

ABC OF YOUTH WORK

How to work with groups in the changing world

PERSONAL GROWTH



BELONGING

FRIENDSHIP

CHALLENGE

Written by:

Matej Cepin

Marzena Ples

Gregorio Ceccone

Ewa Krzaklewska

Mojca Galun

Nick Bosch

Giacomo Trevisan

Giovanni Zambon

Sašo Kronegger

Mathias Kaps

Tiziana Dettori

Edited by:

Matej Cepin

Ewa Krzaklewska

Marzena Ples

Mojca Galun

Illustrations and design by:

Tiziana Dettori

Available at:

www.socialna-akademija.si/abc-of-youth-work/

Project coordination and final editing:

Matej Cepin

Assistant:

Mojca Galun

Published by:

Socialna akademija, Ljubljana, Tržaška cesta 132

Ljubljana, 2018

First Edition, All rights reserved.

Co-funded by:

Erasmus+ program of the European Union

Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Kataložni zapis o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili v Narodni in unive zitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani

COBISS.SI-ID=295801856

ISBN 978-961-93095-3-7 (pdf)

INTRODUCTION: THE WORLD IS CHANGING

- The beginning of youth and youth work **06**
- Youth work today **06**
- How to work with young people in this rapidly changing world of ours? **07**
- Where is what? **07**
- Terminology **07**

YOUTH WORK FACING NEW CHALLENGES

- New Challenges for Europe: how should youth work respond? **10**
- Youth work: one of the most adaptable sectors **10**
- Youth work in new political, economic, social and technological **10**
- Current trends in Europe **11**
- Young people and technological change **15**
- How to build groups in the new technological context **15**
- Sustainability of youth work groups: support of digital technologies? **17**
- To be or not to be digital youth workers in 2018 ? **18**
- Improving knowledge about new technologies to strengthen the dialogue with young people **18**
- Recognising the importance of digital technologies for youth groups **19**
- Conclusions **19**

YOUTH WORK GROWTH CYCLE: A TOOL FOR A BETTER YOUTH WORK

- What is Youth Work Growth Cycle? **24**
- Group, as a core of youth work **24**
- For whom is Youth Work Growth Cycle? **24**
- Two missions of a leader **24**
- Youth Work Growth Cycle is based on youth workers' experiences **25**
- Youth Work Growth Cycle is about reflection on 20 processes **26**
- Why a cycle? **27**
- How to use the Youth Work Growth Cycle? **27**
- How to continue reading this manual? **28**

MISSION 1: ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE

STUDY CASES

- Activities responding with interests and needs of young people **31**
- Taking care of the organisation public image **33**
- Openess of the organisation **35**
- Developing a strategy for reaching out **37**
- Engaging new members based on personal contact **39**
- Being in the space where young people are present **41**

MISSION 2: KEEP GROUPS STRONG AND GROWING **5**

STUDY CASES

- Feeling of Community **45**
- Creating Friendships **47**
- Building a relationship between young people and a leader **49**
- Maintaining the group cohesiveness **51**
- Young person as an important, integrated part of the organisation **53**
- Developing competences **55**
- Bringing new challenges **57**
- Expanding responsibilities **59**
- Meaningful activities **61**
- Expressing oneself **63**
- Having fun **65**
- Non-formal education principles **67**
- Youth to youth approach **69**
- Assuring safe environment **71**

PUTTING YOUTH WORK GROWTH CYCLE INTO PRACTICE **6**

- Quality **74**
- Mentoring **75**
- Implementing the mentoring scheme **76**
- Theoretical background **77**
- Process steps **79**
- Let's go! **83**

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON YOUTH WORK **7**

- Youth work **86**
- Digital youth work **86**
- Quality of youth work **87**
- Working with marginal groups and young people with fewer opportunities **88**
- Systematic support in youth work **88**

REFERENCES **8**

- References **90**



INTRODUCTION: THE WORLD IS CHANGING

It seems that ever since we have entered the third millennium, the world is changing even more rapidly than before. Since technological innovations have come to general use, for example, internet, mobile telephony, robots, interconnection of devices, algorithms for processing large amounts of data and the like, people are socializing in other ways, cooperating in different ways, working in different environments, our ways of transport are changing and we expect different types of comfort. These changes are especially familiar to young people, the so-called millennials, who in fact are unfamiliar to any other world. They were practically born to this new world!

This is the fourth industrial revolution. The first industrial revolution was based on machinery, production and steam engines, and it covered most of Europe at the end of the 18th and early 19th century. The world has changed greatly during this period. Technological changes also brought economic, sociological and political changes with them. Similar consequences are likely to be triggered by the fourth industrial revolution.

The beginning of youth and youth work

In addition to all the changes in other areas, the first industrial revolution left a new sociological category: youth. Before the first industrial revolution, nobody really knew of youth! Socialization transferred you directly from childhood to adulthood and there was no intermediate period. Occurrences such as migration (countryside - city), prolonged schooling, and different job requirements have created a new intermediate period.

Simultaneously with the concept of youth, youth work also developed. For example, in 1844 the first youth organization YMCA was established in the United Kingdom. In 1846, Don Bosco founded the first oratory in Turin, Italy.

Systems of inclusion into society, which prior to the first industrial revolution were still satisfactory, were no longer sufficient afterwards. The void was filled by new, informal systems that were able to (at least slightly) alleviate the challenges of the first industrial revolution for young people.

Youth work today

The fourth industrial revolution has been shaking-up the existing systems of inclusion of young people into society. In many EU countries, the labour market, the school system and other systems do not perform functions in such a way that young people can fully exploit their potential.

Can youth work still have similar impact it had during the first industrial revolution even in times of the fourth? Does youth work have the power to become a part of the response to often poorly functioning systems of inclusion?

Youth work occurs when young people come together and with their own incentives and efforts start acting on issues they find important at a given moment. In this way they improve the world around them, but above all strengthen their competences. One of the key elements of youth work is always group work.

Public perception of the leading force behind the fourth industrial revolution - technology, and especially of the World Wide Web and mobile telephony, is often that it destroys groups and interpersonal relationships among young people.

Instead of socializing with each other, everyone is socializing with their mobile device! And not only that: with these devices young people also receive strong impulses, which make them, among other things, less persistent. Youth work, however, requires the opposite: groups, effort, perseverance and taking responsibility. Is technology therefore an enemy or can be made an ally of youth work?



How to work with young people in this rapidly changing world of ours?

As creators of the manual and the ABC of Youth Work project we posed a question that troubles many youth leaders and youth workers: “How to work with groups in this rapidly changing and digital world?”. In order to answer this question, we spoke with 32 experienced youth leaders and workers from 4 countries, conducted 8 focus groups with young people with fewer opportunities. We processed data and added our own experiences. The answers we provide in the manual are related to two basic areas of group dynamics: entering a group and engaging in groups.

To those who lead youth organizations and leaders of groups we offer advice and ideas, to evolve in this area. We do not offer recipes, but we offer a wide range of experiences from various European contexts of youth work.

The core of the handbook in front of you is a quality system called The Youth Work Growth Cycle. The system consists of 20 processes where individual leaders or whole organizations can take a step forward - towards a higher quality of youth work.

Where is what?

Immediately after this introduction, we present our view of the challenges that youth work is facing in the era of the 4th industrial revolution in chapter 2.

In the following chapter 3 we present The Youth Work Growth Cycle, our proposal to make your group work better step by step. We present both what Youth Work Growth Cycle is and how we developed it.

In chapters 4 and 5 we present the two core fields of The Youth

Work Growth Cycle: in chapter 4 we wanted to answer the question how to encourage young people to join groups and participate in them and in chapter 5 we are proposing solutions on how to keep groups strong and growing.

Chapter 6 is intended for mentors and trainers who accompany group and organization leaders on their way to better group work. We try to explain them the concept of quality and how they could use The Youth Work Growth Cycle together with their clients to raise the quality of group work step by step.

We conclude with chapter 7, which gives conclusions and recommendations and is based on experiences of working on this project.

Terminology

For participants in youth work different terms are used in different European contexts (youth leader, youth worker, animator ...). In this publication we will use a single term – leader for all of these terms.

For the person who is responsible for the operation of the organization and usually coordinates the work of several leaders, we will use the term - manager.

We wish you pleasant read!

Matej Cepin, editor





**YOUTH WORK FACING
NEW CHALLENGES**

New Challenges for Europe: how should youth work respond?

Most young people in Europe nowadays live in a world of opportunities, which was not available to previous generations. Technological advancement and European integration should offer youth life paths that previous generations couldn't even dream of. Success is at their fingertips; they only need to prepare themselves to grab it.

At the same time the future for young people has never been **more uncertain**. Risk factors are increasing and some changes, like migrant flows, fluctuations in the financial markets, or extreme weather conditions, are occurring more frequently than most people expected at the turn of the millennium. There is so much uncertainty that even the near future is difficult to predict. For young people having a dream and making their dreams a reality is becoming harder.

In terms of their active participation in society, young people are confronted by demands of diverse institutions (like schools, labour market etc.), but also influence change in those institutions. **In their growing up and finding their place in their communities and societies, young people can find support** in certain systems, such as the educational system, educational work with young people, social work and youth work. All these systems help them not only develop their autonomy, as well as social networking, social cohesion, social engagement skills, but also build up their self-esteem, self-confidence and professional competences. For this reason, two of the most crucial missions of these systems are preparing young people with regard to their own ideas and opinions for the future and helping them adapt their plans to possible new realities. The more the predictions for the future are changing, the more should activities of these systems be modified. The more the future is uncertain, the more should teachers, educators, social workers and youth workers empower young people by encouraging them to form and express their questions about fundamental assumptions.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify challenges of our time and subsequently also challenges facing the youth work sector. First, we will discuss general challenges: through PEST analysis. Then in the second part, we will look more at technological change as an important aspect of the lives of young people today impacting youth work as well. In the third part, we will look at the role of the youth worker in these new circumstances.

Youth work: one of the most adaptable sectors

Youth work has different forms in different European countries. It has different contexts, political support, aims, goals and traditions. However, youth work is one of the most dynamic sectors especially compared with the educational system, family policies or labour legislation. Its power of adaptation probably comes from the fact that young people are actively involved in it.

The youth work sector has acted as a “corrector” of those institutions, as so many times before in European history, especially in times of societal change or where institutions have failed to quickly respond. Youth work was strong during mass urbanisation and industrialisation, in the time between two world wars and in rebuilding Europe after the Second World War.

How should youth work look, so it can address the challenges of the second decade of the 21st century?

Youth work in new political, economic, social and technological contexts

In our project, we aimed at reflecting on the current challenges facing young people and youth work. We used the method - PEST



changes that are most felt by young people and are especially important to youth work.

In each perspective we chose three of the most important major trends that represent reality for young people in our countries. This choice was based on our

Current trends in Europe

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

LACK OF DIALOGUE ABOUT POLITICAL ISSUES IN

CHALLENGES

- Non-conventional forms of participation (like new social movements) seem more attractive than conventional ones (voting, membership in the political parties...)
- Little influence of young people through established systems
- Little education and training for young people to form qualitative arguments

YOUTH WORK SHOULD...

- Focus on acquiring skills for dialogue and discussion through creating opportunities and programmes
- Present opportunities for socialising with diverse groups – coming out of cocoon
- Empower young people for participation

intuition and experience. Then we tackled the issue by presenting the challenges from the perspective of a young person and from the perspective of a youth worker. Finally, we focused on the question of what should be included in youth work, so it can provide a proper answer to the challenges faced and lived through today by young people in Europe.

INSECURITY CAUSED BY THE FINANCIAL SECTOR, FISCAL POLICIES AND GLOBAL BUSINESS 2

CHALLENGES

- Young people usually like strong, not foggy statements
- Little experience and lack of information affects young people's capacity for critical thinking

YOUTH WORK SHOULD...

- Contribute to intercultural dialogue
- Develop critical thinking of young people
- Encourage young people to imagine standing in someone else's shoes

A LARGE GAP BETWEEN CITIZENS AND DECISION MAKERS CONTRIBUTES TO A LACK OF TRUST IN DECISION MAKERS 3

CHALLENGES

- Young people don't feel a need to participate
- Young people are withdrawing into smaller social circles (family, friends...)

YOUTH WORK SHOULD...

- Develop a sense of belonging to communities
- Create a bridge between young people and institutions, as well as decision makers

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

INSECURE, FLEXIBLE AND PRECARIOUS LABOUR MARKET

CHALLENGES

Transition to adulthood is getting more and more difficult

Pathways to labour market are windy, and precarious

Ideas are over-glorified, hard work under-estimated (for instance when media promote successful start-ups established by young people)

No systemic representatives of young people (not represented well in trade unions, for example)

YOUTH WORK SHOULD...

Form new communities (co-working, connecting freelancers, incubators ...) to support young people

Provide a chance for young people to speak about issues

Create partnerships with businessmen, mentorship, etc.

Provide young people with skills to succeed while facing "new problems"

A GROWING GAP BETWEEN POOR AND RICH: GROWING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

3

CHALLENGES

Young people experience injustice

We live in the culture of debt

Some young people lack opportunities – atmosphere of despair

YOUTH WORK SHOULD...

Contribute to financial literacy

Educate for a broader sense of solidarity, common good, work in civil society, advocacy

INSECURITY CAUSED BY THE FINANCIAL SECTOR, FISCAL POLICIES AND GLOBAL BUSINESS

2

CHALLENGES

It is very difficult for young people to realise their own dreams these days

Young people see some adults not working, but still receiving social transfers

YOUTH WORK SHOULD...

Encourage young individuals to dare to dream about their desired future, despite the reality they live in

Show that hard work is rewarding and beneficial for long term satisfaction in life

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

MIGRATIONS AND REFUGEES IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES 1

CHALLENGES	Ever more socially and culturally mixed societies (schools etc.)	YOUTH WORK SHOULD...
	Obtaining new knowledge about the world	
	Risk of exclusion, prejudices, stereotyping, "ghettos", closed groups, racist messages	
	Appeal of extremism/realism (risk of manipulation)	
	Promote diversity, dialogue, critical thinking and empathy	
	Trying to create projects including (new) diverse target groups promoting inclusion through S.M.A.R.T. methodology	

GROWING INDIVIDUALISM AND CONSUMERISM 3

CHALLENGES	Lack of solidarity and little feeling of being a part of the community, low participation	YOUTH WORK SHOULD...
	Young people today spend more time concentrating on themselves, on their search for identity	
	Conformism and consumerism	
	Not caring / or not taking a stand about real life issues	
	Promote active engagement within the community to show that being an active part of a community is beneficial collectively and individually	
	Promote common decision-making in communities	
	Promote added value of voluntarism	

OVER-PROTECTION AND INFANTILISATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE (LOTS OF GUIDED) 2

CHALLENGES	Youth have a right to be bored	YOUTH WORK SHOULD...
	Stress and burden lies on the adults	
	Promote non-supervised (or less supervised) experiences (autonomy, self-initiative, experiences that take young people out of their comfort zones)	
	Give more responsibility to young people and shape the leadership of youngsters	

TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

ACCESS TO A HUGE AMOUNT OF DATA ONLINE

CHALLENGES

Information is available from multiple sources and is overwhelming everybody

Low competences in managing data/information by young people: lack of a critical approach, lack of general knowledge, devaluation of hard facts, lack of filtering competence

Potential access to more detailed information and getting first-hand information (beyond mainstream media)

Possibility of verifying knowledge with adults.

YOUTH WORK SHOULD...

Help young people with concentration so they do not get easily distracted

Focus on learning competences, linked to using information/filtering/critical thinking

Include methodologies to increase knowledge of hard facts that everybody should know

DIGITAL DIVIDE

2

CHALLENGES

The gaps between generations and people with different skills and equipment are getting bigger

Brings new "dangers", which can lead to losing time (huge amounts) online, addictions...

Deepening gap between youth workers and young people

YOUTH WORK SHOULD...

Reconsider the use of technology together with young people (young people educating each other and also e.g. youth workers)

Talk with young people about the issue and reflecting about pluses and minuses of technologies and modern styles of living

Strengthen different types of communication

NEW WAYS AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND CONNECTING VIRTUALLY

3

CHALLENGES

Enables information to spread quickly and creates fast contact possibilities

International exchanges (couch surfing,...) and travel

Offers a way to always keep in contact

Losing track (feeling out of track)

Increasing consumerism

Shallow communication and relations

We are used to sensing action all the time, shortening our attention/concentration span

Young people are absent minded

YOUTH WORK SHOULD...

Promote positive creative use of communication and connecting tools

Start complementing traditional ways of communication with new methods/tools online

Find new ways of promoting and attracting young people

Young people and technological change

In the first part of this chapter, we have looked into the changing environments in Europe – with new challenges that youth work needs to now face. In the second part of this chapter, we will focus on the impact of technological developments, with a special emphasis on the usage of digital technologies by young people. We will discuss two main questions important to our project: how to form groups and how to make them strong and lasting in the new technological context. The central trend that particularly shapes the lives of young people is the use of virtual technology: young people are being called the Digital generation or Net generation. As data reveal, most of young people today access the Internet daily and use it extensively. In 2014 about 90% of young people (16-29 years old) in the EU use the Internet on a daily basis compared to about 75% of the whole population¹.

Also other country studies confirm this trend, e.g. Shell study (2015) shows that 99% of German youth have access to the Internet and, on average, they spend 18.4 hours per week online. Moreover, most (90%) young people connect to the Internet using a mobile device¹ that makes the Internet constantly accessible to them.

Most young people belong to online networks: 82% use social networking web sites compared to 36% of the whole population¹. Technology is changing the way the communities bonds are created, as young people are balancing both: global communities and local connections², as well as both online and offline communities³. While they are still strongly embedded in local communities (such as schools and families), they have access to global communities and international networks through online access. Another important change concerns education and learning: technology changes the way children perceive and relate to teachers or other knowledge providers, as knowledge is freely available in cyber space³. Don Tapscott, in the book “Growing up digital, rising the Net ge-

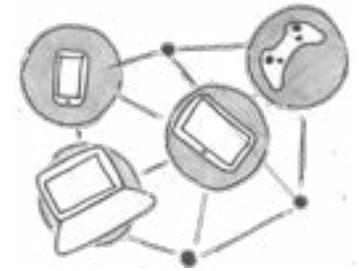
neration” (1998), underlines that the young generation today has some distinguishing features from the older generation (TV generation). Usage of the Internet changes the way young people live, as it is an active space, interactive, allow communities to build and to express oneself. The author believes that young people today:

- Create communities in a new way that is more open, egalitarian and democratic;
- Engage in playful learning, non-linear, learner-centred and interactive;
- Need to possess different skills to navigate the Internet and online world – digital literacy;
- Create identity in a new way (high in self-esteem, one can be actor at a younger age).

His vision is very optimistic and stresses the positive side of Internet usage. As other research shows, young people are often very passive recipients of information and their usage of the Internet is characterised by *banality*⁴. There is also a discussion concerning the commodification of Internet use and the issues of young people becoming customers rather than active creators of Internet space. Additionally some research shows that young people who use the Internet extensively become alienated and actually create fewer friendships, feel more lonely and suffer more often from depression⁵.

How to build groups in the new technological context

Kate Sapin (2013: 91) suggests that to be able to bring young people together you need to recognise young people’s interests: the motivations can be enjoyment (fun, adventure, expressing oneself, socialising), participation in a specific activity, cause (to effect change), to learn or get support, to address one’s needs (e.g. gain confidence). One of the most important reasons to be active in networks socialising with other young people is the fact that it’s happening without the close supervision of adults. But



¹ Eurobarometer. 2014.

² Sefton-Green. 2004:2.

³ Lehdonvirta, Räsänen. 2010.

⁴ Buckingham, Willett. 2013: 10.

⁵ Spitzer. 2013.

active in networks socialising with other young people is the fact that it's happening without the close supervision of adults. But online relationships do not provide substitutes for relationships in the real world.

According to a Polish study⁶, interactions taking place in offline settings are still the most important. Young people relate to two groups: the first is their friends and peers and they seek support within this group for personal problems and school matters. The second group consists of adults who support them in relation to education, personal matters and usage of technology. As the report authors claim, personal relationships do not 'migrate' to virtual world, but they coexist or support face-to-face interactions. Possibly then youth work can constitute an important space for young people to be together and socialise. In this light, a full transition to virtual space of youth work activities would not be attractive to young people.

Kate Sapin stresses also four other aspects:

- Using different methods to bring young people together;
- Working with individuals;
- Recognising barriers to participation;
- Discussing options with young people⁷.



She suggests a lot of ways of bringing young people together, but does not discuss in detail the role of Internet technology. Still some of the hints could be used both online and offline (see picture below). One of the main points is the importance of working with individuals: while online technology to a large extent supports the idea of 'sending a message to the crowd', we need to remember that an individual approach is critical. Young people need personal contact with a youth leader and his/her attention. As the Internet can ease the communication of young persons with adults, it should become an effective starting point for communication between youth worker and young people. As research reveals: "Most youth perceived that using computers and the Internet reduced their anxiety concerning communication with adults, increased their control when dealing with adults, raised their perception of their social status, increased participation within the community, supported reflective thought, increased efficiency, and improved their access to resources"⁸. While, youth workers should allow usage of digital tools in recruitment, but this should be considered only with some groups. The research indicates that "an adolescent who can critically understand and effectively evaluate online information is more likely to become an active civic participant than one who lacks such skills"⁹. This is an important clue for working with disadvantaged groups, as they may lack digital competences. Furthermore, some research suggests that the Internet is not an effective tool for engaging disengaged groups, but when it comes to those already interested it can constitute a good tool¹⁰. Nevertheless, possibly when it comes to disadvantaged young people, the Internet can be used as the second step of recruitment: after gaining some interest from young people, online tools could be used to encourage their participation.

Very importantly the Internet becomes a space where the experience of growing up is articulated. As research shows this experience is also "lived" in the virtual world where, for example, transitioning from one social network to another marks an important moment in young person's life trajectory¹¹. This is why it is important to understand which sites are popular for young persons of a certain age and what needs are being fulfilled (e.g. belonging, fun, socialising, building relationships).

⁶ Lange, Osiecki. 2014.

⁷ Sapin. 2013, p. 91.

⁸ Valaitis. 2005.

⁹ Kim, Yung. 2015.

¹⁰ Levine, Lopez. 2004.

¹¹ Robards. 2012.

Sustainability of youth work groups: support of digital technologies?

The question for youth work in the era of expansion of digital technologies is how to make the youth groups more sustainable. Kate Sapin lists four main expectations of young people that need to be met through youth work¹²:

- Give fun experiences.
- Allow to deal with oppression.
- Ensure growth within the group.
- Create bonds and affiliation.

If we look at group dynamics two aspects are critical for life of the groups: Processes of building group cohesion and group culture. We could then think how to use the Internet for strengthening the cohesiveness of the group, and how the Internet supports cultivation of group culture. The question for youth work is how to build connections between young people so they really feel a part of it and identify with it strongly. For young people online groups are becoming a strong source of identification; possibly then usage of the Internet can strengthen identification with youth groups. In the UK, Spain and Japan young people “identify as strongly with their online communities as they do with their own families, and stronger than with offline hobby groups”¹³. Moreover, in the UK and Japan, it revealed that an online group could be “a more socio-demographically inclusive source of identification than traditional leisure-time formations”¹³. It was suggested that online groups can offer “emotional support, friendship, categorisation, social comparison and other processes that are associated with traditional offline groups”¹³.

Online communities can be especially important for oppressed or marginalised groups. The research concerning members of the LGBT community shows that “the online community operates as a space for young people to understand and potentially overcome their experiences of egoism and marginality”¹⁴. So while being a space that brings young people together, the community not only

provides a sense of belonging for the participants and reduces their experiences of isolation, but also connects them to resources and networking opportunities that foster political participation.

Another valuable thesis that applies to the sustainability of youth groups is optimal distinctiveness theory, which states that people have a tendency to feel that they are similar to others but at the same time they want to be different. They seek a balance and seek optimal distinctiveness¹⁵. This tendency is especially visible among young people. They look for groups of people similar to themselves (e.g. subcultures), in contrast to those who are not in their group. Thus, the sustainability of youth groups depends a lot on identity with the group and, to some degree, on similarities between members (similar interests, goals, values).

Group creation and group life cycle is most commonly explained by the stages of forming/storming/norming/performing/adjourning (also referred to in manuals for youth workers). Forming is the beginning of group life. At this stage the objectives of the group’s existence should be set and all members should be aware of them. During the storming phase members of the group develop a structure and relationships within the group. During the norming stage the group works on their tasks and members take responsibilities and roles in order to achieve goals. Performing is a phase when members achieve aims and when group work should make them happy and satisfied. Adjourning is also an important phase, which gives a space for celebration of the successes and in some cases reflection about dissociation of the group, and future plans. It is also a time for evaluation and view on contributions and future improvements. A good leader can help the group achieving their goals on every stage of group dynamics.

Main factors influence forming and sustainability of the groups are defined rules and structure, attractiveness of the group and at the same time members’ attraction to each other, sense of unity, teamwork as well as common values of the members, norms of behaviours and roles in the group influence on both - forming the group and its sustainability¹⁶.

¹² Sapin. 2013.

¹³ Lehdonvirta, Räsänen. 2010.

¹⁴ Hanckel, Morris. 2015.

¹⁵ Brewer. 2003.

¹⁶ Kelly, Hunter. 2016.

Andrew Malekoff presents “strengths based group work model” of working with adolescents, which is an approach based on practice and consists of seven principles of group work that youth worker should take into the consideration:

1. “Form groups based on members’ felt needs and wants, not diagnoses.
2. Structure groups to welcome the whole person, not just the troubled parts.
3. Integrate verbal and non-verbal activities.
4. Develop alliances with relevant people within the group’s membership.
5. Decentralise authority and turn control over to group members.
6. Maintain a dual focus on individual change and social reform.
7. “Understand and respect group development as key to promoting change.”¹⁷.

These are the “critical components for competent group work practice”¹⁷. If all these principles are met, there is a greater chance that a group will be sustainable and successful. The role of a youth worker (author names him/her a group worker) is especially underlined. He/she is the person principally responsible for maintaining the group according to the principles stated above with non-judgment, patience and acceptance and has to deal with the many obstacles in group work.

To be or not to be digital youth workers in 2018 ?

As shown above, Internet and social media are tools increasingly used by young people because they represent an opportunity to find information or amusement, for learning and interaction between people. This possible future digital scenario represents a world from which adult people may feel excluded because they have less experience in using digital devices and online communication compared to “digital natives”. This often leads

them to develop a negative attitude. This “digital-divide” between old and new generations it is likely to increase and prevent an effective and direct dialogue, which is the necessary basis of youth work.

On the other hand, fortunately, Digital Natives are growing up: this is a fact. If we consider 1996¹⁸ as the first birth date of digital natives, in 2018 many of them are already working and are starting to be part of different contexts in social and professional life. A new generation of youth workers is going to join the world of work. Figures that inevitably must be able to spend their skills both in the tangible (real) world and in the digital one.

Improving knowledge about new technologies to strengthen the dialogue with young people

Being able to know the digital contexts in which young people interact and the communication codes they use allows youth workers to recognise not only their needs, but also their experiences and the motivations behind their choices. This enables us to better guide the young both in their digital and real-world experiences. Schematically, the needs and motivations that determine and guide youth behaviour in the use of digital media can be traced back to three main dynamics:

1. Affective and relational dynamics (emotions, motivations, sociability);
2. Cognitive dynamics (tools knowledge and technical skills);
3. Value and civic dynamics (moral and ethical values and principles that guide the person, ability to assume social responsibility, overall maturity, sense of citizenship).

In other words, for young boys and girls the Internet and New Media are not simple tools but real virtual places where complex interactions with others take place and where they can satisfy needs

¹⁷ Malekoff. 2014, pp. 43.

¹⁸ The year 1996 as the date of birth of the first Digital Native has been defined by the American sociologist Mark Prensky. If age is the discriminating factor for defining Digital Natives is an open question, because people who have high knowledge of the media is a matter of current academic debate.

of a very different nature: needs for sociability, communication, knowledge, etc.

The level of quality and safety with which these virtual spaces are explored will depend in part on their technical abilities, on the functionalities of the tools, but above all on the principles and moral values that guide each person's behaviour. On this theme, the guidance of adults becomes therefore a fundamental aspect of support to help them to develop healthy and positive behaviours while using the Internet. In this context it is very important to observe how even the traditional socialising spaces (formal and informal), in which young people find themselves, are influenced by the advent of web 2.0 and by diffusion of social media. Knowing the tools and how they are used becomes a very important skill for those who work with young people. Recognising diverse online communication styles makes it possible to actively listen to young people both in the digital context and in the real world. This continuous exchange between digital and real allows us to enter into an authentic and effective empathic communication.

Many youth workers testify how the use of these technologies has helped them to open new channels of communication with young people who were experiencing a somewhat complex or problematic period in their lives. Young people, who in direct communication were struggling to open up, were assisted by communicating with digital tools, finding a more "protected" and less judgmental conversation space where they could share their thoughts and needs with caring adults.

At the same time, many youth workers show how the Social Network has become an important virtual space in which to engage and involve young people who are potentially interested in the various educational projects proposed over the years. In other words, digital and social media allow those who work with young people to better understand them and have an additional communication tool to the traditional ones.

Recognising the importance of digital technologies for youth groups

Good communication management is a key element of young people's engagement: to be able to participate in the activities and life of their community, young people need to be informed about upcoming events or projects. Communication today plays a central role in any field: good results from activities for young people often depend on the communication strategies used. If you are not able to tell what are you doing, your actions may as well not exist and young people won't engage with them.

Youth policies must look at digital communication as an opportunity for information sharing, knowledge enhancement, but also as a field where young people become active, reinterpreting and elaborating the data. Our research, focus group and interviews, have shown that educators and youth workers should be trained in the field of media education but often this training is not available or does not seem a priority. This training should include safe use of the Internet, effective digital communication, personal branding and web reputation management, as well as learning about social relationships both in the off-line and on-line world.

The adult youth worker is a model for young people and a role model, also in the digital world. This means that a youth worker should also pay special attention to what they write or publish in social media or through other on-line channels. So usage of the Internet by youth workers has also an ethical and moral dimension and youth workers should be conscious of the potential impact of the content they place online, not make mistakes such as placing photos or texts that are not coherent with the educational role of a youth worker.

Coming back to the objectives of the educational action, it is important to observe how adolescents and pre-adolescents live an increasingly substantial part of their social lives within the digital context, reducing in a considerable way "face to face" relation-

ships. Our task as youth worker is to promote the development of a social and emotional intelligence functional to the analogue and digital context around young people. Younger generations need more and more mentors, who are aware of changes of the digital world that can help them construct the necessary skills and tools to become aware protagonists in the current reality, both in the real and digital world.

Conclusion

This chapter showed us that big changes are occurring in the world around us and affect young people's lives. These cannot be bypassed by youth or by youth workers. They bring demands to make changes in youth work, at least to include new target groups (such as migrants) and new topics (such as ICT skills, financial literacy, etc.).to make changes in youth work, at least to include new target groups (such as migrants) and new topics (such as ICT skills, financial literacy, etc.).

However, changes in target groups and topics should not be the end of the transformation of youth work and its adaptation to new circumstances. Youth work is about creative socialising with young people. The above mentioned trends do not only influence those who are young people today and what they are speaking about. Many of the aforementioned trends influence how young people socialise with each other, keep themselves informed and perceive the autonomous space around them and the way they grow up.

To conclude: changes in youth work should not principally focus on new target groups or new content in the youth work curricula. Changes should focus primarily on the methodology of youth work. New ways of directing the attention of young people should be discovered. These should include new ways of helping them find common interests, new approaches to overcoming individualism, new forms of accepting joint decisions, new styles of solving conflicts, new ways of promoting creativity in groups and practising dialogue.

These efforts probably take more time than just changing the content of youth work. They also demand a shift in main considerations of a youth worker. We, the youth workers, should concentrate less on offering activities to young people and be more focused on observing and facilitating their socialising and dialogue, searching for common interests, their motivation, their empathy for others and their sense of community.

How is youth work adapting to changing world? Working with migrants

In interview with Primož Jamšek and Jaka Matičič from Slovenska filantropija (Slovene Philanthropy) we discussed about the challenges and importance of youth work with migrants. A bunch of youth organisations in Slovenia (at least on a declarative level) claim to be helping migrants, but in reality, not many do. Probably not because of lack of interest from those youth organisations, but more due to the fact, that migrants themselves are not willing to do the necessary first step to join youth work. Even Slovenska filantropija, which is one of the largest organisations actively working with migrants, sometimes has difficulties helping other organisations, who would like to include migrants in their projects. Sometimes we tend to forget, that those people don't stop living a life just because they are migrants and are not simply sitting idly, just waiting for somebody to come and work with them.

They still want to live as normal as it gets, go to school, etc. When migrants come to Slovenia they lack any social network and have lost the one they had in their home country. In a new country, you will start building your new social network in the place, where you first end up. Usually for them that is an asylum home. There, you create a safe space for yourself and feel accepted. The organisations that support migrants in transition from asylum home to the outside world will naturally be the ones migrants will trust most. Some of the volunteers from Slovenska filantropija also work there, so transition is easier. Since they will already know this organisation or that youth worker, they will be more willing to accept their support even further. Youth organisations however do not primarily engage in reintegration of migrants.

Working with such vulnerable groups is not a common specialisation of a youth organisation. "When we are inviting them for youth exchanges, they only apply for the ones they know I will lead, since they know me. It is really hard to convince them to go to an exchange where I am not present." Also presenting the concept of youth exchange and its benefits is difficult to explain. Why? How? What is the point? If you want me to go to another city in Slovenia, I am afraid,

how will I get there? Etc." Slovenska filantropija is hoping that lack of trust towards other organisations could be overcome by inviting youth workers from secondary organisations to join them at their work, so migrants would get to know them. Slovenska filantropija offers counselling (professional orientation) on one hand and workshops on the other. Migrants really connect with physical work, not only because of the language barriers, but they miss manual labour and the feeling of doing something productive (contribute to the community) as well.

Youth work can also help migrants broaden their horizons and discover their own potential. Help them experience things that they never tried before, which leads to widening of general knowledge. Experiences show, that there are no difficulties forming multicultural groups, since local youth is very welcoming. However, Slovenska filantropija noticed that it is useful to prepare and guide the local youth. We should not act differently in communication to migrants. Not ask questions that come to our minds first – like, why are you here and how did you travel (some will share their stories on their own, but for some those are very intimate questions). "Migrants have a stronger than usual need to feel accepted. They can get upset quickly if I send messages to four of them and I forgot one.

They need confirmation, that they are ok and we accept them." Everybody experiences conflicts or people improperly behaving towards us, but migrants connect everything with their position of being refugees. We have to (re)socialise them. Migrants bring with them a lot of distress and this influences their inclusion process when participating also in youth activities. When involving migrants, youth work changes. It starts to involve qualitative support on many different areas (psychosocial help, empowering for good communication skills, etc.). That support is needed if we want to qualitatively include migrants in the youth work sphere and improve lives. Migrant and ours.



**YOUTH WORK GROWTH CYCLE:
A TOOL FOR A BETTER
YOUTH WORK**

What is Youth Work Growth Cycle?

In this chapter we would like to introduce you to the **Youth Work Growth Cycle**. The Youth Work Growth Cycle is a set of elements which are important in youth work and at the same time allow groups of young people to grow and develop. Some people, those who like official names, might call Youth Work Growth Cycle a quality system. This is because using it systematically and for a long period should raise the quality of youth work. But one can also think about it in a simpler way and call it a check list. If we think about it as a check list, the Youth Work Growth Cycle is a list of 20 important processes that should be happening in youth groups or organisations. Youth workers wanting to improve their work can have a look at this list of processes and see how their group or organisation is doing in relation to these 20 processes.

Group, as a core of youth work

As authors of this manual, we were often reflecting on the foundations of youth work: what are the elements of youth work which should remain the same over time, regardless of the available technology and other changes that are happening around us? What is the ABC, the core or heart of youth work? We believe that the very core of youth work are **groups**, youth work has been happening in groups since its beginning and they are the basis of learning and doing in youth work. Creating a strong group is the biggest measure of the success of a youth worker. In fact, youth work happens when young people come together, learn, entertain, and do something good for other young people, communities and the world around them.

Youth Work Growth Cycle is based on the same assumption. It takes a **group** as the foundation of quality and development. It is therefore designed to facilitate reflection on groups in different contexts, from small groups (e.g. 8 young people who meet on a weekly basis) to large organisations, such as national youth organisations or movements.

For whom is Youth Work Growth Cycle?

Youth Work Growth Cycle was developed for youth leaders, youth workers, managers in youth organisations, youth clubs, youth movements ..., trainers of youth leaders and workers, coaches and educators in youth work. Everyone will probably use it for a slightly different purpose and in a slightly different way.

It allows a leader or a team of leaders to reflect on the work they are doing and plan it inspired by the list of 20 processes. The Cycle would help them to see the strong and weak points of their work. This way, with simple observations, they will be able to plan actions that will allow them to raise the level of quality of their youth work, in their groups or organisations.

Let's start exploring the Cycle by thinking about two fundamental missions of a leader!

Two missions of a leader

Our next assumption is that in each group or organisation, two important things are happening simultaneously. They happen in all groups and organisations in youth work, regardless of the characteristics of their members, their purpose or their core activity. The first fact is that in every case, individuals are joining the group and the second one is that the group is developing and growing with time. The leader is usually supporting these developments through his/her two main tasks:

- Enabling the entry of young people into the group / organisation.
- Encouraging and facilitating growth of the group / organisation and young people within it.

If one or both of these tasks are neglected for a long time, the quality of youth work starts deteriorating or completely diminishes.



If one or both of these tasks are neglected for a long time, the quality of youth work starts deteriorating or completely diminishes. Therefore, in this manual, **Chapter 4** and **Chapter 5** are dedicated to these two important missions.



Youth Work Growth Cycle is based on youth workers' experiences

The Youth Work Growth Cycle was created on the basis of stories and materials from 32 youth workers, leaders of youth groups with varying levels of experience, coordinators of volunteers, youth workers in youth clubs, from four countries (Germany, Italy, Poland and Slovenia). The project team conducted 32 in-depth interviews with them to find out what they believe in. Interviewees expressed the need to continue engaging with young people in groups and keep those groups strong and growing. In selecting them, we were paying close attention to many factors, to ensure diversity of contexts and methods they use in their work. We have been attentive to their experience in youth work, the contexts in which they work, the level of their commitment, their target groups, the activities, their performances and other factors, such as age and gender.

We asked them two sets of questions related to the two above-mentioned core tasks: *how do you ensure that young people keep joining your group or organisation; and how do you maintain the growth of your group or organisation in the long run?* We were paying attention to the social and technological changes that affect young people today, which are described in **Chapter 2** of this manual.

In addition to these 32 experienced youth leaders and workers, we also conducted 8 focus groups with different youth groups. In a slightly different way, we gave them similar questions, of course this time, from the participants' point of view.

We listened and listened, combining synonyms, linking similar experiences, and finally we reached the following recommendations:

In order to encourage young people to participate (mission 1), it is necessary to strengthen the appeal of the external image of the organisation and increase its reach. To ensure sustainability and growth of groups (mission 2), it is necessary to strengthen the feeling of belonging to the group or organisation, to support personal growth and development of young people, to be more attractive for the young as a group or organisation and to use pro-active methods of work.

We call these recommendations 6 fields of work in groups or organisations.

**ENCOURAGE
YOUNG PEOPLE
TO PARTECIPATE**

- Taking care of communication and public image
- Improving reach-out

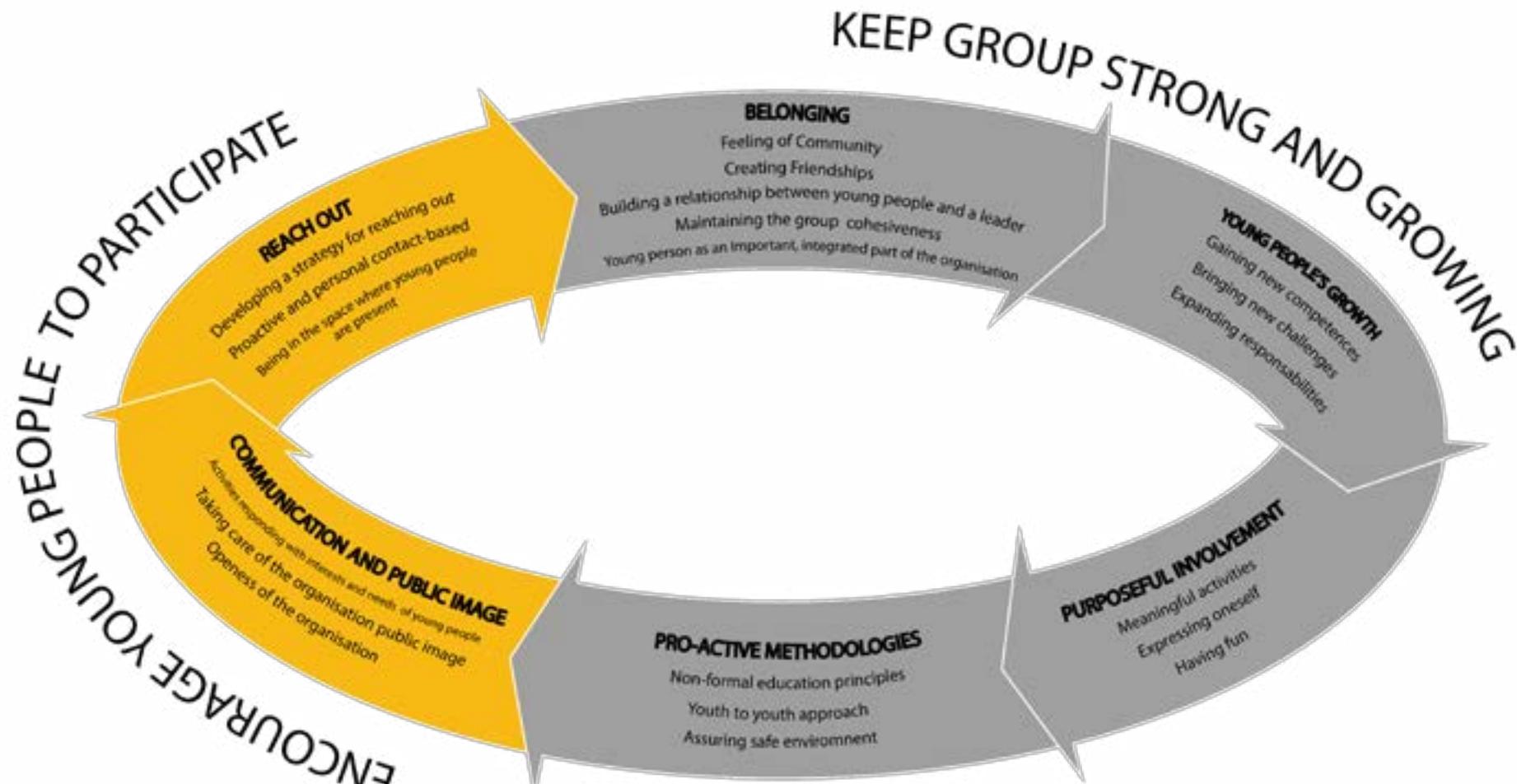
**KEEP GROUPS
STRONG AND
GROWINGS**

- Strenthening belonging
- Supporting young people's growth
- Supporting purposeful involvement
- Using pro-active methodologies

Youth Work Growth Cycle is about reflection on 20 processes

Interviews and focus groups gave us 20 processes, which usually occur in groups and organisations in which quality youth work takes place. All of them are linked to the missions of a leader, reflecting on those processes would help youth leaders

to better fulfil their missions of taking care for the group and engaging new group members.



YOUTH WORK GROWTH CYCLE

These 20 processes can serve as a list by which you can identify strong and weak points of youth work in your group or organisation. Each of these 20 processes is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 4** and **Chapter 5**.

Chapters 4 and 5 describe for each process:

- Name of the process;
- A brief description of the process;
- Examples of indicators for it;
- Examples of actions you can take to strengthen this process;
- A case study.

Why a cycle?

A circle is a meaningful symbol in youth work. It represents personal growth, group growth and constant upgrade options. In groups, the circle represents meetings, conversations, confrontations, honesty, and non-hierarchical relationships, young people like to sit in a circle where everyone has a similar position. The circle is also a symbol of life, birth and death, energy which flows from generation to generation, which is also a well-known phenomenon for group and organisation leaders. The Cycle has all the characteristics of a circle and it signifies the lack of a real end: we never can reach the end of our mission or a real fulfilment of our aim. We can conclude our project, but there will always be a potential to continue, to improve and to find new challenges for the future.

The **Youth Work Growth Cycle** was formed into a cycle for all the above-mentioned reasons. We do not want to favour or give any of the 20 processes more importance than the others. We want to give you the freedom and responsibility to begin work with young people where you want to and to finish where you want to.

How to use the Youth Work Growth Cycle?

The Youth Work Growth Cycle can be used in different ways. Let's name a few:

- In the mentoring process when, for example, the mentor assists the group or organisation leader with raising youth work to a higher quality level.
- As a tool for reflecting on one's own work as group or organisation leader.
- As a source for workshops and training on ABC of youth work.
- As a tool at the organisations' main committee meetings.
- For a relaxed conversation about the state of a group or organisation between members or key participators ...

Most of the above suggest that you select one or a few of the 20 processes and focus your work on those. This can be focused on a process that is a strong point in your group or organisation, or one that represents a weakness. In both cases, it makes sense to focus on one or a few, rather than on all 20 processes.

Raising youth work to a higher level of quality does not happen overnight. It is a long-distance run. Work on each of the 20 listed processes requires changes in the organisational culture of the group or organisation. Organisational cultures take a long time to change. A one-time meeting can bring a fresh breeze, but with a single meeting we cannot achieve major or planned changes.

As authors of this manual we believe that planned changes can only lead to long-term work on individual processes. We devote the entire **Chapter 6** to dealing with this.

How to continue reading this manual?

Decide how much are you interested in Youth Work Growth Cycle!

As you can see, this tool is very structured and you can use it to the extent you need:

- 2 missions of the leader,
- 6 fields,
- 20 processes,
- A set of indicators and possible measures.



Chapter 4 describes in more detail the processes associated with the first mission of the leader, “Keeping groups strong and growing” and, in Chapter 5, those related to the second task “engaging young people to participate”. If you just want to get

acquainted with these processes for now, we recommend that you start with one of these two chapters.

If, however, you want to raise the quality of youth work in your group or organisation and want to do it systematically, we recommend a browse through Chapter 6. There you will find recommendations on how to address this process for the long run.

Good luck!



Try it out in 5 minutes:

1. Pick a process that you think you want to reflect on.
2. Check the indicators. What are they telling to you? How would you evaluate your work by using different indicators?



**MISSION I:
ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE
TO PARTICIPATE**



1 Activities responding with interests and needs of young people

Activities in the organisation are interesting for young people. They are based on youth's interests and needs.

Whether we like it or not, young people will not come to our organisation if its image isn't attractive to them. Young people don't like boredom. Very often they are overwhelmed by school, private classes and extracurricular activities. They look for something unusual, interesting and colourful. On the other hand the organisation has great PR and looks fantastic but lacks interesting events, the result will be the same. Young people want to spend their free time in an exciting way by developing their passions and interests. Only when those two elements are consistent will the organisation project an inviting image to young people.

How can the organisation appear interesting to young people? First, it has to be present and active on social media, where it showcases its activities and initiatives. Very often young people learn about the existence of the organisation from Facebook, when they see their friends tagged in pictures or attending events. If this catches their attention they might dig deeper and find out more about the organisation.

Second, the image projected in social media has to be consistent with reality in the organisation, so when young people come to attend a real event, they won't be disappointed.

Thirdly, word of mouth is one of the most powerful tools for spreading information. The best recommendations are always from friends and, if friends are members of the organisation and talk about this with passion, that means that this place is really interesting.

Indicators

- The organisation's activities are perceived as attractive, innovative, and 'new'.
- The organisation offers rare, unique opportunities (e.g. travel to foreign countries, taking part in specific events, workshops etc.).
- There are possibilities to share and/or develop hobbies, interests.
- The activities fulfil young people's basic needs (e.g. learning, place to stay, food).
- Young feel that their activities can bring change in local communities.

Actions

- Organising presentations showing the activities of the organisation, where members share their experiences, show photos or films.
- Learning from the experience of other organisations.
- Offering free-of-charge training courses or workshops.
- Organising weekends away with the association or team building activities (to get to know it and to know future members).
- Be active at school fairs and try to do a presentation which is different from the others.
- Members talk about the organisation to their friends.
- Be present in social media.

Case study - The Jewish Centre Community, Kraków, Poland

The Jewish Centre Community in Kraków is an institution that brings Jews together through social and educational activities. At the same time it plays a role in educating anyone wanting to know more about Jewish culture. The mission of the JCC is to build a Jewish future in Kraków. One of the main aims is to show that, despite historical events, Jewish life in Kraków is thriving.



Photo by: JCC Krakow archive

Apart from members, every day the centre is visited by guests from all over the world. One of the significant aspects of JCC activities is volunteering. Every year it attracts more than 100 young non-Jewish volunteers. The JCC's volunteers have received awards in the "Colours of volunteering" contest organised by the Regional Volunteers Centre in Kraków.

There are many reasons why volunteering programmes at the JCC are so popular and successful. Activities at the JCC are interesting for young people. The volunteers:

- Take part in a huge range of educational, cultural and social programmes;
- Develop various soft skills and gain new knowledge;
- Meet people from all over the world and make stable friendships;
- Propose their own initiatives and activities;
- Feel that their contribution is helpful and has an impact on the community.

The focus of JCC activities is unique, specific and young people cannot find anything similar anywhere else. Young people have an opportunity to explore a rich Jewish culture, including taking part in workshops, training courses, lectures and trips. They celebrate with community holidays and mark important dates. They not only become familiar with Jewish culture, history and traditions: first of all they confront and challenge stereotypes by meeting friendly people from all over the world.

Furthermore, young people can propose their own activities according to their interests and passions. JCC's flexible approach provides the means to do it. Although

the subject of Jewish culture is very much in focus, there is a space for young people to implement "non-Jewish" events together like leisure activities or projects. It is crucial to recognise individual needs and adjust the activities to a young person's expectations and interests. Each volunteer has personal meetings with his or her coordinator to discuss those issues.

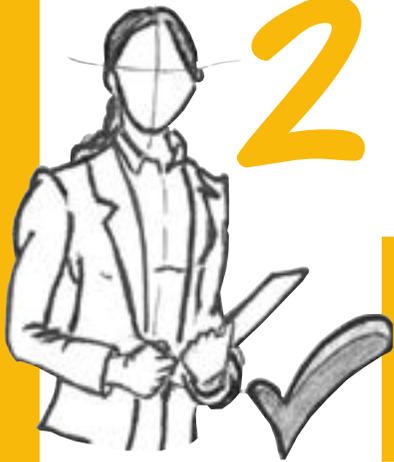
"They come here because they've heard that it's a great experience! Friends said that you can learn a lot, do a lot of interesting things"

Magdalena Arabas, Coordinator of volunteering programme at the JCC

Another segment of JCC structure which attracts young people is Jewish Club Gimel/Hillel, opened for students of Jewish origin. Many of the members have started to explore their Jewish roots very recently as, after Second World War, people tended to hide their Jewish roots. The Club helps them to deal with their identity and to implement their own ideas, however unconventional. The Club is fully run by young people and all events are organised by them.

JCC runs a Facebook page about the institution but, at the same time, a special Facebook page for volunteers called JCC Kraków Volunteers, which publishes information about activities in a very attractive, visual way with many pictures from events, where volunteers are shown enjoying themselves. Materials are always colourful and attractive, giving the impression that participants can develop and realise their passions and there is always something interesting going on. The Facebook page is the principal place where young people find out about the JCC, mostly through pictures that their friends are tagged in and they may start to think "why not to come and see what is interesting there?". For many young people the JCC is an attractive place to be.

Young people at the JCC are visible. They appear in all media products prepared and disseminated by the JCC, like videos and articles. One of the most prominent examples was the publishing of a calendar presenting volunteer profiles. From one perspective it was a wonderful way to show appreciation to volunteers; it was also a powerful tool to promote volunteering at the JCC. During volunteer recruitment, a Facebook event is created and then shared by current and former volunteers. Through sharing many people are exposed to the opportunities at the JCC and the fact that the event was shared by a friend adds more credibility. The JCC offers young people interesting ways to spend their time, experiences that are shared on social media, making the centre attractive to them.



2

Taking care of the organisation's public image

The organisation is perceived as attractive, successful, doing good things for a cause, the public have heard about the organisation etc.

Promoting a good picture of the organisation is essential for it to be appealing to potential young members. Leaders should make sure that the proposed activities are of interest to the target groups. They should also promote the organisation by using young people's language and tools, such as the Internet and social networks. Traditional methods (posters, word of mouth etc.) could also be utilised.

The goal of the leader is to ensure the implementation of events and build a positive perception among the local community by engaging the locals in active participation. The organisation should make people in the community feel more involved and attempt to relate to their personal life. Aspects like seeking a constant dialogue and co-operation with other organisations/institutions present in the area, proposing joint events, participating in activities carried out by other local institutions like schools, universities, sports clubs or any association that work with young people must not be underestimated.

Indicators

- Many young people have heard about the organisation.
- The organisation is recognised in the local community.
- Young people hear about the organisation from friends.
- The organisation collaborates with diverse stakeholders, especially with schools.
- Organisation is perceived as open for new members (not just for group of friends).
- There is a regularly updated public website or page promoting the organisation.

Actions

- Co-operation with other associations, schools, universities, political parties - participation in their events.
- Promotion at public events.
- Informative and updated website.
- Project outputs on the internet (photos, videos etc.) created with involvement of young people.
- Take part in competitions (e.g. school competitions).
- Leaflets, posters informing about activities.
- Organising open workshops, presentations in schools, universities. These activities can be a good chance to show friends how the group works and what activities they can join at the group.
- Organisation is present on social media, where all main events are described.
- Participating at "Open Days" events at universities, schools, NGO fairs and other open events, where the organisation can present its activities.
- Organising picnics within local communities.
- Promotion among parents.
- "Celebrity" support - young people are more interested in activities, if they see that people, who are important to them support the organisation.
- Participating in activities of other organisations and institutions.



Photo by: Media Education Association archive

Case Study - Media Education Community Association, Udine, Italy

Media Education Community Association (An association for Social Promotion) includes educators, trainers, journalists, graphic designers, media experts, and communications technicians. This organisation promotes and develops projects in the field of Media Education, in collaboration with the local authorities, schools and universities, and other institutional, public or private entities. Its mission is to promote Critical Media Awareness Paths. The association organises courses, conferences, debates, study groups, cultural events on media literacy issues, and awareness-raising actions. They focus on educational impact of the new media and, in general, the physical and mental wellbeing of people, especially children and young people of school going age.

The organisation manages its public image through two different aspects:

1. Local Reputation: This is based on achieving and maintaining good relationship with local institutions such as schools, municipalities, sports organisations, cinemas, associations of voluntary movements and cultural organisations. The Media Education Community Association actively and constantly collaborates with them by frequently organising activities, successful events and conferences at schools or theatres or public halls, to which local authorities are invited along with mayors, municipal councillors, journalists and other prominent personalities. The association promotes its activities through posters and brochures created by their own internal graphic designers and illustrators. Materials about every event are published in

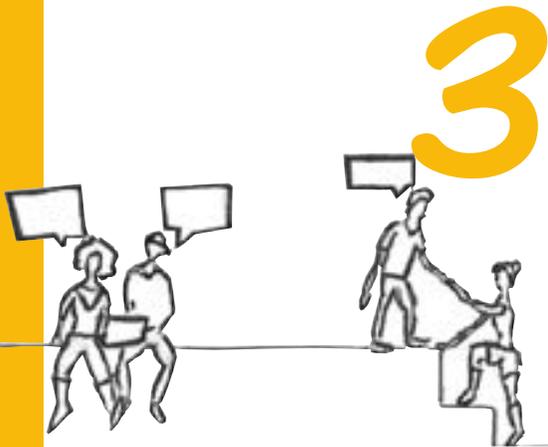
the local media, such as local newspapers and television channels. The association builds an excellent relationship with them by keeping them informed about the local activities and making themselves available for interviews or give speeches on the subject of digital education.

“The reputation of the association is built day after day, first of all with the quality of the actions on the territory. When there is quality, internet becomes an effective tool to promote association and share projects with local community.”

Giacomo Trevisan, Educator of MEC

2. Web presence. The association’s website is constantly updated with news about all the events and activities carried out by its members. Many articles are written by educators and journalists of the association, and are lucid, informative, educative, and easily comprehensible to a wide range of audience. The organisation is also present on social networks, particularly Facebook, with a constantly updated page on a daily basis and integrated with new content. Often an insouciant or hasty reader does not continue to read all the content. In order to cater to their selective interests and reading, we focus on the importance of communication through images. Therefore, we pay special attention to the choice of titles, images and slogans that accompany the content, which must be rational, well-explained, and attractive.

Basically, the organisation tries to make a coherent connection between educational messages promoted through offline events and multimedia content it posts on its website and social media pages. The goal is to promote an effective way to use digital devices and internet tools to reach as many people as possible.



3 Openness of the organisation

The organisation is open to new members and it is perceived in this way.

Young people should feel welcome to join any organisation, project or event. The openness of the organisation is crucial to gaining new members. The important part is the outside perception of an organisation, which sometimes does not correspond with the internal one. Sometimes the organisation perceives itself as open, while local young people consider it as a clique and they may even be afraid to come.

Openness is directly related to inclusiveness. An organisation is considered as an open one when anyone can join and take part in its activities despite different characteristics, difficulties and disadvantages. When young people come to the organisation, there is always someone who will talk with them, answer their questions and support their ideas. Quick replies to their e-mails or messages on social media is a must these days. And quick means a couple of days, not a couple of weeks. Information about a lack of response will be quickly spread among peers and it is extremely difficult to dispel negative views. Open meetings and events are expected as well as an encouraging attitude from leaders and members of the organisation. By publicising what the organisation is doing, members can recommend it to their friends.

Indicators

- The organisation reaches more difficult to reach groups.
- The organisation is inclusive for all youth, including those from disadvantaged groups.
- The organisation is perceived as “open”.
- Participating in the activities is fully open and voluntary: young people can leave the group if they do no longer feel comfortable.

Actions

- Making the process of joining and leaving the organisation or group is transparent and simple.
- Involving current members in inviting potential new members and introducing them to organisation.
- Open calls (e.g. to join activities, projects, trips or exchanges).
- The organisation cherishes the diverse experiences of their members.



Photo by: Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju i Integracji Młodzieży STRIM archive

**Case study - Youth Development and Integration Association
STRIM (Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju i Integracji Młodzieży STRIM)
Kraków, Poland**

Youth Development and Integration Association STRIM is an active organisations focused on international volunteering and educational mobility projects in the Malopolska region. During over 15 years of existence, STRIM has hosted and sent abroad hundreds of volunteers, organised numerous seminars, training courses, youth exchanges and local events mainly for and with young people. The aims of the association focus on empowerment and integration of all young people.

STRIM is a member of the Polish Council of Youth Organisations (PROM). In 2014 “Salt Crystals” awards, organised by the Marshal of the Małopolskie voivodeship, STRIM received a commendation for “best public benefit”. The aim of the prize is to promote good practice within NGOs.

One of the organisation’s strong points is its openness towards young people wishing to participate in STRIM’s activities. STRIM organises plenty of open events like International Volunteering Day or International Migrants’ Day where everyone who is interested in this subject is welcome. The events are implemented in a non-formal way with a friendly atmosphere and very often young people who come, heard about the association from their friends.

Joining the organisation is gradual and at each stage youths develop, learn and have a different level of responsibility. At the beginning young people might be participants in local events. Very often they participate in international youth exchanges, where they have small responsibilities in the programme preparation.

Every year the association recruits in an open call around twenty five so called “mentors” for the international volunteers that STRIM coordinates. Mentors help foreign volunteers to integrate in the local community and monitor their learning process. Mentors also take an active part in organising some events. After being a mentor many young people apply for membership, which gives them the opportunity to initiate own activities and coordinate projects independently. Members also have a unique opportunity to participate in international training courses and seminars. Very often young people who were sent for a volunteering project abroad join the organisation after their return to the country.

“People who come to STRIM are fascinated by its diversity. Young people come because this is something different that they can do in their lives and they are welcome. Their lives are often boring, monotonous (...) creativity is not there and they find it in STRIM, where they can express themselves”

Dorota Skwarczewska, Project coordinator at STRIM, youth worker

Every new member at the beginning of his or her adventure with STRIM has a guide, a member with more experience, who shows her or him the organisation, explains the structure and rules and aids integration with other members. In majority of cases, new members are inducted by “old” members. Members invite friends to events, who very often stay in STRIM. The level of “integration” with the association is chosen by the young person. Participation is voluntary and a young person decides the extent of his or her involvement.

STRIM is open to all youth, no matter what nationality, place of living, sexual orientation or disability. What matters is their motivation. Volunteers in STRIM have different backgrounds. Members also prepare future volunteers to go abroad for an educational project.

STRIM members are present in all main fairs that attract young people: educational fairs, NGO fairs, youth organisations’ fairs. They conduct meetings in schools, universities and local libraries to promote active participation. The members and international volunteers present the organisation and opportunities that STRIM offers young people by being involved in the activities. This approach creates

4 Developing a proactive strategy for reaching out



Communication with all stakeholders, especially young people, is planned and implemented.

Engaging new members in activities is carefully planned by the organization. Specific target groups should be identified and for each of them the organisation should have a developed strategy. The organisation should plan communication with the largest possible number of stakeholders in its area and be able to involve potential new members. A strategy of successful involvement should necessarily include the usage of new technologies, such as the Internet and social networks. However, at the same time, it should not neglect the importance of direct contact with people who attend events, such as concerts, theatrical performances, conferences or flash mobs. Co-operation with local institutions like schools and sport associations is an important part of reaching new potential members.

All engaging activities, both online and offline, are carefully planned and periodically repeated.

Indicators

- The organisation has a reach out strategy designed and adjusted to potential members among young people.
- There is a clear idea about the target groups of the organisation and what are their needs and interests.
- There are regular efforts to reach out new members.
- Promotional activities take place both online and offline.

Actions

- Use new technologies (like social media, home pages, websites, Instagram, etc.) but also personal contacts.
- Organise exhibitions, happenings, flash mob, concerts, live shows, plays.
- Schools and universities are a good way to get to young people in education.
- Tasks related to promotional activities are assigned to specific people in the organisation.
- People responsible for reach out may need some training or learn from experiences of other organisations.
- Organise a public event to promote the activities of the organisation.

Case study - Swartz Studio, Sacile, Italy

Swartz Studio is a small cultural association based in Friuli, set up by four founding partners. It also involves volunteers (their number is dependent on the activities and events). The main aims of the organisation are to promote Alternative Culture, Music and Art (independent productions) in town where there are few opportunities to access them. Some effective strategies for involving young audience is to provide a social venue where it is possible to spend time together (casual meets), share ideas and



Photo by: Swartz Studio archive

passions. Young people come there because they look for a place to reside and feel at home. They enjoy being at the association for two reasons:

- They witness something new happening.
- They witness people who are really committed to improving the community and offering new ways of spending time together and to expressing oneself.

Every person is involved in a different way, few of them just come to spend time together and listen to music and some even participate in creating the events, while others help with preparation and implementation of the activities. There is no fixed pattern of participation.

It is important for each project to have different levels of involvement: a core group that actively supports the association; Passers-by, who just make the place feel alive, participating in the events and sharing ideas and passions; etc.

New people mainly join the association during cultural and music events and then get involved on a voluntary basis.

The Swartz Studio doesn't have a specific target, since it tries to involve people of all ages, especially those who are interested in independent culture and are looking for a chance to spend time together in a free, culturally exciting and creative environment. The majority of the activities that are coordinated by and also target young people

"A vacant office in the city centre (Sacile, PN) becomes the venue for four people, who usually meet around the city in search of stimuli, to roll up their sleeves and start doing what they could not do elsewhere."

Loris Tomasella SWARTS Studio Partner and founder

The organisation's engagement strategy is based on three fundamental pillars:

1. **Word of mouth:** Most of the people who join the events or visit The Swartz Studio during its opening hours do so with a friend or on a suggestion by a friend. People who come to the Studio are curious and look for non-commercial and non-mainstream options. This is a new offer in town, so word of mouth has a very important role. The founders actively promoted this kind of communication through their own friends. People who join based on that communication canal ("word of mouth") are normally more committed and reliable (compared to on-line communication audience).
2. **Friends and friends of friends:** This approach helps to build a solid, integrated group of members.
3. **Use of Social network and web:** Social Networks, Facebook in particular, play an important role. One of the main activities in The Swartz Studio is creating events that can be easily promoted through Facebook and reach wide audience.

The real beginning of a relationship is when participants come to the place and meet face to face with people who are already involved.

The methods of involving a well-defined audience into Swartz Studio activities are quite simple and structured:

- The first phase includes talking to young acquaintances who think Swartz Studio activities are interesting.
- After they spread the idea on social media, evaluate the reaction of their target audience.
- If the reaction is positive and motivated, they start a crowd funding campaign to raise funds to activate an initiative.
- If the campaign is successful, those who took part automatically (almost always) become a promoter of the initiative.

The interesting aspect of Swartz studio is how they achieve their goal by utilising the potential of the audience and local community involvement, using both face to face approach and digital technologies.

5 Engaging new members based on personal contacts



During the process each person is taken care of individually and there are methodical ways to get in contact with every potential interested young person.

Meeting in person is still the most powerful way of engaging people, especially when we talk about organisations that aim to involve young people for longer period of time. Online “recruitment forms” can work, however it should be followed by meeting at the organisation’s premises. This is the only way when leader can get to know a young person and then adjust the activities to his or her needs. By meeting at the organisation, a young person gets more familiar with it, starts to understand faster and more clearly what is this all about and can experience the culture of the organisation. The fact that leader devotes time to the young person makes her or him feel important and needed.

During the meeting the leader should ask potential members about their expectations, interests, hobbies, and ideas, but do not push them. They will open themselves up, when they are ready to do so, not necessary during the first meeting. The meeting should take place in an informal, relaxed atmosphere, maybe with coffee and cookies. Don’t let them feel like they are at a job interview!

The first meeting is crucial: after it the young person will decide whether to come back to the organisation or not.

Indicators

- Personal-contact recruitment activities are organised.
- Young people have known somebody from the organisation before joining.
- There are pathway/ways designed to communicate with new members which involve personal contact.

Actions

- Involving the previous participants or organisation members in the promotional events.
- Direct conversation with young people after a presentation about the organisation.
- An application form with basic questions (motivation, interests) as a first step, then face-to-face conversation with the leader.
- Materials (e.g. leaflets) prepared to give to the potential members during the personal meeting.



Photo by: Foundation Centrum Aktywności Twórczej CAT archive

Case study - Fundacja Centrum Aktywności Twórczej CAT, Leszno, Poland

Foundation Centrum Aktywności Twórczej CAT is a youth organisation founded in 2008 from the bottom-up initiative of young, enthusiastic people who believed in the potential of youth and wanted to make the local community more active. CAT supports the development of youth and children in Leszno (a small city around 65,000 inhabitants in the middle - western part of Poland). The slogan of the organisation is: we are not afraid of challenges. We believe that there is no such thing that cannot be realised. The main activities of CAT are concentrated around educational opportunities for young people, volunteering, promoting culture and youth participation. For many young people the first meeting with the organisation is during an open local event in which they participate, like Day of Europe, International Youth Day, Day of Human Rights or International Volunteer Day. If they like the event, they come to the office and declare that they would like to be more involved in the activities. Others come encouraged by their friends, who know the organisation, some previously implemented a volunteering project elsewhere or are already a member. CAT runs day camps and some of the long-term volunteers participate in them. Leaders always try to have personal contact and to spend time with young people in the organisation.

At the very beginning, every potential volunteer or anyone who would like to be involved in CAT's activities has a meeting with one of CAT's members. The meeting is held in a non-formal atmosphere with coffee and cookies. This personal conversa-

tion is very important as the co-ordinators get to know the young person more but, at the same time, the young person is becoming more aware about the organisation and what she or he can do there. During the meeting both sides express their needs and expectations and together plan the young person's future involvement. Additionally it shows the personal approach of the organisation and a willingness to adjust the activities and tasks to the individual. It strengthens the feeling of importance and raises motivation of the young person. CAT has a special person who takes this role and is responsible for all newcomers. They call her "couch". This person monitors the progress of every young person at the organisation, leads informal groups of young people but at the same time shows her enthusiasm and enjoys the process.

"The most important role in current youth work is the leader with whom young people should meet face to face. Youth have to feel that the leader is there with them from the very beginning (...). We live like a family in the foundation"

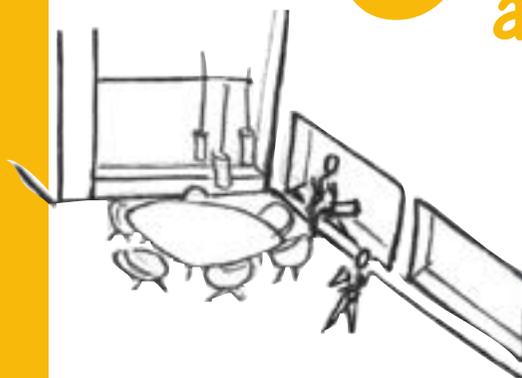
Marlena Pujza-Kunikowska, President of the CAT Foundation, youth worker

This very important feature is to create a nice atmosphere during events but also at the office so young people feel comfortable from the very beginning and they wish to come to the organisation.

The ways of reaching different groups of young people are based on targeting the event. Members of CAT organise various presentations and classes at schools. At these meetings international volunteers are present and talk about their own experiences. After the presentation there is time and space for young people to ask questions or just chat with members and volunteers. CAT organises various open events where everyone is welcome, e.g. festivals, handicraft workshops, board games events, movie nights, Karaoke nights, intercultural evenings, shared meals and cooking workshops. The strong co-operation with teachers, who promote CAT's activities is an important way of reaching young people. International volunteers encourage youth to come to the office and join the activities.

The institution is perceived as open and friendly. It is recognised in the region as a place where young people can spend constructive time by learning, playing and socialising.

6 Being in the space where young people are present



Searching for contact with young people in their territories/ contexts.

In many situations young people will not come to an organisation or youth centre. Often they consider those institutions as something not for them. They might perceive them as something boring, closed or just for the privileged. Or simply they might not know about their existence. Therefore, to reach young people, youth workers should seek contact with them in their own environment and places, where they spend their time: schools, playing fields, thematic festivals etc. To find young people with disadvantaged backgrounds sometimes they should go to the places like railway stations, streets, parks, where they gather and where youth workers or leaders might have a chance to get to know them.

They should be present as well at fairs, festivals, exhibitions and clubs: everywhere where there are young people. Examples of those practices represent mobile or detached youth work. The opportunities for young people should not be visible only in those places though. An important part is to be present online, on the channels where young people spend their time: social media, especially Facebook and Instagram, web forums and other web sites.

Indicators

- The organisation does a mapping of the youth presence in the village/ district/city.
- Leaders are present in spaces where young people are: schools, concerts, stadiums, festivals, online space, streets, and shopping malls.

Actions

- Reaching young people in the places where they are - so pupils in schools; young refugees through organisations that support them etc.
- Street work: the presence in the young people's spaces (parks, bars, formal and informal meeting spaces). Allows engagement of many young people.
- Diverse forms of mobile youth work.
- Being present in the "on-line spaces" may be important to establish or maintain contact with young people.
- Youth leader finds something in common with young person as a starting point. Shows them that he/she is interested in their hobbies.

Case Study - Centre for Prevention and Social Education PARASOL, programme Rakowicka 10, Kraków, Poland

Mobile Youth Work is a specific approach to youth work. It aims at preventing or combating already existing social exclusion of young people. It differs from traditional youth work mainly in where it takes place: it starts outside youth centres, youth clubs, and non-governmental organisations.



Photo by: Rightgood practices archive

Mobile youth workers go to a place where young people like to spend their free time and socialise, e.g. streets, parks and shopping malls, and they talk to young people. Youth work is happening in the natural environment of young people on their own ground.

Mobile Youth Work is based on four dimensions: individual aid, street work, group work and community work. Sometimes it is called detached youth work. The methodology focuses on two concepts: constructive conversation with young people and building relationships with them. Mobile youth workers seek to create trust and only then, based on received information, they propose a range of positive and fun activities and enable young people to participate in them. Very often they work with disadvantaged young people and the process is long and not easy but, if successful, it opens up the potential of youth and shows them different opportunities. Every year the number of organisations adapting mobile youth work methodology is rising. In Tallinn there are six mobile youth workers employed by the Sports and Youth Office. Everyday they meet random young people and talk with them about various topics significant to them. They work in pairs just in case of an unexpected situation.

They constantly develop their communication skills and knowledge about talking with young people. Mobile youth workers are ready to discuss many different issues, give young people the information they expect and to get to know them better. The important point is to understand the needs and interests of young people. Mobile youth workers' actions are based on deep analyses of the needs of young people and reasons behind them. They defend the interests of young people. They are a bridge between them and the world of adults and its different institutions like schools, the Police, social work, healthcare etc. They enable young people to have a voice and advocate on their behalf.

“We believe that in order to help people, you have to go out to them and work with them in their own environment. You can change a person only in his/her own environment and not at a clerk's desk. Our approach to work based on building a relationship with a child is very time-consuming, arduous and full of responsibility. On the other hand, it is very effective”

Beata Sierocka, President of CPES Parasol, coordinator of Rakowicka 10 Programme

PARASOL was a pioneering organisation in Poland that introduced street working in youth work. PARASOL's workers reach children and teenagers in their natural environment and offer educational opportunities, especially for those who are at a high risk of developing dysfunctional behaviours.

The programme “Rakowicka 10” targets young people who unproductively spend time in public spaces like, streets, parks or shopping malls. Although the majority of them go to school and have homes, most of the time they spend on streets and their free time is not supervised. Being on the street has many consequences: street children face many different challenges in their families, schools and local communities. By involving youth in various projects and activities, youth workers help to overcome these obstacles. Young people are invited to participate in different activities by street workers, who patrol the area daily and make contact with them. Street workers reach those who normally wouldn't have come to a youth centre. They offer teenagers alternative ways of spending free time and distribute educational material.

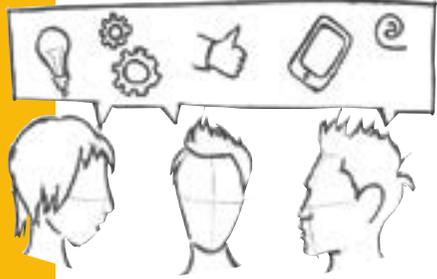
The organisation has an holistic approach. Apart from working with a young person directly, there are many actions aimed at their families, schools and monitoring different aspects of the child development.



**MISSION 2:
KEEP GROUPS STRONG
AND GROWING**

1

Feeling of community



Young people who participate in the organisation develop a feeling of belonging to a group and identify with it; they build bonds with organisation and within it.

A community is based on trust and offers safety to an ever-changing life of an individual. A mutual feeling of community usually grows through keeping warm, interpersonal relationships and managing common resources.

We speak about strong interpersonal relationships when group members treat each other as persons as a whole, not only as co-workers. In a community, people often share personal concerns (such as health, family, wellbeing, etc.) for each other. Conversations are not always about work and their profession. Common resources are the second important element of communities. Members of a community feel responsible for gaining, managing and using common resources in a sustainable way. They are directly connected with the resources and establish rules for managing them. Usually formal or informal processes of decision-making are established.

Strong interpersonal relationships and a common purpose result in a deeper identity of a group or organisation. The identity of a community has a set of defined values, purposes and habits but is at the same time open for newcomers to contribute and become part of it.

Indicators

- *Young people have a sense of identity within the organisation.*
- *Young people feel they belong the organisation.*
- *Young people feel attached to the other group members.*
- *Young people share organisation's values.*

Actions

- *Organising team-building activities within the organisation on a regular basis;*
- *Organising celebrations after successes.*
- *Organising for young people time "outside" the organisation: integration events, e.g. going out, cinema, sport activities, trips etc.*
- *Young people build together the organisation identity and the identity changes along young people ideas.*
- *The discussions on values of organisation are held.*
- *The organisation have common symbols (e.g. logo, mascot), rituals (e.g. welcome event, organisation song or dance), common vocabulary (e.g. nick names for places, members, functions).*



Photo by: Tilen Lah

Case Study - Leaders from four organisations, Slovenia

LEADERS ARE THE LAST TO EAT

Strong communities that allow people a feeling of security, recognition and participation are not built in a day. They are usually the result of great leaders that were able to put the needs of the people in front of their own needs (leaders are the last to eat). Thus providing the space for the development of mutual respect and, later, the respect among all the members of the community. To gain some more insight into the matter of leadership and community building, we interviewed four youth workers and youth leaders with diverse experiences from different Slovenian organisations. One of them is a man, the others are women. Two of them are very experienced youth workers and trainers; one is a youth worker, working for a couple of years; while the fourth is at the beginning of her youth work path.

DEVELOPMENT OF A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

People that we talked to expressed that relationships need to be built intentionally. A relationship between a leader and his group is the key to long-term cooperation and to development of a community culture in which certain rules are observed. The role of a leader is also to support the connection among people and, from time to time, start conversations relevant to the group and support individuals trying to make a connection with others, especially when they are having a hard time.

An example can be observed when people show up at the organisation's events not because of the organisation itself but more because the leader invited them to come. Other important elements are the results of endeavours that need to be communicated clearly. It is not enough just to be together. Members of a community need to have a feeling that what they do matters to others, not only in their community but also in society in general.

THE FEELING OF COMMUNITY

A sense of community that our interviewees felt were 'feelings of connectedness'. People may fluctuate in a community but the sense of connectedness comes from a common purpose. People are motivated by slowly gaining more responsibility in line with the purpose of the community, through fluctuation in the group. When long-term members of a community leave, people gradually develop seniority and take responsibilities to support the community as a whole.

The same importance goes to the ability to share with others. People that belong to a community have mutual feeling of trust that enables open communication and provides a possibility to understand relations among people and find the appropriate role for each individual.

A community is based on trust and offers safety to an ever-changing life of an individual.

Tilen Lah, Rod Kraških J'rt (local scout group from Sežana), youth worker and a trainer

A sense of security was also one of the important elements mentioned in our conversations. It is not only in relation with the feeling of safety, that the group will catch the individual if he or she would fall. It also provides a safety net to an individual who wants to try something new, that will propel the community forward. A sense of security gives an individual a chance to explore and harvest his or her potential, which may not be possible when alone.

Interviews were conducted with:

- Nina Milenković Kikelj,
- Lucija Kovačič,
- Klavdija Štajdohar,
- Tilen Lah.



Creating friendships

An organisation offers an opportunity for meeting other young people, developing acquaintances, socialising between young people, spending time together.

In many environments, friendship is a no. 1 value among young people. Especially at a younger age, friends spend a lot of time together. At this stage, young people have a lot of opportunities to meet new friends, because they have few other obligations. Friendships make our life richer. Especially for a young person, friendship is associated with many intensive, positive and negative, feelings and emotions: dependence, love, hate, missing, closeness, security, trust, etc. All these enable young people to explore themselves within the world surrounding them and to learn to manage their relationships better.

In addition to school, places of youth work are probably the most suitable for young people to get to know their peers. Invitations from friends are probably the most important reason for young people to join youth work. Besides those, many activities in youth work, such as common adventures, challenges, international events etc. boost new friendships.

For a leader it makes sense to give young people space to interact with their peers and to pursue their interests. A leader should build friendships among young people based on their common interests and through regular contact with each other in a pleasant atmosphere. The framework for making such friendships should be part of every youth work programme, methodology and infrastructure. If this happens, there is a good chance that the young people will stay with the organisations sustainably.

Indicators

- *Young people have met new friends in the organisation.*
- *Young people spend time together offline.*
- *Young people from the organisation meet also outside the organisation.*
- *Young people communicate between each other (face to face and on social platforms).*

Actions

- *Initial encouragement for socializing.*
- *Team building activities, “adventures”, challenges together.*
- *Offering a space where young people can meet (familiar space, accessible, informal) e.g. youth centre, social room, sofa on the corridor.*
- *Usage of an online social platform for socialising between events and meetings;*
- *Organise time to talk about our member’s interests (e.g. hobby fair), so the members get chance to know each other better.*



Photo by: "Viel, halt" archive

Case study - "Viel, halt", Schwarzwald region, Germany

"Viel, halt" gives young people, with or without disabilities as well as runaway young people, a chance to participate in an intercultural and inclusive environment. The project promotes awareness of equal opportunities, diversity and builds bridges on an equal footing between young people from different living environments and the local community. The project includes a joint multi-day trip in the summer, when the group lives together in a small space for about a week. The group is self-sufficient; it caters for itself and is responsible for the cleanliness of the accommodation. During this time, various workshops with diverse topics are being held. For example: sustainable cooking, theatre and dance, upcycling, media, etc. The project has been repeated for a second year and the core group of young people remained the same. The stability of the group structure is mainly provided by the youth workers.

The focus of the project is to bring young people closer together, to get an understanding of each other's situations and to learn to work together. It shows impressively how friendships between very different people may be formed. And that is precisely the strength of youth work: to bring together young people from different paths of life and to provide them with a chance to get in touch together. But friendships sometimes cannot be formed from one day to another. And especially people from different social and physical conditions need more time to form a bond. There are several factors that can be incorporated: there may be fewer points of contact and common interests and it is harder for them to establish relationships, etc. In such cases youth workers are especially in demand. The task of the group is to form a community in which each member is treated with respect and finds his

or her place. Team-building measures are always a good remedy for this. There are many different types, games, common tasks and riddles that are involved in "Viel, halt" in different forms. In addition, other parts of the project contribute to creation of friendships. Living together as a community for a few days, where they have to cook and clean for themselves contributes a lot to this. In this intense time, young people get to know each other in different areas and sections of the day, when they would usually not come into encounter with each other. This way they get to know each other better and are more dependent on each other as they organise the daily-life of the group. This brings the group closer together. Working hard together in the workshops also encourages friendships, since they have to cooperate among each other.

"Friendship is like a green plant. When nurtured it will flourish, but if left abandoned without care it will die out."

Mojca Galun, Socialna akademija, youth worker

These and other factors help create a space for young people where friendships can develop and grow. And since this project is carried out annually, the friendships can be intensified over time.



3 Building a relationship between young people and a leader

In a youth organisation leaders play a major role. They are the reference persons to the young people and thus contribute significantly to the character of an institution. A good relationship between the group and its leaders is therefore very important. However, such a relationship does not develop from one day to the other; it takes time and the right approach. It is very important that young people feel their leaders respect them. This can be attained in different ways, such as transferring responsibility or taking up ideas of the group. In addition to respect, trust is also very important. Especially in an institution where young people spend their free time, meet with their peers and pursue their hobbies, it is important that there are adult people who show trust in them. Without the necessary confidence of the group, the leaders cannot solve any conflicts or problems within the group or even with individuals. Trust and respect are especially important to young people in order for them to stay a part of an organisation for a longer period of time. However, it is also crucial that the group is aware of different roles – leader must clearly stay the leader. A close contact between young people and the leaders is conducive, but the leader cannot lose his authority.

To some extent, good relations are also dependent on the character of a leader. If the leaders are motivated and do their work with joy, motivation and enthusiasm will, those qualities will likely spread among the group. There are really many factors that contribute to a good relationship between the young people and the leaders. But all factors need time, some more, some less. Therefore, it may make sense for a leader to accompany a group over a longer period of time so that a good relationship can develop.

Indicators

- Young people are in a close contact with a leader.
- Young people are listened to by a leader/a leader respects the ideas of young people.
- Young people feel respected by the leader.
- Leaders motivate young people.
- Young people understand the roles and responsibilities of group members and the leader.
- There is a good communication and co-operation between young people and leader.
- Leaders are dedicated to their work, enthusiastic and enjoy what they do;
- Young people trust the leader.

Actions

- Youth workers/leaders spend time with young people.
- Leaders listen to young people needs, ideas and opinion, making sure there are dedicated time to do this within the meetings or in the activity plan.
- Leaders challenge young people, but do not put too much pressure. Everyone participate as much as he/she wants and is ready to do.
- In the case of a failure the leader is able to show young people the positive aspects and learning outcomes of the experience.
- Leaders treat everyone in a fair way.
- Mentoring system.
- There is a good communication established between leader and the group.



Photo by: Mojca Galun

Case study - Alpenverein, Heidelberg, Germany

Alpenverein is one of the biggest mountain sports federations in the world. About 850 000 members and 350 sections exist only in Germany. 11 000 trainers, 23% of them children and youth under 26 are part of this organization. In Heidelberg, where the interviewee comes from, 8000 members and 8 youth groups are included in the organisation. This numbers put Alpenverein among the biggest sports clubs in Heidelberg. At the Alpenverein, the youth leaders mostly take care for a group over a period of a couple of years. This means they organize outdoor activities, excursions, organize and perform climbing courses and much more. Especially in this kind of activities, it is important that there is a strong foundation of trust within the group and between young members and their leaders. In climbing, you need to be able always to rely on your partner 100 %. The long-term commitment and the activities help make the group grow together and also to make the relationship between the young people and their leaders get closer.

Since the leaders bear a lot of responsibility, they must also prepare well. This is why the association offers further training opportunities in the field of team leadership, climbing, etc. for a leader.

What characterizes the „Alpenverein“ is the early transfer of responsibility to the young people. During outdoor activities as well as during excursions, each participant is taken into account, some more, some less, depending on their personality. Some

activities are planned by the young people on their own, and the leader only monitors. So the young people have the chance to contribute their own ideas. As a result, they feel they are being taken seriously and realize that they are respected. This also contributes significantly to a good relationship between the young people and the leaders. To give the younger participants more responsibilities is further one of the main factors in the huge sustainability of the youth in this organization. It's not only because they feel they are being taken seriously, because the youth department of the organisation is huge, the youth can also exercise influence on the work in different sections and the organization at large. Proper structure is very important for this. At an early age you can take responsibility in your group, if you want to.

“People feel if a leader lacks skills and competences or a vision where are they heading”.

Ivana Naceva, Ljubljanska mreža info točk
Ljubljana's network of info points (L'MIT), coordinator and youth worker

For example, a youth leader actively encourages the youngsters to become youth leaders as well. Thanks to the youth department, the participants can gradually take more and more responsibilities and will get acquainted with other youth members, who want to do the same. If you delegate responsibilities to the youth appropriately, they will stay and benefit the organisation in the future accordingly.

As a result, a huge feeling of community arises and this will spur a great sense of belonging.

4 Maintaining the cohesiveness of the group



The group is becoming cohesive, there are ways to deal with internal divisions.

Maintaining the cohesiveness of a group means maintaining the group as a united whole. Cohesion is usually accompanied by good atmosphere in which members feel comfortable. Such atmosphere encourages young people to stay in a group or an organization longer, thereby promoting its sustainability. But what are the foundations of cohesion and what characterizes it? In a cohesive group, no one is excluded. Everyone feels he or her is being treated fairly and with respect. Therefore, everybody feels to a part of the group. Everyone is there for each other, supporting and helping others. The level of Cohesiveness in a group is truly revealed during difficult moments and crises. How does a group handle critical moments such as setbacks, conflicts and disputes? It is important not to avoid conflicts since they are an integral part of life. Only if not handled properly and resolved, will they become a negative and destructive factor. Therefore, conflict resolution is in many cases a necessary element to achieve the cohesiveness. A group should try to discuss and resolve conflicts internally and avoid bringing the conflict outside the group. It helps if leaders are trained in assertive communication, conflict resolution methods (e. g. mediation: both peer-to-peer and within the organisations) and skills (active listening, asking the right questions, dealing with emotions, empathy, recognising roles, interests and needs) and facilitation.

There are various possibilities to act on strengthening cohesiveness. Examples include joint trips, team-building activities, communication games or get-to-know-each-other activities.

Indicators

- Each members is included in the organisation activities.
- There are no internal divisions within the organisation and “unsolved” conflicts.
- There are established modes how to mediate in cases of miscommunication.
- Leader takes care when the mediation of conflict is needed and finds solution to them with young people.

Actions

- Leader should be trained in risk management, conflict mediation.
- Leaders have support/supervision/mentorship in times of crisis.
- In the activity plan are set spaces for open group discussion, sharing of needs, problems and improvement proposals related to the organization functioning.
- Avoid isolation of selected members or subgroups within the organisation.
- In case of failure or need of support there are established ways how to communicate it and manage it.
- Transparency in communication.



Photo by: Mojca Galun

Case study - Training for trainers, Socialna akademija, Slovenia

We developed the Training for trainers programme to educate new trainers and establish long-term cooperation with them. It consisted of two 4-day modules and a mentoring process with practical experience (short sessions, workshops, etc.). As opposed to a standard training procedure, our goal was to create a team for future cooperation, so it was very important for us to work on cohesiveness of the group.

TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF (PREPARATION)

The trainers arrived almost at the same time as the participants due to traffic and organisational difficulties. Nevertheless, they decided to go for a very important decision: they took some time to prepare and to come in sync. Participants were told to help prepare everything for coffee break coffee break and have some time for themselves. After an hour, the program started and the team of trainers was able to present itself in a unified front.

TRUST

During preparation time, they communicated their needs, as well as their own strong points. This way, they were all very well aware of each other and could take after each other during the sessions. This is how they established a bond of trust between them. This was also communicated to the group of participants. And not only that,

they showed it to them. Amid the training they decided to test some methods from the Art of hosting. They mainly implemented coaching sessions for participants, who then lead activities the next day. During the sessions, the trainers used coaching techniques (asking questions and drawing from the participants) in small groups. They also provided them with some additional literature.

But the most important aspect of all: during the implementation they were holding the space. This means being present there and trusting with all your being that the group of participants will do their best. And trust, that everything that needs to happen, will.

“While planning we pay attention to the needs of participants and plan the process according to that. During the implementation we trust the process. It will take us where we want to go although at the moment it might look a bit messy. And trust young people, they know what they need!”

Alenka Oblak, self-employed trainer

IT HAPPENS WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN

After the session, trainer facilitated a reflection at which the small leaders’ group could express, what they are proud of and what they would improve the next time. Afterwards the rest of the participants shared their reflections as well. The last words were from trainers, who guided the group into realisation that everything that needed to happen did.

EXPRESS YOUR NEEDS AND RESPECT THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

Since the trainers successfully disseminated the importance of communicating your needs and paying attention to the needs of others, the group created a strong bond built on mutual trust. The trainers also gave participants time to express themselves and with this, they showed that their needs are really important to them. Because of that, the participants soon opened up expressing their needs and tried to allow space for needs of others.

TRUST IN YOURSELVES

When conflicts arose, the group leaned on the communication of needs. With initial help from the trainers, who lead the reflection about this first crisis, the participants continued to resolve the issue on their own. One of the trainers, Mojca Galun told us: “This was one of those rare trainings where each and every one of us made huge steps in their personal growth. And it all happened because of the mutual trust. #mamomito (#wehavethis)”.



5

Young person as an important, integrated part of the organisation

Every young person feels appreciated as a member and her/his participation is important for the organisation.

Young people should feel that they are important and make up an active part of an organisation. Building a friendly and collaborative environment is necessary to ensure enthusiastic and positive participation of young people. Leaders of an organisation are required to have a range of skills connected with teamwork and management. They should know how to deal with internal conflicts or misunderstandings and create a positive environment where all participants feel that they are important and needed in the organisation.

Young people should actively participate and be constantly informed about the organised events and activities, as this would be indispensable for their success. Furthermore, each member has the freedom to express his or her ideas and propose new projects. This approach supports the implementation of techniques and policies aimed at fostering frontal and personal communication between the leader and the young people, and among young people themselves. Simultaneously, it empowers active participation of each member within their working group. It is also important for leaders to show appreciation for the work of the young people and to celebrate the results.

Indicators

- Young people actively participate in planning and realization of the events in the organisation. They have an influence on the activities and programme.
- Young people can propose and develop their own ideas and activities.
- Young people feel important part of the organisation.
- Young people feel that they are valuable, appreciated, needed and noticed.
- Leaders pay attention to each member of the organisation.
- Young people know what is happening in the organisation.
- Young people are informed directly about events (personal communication, personal message/phone call).

Actions

- Youth leaders actively listen to young people's proposals and reflect on them with young people, at different stages of projects.
- Leaders appreciate and notice young people's involvement and contribution;
- Organising celebrations after successes.
- Young people know about the organisation work, the opportunities to participate and future roles they can take on.
- Appreciation of young people's contribution e.g. small, symbolic awards for their involvement (diplomas, personal gifts, public recognition).
- Next to personal communication, the organization may use selected on-line channels for a quick and direct communication with members (ex: dedicated social platform, communication application like WhatsApp or messenger, newsletter for members...).
- Regular meetings in the organisations (of the whole organisation and in subgroups).

Case study - The Social Warning, Italy

Social Warning is an association founded by 40 people. It includes educators, a digital media manager and social network followers.



Photo by: Digital Ethical Movement archive

The average age of the participants is 24 years. They do not have a fixed domicile and are primarily working online, even if their proposals often become real projects developed in specific areas of Italy. The initiator of the association is Davide Dal Maso, aged 23, a young man from Vicenza, who is passionate about digital communication and social media marketing. The purpose of Social Warning is to bring digital culture to students of schools and universities. This is done via training activities aimed at improving the society through a conscious use of the network. In Italy, activities to raise awareness of the risks and the potential of communication technologies are often drawn up by experts and authorities who lack sufficient knowledge about digital communication and the habits of young people. The innovative aspect of the Social Warning proposal is that young people themselves are authors of the training proposals to raise awareness about the potential and risks of new technologies.

Social Warning volunteers mainly meet online to discuss what training courses to implement in different areas with schools and adults. The working group meets to:

- Define different actions to be carried out.
- Propose new projects.
- Share personal experiences, both positive and negative.

These meetings involve volunteers from all over Italy. Once a training action is defined, volunteers in a specific area meet face to face to better define the operational steps. Once developed, all the details of the project are presented to the recipients

who decide whether to implement it and eventually, suggest amendments. These activities are:

- Awareness training about the potential of the web and its risks, aimed at students and parents at schools and universities.
- A set of questionnaires regarding internet routines of teenagers and adults.
- Creation of digital communication laboratories in social networks aimed at disabled children.
- Organisation of conferences and participation at events carried out by other people on the topic of social network education.

Activities can be conducted on request of schools, municipalities and associations. This request can be put forward by direct contact with one of the volunteers of the movement, through social media or through a website form.

Activities are organised by volunteers. Clients (e.g. schools, associations, municipalities, institutions) are asked to reimburse expenses for transfers, meals and stationery costs.

“The Digital Ethical Movement is a group of volunteer that sensitizes on ‘potential and risks of the web’ children and parents all around Italy. The aim is to bring the kids from a level of awareness 0, like the current one, to step 1 in order to open the doors to more structured programs and reduce phenomena such as grooming and cyberbullying ”

Davide Dal Maso, Social Warning founder

To date, 27 activities have been carried out throughout Italy. For each Italian province where Social Warning is active, a live meeting is scheduled every month and an online meeting every two weeks. These meetings may be more frequent, depending on the date of an approaching activity. Each group has a leader who’s role is to mediate between members, to limit internal conflicts or misunderstandings and create a positive environment in which all participants feel that they are important to the organisation. This mediator is selected within the working group by a democratic vote. The current mediator can be replaced on his or her request or by the group. Other means of keeping the volunteers informed are newsletters and phone calls. A strong point of the project is that the school or the institution (where the activity takes place) can issue a certificate to the trainers and this can become an integral part of their voluntary work curriculum. In addition to this, the host institution is asked to promote the activity through its press releases or through its own social media. The public exposure of the volunteers and the possibility of certifying their skills are an important recognition and motivator for the volunteer’s personal efforts and future prospects.

6

Developing competences



Organisation offers opportunity to develop competences, skills, gaining new knowledge.

Society is rapidly developing (technologically and sociologically). Since changes are fast approaching, lifelong learning has become hyper important. Young people need to adapt and are expected to have broader skill sets and to gain them faster as well. Since a formal education does not give them everything they need, non-formal education has to fill in the gaps. It is very important to identify what kind of competences and skills a young person could gain through collaboration with an organisation and how to “sell” those skills to other stakeholders such as their prospective employers.

Nearly every piece of youth work done should also have a learning dimension. We call it learning by doing. It is important for a leader to know young people and offer them opportunities that are interesting to them, a place where they can further develop skills that will help them later in life and also in their future work environment.

The idea would be to teach young people how to set their learning goals, identify their learning outcomes and know how to monitor their own progress. And in the end, also to help them to be able to describe, what they learned and which competences and skills they have.

Indicators

- Young people develop their competences and skills.
- Young people gain new skills, practical experience and new knowledge.
- Young people are trained, monitored and supported by leaders.
- Young people are aware of their progress and self-development through evaluation and self-reflection.
- Leaders support evaluation and self-reflection process.

Actions

- Tools for self-reflection and self-assessment offered for young people e.g. regular evaluation sessions with young people (face-to-face or in a group), setting goals with young people.
- Leaders are focusing on process rather than on results.
- Young people participate in workshops or training courses offered by organisation or other institutions.
- Organisations has a developed system of roles/system/levels/responsibilities and it is discussed what a young person can learn through it.
- Mentoring, coaching.
- Ideas are gathered from young people what training they would enjoy.



Photo by: Združenje slovenskih katoliških skavtinj in skavtov archive

Case stud - Združenje slovenskih katoliških skavtinj in skavtov (Slovenian catholic Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Association), Slovenia

WHAT DO WE WANT OUR FINAL PRODUCT TO LOOK LIKE?

Organisations sometimes create a clear description of envisaged results of their youth work. One model is FIDO, the concept of measuring the competences of young people leaving an organisation. Right now a new definition of the envisaged concept is under development but a presentation of the current one will allow us to explore this concept deeper to.

Združenje slovenskih katoliških skavtinj in skavtov (Slovenian catholic Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Association) is an independent, voluntary, youth, educational and open Slovenian Scout and Guide association which was established in 1990 to resume pre-Second World War Slovenian Scouting and was built up on experience and values from other Scout and Guide associations. It is one of the most active non-governmental youth organisations in Slovenia with about 4400 members, aged 6-30 years (of which 800 are volunteers, youth workers or leaders).

FIDO

Model FIDO – Fant in dekle odhoda (Boy and girl in leaving) - was developed at the end of the 1990s as competences model the organisation strives to adhere to. At that time, the organisation got so big that it needed an additional conceptual framework to be able to steer itself towards its primary goal - raising responsible adults. At the same time, many other methods were clarified and standardised to provide a more unified approach in the process of youth development.

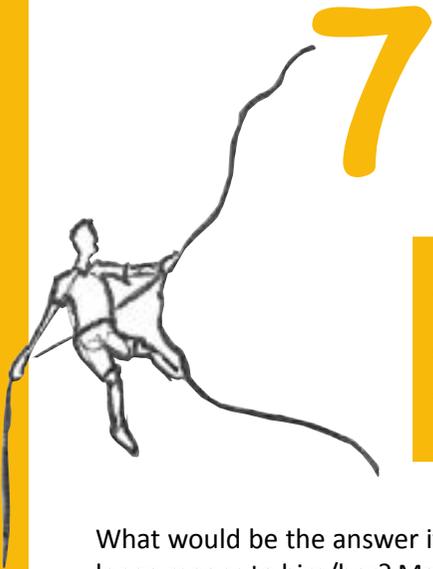
FIDO is not really a competences model but rather a description of a responsible, adult person that has some competences in line with the nine key values of the organisation. The key values were identified through organisation-wide research done in 1998. On the basis of its values the mission statements of the organisation were created. For example: “we are rearing for responsibility and initiative” or “we are rearing for religion and sense of belonging to the Church”. From each of these values and mission statements the model of a responsible person was built along the lines of: “a responsible, adult person in regard to responsibility and initiative is ... “At the same time the steps suitable for different age groups of the organisation’s membership were identified. So a clear model for different age groups (Cub Guides and Cub Scouts, Guides and Scouts and Rovers and Rangers etc.) to follow was created. Regarding the process first the ideal end result was identified and then results for the age groups were scaled down to lead to the same final result.

“Scouts gave wings to my spirit, allowed me to widen my interest and applauded it, recognized my creativity and encouraged it. They taught me about perseverance, resourcefulness, responsibility and respect. Because they trusted me and had vision, purpose and valour. With them I felt at home. And how many jobs I got because of skills I learned from scouts - basically all of them, but in particular those, that were not part of my formal education.”

Ana Grasselli,
Združenje slovenskih katoliških skavtinj in skavtov, Ljubljana, Slovenia

LIFE OF FIDO

The model was used as a tool to support the development of new approaches to work with members and was adopted as one of the core guiding principles in the culture of the organisation. The first attempts at revision of the system were made in 2006; today a thorough revision is underway. The revision is in its concluding phase but the results are not public yet. The values of FIDO live on in the everyday life of adults, former Scouts. Some of the core values became corner stones in family life where both spouses were Scouts and live on in the next generation of the organisation’s membership.



7 Bringing challenges

Young people face new challenges in the organisation, they are trying out their skills.

What would be the answer if we asked a young person, what the word challenge means to him/her? Maybe he/she would respond like this: "A challenge is something new I would like to try. I don't know in advance if I will succeed in it or not. I even don't know what will happen on the way to completion. But what I know for sure is that I really would like to try!"

A challenge is not completed easily: there is always a risk. Its completion usually demands more competencies than a challenged person has. Challenge is connected with intrinsic motivation. It puts a person out of his/her comfort zone.

Challenges are necessary for the development of young people and they cover several positive aspects. Challenges are fun and even more fun they are when they are solved. Life itself is a challenge and, as a consequence, we can say challenges are preparing young people for adulthood. Only those who face challenges will learn new skills or know their strengths and weaknesses better. The sooner they are recognised and can be worked on, the better it can be for the future of young person. That is why it makes sense to challenge young people, to encourage them and to reflect upon personal development challenges brought to them.

Indicators

- *Young people feel challenged.*
- *Young people can reveal their strong sides and develop weaker ones.*
- *Young people get to know different social realities, contexts, groups.*
- *Leadership for young people is open - if they want and when they are ready, they can become leaders.*

Actions

- *Participation in public events and competitions.*
- *Adjusted, individual challenges for each member as a self-development and motivation tool.*
- *Visits to other organisation or unknown, rarely visited places.*
- *Elements of gamification - competitions, gaining levels, lists of achievements, ranks, promotions, moving up in the hierarchy at the organisation (be careful as too much competition may be destructive).*



Photo by: Stark am Start archive

Case study - Stark am Start, Heidelberg, Germany

“Stark am Start” is a musical project, where members organise workshops in different fields and various topics. There youngsters can meet people with different backgrounds and engage in a creative way with diversity. “Stark am Start” is an ongoing project. It works with different groups during intensive workshops to create a musical and to perform it on stage. After the performance, the team starts to create a musical with a new group.

During the work phase a trained (theatrical) team of pedagogues uses elements from the theatre of the oppressed, performance art and Heidelberg competence training (HKT). That is a mental training to support personal goal achievements. During the workshops and activities, young people can discover their talents on stage in construction and technology, band, dance, vocals, percussion, hip-hop, documentation and catering. The goal is to strengthen self-esteem of each and every individual, to develop and expand their team skills and to see diversity as an opportunity. With this strengthened personality “Stark am Start” wants to prepare the new generation of young people, who is ready to react to the constantly changing demands of society of the 21st century. The project challenges the young people in different ways. The workshops themselves are demanding on the participants. Participants learn many new things, e. g. to dance, sing, prepare theatre performances, as well as about working with lights, music work and much more. The groups are always very heterogeneous. Participants are locals as well as refugees, people with immigrant backgrounds, teenagers with Down syndrome; they all participate together in the project and want to be involved. The challenges are also to include everybody and to bring a professional musical to the stage together as a team. To work as a team is very important and everyone has to deal with the huge

level of diversity within a group. Fear of standing in front of several hundred people on stage also needs overcoming and is a real challenge for many. But performing a musical is not the primary purpose. The young people should develop further and be prepared for life with the help of the project. This is where the HKT training plays an important role. Within this workshop young people should face their own personal challenges with the help of their own skills. To do this, participants must first become aware of their own skills. It is also about formulating goals that young people want to achieve and help them achieve them.

“A critical moment in communication between youth and adults which I often see is the fact that in most cases adults want something from youth. Young people understand it as insistence. They don’t want to be stressed. The secret is that we don’t want anything from young people. We talk with them in an informal way in their space and wait till they express what do they want and what they need”.

Alexander Arabkin, Mobile Youth Worker

WORKING AT EYE LEVEL

With artistic and pedagogical work, the project aims to contribute to equal opportunities and intercultural openness as well as to the development of diversity competences among young people and in their social space. The initiators implement the project in the Rhine-Neckar region and then produce a concept on the subject of diversity competences, which can be a model for further alliances, educational institutions and schools. Young people are equally involved in this project, regardless of existing self- and third-party attributions in relation to ethnicity, gender, disability, religion or sexual preference. This approach promotes understanding among them, reduces prejudices and enables an intensive exchange at eye level.

MUSICAL SELF-STAGING

Since its inception in November 2016, artists and volunteers invited young people, schools and other networks to participate actively in this diversity project. Currently the group is working on its own rendition of the musical “Streetlight”, originally performed by the international band GenRosso. The project is also about showing children and adolescents their strengths and supporting them build their self-esteem, encouraging them to actively and creatively contribute to the society. With performing the musical “Streetlight 2.0” this phase of the project will come to an end, culminating in a joint workshop.

8

Expanding responsibility



Young people have growing responsibilities within the organisation, they take more responsibility with time and can manage it.

Everybody is complaining that young people are less and less reliable but this also means they get fewer opportunities to distinguish themselves at something. Each of us have had some bad experience, when we trusted somebody too quickly and were disappointed. But unless we give our youngsters challenges and keep expanding their responsibility (within the limits of their abilities of course), they will get bored and will try to find new challenges elsewhere. When assigning responsibilities, it is very important to be acquainted with the young person and their abilities well, before entrusting him or her with a specific assignment. The trick is in finding the right balance between their abilities and the importance of the task we assign to them. Responsibilities that exceed their abilities can scar them as well, making them feel incompetent, causing a loss of confidence and poor self-esteem. However, young people should feel challenged.

The best way to increase responsibilities is by taking small steps and evaluating the process after each task is completed. Youth workers should help young people to concentrate and elaborate on their strong points and developing their deficiencies. A quality mentorship programme can benefit your organisation immensely, since this is the best way to facilitate the “growth” of your future colleagues or your successors.

Indicators

- Young people can create ideas without any barriers.
- Young people accept growing responsibilities (e.g. becoming leaders after some time, managing project, leading activity).
- Young people have an impact on the shape of their activities.

Actions

- Responsibilities (even very small ones) are given to young people as soon as possible and they rise with the experience.
- Leaders facilitate distribution of tasks and responsibilities.
- Leaders educate and prepare their successors.
- Leaders show their own experience and the way to become a youth leader.
- Organisations has a developed system of roles/system/levels/responsibilities, but it should be flexible and negotiable.
- On the meetings, young people talk about how they manage with the new responsibilities.

Case study - Nefiks Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY IS A PROCESS THAT USUALLY TAKES A COUPLE OF YEARS A YOUNG PERSON CANNOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY IN AN ORGANISATION IMMEDIATELY.

The process usually takes some time and happens gradually. Therefore some organisations create systems for acquire responsibility through different roles. When a young person gets involved in an organisation, he or she increasingly takes roles with more responsibility and therefore grows in competence.



Photo by: Nefiks Institute archive

NEFIKS INSTITUTE

The mission of Nefiks Institute in Slovenia is to support the employability of youth through recording and recognition of non-formal education. It is mostly known to young people for its so-called non-formal index. Attached to it was a booklet in which individuals recorded competences gathered through non-formal education and, in this way, enhanced their value in the job market. Today the recording of new competences is mostly done via online platform.

In the past an organisation could implement its service – recording of non-formally acquired knowledge – with far less participation from the youth. A couple of years ago Nefiks Institute decided to offer the youth to take more responsibility in the process. Through practice a ‘five level model’ of a ‘gradual taking of responsibilities’ was developed ranging from very simple tasks to very demanding.

ROLES

At Nefiks a young person usually starts as a Nefiks Tutor. The role of the tutor is to promote the importance of non-formal education among his or her peers and to support them in registering any competences acquired in a non-formal way.

Some tutors proactively engage with clubs and groups of young people that work in line within the methodologies of study circles. As they advance they can become participants of a club, where they are responsible for arranging meetings. At the

same time, they gain access to a digital base of knowledge that can support them.

Some of the participants of the clubs become club leaders. At this level they have to learn about group leadership, so they receive continuous training.

Some club leaders continue their path as project leaders. As a project leader an individual also becomes a member of the leadership team, or/and an organisation and usually receives some financial compensation for the work.

The highest level is the organisation’s strategic council. This is the body that steers the organisation.

“I dedicate most of my time to work with members of the strategic council and project leaders. Others work with people on other levels. Project leaders with club leaders, club leaders with club members ... A more demanding role works with less demanding ones.”

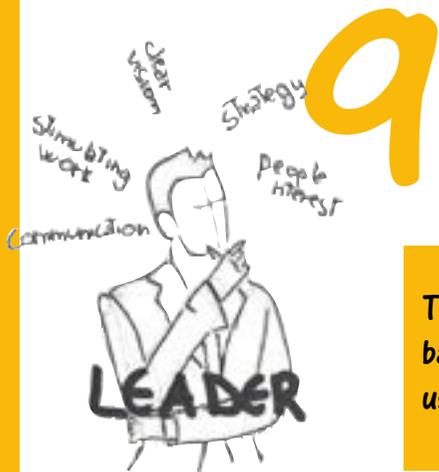
Alenka Blazinšek Domenis, Nefiks Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Alenka Blazinšek Domenis, a youth worker and the expert leader of Nefiks Institute points out: “I dedicate most of my time to working with members of the strategic council and project leaders. Others work with people on other levels. Project leaders with club leaders, club leaders with club members, etc. People with more demanding roles work with people with less demanding roles.”

The process of an individual’s growth doesn’t necessary lead through all five levels. However, Maja, the current director of the organisation (by the statute of the organisation only a young person can fill that post) and Nataša, who is now one of the members of the strategic council, experienced all of them. The whole process usually takes several years.

To address the question of what kind of structure could be seen as an obstacle, Alenka replies: “The structure was created intuitively. We never had a clear goal to develop it. But with the expansion of the organisation and with a bigger number of young people participating, you are forced to do it if you want to provide the same quality as you did before.”



Meaningful activities

The activities developed are interesting, based on their interests and needs, and useful also for the community or a cause.

Young people will be strongly attached to the organisation if its activities make sense to them, to the organisation and to the local community. Meaningful activities mean that young people can contribute to society, they feel useful, their level of social responsibility grows and they see the effect on the community. It is about generosity and feeling that they also can make a difference. And very often this works as a powerful motivator. At the same time through these activities young people get to know themselves better, their own needs, interests and values. Activities are important for their personal development and they see their own personal progress. Young people have a sense that they spend time doing something important and useful. It is also about taking on responsibilities, developing of self-esteem and a wide range of other social skills very much needed in adulthood. At the same time young people do what they want, what makes them happy and what is important for them without pressure.

Indicators

- Activities are interesting for young people.
- Activities planned are based on youth's interests and needs.
- Young people feel that their activities are useful, they serve a cause/ they know why they are doing the activities (doing something for other people/ offering something to the community).

Actions

- Young people are included in development of mission, vision and organisation's strategy.
- Youth leaders are curious about young people's interests, they talk with them about it.
- Youth leaders follow trends concerning young people and reflect how they impact organisations.
- Mission, vision, values and organisational philosophy are communicated to young people outside organisation (e.g. blogs, newsletter, videos, social media, ambassadors).
- Using the results of evaluation - planning based on the previous feedback



Photo by: Adam Białas

Case study - Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego ZHP), Poland

The Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego ZHP) is the biggest scouting organisation in Poland. Currently has more than 100,000 members and continues to grow. The main aim of the organisation is to educate young people and to support their development and shape their characters by addressing challenges. The Scout movement has developed an educational methodology and specific rules. The basic values on which this education is based are contained in Scout law, which all Scouts promise to obey. Education in ZHP is based on moral norms derived from Christian cultural and ethical values. The organisation instils attitudes of respect for every human being while recognizing the system of spiritual values as a personal matter for every member of the ZHP. ZHP has a complicated structure with numerous sub-groups and, although the mission and rules are the same in every unit, the work might differ.

The strong point of ZHP is its structure which fosters small, lasting groups and developing activities together. Each small group has a whole set of unique symbols, rituals, history and traditions that constitute the group. Having small patrols and troops has a positive influence on a group's identity and strengthening friendships. The Scouting system is leader based, but every member can be promoted. A leader follows current trends in youth work. He or she talks with young people about their interests and values. Tasks are set by a leader based on members' expectations,

capacity and needs. Young people through their involvement in activities grow up and may become leaders.

There are two complementary sides to youth work with Scouts: constantly developing Scouts' competences and service in the local community.

Scouts have to be challenged so there is always space for improvements. Challenges also influence the interests of young people. They want to be in the movement as there are always surprises waiting for them. Challenges are adjusted to individuals. They have to be difficult but at the same time achievable. They reach different skill levels, specific competences and they receive badges recognizing their achievements. Ranking system is a very powerful motivator. The Scout movement includes elements of gamification aimed at increasing the level of involvement of young people. Learning by acting makes the process enjoyable. Scouts plan their learning and chose competences that they want to focus on.

"I felt this idea of scouting, it caught me, I feel that it makes sense (...) Young people learn and act in small groups: a community, where everyone is important, everyone is heard, where they can be involved in meaningful activities. Everyone is a part of a group process and all group members achieve their goal together"

Adam Białas, Scout leader,
12th Group "Preria", Kraków-Podgórze District

At the same time the Scout movement contributes a lot to the development of the local community. ZHP members support their local communities by running numerous charity events based on their needs. According to the Guide and Scout Promise, each Scout has to "give his or her willing help to other people". This mission places more importance on their actions. Members feel that they are needed, respected and that their activities are useful and make a difference. Each Scout can propose an activity and then implement it with the whole group. Spending constructive time with the troop at meetings, camps or events is enjoyable, fun and at the same time meaningful.

The Scout movement is successful, because it combines education and constant development with a sense of responsibility for the community in which they live. Members feel that they can change and shape the world.



10

Expressing oneself

Young people have a space in the organisation to express their individuality and personality.

Each and every young person is an individual with his or her own personality, passions, interests, background, education and work experience, and should be perceived as such by other members of an organisation. Every person needs to be fully accepted and appreciated for his or her own personality and be able to enhance his or her capabilities. Young people should have the freedom to express their ideas within the organisation, pursue their passions and improve their skills. A leader has a duty to listen and to evaluate all proposals carefully. Goal is to involve all members in planning of the activities as much as possible and to allow their active participation. An open dialogue with young people promotes a positive and safe work environment for young members who have a chance to express their ideas and proposals.

To make this possible, a leader should be sensitive and recognise different talents and abilities of young people and provide opportunities to use them. He or she can foster their growth and development, by organising and entrusting them to specific tasks and activities. Keeping an open mind toward each proposal coming from young people might be challenging, however, youth workers together with young people can decide what can be implemented. For that, brainstorming can be useful, as well as, providing well-defined spaces for organising activities that can increase and encourage young people's creativity.

Indicators

- Young people have a chance to express their identity within organisation work.
- There is a space in the organisation for young people for cultivating personal interests and bringing it their own passions or hobbies/talents.
- Organisation give young people opportunity to express talents and develop them.

Actions

- Young people actively participate in planning of the events in the organisation. They have an influence on the activities and programme.
- Young people have different roles in the group and can change them.
- Leaders learn about the personal skills and passions of the participants in order to promote them and create space of expression. On this base they offer chance to express skills, ideas and creativity:
 1. active participation in designing and organizing events
 2. improve the physical space dedicated to the activity (painting the walls, graffiti, recycled furniture, drawings, stage backgrounds..)
 3. improve the on-line spaces through their skills and creativity (contribute to improve blog, Facebook page, add new social platforms...)
 4. promote and give value to their artistic and multimedia skills (video-making, music, painting t-shirts...)
- "Crazy brainstorming" - what we would like to do it, even if it seems impossible.



Photo by Theatrical Association of Conegliano archive

Case Study - Theatrical Association of Conegliano territory, Italy

The Theatrical Association of Conegliano is a cultural organisation that works with the youth, aged 7 - 18, with the objective to promote culture in the Conegliano area (Northeast Italy). It focuses especially on theatrical activity and, at the same time, tries to create a positive relationship model for the personal growth of children, teenagers and young people. The association deals with cultural and artistic promotion. The involvement of young people is a fundamental aspect in the structuring and designing of activities.

“You are very important for me, your words and your being”

Valentina Lotti, Theatrical operator

The team is comprised of young people, who at the same time have experience and competences to work with other young people. The value of active listening in supporting and expressing young people’s ideas, passions and interests is emphasised by members of the organisation. In order to ensure that the association becomes an “active listening” organisation, it must be open and available to everyone and also listen to their reactions and be aware of the limitations of these points of view. With active listening there is no place for judgment and advice. Practising active listening is not about searching for different solutions. A key criterion for the success of these kinds of activities is to always be open-minded to all the suggestions from

kids and young people. Usually educators and youth workers can recognise the value of the “active listening” method, however, they do not often use it in their practice. They are startled by the creativity of young people because it does not fit with their “mental patterns.” Keeping your mind open to all the young people’s proposals, even when they seem to be absurd, is a way to open up to new, creative and educational horizons.

One of the last plays performed by The Theatrical Association was based on some very creative proposals, which came from kids, and it obtained interesting results, both on the artistic level and on the public involvement level. If young people perceive that their work will be implemented, they will surely become closely connected with the organisation.



Having fun

Activities are attractive, young people enjoy them, there is opportunity to have joyful moments and laugh.

Fun is a big factor when we are choosing our friends, which hobbies to pursue and where we want to go for vacation. Young people are no different. They prefer to do activities that attract them and those that bring joy. With the increasing amount of organisations doing youth work, it is important that you provide young people with activities that will bring smiles to their faces and give them deeper satisfaction. It is also important that the work in your organisation will bring them joyful moments and that you foster an environment where they can laugh. Since only young people know what is attractive to them and what they will enjoy, include them when/while planning activities and making plans for the year.

You can include fun elements by inserting humour (insert some fun comparison slides, make appropriate jokes at meetings), hold different events as parties or celebrations (successes, birthdays, common holidays) or play games. This kind of 'out of "strictly business" fun' will bring you joy and will help you build stronger bonds.

Indicators

- *Young people enjoy the organisation activities.*
- *Young people are satisfied with what they are doing.*
- *Young people get a chance to vent.*
- *Activities for young people are varied.*

Actions

- *Youth workers should not be oriented only towards results - when a break is needed, take it!*
- *Leaders ask suggestion to young people about the activity they enjoy the most and involve them in planning.*
- *Leaders should allow young people some free time for exploration and joy;*
- *Explore occasions to celebrate and laugh.*



Photo by: Youth Centre Domžale archive

Case study - Youth Centre Domžale, Slovenia

HOW FUN SUPPORTS LONG TERM INVOLVEMENT?

There are many occasions in an organisation that call for celebration, fun activities with active members and sometimes an even wider group. In the next case study, we present how an organisation uses the celebration of success as an element of youth work for supporting and motivating volunteers.

Youth Centre Domžale (Center za mlade) was founded in 1998. It is a public institute, located in a town of Domžale in central Slovenia. The main aims of the Youth Centre Domžale are to provide support for youth, give them opportunities to spend their free time wisely and encourage them to get actively involved in society on a local, national and international level. The organisation achieves these goals through various activities implemented on their own or in co-operation with other local and international partners. The youth centre has 4 employees and a network of around 20 volunteers that participate in the implementation of activities.

PLAC ZA MLADE – HANG OUT FOR YOUTH

At some point, the need to create a special place where young people would have a chance to hang out, play board games, table tennis and reading was identified in Domžale. A process of consultation with the youth was launched in order to crystallise the idea and develop it for implementation. Two meetings took place to identify the place, equipment and furniture required.

Meetings were followed by four actions, where young people built the furniture themselves. The main materials used were transport pallets. There were around 15 participants and they created six couches, a small table, four movable wall panels and two bookcases. Most of the participants were already volunteers of the organisation while some joined the group just to join the fun of creating furniture out of pallets.

CELEBRATION

Before the grand opening of the Hang out for Youth, the organisation invited all the youth who had participated in creation of the furniture to meet in Hang out. Some pizza and drinks were prepared in order to celebrate this success. Young volunteers were very happy to feel the expression of gratitude from the organisation on behalf of all the youth using the place. The event had no special programme and was not facilitated. Its sole purpose was to thank the volunteers and provide the opportunity for them to chat, relax and celebrate their success.

During the first two years of its existence, the youth place was decorated with graffiti as a result of a graffiti workshop. It is a living place with the youth coming every day that also provides place for workshops with parents and youth workers.

“If he/she knows the organisation and knows that it is fun there, he/she will come.”

Andrej Pivk, NGO Skala, Ljubljana, Slovenia, youth worker

LONGER TERM RELATIONSHIP

Many of the volunteers that were involved in making the furniture are still active volunteers in the organisation. One of the volunteers that joined only for the work actions is still active in another youth organisation in the local community. She often approaches the youth centre to implement joint youth projects with both organisations.

All in all this instilled ownership of the place among the youth and the young people who were involved in the making of the furniture. Those that were invited to the celebration still maintain very good relationships with the organisation.

12

Non-formal education principles



Youth work as an educational process that happens in different settings mainly with usage of activating teaching methods and giving maximum space for participants.

Non-formal education usually takes place outside traditional educational institutions. It is characterised by the voluntary participation and it is based on learner’s needs. It usually empowers young people to address their own educational objectives through it. For that reasons, non-formal education is – much more than the formal one - relevant to young peoples’ future challenges.

According to UNESCOs four pillars of learning, young people in non-formal education learn to know, to work (career education), to be (personal identity) and to live together (community education, citizenship education, etc.).

Non-formal methodology engages many dimensions of a young person individually: different senses, different learning styles, and different cultural backgrounds. In a well-prepared learning process young person can find his/her own way to new knowledge and skills. The process that enables this is called self-directed learning.

Non-formal education is also characterised by the fact that young people can try and fail. Learning by doing is an important element. Task of youth workers is to encourage young people to go their own ways, to pursue their own ideas and to try them out. Young people can and should also be allowed to fail. Failures should be seen as a learning process. The process that the young people undergo should be more important than the result.

Indicators

- Young people are participating voluntarily in the organisation (without forcing).
- Recruitment is happening in a non-formal atmosphere - instead of interview - loose, relaxed conversation.
- Active participation of youth in all stages of project cycle.
- Young people can initiate and develop own ideas.
- Young people learn by doing.
- Young people learn also through difficulties and failures.

Actions

- People are encouraged but not forced to participate.
- Leaders work with the groups using non-formal education principles.
- Learning objectives are set by young people and leaders, according to young people’s needs and abilities.
- Process rather than product approach.
- At the beginning of the project, young people should their roles in the project.
- Young people work in small groups, so all members can express themselves.
- In case of failures, discuss it and take out learning from it – discuss it and think of emergency plans for the future.
- Leader accepts if someone does not want to participate. S/he does not force young people to participate.



Photo by: AtelierSieben archive

Case study - AtelierSieben, Schwelm, Germany

AtelierSieben is an NGO in Schwelm, Germany, for women, children and youth, especially those with migrant background. In this NGO participants produce different products like clothes, make-up, colours out of natural resources. The idea is based on a movement called “7 Gardens”, but the NGO brought in its own new and innovative ideas. The “7 Gardens” projects focus on the extraction of natural colours from plants. Because these processes are easy to learn, they are appropriate for everyone. While “7 Gardens” uses these methods in various projects in the field of sustainable development, AtelierSieben uses them and link them to other educational offerings in the organisation. The aim of the NGO is to give the participants opportunities and space to bring in their qualities, to unfold themselves, make them independent and give them future perspectives.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

They rely on “Mouth to mouth” method and believe it be a very powerful tool. In their experience if you want to make young people stay, you shouldn’t force them to do something. Everything they do should be because they want to do it. As a basis for non-formal education, they also stress that voluntary involvement is important.

OPEN TO ALL

Public access for all interested in participation is also a typical feature of non-formal education. Openness is also an important characteristic of the organization AtelierSieben. They are open to new participants but also their new ideas.

Taking in consideration the needs of learning person. Currently it has 20 volunteers and offers different courses with diverse topics. This NGO is always developing its ideas with regard to the qualities and interests of their volunteers and participants. One example: A young woman worked as a teacher in her home country and she also wanted to bring in her qualities to Germany. So the NGO started an Arabic language course open for everyone. Now more than 50 people of different ages and origin, Germans as well, joined the course and learn together.

Some of the other ideas are: production of make-up, production of clothes in an individual style, learning Arabic and teaching young people, how to produce colours out of plants. The non-formal education activities are diverse and all aim to give the participants opportunity for development.

“If you do authentic work, if you have a good structure and interesting offers, if you are close to their needs and you give them opportunities to unfold themselves, more and more people will come.”

Heike Phillip, Founder of AtelierSieben

LEARNING BY DOING

Especially when making and working with colours, there are hardly any limits for the young people. In these activities, young people can be creative and bring their own ideas to life. It’s quite simple, learning by doing. Youth workers show and explain the basics and encourage the participants to try it out themselves. Fun is an important factor, but through concrete activities young people grow and develop their self-esteem. That is why reflection and evaluation together with young people is an important part of the process.



13

Youth-to youth approach

Young people spend time with each other and during activities learn from each other.

An organisation should promote collaboration and co-operation among its own members. In this way, young people can learn innovative working methods and acquire new skills, both through informal learning and peer-to-peer methodologies. Every individual within the organisation can take an example or be taken as an example by others. An organisation should also promote personal and professional growth of each individual person and create a basis for developing mutual esteem and personal relationships among its various members. These aspects improve the quality of work.

A leader should enhance time spent on informal learning and, at the same time, organise small working groups and ensure that each individual takes part in the activities.

Young people should be entrusted with responsibilities and autonomy in the area in which they are training or mentoring (tutoring) their peers as well as others in the organisation. They might develop projects in teams with other members without direct supervision of the leader or at least with a limited supervision. The goal is to create many opportunities to learn from direct contact with other young people and increase their ability to work in a team (team work skills), their autonomy and accountability.

Indicators

- Young people are learning from each other.
- Young people work in small group of peers.
- Young people observe and take examples from their peers.

Actions

- Young people are present in all divisions of the organisation.
- Leaders promote peer mentoring, cooperation and mutual help among young people.
- Young people announce on the table (or website) on their skills and knowledge and other members can ask them for support if needed.
- Some activities are done in small subgroups without direct supervision of leaders.

Case study – Blog fuori dal Comune, Italy

The project “Blog Fuori dal Comune” was developed during the partnership between the Magrini Marchetti High School and the network “B*sogno d’esserci”, in the past year, the initiative also involved students from other schools. The aim is to use peer education to stimulate young students to reflect about being active citizens and about the future of their own area of interest. The project is open to young people, aged 14-19. To achieve these objectives, the project involves creation of a “Multimedia Team”, with the support of an educator. “Multimedia Team” produces and publishes video interviews, reports or other multimedia products using the Internet and Social Networks.



Photo by: Fuori dal Comune archive

This methodology aims at building critical awareness and thinking. The educator coordinates and directs the work, and at the same time, allows a high degree of freedom to the young people. There are blog groups responsible for uploading content on the website. The projects always come from proposals of the young members running the blog. Each idea that is being implemented is chosen after a careful evaluation and discussion with its proponent. Every blog contributor usually works within a small group of peers, writes articles, or makes videos or graphic content.

The areas of work are: Environment, Territory, Solidarity, Youth Volunteering, Refugees' Reception, Management of Public Goods, Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality.

The youth group meets during the school year. Since the first recruitment phase there is an annual campaign to involve new youngsters. Many youngsters stay for the whole school year and even continue in the following year, which makes groups sustainable. Some students stay even for a period of five years (the entire duration of high school). Every year, new members join the blog. At the beginning of the year, leaders (oldest blog members) organise some presentations in high schools to tell new students about the project and encourage recruitment. The oldest blog members lead the youngest, but in general the work environment is very collaborative and equal.

An active role of the “veterans” is important during the presentation. The participants from previous years can share their experience and motivation with their peers, especially first and second grade students. Most of the youngsters who joined the group did so following a suggestion from a friend. Organisation of public events or production of multimedia output helps to raise curiosity and interest about the group among peers.

The project ensures the participation and involvement of its members by creating an environment where everyone feels important and respected. Listening to students' ideas and giving value to them during activities is an inseparable part of this process. For which the following policies are implemented:

1. Listening to participants' interests, ideas and developing them. Sometimes it requires changing planned activities. Giving a chance to young people to express themselves without judgment.
2. Stimulating the discussions, inspiring participants by showing them examples of projects, videos, articles.
3. Challenging them by joining school/youth competitions in the field of media production.
4. Challenging them by setting goals and deadlines is very useful for motivation and keeping them focused.
5. Organising public events, where they have to take care of organisation and also public speaking. These are very good exercises that open them to new experiences, give them satisfaction and contribute to team building.
6. Periodically organising team building activities.

“Seeing the boys working for the improvement of the social context, after having transmitted the necessary skills with the speed of contagion, is truly “out of the ordinary”

Davide Sciacchitano, Blog Coordinator

An important part of the blog's work is the production of videos. Some of them had big echoes on social networks and won prizes in local competitions and raised a lot of attention in their school and local community. The actions mentioned helped in supporting all the other strategies and to attract new youngsters to search for information and join the group. Events and media production are created with active involvement of youth and are mainly addressed to their peers. The activity gradually gained more visibility and reputation through events, media production and awards. The meetings of the blog members allow young people, through discussion and group work with their peers, to acquire digital skills and skills that will be useful when entering the world of work.

14 Assuring safe environment



Young people feel comfortable in the organisation, in both physical and mental aspects.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, safety is the second most important stage after basic needs, like water, etc. Fostering a learning environment requires meeting all the basic needs of the youth. A safe environment consists of both: physical safety and mental health.

A physically safe environment is described as healthy (clean water, sanitation, disease free, injury prevention) and free of threats (self-destructiveness, dangerous risk-taking, substance abuse or physical hazards). Mental health emphasises on emotional well-being, the capacity to live a full and creative life and flexibility to deal with life's inevitable challenges.

An organisation should encourage a nice, open atmosphere, which allows for structure with clear rules to coexist with young people's ability to feel comfortable. You can achieve it with support, care, good health practices, non-coercive forms of persuasion, assertiveness and non-violent behaviour. Leaders should be qualified and act professionally, treat young people with respect and help them in their endeavours. We are all still developing emotionally and mentally. And we have to help each other learn, how to correct non-productive behavioural patterns.

In order to assure safety in our environment, it is suggested to make an effort to predict possible outcomes in advance, to implement preventive actions and also to know how to act if something does happen. It is crucial to act in a timely and appropriate manner if something happens.

Indicators

- Young people feel safe in the organisation.
- Young people are not stressed in the organisation: they feel comfortable there, although sometimes they are challenged.
- Young people can express their opinions and feelings.
- There is nice, friendly and open atmosphere in the organisation.

Actions

- Forming and respecting an agreement by all members of the group and related consequences of violating the agreement.
- Leaders should give responsibilities that are challenging but manageable;
- There are clear rules at the organisation - e.g. what to do in case of violence of conflict.
- Young people have mentors to whom they can talk to when they are facing difficulties/need it.
- No cases of violence or bullying are silenced, leaders take responsibility to deal with them.
- No cases of violence or bullying are silenced, leaders take responsibility to deal

Case study - Zavod Bob, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Zavod Bob is an NGO based in Ljubljana. It is renowned for its street youth work with 100 volunteers, 16 employees and around 50 professionals. This organisation believes that in terms of assuring a safe environment everything comes down to youth workers. They operate a daily youth club that specialises in street youth work.



Photo by: Zavod Bob archive

They firmly believe in democratic decision making (the whole team, even the volunteers, makes decision for the whole organisation) and are working closely with Ljubljana's municipality in preparing Ljubljana's youth strategy. Recently, they have also been working on starting a digital youth centre.

When Zavod Bob first began with street youth work, they picked the most troublesome location (Ljubljana's Plaža, a popular spot for the youth to get drunk on Friday evenings), they came up with a way of attracting attention of the youth (free pancakes) and the action began. First time they didn't think about notifying the authorities and when the local constabulary noticed their activity - the commotion in their eyes - they cleared the street.

In the years of practice the staff at Zavod Bob learned two important lessons about establishing a safe environment:

- A safe environment is based on a clear structure; where everything works within an agreed structure and everybody respects it. Each violation of the agreement results in an immediate investigation.
- Even the safest environment could be dangerous, if there is no person who is at peace with himself or herself, with his or her work, his or her team and who would transmit that peace to a wider group.

Their further recommendations include safety on both mental health and physical safety:

LET THE PROCESS FLOW

Safety should be established in a way that doesn't involve stressing about it. A working team predicts all potential situations in advance, so they can always talk about the future and not about the past. And when they stop the process, it's time for reflection. Until the process is running, do not interrupt it. Matjaž views safety depends on ensuring the process is running smoothly (without outside influences and with leadership).

SUPERVISION

If the Staff experiences a fall-out in a group, they provide supervision which means making changes to the environment. Mentors inform participants at the beginning of any project that an outside supervisor is available to them, and can use his/hers assistance during the planning phase. If it's a long term activity, they get to know the supervisor (for instance, as a visitor to the event). This is a way out even from the most stressful situations.

"All this precaution is necessary, so we don't need to speak about safety with the youth at the events. As one of my colleagues said: If you don't encourage thinking about something that is forbidden, you avoid major obstacles."

Matjaž Vodeb, Director of Zavod Bob

UPDATE THE AUTHORITIES

Street activities require co-operation with police and local constabularies, so they know in advance where the activities will take place. In subsequent years after the "clearing of the street" incident, policemen in plain clothes were present at all their activities, but now they just need to be ready on call. Prior to events groups of volunteers visit the local police station, where they learn that the policemen are there to help them.

"CRISISER": OUTSIDE OBSERVER

They invented a special role of a "crisiser", one of the team members whose job is to watch the group and observe how they function. He or she has the power to stop an activity at any given time. If he/she thinks it is time to stop, he/she contacts the group that is implementing the activity and disperses or goes elsewhere. If necessary, their next step is to inform the authorities.



**PUTTING YOUTH
WORK GROWTH
CYCLE INTO PRACTICE**

The Youth Work Growth Cycle is presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, a system of 20 processes that can help you raise the quality of your work in groups to a higher level. In this chapter, however, we will be elaborating on how to put this system into practice. The chapter is intended primarily for coaches, trainers and mentors, yet it will not hurt if youth leaders, youth workers and others interested go through it. You will learn how to help leaders work better with young people.

When we say better, we are talking about the quality of youth work. The word quality, for many people does not seem to fall into the vocabulary of youth work, yet it essentially has a very simple meaning. Let us take a look at that.

Quality

How can we judge whether one form of youth work is better than the other?

Let us start with a broader question: how do we know that one thing is better than the other? For example: how do we know that one car is better than the other? By price? Terminal velocity? Colour? Manufacture date?



Which of the cars above, would you choose? Sports car, family car or SUV (sport utility vehicle)? Different people would probably decide differently, each responding according to their own needs. Anyone who has a family with several children will find it difficult with a sports car, it is more important to that person to have a higher number of seats, than what the terminal velocity is. Anyone interested in sports will take the size of the luggage compartment into consideration. These reasoning shows us the answer to the question; what constitutes quality. The quality of a certain thing depends on the purpose for which it is being used!

QUALITY DEPENDS ON THE PURPOSE

Indicators are the parameters that we evaluate in the quality of a certain thing or process. Indicators for a car quality assessment can be; terminal velocity, number of seats, the size of the luggage compartment and many others. However the indicators are chosen by each user individually, depending on the purpose for choosing a car. The same is true for quality of youth work. In order to improve work with groups, we need to know the purpose of our work and choose the appropriate indicators.

ONCE WE KNOW OUR PURPOSE, WE CHOOSE THE INDICATORS

Indicators in youth work can be qualitative (descriptive) or quantitative (numerical). A qualitative indicator is, for example, a young person's motivation to work on a project. This is difficult to express with numbers, only on a scale, if we survey the participant. Quantitative indicators, for example, are the number of meetings, the number of participants in each meeting, the amount of funds collected, etc.

It makes sense to use both types of indicators, qualitative and quantitative, when working on improving the quality of youth work. Do not specify too many – rather choose less and put more focus into those!

WHEN THINKING ABOUT IMPROVING THE QUALITY IN YOUTH WORK, SET BOTH QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE INDICATORS

Indicators need to be measured and monitored. Various quality tools can be used in this process. Examples of such tools are; questionnaires, surveys, web applications, logs, checklists of what needs to be done, etc. Many such tools have already been developed in youth work and you can even develop your own, through your own experience.

There. That was about quality. Let us summarize; quality in youth work, and in general, consists of the following steps:

- Define the purpose of youth work
- In accordance with your purpose, determine the indicators that you consider relevant and will observe
- Develop or use a tool for measuring indicators
- Perform actions to improve your indicators.

Sounds hard? An experienced mentor might help you!

Mentoring

In the ABC of Youth Work project, we believe that mentoring is one of the most effective forms of support for group leaders and organisations for upgrading their work. Therefore, we devote the bulk of this chapter to the presentation of a mentoring process that can help you.

The purpose of this mentoring scheme is to increase the quality of youth work done in organisations that work with young people in the area of processes of engagement and sustainability in groups. The key reference point of this mentoring process is the Youth Work Growth Circle that was presented in chapters 3, 4 and 5 and that provides the theoretical model for the development of groups and organisations. At the same time, it is worth noticing that through the mentoring process the capacities of managers are also developed.



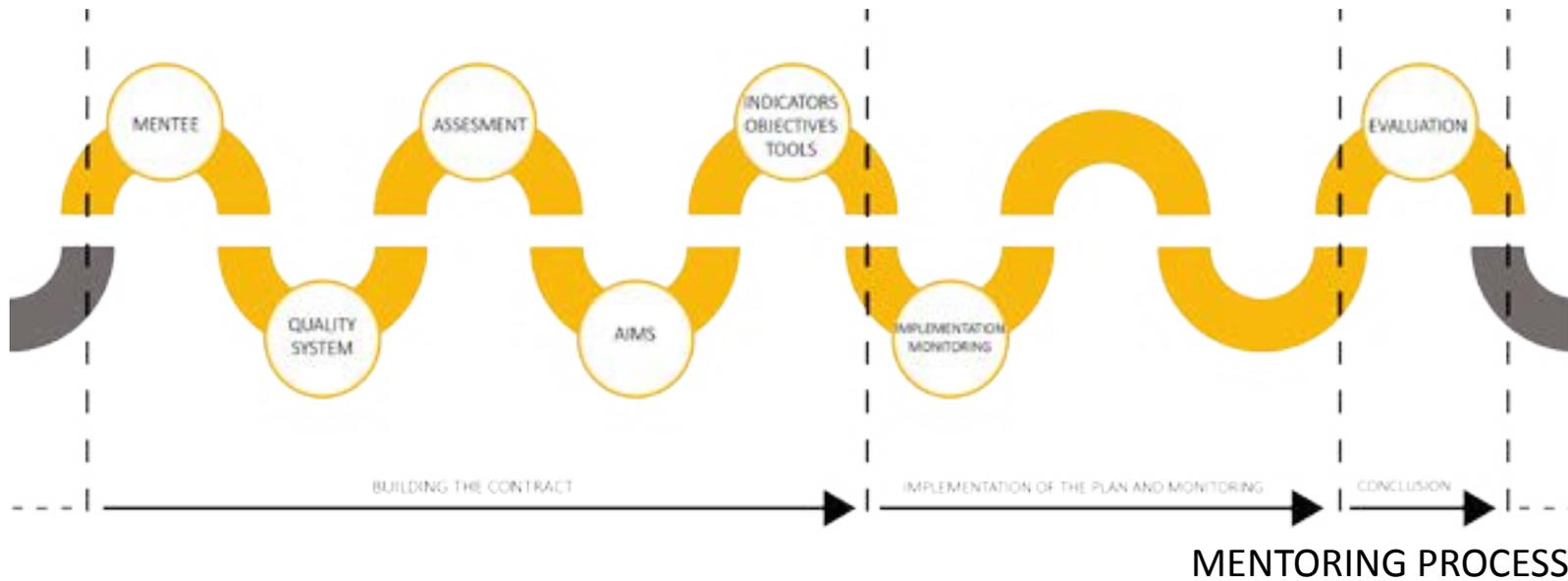
Implementing the mentoring scheme

THE PROCESS OF OUTER BOUNDARIES

The mentoring process consists of three distinct phases. The first phase is building a contract between mentee and mentor. After getting to know each other, exploring the process steps and agreement on the process, the two partners define the envisaged results of the process and define the indicators of changes. The second phase is the implementation of the plan and monitoring of results. The third phase is the conclusion of the mentoring process in which evaluation of the whole process should take place and concrete steps for maintaining the developed qualities should be defined.

The first phase usually takes between 3 and 5 meetings while the second phase takes longer period of time decided upon by both partners of the process at the initial stage. The third phase again takes 2 to 4 meetings for reflection and preparation of future steps.

The length and the interval of the meetings should be agreed upon in advance. The usual length of meetings is between 45 minutes and one and a half hours while the interval depends on the needs of mentee and is usually set between 1 and 6 weeks. Having in mind the work rhythm of the youth organisations the interval is often set to 3 or 4 weeks.



As you can see, the initial and the concluding phase take a rather large amount of time. The logic of economy would therefore suggest that the mentoring processes demand quite a substantial investment of time and energy from both sides, which leads us in the direction of longer cooperation. At the same time, it is worth noticing that the transfer of values and attitudes from mentor to mentee take some

time (in comparison to the transfer of knowledge and skills) and can only happen in long-term relationships.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mentoring process requires intense concentration and often leads to exploring of vulnerabilities. Therefore, the environment needs to support both the mentee and the mentor. Find a relaxed environment where you and your mentee will feel comfortable and will not be disturbed during your mentoring sessions. Not only in the sense of physical presence of people, but also elimination of disturbances caused by digital communication devices.

It is very important that your mentee feels that he or she can trust you. Only with trust will you really get to know all the information about the organisation, the challenges faced and the mentee's weaker spots and vulnerabilities.

THE FINE LINE BETWEEN GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT



GUIDANCE VS. SUPPORT

The mentoring approach always reflects the needs of mentees. Some mentees might wish for more guidance in a more direct approach filled with tips and tricks while others might need more non-direct support in order to grow from their own reflected experience. Finding the right balance depends not only on the learning style of the mentee and the capacities of the mentor but also on the topic we are dealing with. While mentees might just need some space to reflect on certain issues, more guidance might be needed with other topics.

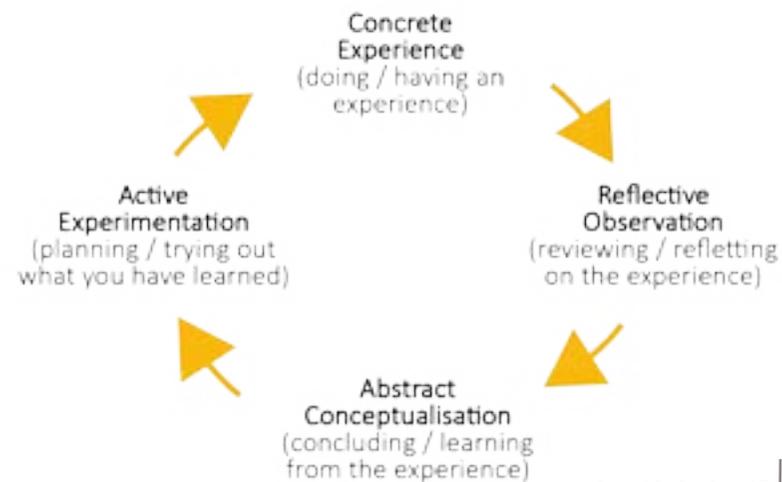
Theoretical background

Before you start with your mentoring process, we would like you to get familiar with two theories that can help you understand the process of our preferred learning style model. This will help you understand the basics of experimental learning and a simple method for setting goals and solving problems that will help you facilitate the learning process of your mentee.

THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE BY KOLB

“Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience”

Kolb, 1984, p. 38



KOLB'S CYCLE¹⁹

¹⁹ Kolb D. A., 1984. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html>

Kolb's experiential learning style theory is represented in four stages of learning:

1. CONCRETE EXPERIENCE

At this stage you encourage your mentee to encounter a new experience, or reinterpret an existing one.

2. REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

Mentee has to observe the experience and reflect on it. Pay attention to differences between any inconsistencies in his or her experiences and understanding.

3. ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALISATION

Reflection should lead your mentee to new ideas or modification of their existing abstract concept.

In this phase the mentee forms new abstract concepts (analysis) and generalisations (conclusions).

4. ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION

In the fourth stage it is time for mentee's conclusions to be implemented in the organisation and observe the result. The mentee has a chance to test his or her hypothesis in future situations which lead to new experiences.

Kolb sees learning as an integrated process. Each stage leads and supports the next. So it's possible to enter the cycle at any stage and follow its logical sequence. Usually entering a phase depends on your learning style.

However, keep in mind that effective learning occurs only when you are able to implement all four stages of the cycle. And not one stage is effective on its own.

Therefore, your role as a mentor is to help your mentee to go through the whole cycle.²⁰

GROW MODEL

Another interesting theory we would like you to implement is GROW model that originates in corporate coaching. Since many claim authorship, there are many different suitable versions of this model.

G Help your mentee think about the future and define "The Goal" – the end point he or she wants to reach in youth organisation. Introduce him or her to the S.M.A.R.T goal setting model and defining the goal, so it will be very clear if they achieved it at the end.

R Talk to the mentee so you both have a good picture of what is "Current Reality": what are the issues, the challenges and how far from achieving their goal are they.

O In this part the mentee has to figure out what are the possible ways from "Current Reality" to reaching "The Goal". Some versions of the approach also propose to identify all the Obstacles and then find ways of dealing with them in order to make progress.

W After identifying all the Options the mentee has to convert them into action steps, which lead to their goal. That's why this step is called the "Way Forward".

²⁰ You can find more about Kolb's cycle and his learning theory at: <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/styles/kolb.html>

The following table contains some sample questions that could support you in development of each of the four steps.

GOAL	<p>What do you want? What will that get you? What is exciting about this goal? How will you measure the results? What does success look like? What's the big picture?</p>
REALITY	<p>How are things going right now? How do you feel? What values and needs are most important? What is the biggest concern? What resources are available? What barriers do you face? What does the resistance really mean?</p>
OPTIONS	<p>What are some of the way you approach this issue? Would you like to brainstorm some options? In your wildest dreams, what strategies would you choose? If you had more money, time or authority, what would you do? What if you could start all over? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of each option?</p>
WAY FORWARD	<p>Which option is your best choice? When will you get started? What's the first step? What else do you need to do? On the scale of 1-10, how committed are you to this plan? What would take you to a ten? What accountability structures would support you? How will you celebrated success?</p>

GROWTH MODEL²¹

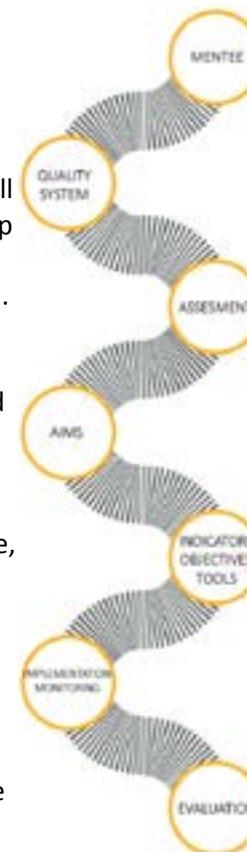
You can find more about GROW model at: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_89.htm

Process steps

In this part we will get to know the phases we see as steps in the mentoring process. Each step consists of a short description that will tell you more about the process objectives, to help you keep in mind what is important, set of recommended methods and suggested duration.

Please keep in mind that each individual person and each mentoring process is unique and that all the “recipes” are just recommendations. Listen to your mentee. Active listening* is one of the most important mentoring skills. Every mentee has his or her own learning style, set of experiences and unique knowledge. So the pace of moving from one step to another can vary.

Your task is to be open, flexible and able to adjust the process to the needs of the mentee, while following the envisaged steps of the process.



1. MENTEE - GETTING TO KNOW THE MANAGER AND HIS/HER YOUTH ORGANISATION

In order to be able to create a working contract, both sides need to get to know each other. As a mentor you need to understand clearly the person you will support. Therefore, you need to take your time to get to know the manager:

- What is this person like;
- What is important to this person;

GROW MODEL

²¹ Lasley, Kellogg, Michaels, Brown, 2017.

<https://trans4mind.com/coun-terpoint/index-transformation/transformation18.shtml>

- Person's leadership style;
- Goals and aspirations, etc.

You also need to get to know the organisation:

- What is the structure of the organisation;
- who is involved in it (how many employed, volunteers...statistical data);
- What kind of events do they do;
- Who is their target group;
- What are their vision, goals, passions;
- How do they see success;
- What is important to them;
- What are they good at;
- What are their dreams, etc.
- You also need to think about the mentoring process. Will the manager (mentee) be the only one to be mentored or does he or she need to involve other members of organisation as well? Keep in mind that answers you obtain at this stage will help prepare your assessment.

Objective:

- Getting to know the manager (your mentee) and the organisation;
- Create safe confidential environment.

Methods:

- Personality or leadership style tests;
- Conversation;
- Use non-structured materials to support the conversations;
- Interview;
- Research the organisation via other means (annual reports, web communication channels), etc.

Duration: 30 min – 1 h



2. INTRODUCTION OF THE YOUTH WORK GROWTH CYCLE

Introduce the basic assumptions of Youth Work Growth Cycle: Group processes are one of

the most important elements in youth work. To understand what is going on in the group, a quality research was made.

It served as an input to the Quality system named Youth Work Growth Cycle which is divided into two major parts: engagement and sustainability. Both parts outline a total of 20 processes that seem to be most important when talking about raising quality of youth work in groups.

Objective:

- The mentee should understand groups as a foundation for youth work in his/her organisation and get to know the processes in youth groups, which influence the functioning of any youth organisation.

Methods:

- Presentation;
- Conversation, etc.

Duration: 30 min



3. ASSESSMENT OF PROCESSES IN ORGANISATION

After presenting the processes defined in Quality system framework (first column of the spread sheet) it is time for an assessment of organisation in line with the proposed structure. Through dialogue you combine mentee's self-assessment and mentor's assessment. The method of dialogue is very important for this step; it provides additional insights to both sides. Draw from the understanding of your mentee and help him or her to assess the organisation's performance in each of the defined processes. Listen actively and keep asking additional questions until you get to the core of the matter. After careful assessment of the current reality pick three processes which, if improved, will benefit the organisation the most.

Objective:

- Assess the organisation's strengths and weaknesses through dialogue between manager and mentor;
- Select three processes that are most crucial for improvement.

- Active listening ²²;
- Recording of important information (in text, images, quotes, etc.)
- Graphic facilitation, etc.

Duration: 1 h 30 min



4. DEFINING AIMS

In this phase you will focus on 3 processes that you selected. The first part of this phase is dedicated to in-depth understanding of the situation. Go over each one of the identified processes with a fine-tooth comb to truly grasp the current state. We suggest you use analysis tools (like SWOT) to support your effort.

When the situation is clearly presented, it is time to dream of a better organisation. Be bold but realistic. Ask yourself what needs to change within the organisation in order to fulfil its mission better. Start from the strong points and think about things you already do very well. What are the factors that contribute to success in these areas? Also think about the weak points, the things that really bother you in the organisation and map them out. Trying to find “who’s guilty” is counterproductive in this phase. We need to focus on the state of organisation, not contributions and responsibility of individuals.

When the picture of the future organisation is clear to everyone involved, envision the aims that will guide the organisation on the path of improvement of quality for each process. The aims should be interpreted in the same way by both, the mentee and the mentor and have inner consistency - clear relation of each aim to other aims.

Objective:

- Thoroughly analyse the three selected processes in context of vision and define at least one aim for improvement for each process.

Methods:

- Mapping the state of affairs (in text, graphic, etc.),
- SWOT analysis,
- Envisioning methods, etc.

Duration: 1 h 30 min



5. INDICATORS, ACTIONS AND TOOLS

The operationalisation of the aims happens through the definition of indicators, objectives and tools for action.

Indicators are the points of reference in relation to which reality can be compared, analysed and assessed. In this way indicators define what are the crucial work processes and outcomes that help develop quality. Indicators can be quantitative (number of young people, time spent at an activity, etc.) or qualitative (the competences young person develops, the principles of non-formal education are met, etc.).

For each of the aims define a couple of indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, that will provide information about the necessary changes within the organisation towards the aim. The indicator needs to present the current state of affairs but also present the changes that are needed.

If the aim of improvement of quality is defined like: “Improve the organisation’s public image” the indicators could be: “Young people hear about the organisation from their friends.” or “Organisation is perceived as open for new members.” Both of these indicators could be measured via tools and the changes in information could send signals about the organisation’s image. For more ideas and inspiration search through the spreadsheet of the document The Youth Work Growth Circle.

Actions are measures we are going to take in order to improve data about indicators and move towards the defined objectives. Actions are always defined directly from the aim and in line with the objectives we want to achieve.

²²To learn more about it visit: <https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm>

Concrete action to reach more young people through their peers (“Young people hear about the organisation from their friends.”) could be encouraging our members to include conversations about the organisation into their communication agenda.

Tools are concrete actions, objects, short elements of process that help us record and/or change data about indicators.

Concrete tools to put discussion about the organisation on the agenda of the youth could be t-shirts or badges young members of our organisations wear. Another concrete tool could be a competition for best photo in the local community with motivating prizes in which youth is invited to participate. Concrete tool to record and collect data is the question “Where did you get the information about our organisation?” in the first discussion with a young person that shows up in our organisations for the first time. Some other examples could be; a poll on the website of the organisation or weekly supervised meeting of youth workers where information about the involvement of youth is collected.

The process in this phase will most likely start with the explanation of the concepts of indicators, actions and tools. Take some time for that and use practical examples!

After explaining the concepts, the definition of indicators will follow. Multiple indicators should be defined for each of the aims but not too many, and they should be both qualitative and quantitative whenever possible. All in all, they should provide a sense of security to the mentee and the feeling that change can be achieved.

The current state of indicators should be defined and the goals we want to achieve identified. Quantitative goals should be defined by the SMART method, so not only change but also time span for change is determined. When the goals are defined actions and tools are developed. Actions need to clearly lead towards the de-

veloped goals while tools need to support the actions. The other element of tool development is tools to monitor the data about the indicators. We should have at least one tool for each indicator to measure data. This will result in change over time. Tools should be individualised for a specific case so we cannot expect them to be ready-made, waiting in a publication. But some of the tool examples are presented in the Quality Youth Work handbook ²³. When indicators, actions and tools are developed, we proceed with implementation.

Objective:

- Define indicators for every process, define desired state of indicators and select tools you will use to measure it.

Methods:

- Logical framework and other action planning tools, etc.

Duration: 2 h - 4 h



6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

In this phase the manager (mentee) is trying to implement the planned activities to improve the quality of youth work. This means cooperation with other stakeholders of the youth organisation, management, redefining policies of organisation, etc.

This is the most delicate state, since you have to find a way to keep in contact and monitor the progress without pressing the person too much. So it is best to agree on the method of communication and it is wise to set dates of meetings in advance (example: each first Thursday in a month at 15h).

Bear in mind that the mentoring process takes some time and that not all the factors that influence it are under your control. The mentee is a person with his or her changing motivation, personal life (and challenges that arise from diverse situations they face).

²³ Available at:
<http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/quality->

At the same time, we must not forget that organisations are living systems, where leading figures and leadership systems change, organisations change the direction of their work and that everyday life situations bring challenges that need to be addressed as a priority. When these things happen they need to be addressed as a priority in the mentoring process too and resolved immediately. The main prevention measure is a good relationship and open communication in all the phases, this strengthens the commitment of the leadership to the mentoring process and development of quality.

Objectives:

- The mentee is actively implementing the plan designed in the mentoring process and trying to improve the quality and his progress to the mentor at least once a month.

Methods:

- Keep in contact (phone, emails, etc.);
- Prepare a way to monitor progress (a spreadsheet, a chart, etc.);
- Strive to motivate the mentee to keep you updated (suggestion: monitoring apps).

Duration: at least 30 min each month



7. EVALUATION

The last phase of the process is dedicated to evaluation of the progress and the process itself. For the mentee the crucial information in this phase is evaluation of the changes that happened in the organisation and on the personal level to him or her. For the mentor the crucial information is feedback on the process and the methods used. Ask the manager to reflect on the whole mentoring process and to give you feedback about the process itself, methods used and quality system implemented. How can we improve the process to make it more useful and easier for the mentee? What were the hardest parts of the process? How could we support the process better? Is there any information that would make the process easier, if presented earlier?

Objectives:

- Mentee shares his experience and gives you concrete ideas to improve the mentoring process and quality scheme and shares one example of good practice with you.

Methods:

- Different evaluation methods;
- Conversation;
- Online questionnaire after a week or two.

Duration: 30 – 45 min

Let's go!

We hope that the presented tool serves you well in supporting managers in youth organisations to achieve even better results in their work and with the whole organisation. The outlined process is the structure that can guide you, but still, have in mind that one of the most important elements of successful mentorship is the relationship between mentee and mentor.

The mentor is a person accompanying the mentee on a long road. The road is not always easy but it brings changes. Often a lot of patience is needed until the first results but this should not discourage us.

We wish you courageous steps in mentorship and a lot of strength to support people you meet on your way.



**CONCLUSIONS AND
REFLECTIONS ON YOUTH
WORK DEVELOPMENT**

As members of the project team, we are grateful for the path that ABC of Youth Work project took us on and are reminiscing about the learning experiences that the project has given us and those involved in one way or another. At the end of the manual we would like to share part of these experiences in the form of conclusions and reflections.

We learned through all different steps of the project: reading of existing materials, thinking about the future of youth work, conducting interviews and focus groups, observing practice of many organisations, mutual conversations, learning about the situation in different countries... We also gained experiences through the development of a quality system, writing this manual, the implementation of trainings and mentoring, presentation of project results at various events across Europe and at the closing conference in March 2018 in Ljubljana.

Conclusions and reflections refer to: the areas of youth work; quality in youth work; work with marginal groups and young people with fewer opportunities; support of youth work. Although it is sometimes impossible to place an individual conclusion strictly in one single field, it is nevertheless listed and classified here, for easier systematization.

Youth work

- Most of youth work takes place in groups. Building bonds with other young people, spending time together and creating community are important aspects stressed by young people. Youth groups are one of the basic elements of youth work, that needs a lot of attention.
- The competences of young people for group work, building relationships and cohabitation in the group (hereinafter: interpersonal skills) are strongly influenced by development of new means of communication. Youth work can contribute greatly to the development of interpersonal skills of an individual.

- Most young people in Europe come into contact with digital communication tools very early, use it very often and regularly. Thus new patterns of conversation, socializing and creating relationships are being established. New behaviours bring new opportunities, as well as new risks. Many opportunities, as well as many risks, remain little explored at the time of writing this publication.
- It is necessary for youth work to constantly reflect on which interpersonal skills young people bring added value to the society and where they have some deficit and need additional support.
- In some settings (e. g. in some EU countries) youth work is largely subject to different quantitative indicators, which often do not reflect the basic principles of youth work. For example, too much emphasis on monitoring only the number of participants involved, the number of public events or the number of jobs achieved, can seriously undermine the functioning of durable groups as a fundamental element of youth work.
- Due to optimization of some specific indicators, requested by donors (for example reaching desired number of participants or number of events) in some settings, youth work is increasingly changing into an instant activity - short-term events with poor longer process or learning pathways behind). In such environments, implementation of activity often becomes more important than personal development of young people.
- Durable and trustworthy interpersonal relationships are one of the strongest means of personal growth of young people in youth work.

Digital youth work

- Youth work needs research outcomes for better understanding of what is going on in the lives of young people and how the internet impacts on their interactions, behaviour, health or well-being. This knowledge should come from specialists, such as psychologists, pedagogues and sociologists who study the impacts of new technologies. This would also allow adequate solutions to be based on the research evidence.
- It is not just youth workers who are critical towards internet usage, but young people see well the dark sides of their intensive digital participation – often they would choose face-to-face contacts over shallow internet interactions. internet usage, but young people see well the dark sides of their intensive digital participation – often they would choose face-to-face contacts over shallow internet interactions.
- More learning dialogue on internet tools between youth workers and young people are needed. The young participants do not demand youth leaders to be super fluent in digital technologies, but as having some basic skills and an open mind towards such tools. Youth workers can learn from young people about their realities by trying to explore the communication channels they are using. This could be done together, allowing young people to become educators, and co- operating together on how these could be used for the benefit of the whole organisation.
- Youth workers also voiced worries about the disattachment of young people from reality. This is, as such, a very good topic to explore with young people. Why not face directly the challenges that stem from extensive use of smartphones in youth work activities? This could give youth work many new topics for activities, projects and debates. Exploring the unknown is yet an aim in youth work.

Quality of youth work

- In discussing the quality of youth work, it is essential to include discussions on the quality of young people’s engagement in the group and on the sustainability of active groups operating in youth work.
- Indicators related to the quality of youth work should focus on the following areas as well: The public image of an organisation, its ability to drag into new people;
 - The capacity of an organisation to reach-out for young people
 - Developing a sense of belonging of young people to the group/organisation;
 - Facilitating the personal growth of young people;
 - Purposeful involvement of young people;
 - Use of pro-active methodologies
- The concept of quality is very useful when considering the development of youth work. On one hand, through the concept of quality, it is possible to establish universal quality systems that enable the development of a large number of organizations. On the other hand, such quality systems allow each organization to follow its own development pathway in accordance with its needs. If quality is managed properly, organizations are not being “pushed” too much in one specific direction.
- The target group, which should pay particular attention to training on the quality of youth work, are leaders of organizations or managers of institutions such as youth clubs. It is sensible to encourage and train them to work in the organizations they lead to support longer quality improvement processes. The process of increasing quality in a youth organization should include all key participants in the organization. Young people must play a key role in this.

- Logical steps of the quality enhancement process are, among others:
 - Short training sessions for key participants about quality;
 - An assessment of the state of the organisation;
 - Defining our purpose and key changes that we want to achieve in the organization;
 - Identify concrete actions to achieve change;
 - Define indicators to measure success;
 - Definitions of tools for measuring quality;
 - Perform activities;
 - Continuous monitoring of indicators;
 - Evaluation of the whole process.
- The Youth Work Growth Cycle, presented in this publication, proved to be an inspiring model for:
 - Debates on the quality of youth work;
 - Preparation of training for youth workers;
 - Support for the mentoring processes.

do not divide young people into specific classes and create assumptions, but they perceive each individual person as a whole with his or her specific features and needs.

Systematic support in youth work

- Institutions that financially support youth work at various levels (local, regional, national, international) are responsible for the development of quality in youth work. Expectations of these institutions should not exceed actual capabilities of youth work organisations, but remain consistent with the financial support they are being offered.
- Youth work can contribute to achieving social goals in various fields (employment, drop outs, migrants, intercultural dialogue, health ...). However, while setting the performance indicators in these areas, it is important to underline that it should not only be seen as a service to different policy fields needs.
- Skilled youth workers are key to success of youth organisations. Invest in their training!

Working with marginal groups and young people with fewer opportunities

- It is important to continue to devote special attention to youth work with various groups of marginalized young people and people with fewer opportunities.
- It is recommended to further analyze smaller groups (sub-groups) of young people with whom an organization works and thus be able to respond to their needs.
- Despite the need for inclusion and special consideration to sub-groups, the best practices have been shown to be those programmes, that do not focus solely on members of marginalized groups, but include wider range of young people.
- Majority of successful youth work projects and organizations

REFERENCES

References

- Albert M., Hurrelmann K., Quenzel G.** (2015). *17th Shell Youth Study. Youth 2015*. Hamburg, Deutsche Shell Holding GmbH. Available at: https://www.shell.de/ueber-uns/die-shell-jugendstudie/multimediale-inhalte/jcr_content/par/expandablelist_643445253/expandablesection.stream/1456210163885/fdd3bb-5b4e9746d62c0e3e1f762722a96aa13a89363985b19306358f0e4453b8/flyer-zur-shell-jugendstudie-2015-auf-englisch.pdf [Date of access 01.04.2017].
- Boyd D.** (2014). *It's complicated – The social lives of networked teens*. Yale, Yale University Press. Available at: <http://www.danah.org/books/ItsComplicated.pdf> [Date of access 29.11.2016].
- Brewer, M.B.** (2003). *Optimal Distinctiveness, Social Identity, and the Self*. In M. Leary and J. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of Self and Identity*. Guilford Publications. 480–491.
- Buckingham D., Willet R.** (2013). *Digital Generations: Children, Young People and the New Media*, Routledge.
- European Commission** (2014). *Standard Eurobarometer 82. Media use in the European Union. Report*. Directorate General Communication Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb82/eb82_media_en.pdf [Date of access 15.11.2017].
- Hanckel B., Morris A.** (2014). *Finding community and contesting heteronormativity: queer young people's engagement in an Australian online community*. Journal of Youth Studies, Taylor & Francis, Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13676261.2013.878792> [Date of access 04.04.2017].
- Hart. G.** (1997). *Children's Participation: The Theory And Practice Of Involving Young Citizens In Community Development And Environmental Care*. Earthscan.
- Harte. S.** *Groups and Groupwork*. Student Youth work Online. Available at: <http://youthworkcentral.tripod.com/sean3.ht> [Date of access 12.02.2017].
- Have your say!* (2015). Council of Europe. Available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/Have_your_say_en.pdf [Date of access 15.02.2017].
- IThINK Critical Thinking and Literacy Manual* (2011). Peterborough County-City Health Unit and the Central East Tobacco Control Area Network, Available at: http://knowwhatsinyourmouth.ca/files/documents/iTHINK-Manual-Final_Electronic.pdf [Date of access 01.02.2017].
- Kelly B.L., Hunter M.J.,** (2016). *Exploring Group Dynamics in Activity-Based Group Work with Young People Experiencing Homelessness*, Social Work with Groups. 39:4, 307-325.
- Kim E, Yung S.,** (2015). *Internet literacy and digital natives' civic engagement: Internet skill literacy or Internet information literacy?* Journal of Youth Studies, Taylor & Francis, Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13676261.2015.1083961>. [Date of access 13.04.2017].
- Kolb D. A.,** (1984): *Experiential learning – Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice-Hall Inc., Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Lange R., Osiecki J.** (2014). *Nastolatki wobec internetu*. Pedagogium Wyższa Szkoła Nauk Społecznych. Available at: http://akademia.nask.pl/badania/raport_z_badan_nastolatki_wobec_internetu.pdf [Date of access 29.03.2017].
- Lasley M., Kellogg v., Michaels R., Brown S.** (2017). *Using the GROW Model - Coaching in Organizations. Coaching for Transformation*. Available at: <https://trans4mind.com/counterpoint/index-transformation/transformation18.shtml> [Date of access 14.11.2017].
- Lehdonvirta V., Räsänen P.** (2010). *How do young people identify with online and offline peer groups? A comparison between UK, Spain and Japan*. Journal of Youth Studies 14(1):91-108. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13676261.2010.506530> [Date of access 29.11.2016].

Levine P, Lopez M.H. (2004). *Young People and Political Campaigning on the Internet*. CIRCLE The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement. Available at: https://civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS_Young_Political_Campaign_Internet.pdf
[Date of access 29.03.2017].

MacGregor M.G. (2008). *Teambuilding with Teens. Activities for Leadership, Decision Making & Group Success*. Free Spirit Publishing.

McLeod S.(2017). *Kolb - Learning Styles*. SimplyPsychology. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html>
[Date of access 13.11.2017].

Malekoff A. (2014). *Group work with adolescents. Principles and practise*. Guilford.

Robards B. (2012). *Leaving MySpace, joining Facebook: 'Growing up' on social network sites*. Continuum. 26:3, 385-398.

Sapin K. (2013). *Essential Skills for Youth Work practise*. SAGE Publications.

Sefton-Green (2004). *Digital Diversions: Youth Culture in the Age of Multimedia*. Taylor & Francis

Spitzer M. (2013). *Cyfrowa demencja: w jaki sposób pozbawiamy rozumu siebie i swoje dzieci*. Wydawnictwo Dobra Literatura.

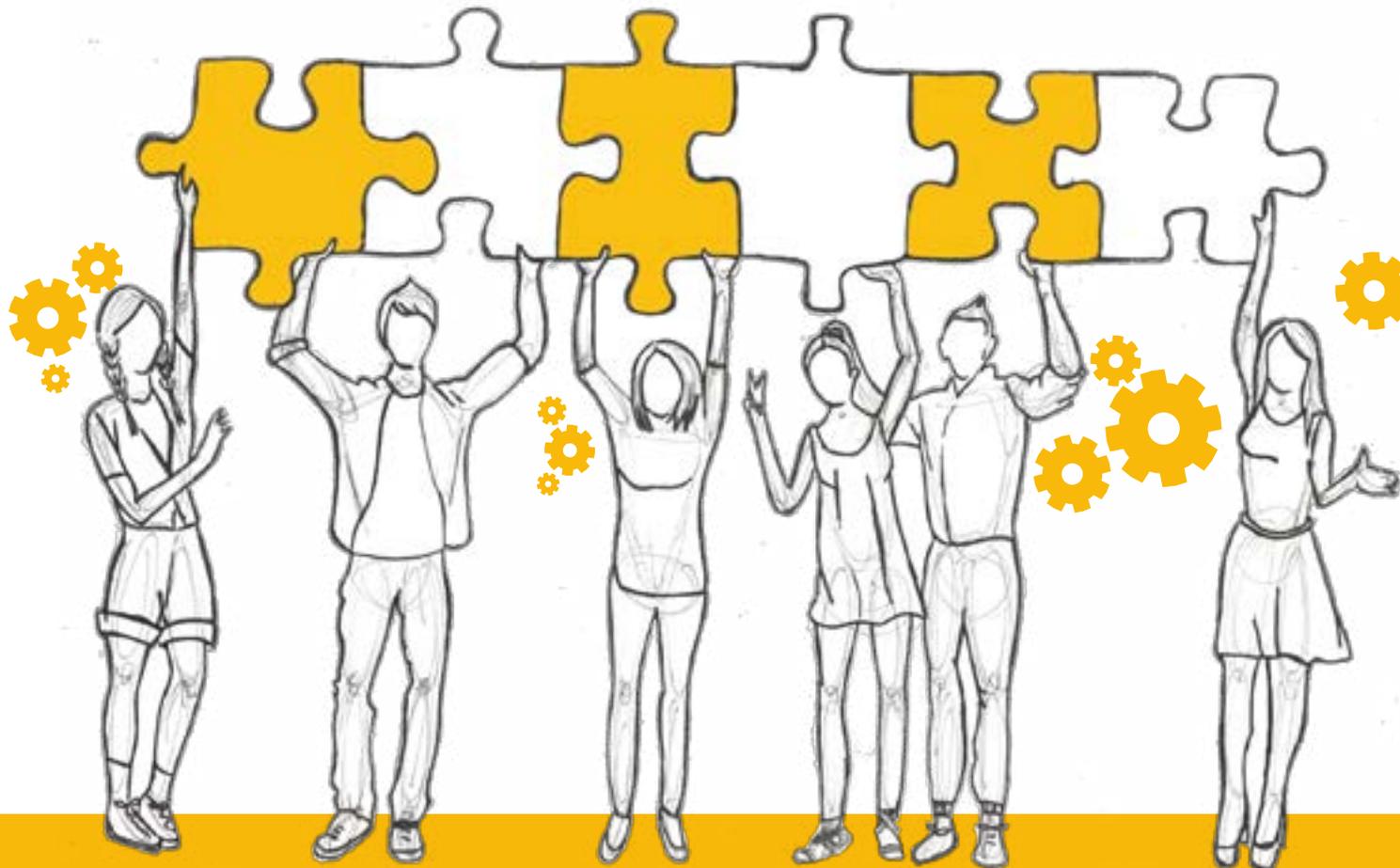
Tapscott D. (2009). *Growing up digital, raising the Net generation*. Mc Graf Hill. Available at: [http://socium.ge/downloads/komunikaciisteoria/eng/Grown_Up_Digital_-_How_the_Net_Generation_Is_Changing_Your_World_\(Don_Tapscott\).pdf](http://socium.ge/downloads/komunikaciisteoria/eng/Grown_Up_Digital_-_How_the_Net_Generation_Is_Changing_Your_World_(Don_Tapscott).pdf)
[Date of access 23.11.2017].

T-Kit on Training Essentials (2002). Council of Europe publishing. Available at: <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1667921/tkit6.pdf/459e262b-11f9-4af8-834f-c10c4cf4d30a>
[Date of access 20.02.2017].

Tuckman, B. W. (1965). *Developmental Sequences in Small Groups*. Psychological Bulletin No. 63 p. 384-399.

Youth Work Mobile 2.0. A competence framework for youth work in the age of smartphones and social media. (ed.) L. Siemer. HeurekaNet - Freies Institut für Bildung, Forschung und Innovation e.V. Available at: <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0Bx7XSL-Wu2nMb2EzdFd0UmM1UnM/view>
[Date of access 13.04.2017].

Valaitis R.K. (2005). *Computers and the Internet: Tools for Youth Empowerment*. J Med Internet Res. 7(5):e51. Available at: <http://www.jmir.org/2005/5/e51/?trendmd-shared=1>
[Date of access 13.04.2017].



Partners:



media
educazione
comunità



UNIWERSYTET
JAGIELLOŃSKI
W KRAKOWIE

Financial support:



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
MINISTRSTVO ZA IZOBRAŽEVANJE,
ZNANOST IN ŠPORT
URAD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE ZA MLADINE



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union