



**Resources for Inclusion, Diversity and Equality**

# **Needs Analysis Report**

## **Country Report Slovakia**



**Grant Agreement No. 2015- 2-UK01-KA205-014061**



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

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## **1. Understanding of Youth Work in Slovakia**

Youth work is defined as purposeful activity that responds to the needs of young people and leads to a positive development of their personalities, so that they can fully apply in life. It is based on the principle of voluntary participation of youth, partnership approach and mutual respect. Its mission is to contribute to maturity, finding meaningful life direction and self-awareness of individuals and groups. It should create space for young people's involvement on matters that affect them, to motivate them to participate and thereby contributing to building civil society. YW is carried out by people specifically trained for, actively working in this area, as well as volunteers.

One of the forms how to achieve the youth work quality in Slovakia are the accreditation programs of non-formal education based on Act no. 282/2008 of Codex on Support of youth work, and on Act no. 131/2002 in Codex on Universities. In Slovakia, the design of innovative systems for enhancing the quality was supported in initiatives of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic Priority of youth policy (Programs for Youth - 2014 to 2020). In other types of organizations (except children and youth subregional organizations) at the level of regions, cities and municipalities have yet not been achieved any consensus on what constitutes quality in youth work. It is also a need for greater support for the introduction of quality through the use of various tools to create a motivating environment where the organizations are able to inspire each other and learn.

The inclusion approaches are not thematized in the youth work programs.

## **2. Background research on the issues which may affect young people**

As well as in other countries, here in Slovakia we can see the tendency toward enforcement of inclusion into praxis in the last years. In Slovakia, but also in other countries, we can also see that enforcement of inclusion is preferentially connected with formal education, i.e. educational process. Many statements of Slovak influential specialists points to the fact that the need of enforcement of inclusion into non-formal education or within the frame of free time of children and youth in the school or outside of school, in various youth organizations, is very often forgotten.



N. Bizová (2012) pointed to this problem in a long term; she mentioned that the issue of inclusion is elaborated within the frame of educational process. Its application within a free time in Slovakia is backward. Slovak specialized and academic journals pay almost no attention to this topic. There exists no publication written by Slovak author that is explicitly focused on inclusion of children and youth within their free time. M. Sabolíková (2011, pg. 192) also calls attention to it “the analysis of non-formal education from the point of view of inclusion of disabled, mentally disturbed or threatened pupils is not in the centre of interests.” P. Lenčo (2011, pg.182, 186) asserts: “in regard to non-existing data monitoring this issue and absent empiric research in this field... the current condition of inclusion in children’s and youth organizations (as well as in other institutions for free-time education) is not elaborated yet in Slovakia.” Author mentions following observations which flow from his longtime experiences in a field of work with children’s and youth organizations: (1) in the praxis, there exists mostly non-governmental organizations for intact children and youth, non-governmental organizations for disabled or disadvantaged children and youth, but also these organizations are focused on a special kind of excluding (e.g. Roma children and youth, urban children and youth) or disability (organizations for physically disabled children and youth, blind, deaf) – in this case we cannot talk about realization of inclusion within a free time of children and youth. (2) Non-governmental sector is tightly connected to local community in which it exists and tries to react on its needs. That is why there are some cases in the praxis, when the participants of children’s and youth organizations are disabled or disadvantaged people, but there are no records or statistics about these facts, because they are considered to be a natural part of community – on the one hand, it explicitly talks about realization of real inclusion within organizations, but on the other hand, there is a lack of statistical data that could prove these statements.

In spite of the fact mentioned above, we can see in the issue of non-formal inclusive education of children and youth in Slovakia some research findings. If we pay our attention to all things that may influence the excluding the children and youth from equal opportunities within the frame of spending their free time, or if we consider as barriers in inclusion within the free time factors such as disability, long-term health problems, special educational needs or social, ethnic, economic, geographic, or cultural disadvantages etc., then we can point to following research findings that are connected to Slovakia:



1. Kováčová, B. (2008) researched an offer of interest groups and she calls attention to the fact, that there exists parallel offer of interest groups for intact pupils and for disabled, mentally disturbed or threatened pupils. This case we cannot consider as inclusion within a free time, because the non-formal education is practiced separately for intact pupils and separately for disabled, mentally disturbed or threatened pupils. So the pupils do not come into contact during the outside school activities. It is bewildering that for disabled, mentally disturbed or threatened pupils that there are very often offered those interest groups that are not typical free-time activities, but they are focused on school performance, re-education or they stimulate special educational care. According to statistic findings, which author mentioned, every fourth interest group, which is established for disabled, mentally disturbed and threatened pupils, has re-educative features, so it does not fulfil the content and function of free-time activities for children and youth. Last but not least, the author points to serious problem that is the misuse of discriminatory nomenclature in interest groups aimed for children or young adults with disability, mental disruption or threat (e.g. better reading group, group for children with specific learning disabilities, group for integrated pupil etc.) – that contents are mostly build up on re-education, or more precisely, on substitution of special educational care. So the author suggests: a) to define the boundaries of free-time activities for all providers of interest groups to be clear, what we should consider as free-time activity and what we should not; b) to eliminate interest groups that have re-educative character
2. Lenčo, P. (2007) – in his research he found out that in youth organizations there is not much attention paid to unemployed youth. Economic position of young adults has significant role in the possibilities of spending their free time.
3. Fulková (2008) – in her research, apart from other issues, she was focused on the detection of obstacles of young adults in the possibilities of spending their free time. As the biggest obstacles she considered (a) the lack of financial resources (40% of respondents) – so we can talk about economic factor; (b) – lack of suitable offers – in this case we could talk about obstacles that are various disabilities and disruptions, but as well geographical obstacles, or more precisely, lack of possibilities for young people living in the villages; (c) inconvenient technical and spatial conditions of organizations providing possibilities for spending free time for young adults – also in



this case are especially those obstacles, which relate to the individuals with disability or long-term health problems; (d) a ban on the part of parents (25% of respondents) – the concrete reasons in this case are economic but also social obstacles in the families of young people.

4. Šuhajdová, I. (2014) – in her research she focused on spending the daylong education, i.e. on non-formal education either. Apart from other things, she found out that daylong education system is primarily aimed for pupils from socially disadvantaged environment, especially for Roma pupils. Researched schools permit to participate to all pupils without any distinction of age, sex, health condition, and special educational issues, social or ethnic origin. All things consider, schools within the frame of non-formal education of their pupils managed to fulfil the principle of inclusion, i.e. equal possibilities for all, without any distinction. As the author adds, daylong educational system in Slovakia is primarily realized only for pupils at primary schools. Secondary schools students do not have opportunity like this.
5. Kováčová, B. (2007) – when assessing interest groups for children and young adults she found out these weaknesses: (a) lack of awareness of current offers – this problem is primarily related to young people living in villages or in more outlying areas. They are not expected to be interested in free-time activities realized in towns, because the geographical disadvantage is taken into consideration, which is also tightly connected to the need of traveling and the economic obstacle; (b) the space and environment are discriminating to minor groups – it is especially problem related to young people with disability; (c) – internal rules of institutions, which provide free-time activities mostly for intact population, they do not take into consideration any disadvantage.
6. Kratochvílová, E. (2010) – points to the fact, that children and young people are usually not appropriately addressed by providers of free-time activities, they do not know the offer or the offers are not clear to them. This is the basic problem especially for people living in villages, because the institutions providing free-time activities are not equally accessible in the villages and in towns, so we can again talk about geographical obstacles.
7. Drzníková, E. (2000) – she also points to the problem of equal accessibility of free-time activities for all young people without any distinction, especially she points to the problem from the point of view of geographical accessibility.



In conclusion, we can say, in Slovakia, there is a lack of any reference to research of equal opportunities within the frame of spending free time of orphaned children, children from orphanages, immigrants, national minorities, different religious confession or children and youth, who had problems with addictions or delinquency in the past. On the other hand, the most attention (but still not enough) is paid to possibilities of inclusion, i.e. equal opportunities for children and young people with disability.



### **3. Inclusion, equality and diversity in the non-formal education from the perspective of young people in Slovakia**

#### **3.1 How do young people understand the term and practice of youth work and the youth worker characteristics**

In the first area we have focused on finding ideas of young people who were active in informal groups as "clients" in their understanding of the term "youth work" and the perception of targets of „youth work“. We have noted respondents' answers, which the term „youth work“ and its targets situated in the following areas:

- a) Full - valuable use of leisure time, self-realization

*"... I felt useful, I'm doing something not only for me but also for the group, for others, so that feeling of self-fulfillment ...*

- b) Formation of the young man, his values:

*"The formation of a young person, values, beliefs, so there is a young man evolved, forward direction."*

*... And while we seeking common progress and let's say that even the value is confirmed in us to properly formed others in our community."*

- c) Socialization within the group:

*„... It helped me especially in this ... someone has taken and perceives as I am.“*

*"... Helped me to know how to socialize as a group that I knew I was fit in and each of us found, what he does best and that motivated us so well that we do something that we want, what we enjoy. "*

- d) Prevention of socio-pathological phenomena:

*"Acts on the young person's preventive, not that then we will solve only the problem itself ... keep him from some groups at risk, if it already is not."*

- e) Self-acceptance:





*"Group and the community helped me take apart, so that, as I am, so I'm basically perfect that there is no need to look for my shortcomings, but look for my positive and accept myself."*

f) Helping young:

*"Help the young, support (psychological, financial, emotional)"*

g) Acquisition of practical experience necessary for life:

*"..to acquire even some practical experience ..."*

As indicated the respondents' answers, understanding of youth work and its targets are relatively broad. This may be due to the fact that youth work is implemented in practice in different areas and meet different goals in real. It follows also from the exposure of respondents, who visited within youth group for example christian community, choirs, scouting organizations or organization working with migrants, folks group and others. It is this diversity of organizations and associations providing youth work determined various performance of targets which we conduct our research identified the targets at the level of self-realization and meaningful use of leisure time, formation of personalities, their values, attitudes, opinions, socialization within the group, preventing in the area of the prevention and solution of socio-pathological phenomena. However, as indicated the answers of respondents, the action of youth groups beyond the traditional definition of the functions of leisure time and provides the "clients" space for their self-acceptance, which is in terms of the characteristics of this developmental period, a very important phenomenon, which is very important in terms of a healthy mental and physical development.

With elements of self-acceptance is related another identified plane of targets, the level of help - psychological, emotional but also financial. In terms of the particularities of the developmental period of adolescence we can be as one of the typical characteristics indicate the significance of peer groups. We think that this may be why groups working with youth can also operate on youngsters in a psychological, emotional as well as financial assistance.



Similarly, a youth group provides space for gathering of practical experience. As also mentioned the respondents themselves, often a member of the youth organization "educate" their own executives or their influence in the choice of their future profession.

In another area we have focused on identifying the characteristics of youth worker. Based on respondents' answers, we recorded the characteristics of:

### 3.2 Youth worker personality characteristics

#### a) personality traits:

*"Also, those personality traits, such as. strong will, that's what led us to that, he lived alone with that.*

*"...to be friendly, smiling, that young looking forward to meeting him."*

*"It must also be responsible for the group. If there is such. injury, so it must be able to tackle."*

*"He can understand the family situation of young people, as often as we met people who had divorced parents, poor family background. He was trying to understand and does not define the man, but just accept it."*

*"Evokes a feeling of trust, respect. When there is not trust, we can not work together."*

*"He was a man who didn't partition the people capable and incapable, could identify talent."*

#### b) Expertise in the area within which he operates:

*"... And he is the specialists."*

*"... He has experience, he knows what he says. He passed something. "*

#### c) Ability to lead and manage a group:

*"Knowing practical assistance when it was needed. Does not solve only your program, you know to adapt to existing situations. "*

*"It gives space to use talents of young people, providing scope for implementation."*

*"... Can lead us."*



*"Youth worker does not differentiate between us, we were in scouting young men, and whether anyone had any problems or was a different color. He was tolerant towards all. He does not exclude anyone from the group. "*

Respondents situate requirements for youth worker into three basic areas. In the area of personal capacities respondents considered an important feature of self-discipline, friendliness, responsibility, empathy and responsiveness to the needs of the group as well as tolerance. Just tolerance attributed great importance to young people. This was evidenced by the negative experience of one respondent, who points out that intolerance and disregard for the needs and requirements of the group may also lead to its disablement: *"... I have negative experience, the group leader did not give the possibility to express your opinion, he was intolerant, went only for its objective and does not respect anyone. More he realized himself than he wanted to help the implementation of the file. Later, after the establishment of CA is exalted, he acted as director, negatively affecting the atmosphere in the group. He didn't listen to the opinions of others. Finally, I left the group and the other members left the group either. "*

In terms of qualifications, respondents considered especially important for the expertise and professionalism of youth worker in areas in which youth work as well as his practical experience. Just practical experience leading the respondents consider it very important and for others to follow. From the above we can identify another important characteristic of youth worker who, while not directly named by respondents, but clearly emerged from the context of the interviews and that the youth worker should be a model for youngsters with whom he works.

Another area requirements of youth workers we could name as managerial skills. Within it we have seen qualities as leadership within the group, a clear vision of the targets and procedures to achieve the aim, promoting giftedness and talent of the group members, but also sensitivity to their needs and requirements, creating space for the realization of the group members, the ability to listen, flexibility. Special attention should, in the context of our commitment like to draw to the identified properties leading youth worker as follows: equal opportunities and tolerance. As emerged from the interviews, young people are very receptive and sensitive to the creation of equal opportunities for both self-development as well as the whole group. Similarly, in the tolerance of the respondents considered it very important that the group leader: *"Makes no distinction between us ... whether anyone had any problems or was a different color. He was tolerant towards all. He does not exclude anyone from the group. "*

From the above article it shows that respondents of young people realize the importance of creating equal opportunity and tolerance within the informal education of young people. Just the concept of equality, inclusion and diversity, we focused in the next part of our paper. From that concept we saw at least responses in clarifying the concept of inclusion.



### 3.3 Understandings of IDE

When asked "How do you understand the concept of inclusion?", "What do you think is inclusion?". Answers of respondents was recorded in the following areas of inclusion:

a) In the social field:

*"Receiving or accepting everyone, each unique, his uniqueness, if someone is already poor, we all have different needs, something different and accept it such as it is. We try to get to know him as the environment or how he survives. "*

*"As part of my experience in the transit center refugees I had an experience where there was a lot of diversity and inclusion took place there in the true sense, or at least the way you imagine it myself. There they met people of different ages, from different countries, they get to know among themselves diverse, because there were Germans, Englishmen, Slovaks, etc., there were men, women. Came from a completely different culture, there came men, women and teenagers. "*

b) In pro-social areas (identification of new areas inclusive approach in practice):

*"When it comes also to us a new community member, we go to our standardized programs, such as we have, but will adapt to him (the whole group) with that introduced to it, give him space for sharing it with us. On that day, we changed his program on that day. "*

When analyzing the statements of the respondents to the concept of inclusion, there was considerable surprise that in either case, we have not seen the perception of inclusion in the true sense. Neither of the respondents stated understanding of inclusion in the context of integration based on the physical, medical, psychological and even. disability. We can assume that they are in practice to such a form inclusions didn't meet, or, on the contrary, inclusion in practice was so successful that it was a natural for respondents did not perceive these individuals as inclusion bodies. Most of the comments of the respondents went to the area of social inclusion, which we saw as a difference for applying an inclusive approach poverty (social environment), age, gender, culture, nationality and religious affiliation and linguistic diversity.

As we consider the incidence of inspiring description of an inclusive approach when adopting each member to the team. This area approach can be understood as a new area for inclusion. This dimension could be called pro-social, focused on the admission of any member of the group.

An interesting observation can be considered inclusive approach and within the volunteer group operating in the transit camp: *"Even within the volunteer was not only*



*the majority of the population. There were ex-cons, alcoholics, addicts lived. And any differences there died. There just came a kind of harmony. It was only there for one thing: heat clothe people who come to us to withstand the adverse conditions and survive at least 24 hours, which have been waiting even though it was night, dark, cold, rain, and then it snowed." It further stated respondent: If the inclusion is successful when it comes to basic needs (survival, health) - I think this is also one of those reasons. Determination that those people went there and went free vision ... the money was not there ... Everyone was determined to himself, despite risking their health, their own time, they did not need to be assessed financially. Imagine That inclusion ... " This observation, as well as the approach, in respect of inclusions can be considered very interesting. Reflects the internal motivation and conviction motivating volunteers (perhaps necessary) applying an inclusive approach in ensuring basic living needs.*

Additional terms to which the youths had to express the notion of equality (in the context of youth work) and the ideal of equality. We received such statements:

*"Same receive individual in society, whether it is economic conditions, or whether they acted otherwise, we strive to take to rule respect and mutual understanding. E.g. I remember that at Strelka sang the one who could not sing. "*

*"Equality was also in our church. We do not make any bankruptcy, aptitude tests. If one has an interest and wants to come to church to praise God and wants to ask, it is accepted. We make no distinction everyone is accepted. "*

*"We have done so through our resort that we went out to play with children on estates and then they came in the evening to our center."*

*"The joint activities, we gave each child to survive its own success. We never did not focus of whether it is from a poorer family, whether it's a boy, girl, or better learn or not. Every child there Survived his own success, which supported not only him, but the group itself. The program has been built so that every child can experience your success. "*

Under those terms, we can observe that youngsters who worked in informal leisure organizations perceived notion of equality especially in the plane of equal opportunities. This fact appears to us to be quite logical and understandable, because the main business organizations attended youths, has been providing a variety of leisure activities. And it is "availability" provided activities for all who expressed an interest in them was the main line of respondents association with the notion of equality. Within the interviews, however, we saw the application of the principle of equality of youngsters from different social backgrounds - social equity and gender equality.

Another term, which was the subject of our research was the concept of multiplicity, diversity. We received such expression of respondents:

*"I was only faced with the fact that the greatest differences are that they are introverts and extroverts. Young people in our country, in our community, there are those that have no problem to prepare skits, meeting or a topic, or share what they experienced during the*



*week and enrich others. But again others have more sense of vulnerability, rather be quiet, and will not solve anything."*

Similar to the concept of inclusion, even we did not record diversity within the groups that would be associated with racial, cultural, linguistic, religious or other differences that would be expected. This condition can be caused by the fact that Slovakia still lives a few people of a different race, culture or language. Similarly, the religious affiliation of the majority of Slovaks we could still include the traditional (usually Christian) communities in which they occur specifics not be a principal differences. We believe that this could be one of the reasons why respondents did not diversity in religion. Identified diversity we could include in psychological personality area.

### 3.4 Practical work with young people

In the next part of the research we focused on detecting the use of strategies in the occurrence of disability, health problems, education problems, cultural differences, economic, social and geographical barriers.

It was a question directed to the area include the largest possible number of people with different needs, with a focus on ensuring equal opportunities for others.

We examined whether respondents have experience of engaging people with different needs and what can be a barrier to their full participation in informal youth activities.

We note the obstacles in the following areas:

- a) Differences in religions, religious prejudices in the field:

*„They can smell fear, they are not the same religions. "*

*"I met with the fact that parents come for the head of the child done something, but it is a church, it would not, because the child will laugh. However, young people know very well defend their faith. "*

- b) Obstacles in the social sphere:

*"I did not go to camp because we did not have enough money and I was from a divorced family."*

- c) Obstacles over health restrictions of disability:

*"The dance groups were people with disabilities are excluded, nor should there not trying to get."*

- d) Personality traits:



*"They can smell fear ... that are not accepted by other people that have low self-esteem, the organization has to show that you accept that about you, it would be boring if we were all the same."*

e) Prejudices related to education in the organization:

*"They laugh of children, they are pioneers, because they wear headscarves, scouts"*

*"My parents would not let go of me, or my brain will not wash out the values that the family does not accept the prejudices from the other side."*

f) Barriers resulting from prejudice and egocentrism:

*"People as admission to refugees in terms of prejudice, laziness and egocentrism."*

*"The very children they have a friend with a variety did not notice, but guarded by parents, Slovaks are conservative."*

When survey respondents' own experience of involving people with different needs and identifying barriers to their involvement in informal youth work, we met with the fact that the real youths organized in an informal Leisure of educational activities have experience with the occurrence of certain obstacles that appear to be important in creating a level playing opportunities.

Individual areas of occurrence of obstacles we might consider in providing the activities of the institution when the institution was not ready for the obstacle, respectively, in terms of activities to be offered has not been able to overcome the particular need for youths, to handle. The case involved the obstacles arising from medical restrictions seeker activity (folk group). Similarly, in this area we can also include a number of obstacles in the social area. E.g. When activities are offered for the family financially demanding a junior therefore can not attend.

Surprising to us, the most of the obstacles identified was recorded on the side of youngsters and their families. In several recorded cases it involved various assumptions and prejudices especially in the religious field and personality. However, we recorded the prejudices related to education in the organizations and prejudices resulting from egocentrism.

On this basis it considers necessary some attention, vigilance in identifying obstacles to the implementation of youth work, as many identified obstacles in real do not constitute obstacle by the institution, but oftentimes they were certain assumptions, presumptions and prejudices youngsters, often their families who actually did not constitute a real obstacle.

As suggested by the answers of respondents, this fact aware of the **organizations themselves**. The problem is trying to overcome in different ways. eg .:





a) Direct communication:

*"We do it in this way evangelistic concert, we took a band called speaker we have shown to the young people that you can live a Christian without limiting us."*

b) Own participant experience:

*"I have personal experience with Adela, I'm not a believer, I come from a Christian family, I did not know that we live in the project to help refugees on some parish and my eyes nearly dropped when I found out. I did not know if they want from me ritual matters, but it was not at all violent. It was amazing, no one forces anyone to join them, even they don't judge me that I did not recognize their faith. "*

c) Respect for differences obstacles:

*„Some parents wanted their child went to church on Sunday, in the section we had about 30 girls, the whole section we went to church, who would not, don't participate at Mass, the others were in the park next the church. "*

As is clear from the above, the basic procedure for overcoming prejudices and barriers is direct communication, whether in relation to the outside, but also in relation to their own community. A suitable procedure seems even own experience, where a junior firsthand understand that the anticipated problems, obstacles doesn't exist in practice, respectively, can be overcome her respect.

In the work with the elimination (or, potentially shedding) groups we investigated **examples of good practice programs** aimed at specific groups work with their differences in cultural, health, and other geographical areas.

*"In 2010, roma scout started reaching out Romani children in eastern Slovakia. They teach them good behavior, tehre were created number of Roma partitions. "*

*"Assistance from the local government. Who doesn't have money, does not give money. "*

*"A few weeks ago they began to invite the band to jail. We were involved and we will do it for us new and interesting. "*

*"We have made a collection for the children of Africa, we went into town and we did the collection."*

As is clear from the above, an example of good practice appears to Roma scouting. Rights of Roma live in Slovakia, one of the groups, which potentially is secreted group, especially for his frequent disruptive behavior. An interesting example is the cooperation of the city, respectively. local government, which in the example of good practice has been instrumental in funding. Another example of good practice is to work with inmates and various collections.





In the latter, we aimed to identify specific support in organizations. We also looked at whether they are at work in the various informal organizations used manuals and instructional materials aimed at youth work focused on the area of inclusion, equality and diversity. Alternatively, or in actual practice there is such a need. We met with the following approaches:

a) Absence of document tracking and methodologies:

*"We had training in the context of early intervention, and there we were taught the basics, because not every volunteer is someone who is studying in humanitarian ways, we all attended one-day training concerning an early intervention work with people."*

*"Right now rather not, because when we do it for several years as we know, still there are any new community, it would fit for the new organization."*

b) Methodology and training designed to work with the majority population:

*"I learned how to create projects within project management."*

*"We explicitly to specific needs not within NODAM we have the General Assembly there is talk of what we do and what we need to solve the issue, takes actions to be organized."*

As apparent from the above, respondents had information about the existence of the methodology of work with disadvantaged groups or with assigned in applying the principles of inclusion, equality and diversity. This condition could be caused by youths of such a document had no knowledge since worked as head animator of the organizations. However, this finding may indicate the state of the practice for youth work with certain disadvantages exist in practice methodology, respectively, other publications describing how to work with such a group. Based on the identified answers the question arises whether, in practice, should be such that the material actually exists.



## 4. Inclusion, equality and diversity in the non-formal education from the perspective of youth workers in Slovakia

### 4.1 Youth work and youth workers characteristics

- a) Basic personal characteristics of youth workers are flexibility and the ability to listen and accept the perspective of young people:

*He has to be flexible and able to adapt to the thinking of young people, he has to be able to listen the young he is working with. He has to know how to accept their opinions and see the issues from their perspective, because the understanding is the first and fundamental step to their cooperation.*

*Very important is the creativity – it is very important to know how to solve something that was not planned. He has to solve problems step by step and he has to be flexible, i.e. to apply the most suitable activities for that moment.*

- b) Another very important feature reflected by youth workers is responsibility and truthfulness:

*Awareness of responsibility is very important for youth worker. When I go to camp, I have to be responsible for children and youth.*

*A lot of things depend on clientele. I prefer to give information but I cannot forbid it to him. It has a place, there they could come. They have true information, when something happens. We give them real information.*

There have appeared features such as patience, goodheartedness, kindness and gentleness. Other demands for youth workers were focused on professional training and communicative skills.

- c) As another important assumption of work workers consider the motivation of youth worker and his personal experiences.

*According to me, in this work are not important personal features but motivation. It is good thing, when people are inwardly convinced of this work. They do not do that from some other reasons and so they are moving forward. So for me, the key element is the internal motivation. It is possible to work with other personal features; it does not matter whether the worker is an introvert or extrovert.*

*The personal experience is very important but it is necessary to continue in education through conferences and courses, because the worker is able to interconnect experiences with new knowledge. But also, according to me, it has to be a person, who has a mindset of youth worker. Every personal experience of working with youth is good.*



- d) The fundamental assumption of youth worker is making relationships with young. We recorded an observation of a respondent, who see the youth worker as a facilitator on his journey, who directs, but respect the choice of youth:

*All activities we prepare are focused on building relationship and those relationships could help to child to move forward.*

*I like the attitude, not to be an expert but facilitator. I prefer to go through the way of attitudes and to build up on my own experiences. Whether we are young or older, we should realize that we are those, who can help and we will try our best to direct them on the right way. Then communicative skills decide whether he consider me to be his partner or a savior. It would be more convenient to be a guide and lead a young on the right way; use my experiences and build up on them when working with youth. I say what I think and I respect where he goes.*

*A lot of things are depending on clientele. For example, if I work with intact children, let's call them common, non-problematic, my aim is to guide them on the way to responsible, initiative and pro-social adult.*

- e) It is necessary to direct them, help them, to present the messages but also give them space for their own direction:

*The worker is expected to reveal this message.*

*I do not know when we start to deform children. It is necessary to let them be themselves.*

- f) Another position of youth worker is the position of role-model:

*For me, the more important is the process than the aim, because I can give something of myself. He has positive role-models. We give him opportunities, but the decision is up to him; he needs a time.*

*With young people, it is the same. They need a role-model, which is more important than anything else. For example – the responsibility. We have to be a role-model for them, i.e. we have to go the same way we want them to go.*

## 4.2 Understanding of IDE

- a) Inclusion is considered to be the natural part of everyday work, but also an element unifying the diversity:

*We can see the inclusion on everyday basis, because it is an open café where come the public and waiters and waitresses come into contact with various people. Some of them do not know we are sheltered workshop and this was the aim. There is nowhere seen we are sheltered workshop, because our head did not want it. I also worked with healthy people*



*and when I compare it, there is no difference. The difference is only in the temper of the people.*

*Inclusion is about connecting. The connection of something, that is divergent and at the same time equal. This is what we do in educational activities, we try to crash the perspective and prove that not all, what is different is automatically bad. But it is different without the evaluating element.*

b) Equality is understood as balancing the opportunities:

*For example, children living in neighborhood are not excluded; we do not have to include them into society. But this flows from the particularity of each family the children come from. They do not have enough life experiences in comparison with their coevals, e.g. they do not have money for interest clubs, for toys, or they parents are so busy with solving their personal problems; they have not the time for doing homeworks with their children. In our café, there is the balancing the opportunities for these children and by these we try to support this kind of “inclusion”.*

c) Diversity is not an obstacle for youth workers, but it is an opportunity for them:

*We have different children but it is a good experience for us. Although we have to deal with the conflict every day, it is not because the children are so different. Children have an opportunity to come into contact with children from other group.*

*Apart from the age, we do not have any demands for clients. Our clients are very diverse. Also the workers are different so it is the same at the both sides. Activities are suitable for clients. Every time it is different, the setting of the programs could change after half a year. Sometimes it happens naturally, sometimes we have to work harder on it. But it is not a problem for us. It is based on law-threshold principles. From time to time it happens, that the requirements of our clients are so various, we are not able to cover all of their needs. We try to settle functioning system, which gives some space for all of them. We have to work hard on it that everyone could fit in.*

#### **4.3 Practical work with young people**

a) The reaction of workers to special emphasizing of IDE strategies in the activities of organization could lead to its more complicated application in praxis.

*I have that feeling, that all the time we pay to this issue so much attention, that we just deepen the differences. For us is the inclusion so natural, that just pointing to the inclusion leads to making the differences.*

b) From the point of view of giving an examples of implementation of principles of IDE into praxis, many respondents said, that isolated principles are not excluded



in documents, but they are included in the fundamental documents and principles of organization functioning:

*We have these principles within the frame of ethic codex, principles and philosophy.*

*We have nothing that is standardized or measurable. In Slovakia, these principles are perceived as spontaneously. We do not need to have them in written form, even though we now, that this is very common abroad.*

c) They are implemented according to the experiences very often:

*We do not have formalized, but at every event we give some rules, which we write down and put it in a visible place. Very important is to be a role-model. Younger get experiences when they see us, older, how we behave to each other and communicate. That is a good example for them. We do not provide formal education in this area, but we implement it through experiences. It is a part of philosophy of organization.*

Youth workers did not prove examples of application of inclusion in praxis, but the **possibilities**, how to realize the inclusion. They stated **factors**, which influence using of IDE approach.

*The systematic prevention is sometimes very difficult. We had camps with Americans, everything was arranged and paid, but the children got sick or their parents did not let them to go to camp; so there are many factors that restrain the systematic process.*

*I personally sometimes can do more for inclusion, because I work in formal environment. My aim is to let everyone feel accepted in those preventive programmes. We usually come to an agreement with headteacher, how to improve the choice of activities that helps to overcome the diversity. I think this should be systematical.*

They gave **examples from praxis**, how the orders, documents and legislation constrain the providing of IDE. They call attention to the fact that these regulations do not respect individual life stories, or more precise, they cannot use these services because they are not provided in appropriate form; they are restrained by other people, e.g. by parents. Majority has an opinion, that for IDE work with youth are more important local regulations and directions than the national and supranational, in which they see certain amount of corruption:

*For example, there is a situation, when child should go to social advisory service, but he cannot go without parents. Here we come to blind alley, because child is looking for help but we cannot help, we just try to find the right way.*

*There was a family – mother, father and children. There exist no social services, where they could go as a family. Some services are only for mother with children, but father is separated. This system destroys the family.*



*There are some services, which a person has to fulfill. But there is no that work with individual story. As I understand, there must be some rules, because there would be anarchy without them. But also, the individual life stories are very specific. Since I worked in this area, I have not found the same stories.*

*Very important is legislation on a local level.*

*Sometimes there is also inconsistency – we cannot estimate beforehand, whether we get the budget from the state or not.*

*We are in operation the whole year. Does the state think about the fact that these services should not be solves only in a friendly way?*

*Conventions are not applied in praxis. The offices do not understand to this issue. Legislation is good, but the application of it is difficult. It is always based on people, but it also fails because of them. This was also said at conference by one policeman, who said, they know about it, but they do not apply it.*

Youth workers stated, that in many organizations are applied the **principles based on equality of all clients and on voluntariness.**

*Because it is anonymous, it is open so the restrains are minimal. I do not remember any case of exclusion.*

*Our organization work on a principle of voluntariness. Who applies can go. We address the school from the whole Slovak republic. We go to schools, to class, pupils are different, but we work with them. We do not exclude anyone at all, but we give an opportunity to leave.*

### **Problems in inclusion praxis**

- a) One of the problems restraining the availability of services is the lack of the capacity of the institution:

*We would like to provide services for all, but it is impossible because of the capacity.*

- b) The problem is also the issue of barrier environment:

*We exclude the people who use wheelchairs, because there is no access for them.*

- c) We also noticed the social disadvantage of groups. Organizations try to overcome this disadvantage by looking for sponsors:

*At our villages, children know each other. We try to use this fact for our purposes. We are prepared for what could happen. We are an open group, financially disadvantaged. We have camps, that last for a week and cost approximately 50 euro, but for some families it is too expensive. That is the reason, why we are looking for sponsors...*





*No one is excluded. But it is very difficult to involve some groups, e.g. Roma youth, handicapped or mentally affected.*

- d) The answers said, that the most frequent barrier is the absence of professionally trained personnel, so the organizations could involved all children:

*I remember one boy. He did not know how to behave in this environment, because he was at the edge with psychiatric diagnosis. It is also connected with the fact, that we have some competencies in our professions. Than we send these children to other institutions.*

- e) The suitable strategy for overcoming the impossible providing of IDE in a programs of organizations, they recommend the redirecting to organizations, which could provide more quality services:

*It has already happen we had to reject a child in wheelchair, because there were motional camps and we knew we went to powerboat. So in this case, we directed the child to those camps, which are aimed to children in wheelchairs. Or we had to reject a child, who needed 24-houred care, because he was extremely hot-tempered and we could not have this child in our organization, because our services are based on gifts. But we did not know where to direct him.*

- f) There were also reactions, in which the workers stated that they are not under **the obligation to solve some obstacles or to provide their overcoming.**

*One client, who baked cheese cornet in the sheltered workshop, rejected to taste these cornets, because it was in conflict with her faith, so she had to be placed to another organization.*

*I think, if someone rejects something eat because of his faith, it is his personal issue, and it is not our job to arrange all conditions according to his lifestyle. It is something completely different to make conditions for people with celiac disease, who cannot eat everything because of his health condition not because of his faith. All wanted to say was, that people should adapt to their work and not adapt their work to their lifestyle.*

- g) As a problematic seems to be protractedness and demandigness when the projects are applied into praxis:

*This year we wrote the project about searching homelesses. I hope, one day we could come to visit flats of drug dealers*

In this part was developed the discussion about the limits of inclusion proved on examples from praxis (jelly bears made up of beef cattle from machine placed in institution) or other demands connected to eating habits from the different cultural and religious aspects, preparation of meals and about extreme attitudes toward inclusion.



There were expressed personal opinions of youth workers without connection to work with youth.

### Evaluation of youth work organization IDE praxis

- a) Evaluating process follow from concrete achievements of field-work, according to workers the success is depend on the satisfaction of clients.

*After each service we have intensive meeting where we talk about what happened during the field-work and we record those things. This record we send to all member of the team, i.e. also to those, who did not work in a field. The reason of this process is that we want help also those clients, we have not seen before. We want to direct him to the right place. It is the minimum, we can do for him.*

*Evaluation flows from the clients' perception, whether he is satisfied or not.*

- b) Respondents stated as another element of evaluating the success the supervisions and sharing the experiences with other organizations:

*Supervision, supervision is everywhere. The only thing we do here is solving the problems with clients. We have also attended a lot of conferences, where report about it. We are very flexible. At the same time we are also auditing body... There are not many people that I could receive the feedback form. It should be someone, who has a lot of experiences and he is not interested in. Maybe someone from Czech Republic.*

- c) According to many respondents, the evaluating of projects takes a place in informal meetings:

*...we all have to observe and evaluate. If there is a problem, we are searching for solutions. It is on the level of informal meetings.*

### Resources

- a) Utterances of workers were focused on manuals, methodics to specific work they provided, and **they were not binded to IDE** in spite of repeated questions focused on IDE.

*We have manuals for application of law-threshold principle in praxis. Ethic codex must be signed by every new worker. We also have check-list, where people can check what they are able to do or not.*

*We have accredited system of Ministry of education for youth workers who have not pedagogical education. The area for inclusion of people with specific needs is not stated there.*





*We have a lot of courses, methodics, but also common manuals. We do not have those principles specified, but because we are Christian organization, it includes these values but it is named differently. The animator-beginner is only 15 years old so I think; he could not define it though. Maybe he could define equality. If we have concrete situation, we should explain it to him.*

- b) Youth workers consider the manuals to IDE as useless, these recommendations they would more appreciate as a part of preparation for work with specific groups of young people.

*We try to for-prepare people to all critical situations.*

*For-preparation would be a good thing, because I do not have special pedagogical education but I work with mentally disabled people.*

#### **4.4 Training and Education**

- a) Workers perceive the methodics and trainings in the area of inclusion as less needful. Usually, they do not realize it. The more important are priorities. They do not consider as needful to train in IDE the members when it is not a big organization. Many times they initiate the educational trainings because of the needs of praxis:

*We realize the courses in that way, we create something and then looking for someone who would train us up. After we planned all things, we call the specialists. An experience reveals the need.*

- b) They consider very important in IDE the learning in their natural environment of organization based on the personal sharing of experiences between the workers of organization.

*I do not think that creating of formalized structures for IDE would be needful; even I believe it would be contraproductive.*

*Written recommendations are not the same as personal sharing of experiences.*

*Acceptation of all clients is so natural for us, that we do not pay specific attention to that. The written form has no importance for us.*

Some youth workers stated, in regard to diversity of work with youth and the range of this area, it would be very difficult to create general methodic and training applicable in praxis. As the way out of the current situation they intended to create a tool, which the



worker can adapt to his praxis. These tools should be more generally applicable, not to be focused on specific issues.

- c) Workers provided some arguments why they could not improve the situation in IDE. They provided examples from praxis they consider as insolvable:

*I do not perceive the law-threshold principles as absolutely open system, we are open for all children, but, for example, we do not have special pedagogical education so it would be very unprofessional to take care about disabled child. I think there are institutions which would provide them better care. It is not our primary goal because we know we have some professional limits. Another point is that because of our limited capacity, we could not do public PR, even though we know that there are some children that would definitely benefit from this.*

*We try so hard to define these things, to write it down, but sometimes it can limit the process of inclusion. Sometimes we just spend more time for defining the terms than to real process in praxis.*



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