditions and performs the task. It must be the responsibility of group members. Generally we ask participants if we can trust them and we try to come to an agreement that they will monitor the performance of the task themselves. It is best to refrain from getting involved in the action and only observe it and take notes for further discussion.

Sometimes the group cannot successfully perform the activity and the task appears to be too difficult a challenge. How can we help? We can stop the process and ask the group if they need help. If not, we do not interfere. If yes, we stand or sit in a circle and discuss it. We can ask what the greatest difficulty is, how the participants feel, if anyone has any suggestions; however, it is necessary to make group members hear each other. Generally after such a pause the group wants to try the task again.

It should be pointed out that all the tasks described in this book are manageable and are not unrealizable.

## „CHOCOLATE RIVER“



Learning to work in a group  
Planning one's work and implementing it according to a plan  
Making conclusions and recommendations for further cooperation



10-25



Sufficient space, wooden plates (about 10x30 cm), if the task is performed in the nature and A4 paper sheets if the task is performed inside.

Length of the area: A number of big steps equal to 1½ times the number of group members. For instance, if a group consists of 10 people, the length of the area should be about 15 big steps.



7-10 minutes – preparation  
20 minutes – activity  
10-20 min – discussion



A group will need to move from one place to another (move across a hot chocolate river). People cannot walk on hot chocolate, so they have to use “magic pebbles” (wooden plates/A4 paper sheets or anything you can stand on. The number of the pieces that the group receives is smaller than the number of group members.

The task is to get the whole group onto the other bank.  
Additional conditions:

- People can walk only on “magic pebbles”;

- The “pebbles” which are not held, swim away. This means that when the pebbles are in the chocolate river (on the territory across which you need to move) they must always be touched. If the “pebble” is not touched it swims away (it is lost). The group needs to carry on with the supplies left.
- People cannot touch hot chocolate or lean upon it. If anyone breaks this rule (falls into hot chocolate river) the whole group has to return and start from the beginning.

The task is fulfilled only when all group members get onto the other bank.



Variations are possible

Certain periods of time can be indicated for preparation and fulfilment of the task (e. g. 10 minutes for preparation and 20 minutes for actions).

It is also possible to forbid talking inside the group when carrying out the task (then greater importance is focused on planning).

If the group wants a greater challenge some participants can have their eyes covered.

Notes on security:

At the first glance the task may appear very simple. But this is why the task is tricky. It is worth warning the participants that it is strictly prohibited to throw wooden boards and other heavier objects! (The majority of injuries usually happen by people being reckless).

Please pay attention to the distance at which the

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participants arrange their “pebbles”. The greater the distance – the higher the risk that it will be difficult for participants squatting down and even more difficult standing up from such a position and then there is the risk of participants slipping and hurting themselves. When the task is performed in the nature it is important to ensure participants do not step on stumps. Wet grass is also very dangerous!

## „STRING AND A HOOK“



Learning to collaborate  
Learning to plan one’s work  
Learning to share responsibilities



Unlimited, but no more than 20 is the recommended number.



String and a hook, a lot of space, best option - outdoors  
A stopwatch



Depends on group size and it’s ability to understand the task



The hook is joined to the string which is tied in a knot. During the task at least one hand of every group member has to stay on the string. Participants cannot touch the hook. The task: the hook has to “travel” around the string as quickly as possible. Group members can decide how much time it will take them to fulfil the task.

## „LITTLE MONSTERS“



Learning to collaborate and take decisions  
Developing creativity



Unlimited. If the group is large, it is divided into groups consisting of 10-12 people



Large area it is recommended to do it outdoors



10-20 minutes – preparation  
3-5 minutes – activity



A group is divided into smaller groups of 10-12 people. The task for each group is to make little monsters without using any materials except group members. A monster of 10 people can touch the ground with 9 legs, 6 hands, 3 heads and 1 tail (groups can improvise). The groups consisting of more members are allowed to use more hands and legs.

Other conditions:

- Everyone has to touch at least 2 members of his/her group (thus making sure that a monster is a one-piece being).
- Monsters have to finish a course from one line to the other one (the distance is approximately as many steps as there are members in the group + ½ again. The monster made of 10 people has to finish a course of 12-15 metres. The distance should be selected according to physical abilities of the group).

- All monsters make a move from the start line at the same time. When there are 2 (or more) monsters, they can start moving from different “shores” and meet in the middle.
- While the monsters are crossing the “river” they have to sing non-stop. This means that all the people making up the monster have to sing the same song loudly and in unison.

Variants:

Monsters have to cross a real river or a pool. The same rules apply.

Usually this activity is very funny and brings loads of positive emotions. It is very useful for building up a team.



## „CALCULATOR“



Getting an insight into group work  
Learning to plan one's work  
Learning to share responsibilities



10-25



String or chalk, paper slips or stickers with numbers from 1 to 25 or more (depending on group size)



30 minutes for activity  
10-20 minutes for discussion



Make a circle on the floor or on the ground using chalk or string, its diameter should be approximately 2-3 metres. In the middle of the circle paper slips with numbers are stuck in a random order. The task is to touch all the numbers in the circle from one to the biggest number in ascending order. Only one person can touch the ground inside the circle at one time. Three attempts are given for fulfilling the task. Members of the group can consult each other for 10 minutes. Then all participants have to stand behind the line which is about 3-5 metres from the circle and this is where the activity starts. The time that the group has to touch the numbers is calculated as follows: total number of the numerals in the circle minus  $\frac{1}{3}$ . For example, if there are 24 numerals, the challenge for the group should be pressing all the "buttons of the calculator" from 1 to 24

in ascending order in 16 seconds.



Groups are very diverse therefore each group has to set a challenge itself.

This attitude is very appropriate when we are developing independence. In life there will be many tasks, which young people will have to plan time for and decide the results they want to achieve and how they will achieve them. Then they will evaluate the results of their activity.

## „FLYING EGGS“



Collaborating, making decisions, team work.



8-30



Long string, three times as many cones as there are participants, two buckets, two eggs (a few spare ones), two small balls



About 60 minutes



A group has to decide in what period of time and how many cones they will throw from one bucket into the other one.

The string is used for making a square and two buckets are put in two opposite inner corners of the square. One of the buckets is filled with balls, cones and eggs. Participants stand around the string positioned from each other by equal spaces (i.e. there should be an equal number of people standing on each side)

Rules:

- A group is given time to consult each other about how they are going to achieve the goal and then they say what challenge they accepted for themselves
- A group has to start and finish by throwing a ball
- An object to be thrown has to be “held” by every participant
- A participant cannot throw an object to his/her neighbour (a person standing on the same side

of the square)

- If the cone drops on the ground, it “burns” – it cannot be picked up and thrown further
- If a ball falls on the ground the whole attempt is considered to be a failure

Bonus: if an egg is thrown successfully into another bucket, the team gets 30 seconds of extra time.

After this task discuss implementation of this method. Dedicate time for reflecting on feelings, course of action and analyse with the group how well they prepared and collaborated.

## „DIAMONDS“



Team work  
Understanding management and leadership



Unlimited



A large area – this activity is especially suitable for performing outdoors



15-20 minutes for practising  
15 minutes for performance  
15-20 minutes for discussion



Participants divide into groups of 4 and stand forming diamond shapes (if the number of participants does not allow dividing into groups of 4, participants can form triangles). Participants should also attempt to keep the same distance among the people forming diamonds (approximately 1 metre from each other). All the people forming diamond shapes have to move at the same time. The person standing at the tip of the diamond is a leader. The rest of the group follows him/her and repeats all his/her movements. When the tip of the diamond turns left or right another person becomes the tip of the diamond. From this moment s/he is a leader and the rest of the team repeat his/her movements.

Diamonds do not talk, people move in silence.  
If 2 or more diamonds meet, it is not a problem. They

simply pass each other and carry on with their activity without diverting their attention from their leader.

The tempo and complexity of movements depends on the person standing at the tip of the diamond and on physical preparation of group members. Regardless of the movements the importance is put on maintaining silence (reactions can be discussed afterwards).

After the diamonds have practised the process is stopped. All the participants are invited to put on a show. A show lasts for 1 minute. During this minute each diamond has to demonstrate the best it can do and each of the 4 persons has to have a turn at being at the tip of the diamond. Discussion depends on the learners' objectives, on the topic, on emotional reactions in the group. But it is recommended to ask: How do people feel now, how did they feel during the process and why?

What were the difficulties? Why?

What was easy? Why?

What conclusions can be made after this experience?



The exercise is very suitable as a warm up to introducing a topic on teamwork, management and leadership.

## „BLIND TRIANGLES“



Learning to collaborate and work in a team



12-15



Scarves for covering eyes, strings (15-20 metres length). A large space (this is suitable for performing outdoors)



30-45 minutes



The task is to make an equilateral triangle from the string put on the ground. A final result should look as follows: all participants stand and are holding the string with both hands, the string forms the shape of an equilateral triangle. Consultation can begin only after eyes have been covered.

The discussion is structured depending on the topic as well as educational objectives.

You can ask:

How did people feel during the task?

Where do the feelings rise from?

Are they happy with the result? Why?

Who took the role of a leader? How did it happen?

Did they manage to converse and hear each other?

How do we want decisions to be made in our group?

What other recommendations have we got for further group work?



A more advanced group can be given a more difficult task – two equilateral triangles inside each other or a triangle in a square.

You can assign a couple of observers so that during the discussion they can comment on what the process looked like from the side.

## „STRING“



Developing concentration of the group  
Learning to plan one's work and implement it later according to a plan  
Making conclusions and recommendations for further collective work



10-25



String (at least 5 metres long) and stable items (e.g. trees) to which you can attach the string.



20 minutes for planning (usually the amount of minutes given for the group equals the number of group members).  
20 minutes for the performance  
30 minutes for discussion



The whole group has to get over the string without touching it.  
The string is tied approximately at the height of waistline.

Participants stand hand-in-hand making a circle. They are given time for planning a way (ways) for getting over the string.

There are certain limitations:

The string cannot be touched or bypassed and participants cannot get underneath the string. If someone touches the string the whole group goes back and starts over from the beginning.

After the task discussion is carried out

Reflection:

- What feeling is felt? Why?
- What was the process of planning like?

- Were the ideas of all members heard? If not, why?
- Was everyone given clear responsibilities? On what grounds were they divided?
- Was there a leader in the group?
- Did the performance correspond to the plan of actions created?
- What advantages and disadvantages did you notice in the group?
- How can group work be improved?



The task can be performed in silence. It helps the group concentrate and it gives room for a new challenge.

Certain amounts of time can be given for preparation and performance (for example, 20 minutes for preparation and 20 minutes for action).

If staying in silence was a condition, people who speak can be given additional penalties for instance, you can tie up their hands or legs or reduce time limit.

“Saves” are possible – once five people get over the string, in the case of an unsuccessful attempt they do not have to go back and start over. Generally you can agree with the group on time, on “saves”, on the number of “lives” etc. For example, if a group was given 3 lives and 3 people touched the string – that is it, “Game over! Insert new coin” (such variations are suitable for computer game fans). If all lives are lost, the task can be interrupted and you can ask the group if they want to sit down and discuss the mistakes and the process, or if they want to continue the task. If the group wants to carry on fulfilling the task until the end, it is given an extra attempt. The group has to think of an additional condition making the task more difficult to complete.

## „WHEN DOES THE EVENT TAKE PLACE“



Learning to effectively share information  
 Finding and developing ways of successfully collecting, interpreting and checking the received information  
 Learning to manage excess information



6-24



6 individual rooms  
 About 50-100 paper slips for writing telegrams  
 Instruction for each group  
 A large sheet of letter registration  
 2-4 “telegraphists” (depending on group size) who are distinguished by hats, cards, ties, etc. (you can improvise)



45 minutes for performing the task  
 About 40 minutes for discussion



The group is divided into six groups. The groups think of a team name and then is assigned a place to work. All the groups write down the names of other teams in order to be able to later send telegrams. The groups receive copies of instructions and later are given paper for writing telegrams. From this moment time starts to be counted down. Telegraphists register every telegram on the registration sheet so that during the discussion they can view and show other groups how they communicated and what connection exists between the amount of telegrams sent and the process as well as the result.

Registration table:

Sender				
Recipient				

The task should be completed in 40 minutes from the moment of handing in paper for writing telegrams. Straight after completing the task when the moderator reveals the results, the discussion takes place.

**Reflection:** What processes happened at the beginning of the task, in the middle and at the end?  
 Was the amount of the messages sent sufficient? Why?  
 Was a certain information management system created (selection, analysis, checking)?  
 If someone knew an optimal solution, could s/he influence the group? Why/ why not?  
 Was there a leader/were there leaders in the group? If yes, why was the leader this particular person/people?  
 What were the main obstacles during the task and in what ways did you try to overcome them?  
 What recommendations would you give for making communication more effective in the future?

### Instruction for the participants:

#### When does the event in Klaipėda take place?

You are planning to implement youth initiative. You

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are going to visit 12 different towns in which you will organize meetings with the local youth community. In order to agree on the budget of this initiative you have to provide to the International Youth Cooperation Agency a full event calendar indicating where and when the planned meetings will take place.

There are six small groups working on this initiative which are responsible for organising these meetings. However, these groups have only a part of the information needed and it appears that there is no information about the time of the meeting in Klaipėda.

In order to get money on time for implementing the initiative it is necessary for the central organisation office to receive confirmation form each group stating when the event in Klaipėda takes place. When the office receives this information it will be able to send a full final event calendar to the agency.

Due to a serious natural disaster it is not possible for all groups to meet or communicate over the phone or via Internet. The only means of communication is telegraph.

Your group has to give an answer to the central office in 45 minutes providing the time of the meeting with the youth community in Klaipėda. In order to get this answer you can send telegrams to other groups which also have a part of the information needed, but the information they have differs from the information you have.

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The meetings will be organised in the following cities and towns:

Klaipėda	Vilnius
Panevėžys	Šiauliai
Marijampolė	Ignalina
Kaunas	Kulautuva
Jurbarkas	Kelmė
Alytus	Kuršėnai

**The rules of writing telegrams are the following:**

A telegram is a short and specific message or question. In one telegram you can write information or ask a question only about one of the planned meetings.

A telegram is written in the following order:

**Sender >>>>>>>Text>>>>>>> Recipient**

The telegram will be taken from you by a postman but if the telegram is not written according to the rules it will not be accepted.

The task will be considered successful if all six groups send the same correct answer in 45 minutes.

## „SPIDERWEB“



Learning to collaborate  
Learning to plan one's work and implement it later according to a plan  
Making conclusions and recommendations for further collective work.



8-24



Strings and stable items (for instance trees) to which you can attach the strings.



10 minutes for preparation  
20 minutes for performance  
30-45 minutes for discussion



The task for the group is to get over the spiderweb without touching it.  
The spiderweb is weaved in a way that every participant has a hole to get into. The size of these holes has to be sufficient for the participants to get through. The lowest string is tied up approximately 60 cm from ground, the highest – approximately 2 metres from ground. Participants are given time for planning a way (or ways) for getting through the spiderweb.

There are certain limitations:

The spiderweb cannot be touched (it is poisonous), or bypassed and participants cannot get underneath the spiderweb. Also participants cannot jump through the hole. If someone touches the strings the whole group goes back and starts over from the beginning. Time is

not stopped.

The task is performed in silence. It helps the group concentrate on the given situation and it gives room for a new challenge.

After the task the discussion is carried out.

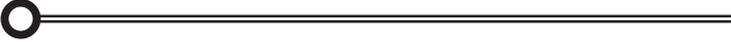
*Reflection:*

- What feeling were felt? Why?
- What was the process of planning like?
- Were the ideas of all members heard? If not, why?
- Was everyone given clear responsibilities? On what grounds were they divided?
- Was there a leader in the group?
- Did the performance correspond to the plan of actions created?
- What advantages and disadvantages did you notice in the group?
- How can group work be improved?

Variations are possible.

You can allocate certain time for preparation and implementation (for example, 10 minutes for preparation and 20 minutes for action). People who speak can be given additional penalties, for instance, you can tie up their hands or legs or reduce time limit. "Saves" are possible – after five people get over the string in the case of an unsuccessful attempt they do not have to get back and start over. Or, the group can have 3 "saves" and can save any situation. In the case of failure they do not have to start from the beginning,





instead, they start from the place in which they used “save” function.

Group members are encouraged to accept responsibility for how well they performed the task so that group leaders do not need to control it. You can hang a fishing bell on the strings of the spider web. When the bell rings (and a jingle is perfectly audible in pure silence) it is clear that somebody has touched the spider web so the group returns to the beginning.

If the time is not sufficient, the group can agree that in the case of failure only one person goes back or the person who touched the string and one more member of the group has to start over. The whole group has to return only in the case when the last person touches the web.

In order to avoid jumping over the holes (because the majority of injuries usually happen out of recklessness and the group leaders are responsible for safety) you can suggest to the group that the person who gets through the hole has to have his/her eyes covered. This helps maintain safety, concentration and concern about each other and new senses are experienced. This activity is good to use when analysing the topic of “gender relations”. Even if you do not analyse this topic during the discussion you can present some questions about the roles that were shared among male and female participants. Why? Did anyone feel alienated, unvalued or discriminated? What does such role allocation give the group? What would you like the activity to be?

## „FINDING A TREE“



Realizing the importance of planning and preparatory tasks when implementing an activity

Developing group concentration, strengthening collaboration

Developing confidence among group members



8-30



An area with more than ten trees (a pinewood would be perfect); items that can be used for marking the trees; bands or scarves for covering eyes; a watch.



20 minutes for preparation

20 minutes for performance

20-30 minutes for discussion



The group is divided into two smaller groups.

Group leader shows the group the areas from which they have to start and the trees they will have to find. Each group has to find trees on which some item is left: 2 matches are left on one tree, an empty box of matches on another) and they are also shown the tree where the groups will have to meet and light a match, using the empty box of matches, to burst a balloon that is attached to the third tree.

After presenting all the trees and explaining what the groups have to do the task starts.

The group can plan their actions and prepare for the task for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes group members return to their starting area and their eyes are covered.

During the tree search group members cannot talk (the importance of planning is emphasized).

The balloon can only be burst when all the members of the groups find all items needed and meet at the third tree.



It is important that the group leaders ensure safety during task performance. A forest is not a park.

Variations:

- There are markers (pencils, crayons) and paper put next to the trees. After meeting at the third tree the participants have to draw something with their eyes covered. They can draw the symbol of the group, their group leader's portrait etc.
- It is also possible to put some food products or cutlery items next to the trees which will be needed for lunch or dinner etc.

## „FEED A HUNGRY FRIEND“



To experience leadership shared in a team  
To learn sharing roles and responsibilities



5-12 (if the group is bigger, the task is performed in smaller groups)



Fruit preserves



20 minutes for performing the task  
30-40 minutes for discussion



The group receives the list of roles/responsibilities:

- 1 person eats
- 1 person opens the can
- 1 person speaks
- 1 person searches
- 1 person gives directions
- 1 person feeds
- 1 person “enhances destruction”
- 1 person observes
- 1 person tries to ensure the task is performed with creativity
- 1 person is the media representative
- etc. (the number of roles has to match the number of group members)

The task is finding and eating the hidden fruit.

- 10 minutes for preparation
- 10 minutes for performance

### Reflection:

- How did I feel when the role was allocated to me/ why did I choose this role?
- Did the role satisfy me/how did I feel performing this role?
- What role would I choose if I could do this/what would I like to change?
- What was the collective work like?



If there are two groups, the members of one of the groups are allocated the tasks while the other group can choose the roles themselves.

The number of the roles can be bigger than the number of group members. It is always interesting to observe and discuss what criteria is used for allocating the roles, which roles are compatible and whether it is true that one person can perform it and the other cannot. How do people feel after taking the role/after having it allocated? Who takes several roles?

We follow the saying that “in a good team the roles are seized and not pushed”.

## 4.10. GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

### „COLOUR CIRCLE“



Learning to receive feedback from other group members  
Learning to give feedback to group members



8-24



Paper, gouache, watercolours, crayons.



Step I – 20 minutes  
Step II – 45 minutes



The group leader gives a short speech stating that every person is different. We see and accept each other differently. Participants are encouraged to associate every member with some colour and express it on the paper.

#### Step I:

Every participant marks other group members with different colours in the order in which they are sitting in a circle. Every member starts from marking himself/herself with the desired colour.

#### Step II: Discussion

Sitting in a circle, the participants say what colours they associate with every group member.

Variations:



The way one sees and perceives another person can be expressed using symbols instead of colours. It can be items, animals, plants etc.

### „GROUP REACTION“



Realizing the benefit and effect of feedback  
Finding the most beneficial feedback



12-24



No materials needed



20-30 minutes for action  
20 minutes for discussion



The group leader announces that 4 volunteers are needed.

Volunteers will need to leave the room one by one. The group thinks of a particular activity that volunteers will have to perform. Group members cannot talk – the volunteer will have to decide from group reaction what the particular task is.

The first volunteer leaves the room.

The group thinks of a simple task, for example, to open a window, to write one's name on the sheet of paper on the blackboard, to sit on someone's knees etc. Only a POSITIVE reaction is required. This means that when the volunteer moves to the "correct" side or performs an action related to the task, the group claps. The closer the volunteer gets, the more intense the clapping (just like in the game "Warm-cold" that we used to play in kindergarten).

The volunteer waiting behind the door does not know what the reaction of the group will be, s/he has to

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identify the reaction and double-check it by his/her actions.

The second volunteer: The basis of the task is the same – the group will have to set another simple task. When the volunteer leaves the room the group leader says that now the reaction has to be NEGATIVE. This means that when the volunteer does something wrong group members stamp their feet. No other reaction can be used!

This task requires group concentration because they cannot talk. Participants have to follow the volunteer's movements and actions because wrong reaction can mislead him/her.

The third volunteer: The rules of the task are the same but now the reaction can be POSITIVE and NEGATIVE. When the volunteer performs correct actions the group claps, when s/he acts wrong the group stamps.

The fourth volunteer: The rules are the same, but NO REACTION is expressed!

When participating in this task we should be very delicate in order not to make the task a mockery. Usually the group, seeing that the activity is practically impossible to complete, thinks of a very simple task, for example, to sit in one's place in the circle or sitting on an empty chair. If the volunteer cannot complete the task in 2-3 minutes, the task is interrupted and the participants start a discussion.

The discussion is structured:

1. First the group hears from the volunteers in the order they performed the tasks stating how they

felt, which parts were difficult/easy and why.

2. The rest of the participants share their ideas - describe their experience, emotional reaction and thoughts.
3. Conclusions and recommendations are given indicating what kind of feedback is helpful, what kind of feedback is disturbing and what feedback is the most efficient. What conclusions can we make with reference to further work within this group? (What kind of teamwork do we want to have?)



This activity is recommended at the beginning of the process of groupwork so that the participants can perceive group influence upon a person and agree on further types of groupwork.

## „RESPECT OR TRUST“



Giving and receiving feedback from group members



8-16 (up to 24)



Different colour stickers (e.g. red and blue) or different colour cards



1-2 hours



A group sits in a circle. Every member has 3-5 red cards and 3-5 blue cards (the colours do not carry any importance so you can choose your favourite ones). Participants have to put their red cards in front of the person they respect and the blue cards to the person they trust.

They can freely dispose their cards, i.e. participants can give all their red cards to one person of the group or they can give the cards to several members. When everyone puts down his/her cards you can see a kind of a sociogram. You will notice some people having lots of red cards and some having none.

This information is very explicit.

The next step:

Participants are encouraged to share their emotional reactions, express their feelings seeing red and blue cards put in front of them. (It is possible that some people will have no cards. However, the question

remains the same – how do they feel about it?)

When a person shares his/her feelings, s/he can ask 2 or 3 people to comment why they gave or did not give their cards.

The group leader must strictly monitor the process, keep the structure and make sure that the feedback is constructive. This task is extremely serious therefore it is recommended that the group leader does not participate in the task of giving cards and avoid giving his/her feedback in such a way.

Variation:

It is possible to think of more aspects for giving feedback.

The form of giving feedback using coins is emotionally even stronger. (Money usually solves all unsolved questions). The principle of the task is the same but you can involve other aspects, for example, 1 cent – I love the person, 5 cents – I trust the person, 1 litas - I am afraid I don't know how I can make friends with this person.



## „WHY THIS PERSON IS WORTH IT“



Giving and receiving feedback from group members about one's development.



12-20



No materials needed



30 minutes–1 hour



After completing any task it is always recommended to review achievements and competences developed. It is even more useful when these competences are registered in a certificate. (It can be a non-formal certificate. Acknowledgement always starts from oneself).

Before handing in the certificates everyone is welcome to give the reasons why s/he is worth getting the certificate. After expressing his/her own reasons the participant can ask 2 group members to give their comments why s/he is worth it or not worth it. One more person can voluntarily comment on this (give his/her feedback).

The group leader must decide whether s/he participates in this process and also comments it, or whether s/he only moderates the whole process.



The task is extremely suitable for closing up this process.

If the group leader gave feedback only to one person, s/he should give it to the rest of the participants. Group leader's attention should be equally allocated to all participants until the end of the process.

## 4.11. WORKING ON A CHOSEN TOPIC

These methods are designed for dealing with particular topics. The easiest (and at the same time the most difficult) method is In some ways it is easier to work on a topic and discuss what happened afterwards but in it can be difficult to suppress discussion in the moment and information may be forgotten if not disclosed immediately. The methods described in this chapter allow analysing topics dynamically and in an engaging manner. Using these methods you will encourage participants to get involved in the analysis of a topic.

### „IDEAS FAIR“



Purifying ideas



12-30



All materials for creative work.



30 minutes for portraying  
20 minutes for presenting ideas



1.2.3  
Firstly the participants are invited to creatively portray their ideas. For this participants can use pictures, magazines, watercolours, crayons etc.

The task: presenting your idea in 20 minutes to as many people as possible. The groups cannot consist of more than 3 people.

Group members walk along work area. They meet,

present their ideas to each other, listen, comment and raise questions.



Sometimes it is recommended to give some time for participants so that after the “fair” they can put down the most important ideas they heard during presentations. Having noted it down participants will be able to refine their ideas.

Group leaders should monitor the proceedings and make sure that groups do not consist of more than 3-4 people. The objective of the task is to let a person present his/her idea as many times as possible. Otherwise the “ideas fair” would lose its meaning – everyone would not be able to present his/her idea to a group.

When explaining one’s idea to others it also becomes clearer to oneself. The ideas get more real. (As the saying goes, having explained the idea 6 times you start understanding it yourself.)

## „FOUR CORNERS“



Choosing a topic on which the group is going to work



12-30 (can be a larger group)



Area suitable for moving around, paper, writing materials



45 minutes–1 hour

### Step I:

When many topics are suggested, people can vote thus deciding which topics should be rejected and which ones should be included. Voting can be carried out in two ways:



1. Topics are written on separate paper sheets. Every participant gets 3 stickers meaning that s/he has 3 votes. Every person gives his/her vote for the topics (one topic) they support. Participants locate their stickers next to the topics written and votes are counted.
2. Group members who suggest topics stand in the middle of the circle and give their arguments for choosing them. The group listens to all speakers and every group member stands next to the person whose topic s/he likes most. The topics that received the greatest amount of votes are selected.

When choosing the second voting method it is important to pay attention to the relevance and importance of the topic rather than to a particular person presenting it. When 3-4 topics are selected people can choose their favourite one.

### Step II:

Every team gets a corner of the room in which the activity takes place. Each member of the group has to select a topic and stand in a corresponding corner.

The effect is much stronger when the person votes for the topic not only by raising a hand or marking a dot but also physically stands in the corner allocated for this topic. This way everyone takes the responsibility for the choice and it is obvious how many people support one or another topic.

### Step III:

People standing in corners are given time to discuss. Their task is to present the topic to a group in a way that the group chooses it. Arguments are presented in a common circle.

### Step IV:

After all groups give their presentations they return to the corners. Participants who decide to support another topic can move to other corner. This decision is a final one. The winning topic is the corner with the greatest number of people.



“Four Corners” can be a coherent step after “Ideas Fair”. This method is usually applied when the group suggests a lot of topics and it is difficult to decide which one should be chosen. If the number of topics is very high, they could be combined especially if the topics are related to each other.

Another variation is that the group leader suggests 3-4 topics, allocates corners for each topic and the group has to choose one of them.

Participants do not have to deal with such great uncertainty but they have a possibility to make a decision. Topics suggested by the group leader have to be the ones that emerged in a group.

## „EDITORIAL MEETING“



Finding a common solution for further group-work  
Learning to work together



12-20



Paper, writing materials



1-2 hours

### **Step I:**

Every participant writes a one-page article about the situation in the group expressing his/her mood and ideas s/he would like to realize in the group. The article has to contain a title reflecting the main idea.



### **Step II:**

The group gathers in a circle. Every group member reads his/her article, writes down the title on a card and puts the card in the middle of the circle.

### **Step III: “Editorial Meeting”**

Introduction: “Dear colleagues, today we called this editorial meeting. We are gathered here to agree upon the release of a newspaper “News from the Group”. Editorial staff received a number of articles that we have to revise and put into the pages of the newspaper. It is important to select the articles according to topics

and decide which articles will be printed in the front page”.

The task for the editorial staff is to divide the cards with article titles according to topics and to create common names for them. In other words, participants have to locate the articles in different pages of the newspaper and create sections, themes and headings. When the articles are located and the newspaper is prepared the group can see which articles are essential and which ones are not of great importance, i. e. which aspects of the topic are more or less interesting for the group. According to the importance aspects of the topic and related questions are included in the work plan.

## „SLIDE MEDITATION“



Finding an emotional connection with the topic  
Reflecting one's experience related to the topic  
Seeing a topic from a creative angle



8-24 ideally but it could be a larger group



Slides, projector, screen or a wall to display the slides,  
paper, writing materials



1-2 hours (if the group desires, it can last longer)



A slide is displayed on the screen or on the wall. A piece of text (a poem, a fairy tale, a short story etc.) related to the image in the slide should be read. After reading the text there is a long pause (at least 5 minutes or more, depending on the maturity of the group). During this pause participants have to analyse the image in the slide and think about what they heard. Then participants can describe what they see, feel, what ideas they have.

Variations:



Slides are changing on the screen. Every slide is accompanied by text and music.  
You can dedicate some time for participants to take some notes. If time allows you can encourage participants to write a short essay, create a piece of haiku etc.  
After individual creative work the group gathers into a circle to share their ideas.

## „FIND EUROPE“



Seeing into the essence of the European aspect - realizing that one does not have to go far to find Europe, it is here around us.



5-30



A large paper sheet (about 2.5 x 3 m)  
Writing materials in different colours



About 45 minutes



Every participant has to “find Europe”. They can look everywhere but talking is forbidden. Every finding, doubt or question should be portrayed on the sheet. Participants can respond to each other's drawings or sentences.  
After the time is up all participants look at the paper sheet and say where they see Europe in it.



The task can be performed outdoors. Participants look for Europe individually or in small groups. After returning participants present their discoveries in a common circle. The ideas can be written down, drawn or depicted with symbols. Participants can bring natural objects or make a sculpture representing Europe etc. In a similar way not only can you look for Europe but also for ethnic nationality, citizenship, pollution, mobility, opportunities for youth activities etc.

## „WORLD CAFÉ“



Discussing questions raised and finding a solution.



20-40



Tables, chairs, whiteboard paper sheets, various stationery items (the amount of the materials depends on group size).



About 45-60 minutes (depends on group size and topic specification)



The idea of a café refers to a widely used method “World Café”.

A World Café is a meeting place of youth initiative developers who gather here after realizing what motivates them to actively participate in youth activities. In the meeting they discuss and consult on specific actions that can satisfy their needs.

When working, participants try to comply with “etiquette rules and guidelines” applicable in a café community: to converse with a goal; to listen carefully; to concentrate attention on what is important; to listen and try to understand; to talk following one’s mind and heart; to contribute with ideas; to try to join ideas; to draw, write, mark on “tablecloths”; to have a good time.



The room is prepared. Tables and chairs are arranged. The number of the tables has to match the number of groups; the number of chairs should match the

number of group members.

A large sheet of paper and writing materials in different colours should be put on every table.

The group is divided into smaller groups of 5-6. Group members take their places at the tables.

“Etiquette rules and guidelines” applicable in the café are introduced to the group.

Groups discuss their topics for 10-15 minutes. All findings are put on the “tablecloth” (paper sheet). At the end of this task the group decides who the “master” of the table will be and what information s/he will have to transfer. The master’s function is telling the new people what their group discussed. The table “master” is a different person every time.

After 10-15 minutes all participants (except the master) stand up and find new places at other tables.

Every time the participants change the table they listen to its master and respond to the information received. Everything is also written on “tablecloths”.

This action is repeated until everyone visits each table. At the end every group presents final variants of “tablecloths” to each other.

In order to create café ambience you can use background music and bring snacks to participants.

Adapted according “World Café”.

The method has many variations and is fairly wide. It can be applied to the discussion of other topics.

For more information on this method please see these

websites: [www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com)

<http://www.co-intelligence.org/P-worldcafe.html>



## „COLLEAGUES' CONSULTING“



Finding solutions to possible problems using group resources – getting advice from group members  
Developing active listening skills  
Learning to discuss constructively



Unlimited



Area big enough for the number of participants divided into groups of 3, paper sheets, writing materials, a watch



45 minutes for consultation  
20 minutes for discussion



The group is divided into smaller groups of 3.  
The structure is presented:

1. 1 person speaks, others stay silent (up to 5 minutes)
2. 1 person stays silent, others give their suggestions (up to 5 minutes)
3. All participants discuss the problems arisen and their possible solutions (up to 5 minutes)
4. After 15 minutes group members swap roles and other members present their problems.

Discussion questions:

- Were consultations with colleagues useful and if so, how?
- What was difficult/easy when conducting discussions in such a structured manner? Why?
- What main problems were solved?



The task is very useful when working on ideas. Participants receive a lot of suggestions, their ideas get more realistic and concrete.  
This task is also good to use when planning various activities, no matter if they are related to projects or to personal development.

## 4.12. LOOKING INTO ONESELF

The best methods for looking into oneself are methods described in chapter “Communication and Collaboration”.

The methods described in this chapter will help you achieve the following educational objectives: perceiving and realizing development of one’s personality, identifying behaviour models, being better able to understand and disclose oneself to others, reflecting one’s situation in a group, analysing relations among group members, planning one’s personal development more in a more focused way, learning to learn.

### „LIFE LINE“



Perceiving and realizing one’s personal development



8-12 (if a group is bigger you should divide participants into smaller groups)



Paper, pencils, markers, watercolours, crayons



2-3 hours (if the group desires it can last longer)



The “Life line” develops perception that personal development is determined by personal experience as well as by common events experienced by a lot of people. The method helps us understand the impact of other people on personal development. “Life line” helps us understand that “I can take decisions myself

in life and even though I cannot change everything, I am responsible for many things”.

The method is intense. You can dedicate an entire day for it. If you finish earlier do not start a new topic, it is more advisable to play games or have “free time”.

#### **Step I:**

Every participant draws his/her lifeline on a sheet of paper. They mark points on the line which represent their most important life events. On the same sheet they write down names of influential people in their lives. Next to the name participants write the phrase that is characteristic of this person (“what this person tells me”).

#### **Step II:**

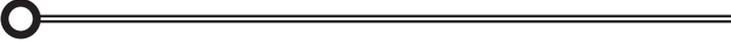
Standing in a circle, every participant presents his/her “life line” to the group. If the group is too large you can work in smaller groups.

The “Life line” can portray not only the past but also it can include the the present and the future.

Variations:

The “Life line” can be pictured as a curve in a scale with a positive and negative experience.

This method is applicable when working on various topics, for example, “gender” or “gender relations”. This method develops the conception that boys and girls live in very different world and this means that their socialization is extremely different as well. Guys and girls can draw and present their “life curve” in separate groups divided according to gender (it is safer). Then,



standing in a common circle, participants present “news from groups”, the main insights and things that they want to share.

When working on the topic of “gender differences” aspects for consideration may include:

For guys – “how did I feel when I was a little boy and how do I feel now being a man?”

For girls – “how did I feel when I was a little girl and how do I feel now being a woman?”

When comparing guys’ and girls’ life curves it is obvious that their socialization, the way they see the world, their self-perception and self-assessment are different. (Girls’ curves always “fall lower”. i. e., girls depict more negative experience. Guys are always more self-satisfied).

Naturally, when discussing this topic group leaders must have clear gender comprehension in order to be prepared for discussing with young people and helping them. Girls have to work with a female group leader and boys/guys – with a male group leader.

## „LIFE TRAIN“



Perceiving and realizing one's life aspects, relations and priorities  
Realizing development of a person as a professional (for youth workers themselves)



8-12 (it can be a bigger group)



Paper, pencils, markers, watercolours, crayons



2-3 hours (if the group desires it can last longer)



Participants are encouraged to draw their "Life Train". A train is a symbol of life. When drawing participants have time to concentrate, think and depict:

- What does my life look like now?
- What is my "life train" like?
- What carriages does the train consist of? (Carriages can symbolize different life aspects, for example, family, school, friends etc.);
- What people are sitting in the carriages together with me?
- What is keeping all the carriages together?
- What pulls/pushes the train?
- Where does the train go from and what is the destination?
- What is there around the train? And so on.

These questions can be listed on a sheet of paper so that participants can more easily focus while drawing and presenting their "life trains" in the group.

### Step I:

Every participant draws his/her "life train".

### Step II:

Everybody presents his/her "life train" in a common circle.



Using this method we can often kill two birds with one stone: participants reflect their life (and/or professional) experience and perceive it better; and we as group leaders, get very useful information.

Every participant must be given a chance to present his/her "life train" to the group.

This method is intense. If the group desires, you can dedicate an entire day for this activity. If you finish earlier do not start a new topic, it is more advisable to play games or have "free time".

Variations:

Instead of a train another symbol can be chosen, for instance, "road of life", "river of life" etc.

## „GROUP PERFORMANCE“



Looking deeper into oneself, reflecting on one's situation in a group, reflecting on relations among group members



12-30



All materials for creative work



Step I - 15 minutes

Step II - 20-30 minutes

Step III - 1 hour



### **Step I: "Preparation"**

Group members' belongings (shoes, trousers, jackets, books, scarves, umbrellas, glasses etc.) are put into one pile. Everyone thinks of a character for himself/herself and creates his/her image taking the things from the pile.

### **Step II: "Performance"**

Participants gather into a circle wearing these clothes and items and everyone presents his/her character, telling their name, profession, age, character traits, and starts acting. Participants create a common improvised performance.

Usually it is difficult to terminate the performance. Depending on the situation, the group leader can simply decide to interrupt and end the performance.

### **Step III: "Reflection"**

Reflection is more important than the performance itself, therefore the main attention should be focused on reflection. The aim of reflection is to discover interrelations among group members and to give

each other feedback.

### Reflection:

1. Feedback is given by two participants:

- How did I feel in the selected role?
- Does this role reflect my situation in a group?
- Who did I communicate with in the performance?
- Who did I not communicate with?
- Did I feel the difference between the communication with members of the opposite sex and members of the same sex?
- Does this performance remind me of other situations I have experienced?

2. Feedback is given by group leaders (observers). They discuss course of actions and say what they observed about the performance.

3. "Returning to reality" (to the group):

- Can we look at each other the way we are?
- Do we want to express our feelings to particular persons in a group?
- Are we eager to explore our interrelations?



The group leader does not participate in the performance. S/he observes the performance. In order to facilitate the performance you can define the environment in which the action is taking place (e. g., "station", "market", "school", "disco", "hospital" etc.). After the performance, the group leader gives feedback.

Variations:

The performance can be played out as a pantomime which relies more on non-verbal communication). Characters do not introduce themselves. Group members have to guess.

## „MASKS“



Knowing oneself, looking deeper into oneself and disclosing oneself to others, getting to know each other better



8-12



All the materials for creative work: paper, cardboard, scissors, watercolours, gouache, felt tip pens, pencils, magazines, glue, thread in different colours



Several hours (it can last an entire day)



This method helps us realize that a person's mask is never totally intact. The method also us gives an opportunity to observe other people's masks and for us to express hidden characteristics whilst hiding behind our mask.

Group work with masks can be very different. Here are just a few ways of working.

### 1) **Creating one's own mask.**

Step I – 1 hour

Step II – 1.5 hour

#### **Step I:**

Every participant makes a mask for himself/herself using paper and cardboard.

The group leader structures the work. S/he formulates the task taking into account educational objectives, for example:

to reflect oneself in the mask;

to emphasize one's different character traits;  
to highlight in the mask the things one likes in himself/herself;

to highlight in the mask the things one does not like in himself/herself;

to portray qualities that one would love to have etc.

If this is not the first day of activities for the group, masks can be used for reflection, for instance:

What mask did I have in the group yesterday?

How did my mask change yesterday?

#### **Step II:**

Everybody presents his/her mask in a common circle.

### 2) **Creating a mask for a partner (pair work)**

Step I – 1 hour

Step II – 1.5 hour

#### **Step I:**

Partners sit facing each other for a long time and observe one's eyes and face. The task is to make a mask for each other.

#### **Step II:**

Masks are discussed in a common circle:

a) The creator of the mask puts it on and his/her partner says everything he sees in the mask.

If the participant is able to identify himself/herself through his/her portrayal via the mask, a person opens his/her inner world to the group. By saying what s/he sees in the mask the participant is actually speaking about himself/herself.

b) The creator of the mask puts it on and the rest of

---

group members comment and say what they see in the mask.

c) the creator of the mask tells the group his/her ideas:

- Why did I make such a mask for my partner?
- What did I want to depict in the mask?

Identification with one's mask is a transition to a deeper emotional level. The function of the mask is dual: the mask covers a face and in a way hides what a person does not want to show others and at the same time discloses significant things lying inside the person.

### 3) Group performance with masks

Step I- 1.5 hour

Step II - 20-30 minutes

Reflection - 1 hour

Hiding behind the mask provides an opportunity to express qualities normally repressed, which cannot easily be expressed in other situations.

#### Step I:

A group creates various masks personifying different characters. Every group member makes up a character in whose shoes s/he wants to stand and chooses one of the masks created by group members.

#### Step II:

Group performance (see method "Group Performance").

#### Reflection:

- Why did I choose this particular mask?

- 
- How did I feel in a common group performance?
  - Was I able to communicate with other characters?
  - What was my relationship with them like?
  - Who was I not able to communicate with? Why?



The essence of the method is the idea that by putting on a mask the person shows his/her real face.

This method helps understand that people live with different masks. Masks can be very different and their functions are also very diverse. This method develops understanding that a mask can protect a person but at the same time it can prevent him/her from making contacts with other people, and can hinder communication and personal development.

## „PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN“



Planning one's personal development, learning to learn



Unlimited



Paper and writing materials



30-45 minutes for individual work



Participants are encouraged to fill in a table or simply think and write down answers to the following questions:

- What do I want to change and improve?
- Why does this point need to be improved?
- How am I going to improve it?
- When am I going to do this? (it is necessary to mark dates in a calendar)
- What are possible difficulties and how can I avoid them?
- What/who can help me implement it?



A simple and very useful tool. Usually PDP is even more effective when it is combined with Intervention. Intervention can be interchanged or supplemented by an individual conversation with the group leader. A personal development plan which has been discussed with colleagues or the group leader tends to be much more specific and realistic. People are “reinforced” by

support of colleagues and group leaders are even more willing to implement their plans. However one should be aware that planning personal learning might not be helpful to some people. Some people tend to learn quite well without planning or discovering learning directions in the process.

## 4.13. REFLECTION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

The methods described in this chapter will help your group to reflect and evaluate feelings and states; analyse their behaviour; investigate and name the group situation; give feedback to group members; receive feedback from group members; and evaluate the experience received.

If the group activities are long-term or last for several days, it is recommended to keep one "reflection line". This means choosing and repeating the same reflection method but slightly modifying and changing it or making it a little more difficult every time. When the same reflection method is repeated it soon becomes a habit and allows members feel safer and concentrate not on the form but rather on the content.

### „LIGHTNINGS“



Describing the "here and now" situation, describing one's emotional reaction



12-30



No materials needed



10-15 minutes



A group sits in a circle. Every member has to briefly, in one sentence say how s/he is feeling at the moment. The discussion can also be related to everyone's opinion about further group work (for example, how



much energy everyone has, if somebody needs a break, if there is anyone who wants the activity to be changed, who wants to carry on working etc.).

This method is usually applied when the situation is uncertain and the group leader wants to make it clear together with participants. This method can also be used to finish a part of group work.

Variations:

To imagine and then tell the group "where I am at the moment" (for instance, in nature, in a car, in a street surrounded by skyscrapers, sitting on the scarp with my legs lowered, by the sea etc.).

To express one's mood and feelings by taking off a shoe and putting it in front of oneself:



To express the energy levels or the usefulness the activity, members can stand on chairs: the higher a person is standing, the higher his/her evaluation (getting off the chair and standing on the floor represents a low evaluation).

## „BAROMETER“



Describing one's emotional state



12-30



Paper, pencils, markers, crayons



5-7 minutes for drawing  
20 minutes for sharing in a circle



### Step I:

Every participant draws his/her picture. The task is to portray in the drawing one's state according to the corresponding questions (respectively according to objectives and reflection duration):

How did I feel yesterday?

How do I feel today?

How do I feel now at the end of group work?

In order to make it easier to express one's state in drawings the following a scale is provided:



HOT SUN



RAINBOW



RAIN



WIND, CLOUDS



STORM, LIGHTNING



SNOW



FROST



FOG

OTHER...

Drawing of various nature processes should be added. The last scale field "other" is left for those who can carry on further by creating their own "weather conditions" and symbol.

### Step II:

Everyone puts his/her drawing next to the respective scale boxes. If the "Barometer" activity is repeated every day you can compare general group mood "yesterday" and "today".



### Step III:

The "Barometer" is discussed in a common circle. Everyone explains what drawing s/he had made and names his/her state.



The form of this reflection method is simple. The "Barometer" is suitable to learn to reflect when a group starts work. The method develops understanding that there can be a common group's mood as well as "my" mood within a group. It is important to learn to distinguish these two moods.

When a group's activities last for several days the "Barometer" is applied every day in the morning or every time the group finishes work.

Group "barometer" cannot be either "good" or "bad". The group simply feels this way. It is important to give everyone a possibility to describe his/her drawing, to disclose one's inner state and to get something off their chest as much as possible.

Variations:

A weekly "barometer" can consist of several aspects. A separate drawing is made for each of the aspects, for example, group mood; group work; group leader work; environment etc.

*"Whenever people talk to me about the weather I always feel quite certain that they mean something else" (O.Wilde).*

## „KEYS“



Naming learning outcomes



Unlimited



Keys of all shapes and colours made from paper or cardboard (about 5 for every participant)



10-15 minutes for individual reflection and noting down the learning outcomes.

1-2 minutes for every participant's speech



Participants are presented with aspects they need to write on the keys. Then participants choose the keys they like or make their own one and individually reflect and write down their own learning outcomes, acquisitions etc.

Later the content written on the keys is presented in a group.



A key is a powerful symbol itself. You can take advantage of this. Sometimes we are looking for a key to someone's heart, sometimes we need a key of a puzzle, but in most cases we use a key to unlock a door. Possible question for reviewing outcomes of this activity - what doors will we be able to open using this key?

Possible variation: participants can cut their own key. In this case it becomes more personalized and unique.

## „WATER“



To review the activity and make assessment of positive and negative aspects (or the ones, which have to be improved)



10-25



A spoon, two transparent bowls with water in different colours (light and dark), one jar with clear water.



About 45-60 minutes (depending on group size)



Participants go to the jars one by one and assess some aspect or the entire activity.

If the evaluation is positive a person pours a spoon of clear water into the jar with light colour water, if the evaluation is negative – into the jar with dark colour water. The number of spoons poured into jars corresponds to the number of positive/negative aspects mentioned.

After all participants give their assessment you can see visually the result of evaluation.

## „SHIPS“



Assessing the emotional aspects of the seminar



10-25



Two big ships made from paper, a black one and a white one with a string attached; 10x15 cm paper sheets, pens.



About 20-40 minutes (depending on group size and duration of a seminar)



Participants sit on the floor in a circle with their backs facing the centre of the circle. There are sheets of paper and pens put in the centre of the circle. Both ships are pulled by the string around the circle. Participants write their positive and negative evaluations on the sheets of paper and put them into a corresponding ship. The advantage of the method is that participants can freely provide their feedback.

## „EVALUATION CURVE“



Receiving feedback about the content of activity (program) from participants



10-25



A long sheet of paper (wallpaper, joined sheets of paper) is illustrated with graduated columns; the number of columns corresponds to the number of program parts plus all practical things we want to evaluate.



10-15 minutes – depending on program parts



The entire program is briefly reviewed. The participants are asked to evaluate each part of the program by marking an invented symbol on the curve. After all participants have given their evaluations they are asked to comment it.

## „ASSOCIATION PICTURES“



Realizing, understanding and naming personal benefits received during the activities



Unlimited



A3 papers sheets, magazines, newspapers, waste–paper, scissors, glue, various writing and drawing materials



About 30 minutes for individual work, 30 minutes for discussion in groups



Firstly participants create a picture or symbol that represents parts of the project. They stick this to the sheet of paper and draw on it depicting personal benefit they received by participating in these activities (in the project, program, tasks etc.). Next the participants discuss their drawings in small groups. The discussion is carried out in an unusual way. One drawing is put in the centre of the circle, the author of the project remains silent and others try to interpret what the author wanted to reflect by the picture (with reference to personal development). After this the author describes his/her picture.

All pictures are analysed and discussed in the same way.



Association pictures can be used for other purposes: to work with ideas related to activities/projects, to express emotional state etc.

## „FIVE FINGERS“



Evaluating one' emotional state, realizing how the day influenced current state



Recommended up to 35



Fingers



Depends on group size



Participants think about the day and their emotional state and evaluate it by showing 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 fingers. The greater the number of fingers the higher the evaluation. It is recommended that if the participants want to they can explain and comment why they are showing this number of fingers.



Be delicate. If there are people in the group who do not have all his/her fingers, do not use this method.

## „DRAWING FEELINGS“



Realizing how the day influenced current emotional state, evaluating one' emotional state



10-25



A4 paper sheets, various writing/drawing materials, music player.



About 15 minutes.



Every participant draws his/her feeling on the sheet of paper listening to relaxing music. Drawings are put side by side and participants can analyse them, comment and ask each other questions.

## „WAILING WALL“



Evaluating the emotional aspects of the activity, naming all negative aspects of the activity



No materials needed



10-30



About 30 minutes. It highly depends on the group.



Participants stand in two lines facing each other so that every participant has a couple. Then one of the lines gets close to their partners and participants tell their partners one thing which annoyed them, what they did not like, what influenced them in a negative way etc.

Then everyone gets to his/her place and participants standing in the opposite line do the same. The action is repeated until all participants say all negative aspects that they want to express.



It is not recommended to use this method if you do not use “Joy Avenue” (another method) afterwards because “Western Wall” gives room for sharing negative aspects only.

## „JOY AVENUE“



Evaluating emotional aspects of the activity, naming all positive aspects of the seminar



Large space (best option – outdoors)



10-30



About 13 minutes. Highly depends of the group.



Participants stand in two lines facing each other and make a tunnel (alley) by holding each other's hands. A couple standing at one end of the tunnel quickly thinks of a positive aspect that they liked during the seminar and run through the tunnel shouting this aspect aloud. After getting out of the tunnel they stand at its other end. Couples do the same one by one until all aspects are mentioned (shouted out).



It is not recommended to use this method if it feels here are no joyful aspects to express

## „GROUP DRAWING“



Reflecting experience received and situation inside the group



12-18



A large sheet of paper, markers, pencils, crayons, gouache, watercolours



10-15 minutes for individual drawing  
20-30 minutes for discussion



1.2.3

On the first day a group receives a large sheet of paper where every group member has to portray his/her feelings and situation inside the group. Every day new images and new experiences are added to the drawing. Each time the group adds something members discuss the drawing by answering these questions:

- What is the general impression?
- What did we draw?
- What was important?
- What was difficult?
- What are the symbols of group members in the drawing?
- How does the new part of the picture relate to the part drawn yesterday?
- How do these parts differ?

### Reflection:

- What is the general impression of the drawing?

- What have we been doing during these days and what have we done?
- What development of group work can we see in the drawing?



By analysing how individual group members are reflected in the drawing you may make conclusions about their activity and roles in the group.

Group drawing can be modified every day, for example, at the beginning of every day before starting work or after group work at night. Group drawing is very suitable when the group spends longer time together.

## „SUITCASES“



Naming and concluding experience received (naming the most important things, lessons, conclusions, discoveries, achievements, challenges, remaining questions etc.)



12-18



Large sheets of paper, writing materials



20 minutes for individual writing  
20 minutes for discussion (optional)



Suitcases are drawn on large sheets of paper. Participants “pack” them (write down) with everything they received, experienced, understood during the seminar and what everyone takes away from the session. After an idea is written down the suitcase is passed round. Suitcases are passed in a circle. There can be two or more suitcases so that participants do not need to wait until the suitcase makes an entire circle. After the suitcases are “packed” someone reads aloud everything that is written.



“Suitcases” can be used at the beginning or in the middle of the learning process. Thus group members can “pack” the suitcases with their expectations, intentions, and objectives – everything that participants expect from further group activities.

Variations:

Suitcases are simply put on the floor or on the tables, people are free to write down the most important things on the suitcases whenever they like.

The task can be more structured by making different types of suitcases according to certain aspects which are important to be mentioned and evaluated.

A rubbish bin can be drawn for “throwing away” trash – participants throw away (write down) all the things they want to get rid of and do not want to keep.

## 4.14. FAREWELL AND FINISHING GROUP WORK

Methods described in this chapter are used for preparing group members to say goodbye, for ending a period in 'group life' and returning to "reality" (everyday life). When we start working with a group we dedicate a lot of time for "building-up" a group. While participating in the group work members often forget about "the world outside the group". These methods help close up group process, realize that the moment of returning "home" is very close. The ending is as important as the beginning.

### „YOU WILL DO IT“



Preparing emotionally for the process of 'un-forming' as a group and encouraging participants to take action after the educational activities are over



12-20



No materials needed



13 minutes



The group stands in a close circle. Every participant has to put his/her left hand on his/her belly and their right hand on the waist of the neighbour standing on the participant's right.

Every member can say aloud at least one wish (wishes must be realistic, related to activities a person is going to do in his/her life).

This activity is reminiscent of a ritual. This "ritual" is performed in the following way:

Someone says his/her wish, all participants take a deep breath and say aloud altogether "yes you can!"

It is important for the whole group to say it in unison so that the sound resonates.



If everything is done correctly energy starts flowing. Most often it is expressed by chuckle or tears. This is a sign that participants can remove hands from their neighbours' wrists and finish the process.

## „FAREWELL POINTS“



Preparing emotionally for group parting



Unlimited



No materials needed



Up to 30 minutes



Participants are moving with music. When the music is stopped they freeze, listen to the instructions and fulfil the task. Farewell impulses:

- To shake hands as quickly and with as many people as possible
- Randomly blink an eye to each other (in pairs) and slowly recede from each other
- To bid farewell to somebody by kissing his/her hand
- To look for one's car keys or travel ticket everywhere
- To stand once more in one's favourite work space
- To stand in pairs simulating pilots and perform the last preparation before flight
- To quickly give feedback to each other
- To "respectfully" throw out from the learning area the person who wants to stay here for more time
- To lose someone from one's sight
- To try to stop one another

- To try to push one another
- To recede from each other and breathe deeply
- To rub one's "footprints"
- Other



Other impulses are possible

## „MURMUR“



Preparing emotionally for group parting, checking how well group members can hear each other



Minimum 6 people



No materials needed



As long as it takes



Group members stand in a close circle with their eyes closed. When a command is given everyone starts telling to his/her neighbours on the left and on the right a story how s/he gets home after the seminar, training, camp etc. When the group leader touches one of the participants, s/he has to stop telling the story and remain silent. If the neighbours standing next to this person do not hear this person speaking, they also have to remain silence. Neighbours of the neighbours also stop talking etc. One of the objectives of this method is to make group members hear as quickly as possible when their neighbours stop talking and to stop talking themselves.



This method can be used when working on the topic of active listening and hearing each other. The next level of this method is participants retelling what they heard their neighbours speaking about.

## „AND NOW I AM GOING BECAUSE...“



Finishing group work and saying goodbye



Up to 25



No materials needed



Up to 30 minutes



Group members stand in a close circle. Personal participants' things are packed and located in another area so that after leaving this space participants do not need to come back. The group leader asks the participants to think of pragmatic and common reasons why they have to leave now. The person who gives the reason (finishes the sentence) says goodbye, leaves and does what he said was the reason of leaving. Nobody is given any answer or comment.



At the beginning the group leader announces that s/he will finish his sentence last and will also leave. This activity can be performed after "Cheerful Cleaner", for example.

## „CHEERFUL CLEANER“



Finishing group work



Up to 25



No materials needed



Up to 30 minutes



Groove music is played in the background. The whole group cleans the learning space to make it look exactly like it looked at the beginning



Leaving a “neutral” environment is much easier than going away leaving many personal items and imprints.

## „THREE CONCLUDING WORDS“



Preparing emotionally for group parting



Up to 30



No materials needed



As long as it takes, however probably up to 30 minutes  
Group members are standing in a circle. In turn, everyone says a sentence about themselves e.g. their name and three words which sum them up & will be the last impression the group receives about this person (e.g. Gabrielle – I am amazing; Daniel – front line warrior etc.).



After the speech participants applaud a lot.

NOTES

NOTES



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**NOTES**

**NOTES**



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**NOTES**

**NOTES**



A series of 15 horizontal black lines spanning the width of the page, providing a space for handwritten notes.

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MA of Educology Science at Vytautas Magnus University (VDU), consultant, trainer, supervisor. Since 2007 works at consultancy firm 'Kitokie projektai'.

Is the head of the Lithuanian Association of Professional Relationship Consultants (Supervisors) since 2010.

He is most proud of the "Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe" diploma of Partnership Programme of Council of Europe and European Commission (2001–2003) and his supervisor diploma of VDU–Munster academy (2005–2007).

Since 1996 he has worked intensively on programmes for training and improving youth workers and trainers. He has implemented training projects in Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Spain, Latvia, Luxembourg, Holland, France, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, and Germany.

He works a lot with Russian speaking youth workers.

His favourite training subjects are non-formal education, experiential learning, and intercultural learning.

He currently spends most of his time giving training related to the experiential development of basic and career competences for lec-

tures of colleges and other schools of higher education. He also supervises groups of teachers.

Hobbies: raising children, Russian rock music, Russian literature, poetry, theatre, cinema, dogs, water, friends, nature, and music.

Subjects of unwritten dissertations:

Pedagogical aspects of youth integration into society;;

Teachings of Buddha and non-formal education;

Pedagogical aspects of dog training and peculiarities of human behaviour in target groups in the context of Central and Eastern European dimensions.

## ARTŪRAS MALINAUSKAS



Is a free citizen of Kaunas, unafraid to live in other places. Husband and father of two daughters.

Supervisor (Munster academy, VDU), social worker and pedagogue with a specialisation in youth work(Dresden, Germany).

Since 2008 he is a partner of a free and responsible community of interpersonal relationship professionals, the consultancy firm 'Kitokie projektai'. He works with people and groups of people from various professional contexts by consulting with them, conducting training, holding seminars and providing supervision in Lithuania and abroad.

Gave, gives and will give (until he is 45 years old) a lot of his heart in order to make things better for young people. Contributes to the improvement of youth work with his thoughts, words and actions.

Professional attitude: like a chess horse – direct, interrogative, two forward – one to the side, or different at all. Favourite question: "Who said it would be easy?".

Hobbies: archery, since it is about himself; juggling, since it is about life.

Inspiration: Daniil Charms

Happy to be:

Member and council secretary of Lithuanian Association of Professional Relationship Consultants (Supervisors).

Member and ex board member of Association of Non-Formal Education in Lithuania (LiNA);

Trainer of the "Youth in Action" programme of the European Commission;

A person who helps to implement integrated youth policy in Lithuania, especially dealing with questions of open youth work and training youth workers.



Son, brother, man, father.  
Trainer and supervisor.

Born and living in Vilnius.  
Works in Lithuania and  
abroad. Languages used at  
work – Lithuanian, English,  
Russian. Has acted in the field  
of training and consulting  
since 2003.

Likes working on topics relat-  
ed to educative relationships

between people and within each person.

Highly knowledgeable in approaches and methods of non-formal and experiential education in nature. He believes that a personal/group challenge is a means of initiating learning.

He does not teach people, but rather provokes their individual learning (about a subject, themselves and others).

Since 2010 he is one of the founders and associates of training centre “Daugirdiškės”.

Since 2007 he has cooperated with the Lithuanian Council of Youth Organizations by training and consulting members of youth organizations.

Since 2004 he has been involved in activities of the Association of Non-Formal Education in Lithuania. He has been a member, administrator, member of the board and chairman of board of the association.

Since 2003 he has cooperated with the Agency of International Youth Cooperation by creating and implementing various training courses.

Since 2007 he has worked on the subjects of raising the basic and non-formal education competences of youth workers, teachers, lecturers, sports trainers; he consults youth organizations and regional councils of youth affairs and provides training to trainers.

His sources of energy are mountains, wind, wholesome human relationship and “difficult” groups.

Hobbies: spontaneous travels, kitesurfing, snowboarding, table football and other sports, music and experimenting in the kitchen.

## LAIMONAS RAGAUSKAS



Was raised in Kuršėnai, where he was involved in youth work for 7 years, implemented local and international activities, collected fundamental experience of a youth worker, which he later on shared with colleagues by starting to conduct trainings. Since 2002 he has been actively involved in the Association of Non-Formal Education in Lithuania (LiNA) and contributed to de-

veloping the area of non-formal youth education and youth work in Lithuania. In the association, he currently coordinates international activities and membership in international networks.

In 2003 he started training young people and youth workers throughout Europe – from Spain to Finland, from Great Britain to Georgia. The majority of training was implemented in the framework of non-formal education programmes of the EU by cooperating with National agencies, SALTO-YOUTH resource centres, European Commission and other institutions. Since 2007 he has got a lot of inspiration by taking part in activities of the European network UNIQUE.

Currently focuses mostly on training youth workers and trainers. Mostly enjoys working on subjects of non-formal education, intercultural learning, experiential learning, learning to learn and youth participation.

He gets inspiration for new activities and methods from his children and colleagues who like to experiment and from night flights. Greatest hobbies – films, exploring club cultures and bath cultures of various countries.

Currently lives with his family in Vilnius and has three children. Together with his colleague trainers has established training centre “Daugirdiškės” ([www.daugirdiskes.lt](http://www.daugirdiskes.lt)) in Daugirdiškės village, Lithuania.

Ž.Gailius, A. Malinauskas, D. Petkauskas, L. Ragauskas

**HANDBOOK FOR PEOPLE WORKING WITH YOUTH GROUPS**  
**Non-formal education practice in Lithuania**

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Designer: Vaiva Kovieraitė

Translation by: Lina Jankauskienė, Gabrielė Jokubauskaitė, Jurgita Urbonaitė

Copy editing by Nik Padisson and Denice Boyton-Jennings

Published by "Flexi Print"

A. Smetonos g. 5 -402 Vilnius

Edition - 1000 egz.



ISBN 978-9955-9781-1-4



9 78 9955 9781 14

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e-Publication may be downloaded from [www.jtba.lt](http://www.jtba.lt), [www.jrd.lt](http://www.jrd.lt) and [www.neformaliai.lt](http://www.neformaliai.lt).