

Youth Lifestyles

Deviance and Prevention



YOUTH
Lifestyles

Youth
Work
for
Vulnerable
Young
People

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This publication is dedicated to the memory of our dear friend and colleague Erika Munková, who was the initiator and inspiration for the project "Youth Lifestyles, Deviation and Prevention".

Erika is sorely missed but fondly remembered by all who knew her: youth policy makers and youth work professionals across Slovakia and throughout Europe, and countless young people whose lives she changed for the better.

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- Deviance, Vulnerability, Lifestyles, Living Conditions, Prevention

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INTRODUCTION

Youth Lifestyles, Deviance and Prevention

The Handbook

There are currently only a small number of research documents and works such as manuals, kits, brochures, or studies that systematise non-formal education tools for those who work with disoriented young people, to overcome risky behaviour and encourage healthy lifestyles. Although proactive methods are often used in the field of prevention, these tend to lack systemic support within a coherent and well-defined educational framework.

This Handbook condenses some of the most significant approaches used by five European partner organisations in the field of deviance prevention, as well as some initiatives, activities, working methods and practical tools, essentially based on Non-Formal Education principles, demonstrated during the six phases of the project.

The goal of this work is to provide some reference points relating to policies and measures to tackle some of the issues faced by the most disadvantaged youth Europe (which we refer to here as “deviance”) and, above all, practical tools for all those who work to promote healthy lifestyles to the younger generations.

What has particularly inspired the five partners of Youth Lifestyles, Deviance and Prevention is the shared commitment to improving the living conditions of young people in their own contexts - especially in terms of educational opportunities and the raising of personal awareness - in order to prevent them from falling victim to various forms of addictive behaviour and other harmful lifestyles.

Overall, this Handbook is intended to be an open access resource for all those who try to avoid the spiral of heavy consequences and negative repercussions that deviance often creates, not only for individual young people but also their peer groups, families and communities.

Who this Handbook is for

This Handbook is for: this Handbook is intended as a practical resource for youth workers and organisations active in the youth field. It reproduces the various case studies and activities seen and experienced during the 6 phases of the project. The content of the Handbook is therefore a synthesis of the “know-how” gained from the activities and methods that the five partner organizations use in their work with young people.

All practice must also be based on a solid theoretical and policy foundation. We have therefore included definitions of key concepts and brief references to policies and measures to combat youth deviance implemented at national and European level (EU and CoE). Although these are not presented in detail, practitioners are encouraged to find out more from the publications and data produced by the relevant authorities.

In the design of this Handbook, we have considered, above all, two closely related factors:

- the use of this book as a practical tool for all those (educators, youth/social workers, trainers, young multipliers, group leaders, etc.) who wish to set up educational initiatives focused on the prevention of youth deviance and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.
- the sharing of good practices and the acquisition of new skills and competences related to the fight against specific problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, unintended motherhood/ early pregnancies, depression-loneliness/suicides, nutritional disorders, gaming and gambling, bullying and cyber-bullying, delinquent phenomena, dangerous driving, and so on.

Limits and Potential

We are well aware that we are facing very complex problems whose elaboration and solutions (when possible) require the intervention of highly qualified experts specialized in the medical and psychological field. However, based on the experiences we have gained in working with young people we are also convinced of the potential and power of non-formal education as an additional tool for the prevention of deviance. For this reason, this work should be seen as a pedagogical tool for educators that will not only integrate with other kinds of educational action aimed at young people at various levels in our society, but also, where necessary, fill some of the gaps in current provision.

PROJECT

Project, Phases, Partnership

Youth Lifestyles, Deviance and Prevention: European Dimension

This project has brought together five experienced European partners who operate in very different contexts, but who share a common commitment to direct or indirect action to prevent youth deviance (such as addictions and other forms of unhealthy lifestyles) harmful for the young people's health and their social relations.

All partners in this project are:

- developing their activities in the field of non-formal education
- actively engaged in promoting healthy lifestyles (fighting against harmful behaviour, habits, activities) and practices that aim to promote the inclusion in society of particularly vulnerable individuals and groups (inclusive practice is seen as an antidote to deviance, an effective prevention tool and a means of encouraging full participation and active citizenship)
- participating actively in intersectoral working groups that contribute to shaping youth policies and specific measures to tackle deviance at the local and national level.

Phases and Themes

ACVČ SR and RCM - KOŠICE (Slovakia),

- sharing Expectations, definition of Themes for each phase, activities' Planning

DIGG'OUT - ALMERE (The Netherlands)

- Depression, Loneliness and other Psychological diseases, Youth Suicide
- Local policies and measures: prevention strategies based on territorial networks (Inter-institutional and Interdisciplinary work groups)

ACVČ SR - Centrum voľného času STARA L'UBOVNA, (Slovakia)

- Different kinds of Addiction (drugs, alcoholism, smoking, gambling online), Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Peer Education: how to train teenagers to help teenagers, how to set up workshops focused on prevention addressed to young people

MOMENTUM WORLD - LUTON (UK)

- Bullying, Cyber-Bullying & Online Safety and various forms of Internet Addiction (eg Gambling & Gaming, mobile phones and other electronic devices)
- Road safety (including dangerous driving)

FITT - TIMISOARA (Romania) - Conference

- Nutritional Dysfunctions (Obesity, Bulimia, Anorexia);
- Sexual Education to combat the phenomenon of Teenage Pregnancy

EURONET - POTENZA (Italy)

- NEET phenomenon and responses (preventing dropping out, vocational orientation, citizenship's promotion);
- IL-LEGALITY, supporting young people at a crossroads

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GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is a group activity which lasts for 1-2 hours.
2. It focuses on the Filia n.o. and its Peer program of drug prevention.
3. Resources and further information can be found at www.filia.sk.
4. Scaling up for more people is possible but will require more time and more preparation.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To explore various topics relating to drugs and risky behaviour of youth.
2. To enable participants to use empathy to defend something which they normally would not.
3. To show them some options of refusing advances to participate in these activities
4. To discuss why simple solutions and simple answers will not help.
5. To raise awareness of these topics among young people aged 13+.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Peer programme to prevent drug misuse and other risky behaviour of young people

- This is a long-term programme, lasting a whole school year, that is 10 months (70 hours overall)
- The programme is targeted at students of the 6th and 7th grade (Elementary school) and 1st and 2nd grade (High School)
- The methodological structure is "Training / Experience activities" and the peer group is composed of 5 students, with 1 pedagogue acting as the group coordinator
- The programme begins with an initial 3-day intensive training
- This is followed by 4 workshops (meeting with experts)
- There are two presentations of activities to the peer group
- The programme concludes with a final 3-day session, during which each school involved, in addition to other things, presents their prepared activities.
- There is a joint evaluation of the whole year, as well as the presentation of graduate certificates at the end.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Printed materials are ready to be shared after the workshop.
- The coordinator prepares the topics to be discussed and role-played.

OTHER INFORMATION

Introduction training (3 days) – this is focused on the preparation of peers, communication training, teamwork, and how to lead small groups. Peers learn to lead groups on topics which they themselves choose.

4 workshops focused on improving existing knowledge and understanding the situation in the field of drug prevention, alcohol abuse and other types of addiction. The goal is to prepare the peers to work in small groups at their school.

3 meetings, where the achieved results are reviewed and debated, the implementation and evaluation of questionnaires from individual schools takes place, and schools present their own prevention programmes.

Training/Experience activities

Argumentation:

Create 4-member groups. Each group draws one statement, which will be defended by 2 people from the group while the other 2 will oppose it:

1. "For me, smoking marijuana is always an exciting experience"
2. "Smoking calms me down"
3. "In order to reset myself I have to get drunk every Friday"
4. "I do not bring my own snack to school, so one of my classmates has to give one to me"
5. "I attend boxing training in order to gain respect among my friends"
6. "Whenever I go to a shop, I always steal some kind of tasty chocolate"
7. "I don't need to learn. My father always settles my grades with the teacher"
8. "I never let some old witch take my place in a full tram"

At the end of the discussion a speaker for each group informs everyone of the conclusion which the group has reached. Let the participants discuss what they found interesting, what they learned from the activity, what was problematic, etc.

Rejection - how to say no

Create pairs. Each pair will use one of the rejection methods, without letting other participants know what it is (they are supposed to guess it).

How to reject alcohol, cigarettes, drugs or any other negative things:

1. Rejection by avoidance (situations where you are offered alcohol, tobacco, drugs...).

Fast rejections

2. I do not see – I do not hear.
3. Rejection by a gesture.
4. Clear NO, or somewhat kinder I do not want to.
5. Rejection – with an explanation.
6. Via a better offer.
7. Turning the debate in a different direction.
8. Rejection by postponing.

Strong rejections

9. Broken record.
10. Rejection by counterattack.

"Royal" ways of rejection:

11. Rejecting once and for all.
12. Rejecting any help.

Which type of rejection do the participants use most in real life? Which one do they find to be the most effective or the least effective? What are their experiences with rejections? Encourage debate.

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is a group activity which lasts for 1 hour.
2. Number of participants 10 - 20.
3. Age 14 - 18 years old.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

The activity is focused on gaining awareness of priorities in human life and how drug misuse can directly threaten one's own values.

GENERAL INFORMATION

To start with, participants talk about the meaning of human life - what they can't imagine their life without, and what social roles are most important to them.

We will explain what a social role is:

- **short-term social roles:** train passengers, theatre / cinema / concert goers etc.
- **long-term social roles:** mother, father, brother, sister, pupil, student etc.
- **general social roles:** man, woman, boy, girl etc.
- **peculiar social roles:** provocateur, rogue, thinker etc.

Closely related to these social roles are needs (they may be based on Maslow's pyramid of needs), which we connect with human values (<https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>). Once the needs are fulfilled there naturally comes a moment where values start to become important instead. Values also reflect family upbringing.

A child or a young person develops attitudes and values shared by his/her family, but at the same time can develop values and attitudes in various groups both at school and outside school. However, the most important thing is to be able to name and identify the values and attitudes that affect the development of one's personality. Here the support of the educator becomes very important. He/she can do this through coaching, mentoring or any other means that support the development of the child.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Post-it notes (12 pcs) or one A4 sheet; markers, pens etc.

OTHER INFORMATION

Fold the prepared paper into two halves. Divide the first half into six equal parts to make "tickets". Instead of dividing the paper you can use 6 post-it notes (stickers/labels).

Training/Experience activities

Part 1 of activity:

On each of the 6 tickets (pieces of paper / post-its), participants write down one of the social roles which they think are most important. They then sort their tickets into their chosen order of importance. They then sit in a circle and proceed clockwise. Taking turns one by one, the participants select one ticket and with the words: "I give up my social role ... (the name of the one they have chosen)", they fold up the paper and throw it into the middle of the room. This "Wheel" is played 6 times until each participant has discarded all their tickets.

The facilitator does not comment on the game at all, but may only express his/her interest non-verbally. At the end of the "wheel", the facilitator asks: "was it difficult for you to throw away your social roles? Which roles did you find more difficult to give up - first or last? And why?"

Part 2 of activity:

Again, everyone prepares 6 tickets. This time, participants write a value they find really important on each ticket. The individual values are sorted by significance. As before, participants then sit in a circle and proceed clockwise. Taking turns one by one, the participants select one ticket and with the words: "I give up my value ... (the name of the one they have chosen)", they fold up the paper and throw it into the middle of the room. The activity lasts until each participant has discarded all their tickets.

At the end of the "wheel", the facilitator asks: "was it difficult for you to throw away your values? Which ones did you find more difficult to give up - first or last? And why? What was more difficult for you to give up - your social roles or your values?"

Reflection:

In the final reflection, we talk about the fact that during the game they threw away the tickets on which they had written the social tasks that are most important to them, and the values that matter most to them in life. This was just a game. But if you find yourself in a situation where someone offers you a drug and you decide to use it, it will no longer be a game. The drug robs you of all your values and your role in society.

Finally, it is important to let the participants explain how they feel, and their views on the issue of human values and drug use.

Conclusion:

Through this model situation, everyone in the group will come to realize what drug addiction will take away from them in their life. The activity leaves an impression. Facilitators as well as young people have the opportunity to learn from each other, and to understand what is important in the life of their peers. As a rule, the participants usually keep the most important social roles and the most important values till the end and only discard them as their last ones.

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is a group activity which lasts for 1-2 hours.
2. Number of participants 10 - 20.
3. Age 14 - 16 years old.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

- To creatively solve a problem.
- To learn how to express opinions.
- To discuss and defend a position on the topic of alcohol, cigarettes and drugs.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This activity is called *Unfinished sentences...*

The aim is to create a working atmosphere in order to find out what participants think about the use of alcohol, cigarettes and drugs by adolescents, how they react and what they think.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Flipchart paper divided into 4 parts (so each piece of paper is A3 size).
- The number of pieces depends on the number of sentences - we recommend about 10 - 15 pieces.
- Felt-tip pens / markers, adhesive tape (suitable for walls).

OTHER INFORMATION

We place the flipchart papers (divided into smaller blocks of size A3) in the middle of the room. On each piece of paper, the beginning of a sentence is written with a marker. The participants have to complete the sentences.

Training/Experience activities

The task is for each participant to take a marker and complete the sentences that have been started on the pieces of paper. Participants gradually walk around and complete the individual sentences.

Some examples of the sentences could be:

- a/ People who take drugs should be told...
- b/ I call people who take drugs...
- c/ Taking drugs is...
- d/ Getting drunk at the disco...
- e/ When I don't drink alcohol...
- f/ I know people who...
- g/ I know that...
- h/ Cigarettes...
- j/ What surprises me the most is that...
- k/ Recently I have noticed...

We then stick the flipchart papers up on the walls or board (or both). One by one, we read out what the participants have written to finish the sentences. We discuss what has been written and at the same time we think about what led the participant to complete the sentences with such a statement - which could be contradictory, negative or even threatening to a young person.

Reflection:

In the final reflection we do not recommend identifying who wrote each idea or opinion (especially if these are controversial). But participants are free to identify themselves if they wish. We may ask other participants to give their opinion about some other questionable sentences. We should always give the authors of the statements the opportunity to express themselves if they wish, but this must always be voluntary. If there is a supportive atmosphere in the group, the authors of the completed sentences will usually have no problem identifying themselves and explaining what they have written and why.

Conclusion:

The conclusion is a shared summary and explanation of why it is important for young people to understand the consequences of drinking alcohol, smoking or taking drugs. We may then move on to other similar topics in this field, in gradual steps; or we might like to show a suitable film related to the topic of our shared discussion. If appropriate, we can also reflect on participants' real life experiences.

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is a group activity which lasts for 1-2 hours.
2. It focuses on the Medical Students' Association Kosice n.g.o.
3. Some resources and information can be found at <http://spolokmedikovke.sk/>, https://www.instagram.com/Smmk_slovakia/
4. Each topic requires a minimum of 2 hours for presentation. Including the practical part, it can take up to 4 hours.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To explore various topics relating to drugs and risky behaviour of youth.
2. To enable participants to use empathy to defend something which they normally would not.
3. To show them some options of refusing advances to participate in these activities
4. To discuss why simple solutions and simple answers will not help.
5. To raise awareness of these topics among High School students.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The main goal of the Reproductive Health Club is to educate people about topics they do not normally dare to talk about. Currently, the main topic is oncological diseases of women and men as well as sexually transmitted diseases.

As part of the activities of FGC (First Gynaecological Consultation) and Men's issues, we organize discussions for high school students. In this way we communicate with young people about ongoing puberty and what to prepare for during adolescence. We try to give them enough information and motivate them to prevent breast cancer and testicular cancer.

In addition, we also focus on awareness-raising events such as Pink October and Movember, which are dedicated to oncological diseases or WAID, on the occasion of the International Day against AIDS/HIV.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Printed materials are in place to be shared after the workshop.
- Coordinator prepares the topics to be discussed and role-played.
- Golden circle model.
- Educational movie/clip on the topic that is talked about during the workshop.

OTHER INFORMATION

We have come to conclusion that the main aspect of a successful workshop is good session design, so the workshop included a short brainstorming about the actual design.

The workshop started with setting a problem about different personalities in the community. At the beginning we asked participants to answer various questions about their personal life. After they had accomplished this task, we presented our model of different types of learners. We then divided them into four groups depending on their personalities – activists, reflectors, theorists and pragmatists. In each group the task was to think about the workshop activities in relation to all four types of learners separately. Following this activity, we arranged a discussion about the workshop design. We believe that this is the best way to arrange activities for each type of learners in the workshop.

Training/Experience activities

Sometimes there is a problem with the behaviour of some of the participants in the project. During this session we presented examples of problematic behaviour of participants during previous workshops – we classify these as:

- **Clown** – trying to distract others, playing around
- **Snowman** – silent, not interested, not cooperating
- **Sniper** – trying to find problems in the workshop and to embarrass the trainer
- **Parrot** – making fun, trying to get the attention of other participants
- **Black cloud** – not interested in the topic, interrupting others and the trainer
- **Plane** – constantly abandoning the topic
- **Know-it-all** – self-explanatory

We discussed each of the behaviour types and tried to find a way to handle the situation.

Golden circle

We presented participants with what is, in our opinion, a more effective way of thinking. We think that it is best to consider first WHY you are doing something, and only after that to try to accomplish it. It is not a good idea to do something that later lacks meaning. Sometimes people (even trainers) know what they are doing, they know how to do it but at the end they do not actually know why they are doing it. We presented this topic in two ways. The first is called the “Golden Circle”, and is all about ways of thinking. The second is called the “Law of Diffusion of Innovation” and we connect this with education. We explained to participants how to manage a campaign and when their project will be effective.

Youth and risk factors

In this session we tried to describe types of prevention and social determinants of health in the community. We believe that if you want to create an impact, you first need to know where the main problem of unhealthy life style is. We used video and WHO sources in our lectures. At the end of our lecture we presented the CAN syndrome and the main types of abuse in society – physical, emotional and sexual. We told participants about the kind of “red flags” (warning signs) that youth workers have to know how to recognise.

To sum up we hope that this training day was useful for participants. We tried to help with their activities and to improve their skills. From our side everything went smoothly. We think that the training could be improved if there was more time available. We noticed that participants were sometimes bored and that they would prefer to have more activities in a shorter time.

Sexual and reproductive health prevention activities

- The aim of this project is to overcome fear, and to support girls and women to visit gynaecologists
- We talk to girls about topics such as pregnancy, menstruation cycle, breast cancer, STI and many others
- We organise similar projects for boys
- We usually talk with them about topics such as contraceptive methods, testicular cancer, STI etc.
- International peer education training based on IFMSA capacity building. The aim is to build solidarity and anti-discrimination among young people. The training mostly covers topics such as Gender, Gender based violence, STI, etc,

Public health prevention activities

First aid training and case studies. We teach and provide experience about first aid, using new methods developed by our SCRC members.

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is a group presentation which lasts for 1-2 hours.
2. It focuses on the vulnerable youngsters at Digg'Out.
3. More information about the youngsters, the mission or the activities at Digg'Out can be found at www.diggout.nl.
4. To maintain mutual respect and balance in the workshop, the number of youngsters was limited to 6.
5. The reason is to avoid anybody being left out while expressing their feelings.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To develop communication skills while debating each other's norms and values.
2. To define norms and values and discuss this in the group.
3. To share each other's sources of inspiration, and listen to each other's stories.
4. To give youngsters new insights or ideas.
5. To create awareness and self-confidence.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This is a short workshop which takes the group through an interactive process explaining and exploring the world of their norms, their values and their inspiration sources. Each youngster contributes their own norms, values and inspirations. At some point the youngsters start to discuss and react to each other's norms or values which leads to a wider debate. Everything being said in the session should stay in the session.

To break the ice for the group, at first they play an ice-breaking game or a name game. After this game the main session starts. During the session, everybody needs to feel safe in the group to tell their stories, give opinions or react to everything they hear.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Self-made cards which contain the norms, values and inspiration sources.
- Facilitator briefed about the session, the serious nature of the topic and the importance of being able to structure the debate.
- An ice-breaking or name game to start the session.
- Chairs and tables to sit on and sit at.
- A white board with markers to write down important arguments and key points.

OTHER INFORMATION

To avoid inappropriate behavior, it is necessary to have a couple of Digg'Out coaches join the session. Everybody should get a voice in a safe and trustful environment. Everybody should respect each other's norms and values even if they do not agree with them or have another opinion at that point. Let them discuss with each other as long as they do it in a respectful way.

Training/Experience activities

Necessary:

save environment coaches who are familiar with the topic, who have a connection with the participants, and skills to lead a discussion or dialogue.

Depending on the composition of the group, one can opt for a discussion or a dialogue. Primarily, Digg'Out prefers a dialogue. Discussion is always based on the principle of convincing the other that you are right, dialogue is together researching the most suitable answer.

Dialogue rules:

- Don't assume what others mean.
- Build in peace, postpone judgment and ask specific questions.
- Forming an opinion based on an experience rather than an idea.
- Learning to put yourself in each other's situation.
- Listening literally and non-empathetically.
- Connect with arguments to what the other is really saying.

Cards with norms, values an inspiration sources (belonging with the topic to talk about)

The coaches explains the guidelines

If necessary a name game (preference is people who know each other already a little bit)

So get to know each other a bit better they could play a short game with some funny questions that can reveal common ground. By example:

- Who was your childhood (famous person) crush?
- What was the grossest food you ever tasted and still had to be polite?
- What was the craziest outfit you ever had?
- What's your silliest memory with your best friend?
- What was the first concert you ever went to?

After this part you asked everybody what was the best part you remember of the other participants. It will give a good feeling.

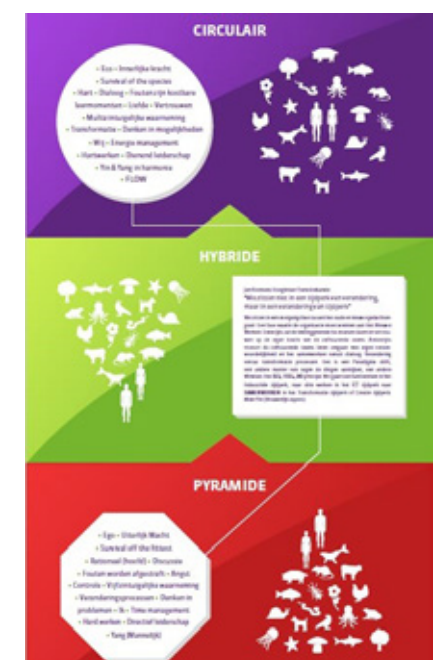
Verification of sustainability

Preferable would be to have for 6 weeks once a week this session, it takes time to learn to know each other and to open up.

Learning by doing

A safe group will open quicker with the bigger issues they need to share before to accept help.

Working circular



GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is an individual tool for youngsters who take care of the animals at Digg'Out.
2. It focuses on the vulnerable youngsters who are facing social exclusion.
3. More information about the youngsters, the mission or the activities at Digg'Out can be found at www.diggout.nl.
4. Participants find peace in taking care of animals; they also develop knowledge about tropical animals and biology.
5. Participants can be either male or female.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To develop knowledge about animals and biology
2. To create a safe place for youngsters to develop a wide range of skills.
3. To teach youngsters about how to take care of the animals when it comes to feeding and cleaning.
4. To build up a relationship and trust with the animals.
5. To reduce stress and depressed feelings.
6. To allow them to feel valued and needed.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The main purpose of this tool is to give this youngster the opportunity of a daily activity where in the past they did not have any. This gives them space and time to develop themselves on different levels and through different skills. By giving them the responsibility for taking care of the animals, we help them learn to communicate and step up for themselves. In this way they start to overcome their lack of self-esteem and social skills. The activity develops self-confidence because with animals there is no element of fear and rejection. An animal will never turn its back on you.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Food and drinks for the animals.
- Cleaning tools.
- Decorations.
- Care-sheet.
- Check basic knowledge and provide general information.

OTHER INFORMATION

It is good to know that when a youngster starts with this tool, first of all an 'expert' on this topic guides the youngster through the tasks, and gives the basic information about how to take care of tropical animals. Starting from this point, he/she can then develop his/her own skills independently. As soon as some self-confidence has been developed, a youth coach within the organization can start a conversation with the youngsters about their lives and future plans.

Training/Experience activities

Some work can very well be done by non-experts. This is the case with peer education, which is health education that is primarily intended to be preventive. In this form of health education, members of a social group are supported with the aim of bringing about a behavioral change in the other members of the group, also known as peers. This behavioral change has a positive effect.

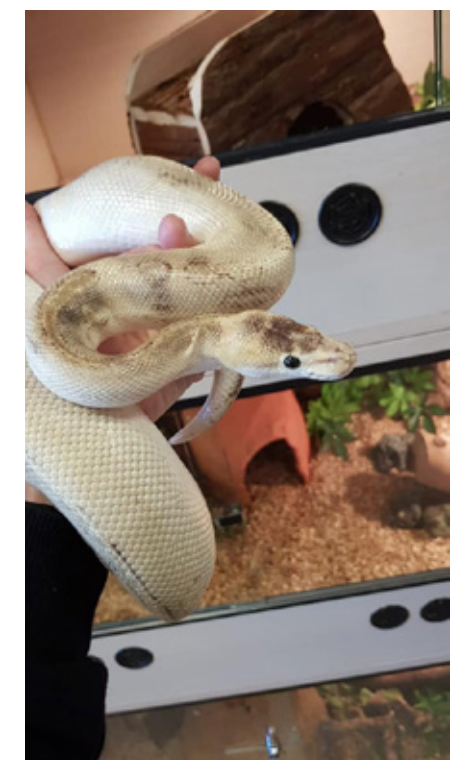
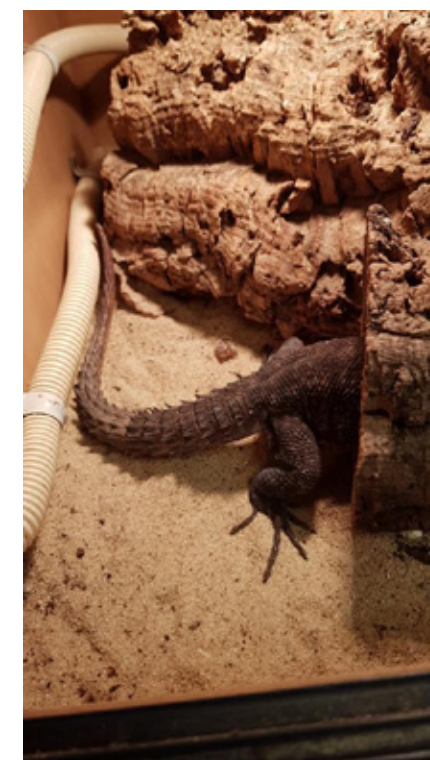
Keeping the cages clean is very important. Here, too, it is important that it is properly demonstrated and which cleaning agents are needed.

Check basic knowledge and provide general information. For example, young people who are in the autism spectrum often benefit from repetition and learn by doing it.

In the beginning, the 'participant' will mainly work with the peer educator until the participant's confidence has grown and indicates that he/she can do it him/herself.

Every person wants to feel needed, the realization that an animal is dependent on you, gives self-confidence.

Planning, structure, clear explanation is necessary. All participants who take care of the animals work on (unconsciously) their self-confidence.





GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is a group activity which lasts for at least 2 hours.
2. It focuses on awareness of what is mine and what is somebody else's.
3. The monkey represents responsibility.
4. Mixed group of vulnerable youngsters with different stories and backgrounds.
5. Part of the activity is to acknowledge the monkeys (the responsibilities).

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. How to prevent somebody else putting the monkey on your shoulders. Making their problem, your problem.
2. Learn to communicate.
3. Learn to listen.
4. Learn to see choices and make choices
5. To acknowledge the consequences of the choices you make.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This activity runs as a single 2-hour session with a group of 6 to 10 youngsters. This is a mixed group of youngsters in the age range of 13 to 27, who are classified as "troublemakers" by society. As non-formal educators we teach them to step up for themselves, acknowledge that they can make their own choices, and understand what effect those choices have for their future lives. By doing the activity together, they will see each other's weaknesses and strengths: this enables them to learn from each other and to create mutual understanding. This also helps them to see that they are not alone and there are others who maybe make the same life choices as they do.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Pictures of different kinds of monkeys – stuffed monkeys will do too (different in size).
- 10 chairs.
- Questionnaires of how to detect the 'monkey'.
- Storytelling and metaphors.
- Pen and paper.

OTHER INFORMATION

Because the youngsters are labelled as "troublemakers" and "problematic", we need to improve their confidence to learn and to be proactive. Step one in this activity is to offer them a platform to show their weaknesses and strengths, and to share these with others. Step two is to create a safe space where everything can be shared (this stays in the room and privacy will be respected)

The youngsters can call the educators by their personal names, so everybody is on the same level, youngsters and educators. Nobody is left out and everybody is treated equally.

Training/Experience activities

Are you aware of the monkey / monkeys on your back? How do they get there? Even more interesting, can you get rid of them and make sure that other heavy monkeys don't sit on your back?

Target

Be in control of "the monkeys on your back". Get the monkey offers tools and strategies to deal better with monkeys, to look at them differently step by step, to recognize changes in your feelings. And it stimulates skills to prevent problems in the future.

Get rid of the monkey in a relaxed way with lots of laughter.
To know your monkey, describe, assign and insure the monkey you start with a metaphor.

What is a metaphor?*

A metaphor is a literary device that imaginatively draws a comparison between two unlike things.

It does this by stating that Thing A is Thing B. Through this method of equation, metaphors can help explain concepts and ideas by colorfully linking the unknown to the known; the abstract to the concrete; the incomprehensible to the comprehensible. It can also be a rhetorical device that specifically appeals to our sensibilities as readers.

To give you a starting point, here are some examples of common metaphors:

- "Bill is an early bird."
- "Life is a highway."
- "Her eyes were diamonds."

Note that metaphors are always non-literal

Monkey methapor example:

- <http://www.throwcase.com/2014/12/21/that-five-monkeys-and-a-banana-story-is-rubbish/>
- https://www.econlib.org/archives/2018/03/inside_the_monk.html

To find the monkey questions could be:
what make you

What situation makes you tired?

Who demands a lot of energy from you?

Why is it difficult to say no?

What happens if you say no?

What are you afraid of?

After they found their monkey (maybe one big one or serveral small ones) you start the storytelling session with the monkey in front of you and start to tell the story of the monkey with the next questions:

1. "Imagine if ..."
2. Here's what excites me...
3. "I remember when..."

Between all the sessions plan some time for the participants to write down the steps and conclusions also they can draw a mindmap.

*Reedsy

GROUP INFORMATION

1. Group of youngsters going outside making pictures of everything that creates frustration and happiness.
2. Age 13-27.
3. Youngsters with fear of going into public or being around other people.
4. Working in pairs with one camera.
5. Mixed genders.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To rebuild self-esteem.
2. To see the world from a different perspective and discuss this topic.
3. To challenge your own assumptions.
4. To tell stories with materials.
5. To create awareness of each other's view of society.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This activity is built up and structured in 4 sessions of 1 hour each. Each pair holds a camera while walking into the city or places they would like to visit in the surrounding area. For youngsters who are facing social anxiety or have difficulty facing other people in public, using a camera can give them comfort like a protecting shield.

While everybody has been given the same assignment, the end result will be different because everybody comes back with different pictures, stories and perceptions.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Camera or phones.
- USB-stick to print the photos in a nearby shop.
- A3 paper to put the photos on.
- Sticky notes for feedback (their point of view).
- Pens and markers.

OTHER INFORMATION

In this activity we let the participants choose the pictures they want to share and to tell a story with. They may also inspire others by doing the same in their private life. In addition, we can use this method to help youngsters (for example those with autism) find an easier and more creative way to communicate with parents, teachers or friends.

In the end an exhibition can be held for the public, to show the results of all the collage the youngsters have made, so they can tell their story to other people who are not working with this target group. This will create wider awareness and empathy.

Training/Experience activities

Peer to peer learning has our preference for this assignment. An experienced peer educator who has already built up his self-confidence. Everything falls and stands with relationship, trust and communication.

Communication skills, listening to others, conversation techniques:

- Being able to put yourself in the perspective of others, have empathy;
- Having tact, being able to work together, being a team player;
- Being able to deal with distance, proximity, being involved and being able to indicate boundaries, not taking others' problems home with you;
- Being strong, tough, being able to give (unsolicited) advice, disagree dare to be assertive;
- Be able to bear responsibility;
- Knowledge of coaching methods;
- Can deal with unexpected situations (eg aggression);
- Able to rise above own problems, helicopter view.

Specific skills are:

- To be able to tell your own story, to be able to share experiences, experiences functional can deploy.
- To be able to stand next to the participant, to be equal, to be able to make room for the story of the participant, can sense what needs someone, can be modest and reserved.

The peer educator makes an inventory of what is going on at moment?

Choose together with the participants which topic they would like to carry out first.

For example, people find it difficult to look at people, then the assignment could be photograph at least 10 faces.

During the discussion of the assignment (the faces) may include inquiring questions:

Put the photos in order the 'prettiest or best' first.

Let the participants talk about why they prefer the best photo.

An extra question could be, would you dare to speak to or greet this person?

Discuss with the participants when they are confident enough to exhibit the photos (with the stories). This can be done on a small scale at your own location with family friends who come, but you can also think of, for example, the public library.

Self-confidence cannot be measured in the short term. However, one can see from the follow-up steps that the participant will take, for example back to school or work, what the result will be.



GROUP INFORMATION

1. A nerd is someone who is not a part the popular 'mainstream culture' in society.
2. Often introvert and lonely, spending a lot of time behind their computer screens.
3. Doesn't have a big social life or good social skills.
4. Often males but can also be female
5. Age range 13-27.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To develop social skills.
2. To get them out of their houses and interacting with others.
3. To increase their social network.
4. Learn to communicate with other young-sters with different personalities.
5. To increase their self-confidence.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Within this activity there will be no use of a computer, but board games instead. For example, Dungeons and Dragons, Monopoly or Risk. The reason behind this is to improve communication skills and social skills because participants have to talk to others. By playing board games they are able to get know each other better, thereby creating relationships.

It is important that everybody is equal in this activity. There should be no regard to your age, back-ground, education or social skills.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- A room to come together.
- Games.
- Chairs and tables.
- Food and drink.

OTHER INFORMATION

The term 'nerd' is often seen as negative. A lot of nerds are bullied because of their lack of social skills. The word is often used because they wear different clothes or have unconventional interests or hobbies. The risk is that they may end up isolating themselves from the outside world or, conversely, that they feel themselves better than others. So the importance of this activity is that they get out of their rooms and surround themselves with others.

The nerd corner is a physical room where anyone can learn, communicate, meet and develop on an equal basis.

'Nerds' can be reached and invited to join the activity through targeted posts on the internet, or by distributing flyers in public places, as well as by word of mouth and networking.

Training/Experience activities

The Nerdcorner is especially for the group of young people who for different reasons or back-grounds do not visibly actively participate in life. These young people are invisible for multiple reasons.

Loneliness is often the precursor to depression. For various reasons or backgrounds they are not visibly active. Young people who have the bare essentials in school does and or does not go to school. Lonely young people who have little to no social contacts to have. And a lot of sitting in their room, attic.

A physical place where like-minded people can meet and develop each other. What makes this place going to be visited? It is recommended that a somewhat older "nerd" runs the corner. The older Nerd is the game-master.

In the Netherlands, mainly games such as Dungenons and Dragons, Pathfinder and Magic the gathering are played. Of course, every board game is suitable and is also quite group dependent.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pathfinder_Roleplaying_Game

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dungeons_%26_Dragons

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic:_The_Gathering

What distinguishes the gamemaster from the other players of a role-playing game | role-playing game is that he or she has different tasks, and also different powers. In most games, the players only have control over one character. However, they may also determine exactly what the character says and thinks, and what actions the character tries to perform. The player's job is then to play this character. The gamemaster, on the other hand, has some or all of the following tasks, depending on the system being played and the agreements within the group:

An important part of the Nerdcorner is fixed appointments, fixed moments and good clear communication.

For very vulnerable young people it is advised to start with a small group of 3 players and 1 game master.



GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is a group activity which lasts for 1 hour.
2. Youngsters who do not have a job and are not attending school, training or professional refresher courses.
3. No limitations.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To give young people resources.
2. Provide a possible method for defining a Plan action.
3. Promote the achievement of some personal goals through intermediate steps.
4. Create awareness of what they can do.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Training should be prepared with an introduction to the idea of personal goals. This includes both short-term and long-term goals that participants want to reach.
- There should be an initial presentation of activities.
- All participants receive a short questionnaire, to which they must give an individual response in a limited time.
- After the preparation of the Action Plan, each participant presents their plan to the group, and the others comment on it.
- After this, there is a group discussion.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Printed materials (questionnaire).
- Coordinator prepares the topics to be discussed.
- This activity could be carried out in the open air or in a comfortable location.

OTHER INFORMATION

- Coordinator prepares the topics to be discussed.
- This activity could be carried out in the open air or in a comfortable location.
- The activity for young people is useful to discover and define their goals.

Training/Experience activities**The trainer introduces and explains the questions, and the definition of the intermediate steps**

- The participant identifies a future goal, and based on this he/she completes the questions and defines the intermediate steps.
- Working in a group we analyze some of the examples presented.

Guiding questions:

- Name.
- Goal.
- (At least) 3 reasons why this goal is important for you.
- Why do you think that by reaching this goal you will be satisfied?
- What resources and skills will be needed to achieve this goal?
- What experience/s will help you in achieving this goal?
- What steps you will take if you cannot reach the first goal you have identified?
- Why did you choose this alternative action plan?
- What information will you need, to reach the goal identified? How will you look for this?
- How do you imagine yourself having achieved your goal?
- How did you find out about the possibilities/opportunities that this goal offers?
- What/who can help you?
- Try to set small short-term goals for getting to the goal you have identified. Set yourself some deadlines.

Verification of sustainability

Verification of sustainability in regard to the identified objectives.

Are the intermediate steps appropriate? Is the path feasible? Do you know how to achieve your goal? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your Action Plan?

The Action Plan can also be kept and reviewed over the course of time.

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is a group activity which lasts for 2 hours.
2. Young people who are not attending school.
3. 15-20 participants.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. Knowing how to conduct a job search.
2. To show young people some options to participate in these activities.
3. Following a plan for job research.
4. Know how to identify which advertisements/positions are most in line with your profile.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Looking for a job is not a simple process. It requires a strategy for research. You need to follow a plan, with a series of steps to understand which positions are in line with your profile.
- We must focus not only on remuneration and responsibility, but also on the skills, training and experience requirements, as well as the company ethos, to be sure that the position corresponds to one's interests, skills, values, personality and development objectives.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Computer.
- Projector.
- Internet.
- Tennis ball.

OTHER INFORMATION

- The trainer can give an example of a specific company position.

PREPARATION

- Prepare the icebreaker game.
- Here is a video to show at the beginning <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVx6ntr5OqI>
- Preparation of announcements and job descriptions.
- Preparation of the T/F assessment.

Training/Experience activities

- The trainer welcomes the participants and asks them to form a circle. After introducing him/herself, the game with the ball begins
- Whoever receives the tennis ball says their name and something they feel passionate about. They then throw the ball to the next participant, who does the same, and so on
- The video is projected and participants are asked to think about the job title-mission relationship
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVx6ntr5OqI>
- The various methods of job search are presented:
 - Personal introduction
 - Presentation calls
 - Direct mailing
 - Completing an application
 - Answering an online application
 - Contacting employment agencies
 - Networking
- In groups of 2/4 people the activity begins - the trainer gives participants some job descriptions for company positions, and asks what strategy they would choose to apply for each one, and why.

Verification of sustainability

Compare the participants' initial answers with the final ones.

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is a group activity which lasts for 3 hours.
2. Suitable for all kinds of young people.
3. Group size: no limitation for adults; for young people a smaller group (8-12 people) is better.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

- The trainer will help the participants to:
1. Understand the importance of networking for a professional/entrepreneurial career.
 2. Develop networking and entrepreneurial skills.
 3. Recognize and exploit different networking opportunities.
 4. Learn how to build a professional network and how to use contacts effectively.
 5. Learn how to make a first good impression
 6. Explore digital tools to create a more effective network.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Networking is one of the most powerful ways for young people to increase their job opportunities and develop their potential in the field of entrepreneurship.
2. The aim of the training course is to provide young people with networking tools to be able to enter and succeed in the job market.
3. Through discussions on different topics related to entrepreneurship and networking skills, participants will have the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences.
Some of the topics that will be discussed are:
 - the importance of building a professional network
 - different networking strategies
 - how to make a good first impression
 - digital networking / building a digital profile

The trainers' presentation will focus on digital networking skills. Trainers will focus on the do's and don'ts social media, with a particular emphasis on Facebook and LinkedIn. Finally, participants will take part in interactive exercises/games to put their networking skills into practice.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Printable version of the Powerpoint presentation on digital networking skills.

OTHER INFORMATION

- The training course will be interactive.
- Participants can sit in a circle both during the discussion and during the practical part of the course.
- Trainers should encourage participants to take an active part during all phases of the course, sharing their ideas and previous networking experiences.

Training/Experience activities

The trainer should briefly introduce the purpose of the training course and the topics that will be addressed. In addition, trainers should ask participants to introduce themselves and share what they expect from this training.

Participants can talk about their background, interests and their professional aspirations.

Some activities proposed for training are:

Online Tutorials - Participants can search online and list at least 4 different networking opportunities.

LinkedIn

This is much more than an online CV. By creating a LinkedIn account, you will ensure that your professional profile will appear in every Google search done by potential employers.

Use LinkedIn to:

- search for information on a company and follow the keywords of its sector.
- identify the skills that employers are looking for in their sector.
- demonstrate your interest in a specific sector through participation in group discussions.
- create connections and develop your own network.

Twitter

A carefully formulated profile can attract followers, including potential employers.

Use Twitter to:

- follow employers, professionals and commentators in your area of interest.
- keep up to date with news and events in your field of interest.
- increase your profile by participating in discussions.
- draw attention to your business on other platforms.

Facebook

Evaluate whether it is preferable to create separate and unrelated personal and professional profiles. Remember that personal profiles are often public.

Use Facebook to:

- 'like' the Facebook pages of relevant companies, and receive updates.
- join groups relevant to your job search, comment on posts and participate in discussions.
- post content relevant to your career and job search.

Interactive Circle Beat

- Discussion of how to make a good first impression.
- Get your dream job through the net.

The debate can be concluded by summarizing the key points learned by the participants.

Verification of sustainability

At the end of the course, participants should fill in a questionnaire to evaluate the content and quality of the training received, the trainers and the general organization. Questionnaires may include percentage scores (e.g. 1 - 10) and personal comments.

"Se vuoi..." (If you want...): the power of memory for a future of hope

... we have
nothing to teach,
only experiences to share

Se vuoi... is a non-profit educational initiative, conceived by a group of well-motivated policemen from the Palermo Police Headquarters who, on a voluntary basis, take care of its promotion and carry out its activities. Thanks to a bus made available by the Palermo Police, primary school pupils and college, high school and university students, as well as young people belonging to informal groups and associations, have the opportunity to visit places where innocent people, State officials, representatives of institutions and civil society have paid with their lives for their determination not to submit to organized crime, their commitment in the fight against the mafia, and their affirmation of legality.

Direct testimony... the strength of memory: *Se vuoi...* offers young people a real Path of Memory, an itinerary that touches, one after the other, some places in the city and various locations in the Province of Palermo where the mafia has perpetrated its crimes. Waiting for children and young people in every "place of memory" there are witnesses, people who have experienced those tragedies, who have suffered the consequences as they are linked to those who lost their lives at the hands of the mafia (children, wives/ husbands, parents, relatives, friends, colleagues/collaborators). The witnesses tell the story of the victims, illustrate their profile, their civil and professional commitment, the ideals that inspired them and guided their action; young people, listening to their story, understand what it meant for them to lose a loved one, and the repercussions, for the community and the State, of the disappearance (murder) of an honest citizen, a representative of civil society, a member of the institutions.



AIMS OF THE INITIATIVE

Prevention: "Se vuoi..." unfolds its action above all in preventive terms: to prevent young people - especially those with fewer opportunities and with fewer educational qualifications - from falling into the vortex of organized crime.

The gaze of young people towards the future: starting from the past, from places of memory, the painful stories of witnesses give children and young people the opportunity to look to their future on the basis of values and principles which directly contradict those of the mafia.

Culture of Legality: raising awareness among new generations (starting with primary school children) about the importance of legality, compliance with the law and the rules of civil coexistence as pillars of the democratic life of a community.

Active citizenship: stimulating the civic sense of young people and increasing their sense of belonging to the community, a fundamental step on the path that will lead them to become meaningfully engaged citizens.

Trust in the Institutions: seeing policemen talking, and even joking with the participants, seeing them conduct the activities of "If you want ..." and guiding visits to the various departments of the Police Station has a strong pedagogical value: it shortens considerably - and in many cases nullifies - the distance between young people and the Police - often seen with distrust, and even hostility -, eliminates many prejudices, gives participants the opportunity to understand the role of the Police in maintaining the orderly life of the community

Se vuoi... ultimately assumes the function of a bridge between young people and the police, the institutions. Having faith in the police, thinking of them as a friendly and not an adverse force, however rhetorical it may seem, in areas where the mafia culture has atavistic and deep roots, is in itself a great result, a significant step forward for the whole community, not just for young people.

... before, I also didn't have a good impression of the police but now you have cancelled in me and in many other guys the prejudice we had about you and your team "the sbirro" ... "the pigs"

Extract letter from Andrea C. to the police officers of *Se vuoi...*
Franchetti Middle School - Palermo

THE ITINERARY IN STAGES IN THE PLACES OF MEMORY:

Father Pino PUGLISI, parish priest of the Church of San Gaetano, Palermo, killed with a blow to the back of the head for his commitment as an educator of children and very young people in the suburb of Brancaccio, an area with a high mafia presence.

Libero GRASSI, was an entrepreneur in the clothing sector, killed by the mafia after taking a stand against “pizzo” (protection money/payoff). After his death, the family continued its campaign in support of the Addiopizzo Movement, which many traders from all over Sicily gradually joined.

Mario FRANCESE, journalist, killed in Palermo for his investigations into some so called “morti eccellenti” (assassinations of notable people) and the large flows of money from public procurement managed by the mafia.

Boris GIULIANO, head of the Palermo Mobile Squad, murdered in a bar in Palermo by Leoluca Bagarella, one of the leaders of the Corleonesi clan.

Ninni CASSARÀ, assistant commissioner, associate of the Anti-Mafia Pool of Palermo, killed by a commando group of nine men in front of his house, before the eyes of his wife and daughter.

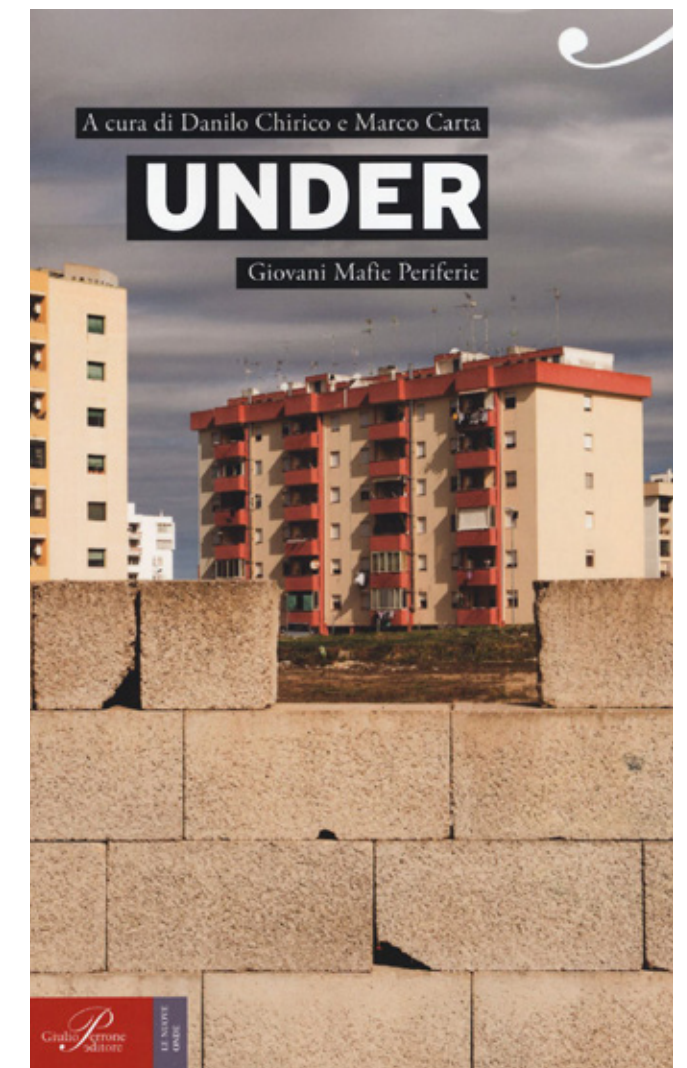
Giovanni FALCONE, judge and prosecutor, famous for his investigations which showed the link between the mafia, policy makers and representatives of Italian institutions. He spent most of his professional life trying to overthrow the power of the Sicilian mafia. He was murdered by the Corleonesi clan in the “Capaci massacre”, together with his wife and the men of his bodyguard.

Paolo BORSELLINO, magistrate, member of the Anti-Mafia Pool, together with Giovanni Falcone (a great friend of his) is considered one of the most important personalities in the fight against the mafia in Italy and also at an international level. He and his bodyguard were killed by a car-bomb which exploded in front of his mother’s house.

Carmelo IANNÌ, entrepreneur, executed in his hotel in Villagrazia di Carini in front of his wife for helping the police in an important anti-drug operation.

Giovanni DOMÈ, custodian of a construction site, totally unrelated to the mafia, was killed in the “viale Lazio massacre”, one of the bloodiest settlements of scores between mafia factions. He left behind his wife and five young children.

Peppino IMPASTATO, journalist, radio host, Italian activist, known for his campaign against the activities of the Cosa Nostra, as a result of which he was assassinated.



ILLEGALITY

Young people and educational opportunities... looking to the future. All the organizations that carry out initiatives to combat illegality and mafia culture, listed below, devote particular attention to activities which will raise the awareness of children, adolescents and young people on the issue of legality. All have fully understood that the effort to change people's mentality and replace mafia culture with a democratic and inclusive vision of community life, based on respect for others and legality, entails educational action and the formation of new generations.



CENTRO TAU - Officina di Futuro is a youth center rooted in the central Zisa neighborhood of Palermo. Even though this is a city centre district, it can nevertheless be defined as an "urban periphery" due to the conditions of social and cultural disadvantage of its citizens: economic poverty and social exclusion, environmental degradation, derelict houses, piles of garbage, illegal landfills, etc. All these components instil in citizens a growing sense of abandonment by public institutions and encourage deviance, not only among young people. For many families, illegality represents the only possible path to follow. Objectives of the TAU Center: improvement/strengthening of socio-educational services, encouraging youth solidarity through the offer of an open socio-cultural space, guidance and support for adolescents who have dropped out of school, promotion of youth participation, artistic and cultural creativity (music, media, storytelling, video/cinema), and European youth mobility. In 2018, the centre welcomed over 150 children aged 6 to 16 and over 70 adolescents and young people aged 17 to 25. In its 29 years of activity, thousands of children and young people have attended the Tau Center, and many who are now adults still find a point of reference there today.

The first thing you learn when you work as an educator/youth worker in difficult areas where the culture of illegality is entrenched and widespread, is that no one has a magic wand: every goal achieved, every boy or girl saved from crime, is the result of a long, hard, sometimes frustrating effort whose positive results - if they occur - will manifest themselves over time, after years of work.

Our educational approach must keep in mind the family, social, and cultural context made up of strong, ancestral ties: this is a context in which many of our children's families derive their income from criminal activity and from belonging to mafia organizations.

It is therefore necessary to implement educational processes underpinned by positive and equally ancient values such as hospitality, solidarity, nonviolence, beauty, respect for the environment and the common good. Thinking that active citizenship and legality can be achieved through educational activities based on opposition, i.e. in terms of "anti/against" ...

(anti-crime, anti-illegality, anti-mafia, anti-corruption, etc...) is mistaken. Choosing to change one's perspective and lifestyle cannot be an immediate process. For many families it is difficult to imagine an alternative source of work and income. The State and civil society do not offer such alternative opportunities: if anything they deny them. It's hard to say, but that's the way it is.

Ours is a long-term strategy based on educational activities that promote participation and that over the years allow children and young people in difficult environmental and family contexts to feel an active part of a process of learning, growth and, consequently, of change. It is these positive experiences, these regular, daily, apparently small but constant steps over time, that orientate children towards paths that differ from those of crime. They are "small" educational experiences that allow educators / youth workers to convey positive values and children to understand that the real antidote to illegality lies in opportunities and in the recognition of their rights.

Francesco Di Giovanni
 Coordinator of

INVENTARE INSIEME (onlus) CENTRO TAU, Palermo

MAESTRI DI STRADA (Street Teachers) is an association of volunteer teachers and educators who work in difficult neighbourhoods of Naples to give children who have dropped out of school an additional educational opportunity ("The School of the Second Chance"). The street teachers meet the children outside of school, on their own territory, in their meeting places, where they spend their time and have their points of reference. The teachers offer them training based on a strong interpersonal relationship that puts them at the centre of the growth and learning process. Ultimately, the educational action of street teachers goes beyond simply teaching, as it seeks to support young people in building their "life project" with their own available resources and in spite of often very difficult conditions. The goal is to promote citizenship and the rights of young people with fewer opportunities and at risk of social exclusion.



"To counteract early school leaving, the only way is to go where young people are with their minds and hearts and take their existential and social discomfort as the only raw material with which to build their own life project".

In 14 years of activity:

23.456 hours of lessons 532 Kids involved 600 Teachers and Educators engaged

Some data relating to failure and school dropout in the Campania region and the city of Naples (2017 - 2018):

- 29.9% of high school students fail to graduate. In Naples, the percentage is 35% and it is even higher if we consider only the technical and professional institutes.

23% of young people between 18 and 24 can be considered NEETs, completely marginalized: they do not work, study, or attend professional training courses. Source: Censis (National Institute of statistics).

LIBERA, Associations, Names and Numbers against the Mafias (for a society free from mafias, corruption and any form of illegality) is a network made up of associations, social cooperatives, movements and groups, schools, trade unions, dioceses and parishes, scout groups, all involved in a common commitment not only "against" the mafias, but for the affirmation of the culture of legality.

The premise from which their action starts is the conviction that mafias are not only a criminal problem, but a social and cultural phenomenon that can only be faced and beaten by joining forces.

In the early 1990s, Libera launched a popular petition to collect a million signatures for the approval of a law that allows assets confiscated from mafia and corrupt people to be used for social use. Since the entry into force of the law, more than 19,000 assets have been confiscated from the Mafias and over 650 associations and cooperatives have been assigned assets in Italy. These organisations deal with inclusion and services to people, job reintegration, training and youth work, urban and cultural regeneration, and support for victims of crime and their families.

Libera is present throughout Italy with 20 regional branches, 82 provincial coordination centres and 278 local offices. There are more than 1600 national and local associations, movements, groups, cooperatives that make up the LIBERA network. There are 80 international organizations belonging to the Libera Internazionale network, in 35 countries of Europe, Africa and Latin America. Every summer, over 4,000 young people participate in volunteer and training camps funded from assets confiscated from the Mafias. Over 5,000 schools and university faculties actively collaborate with Libera.

The numbers of the 2018 Activity Report:

400 seminars, 80,000 students involved, 6500 teachers, 4,500 schools, 160 volunteer camps, 2,876 young participants.

ADDIOPIZZO (Goodbye Payoff/Protection Money) is, at the same time, a movement and a voluntary association that promotes a virtuous economy free from the mafia through the tool of critical consumption. It includes women, men, boys and girls, traders and consumers who recognize themselves in the phrase "a people who pay protection money is a people without dignity". Addiopizzo acts from below and becomes the spokesperson for a "cultural revolution" against the mafia which in many cases, with the relentless demand for protection money, has led to the ruin of many traders and suffocated the local economy. Since 2005 Addiopizzo has involved schools in Palermo and its province in activities aimed at learning about the phenomenon of "pizzo" (protection money/payoff) and in promoting critical consumption as a new tool for struggle and solidarity with traders (about 200 schools in the province of Palermo, and hundreds more in all the rest of the national territory). The goal has always been to view Addiopizzo's anti-mafia action from below and to offer children and teenagers a point of view that is as critical and aware as possible on the reality that surrounds them.

"Every time we enter a classroom and start talking to our younger siblings it is as if it were the first time: we are aware that we are trying together to take back something that the Mafia is constantly trying to take away from us, namely the belief in a possible alternative. For us, young people matter a lot: they are the future, they are the ones who have in their hands the tools to fight against the mafia culture".

1.024 Shops and Companies that have joined Addiopizzo

13.366 Consumers who openly expressed their support for the initiative

184 Schools involved in training courses focused on anti-racket/legality

3.538 Messages of Solidarity from the World

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This is a group presentation and discussion which lasts for 1-2 hours.
2. It focuses on the Breck Foundation anti-cyberbullying campaign.
3. Resources and information can be found at www.breckfoundation.org.
4. Session is more impactful with a smaller group but it can be run with a large number of young people.
5. Have support in place to give to group.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the theme of cyberbullying by sharing the harrowing story of Breck who was groomed online by another online gamer.
2. To create a wider issue of online grooming and the techniques perpetrators use
3. To give young people resources and help line numbers if they are victims of online grooming.
4. To create a greater awareness of the work of the Volunteer Police Cadets and the Breck Foundation .
5. An awareness session aimed at young people 13+.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This activity is a short workshop run by Volunteer Police Cadets in association with the Breck Foundation. It takes the group through an interactive process exploring the issues around online gaming and how in this case it led to the grooming and ultimate death of Breck Bednar. The well structured presentation takes the audience through a chronological sequence of events and utilises power filmed interviews and witness statements from the police investigation. The workshop is harrowing but fully interactive and although very sad but it leaves the audience with lots pointers to look out for and support others that might be groomed.

The Volunteer Police Cadets who deliver the training have all undergone presentation training by the Police Cadet staff and the Breck Foundation. So it is very professional, interactive and well paced.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Printed materials are in place to share after the workshop.
- AV equipment (projector and speakers) setup and tested.
- Offline version of materials available incase internet fails.
- Teachers/students are briefed about the sensitive nature of the workshop.

OTHER INFORMATION

If the session is being delivered to a large group an introduction to the session is recommended as the Volunteer Police Cadets will not know the group personally so it is important that there are teachers or youth workers to help deal with any inappropriate behaviour.

As the session unfolds the atmosphere in the group will turn very serious when you start to realise where this story ends. It is highly emotional and there are some tough family interviews which might affect members of the group so it makes sense for a teacher or youth worker to be observing the audience to ensure everyone is coping with the content.

Because the Volunteer Police Cadets are there for the single workshop it is worth having a second session to unpick with the audience the learning, the issues and support available when dealing with such big issues.

Breck Foundation - www.breckfoundation.org / Volunteer Police Cadets - <https://vpc.police.uk>

Training/Experience activities

Step 1: Introductions (5 minutes)

Presenters should introduce themselves and ensure that everyone in the room has a chance to talk to each other and feel relaxed.

Step 2: Discussion (15 minutes)

In smaller groups, participants share what they already know about cyber-bullying, cyber-crime and online grooming in general. They may refer to specific cases which they are aware of either personally or through the media. In most cases, participants will probably be aware of only a limited amount of the issue. Each group presents back their main points.

Step 3: Film part 1 (15 minutes)

The first part of the film is played, with additional commentary from the presenter.

Step 4: Discussion (5 minutes)

Group work. A review of the story so far. What was happening? Why did everything seem normal? What are the danger signs?

Step 5: Film part 2 (15 minutes)

The second part of the film is played, with additional commentary from the presenter. This includes interviews with the family and is highly emotive. Participants may be upset so the session is paced carefully.

Step 6: Reflection (5 minutes)

Participants talk in pairs or threes to share their feelings about the story.

Step 7: Discussion (20 minutes)

Group work. Discussion of the story and the issues raised. Topics may include:

- Could the tragedy have been prevented?
- Who was involved? Did anyone make mistakes?
- What are the tricks which criminals like this use?
- What safeguards exist when people are online?
- What kind of legal solutions exist? Can the police intervene?
- How can we educate young people to be aware of the dangers? Who should do this educating?

Step 8: Presentation (10 minutes)

The Volunteer Police Cadets present the methodology which they and the Breck Foundation are using to raise awareness of the issues among young people. What can everyone else do to spread the information? This includes an explanation of the "Breck Principles" and how schools and young people can be empowered to make a difference.

Step 9: Conclusion (10 minutes)

Final review, contact / support information and an opportunity for participants to ask further questions.

GROUP INFORMATION

1. Group of problematic males who have been disruptive in other lessons.
2. Age 14-16 years old.
3. Group size 8-12 students.
4. Struggling with written English.
5. Students struggling to function in a class of 30+.
6. Males in particular
7. On the fringes of being excluded due to behaviour.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the theme of cyberbullying with young people on fringes of actually being involved with this issue.
2. To work with the teachers to use non-formal education methods to help them engage with their English lessons.
3. To use film methods (and smart phones) for creating a short film exploring this issues.
4. To develop a fact sheet/info graphic which can be shared with other students.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This programme runs for 8 sessions and each session is 90 minutes long. The group consists of 12 boys aged 13-14 who had been identified as problematic in the classroom. As non formal educators we work with their teachers to develop a more engaging learning spaces - this includes time out of the classroom, creating a different creative environment and using cool technology with is not normally allowed in the classroom. Our aim is to explore the issues, then research the impact cyberbullying has on the victims. This is written up and then graphic storyboards are created so the students can create short films. These were showcased to the headteacher and selected guests and then the students created an infographic which are displayed around the school. The students are given extra support by our team when it comes to writing the materials up as they all have been identified as having issues with their written English.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Various agreed teaching spaces (including outdoor space) - avoid formal class situation.
- Arts and craft materials for creative sessions and writing materials.
- Technology for filming (smart phone rigs, lighting, tripods and sound equipment).
- Laptop and printers for info graphics - including access to Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator.

OTHER INFORMATION

Because the students are problematic students we need them to take ownership of their learning, so step one is they had to apply for this learning programme then go through a short interview. Once selected a group contract around behaviour is negotiated. It is agreed 3 strikes by the teachers, the group or the youth workers and the students will be sent back to their regular lessons and removed from the project.

For the duration of this programme students call staff by their first names and whilst on the project the strict uniform guidelines are relaxed whilst they are in the project spaces. (They are reintroduced once they are filming around the school). It is agreed if they cause any disruption to other students not on the project, this would count as a "strike".

On the actual project the students are consulted during all phases of the project and this leads to them feeling a strong ownership of the project and wanting it to succeed. There is not likely to be any drop out from the group and very few "strikes" are expected. Students on this activity have said this was due to them feeling they were being treated like adults.

Training/Experience activities

Week 1

1. Meet the team, team building activities, introduce plan over the next 6 weeks.-
2. Group introduce themselves and share thoughts of how others perceive them in school.
3. Explore how you want to seen by others.
4. Exercise on computers to explore examples of cyberbullying and come up with a definition in small teams.
5. Present definitions then create an over all definition of what the team think cyberbullying is.
6. Final step: group goes round and shares one word to describe how they are feeling.

Week 2

1. Session is started in a secret classroom outdoors - clue is left and team have to find it and their teachers.
2. In small teams the group have to read, watch or listen to powerful stories about cyberbullying (podcasts, written articles or video clips) and then put together a case for which media platform has the most impact and why.
3. They then have to come a with a fictional story of their own recorded (using audio recorder on their phones) .
4. A team challenge is set to then type these up onto a laptop as a written story (chocolates for those who finish - staff can be called in to help).
5. Final step: group goes round and shares one word to describe how they are feeling.

Week 3

1. A cool creative space for learning is found - it is important this isn't a standard classroom - this needs to be thought-provoking (art classrooms might be a good space).
2. Energiser - gets the group to explore creativity and drawing.
3. In small teams the groups choose a written story created by another team.
4. This session is all about turning the written articles into a graphic or comic storyboard.
5. Using coloured pens and resources groups work on their graphics. Groups can complete these at home ready for the next session.

Week 4

1. Training on 10 x10 film framework (10 sequences of footage, each sequence can be no longer than 10 seconds in length).
2. Groups share their graphics, relate back to the written story and then teams pick a graphic which is not theirs - the aim is to use the 10x10 filming framework to turn the graphics into a short film.
3. Groups plan their film and use the session to get resources in place ready for filming next week.

Week 5

1. Teams receive a training input on how to use their phones to filming their projects.
2. They are introduced to smart phone rigs, 3 axis gimbals, lighting and additional sound equipment (better microphones).
3. They all receive a 20 minute training input on the 10 rules of filming.
4. Filming starts.

Week 6

1. Final stage of filming.
2. Group receive a simple editing tutorial or either IOS or Android editing software and editing begins with the group.
3. Editing starts.

Week 7

1. Editing finishes - films shown to staff and rest of the team (big screen/good sound).
2. Teams identify a time to showcase the films, stories and graphics to the headteacher and invited guests (including family / parents).
3. Some of team who have finished their films work on a simple infographic with staff based around cyberbullying.

Week 8

1. The students run a simple showcase event for headteacher and selected guests (could invite family).
2. Interactive evaluation session with the group and separate evaluation with teaching staff about impact.
3. Presentation ceremony with special certificates and prizes (e.g. cakes) for those who complete the full 8 weeks.

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This campaign is aimed at all age groups.
2. Activities are generally suitable for non-formal / informal settings.
3. Teachers and parents can also be involved.
4. Activities may be adapted to suit different age groups.
5. There is no minimum or maximum group size. During the campaign, 1-to-1 engagement is also encouraged.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To raise public awareness of road safety issues, especially among young people and children.
2. To reduce road traffic accidents.
3. To create a change of mentality especially for young new drivers who are the highest risk group.
4. To empower children and young people as peer-to-peer educators.

GENERAL INFORMATION

"The Honest Truth" was started as a small project but rapidly became an award winning, national road safety initiative delivered in collaboration with police, fire and local authorities in the UK. The aim is to teach young people about safety on the roads. Road accidents are a major problem affecting young people in all countries and we believe that young people should have a leading role in educating each other about the dangers. The campaign is run by the National Volunteer Police Cadets and a range of other partners. In 2016, Momentum World organised an international training course to share the methodology with 7 other European countries, funded by Erasmus+. Resources are available from Momentum World. For further information about the campaign please see <http://www.thehonesttruth.co.uk>

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Large cardboard photo (selfie) frame
- Printed "pledge cards"
- Video resources: Honest Truth music video for younger children; "COW" or "Victim's Sister" for teenagers / young adults - <https://vimeo.com/channels/thehonesttruth>
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=cow+road+safety

OTHER INFORMATION

The basis of the campaign is to communicate one simple message: "Small Changes Save Lives". It has been proved that children of 5 years old (or even younger) are aware of feeling safe in a car. This means that there are good reasons for teaching these young children about dangers such as speeding, seat belts, drinking and using mobile phones (now the biggest cause of accidents). Children can influence their parents and older siblings. The aim is not only to raise awareness but also to change behaviour. This starts from the principle that encouragement is more effective than enforcement: this is not about the law or police or punishment for bad behaviour. It is about helping people to understand that actions have consequences, and that the difference between safety and danger can be a matter of personal choice. The activities suggested here are only intended as a framework. A campaign can be very small (local) or very large (national). Momentum World is happy to advise anyone wishing to develop these activities. We can also help make contact with UK experts from the Volunteer Police Cadets or other suitable organisations.

Training/Experience activities

Phase A: workshop or group activity

1. The methodology here depends on the age of the group. For young children, activities will have to be led and guided by the teacher. For older groups, structured or free group discussion is possible. The level of each topic will also vary. If possible, animal masks should be used; if these are not available, then pictures can be used. Discussion about road safety:
 - a. What does it mean?
 - b. What is the difference between feeling safe and feeling afraid?
 - c. Who is responsible?
 - d. What are the causes of traffic accidents? Introduce the animals which represent different driving dangers (parrot = talking on mobile phone; chimpanzee = passengers playing around; cheetah = going too fast; etc.
2. Watch video (Honest Truth song or "Cow" etc). Then ask questions to check understanding. Play again, or learn to sing the song if appropriate.
3. Present statistics on traffic accidents (mainly for older groups).
4. Discussion of actions and consequences.
5. Creative activity: draw pictures of the animals (younger groups) or campaign posters (older groups); prepare the selfie-frame with colourful and appropriate images.
6. Everyone writes a campaign message on a large card. This is a message to a young driver. The take a photo of each participant, holding their message and using the selfie-frame.

Phase B: pledges

This stage of activity may follow on immediately from phase A and involve the same group, if the group includes young / new drivers. Because this stage requires other family members to take action, the activity organiser should prepare a simple info sheet / consent form for participants to take home, to show that this is an educational activity in accordance with privacy policies.

1. Hand out pledge cards. Explain that these are for anyone who drives a car. Younger children should give them to their parents or older siblings / relatives. The idea is to ask drivers to promise to make one small change: for example "I will not use my mobile phone while driving" or "I will use a back-seat seatbelt".
2. Participants take cards home and either write their own pledge or get other drivers (family/ friends) to write one. After writing the pledge, each person should be photographed holding the card, and then post the photo onto their personal Facebook or other social media page. The reason for this is that if you make a promise, you are much more likely to keep it if you tell other people.

Phase C: campaigning

Organise a local street action or if possible get the group to take part in a community event. Your activity needs to be somewhere with a family atmosphere, to attract children as well as parents.

1. Do a stakeholder analysis / map. (For young groups, the teacher or leader will do this). Who do you want to support your activity? Make sure you contact the police, driving instructors, and so on. Ask them to come and help you.
2. Prepare colourful banners and costumes (animal heads if possible). Prepare a simple information flier. Take along a speaker system to play the Honest Truth song; or get younger participants to perform the song.
3. All participants from your group should speak to as many people as possible and ask questions about driving / road safety. They hand out information fliers and pledge cards. Ask people to write a pledge and then take selfies with their cards. Encourage them to post on their social media.
4. After taking the selfies, collect the cards that have been written. This will give you an immediate measure of impact: how many cards did you get? (and make it competitive: who spoke to the most people and collected the most cards?).

Phase D: reporting

1. Organise a follow-up session with the group and ask for their feedback and ideas for the future.
2. Collect all the pledge cards and post photos online to show how many people you reached.
3. Make a short video of the activities and promote this online. Share with other schools / groups and encourage them to join the campaign in future. Get ready to do it again - bigger and better next time.

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This activity is suitable for any age or ability of participants.
2. Preferred group size is 10-12.
3. Activities normally take place over several sessions which may be daily, weekly or at any suitable intervals.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To enable young people to communicate directly with policy-makers.
2. To empower young people concerning issues which affect their lives.
3. To raise awareness of relevant issues within the community and encourage wider support for solutions.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This activity uses the methodology of "Time for Tea", a global programme developed by Momentum World with support from Erasmus+. Time for Tea is an educational activity which uses tea to give young people a voice. It encourages global learning, creative thinking and social action. It is simple, fun and accessible to people of any age, background or ability.

Any teacher, youth worker or other motivated person can lead a Time for Tea project. No specialist knowledge is required. The methodology allows maximum flexibility, so the approach, content, activities and timetable can be adapted to the needs and interests of each group.

For further information about Time for Tea, visit www.time4tea.info

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- Packets of tea.
- Creative materials of all / any kinds.
- Film or smartphone video camera (with stability rig if possible).

OTHER INFORMATION

The methodology of Time for Tea can be applied to any topic of importance to young people. Here we suggest a focus on lifestyle issues and in particular online safety. However if the group strongly prefer to work on other issues, they should be encouraged to do so. Empowerment, creativity and motivation are key to success with this activity. The objective is to enable the opinions of young people to be heard by decision makers and the wider community.

Before starting this activity, we recommend registering the group on the Time for Tea website. This ensures that the group becomes a member of the global community and will have access to the results platform, ensuring greater sustainability.

You should consider stakeholders for the activity. There will be a need to make contact with decision-makers, so you need to work out whether any issues of protocol are involved, and who could help you and your group to "get through the door".

Training/Experience activities

It is expected that the whole process will take several weeks but an accelerated timetable is possible.

1. Prepare

- Plan your activities. Choose the group of young people you will work with. Remember - it is their project: the leader should only advise and support. Planning should include creating a simple storyboard for the film that will be produced at the end of the activities. This is important, in order to make sure that you capture useful and creative footage.

2. Discuss 1

- Young people should have the chance to explore and discuss a wide range of issues that are important to them. Guidance and materials are available from the Time for Tea website or directly from Momentum World.
- The group leader will gradually focus the discussion onto issues connected with youth lifestyles (but allow alternative topics if the group wishes). In this example, we take the issue of online safety as the focus.

3. Discuss 2

- Having decided which topic is most important, the group has to decide what they want to say about it. Who do they want to listen, and what do they want to change? The message should be short, positive and easy to understand. For example, the group might want to advocate a specific policy or legislation to improve cyber-safety.

4. Create

- Buy a packet of tea. The group works together to design an imaginative packet for the tea plus their message. How creative can they be? If possible the design should be connected with the message.

5. Communicate

- The group delivers the tea and message to the person or people they want to listen. Ask this person to drink the tea and think about the message. Hopefully they will answer or offer a meeting - so they can drink tea together with the group, and discuss the issue.

6. Disseminate

- Tell the story of your project, through video, photographs or other media. Send it to Momentum World so that we can help you share it with the world via the Time for Tea website. This will also enable you to link with other groups who share your interests, perhaps leading to further international projects.
- Organise a dissemination event so that you can tell the local community and engage them with the issues. This is a further opportunity for young people to develop presentation and communication skills. It also creates inter-generational dialogue.

NOTE: more detailed methodology, materials and support will be provided to your group after you register on the Time for Tea website. <https://www.time4tea.info>

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This activity is suitable for young people aged 16+.
2. Group size from 18 to 32.
3. Can be organized in schools, youth groups, or as part of wider projects.
4. Duration 2 hours.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To explore all topics related to "Youth Lifestyles, Deviance and Prevention" in a single session.
2. To share ideas and communicate inspiring messages to a wider audience.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This is a very simple activity following a basic "World Café" style but also leading to production of a creative output which can be used for wider communication / dissemination.

It is a new activity which has not yet been implemented in this form, although the basic elements are already tried and tested. It is based on the work done during the "Youth Lifestyles" Erasmus+ project.

The choice of topics covered will depend on the interests of each group and also on the availability of relevant experts (youth / social workers, policy makers or others with experience of each topic – this could be a person who has been affected by the issues). It is recommended that a minimum of 4 topics should be covered in each session.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- DSLR camera or good quality smartphone.
- Photo editing software (PowerPoint can also be used instead).
- Colour printer and photo paper (if physical photo prints are wanted).

OTHER INFORMATION

Each expert should sit at one round table for the whole session. It is a good idea to have a second person at each table, preferably with good writing / artistic skills, to create a mind-map or word-cloud from the discussions as they evolve.

Another person (staff member or young person) should be responsible for the photography element. They need to find a well-lit location preferably with an interesting background. Alternatively, a "photo-booth" could be set up. If more professional equipment is available, that will be an advantage but it is not essential.

It is advisable to create a postcard template in advance, so that each photo and statement can be pasted in easily (see below). Momentum World can give more advice about how to organise this process.

Training/Experience activities

Introductions

Allow everyone to introduce themselves. Possibly use some icebreaker activities. Explain how the session will be organised and encourage participation.

Discussions and recording

Each table will be devoted to one topic, e.g. drugs; road safety; mental health; etc. A relevant expert and recorder will be seated at each table, staying there for the whole session.

Equal numbers of participants should sit at each table. The expert will present the topic for 5 minutes, and then the group will discuss the issue and offer ideas for solutions for 15 minutes. The recorder will build a mind-map or word-cloud based on the discussion.

After 20 minutes, each individual will write down one sentence or some key words which represent an inspiring statement about the topic. They should write their name on the paper. Papers are collected.

Each group then moves to another table, where the process is repeated. The expert will again introduce the topic, and summarise the previous discussions. As the new discussion progresses, the recorder will add more content to the mind-map.

This process is repeated 4 times (i.e. each table has hosted 4 groups).

The experts and reporters then present the composite mind-maps to the whole group.

Photographs

While the discussions are taking place, participants will be taken aside one by one to have their photo taken in the photo corner or photo-booth.

Creating the postcards

Each participant's photo plus inspiring statements will be combined (using a prepared template) to create an "inspiration postcard" to illustrate the topics discussed.

If enough people are on the creative team, it is possible to produce these postcards before the participants leave; but in most cases, it will be preferable to do the editing after the session.

Postcards may be printed and given to participants; or may be distributed only in electronic form.

Completed postcards may be used in various ways, including communication with policy makers, project results dissemination, or as further training tools (See example of a postcard from another project below).



TARGET AUDIENCE

This online training is designed for parents and teachers - but also for anyone with an interest in helping with the addressing of the topic of bullying.

There are 2 main online courses; one for parents and one for teachers, and also there is the book 'The Truth about Bullying'.

You can find all the info here:
<https://youthpotential.mykajabi.com>

OBJECTIVES

The goal and mission is to supply EVERY UK school with the Teacher Training Program on bullying, with FREE access to all school staff.

So far we have supplied 14,000 schools, and have another 17,000 to go in 2020. We also want all parents to learn the Truth About Bullying with the parents course and book.

Together, parents and teachers will be drip feeding the same information to our children, which will help them understand and overcome any bullying.

about Bullying, the Con-Trick behind any bullying, what is actually driving the bullies' behaviour, the 'Emotional Needs' that are the true reasons WHY people bully, how different personalities contribute to the problem and the magic formula of HOW to respond and overcome any bullying.

OTHER INFORMATION

The goal of the MADD Challenge, is to provide every UK school with a Teacher Training Programme, that will make a DIRECT difference with Bullying & mental health issues.

We have been using a social media campaign to raise awareness, which has brought forward genuine people & businesses who are directly donating to supply school programs. This will help self-fund the growth of the courses available to schools for FREE, and cover all issues dealing with the mental health of our youth. As well as helping school children, the course content will also be helping teachers & school staff with their own mental health. A TRUE WIN-WIN.

GENERAL INFORMATION and BACKGROUND

The bullying problem (especially online) is causing so many mental health issues, self-harm and suicides with children of all ages. In 2018 and 2019, child suicides were over 200 each year and thousands of more cases with mental health problems. It's time to make a difference and tackle the bullying problem directly. This course gives you a true understanding of the con-trick behind bullying, and how to overcome and deal with it.

Influenced nine years ago, after reading an article where a teenage girl had committed suicide due to cyber bullying, Norry Ascroft from Blackpool, UK set up the Making A Direct Difference campaign (MADD).

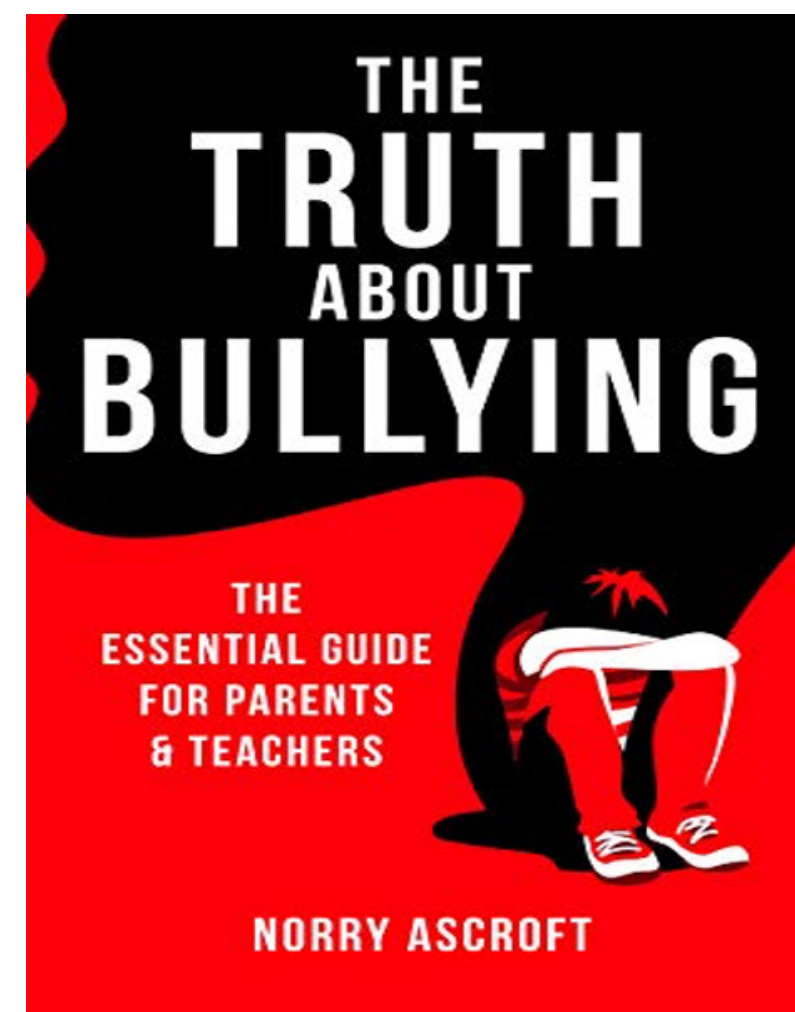
"It was the third suicide in as many weeks that I'd read related to bullying, and it just hit me emotionally," he said.

VIDEO COURSE and BOOK INFO

The video training course provides you with a true understanding of what is really going on with bullying, and how anyone can overcome the hurt and emotional pain it causes.

The information is all based on human behaviour, so it can be filtered into any activities that your children are doing and at any age. This course on bullying is totally unique, and is making a direct difference for parents and children all over the UK and in other countries. There are 10 videos in the course; Set up, Model of The World, Emotional Needs, Personalities, How to Respond, The Book, The Magic Triangle, How To Drip-Feed and How To Overcome.

The Truth About Bullying book helps you to truly understand WHY people bully and HOW to overcome the emotional pain that bullying causes. You will learn: the two main truths



GROUP INFORMATION

1. This activity employs the power of pictures to portray teenagers' views on the effects of bullying in the world.
2. Level 2 (this ranking takes into account the necessary preparation of the facilitator and the level of input required from the participants).
3. Group size: 9/12, aged 13-15
4. Duration: 100 minutes.
5. Related rights: Right to education.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the causes and consequences of bullying.
2. To advertise young people's perception on the issue of bullying.
3. To awaken sympathy for the fight against bullying from the wider population, through art and creativity.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- bits of paper/canvas.
- coloured pens/acrylics/pencils etc.
- tape, string, scissors, pegs (to create the art gallery).

OTHER INFORMATION

Get acquainted with the causes and consequences of bullying and be ready to emphasize why it is a relevant problem in your community.

Training/Experience activities

Instructions:

1. Discuss the issue of bullying in your country and local community. Outline the main three types of bullying: physical, verbal, and social. Ask participants whether they have experienced and/or witnessed instances of bullying within their community.
2. Split participants into three groups and ask each group to write and act out a scenario describing any one of the three aforementioned types of bullying. Assign the topic randomly.
3. Reassign the topics so that each group has a different one. Now ask them to create illustrations inspired by the previous group's portrayal of the phenomenon. They should consider the consequences that type of bullying has on the victim, the aggressor, and the witnesses, as well as the wider community. Encourage them to create as many illustrations as they feel like; however they should all include one to answer each of the following questions: "What is bullying?" and "What would a world without bullying look like?"
4. Ask the participant groups to work together and set up a miniature art gallery in the workshop room. They should also come up with ideas to promote their exhibition to the world.

Debriefing and evaluation:

Ask them to consider how watching and acting the scenarios made them feel:

- Could you relate to the plays? Did you feel more empathetic towards the victims by watching the scenarios unfold than you would have been had you read about a bullying story in the newspaper or heard about it from a friend, for example?
- Do you agree that images speak louder than words? Is art an effective way to fight bullying, discrimination, and intolerance?
- Did the illustrations feel accurate? Do you think they would be appealing to the wider public?
- What other out-of-the-box ideas can you think of, to fight bullying in targeted communities?

Tips for facilitators:

As bullying is a common phenomenon, some of the portrayals might awaken painful memories and even trauma for some of the participants that have experienced it before. Assure them that your workshop is a safe place and that they are encouraged to share only as much as they are comfortable doing.

Suggestions for follow-up:

Encourage the participants to reach out to art galleries, museums or other spaces, and convince them to arrange their exhibition and open it to the public, in order to raise awareness about bullying and its consequences.

("Pictures at an exhibition" the title of a suite of ten pieces composed by Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky)

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This activity encourages young people to assess their own communities by creating a customized anti-bullying campaign.
2. Level 5 (this ranking takes into account the necessary preparation of the facilitator and the level of input required from the participants).
3. Group size: 15-20.
4. Duration: 150 minutes.
5. Related rights: Right to education.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To encourage anti-bullying movements at grassroots levels.
2. To enable young people to develop the skills to fight bullying.
3. To compel young people to critically assess their own communities.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- bits of paper
- colourful pens and markers, post-its etc.
- flipchart/cardboard sheets

OTHER INFORMATION

Familiarize yourself with the mechanisms that have been proven useful in the fight against bullying, in order to be able to offer meaningful ideas and suggestions to the participants regarding their projects.

Get acquainted with the process of project writing.

Training/Experience activities

Instructions:

1. Describe the issue of bullying in your country/globally, its causes and consequences and how it influences the progress of communities. Ask participants to consider their community and think of one minority that are usually subject to discrimination and bullying and the possible reasons behind that.
2. Discuss the process of writing a project and outline the key steps, with clear examples. Share a few tips and tricks for running successful campaigns.
3. Split the participants into groups. Explain that each group will have to choose a minority whose members are often victims of bullying, and design a small project to tackle that particular issue.
4. Ask them to create a campaign to promote their project within their community. Each campaign should have a visual identity that includes a logo and a message that they could challenge the community to support.
5. Ask the participants to present their projects. Encourage the other groups to make comments and ask questions. Discuss what resources they would need in order to bring the projects to life and the funding opportunities available within their community.

Debriefing and evaluation:

Consider the participants' proposals and debate their feasibility:

- Do you think the projects could reach their target objectives in the community? What about other communities, would they be as effective?
- Is the project more likely to gain support and sympathy because it is run by members of the community? What other factors would enable the public to take ownership of the project?
- How important are individual and specific actions in tackling world-wide issues such as bullying? Are grassroots movements more successful in this matter?
- What else would you do to tackle bullying in your community?

Tips for facilitators:

Keep in mind that some participants might be members of minorities themselves and could therefore be offended or upset by some of the debates. You should encourage participants to be empathetic to each others' experiences and thoughts.

Suggestions for follow-up:

Encourage the participants to pitch their projects to youth NGOs, as well as to apply for participative funding mechanisms and run their projects within their communities.

(*"The shape of things to come"* title of a science fiction novel by British writer H. G. Wells, which speculates on future events up to the year 2106)

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This activity explores the mechanisms through which children become bullies, as well as creating a profile for school discrimination officers.
2. Level 4 (this ranking takes into account the necessary preparation of the facilitator and the level of input required from the participants).
3. Group size: 10-12.
4. Duration: 120 minutes.
5. Related rights: Right to education.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To uncover the motives and stimuli that over time cause a bully's actions.
2. To raise awareness regarding the impact that seemingly harmless statements can have on others.
3. To create the profile of the "anti-bully" and encourage teenagers to become one themselves.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- flipchart sheets
- paper
- pens/markers etc.

OTHER INFORMATION

Research the main motivations that lead to anti-social behaviour such as bullying. These are often linked to childhood experiences (e.g. lack of a father figure) and can be triggered by seemingly harmless jokes, pranks, or statements.

Design a couple of scenarios where seemingly neutral events trigger bullying.

Training/Experience activities

Instructions:

1. Describe why bullying is an alarming issue, by emphasizing how common it is and how its effects on everyone involved can be life-long. Ask the participants to share their own experiences with bullying. Explain that while people are not born bullies, they can become bullies and that the first part of the activity is going to explore the hardships and triggers that can determine that.
2. Ask for volunteers to act out the scenarios you have prepared – you should include an aggressor, a victim, and a few witnesses with various reactions (including the bystander effect). Instruct them on the appropriate body language in each of the instances. Ask them to vote on which of the presented events they believed was the trigger, and justify their answers. Discuss how our memories and experiences can influence the way we react.
3. Discuss whether taking a stand when witnessing someone being bullied is important, and the methods available to do that.
4. Split the participants into groups and ask them to imagine the profile of a hypothetical discrimination officer (a student-held position within the school, responsible for fighting discrimination, intolerance, and bullying). What qualities should the discrimination officer have? How should the discrimination officer act? What methods would the discrimination officer choose in order to reach out to each of the categories above (victims, witnesses, aggressors) and alleviate the conflict?
5. Ask the groups to present their profiles. Discuss what are the key attributes of the "anti-bully", based on the proposals. Why are those important?

Debriefing and evaluation:

Encourage the participants to consider the following:

- Can our past experiences affect our current actions? Are we able to alter or counteract this influence?
- Is it important that we understand a bully's motivation? Do bullies deserve empathy from us – if yes, should it be more or less than for the victims?
- Is the bystander effect a dangerous phenomenon? Why do you think it occurs?
- What is the best way to help and support a victim of bullying?
- Do communities, especially school communities, need more indirect means for people to join the fight against bullying? Do you think having a (peer) discrimination officer would empower pupils to report more instances of bullying that they witness or experience?
- What other mechanisms should be created in schools in order to discourage bullying?

Tips for facilitators:

Discussing unfortunate experiences and linking them to bullying can be distressing to participants that have experienced similar circumstances. You should make a disclaimer that all roles are fictional and are merely meant to emphasize trends, not clearly established causative relations.

("Circle of influence" a psychological concept that describes all the things in our life that we have control over (the things we say, our behaviour etc.)

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This activity uses a youth-friendly quiz and the role-play approach to debunk myths regarding pregnancy and contraceptives.
2. Level 2 (this ranking takes into account the necessary preparation of the facilitator and the level of input required from the participants).
3. Group size: 8-10, aged 14-18.
4. Duration: 90 minutes.
5. Related rights: Right to education.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To educate young people on the myths surrounding pregnancy.
2. To inform young people on available methods of contraception, including their benefits and drawbacks.
3. To emphasize the importance of access to accurate information.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- paper and pens
- boxes/bowls/hats

OTHER INFORMATION

Examine the issue of teenage pregnancy in your country and/or local community. Prepare 12-18 questions/statements aiming to highlight the most common myths and misconceptions about pregnancy and contraception.

Training/Experience activities

Instructions:

1. Describe the context of teenage pregnancy in your country and/or local community, as well as the impact this phenomenon can have, both on the people involved and on the wider community.
2. Explain that you will show them (either on a projector slide, pieces of cardboard) a series of statements and yes/no questions regarding pregnancy, the practice of safe sex and contraceptive measures and the associated myths and misconceptions. Each statement/question will have a corresponding voting box (bowls or hats could also be used) in which they will have to place their anonymous votes, deciding after each statement whether it is true/false, or the answer is yes/no, respectively.
3. Open the boxes together and sort the votes. Consider the results - what is the general trend in the group? Are they mostly able to tell the myths from the facts or not? Discuss how trusting myths can be deceiving and dangerous.
4. Split the participants randomly into 2 groups and ask them to role-play the consequences of trusting accurate vs. inaccurate information when it comes to having a healthy sex life. To aid their creativity, they should be encouraged to use some of the previous examples of facts/myths.
5. Invite the participants to present their short plays. Ask the other group to pay attention and consider what the performing group's inspiration might have been, and share the conclusions after both groups have completed the task. Ask the participants what other situations they might have chosen to portray, had they been assigned to the opposite group.

Debriefing and evaluation:

Ask participants to consider the consequences illustrated during the role-play exercise:

- Are they realistic?
- Are there any other consequences that have been overlooked?
- How did your role make you feel?
- How would you react if you were in that situation?

Debate how important being able to tell apart myths from facts is:

- In your community, how many people do you think believe in at least one of those myths?
- What could be done to improve overall access to accurate information within your community?
- What could you personally do to educate your peers and enable them to base their decisions on accurate information?

Tips for facilitators:

- Be aware of the fact that sexual health might be a sensitive subject for some teenagers. You should make it clear from the start that this is a safe space and that there is no shame in not knowing all the answers, emphasizing the fact that the point of this workshop is to educate.
- Be prepared to handle some participants fooling around, as well as instances of inappropriate laughter. You should explain that sexual health is just as important as general health and is not a topic that we should avoid.

("Mythbusters" based on the famous supernatural comedy film, Ghostbusters)

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This activity explores the costs of having a baby by translating them into youth-friendly board-games.
2. Level 4 (this ranking takes into account the necessary preparation of the facilitator and the level of input required from the participants).
3. Group size: 6/12/18/24
4. Duration: 120 minutes
5. Related rights: Right to education

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To uncover the costs associated with bringing up a child.
2. To illustrate the importance of making informed decisions.
3. To promote the practice of safe sex.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- cardboard sheets
- paper
- coloured pens and markers
- coloured post-its

OTHER INFORMATION

Prepare posters or slides with the most common necessities for a baby (food, medical bills, nappies etc.) and research the associated costs.

Training/Experience activities**Instructions:**

1. Describe the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy, its prevalence in your region and its consequences, particularly child abandonment. Explain to the participants that you will show them a series of pictures illustrating the most important and common necessities for a baby that translate into the most significant costs for a family.
2. Split participants into pairs and ask them to estimate the cost for each of the goods/services shown.
3. Go around the room asking each of the pairs to share their estimates and then show them the real costs. Were they close? Which of the costs do they find most surprising?
4. Split the participants into three groups and ask them to create a boardgame that would highlight these expenses. Encourage them to use as many illustrations as possible to make the board-games more appealing. They should try to include as many of the previously discussed costs as possible. Explain that they will have to pitch their ideas to the other groups and that they should also think of ways to advertise the game to the public. Each of the groups will have to vote which one of the other boardgames they would fund if they could.
5. Ask the participants to present both the layout of their boardgame, as well as the rules they have envisioned. Invite the other groups to ask questions and then consult among themselves in order to pick one of the other teams. Ask the groups to justify their decisions and point out how the ideas could potentially be improved.

Debriefing and evaluation:

Ask the participants to build on the previous discussions:

- Do they agree that having a baby is an investment?
- Should people be fully aware of the expenses of having a child before they engage in unsafe sexual activity?
- How important is it to be able to make informed decisions?
- Do they think boardgames are a creative tool to help people become more responsible? Could they be effective in promoting the practice of safe sex?
- What other similar tools can they think of?

Tips for facilitators:

- Understand that this topic is a sensitive one and it might make some of the participants feel uncomfortable or ashamed.
- You should be prepared to answer any potential questions regarding the practice of safe sex and contraception.

(“Mythbusters” based on the famous supernatural comedy film, Ghostbusters)

GROUP INFORMATION

1. This activity consists of a school board simulation, debating whether they should introduce a sexual education elective course.
2. Level 3 (this ranking takes into account the necessary preparation of the facilitator and the level of input required from the participants) Group size: 8-10, aged 14-18.
3. Group size: 8-14.
4. Duration: 60 minutes.
5. Related rights: Right to education.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. To emphasize the importance of sexual education in schools.
2. To portray the various attitudes of decision-makers towards sexual education.
3. To explore the methods that could be adopted.

PRE-SESSION CHECKLIST

- a large board meeting style table with chairs
- bits of paper and pens

OTHER INFORMATION

Find out the number of people there are on a regular school board and the proportions of teachers/students/parents/public authority representatives.

Create short role descriptions for each of the representatives: some should be for, other against, and some neutral; describe how easily influenced they are supposed to be and try to include a short justification of their stance.

Training/Experience activities**Instructions:**

1. Describe the issue of teenage pregnancy in your country/community. Ask the participants to think back on their school experience and consider whether this topic has ever been tackled.
2. Explain the set-up. Tell them that they are going to portray a school board meeting where the only point on the agenda is to discuss the proposal of introducing a sexual education elective course.
3. Randomly assign roles to the participants. Ask them to only reveal their character (whether they are a parent/student/teacher/public authority representative) and not their character's thoughts and feelings on the matter. Give them 15 minutes to meet with the other people of their group and discuss strategy.
4. Set the scene and start the "meeting". Limit the time of the meeting according to the number of participants and the available time.

Debriefing and evaluation:

Ask the participants to consider how they felt during the session:

- Did you feel that you were being listened to? Did you feel that you were being pressured to support someone's cause/were people trying to inflict their own opinions on you?
- How accurate do you think your representations are? Do you think there is much resistance in schools, from teachers, parents, and officials when it comes to sex education?
- Do schools play an important role in promoting safe sex? Are they currently doing enough? What more could they be doing?

Tips for facilitators:

- Be mindful of the fact that the topic of sex education is a sensitive one that can be taken jokingly by some teenagers. Emphasize the magnitude of the issue and reassure them that the workshop is a safe space where they can share their thoughts.
- Try not to interfere with the flow of the debate but do defuse the situation if participants become aggressively passionate in their performance.

(*"Wallpapered meetings" based on the phrase "to wallpaper a meeting" = trying to populate the meeting with people likely to agree to one's position*)

ADDICTIONS

THE MALIGNANT VORTEX

Say it ain't so
Your drug is a heartbreaker
Say it ain't so
My love is a life taker
I can't confront you
I never could do that which might hurt you
So, try and be cool
When I say
This way is a water slide away from me
That takes you further every day

"Say it ain't so", Joe Ghost

What is addiction? Over the last few decades, the concept of addiction has become progressively broader. Today it refers to all those behaviours and acts that may initially have the function of providing pleasure and relieving an inner pain or discomfort, but later become persistent and uncontrollable, despite their harmful physical and mental consequences for the individual. Due to the variety and complexity of its typical causes, and the multiple forms it can take, we can say that addiction is much more than a "severe substance use disorder".

A wide spectrum. It is certainly true that in the collective imagination the concept of addictions is frequently associated with the regular use of a legal psychoactive substance (alcohol, tobacco, psychotropic medicines) or an illegal one (heroin, cocaine, synthetic drugs, hashish/cannabis*, etc.); but this must not divert our attention from other forms of addiction, which can be equally devastating for the individual, particularly for the young.

Alongside the regular use of drugs and abuse of alcohol and tobacco, the spectrum of addictions has gradually expanded to include forms such as *gambling/gaming*, *eating disorders* (anorexia, bulimia, binge-eating), *a compulsive sexuality* characterised by an uncontrolled desire, *body dysmorphic disorder* ("my body is too small" - bigorexia or reverse anorexia), the obsessive use of *electronic devices* (social networks and the Internet); and also the need of "adrenaline-producing experiences", the continuous search for extreme sensations resulting from acts that often endanger one's own life. All these forms of addiction, varied and different from each other, explain why it is a complex condition that cannot simply be reduced to an illness of the brain that occurs with the compulsive use of psychotropic substances.

What do all these forms of addiction have in common? All are characterised by the impossibility of controlling an inordinate desire that leads to a compulsive act or obsessive and self-injurious behaviour (to the point that it takes over one's whole life), where attempts to control and interrupt the repetition of the act or behaviour are in vain. This also applies to those forms in which the addiction manifests itself as a "lacking act", a systematic show of denial, rejection, or removal (as in the case of anorexic subjects towards food). Uncontrolled, obsessively repeated acts are only the manifestation of a problem that in most cases has very deep and hidden causes.

Causes and Effects. Addiction, therefore, is a complex phenomenon that is often grounded in a person's experience and does not have a cause that can be uniquely defined: it has roots - often far back in time - linked to the individual's evolutionary history, to their daily life habits, or to behavioural tendencies. It may be triggered by many factors, of a personal, social and / or hereditary nature, for example harmful personal experiences, education, environment, family, depression, mood at a particular moment in life, lack of self-esteem, and so on. Sometimes an apparent "weakness of character" leads to yielding too easily to pressures and expectations of the peer group; while more generally, there may be a feeling of inadequacy compared to the images and models promoted by our contemporary culture, and the expectations of our society ("I'm not able to look or behave the way that other people expect").

The search for a pleasure that does not gratify. The reaction to all these pressures, to feeling harassed, besieged, empty inside, or not being up to what society expects, results in an escape into an "easy" and illusory pleasure, an imagined fulfilment that does not give any real gratification, fuelled by an insatiable and malignant desire that inexorably leads individuals to lose their self-control and autonomy, undermining their ability to cope with the different situations which confront them - and so, gradually, to shut down their lives.

The great difficulty – and also the most delicate aspect – in both preventive and therapeutic interventions lies in shifting the focus from the visible part of the addiction (desire – act – (moment form of addiction are in fact the symptom, the consequence of a profound malaise, in many cases a desperate attempt to remedy or escape from a deep and painful emotional, psychological distress that is impossible to bear.

The approach to the problem of addictions must not be centred on the product, but on people and their social relationships. It is painful to note that our society prefers to marginalise those who become victims of their own contradictions, rather than trying to remove them.

“The Gods’ seasons”, H. Morgaron

Prevention: Youth workers and non-formal education.

It is clear that the terrain on which educators and youth / social workers move, and in which they can have an impact, is that of Prevention.

All those who work with young people using the methods and tools of non-formal education have the opportunity to:

- **share enough time and space** to get to know young people, listen to them, empathize with them. This allows youth workers to be close to young people in moments of greatest difficulty and to “feel what they feel”, which in many cases is impossible for the adult world
- **propose activities** which, for their implementation, rely on the resources of the young people who are in the group. These activities are thus based on the principle of active participation, and stimulate the imagination and creativity of the participants. These are also positive activities: they allow youth workers to create a real life process of inclusion, belonging and identification with the peer group. This results in the assumption of a recognised role within the group, responsibility, autonomy, the ability to propose / take initiatives, participate in the decision-making process, etc.
- become a **point of reference** not only for education, but also for affection, especially for the most vulnerable and fragile young people who may suffer from affective deficiencies and difficult family situations. It is precisely this position – in some ways privileged – within groups, this recognition by young people of their particular role, that allows youth workers to convey positive values and to be listened to when they propose healthy lifestyles (relational skills). Furthermore, the relationship between young people in difficulty and youth workers can be decisive in preventing risky acts, bad choices, or a lifestyle that is harmful to health
- be aware of **what is happening in the lives of young people**: when they see young people at risk of slipping into harmful lifestyles, dangerous behaviours, and addiction, they can refer the case to experts and competent services. It is clear that in the case of any medical or psychological intervention, educators become the first interlocutors for such experts and services, because nobody (except perhaps – though not necessarily – the parents) knows the young person better than them. It is therefore beneficial when interventions and measures to fight addiction are the result of networking and consultation between professionals with different profiles and skills, and including both formal and non-formal educators
- take advantage of working closely with young people and understanding their particular group dynamics: youth workers can thereby initiate activities based on principles of peer education or cross-age group education (e.g. younger members playing a multiplier role, or young people as a resource for other adolescents). In many cases, young people are the best role models, the ideal vehicle for promoting healthy values and lifestyles.

SLOVAKIA

National Framework



Some data

After a progressive improvement in the data recorded from 2011 to 2015 – years in which the estimates of consumption stabilised and gave hope – in recent years Slovakia has unfortunately again experienced an increase in tobacco and drug use and alcohol consumption.

In the observed period 2004-2018, the number of treated drug users in specialised centres increased remarkably: in 2018, 31.2% more people were treated for drug addiction than in 2004.

In 2018, 3,038 people underwent treatment for illicit drug use in Slovakia (males accounted for up to 81.6%, females for 18.4%).

In the data relating to the age distribution of drug-induced deaths reported in 2018, or more recently, Slovakia ranks ninth out of 30 European countries (European Drug Report: Trends and Development, European Monitoring Center for Drug and Drug Addiction, 2020).

In 2017, one in five prison inmates in Slovakia had addiction problems.

The cities of Bratislava and Piešťany participated in the European Project “Sewage Analysis Core Group Europe” (SCORE - 2015 and 2016) which had as its object the analysis of

wastewater. In both cities, a high concentration of cocaine and MDMA was recorded with a significant rise in values over the weekend, an evident sign of youth involvement.

In Slovakia, the problem of drug use is mainly associated with high-risk methamphetamine (domestic methamphetamine production) and high-risk opioid use. Statistics for people entering treatment indicate that primary methamphetamine use in Europe is concentrated in Czechia, Germany and Slovakia (European Drug Report: Trends and Development, EMCDDA). Out of more than 2,000 prison inmates tested, 3 out of 10 tested positive for drug use. The drugs most identified were cannabis, opioids and amphetamines: a high percentage of the inmates tested positive for benzodiazepines.

Fortunately, not all the data are so negative: according to many data and parameters, the situation in Slovakia is actually much more positive than in other countries (for example, the proportion of clients who inject heroin has markedly declined in recent years).

Despite this, these data make us reflect on the phenomenon of addiction, especially among young people, and on the measures and strategies (especially preventive) that need to be put in place to tackle the problem of youth addiction.

Youth Addiction in Slovakia

As in many countries, so too in Slovakia there is a lively debate on the relationship (and the possible transition) between: (a) forms of addiction to legal substances or activities (mainly alcohol and tobacco, but also gambling and excessive use of electronic devices); (b) illicit so-called soft drugs (marijuana / hashish etc.); and (c) hard drugs (e.g. heroin, cocaine, crack, methamphetamines) which create addictions from which there is often no escape, leading to a significantly lower quality of life and, in many cases, death. In Slovakia, the debate is fuelled by data (especially relating to young people aged 15-24) which are quite alarming. It is not our intention to give any answers here, much less to reach conclusions on the possible transition in addiction from legal substances to illicit ones (the problem is very complex and requires a thorough and scientific examination). We limit ourselves here to reporting selected data, and underlining how alcohol abuse and smoking are in themselves serious problems that affect young Slovaks, especially male teenagers.

Some particularly interesting data are provided by the 2019 report European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) carried out in collaboration with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). This collected detailed data on students aged 15-16, beginning in 1995 (24 years of activity) and involving 35 European countries including 25 EU member states. The report gives reliable and comparable information on a key population, enabling analysis of different forms of youth addition and helping us to understand the mechanisms by which young people are drawn into psychoactive substance use and other deviant behaviours.

Tobacco

On average, 2.9 % of students began smoking cigarettes on a daily basis at age 13 or younger. Slovakia sadly holds the European record with 6.0% of this age group smoking, a percentage which goes well beyond the European average.

Alcohol abuse

Although the most recent ESPAD survey indicates that the downwards trend has levelled off and remained constant in 2019, nevertheless Slovakia reported a worrying increase in current alcohol use, of five or more percentage points.

Drugs

Slovakia is among the European countries with the highest proportions of students reporting regular use of illicit drugs (Czechia 29%, Italy 28%, Latvia 27%, **Slovakia 25%** - though it should be noted that this mainly relates to cannabis use).

Young people aged 15-24 who regularly consume cannabis make up 13.2% of the population in the age group between 15 and 64 years; they are 2.5% for the consumption of MDMA-Extasy (practically almost the whole national consumption) and almost 1% for the consumption of methamphetamines (almost half of the entire national consumption. The other half is consumed by young people between 25 and 34 years old). The consumption of cocaine is low (0.3% of the population aged 15 - 34): this is most probably due to the high costs, which is why other psychoactive substances at more affordable prices are preferred by young people.

It should be noted that in Slovakia the data relating to the use of drugs and the consumption of alcohol and tobacco are increased by Roma young people who, according to the latest census, represent about 2% of the population. Among Roma adolescents, and sometimes even children, the inhalation of toluene and alcohol abuse are widespread.

Prevention: although the National Drug Strategy 2013-2020 defines the main objectives of prevention and intervention frameworks in line with policies and measures implemented at European level, in recent years Slovakia has only earmarked 0.05% of the GDP for this purpose, with most of the funds being used for reduction of supply (60%) and reduction of demand (35%). Unfortunately, too small a proportion - almost insignificant - of the social funds earmarked for the fight against addiction is devoted to the prevention of risk factors that can trigger drug use or alcohol consumption. The preventive system is therefore not very effective in the fight against various forms of addiction.

In Slovakia, prevention is an integral part of the programmes of many national institutions. Most preventive interventions are coordinated and monitored centrally, but the evaluation of the objectives achieved, effectiveness of methods used and impact on target communities is often incomplete or not even performed.

Preventive activities in schools focus on alcohol, smoking, illegal drugs and risky behaviour. Several systematic prevention programmes are implemented, such as "*Cesta k emocionálnej zrelosti*" (Road to Emotional Maturity), a long-term programme targeted at students aged 12-15 which develops and strengthens psychological and social skills as protective factors (e.g. "ako povedat nie", how to say no).

Prevention Centres provide pedagogical and psychological counselling, with an emphasis on primary school pupils, parents and teachers. All Primary and Secondary schools have a prevention coordinator who is usually the school psychologist or a teacher.

Formally, all schools are connected in a large national network and participate in prevention programmes, but the educational and training activities are often one-off, uncoordinated events that are the initiative of individual schools. For this reason, preventive initiatives lose a large part of their potential.

Scattered throughout the country, there are several Youth / Leisure Centres that implement youth prevention programs based on the principles of peer-to-peer and non-formal education. This type of pedagogical action needs to be strengthened.

Among the various **Health and Disease Prevention** initiatives addressed to young people, the university association SloMSA (Slovak Medical Students Association) deserves a particular mention. Medical students organise thematic meetings, workshops, training courses focused on sexual education (prevention of early pregnancy/use of contraceptive methods and STI), prevention of diseases and damage caused by the use/abuse of drugs, tobacco and alcohol (clear explanations and illustrations showing the effects of these substances on the health of young people: throat, lungs and overall breast and testicular cancer, brain and lung damage, heart failure, etc.) Their methods are practical, interactive and participatory, enabling young participants to learn about their own body, gain confidence and overcome the fear of talking about addiction and health problems. Members of the Association's Kosice branch - Spolok Medikov Mesta Košice (Medical Students' Association Košice) - were also trainers on the Erasmus+ project Youth Lifestyles, Deviance and Prevention (Stara Ľubovňa Training Course).

The website of the National Drugs Monitoring Centre provides information and counselling services. Specialist psychological counselling is also provided for families where there are young people with drug and alcohol addiction problems.

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DEPRESSION LONELINESS

THE SHADOWS OF DEPRESSION AND LONELINESS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Physical and mental health should also be understood as an instrument for social inclusion, empowerment and active citizenship of young people.

*European Commission,
White Paper on Youth Policy*

21 November 2001

A dark, deep evil: there is now unanimous agreement among mental health specialists, that depression is the leading cause of death of young people in the 14 - 29 age group. While in some cases the direct relationship between depression and causes of death – such as suicide or drug overdose – is evident, it is less so in the case of so-called ‘unhealthy practices’, i.e. all those behaviours that have a significant impact on causes of death of young people. For instance, a reckless driving style, or even errors at the wheel that lead to road traffic accidents, which are the leading (direct) cause of death of adolescents and young people in many countries; but also other highly risky, seemingly unconscious behaviour that endangers young people’s lives, or harmful habits that have a more diluted effect over time, but that are equally damaging, such as smoking, alcohol, “soft drugs” consumption, or an unnatural relationship with food, and so on. In fact, it is much more difficult to determine the true causes of reckless behaviour by directly relating it to a depressive state: certainly not everything can be attributed to depression, but its impact on the living conditions of many people (especially young people) and, in many cases, in ending life is much greater than is generally thought. When it does not manifest itself openly, depression is sneaky, hidden, deep; which means that it is difficult for people affected by it, to reveal their own inmost state, talk about it, or share what they feel. It is a dark, deep evil that undermines the lives of young people from within: it has appropriately been called a “cancer of the soul”.

The worrying dimensions of the phenomenon: according to WHO statistics, the burden of depression and other mental health conditions is on the rise globally: more than 300 million people in the world are affected by depression, which is therefore considered to be the leading contributory cause of global disability; in Europe, between 2005 and 2017, its prevalence increased by more than 18%. At the overall EU level, 14% of young adults are considered to be at risk of depression; 4% of people in the age range 15-24 are already suffering from chronic depression (Euronews, 2019); 4.3 % of all deaths in the EU-28 in 2016 resulted from mental and behavioural disorders related to depression. In Europe, Sweden tops the list for youngsters “at-risk of depression” (41%), followed by Estonia (27%) and Malta, but all European countries have percentages at worrying levels.

One of the things which often prevents effective care is an inaccurate assessment: people who are depressed are often not correctly diagnosed.

There are two factors that significantly affect the onset of depression: economic conditions and gender. Depression affects women far more than men and it is now clearly demonstrated that less well-off people in poor economic conditions are more likely to fall into depression.

Direct testimony: the voice of young people

“While dealing with depression you feel sad, nothing can cheer you up and you have a lack of interest in others. You feel weak, lonely and like the entire world is against you”
(Mind Blue, Z.J.).

Diana, (22 years-old): *since I was a child - it seems absurd, but it is so - I remember isolating myself and crying, always thinking the same thing: “nobody loves me”.*

Now only Darkness: *I am Ben, 19 years old. I have never been happy. I have divided my life into four parts:*

1st) 3-10 years old: weight gain phase and beginning of the awareness of being “different”.

2nd) 10-14 years old: chronic phase, adolescence. I was bullied, I suffered physical and

psychological torture from people around me, and the first experience of social discrimination at every level. Loneliness. Weight gain.

3rd) 14-17 years: psychological change, "normalized" bad habits (alcohol, smoking), progressive increase of aggressiveness and discouragement about life; emotions of hatred and indifference to the suffering of others; loss of a year of school due to my bad performance; increase in pessimism, beginning of loss of self-esteem. More weight gain.

4th) 17-19 years: stabilised bad habits and even an aggressive and vindictive personality, imbalances and mood swings, chronic pessimism, weight loss due to hospitalization, grumpiness, double personality, gave up on life, false, malignant and recently mentally unbalanced.

Always obese, never had a girlfriend, I have always had difficulties in clothing, discriminated against and mocked by all. Now I walk around with a trekking carabiner in my pocket in case I find myself in trouble in the face of possible dangers and I have to use it as a puller to vent the anger of 19 years of life without ever smiling. In a nutshell, this is my life.

Not a Taboo!... fighting against silence and invisibility: Ben's words help us to understand how far depression can cause suffering, undermine a young life, and take away hope, giving the feeling that there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Obviously, depression can manifest itself in many ways: depending on the severity of symptoms (depressive states can be categorised as mild, moderate or severe) it can induce a variety of behaviours, feelings and reactions. It can cause all kinds of further problems by lowering a person's level of energy, leading to under-performance at work and study, poor concentration, lack of motivation/interest, anxiety, panic attacks, disturbed sleep and appetite, a feeling of not being taken seriously, of guilt or low self-esteem, of being inadequate/not up to expectations/judged negatively by others. There may even be physical symptoms that cannot be explained by a standard medical diagnosis. It can also lead to suicide: close to 800,000 people in the world put an end to their life every year (suicide is the second highest cause of death in 15-29-year-olds).

Barriers to effective care include the social stigma attached to depression, which is a crucial problem because there is no way to fight against this "dark evil" if those suffering from it are also victims of social exclusion, or become invisible in the eyes of civil society. It is important to start by realising that depression is not and should never be a taboo subject: therefore it is vital to fight against silence itself, because for those who fall into depression, silence and social exclusion are a kind of condemnation without remedy.

Causes and contributing factors: it is practically impossible to detect the underlying cause, or to attribute to a single factor the development of such a complex phenomenon. Depression is more often the result of a combination of social, psychological, and biological factors (e.g. personal traits and heredity). Triggering causes can be adverse life events such as being bullied, sexual violence, bereavement, school failure, unemployment, family crisis/domestic conflict, or traumatic events such as car crashes or other accidents. It is now proven that there are interrelationships between depression and physical health: for example, cardiovascular disease can lead to depression and vice versa. There may also be a vicious circle, whereby depression leads to more stress and dysfunction, worsens the affected person's life situation, and so increases the depression itself. What really matters is understanding the type of support that people who fall into depression need, and helping them to find a way to a better and easier daily life. (Depressie Vereniging, 2019).

Getting support plays an essential role in overcoming depression. It can be difficult (and in

many cases impossible) to maintain a healthy perspective and sustain the effort required to beat depression. At the same time, the very nature of depression makes it difficult to reach out for help. When depressed, the tendency is to withdraw and isolate so that even connecting to close family members and friends can be tough.

The vocabulary of depression: "I am not good enough" "Nobody takes me seriously" "I am alone" "They didn't help me" "Nobody listens to me" "I do not fit in" "I make things up in my mind" "It is not depression, just take some medicine" "You are the problem" "No organisation can help me" "Being sent from one organization to another and another and another".

Prevention programmes have been shown to reduce depression. Effective community approaches include school-based programmes to enhance a pattern of positive thinking in children and adolescents. Interventions for parents of children with behavioural problems may reduce parental depressive symptoms and improve outcomes for their children. Much can also be done by non-formal educators and youth workers working in youth centres and communities with young people at risk of depression. The warmth of the group; personal relationships (informal and non-judgmental) based on closeness, empathy, and trust; direct channels of communication, or simply listening to young people - all these allow more effective intervention, both in the preventive phase and in moments of turbulence.

The experience of the Youth Prevention Centres, together with various studies on the use of non-formal education in working with young people to prevent or overcome depression, has demonstrated the effectiveness of inclusive methods, active participation of young people and, above all, peer education (i.e. the multiplier effect of young people supporting other young people in difficulty). Trainers from one of these centres (FILIA Prevention Centre, Košice) were involved in the implementation phase of the project Youth Lifestyles, Deviance and Prevention.

LONILENESS and SOCIAL ISOLATION

Humans are not meant to be, or to feel, alone

It is right to make a preliminary fundamental distinction between feeling lonely and actually being alone. We can feel lonely even among people, but this does not necessarily happen in total isolation. In fact, exclusion requires a crowd.

With regard to loneliness and social isolation, a number of points are particularly significant:

- there is a direct link between social isolation and depression; furthermore, persistent loneliness is associated with unhealthy behaviours, mental problems and poor cognitive performance
- the significance of loneliness for individual wellbeing and social cohesion should not be underestimated: the mortality risk of loneliness is comparable to that of obesity and smoking
- lonely individuals report more pessimistic judgements and feel more threatened by life situations compared to their 'non-lonely' counterparts
- in an ever more connected world, lonely and socially isolated people face the potential double penalty of suffering from poorer health conditions and being stigmatized as socially inept

Statistics about loneliness are often underestimated, given the negative social stigma associated with it. Around 7% of adults in Europe (i.e. roughly 30 million people) report being frequently lonely. One in ten people in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, France and Greece feel lonely; while 7.2% of the European population claim that they never meet up

with their friends or relatives, not even once a year (European Commission, 2018). A recent study (British Medical Journal - HEART, 2019) found that isolation increases the risk of heart disease by 29 percent and stroke by 32 percent. Loneliness and isolation are linked to stress, depression and suicidal behaviour.

As these facts become better known and understood, politicians are forced to recognise the issue and commit resources to finding solutions. In 2019, for example, the UK government appointed a “Minister for Loneliness”.

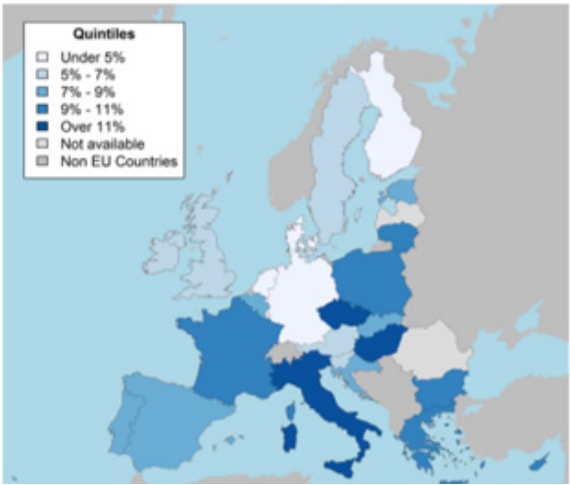
Young people are also affected by social isolation. A detailed report by the Mental Health Foundation found that isolated children are at risk of continuing poor health as adults: the 18-to-34-year-olds surveyed were more likely than the over-55s to feel lonely often, and to suffer depression as a result. Furthermore, while some turn to online social networking for solace, the same report suggests that young people’s use of social media may also be contributing to their social isolation.

Rather than enhancing well-being, as frequent interactions with supportive ‘offline’ social networks powerfully do, the current findings demonstrate that interacting with Facebook or other social network may predict the opposite result for young adults – it may undermine it.
Ethan Kross, University of Michigan

The five main characteristics of being lonely, according to the MHF survey are:

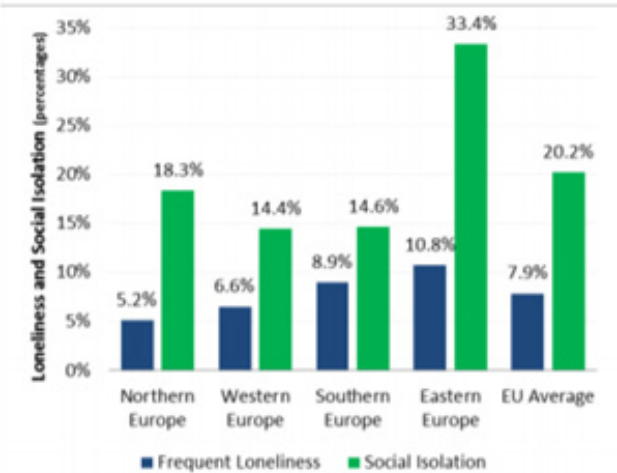
- 1. Having nobody to talk to
- 2. Feeling disconnected from the world
- 3. Feeling left out
- 4. Sadness
- 5. Not feeling understood

Figure 1: Prevalence of frequent loneliness across Europe



(CBS, 2019)

Figure 3: Regional patterns of frequent loneliness and social isolation



Figures 1 and 3 depict the prevalence of frequent loneliness and social isolation in Europe

DUTCH

National Framework



Who and why?

In 2018, 5% of Dutch young people in the age range 12-18 said they had dealt with depression for at least 6 months. Compared to 2014 the total number of young people dealing with depression had more than doubled. In 2014, 1.8% of the youngsters said that they had had feelings of depression. These feelings were reported by the youngsters themselves and were not diagnosed by a professional (NJI, 2018).

According to World Health Organization (WHO) and national research, in the Netherlands, just as in many other countries of the world, depression has been the number one public illness during 2020. The WHO reports that anti-depressive medication is in fact largely ineffective in suppressing feelings of depression. Daydream Therapy: Marieke van Vugt, a Dutch scientist of Groningen University developed a different method to deal with depression. She allowed patients simply to daydream during their clinical therapy sessions, but scientifically evaluated the effectiveness of the process (Daydream in a computer model).

Additional research has shown that loneliness affects people with a lower level of education considerably more than people with a higher level of education. Economic conditions also play an important role. Again, with regard to loneliness there is a clear disparity between people who do not have economic problems, with a medium or high standard of life, and those who can barely make ends meet.

Who and how many in The Netherlands and Europe?

Loneliness is a big issue in Almere, a city near Amsterdam. According to recent research, 49% of the inhabitants are lonely to some extent, and 13% of these are dealing with extreme loneliness. The percentage of lonely people in Almere is higher than the national average (44%).

The close correlation between loneliness and depression is also seen in Almere. Local young people in particular are dealing with this issue in their daily life. Lack of social contacts, attention or trust in health care drives them into social isolation. This widespread problem has a considerable impact on the local community.

Dutch citizens largely agree that loneliness is a significant national problem: 7 in 10 Dutch citizens consider loneliness to be a big problem; 8 in 10 agree that it is a topic worth discussing with others; and 50% think that they are active in fighting against loneliness. This can include the smallest actions, such as a short talk with someone, giving them the attention they rarely get; or visiting someone who rarely gets visitors. The fight against loneliness is mostly in close circles such as family and friends. A third of all Dutch citizens say that they would like to play an active role in the national fight against loneliness.

What to do? Possible solutions. In the Netherlands, with a population of over 17 million, more than 1,800 people die by suicide every year, and 94,000 people with suicidal thoughts attempt to take their lives. Despite these high rates and the damage it does to those involved and to society, people with suicidal thoughts often feel isolated because talking about suicide is still considered taboo. This is partly because the health care professionals they visit are unable to address the issues which cause despair and suicidal thinking.

113 Suicide Prevention is the national Dutch suicide prevention centre, financed mainly by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. In order to promote suicide prevention in health-care and beyond, 113 provides a range of online services which can be used anonymously and free of charge, 24/7. This allows people with suicidal thoughts to find or regain hope, seek help and find adaptive ways to cope with their despair and psychological pain. In addition, 113 aims at empowering, teaching and training health care professionals, gatekeepers throughout society, relatives and friends in order for them to overcome their reluctance to address the suicidal thoughts and behaviour of those in need (113, 2019).

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BULLYING

CYBERBULLYING

THE LAW OF THE STRONGEST? THE HIDDEN WEAKNESSES AND FRAILTIES

BULLYING

Bullying is considered by many experts and Institutions (UNESCO, Save the Children, EU, many Educational Agencies and the entire school world) as an umbrella concept that encompasses various behaviours that, unlike isolated acts of aggression and violence, are intended to cause repeated suffering. This phenomenon only started to gain acknowledgement at the beginning of the new millennium and the delay in preventive measures explains why some countries are still a long way from turning all schools into safe spaces.

The fluid boundaries of the definitions of bullying make it particularly difficult to correctly identify, especially since as society progresses new forms of bullying come to light (e.g. cyberbullying).

According to the Norwegian psychologist Dan Olweus who has dedicated numerous studies to this phenomenon, in order to be able to talk about bullying, the following conditions are necessary:

Repetition: bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Aggressive behaviour: a person is exposed to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons (e.g. when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person) verbally, through physical contact, or in other ways (as in the case of Cyberbullying). Aggressive behaviour does not just result in bouts of physical violence: bullying also includes actions such as accessing embarrassing information, threats, spreading rumours, or deliberately excluding someone from a group.

Imbalance of Power: individual bullying is usually characterised by a person behaving so as to prevail, control or gain power over another person (power imbalances can change over time and in different situations).

Other behaviours that are often mistaken for bullying can include one-off episodes of social exclusion, aggression or intimidation. Although each of these behaviours can be stress-inducing events, they only become bullying if they recur over a longer period of time, when they are deliberate and play on the imbalance of power.

The profile of victims usually fits that of someone lacking in certain social skills and being noticeably rejected by their peers.

Bullying, according to the way in which aggression is manifested and the form that the violent act takes, is generally divided into **four main types**:

Physical, hurting a person's body (hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping/pushing, etc.), making mean or rude hand gestures, or directed at things (taking or breaking someone's personal belongings).

Verbal, saying or writing hurtful things (threatening to cause harm, inappropriate sexual comments, teasing/taunting, name-calling).

Social or Relational bullying, wilfully damaging someone's reputation or relationships: embarrassing someone in public, spreading rumors about someone, deliberately excluding someone.

Cyber (see next theme).

Where bullying takes place: the “culture of bullying” can take root in the most disparate places, even if school buildings are where by far the greatest number of cases are recorded. It must be said that part of the phenomenon remains hidden: it is invisible and therefore difficult to quantify statistically. A significant proportion of bullying also takes place on public transport, in places where young people gather together, in the young person’s neighbourhood and also within the family and the workplace.

Extent and spread of the phenomenon: the UN notes that the violence constituted by bullying affects the learning and well-being of students equally, in both rich and poor countries. Several researchers have shown that no region on Earth is exempt from this phenomenon. Certainly the data may vary, but in almost all regions of the world, physical bullying is the most common form followed by sexual bullying. Exceptions are Europe and North America where psychological bullying (cyber-bullying) is more prevalent.

According to the UNESCO report *Behind the numbers: ending school violence and bullying* (2019), one in three boys was bullied at least once in the month prior to publication of the report. These alarming data are substantially confirmed by two international surveys conducted on a large scale by the World Health Organization (*Global school-based student health and Health Behaviour in School-aged Children*). Taking the month prior to the release of the Report, 19.4% of students were bullied for one or two days, 5.6% suffered violence for three to five days, and 7.3% were harassed for six or more days.

Consequences: bullying generates long-term effects on the victim’s mental health and self-esteem, which can negatively influence their ability to form meaningful relationships in later life, as well as their potential for academic and professional achievements. People who have been bullied during childhood are more likely to develop depression or anxiety, as well as sleep and eating disorders and even physical symptoms such as headaches, fever, nausea, and stomach aches. These adverse consequences are not limited to the victims, as both aggressors and witnesses have been found to be affected by bullying. While bullies might grow into adults prone to illegal behaviour, domestic abuse, and poor abilities to keep a job, witnesses are inclined to skip school more frequently because of deep-rooted feelings of uneasiness and distress. This goes to show that bullying is a complex phenomenon that can alter entire communities, especially school communities, and subsequently reshape society for the worse.

ROMANIA

National Framework



Romania holds the third place in Europe when it comes to school bullying, as shown by a 2018 study conducted in selected countries.

The share of students who reported being victims of any type of bullying at least a few times per month was a worrisome 34% in Romania, exceeded only by Latvia (35%) and Russia (37%). At a national level, 2016 saw the release of a Save the Children study that outlined some alarming facts regarding bullying in Romanian schools: 30% of children have reported being repeatedly hit or shoved by their peers and just as many have been threatened with violence. Verbal bullying is more likely to be used by girls, and consists of name calling, insults, or intimidation: it is intended to humiliate, frequently by referring to someone’s ethnicity, race or sexual orientation, with 1 in 4 children admitting to have been humiliated in front of their classmate.

Social bullying is by far the hardest type to identify and it employs social exclusion techniques such as lying, pranking or spreading negative rumors in order hurt someone’s social standing or to improve one’s own by exerting dominance over peers.

In Romania, 31% of children reported being regularly left out of group activities, while 23% have been threatened with it.

These findings have also been confirmed by another 2016 study conducted by the Institute of National Public Health that explored children's and youngsters' health in Romania, including the prevalence of different types of harassment they are subjected to. It concluded that physical and verbal direct harassment was the most common type of bullying, with the highest incidence being found in Transylvania. Moreover, a 2017 report by the National School Students' Council on the implementation of the School Students' Statute, a Ministry of Education 2016 order describing pupils' rights and responsibilities, found that 28% of respondents felt that their physical safety and/or moral integrity was endangered at school. Furthermore, over 47% of pupils reported knowing of cases of discrimination or having themselves been victims of discrimination within the school. At the same time, there is a well-documented lack of counselling services, with less than half of students having benefited from them, out of which only 53% believed this was helpful.

Another related phenomenon worth discussing is the bystander effect, a social psychological theory that illustrates people's tendency to become passive and reluctant to get involved in an emergency in the presence of others. This is apparently motivated by the diffusion of responsibility and can lead to "good" people becoming complicit in illicit or inappropriate situations, for instance bullying, assaults or other crimes. However, it should be noted that there is also evidence to show that this phenomenon may be exaggerated. In Romania, 84% of children admitted to having observed a situation where a child threatened another one, 80% have witnessed a child being humiliated by a peer and 78% have been witnesses to children being shoved and casually hit by other children.

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CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying means using Internet and other digital technologies (in particular mobile phones) to cause distress or to humiliate other people. It is increasingly prevalent and recognised as harmful behaviour, alongside other forms of bullying. However, many people (including those who perpetrate it) do not understand how serious it is and there is no specific criminal offence in the UK related to this activity, although there are laws which cover various related behaviours such as stalking, unauthorised use of computers, and use of sexual images.

More broadly, cyberbullying includes other forms of harmful online activity such as threatening behaviour ("cyber-aggression"), harassment, sexual provocation or manipulation, impersonation, and grooming (acting over a period of time to persuade someone to think or behave in ways that will be harmful to themselves and others). Online gaming environments also pose significant dangers, particularly because of the anonymity of users and the ease of communicating around a shared interest.

Cyberbullying is often linked to discrimination, including on the basis of gender, race, faith, sexual orientation, gender identity or special educational needs and disabilities. For example, girls report experiencing a higher incidence of cyberbullying than boys, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are more likely to experience bullying, including cyberbullying.

[Source: Childnet International / UK Safer Internet Centre]

Young people are especially vulnerable to all forms of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying can have a drastic effect on their self-esteem, mental health and physical safety. It can lead to depression, self-harm and even suicide. A number of recent high-profile cases have increased public attention on the issue.

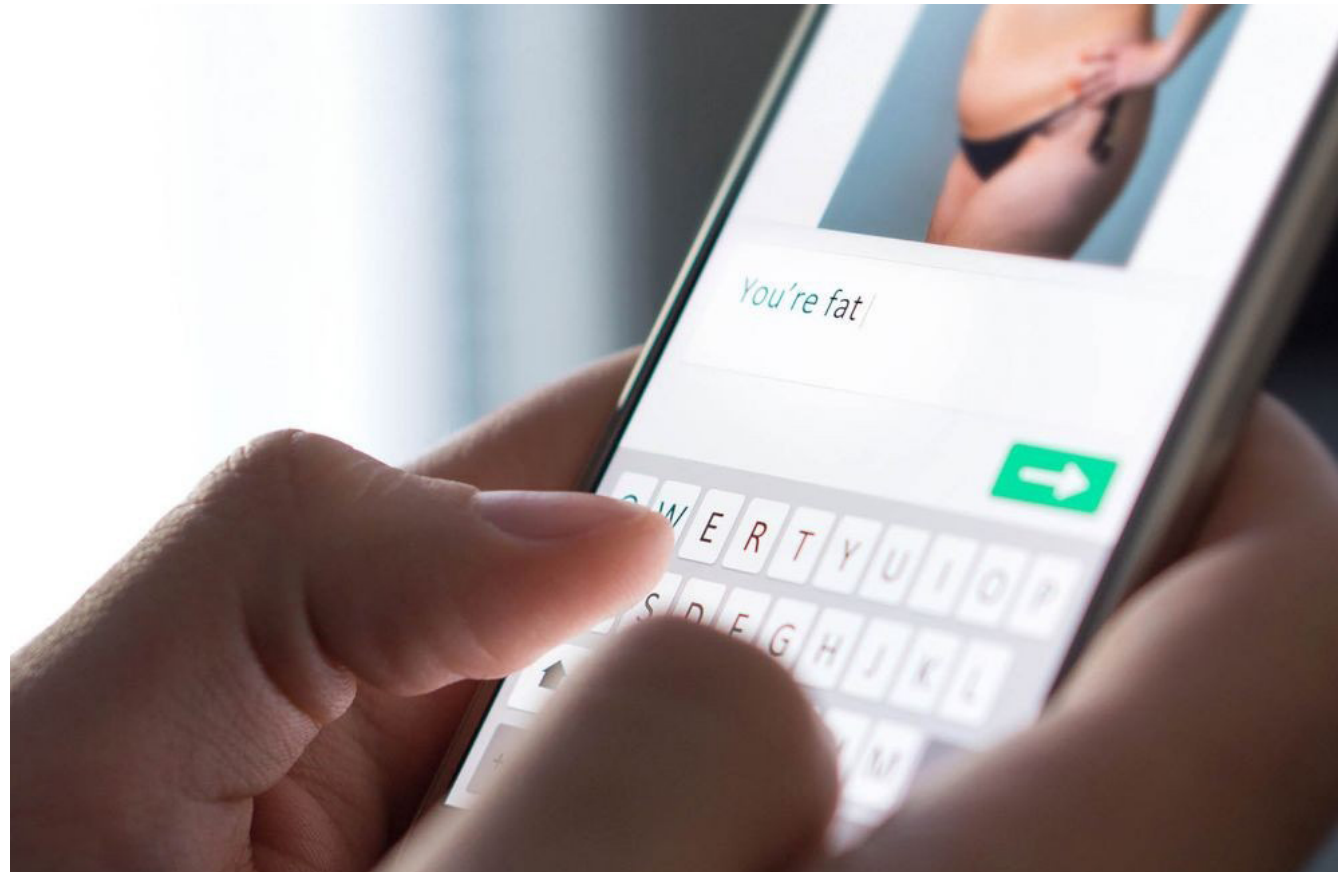
Cyberbullying and "traditional" bullying have many common features, but there are also some things that make cyberbullying different:

- 24-7 nature - online activity means you can be in contact at any time.
- There is the potential for a wider audience and bullying incidents can stay online, for example: a photo that you can't remove.
- Evidence - a lot of cyberbullying incidents allow those experiencing it to keep evidence - for example, take a screen shot - to show to school staff or police if needed.
- Potential to hide your identity - it is possible to hide your identity online which can make cyberbullying incidents very scary.
- Degree of separation - people who cyberbully often don't see the reaction of those experiencing it so it can sometimes be harder for them to see the impact of their actions.

[Source: Anti-Bullying Alliance]

UK

National Framework



Cyber-bullying is very widespread. The UK Anti-Bullying Alliance has found that:

- 24% of children and young people will experience some form of cyberbullying
- 17% of children and young people will cyberbully others
- Name calling is the most common type of cyberbullying

In 2017 Public Health England released research from a 2014 consultation with 5,335 young people aged 11-15 years old. They found:

- 17.9% of 11-15 year olds reported being cyberbullied in the two months prior to being surveyed
- girls were twice as likely as boys to report being cyberbullied
- cyberbullying increased with age for both boys and girls; the reported prevalence rates of cyberbullying at age 15 were almost double those for 11 year olds
- cyberbullying is associated with socio-economic status. Young people from more affluent families were more likely to report being victims of cyberbullying
- young people who reported positive family communication, especially with a father, were less likely to experience cyberbullying positive perceptions of the school environment

- were associated with lower levels of cyberbullying
- cyberbullying was associated with feelings of safety in young people's local neighbourhood [Source: Anti-Bullying Alliance]

Similarly, a report by the Sir John Cass's Foundation (2017) found that:

"Adolescents had a high level of access to ICTs and engaged in a number of online activities which were mainly social in nature. Most adolescents in the sample (69%) had experienced at least one type of cyberaggression, which was most likely to involve being called a hurtful name online, having a picture posted online to embarrass them, or having rumours or gossip spread about them online. Of these adolescents, 43% reported that they had been cyberbullied. These findings are towards the high end of those reported in other studies globally. In addition to victimisation, nearly half of adolescents (48%) admitted perpetrating an act of cyberaggression and most adolescents (77%) had witnessed cyberbullying while online... a quarter of adolescents reported that they had been cyberbullied during [the past 12 months]."

"Although face-to-face bullying continues to be the most common form of bullying experienced by young people, experiences of cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying were often linked. Adolescents reported serious emotional effects due to these experiences."

The effects of cyberbullying are also very problematic for parents. A stable family environment is not always enough to prevent this. As the tragic case of Breck Bednar shows, anyone can be vulnerable.

"No one would have expected Breck to be a victim of grooming; he was an 'A' grade student from a loving family".

[Source: Breck Foundation]

This is reflected in the Cass report:

"Our findings... indicated that adolescents were most likely to confide in friends about these experiences rather than adults and that parents and teachers were largely removed from young people's online experiences. This was clear from the data obtained from parents, which showed that they significantly underestimated their child's experiences and engagement in cyberaggression and overestimated their monitoring of ICT use in the home."

In terms of responses to the problem, the Cass report highlights:

"the importance of working with adolescents to build digital literacy, empathy and resilience as well as the importance of including parents in online safety efforts. Importantly, the report advocates a multi-level approach to addressing the issue... and highlights the need for action by government, external support services, funding bodies and organisations, schools and teachers as well as parents and young people. A comprehensive approach to tackling cyber-aggression and cyberbullying and enhancing online safety of young people is needed, which would include effort at all levels."

[Source: Popovac, M. (2017). *Beyond the school gates: Experiences of cyberaggression and cyberbullying among adolescents in the UK*. Joint publication by the University of Buckingham and Sir John Cass's Foundation.]

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UK Council for Internet Safety: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-council-for-internet-safety>

Wise Kids (promoting safe internet use): <https://wisekids.org.uk/wk/>

Diana Award 2011 report: [http://libeprints.open.ac.uk/32271/1/Diana - Young Peoples Voices_Report.pdf](http://libeprints.open.ac.uk/32271/1/Diana_-_Young_Peoples_Voices_Report.pdf)

Safe 4 Me school resources: <https://www.safe4me.co.uk/portfolio/cyber-bullying/>

Digital Resilience Framework: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831217/UKCIS Digital Resilience Framework.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831217/UKCIS_Digital_Resilience_Framework.pdf)

Report by the Sir John Cass's Foundation and University of Buckingham, including valuable statistics: <https://sirjohncassfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Beyond-the-school-gates.pdf>

Tiger Mobiles summary: <https://www.tigermobiles.com/faq/cyberbullying-statistics/>

The Breck Foundation – charity campaigning for internet safety: <http://www.breckfoundation.org>

ROAD SAFETY & YOUTH DRIVING STYLE

THE ROAD TO SAFETY

A great amount of accurate research has been done on road accidents and youth driving styles at Continental and even World level, in particular by the European Commission (DG Mobility and Transport - Young Drivers), which has for a long time been paying attention to road safety and, specifically, the education of young drivers. All the research highlights one essential and dramatic fact: road crashes are the leading cause of death among young people aged between 18 and 25 in Europe. According to the WHO's statistics, traffic accidents are the leading cause of death for men between the ages of 15 and 29 worldwide. In the most industrialised countries (30 members of OECD), more than 8,500 young people lose their lives on the roads every year. This amounts to a sort of "war bulletin": in order to grasp the complexity of this phenomenon and its causes, we need to consider additional significant data. There is much food for thought.

Generational comparison: the number of errors made by young riders and drivers that cause accidents is much higher than those made by their older counterparts. The number of young people in the age range 21 - 24 who die in road accidents is twice that of people between 25 and 65; and it is actually triple for young people aged 18 - 20. Although young drivers under 25 are about one-tenth of the population in industrialised countries, they account for over a quarter of the riders and drivers killed in car crashes.

A tragic multiplier effect: some studies show that young people behind the wheel are not only dangerous to themselves. Indeed, according to some European and American research, for every 10 young drivers killed, 13 passengers or other drivers die in the same accidents.

Gender factor: young men are particularly at risk; they make up the great majority of deaths on the roads on our Continent (up to three times higher than those for young women). The tendency of males to cause more accidents also has negative repercussions on females: some research shows that a high percentage of female passengers killed between the ages of 18-25 were in cars driven by young men in the same age range. The gender imbalance is due to many different factors: physiological/biological (age, level of development of cognitive abilities, different perceptions of risk, level of maturity); social and cultural (young men are more inclined to show off: it seems that for many young males, showing a certain easy confidence in their driving abilities is a way of marking their transition towards adulthood - a sort of anthropological "rite of passage"); behavioural (desire to test boundaries, assert one's independence, susceptibility to peer group influence); and some other factors that we can generally gather under the concept of Lifestyles (greater use of motorcycles and cars / significantly more driving hours, propensity to use drugs and alcohol, intense social activity (especially at night and on weekends), giving lifts to friends, a greater tendency to take risks, a lack of respect for traffic rules, etc.).

Impact (at personal, social, economic level): on must also consider the serious repercussions that young broken lives, psychological traumas or severe impairments have on families, on the network of relationships / peer groups, and on the communities in which young people live. In addition to the high social costs, the heavy economic costs should not be overlooked: to take one example, it has been calculated that in the US, accidents involving 15-20 year-old drivers cost an estimated \$40 billion every year. European countries, too, pay a heavy economic price for road accidents: for example, in Italy in 2018 the cost of road accidents amounted to 18 billion euros and heavily affected national GDP (over 1%); while in France costs to the community were put at 38.3 billion euros in 2016; a frightening figure which represents as much as 2.2% of GDP. This includes not only public funds spent on material damage, but also medical expenses and productivity losses (just to get an idea, in France each year on average

6 million working days are lost as a result of traffic accidents).

The paradox: if it is true that human beings learn mainly through practice and by gaining experience, then why is it that young males who spend many more hours behind the wheel are the ones who most of all expose themselves, and others, to danger? Why do they make so many more errors (sadly, often fatal) than their female counterparts?

The kaleidoscope of factors... a lethal mixture. Clearly the value of the experience gained while driving is not the decisive factor in significantly reducing the risk of road accidents. There are other, negative, factors that outweigh this. Pleasure-seeking behaviour, the thrill of speed, risk perception, gender, overestimation of one's abilities, inadequate road safety training, distractions (e.g. mobile phones), irregular use of seat belts, number of hours behind the wheel, adverse conditions (driving at night, with heavy traffic, at the weekend, in bad weather etc.), technical / mechanical factors (condition of vehicles' brakes, tires, bodywork, suspension, etc.), state of the roads, quality of road signs, efficiency of roadside assistance, and so on. These are some, though probably not all, of the different factors governing the safety of young drivers, their passengers and other road users.

What needs to be done? It is evident that there is still a significant lack of work that focuses on young riders and drivers.

"there is no single solution - reducing young driver risk requires a co-ordinated approach involving a wide range of actors from parents to legislators and of course young drivers themselves. Measures will only be successful if there is public and political acceptance of the gravity of the problem and the need to act."

Young Drivers: the Road to Safety - OECD

Safe drivers are made, not born. Learning to drive safely takes time and needs extensive training and practice. Looking at the complexity of the phenomenon of road casualties, in this Handbook it is legitimate to ask: what can educators, youth workers, or group leaders do with the tools that Non-Formal Education offers them? Obviously, this is a matter of educational work, of a preventive nature, which complements the technical training and allows us to give clear, vitally important messages to young people who already have a driving license, and to those who hope to obtain one in the near future.

By assuming the key role of facilitators, youth workers can raise young people's awareness about their perception of risk and their sense of responsibility, making them more sensitive to the physical, mental and legal consequences of their actions. These messages may be reinforced through informal meetings, workshops, training sessions, participation in educational activities and campaigns, and so on. We can actively involve young people by placing them at the centre of the educational process and even, over time, give them a multiplier role, thus initiating an educational process based on peer-education.

What makes peer-to-peer and non-formal learning activity particularly effective is the trust of young people: there is a direct reference point for their learning. When a set of coordinated interventions is necessary to respond to a complex problem, youth workers are the most effective educators: they are able to reach out to young people, becoming the ideal bridge between them and the "adult world", institutions, and civil society.

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UK

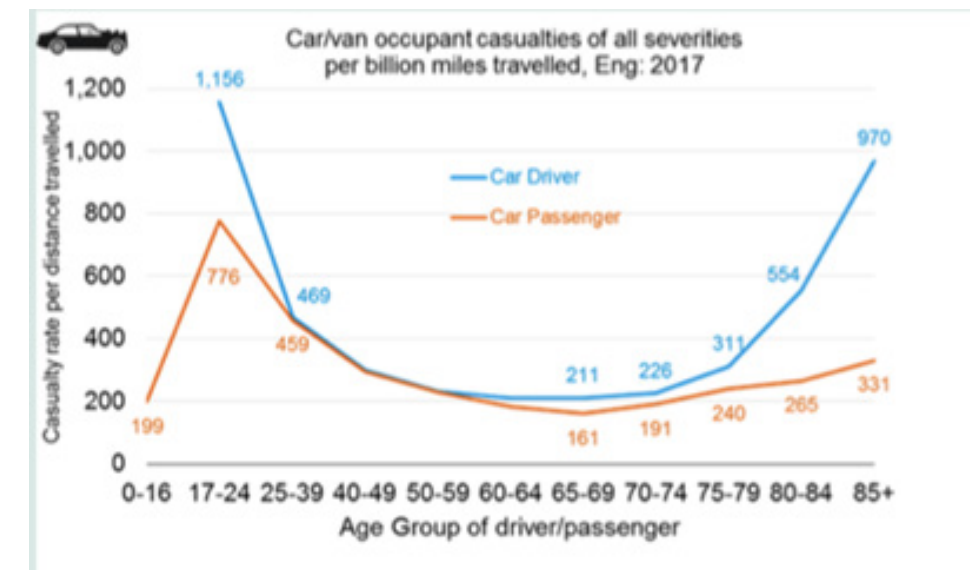
National Framework



Over the last thirty years, the UK has had a good record of reducing traffic casualties. The UK ranked third in Europe and second in the European Union (EU) in terms of road safety in 2017, as ranked by number of road deaths per million inhabitants. There were 1,793 reported fatalities in 2017. This represents 39% fewer fatalities in 2017 compared with 2007, and a 6% (170,993) decrease in casualties of all severities in 2017 compared with 2016. Older car drivers are as much at risk as younger people.

However, there has been little change in the number of reported deaths on British roads since 2010. Over the same period, the volume of traffic on roads in Great Britain has increased by 8%. This “flatlining” is not specific to Great Britain; it has also occurred across the EU and other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries since about 2013.

2017 car occupant casualties by age group:



[Source: UK Department of Transport]

Road fatality statistics since 2010



[Source: UK Department of Transport]

The UK government does not only emphasise law enforcement action by the police and other authorities. An equal or greater emphasis is put on encouraging good behaviour and especially educating young people when, and before, they become drivers. The Department for Transport’s approach is to encourage a lifelong learning approach to road safety for everyone. Understanding how to behave safely on the roads, is a life skill developed from the very early stages of children’s exposure to that environment. This approach is also reflected in the work of NGOs and campaigns such as The Honest Truth.

“Each road situation we face is different. To help protect all road users, we need to understand *what we can put in place to protect them – through skills development for safer road users, safer roads and infrastructure or technological innovation for safer vehicles. Changes in behaviour are most effective when they are progressive; we need to be receptive to new ideas, reflect, plan, act and maintain the behaviour in order to make real change.*”

[Source: UK Department of Transport]

The government has been running road safety campaigns for more than 75 years. In 2000, “THINK!” was officially established as the government’s designated road safety campaign. Since then, THINK! has become recognised internationally for its iconic and ground-breaking campaigns that have challenged dangerous behaviours on Britain’s roads. Campaigns have evolved from encouraging the use of seat belts to tackling excessive speed, drink and drugs, and the use of mobiles at the wheel. In the decade that followed the conception of THINK!, road deaths in the UK fell by 46%.

Road casualty statistics show that young men aged 17-24 are the highest risk group of all car drivers. The current educational focus is for friends to look out for each other and help each other to reduce risky behaviour behind the wheel. Peer-to-peer dynamics are central to young men’s decision making. For example, the successful THINK! 2018-19 ‘Mates Matter’ drink drive campaign, which saw the most significant attitudinal shift in the unacceptability of drink driving among young men in over a decade, used the power of friendships to turn peers from a negative facilitator into a positive influencer.

More recently the Department of Transport launched another THINK! campaign, focusing on new male drivers aged 17-30. The campaign delivers tips around situations where there are a high number of road casualties or where new drivers feel most vulnerable. Future activity will continue to target young male drivers to raise awareness of specific behaviours and reinforce vital road safety messages. There will be a continuous communications approach over the next two years that will highlight four major road safety hazards: drink-driving, the use of hand-held mobile phones while driving, the danger associated with passenger distraction, and speeding. These mirror the educational themes of The Honest Truth.

Useful UK resources

THINK - UK government road safety campaign: <https://www.think.gov.uk>

UK Department of Transport statement:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817695/road-safety-statement-2019.pdf

Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents resource pack - <https://www.rosipa.com/rospaweb/docs/campaigns-fundraising/young-drivers-pack.pdf>

Large amount of road safety Lesson Plans - <http://www.uksafetystore.com/resources/road-safety-teaching-resources/#lesson-plans-teaching-ideas>

Brake road safety charity, resources for young people:

<https://www.brake.org.uk/facts-resources/21-resources/322-youngpeople>

Safe 4 Me school resources: <https://www.safe4me.co.uk/portfolio/road-safety/>

TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD & SEX EDUCATION

EDUCATING INFORMING FORMING

Teenage pregnancy is defined by the World Health Organization as “pregnancy in which the mother is under the age of 20 at the time the pregnancy ends” [1]. This phenomenon is not foreign to any state, yet in developing countries and countries with poor education systems it becomes a severe issue, which carries intricate socio-economic implications, in addition to health considerations, such as maternal and child mortality. In fact, it is calculated that every year, between 14 and 17 million girls aged 15-19 years and another 1/1.5 million girls under the age of 15 years give birth, accounting for over 10% of births worldwide.

Although about 90% of unintended teenage motherhood takes place in developing countries, even on our Continent (with notable disparities among EU countries) the number remains high.

These few statistics are enough to clarify how important it is to implement educational programmes capable of overcoming traditional cultural, social or religious barriers, and of going beyond a narrow mentality or myopic vision which may prevail among some social groups. In any case, sex education remains a controversial subject of public discussion. These obstacles, but also the shame or embarrassment in dealing with sexual issues regarding children and adolescents, have so far severely limited, or even made completely ineffective, the educational and preventive action of sex education.

Early pregnancies, labour and the postnatal phases often bring with them complex problems with serious consequences for adolescent girls and children, including:

- increased chances of **postpartum haemorrhage**
- possible **irregular / stunted growth** and **weight loss** during pregnancy
- **micronutrient deficiency** due to increased maternal foetal needs for nutrition which in many cases results in the **delivery of premature and/or low-weight babies**
- **restricted foetal growth** (which is one of the reasons why babies born to this age group record more cases of Apgar* - less than 7 per minute - and are more likely to die at birth than those born to women aged 20-24)
- higher risk of hypertension
- **an inadequate prenatal nutrition** that leads to rapid weight gain in childhood, which frequently persist into adolescence and adulthood, thus perpetuating the vicious cycle of nutritional disorders

Complications during pregnancy and labour constitute the second most frequent cause of death in teenagers aged 15-19.

Quality of Life of Teenage Mothers: sexual activity during adolescence may also represent a risk for young women's quality of life: plans are often skipped or cancelled, personal ambitions and goals are abandoned, and the sense of one's own fulfillment falters. It becomes more difficult for a young person to continue/complete their studies; relations with their peer group become complicated. In many cases, the sense of guilt and responsibility generated by unwanted pregnancy/motherhood can lead to a drastic drop in self-esteem and a feeling of oppression in the adolescent. This already serious picture can be aggravated further by a decision to resort to abortion. If not properly supported by their family, their wider networks of relationships and relevant social services, adolescent girls are at high risk of falling into depression. In short, the social and psychological framework that is created can have enormously negative repercussions on the teenage mother's life.

Pregnancies during adolescence are usually unwanted consequences of unsafe sexual activity, either due to recklessness or, more commonly, insufficient knowledge regarding contracep-

tive methods. Since sex education is currently not a mandatory part of the school curriculum, the responsibility to educate children on matters of sexuality and sexual health often falls on the parents, most of whom hesitate to openly discuss this topic, considering it “shameful”. In communities where people’s overall level of education is lower, even the parents themselves are poorly informed on the matter, and the schools who bring up sex education in the form of optional classes or workshops are scarce. This explains the notable difference in the average age of first-time mothers between rural areas (24 years old), and urban areas (29 years old), the former being influenced by a higher prevalence of teenage pregnancies.

What needs to be done? Concerning prevention of early pregnancies/unwanted maternities, it should never be forgotten that:

- **sex education is a life-long process**, a structured path that should involve all sections of civil society starting with families, schools and institutional representatives, but also including general youth workers / educators / facilitators who can play an important role in communicating with adolescents and in proposing training sessions based on interactive methods and peer education.
- **Access to sex education is considered one of our Human Rights**: the right to comprehensive sexual education is protected by international human rights treaties and recognized by global bodies like the World Health Organization, UNESCO, UNAIDS and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). A conscious and healthy sexuality lived in a mature and responsible way is generally considered one of the factors that determine the quality of a person’s life. This is why sex education is connected with the development of a sense of citizenship, respect, commitment, self-care and care for others.
- **Sexual needs of teenagers** can cause fear and distress, but it is fundamental to consider that adolescence is a time when children become youths, start discovering their own bodies and intimacy, create their own sexual behavior and develop self-control. If we do not allow them **to acquire sufficient knowledge**, or if we base all educational intervention on abstinence, this can lead to serious problems such as lack of self-confidence, non-acceptance of their own body, or low self-esteem. The goal of educators is therefore not only educating and informing but also, vitally, “forming”.
- Effective **sex education is the best way to intervene with supportive action** in a very delicate and complex moment of the adolescents’ life in which they are frequently exposed to false images of sexual life, false standards of beauty, inappropriate role models, and so on.
- To make the action of educators / facilitators more effective, **universally recognized basic principles should be established**, for example taking full advantage of adolescents’ curiosity and their completely natural desire to discover and experience everything that directly or indirectly concerns sexuality (for example, we need to dispel the myth that adolescents are only interested in contraceptive methods such as the use of condoms, and little else). We need to emphasise the value of the individual, putting this at the centre of every educational action, and showing how they are responsible for their own decisions and actions.

ROMANIA

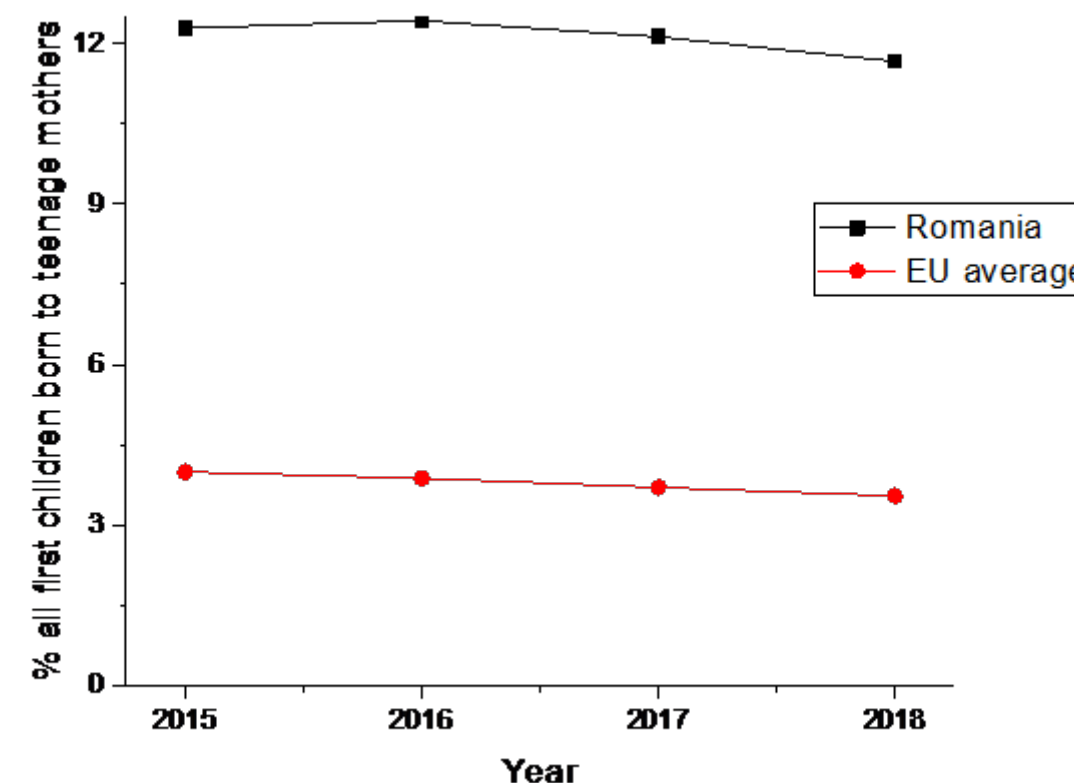
National Framework



Romania registered that an alarming 11.67% of all births of first children were to teenage mothers, surpassed in the EU only by Bulgaria, and three times the European Union average of 3.54% in 2018, according to Eurostat. Graph 1 shows the trend in this indicator in Romania compared to the EU average. It was not until 2017-2018 that Romania started to achieve a significantly decreasing rate of change, but whether it will sustain itself on this downward trajectory remains to be seen. While Romania accounts for just under 5% of the European Union's births of first children across all age groups, it constitutes almost 16% of those where the mothers were aged 15-19.

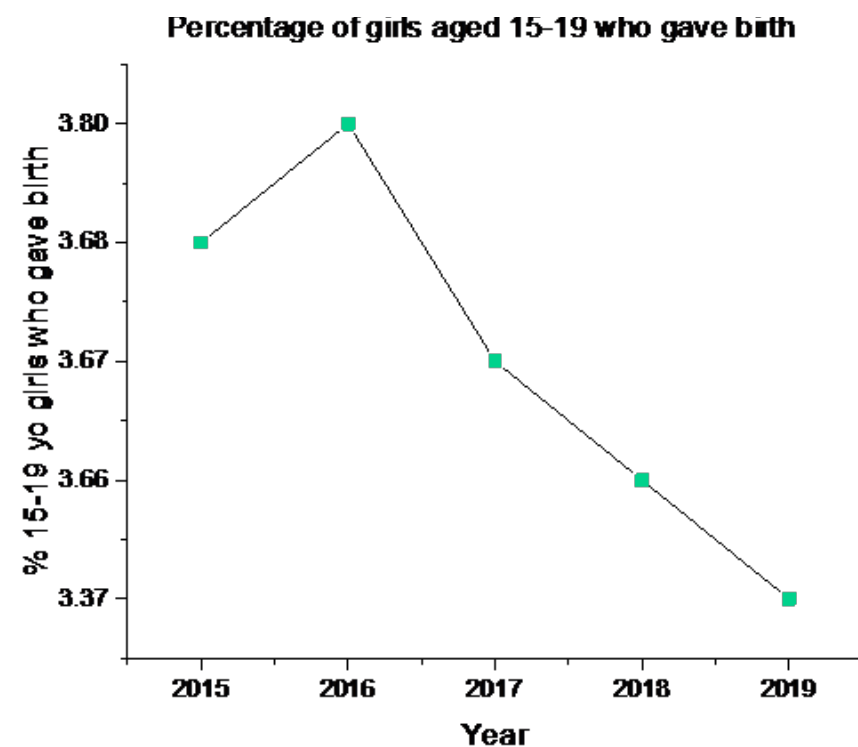
Population and demographic data provided by the National Institute of Statistics shows that although the percentage of 15-19 year-olds giving birth (Graph 2) and having abortions (Graph 3) have been declining in the past few years, more and more of those pregnancies (almost 26% in 2019, Graph 4) are second or further children of teenagers who are already mothers.

Share of births of first children to teenage mothers in Romania compared to EU average

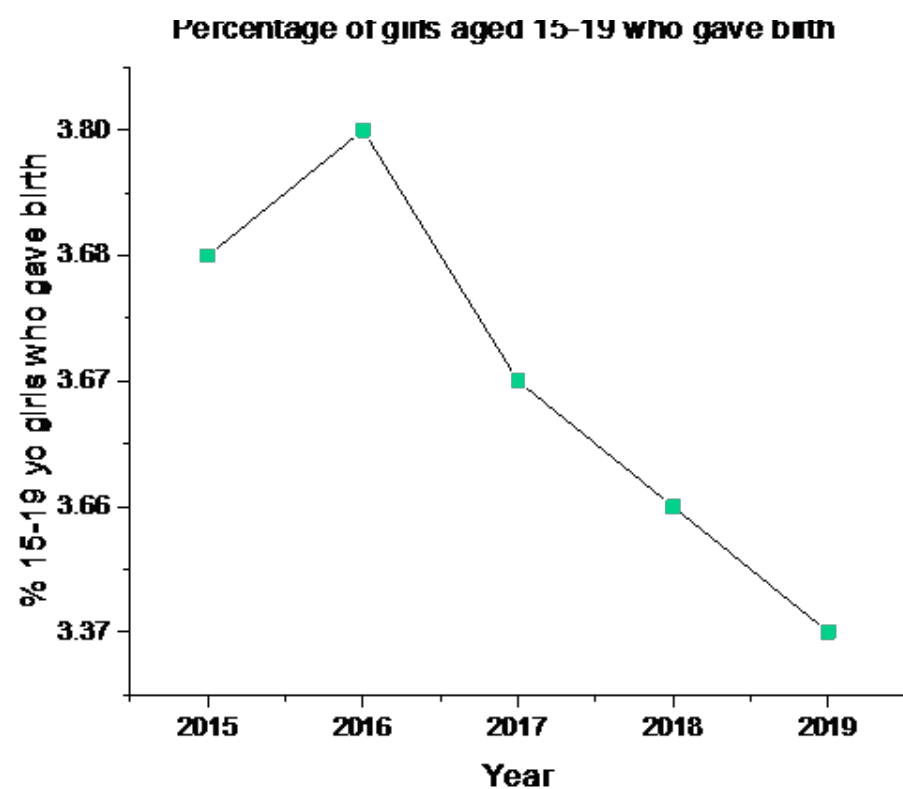


Graph 1- Trend in share of births of first children to teenage mothers in Romania compared to EU average, between 2015-2018 (own work, data source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>)

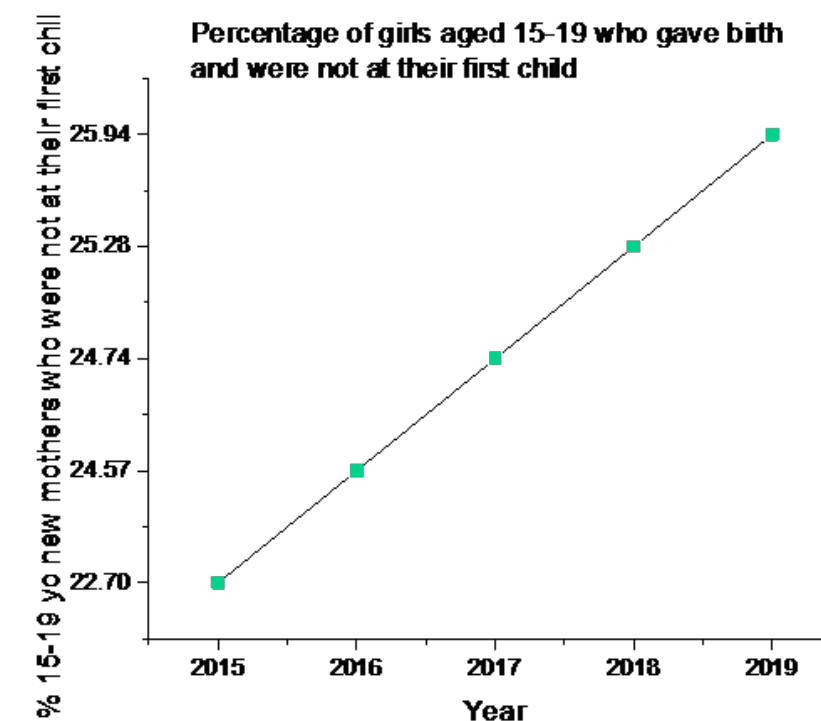
This goes to emphasize how a teenage pregnancy can accentuate the lack of support measures and incentives for these young mothers to stay in school and/or gain a professional qualification, ultimately trapping them inside the false impression that they have no choice other than to be housewives. These poor labour market outcomes have been proven to hinder economic growth. A 2012 World Bank Poverty and Labour Brief looking at Latin America and the Caribbean discovered that constant participation of females in the labour market can result in poverty reduction, as well as an increase in the GINI inequality index by as much as 28%. Given the similarities between the profiles of a significant number of Latin American countries and Romania in terms of relevant indices that describe their socio-economic contexts (Democracy Index - flawed democracies, Youth Literacy Index - around 99.4, Pisa scores - below average in all three assessed competences, Human Development Index - around 0.8), it is safe to extrapolate the findings and conclude that fertility decisions should be driven by choice rather than circumstance. Moreover, a halt in economic growth is not the only cost teenage pregnancies entail. Medical costs (hospitalization, births and abortions, direct pregnancy costs), the costs to the foster care system of supporting abandoned children, and the indirect costs of child mortality amount to millions of euros being lost each year to teenage pregnancy.



Graph 2-Trend in percentage of girls aged 15-19 who gave birth, between 2015-2019*
 (own work, data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)
 *assuming only singlet pregnancies



Graph 3- Trend in percentage of girls aged 15-19 who had abortions, between 2015-2019*
 (own work, data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)
 *assuming only singlet pregnancies



Graph 4- Trend in percentage of girls aged 15-19 who gave birth and were not at their first child, between 2015-2019*
 (own work, data source: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

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Teenage Mothers, An Increasing Social Phenomenon in Romania. Causes, Consequences and Solutions

<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

NUTRITIONAL DISORDERS

THE INNER EMPTINESS: ANOREXIA BULIMIA BINGE-EATING

Because it is extremely widespread, we can consider the eating disorders of young people (especially adolescents) as a real planetary emergency. In fact, millions of adolescents all over the world are underweight, which may result in stunted growth, delayed puberty, cognitive impairment, decreased school / work productivity, or even, in the worst cases, death. This phenomenon especially affects Western countries, regardless of their standard of living (High-Income as well as Low/Middle-Income Countries). However, areas of the World characterised by so-called traditional cultures and with a different model of social organization are not exempt.

Eating disorders mainly affects girls (95% of cases) in the 14-25 age group, but the phenomenon is also growing worryingly among young males.

Anorexia, Bulimia, Binge-eating and EDNOS (Eating Disorders Not Otherwise Specified) are often defensive mechanisms, responses to complex and perceived painful inner states that can arise from a need for personal approval/acceptance by the peer group, the need for attention, recognition and confirmation to overcome low self-esteem, or feelings of inadequacy ("I'm worth little") often linked to expectations perceived as very high that, in many cases, originate in the family.

Underlying these distortions of nutritional behaviors there may be a desperate need for love and attention, the need for adolescents to feel that they are important to the people around them. Where these conditions are not met, a great void is created that young people may try to fill with dieting or, conversely, with food.

An obsessive attention to one's physical appearance may ultimately be a real request for help. In fact, adolescents suffering from eating disorders tend to use the body as a tool through which to highlight a suffering that cannot be expressed in words. For this reason, in many cases, "attacking" one's body becomes an extreme possibility (perhaps the last resort) to draw attention to oneself, to be heard, believed, to be considered ("I exist"): the effect, sometimes devastating and which can lead to extreme consequences, is an abnormal relationship with food that makes one's malaise, inner pain, disorientation and fear of getting lost evident and tangible.

IMPORTANT NOTE: it must be stressed that anorexia bulimia, and other eating disorders, are extremely complex mental illnesses. All cases of eating disorders require specialist intervention by medical and psychiatric experts. The role of the youth worker can and must be only to identify risk factors, to support young people who may be affected, and to "signpost" the way to find specialist help. Above all, non-experts must never make assumptions about the causes of the condition or the possible solutions. Every individual case is different.

ANOREXIA: the mirror never reflects the image of an ideal body. Generally, the path to this eating disorder begins with a strict diet and passes through a maniacal control of the calories ingested and the refusal of food, with the risk of affecting the vital functions of the body. Anorexia relates, at least physically, to an intense fear of gaining weight, but on closer inspection, the extremely reduced food intake - which can lead to a complete rejection - may hide a desperate attempt to defend oneself from hurtful relationships. The control activity occupies the mind of teenagers and young people in a pervasive way, conditioning their whole daily life and relationships with others. An anorexic person, contrary to appearance, may be desperately hungry: hungry for understanding, attention, consideration, warmth, and love - but also, actually, for food itself.

The lack of answers to their need for attention and love may be the underlying factor that

creates a great inner void in anorexic young people, which causes the significant lowering of their self-esteem and the inability to accept themselves; it may drive them to become increasingly “less visible” and - in extreme cases - to disappear altogether.

In these cases, the anorexic illusion may be that of being autonomous and immune from the need for love and desire. The lack of self-acceptance, the difficulty in managing emotions and the need to be loved are therefore among the possible causes of this eating disorder.

BULIMIA and BINGE-EATING: “my body is like a funnel” (when people eat as a way of trying to fill their inner void). These phenomena are also worryingly on the increase: obesity affects one in five adolescents in developed countries; in low/middle-income countries, the prevalence is one in ten and is increasing faster than in high-income countries.

Voracity, impulsiveness in consuming food, the desire to devour it regardless of how tasty it is, or how hungry one is, are what characterise Bulimia and Binge-eating. The consequences can be serious: obesity in adolescence increases the risk of cardiorespiratory and metabolic disfunctions in adulthood, and premature mortality.

In contrast to anorexia, where the desire for food is “canceled through abstinence”, in bulimia the desire overwhelms the person, going beyond any possible control. Although both are characterised by a compulsive intake of food, in Binge-eating there are no compensatory behaviors (self-induced vomiting, use of laxatives and diuretics, excessive exercise, etc.) to contain the sense of guilt and the fear of gaining weight. In fact, whereas bulimics expel the food after ingesting it, in Binge-eating recurrent episodes of uncontrolled and excessive eating cause weight gain or lead to obesity.

People (especially young people) affected by these eating disorders, although aware of their atypical and problematic nutritional behaviour, are unable to control their food intake. This may be because eating compulsively allows them to cope, at least temporarily, with a painful and unsustainable sense of loss and fill their inner emotional void. Food may seem to be the only way to compensate for their shortcomings in emotional relationships. In obesity, the body is forgotten and fat is often experienced as a barrier that protects them against emotions and encounters with others.

A strong sense of guilt, depression, discomfort, insecurity and fear of the judgment of others (especially in adolescents the judgment - true or presumed - of their peers) may be simultaneously the trigger of these eating disorders and the cause of the emotional states that follow the binge.

ROMANIA

National Framework



SOME STATISTIC DATA

Unfortunately, the statistical data from Romania are not precisely documented, which is why we can only refer to the data of countries that have reliable statistics from which it is possible to deduce those of the Romanian case.

By extrapolating from these data, we can state that over 400,000 people in Romania (mostly young people between 12 and 25 years old) suffer from a visible eating disorder (anorexia, bulimia or EDNOS).

Eating disorders occur in people of all ages - they can be found in 7-years-old, but also in 70-years-old.

It is estimated that nearly half of us personally know (perhaps without realizing it) someone with an eating disorder who suffers in secret.

One in 100 teenagers (10-19 years old) suffers from anorexia nervosa; it is estimated that between 0.5% and 2% of the total population suffers from this illness.

Officially 5 out of 100 women suffer from bulimia, but at least 2 studies have shown that only 10% of cases of bulimia are reported, so it is possible that as many as 1 in 5 women suffer from bulimia (20%).

Eating disorders are the third most common chronic disease among young women.

Approximately 10 - 15% of people with anorexia or bulimia are men.

1 in 5 women suffers from an eating disorder or has an irregular diet.

35% of those who follow a diet progress to a subclinical form of eating disorder, and of these 20-25% will end up developing an actual eating disorder in all respects (anorexia, bulimia, binge-eating etc.).

It is also worth mentioning that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men are on a diet at any given time.

YOUNG PEOPLE/ADOLESCENTS

Anorexia is the third most common chronic disease among adolescents.

95% of those with an eating disorder are between 12 and 25 years old.

50% of girls aged 11-13 perceive themselves as fat.

80% of 13-year-olds have tried to lose weight.

51% of 9-10 year-old girls feel more valued / more accepted if they follow a weight loss diet
2/3 of 18-25 year-olds would rather be ugly than fat; 42% of girls in the age range 12 - 15 would like to be thinner.

46% of 9-11 year-old girls are "sometimes" or "very often" on a diet, and 82% of their families are "sometimes" or "very often" on a diet.

91% of students have made at least one attempt to keep their weight under control through diet, and 22% do so "often" or "permanently".

MORTALITY RATES

Eating disorders have the highest mortality rates of all mental illnesses.

A study by the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (Romania) reports that 5-10% of anorexics die within ten years of developing the illness; 18-20% of anorexics will die after 20 years and only 30-40% will recover permanently.

The mortality rate associated with anorexia nervosa is 12 times higher than the mortality rates of ALL other causes of death for women aged 15 to 24 years.

20% of people suffering from anorexia nervosa will die prematurely due to complications caused by the illness, including suicide and heart problems.

Only 1 in 10 people with an eating disorder generally receive treatment.

About 80% of girls/women who are treated for an eating disorder do not receive enough treatment to enable recovery.

10-15% of those suffering from an eating disorder are men, but the numbers seem to be rising.

Men have a much greater tendency not to seek treatment.

Among homosexual men, almost 14% suffer from bulimia and almost 20% from anorexia nervosa.

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Valentina Sedilekova - <https://chutzit.sk/>

NEETS

SCHOOL DROP-OUT/ PUSH-OUT

IL-LEGALITY

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE AT A CROSSROADS

Young NEETs: The acronym NEET (**N**ot in **E**mployment, **E**ducation or **T**raining), used for the first time in 1999 in a report by the UK Government's Social Exclusion Unit, indicates the percentage of young people (generally in the age range 16 - 24) who are either unemployed or inactive - mainly outside the labour market but also outside any kind of educational system (school, vocational college, University or training).

It goes without saying that young people whose income is below the poverty-line, and who lack the skills to maintain social relationships, improve their economic situation and, consequently, their quality of life, are at risk of becoming socially excluded. In fact, the acronym NEET encompasses all those young people for whom the idea of a happy and rewarding future seems to drift further and further away. As reported in a UNICEF research paper ("NEET Equity" - ID 189/Avviso Disagio) on this complex social phenomenon, we can consider NEET as an *indicator of an insufficient quality of life*.

At EU level, NEETs are considered to be one of the most problematic groups in the context of youth unemployment. The European Commission has introduced new indicators, such as the NEET rate, to monitor the labour market and the social situation of young people, and to facilitate comparison between Member States in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Causes of the phenomenon (this is not a Country/Continent for young people).

- the particular historical moment in which we live, characterized by a global economic crisis that has led to a marked reduction in opportunities for young people to find an adequate place in society, especially for weaker sections of the population.
- the loss of all those "certainties" that helped previous generations to enter the labour market and face the challenges of adult life.
- social inequalities, especially regarding access to resources and opportunities. This has the consequence of reducing the chances of breaking the mechanisms of poverty and social exclusion.
- family, cultural, economic and social contexts that do not recognize the skills and talents of young people, and do not invest adequately in their potential. In general, it is correct to suppose that in terms of opportunities, "relations between generations are not very good": the adult world generally does very little - or better said, few concrete things - to help new generations emerge and assert themselves.
- inheritance: the impact of the social status of one's own family and the social context in which one grew up and lived.
- a generalised distrust, above all towards institutions, schools and the world of work, combined with the belief that studying is useless ("*school is not for me*", "*employers do not want me, they do not need me*").

It could be said, in summary of these factors (which are certainly not exhaustive) that today's society is not made for young people, it is not suitable for them. It is as if the new generations do not have a definite place in it and, if they do find one, it is likely to be quite marginal. As a result, many young people are disaffected and apathetic, with a sense of discomfort, and a general disinterest in everything surrounds them or that is proposed to them.

The most worrying thing, as the philosopher U. Galimberti observes, is the attitude of young people, which leads them systematically and knowingly to reject everything that traditional institutions offer them. Rejection (of society as a whole), disinterest, lack of passion as a way of life, an attitude that we could define as nihilistic, all contribute to a space in which it becomes difficult - and sometimes impossible - to reach young people, communicate with them, or create interest and motivation.

Furthermore, to complicate this ensemble of difficulties, in many cases young people feel a desire, which is far from normal, for momentary pleasure, the instant gratification of needs, but without providing real satisfaction, opportunity for growth or greater self-esteem.

WHAT NEETS SAY: *"I didn't feel ready" "I didn't feel comfortable" "They didn't make me feel at ease" "I closed myself... I didn't go" "Total disaster" "They didn't help me" "I didn't like it" "I'm no good" "I'm stupid" "They're bad, they make fun of me" "No, this is not for me, I don't care".*

Young NEETs: who they are, and how many are in Italy and in Europe. Alarming data from Eurostat show that almost a third of young Italians are not studying or working (June 29, 2019). Indeed, these figures are high throughout the Mediterranean area, for example in countries such as Greece and Spain, but in recent years Italy has overtaken all the countries in the area, marking a sad record at European level. This should be seen as an alarm for the economy of the country. According to the latest updates of Eurostat data for the year 2018, 28.9% of young Italians between the ages of 20 and 34 are NEET. This is a worrying figure that is almost twice the European average (in the Eurozone 17.% of young people between the ages of 20 and 34 are NEET, while in the European Union as a whole, the figure is 16.5%). The comparison of the European and Italian data is unforgiving. Italy is even worse than Greece, which is still in great difficulty, where 26.8% of youth are economically inactive. In third place is Bulgaria with 20.9%, then Romania with 20.6%, Slovakia with 20% and Spain with 19.6%. The best placed countries are Luxembourg with 9.9% of NEETs, the Netherlands with 8.4% and Sweden with just 8%.

Economic inactivity is also a gender issue: it mainly affects women. In 2018, at the European level, 20.9% of women between the ages of 20 and 34 were NEET, compared to 12.2% of men of the same age. This gender difference is also confirmed for Italy, where 23.8% of men and 34.2% of women are NEET.

When the data of Eurostat are crossed with those of ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics) for the 15-34 age group, the number of NEETs in Italy exceeds 3 million.

Italy thus confirms itself as a country with very few economic opportunities for young people, and where too few jobs are available. As a result, the "flight" of young Italians abroad has increased in recent years.

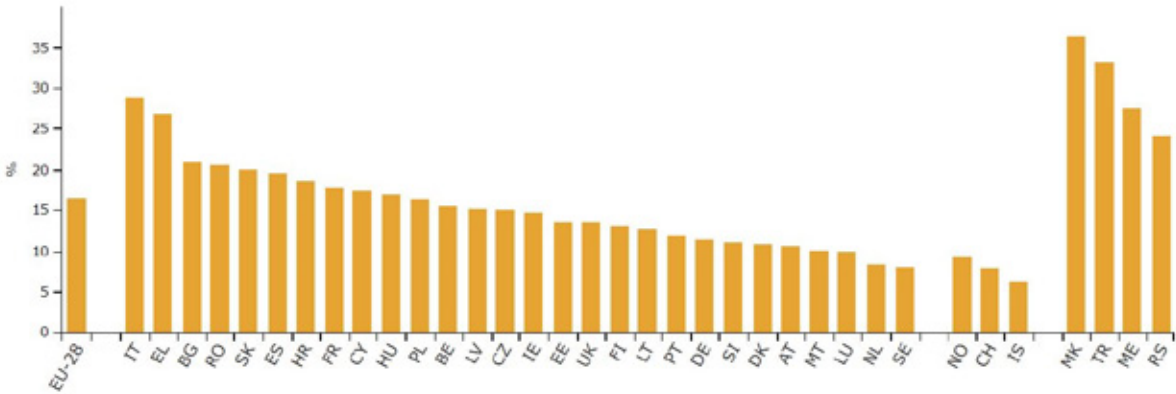
Statistics on NEETs

16.5% of 20-34 year olds in the EU in 2018 were not in employment, education or training ('NEETs').

The proportion of young NEETs in EU countries (2018 figures) varies widely, ranging from 8.0% in Sweden to 28.9% in Italy. This is actually a very significant indicator for understanding the differences, and the social and economic gap, between the countries of the Union. It also indicates the differing levels of attention that the 27 member states pay to young people and the effectiveness of their youth policies.

Slovakia 20.0% Romania 20.6% Italy 28.9% UK 13.6% Netherlands 8.4%

Young people (aged 20–34) neither in employment nor in education and training, 2018

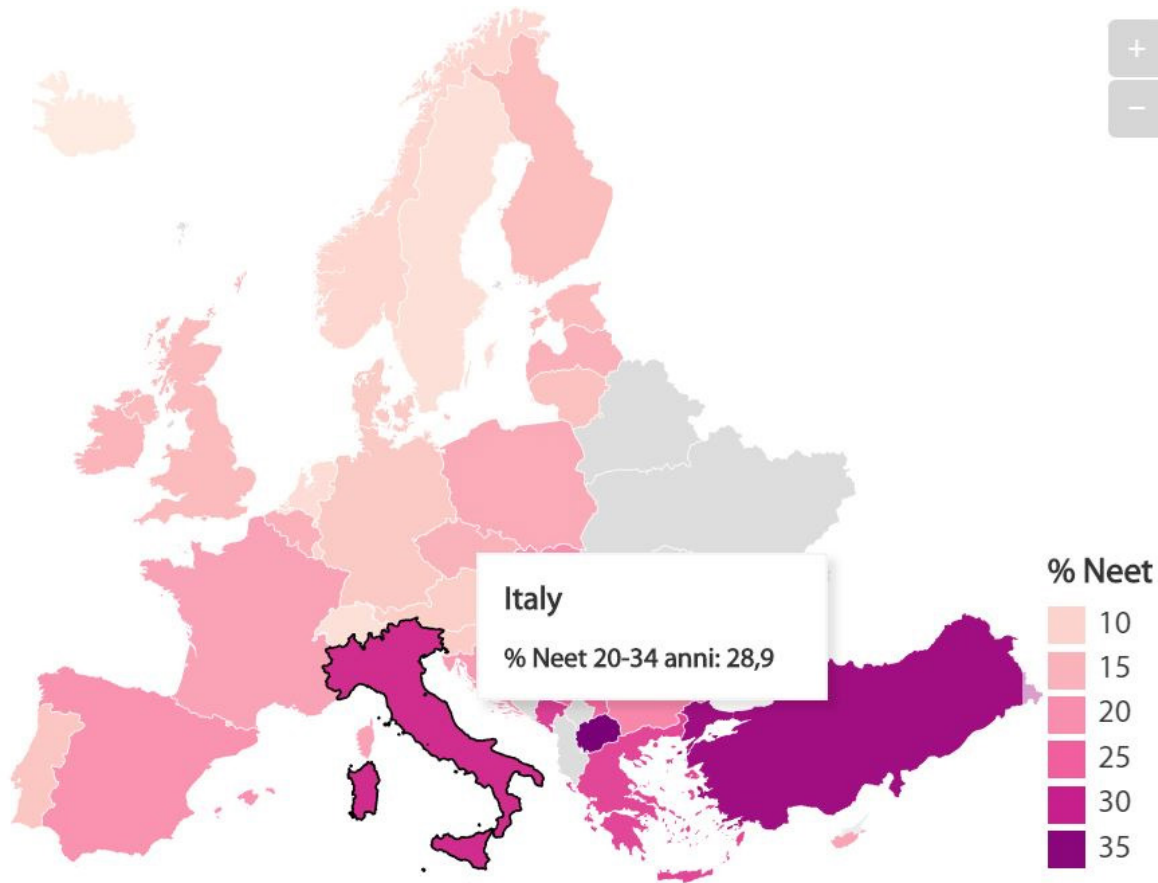


Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_ifse_20)

eurostat

EU map of young people who are not studying or working

Percentage of young people between the ages of 20 and 34 not attending school, training, or other pathways to work (Year 2018).



Mappa: Raffaele Ricciardi • Fonte: Eurostat

ITALIAN

National Framework



At local level... the phenomenon of NEETs in the Basilicata region of Italy. Faced with the lack of job opportunities, fewer and fewer young Lucans (inhabitants of Basilicata) between 15 and 34 years old are moving away from the region. Instead, they decide to stay in Basilicata and persist in seeking a job. However, only 32.3% of unemployed young people regularly send out their CVs, answer advertisements, or participate in public tenders or training activities; as dramatic as it may sound, the available data show that 66.4% of under-35s are economically inactive young people who are not even registered with Employment Services. This means that a high number of young people have not even set foot in a Job Centre. To get an idea of the scale of the phenomenon at local level (Basilicata has a population of just 560,000 inhabitants), we are talking about 32,000 young people (probably an underestimate, as it is difficult to determine the actual number from the statistics), compared with 1.4 million at the national level. Given these numbers, it is reasonable to speak of a social emergency both locally and nationally. In fact, too many young Italians see no substantial progress in achieving their life goals as they get older. The main consequence is that of continually revising these goals, or even resigning oneself to the possibility of not achieving them at all. Despite having skills and talents, too many young people risk getting lost and trapped in the

"NEET" situation. So, on the one hand, the record number of economically inactive under 35s in Italy (compared with the rest of Europe) reduces the country's chances of economic growth; on the other hand it exacerbates an already negative combination of generational, social, geographical and gender inequalities.

NEET, Drop-out phenomena, Deviance and Illegality. Factors such as distrust in institutions, early school leaving, non-participation in training courses, failure to enter the labour market, and a perception that one has a low social status (i.e. a position and role that is indefinite or marginal) constitute a great void in the life of young people, a void that is often painfully filled with behaviours harmful to one's health, social deviance, and a descent into criminality.

Illegality: 292 local areas within eight regions of Southern Italy are identified by the Ministry of Education as areas at risk of social exclusion for young people. These areas are characterised by an economy below the poverty level, with few job opportunities, a strong educational divide, and a high crime rate, including both organized crime (local Mafias) and juvenile crime. Just to get an idea of the extent of the mafia phenomenon and the risk that NEET young people run of being enlisted in the ranks of the mafia, some facts can be particularly significant: in 1984, there were just 578 minors reported for drug offences. By 1990 the figure had grown to about 2 thousand cases; up to 5,123 under the age of eighteen were reported in 2016; and the phenomenon is still growing.

Unfortunately, the link between the mafia and minors is an extended, consolidated phenomenon. Sometimes children as young as 10-12 years, but more often teenagers, are entrusted with various tasks (drug dealer, courier for the gangs, lookout/stake, collection of the "pizzo" (payoff, protection money). In some cases the older ones are ordered to commit murders (boys who show "aptitude"). But the most worrying phenomenon is the individual profile: the average age of members of mafia groups is getting ever lower; there are many factions (especially in the Campania region) made up of teenagers seduced by the myth of money, power, notoriety.

In the last three decades, more than 19,000 movable and immovable properties (lands, productive activities such as farms, orchards, businesses of all kinds, cooperatives, shops and restaurants, craft workshops, etc.) have been confiscated from the mafia.

In all this it must be considered that the youth unemployment rate in some areas of the country (especially in the South) fluctuates between 36% and 50%. There are many areas in which only one out of two young people are in work - and, in many cases, this is precarious work. The economic power of criminal organizations is so great that it can easily become a pole of attraction for young people without prospects, without alternatives. In fact, in many cases, only organized crime is able to offer a solution to young people with fewer opportunities, luring them with the hope that there is a path - risky but short - to achieve a certain economic autonomy, and to obtain social recognition, power and wealth.

Obviously, the persuasive capacity of mafias towards young people increases as the alternatives presented to them decrease: it follows that the impoverishment and scarcity of opportunities produce, especially in some areas of the country, the aggravation of mafia phenomena.

The process is well known: an existential void of young drop-out/pushed-out and NEET young people is filled by the young people themselves with harmful acts and behaviours generated by the great frustration and malaise which they feel about life, or by organised criminals who offer them "opportunities" that are really nothing more than a one-way ticket to a life of crime.

What to do? The role of Educators/Youth Workers and Non-Formal Education.

It is clear that phenomena such as NEETs and the recruitment of young people to the ranks of organized crime are caused by a great institutional, social and cultural vacuum. The antidote to these evils can only be a strategy based on long-term interventions that focus on education for legality, to change the mentality of the new generations in regions where the mafia phenomenon is more prevalent (in the Activities part of this Handbook we present some examples of educational activities based on the concept of legality).

Because of its complexity, to confront and reduce the NEET phenomenon requires a multilevel approach. High level (political and economic) interventions are undoubtedly needed (e.g. reforms that create greater flexibility in the labour market, and specific measures to support young people). In some cases, it may be necessary to implement more radical changes at a structural level, enabling closer inter-institutional collaboration ("joined-up" policy) and putting young people and their specific needs at the centre of policy development. Even the change/improvement of some Socio-cultural factors such as intergenerational relationships and more generally the way young people are perceived by adults, also need attention and attitudinal change: challenging civil society to take a different perspective when looking at the new generations and their potential, may be particularly relevant in improving the life conditions and future prospects of young people throughout our continent.

As many experts have noted in their analyses and proposals for combating the NEET phenomenon, it is essential to combine/integrate all these high-level measures and changes with targeted educational interventions, and personal psychological support for individual young people in difficulty. All research on young NEETs shows a clear vertical drop in self-esteem, confidence in their abilities, a significant deficit in social skills, and a reduced ability to find a sense of direction, make decisions, communicate, or objectively understand their situation. It is at this level (the "micro", personal dimension) that educators and youth workers operate, through a direct relationship with individuals or small groups of young people at risk, with the aim of generating interest and motivation. To show these young NEETs that there is meaning in their lives and purpose in what they do, is actually the strongest tool in the hands of educators and youth workers. By giving meaning and value to young people's activities it is possible to overcome their apathy, disinterest, lack of passion, detachment from reality, discomfort, and loss of energy and motivation.

It is through Non-Formal Education that we can make effective educational and psychological interventions: an interactive and inclusive methodology creates the possibility to overcome the fragilities of young people. This is a sort of "micro" complementary and parallel work that allows them to overcome their fears and to fight against the causes of the NEET phenomenon.

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AMBIVALENZE DI LEGALITÀ. LA RELAZIONE TRA NORME E VALORI IN AMBITO GIOVANILE di Liana M. Daher, Giorgia Mavica, Elisa Casciaro

KEY CONCEPTS

Deviance, Vulnerability, Lifestyles and Living Condition, Prevention

Deviance is generally defined as a **violation of social norms** or a state of diverging from usual or accepted social behavior. It can generate very negative effects, a spiral into which young people fall easily, but which is generally difficult to get out of. Deviance is often referred to as a “no-victim crime”. Yet although it is true that in most cases of deviance it is the individual who causes suffering to him/herself (e.g. through addiction, suicidal tendency, eating disorders, dangerous driving etc.), it is also true that what greatly aggravates the effects of the phenomenon are the various forms of discrimination, social exclusion and banishment which may follow, causing social as well as personal harm.

In reality, the concept of Deviance cannot be so easily defined, because it is difficult (and controversial) to determine to what extent a behaviour is actually lawful, and from what point it can be considered deviant. In fact, an act is generally defined as deviant not because of the nature of the behaviour itself, but because of the response it generates in the socio-cultural environment in which it takes place. It should also be considered that the perception of what is commonly considered transgressive has changed considerably in recent decades and that transgression is a phenomenon subject to continuous change.

Furthermore, although there is undeniably a close link between deviance and family, social, economic and contextual factors (i.e. all those factors that determine the concept of Living Conditions), an increasing number of studies show that age (psycho-evolutionary distress) and psychological state (mental suffering such as depression) are the major causes of deviant behavior.

The interpersonal skills of youth workers, and the non-formal education methods which they use, can be decisive factors for improving the life conditions of young people, and for reversing the vortex that inexorably pulls in young people who have succumbed to deviance; offering them instead a way out and an opportunity for re-inclusion in civil society.

Vulnerability (vulnerable young people): this term refers to the inability of some young people to withstand adverse impacts from multiple stress factors, and the consequent mental suffering to which they are exposed. These impacts are due in part to characteristics inherent in social interactions and the cultural values’ system and, at personal level, to the weakening or lack of defensive barriers. For all those who work with young people it is of particular importance to determine what the link is between vulnerability and deviance, in order to identify and prevent any risks of deviant behaviour.

Antidotes against vulnerability (according to the working experience of the partners) include:

- unconditional (non-judgmental) acceptance of individuals in environments where activities based on the principles of non-formal education are carried out (being part of / feeling included in a small group; actively participating in a work group / team; and in due course, identifying oneself as a member of their own community and acquiring “full citizenship”)
- a close relationship between educators / youth workers and adolescents based on mutual respect, trust and appropriate boundaries.
- regular access to a physical space perceived as a safe place (e.g. youth or social centres) and a high number of hours spent together (shared time and space).
- opening a “special” communication channel between educators / youth workers and young people that allows them to freely express their emotions and to be understood on their own terms.
- practical and inclusive activities aimed at raising the level of self-esteem and strengthening the resilience of young people: improved self-knowledge, acquisition of new soft skills (e.g. learning to say no, not being afraid of going against the tide, ability to resist negative influences by the peer group, etc.).

Who are the most vulnerable young people, those who are most likely to fall victim to addiction? Is it certain that young people with fewer opportunities are more at risk of falling into deviance?

Everyone is potentially vulnerable: the understanding of social vulnerability undoubtedly involves an analysis of the risks and the assets of disadvantaged young people, and a consequent need for a preventive educational plan. However, one of the principles that has guided this project is to avoid focusing on the vulnerability of any specific category of young people. Consequently, the measures and tools presented in this Handbook are general in nature and are directed without distinction towards all those who work with young people to tackle the risks of addiction or deviant behaviour, and to promote positive lifestyles.

Lifestyles and Living Conditions: these terms represent at the same time the conceptual core and the most concrete aspect of any educational work focused on the prevention of distress and deviance. The combined analysis of these two factors - closely related to each other - is fundamental to outlining the general existential conditions of young people, by allowing us to appreciate the context in which they live, the specificity of the local youth culture and its system of values, the real problems - both material and moral - that affect them, their relationships and social constraints, and also their desires, needs and aspirations. We need to understand what could interest and motivate them, potential frustrations and sources of gratification, and the various resources and opportunities that may be offered in any given locality.

We can consider **Lifestyles** as modes of action through which individuals express - to themselves and to others - who they are, who they identify with, who they feel distinct from, and how they make sense of their own actions. In the field of prevention, “lifestyles” generally means those actions that someone performs every day, which are apparently trivial but in actual fact embody complex meanings. In most cases, this is linked to the concepts of well-being and healthy lifestyles. All these notions are peculiar to today’s society, where values, ideologies and even social position are often no longer enough to explain the behaviour of individuals.

“Living Conditions” is generally taken to refer to the wider and complex concept of Quality of Life that may encompass both negative and positive features of life, and determines the level of wellbeing of individuals within their own social context. This includes a mix of subjective and objective factors such as physical health, family and housing conditions, leisure time, education, employment, wealth, safety, security, personal freedom, religious beliefs and the environment.

In fact, at national and, even more, at European level, it is difficult to identify common indicators and parameters that unambiguously define the lifestyles and living conditions of young people: sociological analyses, depending on the country, are strongly influenced by cultural factors, political priorities, differing perceptions of problems and actual needs – what is a coherent priority for one country or area, may not be so for another. The remarkable competence that youth workers have, in setting up preventive interventions, is that they can base their approach on essential empirical data: a deep knowledge of the local context and youth culture and, above all, a personal relationship with the target groups.

Precisely because of this expertise, it is not surprising that youth workers are increasingly present in cross-sectoral partnerships, delivering joint projects and initiatives in the preventive field. In fact, most EU Member States rely on the knowledge and experience of youth associations and the skills of youth workers, when developing systemic approaches (national or local youth strategies and cross-sectoral plans) to tackle youth deviance or to promote healthy lifestyles.

Prevention (Preventive initiatives in the youth field): we can consider this to mean the combination of policies, measures, actions and methodologies aimed at preventing or reducing the risk of deviant behavior, i.e. the probability that young people fall victim to deviance (acts and lifestyles harmful to their physical and mental health) or that unwanted events occur which can have negative repercussions within the peer group, families and communities in which the young people live. The concept of prevention generally refers to the elimination or, in cases where this is not concretely feasible, to the reduction of the risks associated with deviant behavior.

As in all social initiatives, one must keep in mind that the policies and preventive measures that are put in place cannot be only the result of a mere statistical calculation or some artificial equation for determining the level of risk. Statistics and risk calculation are also the result of a cultural context and are thus strongly influenced by social factors. Therefore, the best policies and preventive actions are based on the results of working groups which combine a great variety of skills, experience and analyses reflecting many different points of view. Solutions to (complex) problems are increasingly less deterministic and ever more the result of a process of elaboration that includes moral, cultural, and social elements and competences in the field of interpersonal relationships.

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Expert in youth policies and project management, he has long collaborated with many international organizations as a consultant, trainer and project designer in the development of youth policies, and in the design and implementation of seminars, training courses, youth exchanges and initiatives whose beneficiaries are more young people with fewer opportunities.



ASOCIACIA ACVČ SR (Slovakia - Banská Bystrica)



Association of Leisure Time Activities Centers in Slovak republik.

The Asociacion of Leisure Time Activities Centers in Slovak republic is the association of public organisations - leisure time activities centres aimed on nonformal education and free time activities for children and young people.

We are partners in negotiating with the Ministry of Education, preparing and implementing a methodology for working with children and youth. We consciously consult and remind official documents and action plans for youth work. We organize conferences in cooperation with Ministry of Education , IUVENTA - Slovak national institute - University. We provide public debates and consultations in the field of children and youth with responsible people - teachers, educators, youth workers. Since 2012 we are members of EAICY.

ACVCSR incorporates Leisure time activity centers throughout Slovakia as its members. Works at all levels from national, through regional down to local. We also work trans-nationally with international partners and/or institutions.

The Asociacion is founded as an umbrella organization of Leisure Time activities centers in Slovakia and helps members, education workers, young people to organize different events like round tables with parliament members, seminars, conferences, living library, charity, ecological activities, youth mobility, youth exchanges and many others. The organization since its inception focuses on activities that promote non formal learning among youth. These are seminars, workshops, conferences. We organize our own projects, to promote the application of innovative methods into the practice of leisure centers.

Our aim is to defend the interest of centers, as well as collaborate and develop innovative methods in the field of education and youth work. Our ambition is to cooperate with institutions dealing with the introduction of new methods in the children and youth education into practice. We also consult documents and youth policy in the area of education in cooperation with the Ministry of education.

Organisation makes many activities, clubs, events, trainings in field of culture, art and crafts, sport, tourism, environment and social sphere. It participates with many other organisations and NGO on local and international level. It helps and creates possibilities for local children and youth from minorities or socially disadvantaged families. It participates in many national and international projects aimed on educating young people in EU citizenship, youth policy, volunteering, tolerance and antidiscrimination. ACVCSR was founded 1999. It is an umbrella organisation of 64 member organizations, of

what is about 600 individuals education workers and youth workers.

In 2009, 2011, 2013 we organized a conference on education and training of young people and their role in the context of leisure centers.

Since 2012 we are members of EAICY (European Association of Institutions of Non-formal Education of Children and Youth).

We carried out a project in 2017-2018 granted by National grant from Ministry of Education focused on the transformation of Leisure time activity centres to Modern youth centres with the title Youth centres. The organization is also Youth Wiki correspondent.

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MOMENTUM WORLD

(UK - London)



Momentum World is a provider of international non-formal education. Our aims are:

- To inspire young people and develop their employability.
- To increase young people's understanding of global issues, and access to international projects.
- To facilitate employment opportunities and career pathways.
- To add value to formal education.
- To promote intercultural understanding and inclusion.

We work within 4 strategic themes reflecting both our knowledge and expertise as an organisation, and our international partnerships. All our projects are based on one or more of these themes:

- Reducing social isolation
- Employability
- Intercultural learning and heritage
- Digital media

International education and learning will always be the best way to broaden young people's horizons, improve employment chances and promote equal opportunity, tolerance and sustainability at home and abroad. This is what we offer. Our international leadership, employability skills and intercultural skills courses for young people are among the best available. We give young people access to international volunteering opportunities, and recruit UK participants for a wide range of youth and education projects in other countries.

As well as working directly with young people, we also design and manage innovative intercultural projects for clients in the UK and internationally. We advise schools, colleges and other organisations on how to develop effective international links and projects. We train staff and volunteers from youth and education organisations how to organise safe, fun international activities for young people.

We specialise in film and digital media as inclusive learning tools for young people. Most recently, we have pioneered the use of 360 degree virtual reality filming to produce training materials for youth workers, funded by Erasmus+. Working with partners in Poland and Italy, this was the first ever project to use VR technology for non-formal education. We are continuing to develop this work. For further details see: <https://youthwork360.eu>

As a Eurodesk UK Partner, Momentum World promotes all aspects of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps for the youth sector and more generally. On behalf of the UK National Agency, we also manage the EuroPeers UK network, which gives young people follow-up opportunities after their international projects, and engages them in activity as ambassadors for Erasmus+ and the Solidarity Corps, sharing their European experience and motivating others to get involved.

This work puts us at the centre of a network of professional people interested in education, and makes us a “one-stop shop” for advice and expertise on all aspects of international and intercultural work with young people, and access to a wide range of international training, projects and other opportunities for young people, teachers and youth workers. With our partners across Europe, we have been involved in over 150 Erasmus+ and other international projects.

Contacts

Website

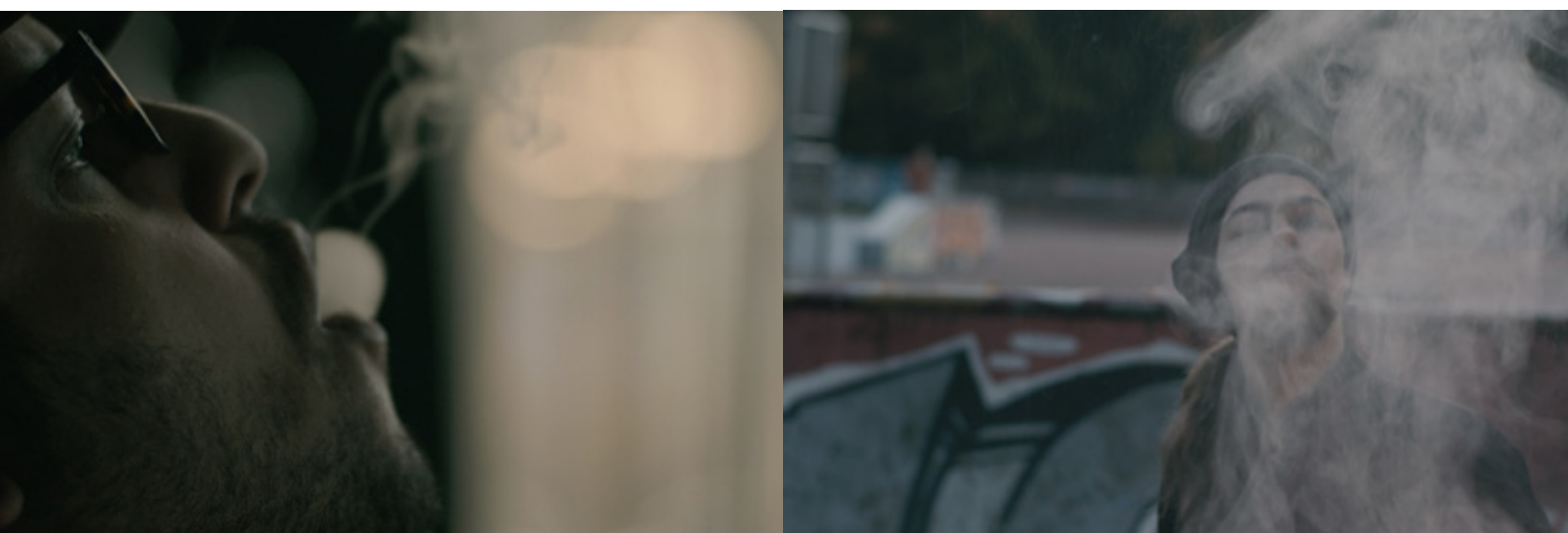
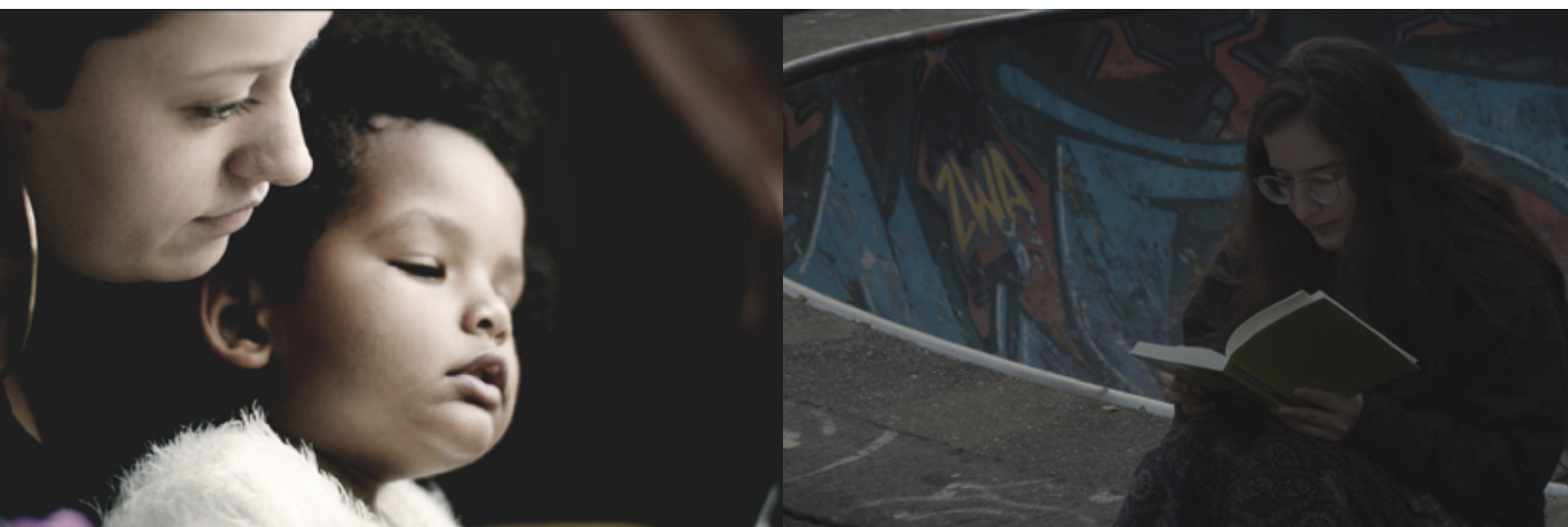
www.momentumworld.org

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/MomentumWorld>

Youtube

www.youtube.com/user/FilmsMomentum/featured



DIGG'OUT

(The Netherlands - Almere)



Digg'Out is a Dutch youth organisation which focuses on the cross-grained, young rebels who are experiencing difficulties in adjusting to today's society. Digg'Out encourages them to take up the responsibility for their own life and to make the most of it by respecting themselves as well as others. It helps them back to school or to a job. The organisation's core strategy and greatest strength is the "For Us, By Us" principle. That is: for young people, by young people. Digg'Out facilitates in support, guidance, training and work. It's a network of young people, education and business.

Rebels...

Democracy and freedom of speech are vulnerable matters. Especially the obstinate, rebellious young people arouse the anxiety of the authorities and are more likely to become a victim of unreasonable and illegitimate conduct. The current policy of getting rebellious young people in line the hard way demonstrates how ineffective this is. These rebels force us to think. They are fundamental to our society, which can only function with and because of them. They connect adults and invite them to actively participate.

Digg'Out supports the rebels of our society to be the director of their own lives. In an inspiring and positive way. With respect for themselves and respect for other people.

How...?

Digg'Out's core strategy is the "VoO-DoO" strategy. VoO-DoO stands for "VoOr Ons DoOr Ons" which means "For Us, By Us" in Dutch. Hence, for young people, by young people.

The underlying thought is that only young people know what young people want and need. Role models create role models.

The organisation works in a getatable, accessible, pro-active and pragmatic way following the action by learning and learning by doing approach. Empowerment is achieved by the creation of unusual combinations of youngsters who learn together and work together.

Why?

The primary goal is to empower young people to return to school or get a job. This is how Digg'Out stimulates the integration and emancipation of youngsters and increases their participation in society. Self-guidance, autonomy and above all guarding one's authenticity are the key themes in everything we do.

Contacts

Website

www.diggout.nl

Facebook

www.facebook.com/DiggOut-132649347343/?tn-str=k*F

Youtube

www.youtube.com/channel/UC93PvRvOPoVGkFH8vAt7r6A



FITT (Romania - Timisoara)



The Timiș County Youth Foundation aims to permanently and sustainably support youth organizations by organizing courses, seminars, workshops, round tables, shows, events of artistic and cultural interest and any other event organized by young people or for young people.

Between 2 May 2016 and 1 May 2017, the Timiș County Youth Foundation was the coordinator of the CHECK-OUT Timișoara program and the activities carried out within it, on the occasion of the city of Timișoara, obtaining the title of Capital of Youth of Romania. Also from 2016, the Youth House of Timisoara, heritage of the Timisoara Youth Foundation and administered by it, was accredited with the Quality Certificate by the Council of Europe, thus becoming the first Youth Center for European standards in Romania and only one of those seven of these centers across Europe.

Timiș County Youth Foundation (FITT):

The Timis County Youth Foundation (FITT) was founded in 1990, based on the Decree Law n. 150/1990, and the heritage of the former Timiș County Committee of the Communist Youth Union of Romania, in order to administer it for the benefit of youth organizations and youth in Timiș County.

The main concerns were therefore the development of the heritage of Timișoara and Lugoj for its adaptation to modern needs, to support the development of the non-governmental youth sector in Timis and the cooperation of the organizations in the democratic decision-making process within the FITT, as well as the development of programs for young people at local, regional, national and international level.

Over time, tens of thousands of young people from different backgrounds have been beneficiaries of projects and activities within the Youth House.

From 2002 FITT operates on the basis of the provisions of law 146/2002, which clarifies the aspects relating to the organization and functioning of the county's youth foundations.

Timiș County Youth Foundation (FITT) today

Timis County Youth Foundation - FITT is an umbrella organization for youth NGOs in Timis County. With over 30 member youth NGO members and an activity of over 28 years, FITT is the most important NGO in the west of the country.

As regards the organizational structure and the decision-making process, FITT is a model of representation of young people and democratic procedure, guided by a general assembly in which the affiliated organizations are represented and by a board of directors in which all members are young.

As far as infrastructure is concerned, FITT operates in its own Youth House in Timisoara (assets estimated at around 3 million euros.) The Youth House offers various services to the community, such as: seminar rooms, animation rooms, hotels, restaurant, artistic music club, but also gym and pub (external management). The youth house is mainly used for conducting activities with and for young people.

At local level, FITT has contributed to the development of the Timisoara youth strategy and will implement a project funded by the Erasmus Plus program that will lead to a strategy for young people in Timis County. At national level, FITT is a member of the National Youth Council of Romania (CTR) and also a member of the national network of youth foundations in Romania.

As for the programs and activities implemented by FITT, they range from social programs for disadvantaged young people to cultural programs, active citizenship programs and the development of public policies (local and national).

Sectoral activities:

- Social programs: support for young people in difficult situations (unemployed, young people in rural areas, etc.)
- Entrepreneurship: cooperation with local and national authorities
- Sports: Capoeira, Tai Chi, aerobics, Tai-Bo courses

All youth programs are based on the active participation of animators and volunteers who share a common goal, namely the development of policies for young people and non-formal education at both regional and national levels.

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Facebook

www.facebook.com/fitt.timisoara

Youtube

www.youtube.com/channel/UCFVZDcDvmuX8kNrY-ZKSjBQ

Other platforms

www.coe.int/t/dg4/eycb/Programme/labelled_centre_Romania_en.asp

www.salto-youth.net/Tools/otlas-partner-finding/organisation/fitt-fundatia-judetean-pen-tru-tineret-timis.4039/



EURO-NET (Italy - Potenza)



EURO-NET is a not for profit association that is member or associated member of 58 international networks (5 of them are EU networks: Europe Direct, Euroguidance, Eurodesk, Solvit and EBN-European Business & Innovation Centre Network), and has more than 61 own antennas in 22 different countries in Europe.

EURO-NET gives to children, young people and adults these services:

- Information and project development center;
- Organization of training courses, exchanges and cultural, artistic or sport activities;
- Sector study, research;
- Counseling, crisis support and prevention;
- E-learning, networking, partnerships, training courses and workshops;
- Publications, newspapers and web sites.

It has realized more than 390 European projects, especially with Youth and Youth in Action, Socrates, Leonardo, LLP, Progress, Daphne, Life, E-Aid, Culture, Creative Europe, Erasmus Plus (KA1, KA2 and KA3), Representation in Italy of E.C., European Youth Foundation, Council of Europe, etc.

EURO-NET was chosen 2 times from the European Commission in the Pan-European Working Groups for its competences and 3 times published for its best practices in the field of media and communications.

Contacts

Website

www.synergy-net.info

www.euro-net.eu

Facebook

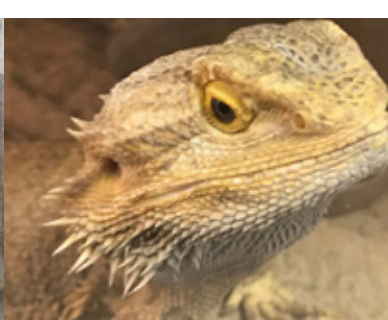
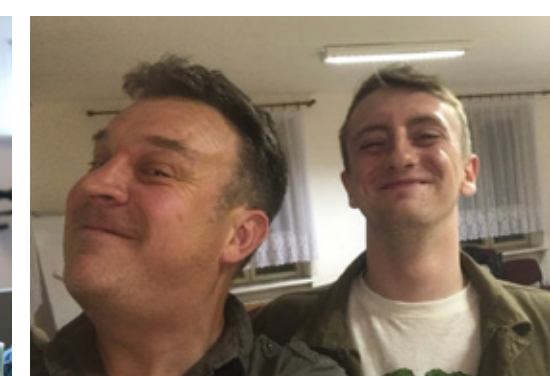
www.facebook.com/euro.net.31

Youtube

www.youtube.com/channel/UCOPKPQnNcL7GsfF5T9e0jkg

NOTE

NOTE



YOUTH Lifestyles

DEVIANCE AND PREVENTION

Youth Work for Vulnerable Young People

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