

A Basic Training Seminar For Youth Workers

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# BOOTCAMP FOR YOUTH WORKERS



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# PREFACE

You can't understand how happy we are that you are reading this text right now. This book is an outcome of a three year project between professional youth workers from Iceland, Finland and Sweden where we came together to try to map up what are the key competences of youth work across borders and what are the most important skills for new youth workers to develop. Behind this text are a lot of meetings, presentations, brainstorm sessions and coffee cups and I can honestly say on behalf of the entire project team that we are really proud of this book and other results of our project.

In this book we map up a 5 session basic training seminar for youth workers where each chapter ends with a two hour session plan with exercises and reflection on how to train youth workers in the subject of the chapter. Our goal is that a professional youth worker can read this book and then hold a seminar for new youth workers, volunteers or seasoned youth workers who want to develop and reflect on their competences.

The editors of this book are all professional youth workers that have been working in youth work for many years and have also experience of researching youth work and training youth workers. Each chapter has an author from the editorial team who is experienced in working with the subject or training youth workers in the topic of the chapter.

The team behind this book are four organizations that took part in a three year strategic partnership project called Bootcamp for Nordic youth workers which was founded by the Icelandic Erasmus+ agency. From Iceland there was Félag fagfólks í frítímaþjónustu which is an organization for professional leisure workers in Iceland. From Sweden there were two partners, Fritidsforum who are a national organization of youth NGO's and youth meeting places such as youth clubs, youth houses etc.. The other Swedish partner was the Nordic Association in Sweden. From Finland there was Setlementti liitto which is the Finnish national organization of settlements and neighborhood houses. Each partner provided staff members, resources and contributed their expertise on the subject of the project.

# SESSION 1

## WHAT IS YOUTH WORK?

Defining abstract concepts like youth work is a complex process because youth work varies between organizations, cities and countries. In this chapter we will define key aspects that unite all youth by focusing on why we do youth work rather than what activities are considered youth work.

### **Chapter synopsis**

- Origins and development of youth work.
- Definitions of youth work and a youth worker.
- Typology of youth work.
- The basic principles of youth work.

### **Learning outcomes**

To be able to:

- Explain what defines youth work.
- Explain what a youth worker is.
- Explain the core principles of youth work.
- Explain the typology of youth work.
- See the difference between youth work and other welfare work that use non-formal education methods.
- Reflect upon your own work with young people.

### **Author**

Guðmundur Ari Sigurjónsson

# INTRODUCTION

It's important when discussing youth work on an international level to start by clarifying what youth work really is. Youth work can be all sorts of things and a lot of people relate youth work with all sorts of fun activities. Different cultures and experiences shape different opinions and give youth work a different meaning between individuals and countries. The diversity of youth work is one of its key strengths since it allows young people and youth workers to adjust their work to local needs and interests of young people. But this diversity also makes youth work a difficult thing to measure and lobby for since people sometimes find it too abstract.

It is common for youth workers to get the question “so you basically play ping pong and pool for a living?” This is a valid question for a person that focuses on **what** youth workers do but not **why** they do it. Ping pong and pool can be a perfectly fine form of youth work in the right setting and if it fits the criteria of youth work. But old people playing ping pong or dogs playing pool is not youth work and therefore pool and ping pong are not a form youth work itself.

The key thing when defining youth work and discussing its value is to talk about **why** we do youth work. Youth work can be all sorts of activities and youth workers can have different approaches, but the purpose of the work is what youth work from all over the world has in common.

Youth work comes from a place of respect for young people. Youth work respects the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* which states that all children have the right to live in safety and develop, to think and learn, to express their opinions and thoughts and to participate in society, arts and culture. “Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.” (OHCHR, 1989).

But youth work is not only built upon the respect for the rights of young people but also the belief that all individuals have skills and competences which they can grow and develop. This belief is well described within the approach of positive youth development or PYD. PYD contrasts with approaches that have focused on preventing problems that some young people encounter while growing up. It sees young people as competent individuals full of strengths and possibilities that they need to be able to develop and grow (Damon, 2004).

In this chapter we will investigate what defines youth work and youth workers and introduce concepts that later chapters will then further explain.



# THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK

Youth work is not an old field of work. Its origins is in the 18th century when people flocked from the countryside to the cities to work in factories and other industry. In cities a large group of people came together and created societies and sometimes clashed together. Young people did not have as clear roles and purpose as in they did in the countryside.

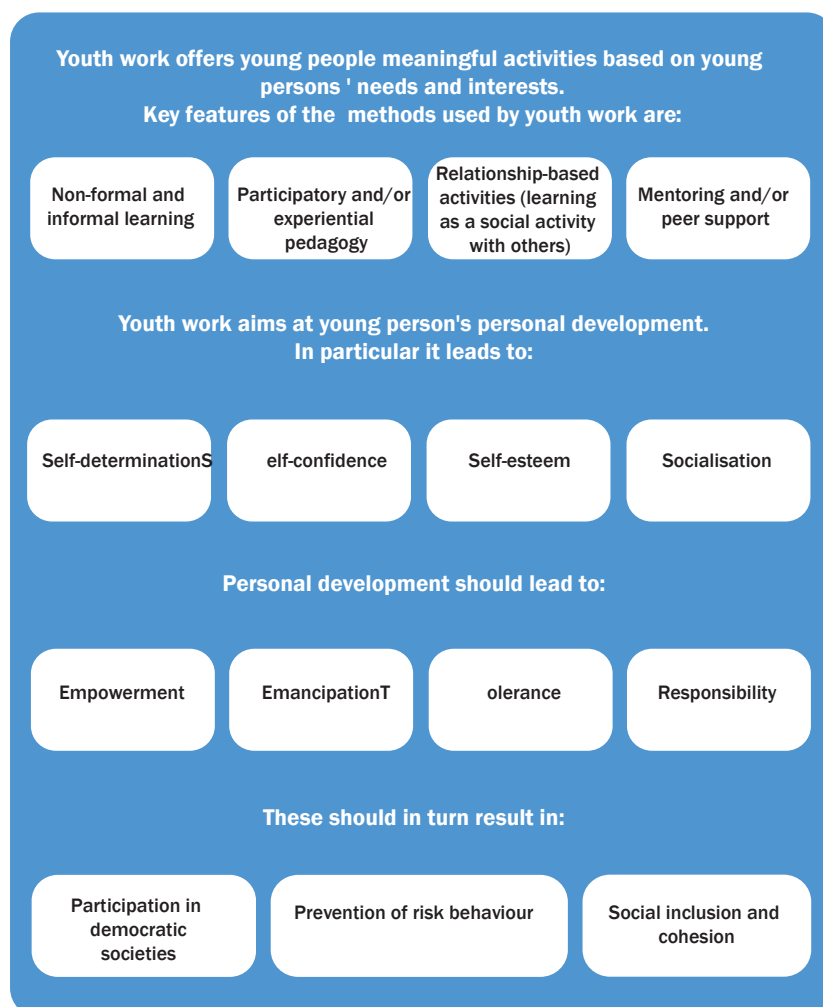
Religious institutions are often regarded as the founders of youth work with the Sunday school and YMCA that started in the 18th century (Smith, 2013). In the end of 18th century public interest in “youth” started to grow and psychologists such as G. Stanley Hall formed theories of “adolescences” as a life stage of young people at the age of 14-24. In the beginning of the 19th century Robert Baden Powell who was concerned about the well-being of young people started the Scout movement (Smith, 2013). In the 19th century many more youth organizations where created and in some countries the municipals and states started to run youth work on a voluntary and professional level (Smith, 2013).

Today the European Union is one of the biggest influencer in youth work in the world. The EU puts a large amount of money in project grants, research and policy making in the youth sector and works with different youth organizations from all over the continent. In the EU’s proposals for the EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027 the aims are to empower young people and build their resilience. The three key words in the draft is engage, connect and empower. The EU wants to encourage young people’s participation in civic and democratic life using this strategy: Connect young people across the EU and support youth empowerment through boosting innovation in, as well as the quality and recognition of youth work (European commission, 2018).

# THE DEFINITION OF YOUTH WORK AND YOUTH WORKER

New youth organizations are born every week, if not every day, all over the world. Their objectives vary, some focus on arts, others on promoting a healthy life style and the third could have an activist agenda. When defining youth work it is important to focus on the key aspects that unites all youth work, all over the world, no matter what subjects the young people are working with on a daily basis.

The European Commission published a report in 2014 called *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union*. In that report the authors identified that though youth work is diverse, the following characteristics were frequently mentioned when describing youth work:



(European Commission, 2014)

This chart gives a good picture of youth work but is not a clear concrete definition on the term *youth work*. Tony Jeffs and Mark K. Smith state in their book *Youth Work Practice* that there are 5 elements that distinguish youth work from other welfare activities. They say that if one of these elements are missing the activity might resemble youth work but is unquestionably not youth work (Jeffs and Smith, 2010). These five elements are:

1. **Voluntary participation.** *The voluntary principle delineates youth work from almost all other services provided for young people. Young people need to be able to freely enter into relationships with youth workers and youth workers and to end those relationships.*
2. **Education and welfare.** *Historically youth work did not develop to simply 'keep people off the streets', offer activities or provide amusement. Many early clubs grew out of Sunday schools and ragged schools that placed great emphasis on offering welfare and educational provision for young people. The methods involved in youth work are methods that encourage us to focus on learning through conversation, experience and relationship.*
3. **Young people.** *Although there have been shifts in age boundaries youth work remains an age-specific activity. While there may be problems around how we talk about and define youth – and around the sorts of expertise those working with young people can claim – there can be no doubting that many young people both view their experiences as being different to other age groups and seek out each other's company. Youth workers have traditionally responded to this – and learnt to tap into the ways of understanding the world of young people occupy and the nuances of youth cultures.*
4. **Association, relationship and community.** *Building relationships has been central to both the rhetoric and practice of much youth work. Relationships are seen as a fundamental source of learning and of happiness. The aim is to work with young people in a community so that they might better relate to themselves, others and the world. Youth work is fundamentally about community; about working, as John Dewey put it, so that all may share in the common life. It is an activity of communities.*
5. **Being friendly, accessible and responsive while acting with integrity.** *Youth work has come to be characterized by a belief that workers should not only be approachable and friendly, but they should also have faith in people and seek to live good lives. In other words, the person or character of the worker is of fundamental importance.*

Those five elements that Tony Jeffs and Mark K. Smith mention are all useful in defining youth work, but they are not a concrete definition of what youth work is. The European Commission published a report called *Quality Youth Work* that was written by the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems in the EU member states in 2015. In this report there are concrete definitions of youth work, youth workers and other key concepts regarding youth work. The approach in their report is similar to Jeffs and Smith to define what it is that all youth work has in common regardless of the activities or where it takes place. Their definition of youth work is built upon two European council statements (2010 and 2013) that state:

- Youth work offers developmental spaces and opportunities for all young people and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes and on voluntary participation.
- Youth work focuses on the personal and social development of young people. In accordance with the previously cited statements they understand youth work as:

*“Actions directed towards young people regarding activities where they take part voluntarily, designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning”* (Expert group, 2015).

This definition is simple and easy to use. If we compare it to the five elements of Jeffs and Smith, we find that:

1. **Voluntary participation** is covered.
2. **Education and welfare** are covered by mentioning the support for personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning.
3. **Young people** are covered.
4. **Association, relationship and community** is covered if you argue that actions that are directed to young people and develop them socially through non-formal and informal learning which can only happen through communications and relationships.
5. **Being friendly, accessible and responsive while acting with integrity** this is not covered in the definition from the expert group.

You could of course argue again that to support personal and social development of young people this element would be the way to do that.

The definition from the Expert group emphasizes on voluntary participation of young people and their development.

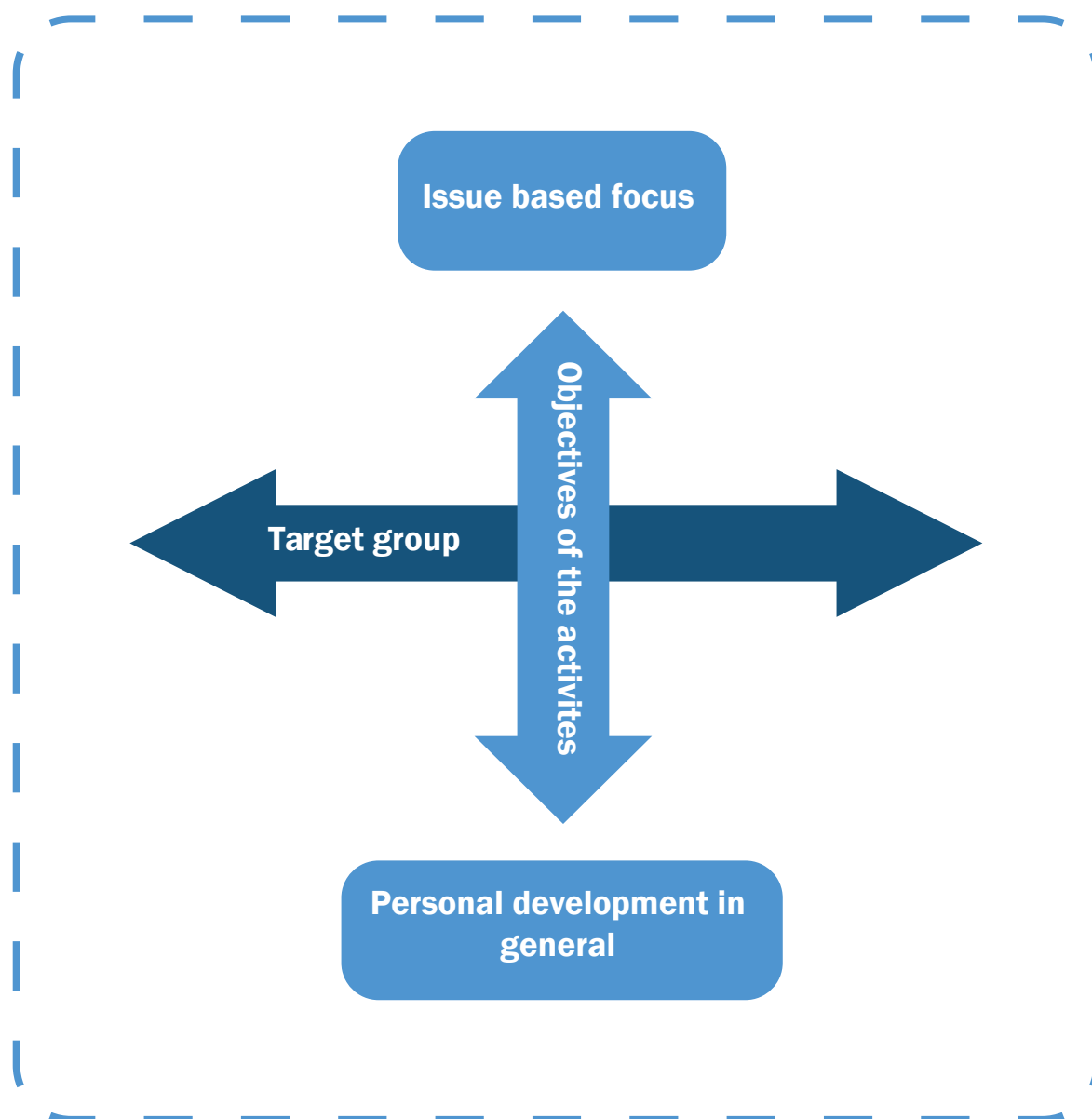
Those are the first three elements Jeffs and Smith mention, the next two elements are integrated in the definition but are better covered when the Expert definition of a youth worker is also viewed. According to them a youth worker is defined as:

*“People working in direct contact to young people, carrying out activities designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning. Youth workers, in turn might be professional or volunteers and civil servants or work for NGOs”* (Expert group, 2015).

Here the association, relationship and community aspects come in place since the youth worker and young people work together. Even though the importance of youth workers to be friendly and work with integrity could be emphasized more, it is nevertheless implied by saying that the youth worker carries out activities designed for supporting personal and social development of young people.

# TYPOLGY OF YOUTH WORK

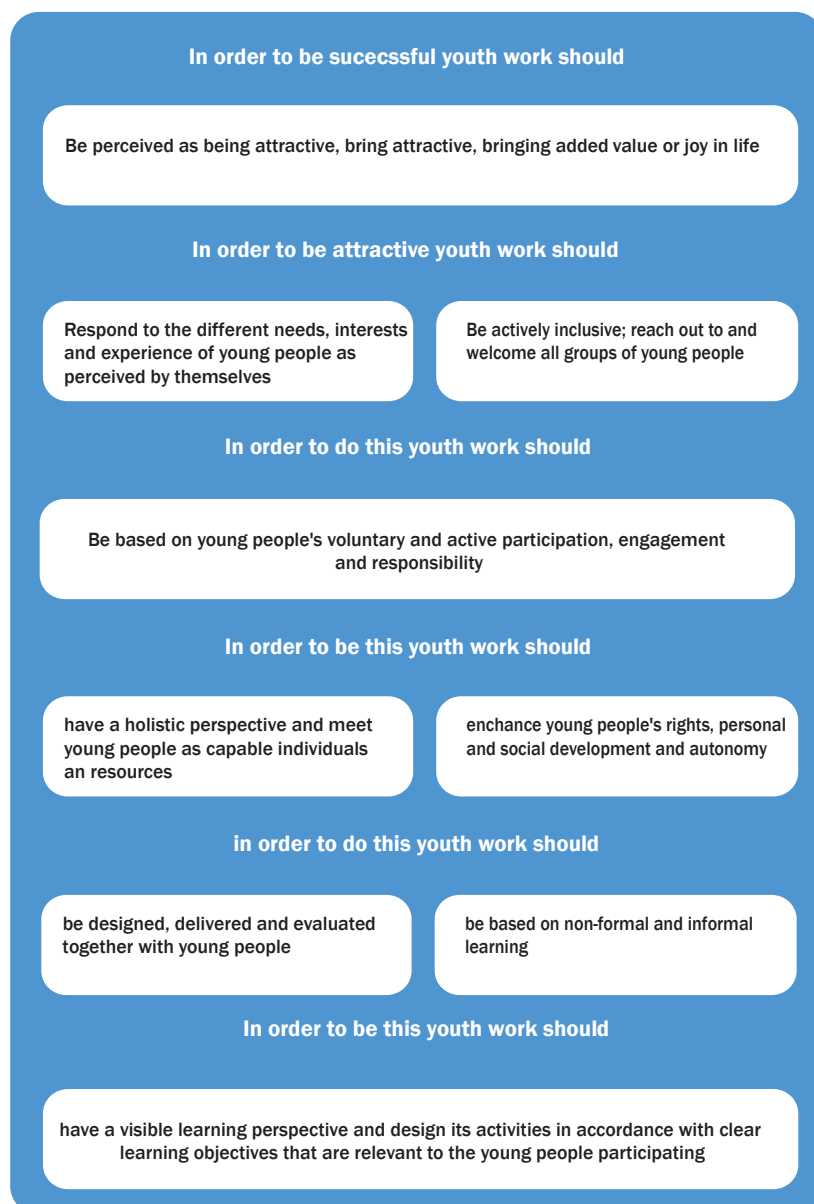
Given the wide range of activities that fall under youth work it's hard to try to map up all the types of activities and projects that fall under the definition of youth work. The authors of the report *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union* proposed that the typology of youth work that consists of two axes that distinguish between the objectives and the target group of the youth work activity (European Commission, 2014).



# THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH WORK

In the report Quality youth work the Expert group on Youth Work Quality Systems creates a chart which they call The Core Principles of Youth Work and they use as a theoretical basis for successful youth work. The corner stone on which these core principles stand is the *UN Declaration of Human Rights* and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* and its protocols, securing every young person's right to equality and personal dignity (Expert group, 2015).

The core principles of youth work are:



(Expert group, 2015).

These core principles are closely connected to each other and together form a context that enables youth work to be successful and reach its full potential (Expert group, 2015).

Even though youth work can focus on a specific group and specific issues the Expert groups emphasizes “successful youth work that effectively meets the above stated principles could not be built on single, isolated and narrowly targeted projects and activities. On the contrary: successful youth work must be based on an open offer about non-formal learning and personal development possibilities directed to all young people, a general offer to which more targeted activities may be attached as part to which young people could be actively included based on their own needs, interest and experiences. If youth work is to be successful and develop, the core principles, not the actual activities, must be the trademark by which young people identify youth work and the youth work offer” (Expert group, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

In a dynamic field like youth work it is important to understand key concepts and be able use and discuss them. The definition of youth work and the core principles stated here above should work as a filter for youth workers to view their projects and activities. These concepts are also tools for youth workers to use to develop their work and to make youth work more concrete and easier to explain to people. Youth workers often wind up in a situation where they need to explain their work or even defend its importance to politicians and other welfare workers.

Here are three good examples of common situations where the Expert group (2015) uses the definition of youth work as a filter to view projects and determine if a project is youth work or not:

If a youth worker is asked to assist the formal education system, by working with a group of youngsters that has had problems at school: The youth worker needs to make sure that the activities are of interest to the young people and that they participate on a voluntary basis if they are to be considered youth work.

If a youth organization or a municipality wants to offer young people a space, a room with some tables and chairs to spend time after school and call it youth work: This is certainly an activity for young people but with no ambition or support for non-formal learning and personal development and therefore cannot be considered youth work.

If a youth worker is co-operating with social workers with a group of unemployed youngsters and they participate voluntarily, non-formal education methods are used, and the aim is personal and social development, it is still youth work. But if the same work is done but the young people are obliged to participate it is social work using non-formal education methods.

(Expert group, 2015)

It's important to state that even though these examples are not youth work that it does not place value judgement on them.

It is important for youth workers to co-operate with different welfare sectors and sometime do work that is not youth work if it benefits the young people or the youth work in the long term.

But youth workers should always be aware of the importance of their expertise and always participate on their own terms. Youth workers should never consider themselves or their activities somehow of lower importance than other welfare workers or educators. Youth work is a crucial part of a positive development of young people, they get to participate on their own terms and learn and develop by doing real things and being active participants in their society.

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# **WHAT IS YOUTH WORK SESSION PLAN**

<b>Activity</b>	Name and motion
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	10-15 min
<b>Description</b>	<p>There is nothing more valuable when working with a group than knowing everybody's name. This game unites learning names, resolving activities together and having a laugh.</p> <p>The group forms a circle standing up. The group leader explains the activity and start by stepping one step inside the circle saying: Hello my name is "XX" and at the same time he makes a motion which can be representing of his personality, hobby or just something silly. The group leader then steps back and the whole group says "Hello "XX" and does the motion also. After that the person on the left or right side of the group leader does the same thing. Introducing by name and motion.</p> <p>To add to the difficulty level and fun it's good to have participants repeat the names and motion of the last two members that introduced themselves before them.</p> <p>For the experts you can try to have participants repeat all the names and motion of all participants that have introduced themselves so the last person has to remember all names and motion.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	A group of 4 persons or more.
<b>Evaluation/ reflection</b>	<p>How did it go?</p> <p>How did you feel?</p> <p>Do you remember any names?</p> <p>Do you remember more names</p> <p>or motions?</p>

<b>Activity</b>	What is Youth work?
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	60-90 min
<b>Description</b>	<p>Participants are asked to write down on post-it notes what they think youth work is. What defines youth work? What kind of activities are youth work?</p> <p>After 5 minutes of thinking and writing they introduce their ideas and hang them on a large paper on a wall. If the group is large, then it's good to have the whole group split up into smaller groups where everyone introduces their post-its and then the group combines ideas together and introduce the group ideas and put them on a wall.</p> <p>Afterword: the group leader has a presentation on the definitions of youth work, typology of youth work and the core principles from the chapter What is youth work. Good to link the chapter to the things that group put up in their presentations.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Post-it notes, pens, large paper, slides on paper or computer to support group leader's presentation.
<b>Evaluation/ reflection</b>	<p>Do you agree with the definition from the chapter?</p> <p>Was there something different in the definitions than the group put up on the wall?</p> <p>Why is that? Why not?</p>

<b>Activity</b>	Four corners – Take a stand
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	10-30 min
<b>Description</b>	<p>In preparation four corners of the room are defined as four different positions on topics.</p> <p>Strongly agree</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Disagree</p> <p>Strongly disagree</p> <p>Participants stand in the middle of the room and the group leader reads out statements and gives the participants around 10 seconds to take a stand.</p> <p>It's important when the group leader is explaining the game that he emphasizes the importance of participants taking their own stand and it's more than okay to for the group to take different stances.</p> <p>When participants have taken a stance the group leader travels between corner and asks a participant in each corner to explain their stand. Allow other participants to add arguments.</p> <p>The goal of the exercise is to get an active discussion and reflection on topics and not necessary that everyone agrees in the end. It's okay to view things differently.</p> <p>Is this Youth work? Take a stand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A youth worker agrees to work in co-operation with the local school with a group of youngsters that have had some problems at school. The group wants to go to the youth club on school time where they play games and discuss life, school and whatever comes to mind two times a week for a month.</li> <li>- A youth organization or municipality offers young people a space, a room with some tables and chairs where they can spend time after school.</li> <li>- A youth worker is co-operating with social workers with a group of unemployed youngsters in the youth club. The participants need to show up to get further</li> </ul>

<b>Description</b>	<p>- A youth worker is co-operating with social workers with a group of unemployed youngsters in the youth club. The participants need to show up to get further support from the municipality. Non-formal education methods are used, and the aim is personal and social development.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	4 pieces of paper to mark each corner
<b>Evaluation/ reflection</b>	<p>How did it feel to have to take a stand?</p> <p>Are you used to think critically what youth work is and what is not youth work but uses the methods of youth work?</p>

<b>Activity</b>	Three badges
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	25-30 min
<b>Description</b>	<p>Participants create three badges that youth workers need to earn to be able to support quality youth work. The badges should be drawn on a piece of paper. They should be named and under each badge there should be 3-5 attributes or tasks that the youth worker needs to possess or finish to be able to receive the badge. (10-15 minutes)</p> <p>These badges should be built around the definition of youth work and the group's discussions about youth work but participants are of course free to play with it or create badge for what they personally think is most important.</p> <p>Participants present the badges they created either in groups or for the whole group depending on the size of the group. (15 minutes)</p> <p>Participants then take their badges with them home as personal goals to achieve or to display on a wall if they have finished them.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Colorful pieces of paper, colors and markers
<b>Evaluation/ reflection</b>	<p>Do you set professional goals in your work? Why? Why not? How does that work for you?</p> <p>Are these badges useful personal goals for you as youth workers?</p> <p>What can you do to make sure that you reach these goals?</p>

# SESSION 2

## NON-FORMAL LEARNING

In general, learning is considered as a process where knowledge, skills and attitudes are acquired. In youth work non-formal and informal learning play a key role since the youth work environment provides a valuable learning experience for the development of young people.

### **Chapter synopsis:**

- Ways of learning
- Non-formal learning
- Experimental learning
- Reflection
- Validation and Recognition

### **Learning outcomes:**

To be able to understand the differences between non-formal, informal and formal learning.

To increase awareness on youth work as a platform for learning.

To gain understanding on the value of validation in non-formal education and ways to support young people in the validation process.

### **Author**

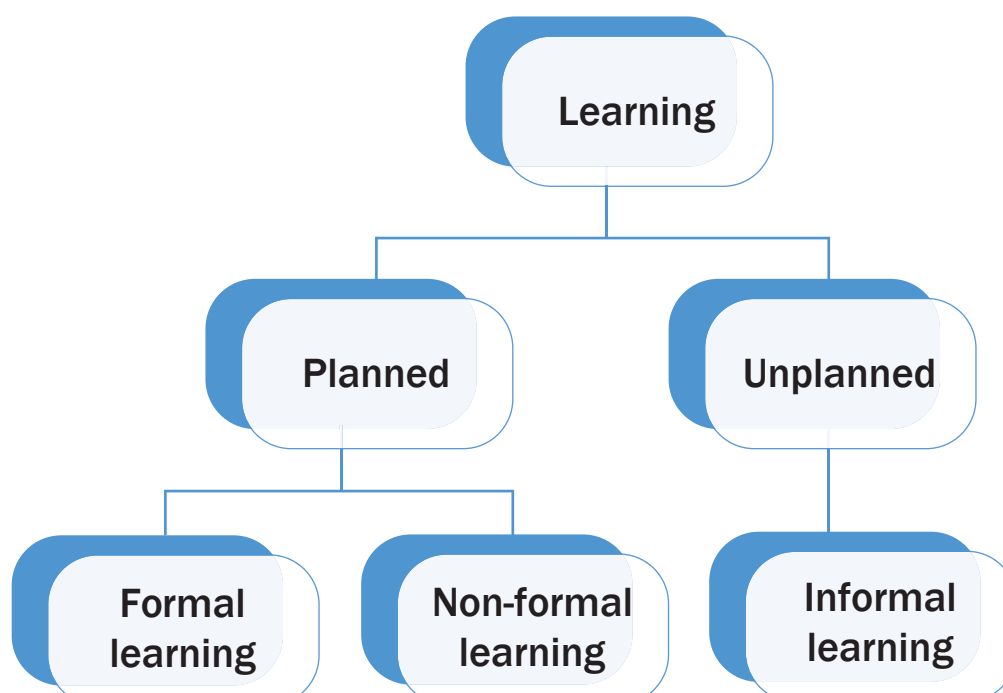
Elísabet Pétursdóttir

# WAYS OF LEARNING

Youth work provides a platform for a variety of learning possibilities. Experiences that enables young people to learn: deliberate as well as unknowingly gaining skills and knowledge that enables them to grow.

In recent decades, young people have been seen as inactive receivers in the formal learning context. However, this has been changing and today there are more demands for active participation of the learner and involvement in the learning. That means that the learner has more influence on how and what he wants to learn since learning is no longer defined only as formal education within a educational institution(Cieslik and Simpson, 2013). Non-formal learning can take place in parallel with more conventional education or training but seldom finishes with formal recognition. Non-formal learning can involve collaboration, often with someone with similar interests or objectives. An example of that kind of learning process could be youth exchanges or projects in youth centers.

There are generally considered to be three ways of learning; formal, non-formal and informal learning. Both formal and non-formal learning are characterised by the learning being planned and structured in some way.





There are two types that can be recognised when looking at planned learning. Formal learning is purposive learning that is structured and regulated from the outside and is usually recognised by certificates or diplomas. Non-formal learning is also purposive but voluntary, it is often assisted by others and can take place in a diverse range of environments. In non-formal learning the individual or the group that chooses to participate are often involved in the planning or at least has a much greater opportunity to steer elements of the plan: i.e. goals, content, methods, assessment and evaluation of learning (SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, 2010). Informal learning is the third definition of learning but that type of learning is not planned and just happens whether the individual realises it or not.

In non-formal learning it is more important what happens in the learning process than following a schedule of curriculum. Methodology in supporting the individual in the learning process also plays a role as well as creating a platform for learning that happens outside of the formal educational institution. The learning opportunities that exist in youth work are mostly found in the environment where young people participate. The role of the youth worker is to provide support for the young person to learn through experience.

# NON-FORMAL LEARNING

The principles of the learning environment in non-formal learning is that it is;

- Structured
- Voluntary participation
- Regulated from the inside

Defining non-formal learning is not easy but many theorists and practitioners share the same understanding of its core principles. Non-formal learning can be defined as a subject that involves acquiring knowledge, attitudes and competences without a formal curriculum and outside an educational institute.

The foundation of the non-formal learning (ex. aim, method, process of acquiring the knowledge, length, evaluation) can be different depending on the individual or group that choose to participate (Cieslik and Simpson, 2013).

Non-formal learning relates to the idea of a learning society that has been an important part of educational policymaking for a long time. According with the idea of the learning society, education encourages non-formal learning within non-educational institutions in society. The learning society notion is connected to other concepts, like the idea of a knowledge economy where people are perceived as learners, engaging in informal and nonformal learning connected with different aspects of life, their whole life (Cieslik and Simpson, 2013).

This has been identified as an important influence in the lives of young people in Europe and that these ideas have increased the importance of education and non-formal learning processes in preparing younger generations for life in the knowledge economy. Both the concepts of learning society and knowledge economy shape the lifelong learning policy adopted by the European Union (Official journal of the European Union, 2006).

With the new EU-Strategy for *Youth-Investing and Empowering*, non-formal learning becomes for the first time a priority for policy cooperation in the youth field at European level:

“Complementary to formal education, non-formal education for young people should be supported to contribute to Lifelong Learning in Europe, by developing its quality, recognizing its outcomes, and integrating it better with formal education” (Commission of the European communities, 2009).

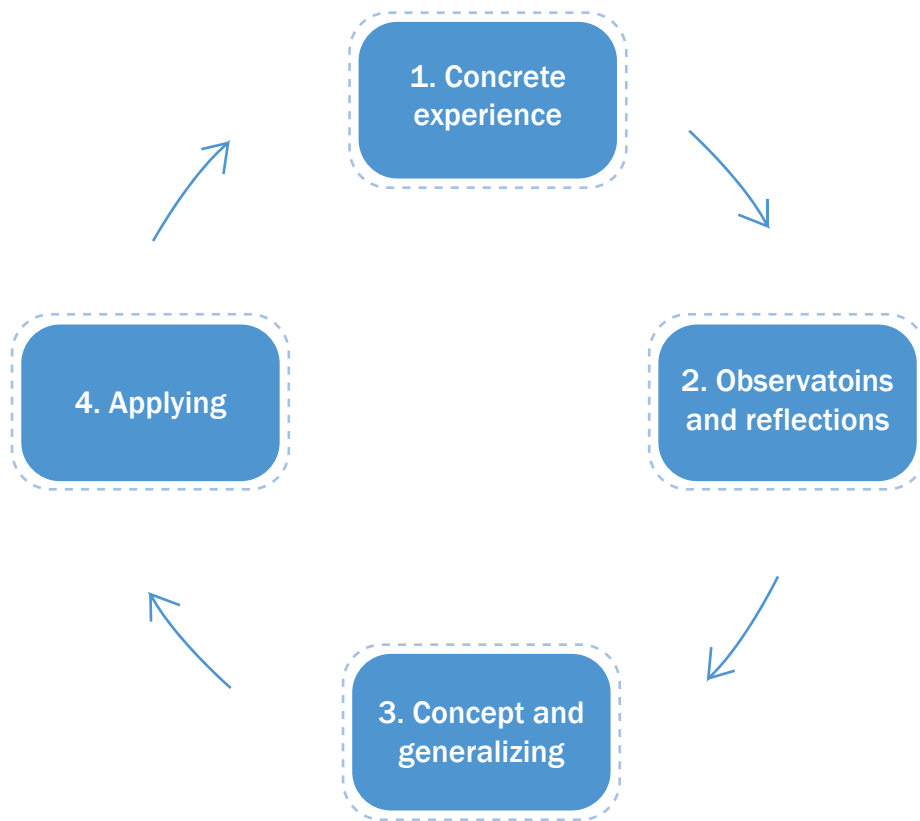
This priority was confirmed in the Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018). As a complement to formal education, non-formal learning for young people should be promoted and recognized, better links between formal education and non-formal education be developed. (Commission of the European communities, 2009).

# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning is the process of learning from direct experience. It assumes that experiences are sources of learning as one of the most influential thinkers in the history of modern educational theory John Dewey presented. That experience that an individual gains through interaction with others is the basis for experiential learning. Experience does not take place in a vacuum but under certain circumstances and in context with the environment of the person having that experience. (Dewey, 2006) Thought and reflection are connected to the concept of experience since according to Dewey, “*no meaningful experience can take place without thought being applied*”.

One of the most well-known theories of experiential learning comes from American professor David A. Kolb. He describes learning as being a process where knowledge is gained through the shaping effect of experience. Experiential learning incorporates experiencing something new and previously unknown to the person and can lead to uncertainty or even crisis which can in turn provide an opportunity for the person to learn new things (Kolb, 2015).

Kolb's theory about the cycle of learning is likely the most common theory or model used about the subject of experiential learning, especially in connection with non-formal learning. Kolb's basis for the theory is in the ideas of John Dewey and psychologist Kurt Lewin.



(Kolb, 1984, p. 21).

The cycle displays how learning occurs through people's experience. Different people will learn in different ways and direct experience represent the start of that process for many individuals. Of course, some of us will learn best by applying reflection to our experience while others can gain considerable knowledge by engaging with theory from a book or a course. Some will only truly learn after having tried things out for themselves.

Phase one delivers raw experiences that are yet to be processed. In the second phase, those experiences are given some meaning or at least labelled with a name. Those labels are then linked to familiar concepts in the third phase which provides an opportunity for even more processing of the raw experience. From there, more rational may be applied to these thoughts to further advance their meaning.

# REFLECTION

When working with learning processes, considering Kolb's cycle of experiential learning, it becomes clear that reflection is a crucial element in learning. It is through reflection that one can look back at experiences, understand them and incorporate them into new concepts or ways of thinking. This process of re-conceptualizing is generally strongly connected to a reflective process.

The importance of reflection becomes apparent when working with experiential learning. Reflection has become a key concept in today's discussion of pedagogy and learning theory. This is because of a rise in awareness about the utility of education gained in schools and other learning institutions, especially for the professional sector and companies, and it is clear that reflection plays a key role (Illeris, 2007). This underlines the importance not only of obtaining knowledge but also of being able to apply it.

Reflection enables us to look back at what we have experienced, understand the past and use it to shape new thoughts and concepts (SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, 2010). Dewey discusses the key aspects of all reflective thought as being relations where a single concept represents or references something else and thus makes us consider the extent to which we think these two things are representative of one another. Thought happens in a context where something has initialized, invoked or awakened it (Dewey, 2000). Reflective thought is based on an opinion being backed by a rational argument. Here, Dewey points out that a thought must be backed by reasonable clues for it to be believable.

Reflection has been defined in context with the self, that something is reflected in the self of the learner. Hence, the importance of the self is central. Experience is evaluated using one's personal identity. The concept of self-reflection has also been applied in this context. It can be a big challenge for an individual's self to adopt to a new environment since the reactions of that environment act among other things to shape that self (Kristján Kristjánsson, 2010).

The theorist Schön divides the definition of reflection into *reflection on action* and *reflection in action* which he claims happens instantly when people react to a problem by exploring possible solutions based on their knowledge of the subject at hand.

*Reflection in action* can also incorporate circumstances where someone stops something they are doing, thinks about how to proceed, then starts working on the task again. *Reflection on action* comes after *reflection in action* since it involves us reflecting after action has been taken putting in context and creating meaning. While *reflecting in action* might come naturally with people, reflecting on action usually involves deliberate intention (Buchroth & Parkin, 2010).

As Dewey points out, the mind needs to be trained to apply reflective thought. People's ability and interest to reflect varies a great deal. While it comes naturally to some, others will find it difficult. Various reflective methods exist and while some might benefit from conversation to start the reflective process, it might suit others to spend time alone in thought before being able to start discussing their experience.

# WHAT DID I LEARN?

When participating in a non-formal learning environment it doesn't come automatically to make sense of what it is that we learned. Support is often needed for the individual to realize the learning outcome. The youth worker can take on different roles like facilitator, coach, trainer and leader to provide support. But whatever the support is it can be a crucial part of the learning process for the young people to realize what they have achieved.

Reflection is a key element in competence development in non-formal learning like was mentioned in the previous chapter. It can be challenging to reflect on experience and support is often needed for learners to be able to develop the skill of reflection. In the learning environment of youth work, debriefing is often used at the end of the activity to support the learning process of the activity. Some confuse the terms reflection and debriefing but reflection is just one part of debriefing.

Debriefing contains numerous stages of educational activity when participants: reflect, share, analyze and conclude their experience of the activity to better process their learning.

## **Examples of debriefing questions:**

- What happened?
- Why did it happen?
- How did you feel?
- How can you use this experience in life or work?
- Why did it happen?
- How did you feel?
- How can you use this experience in life or work?
- Why did you feel like this?
- What does it remind you in regard to "real life"?

# MAKING LEARNING VISIBLE

How do we know that we have learned something? How do we realize when experience becomes the source of learning and does it happen automatically? Some of these questions are easy to answer but others are puzzling. We all learn in different ways and we evaluate our development differently. We might think and feel that we have learned something, but it is not until we start thinking, reflecting or even discussing the experience that we realize that the learning that took place with that experience. A vital part of making non-formal learning visible and valuable to the individual is reflecting and evaluating what it is that the individual has learned from that experience. A variety of tools are being used for supporting validation and recognition of non-formal learning and below are a few examples:

## YOUTHPASS

Youthpass is a validation tool developed to ensure that participation in the Erasmus+ program gets recognized as a learning experience based on non-formal learning. In doing this, the European Union wants to underline the importance of experience being recognized as education making young people more qualified for further studies as well as in the labor market (SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, 2010)

Youthpass has the potential to raise the quality of the learning process. Furthermore, it can help involved people to communicate this quality through formulating their learning outcomes and making them visible for various stakeholders such as employers, educational institutions, youth organizations and others.

# LIFEQUEST

LifeQuest is a mobile application where youth workers can gamify and visualize participation, validation and education in non-formal learning. In LifeQuest the youth worker creates a community for his organization, institution and project and all the youngsters can download the app and join the community. Within the community the youth worker creates tasks and quest which the youngsters receive XP points for finishing. The youngsters can also finish more complicated quests and receive badges that validate their participation. To receive a badge the youngsters have to answer a reflective questions to reflect on their process.

They then receive the badge to their personal profile which collects all their badges, projects and XP points that represent their experiences and learning processes.

# EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework whose purpose is to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems. The core of the EQF is its eight reference levels defined in terms of learning outcomes, i.e. knowledge, skills and autonomy-responsibility. Learning outcomes express what individuals know, understand and can do at the end of a learning process. Countries develop national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) to implement the EQF.

# OCN

Is a method offering national qualifications connected to the European qualification framework. The OCN method provides a platform for recognition of achievement through credit-based units. This approach offers maximum flexibility for learners and the opportunity to create learning programs that reflect people's interests and ambitions.

# BADGECRAFT

Badgecraft is a tool that was developed to assess competences, validate prior-learning, support professional development of staff and create motivating and engaging recognition systems for achievement.

Badgecraft offers a multilingual web platform to manage achievements using digital open badges. Organizations and individuals can earn, create, issue, share, sort and display badges online, plus use them to communicate achievements in the places which matter.



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# **NON-FORMAL LEARNING SESSION PLAN**

<b>Activity</b>	Learning river – Creating a timeline in the shape of a river
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	30 - 90 minutes depending on the project.
<b>Description</b>	This exercise can be used in many different ways. The basic concept is that it will help participants to reflect and digest their experience. It can be used as a follow up of a group discussion, personal reflection time, or it could be used as the starting point for reflection. Where and at which point to use this exercise depends fully on the project and the participants. Start the session by giving participants the time to think back to their experience in the project so far. Ask participants to draw/create a river of their journey, showing all important aspects of the journey so far: funny moments, important moments, important people, challenges, conflicts etc. You could give examples of symbols: a dam to show blockages or challenges, a bridge to show connections, currents to show interesting experiences, a boat to show support etc. Give participants enough time to make the river. In small groups share the rivers that have been created
<b>Resources</b>	Art materials, old magazines or newspapers, flipcharts – large size paper sheets, some participants might like to stick two flipcharts together, scissors, glue
<b>Evaluation/ reflection</b>	How was it thinking back and making the river?

Adapted from Youthpass in EVS/ SALTO-YOUTH Training and Cooperation Resource Centre. (2010)

# LEADERSHIP

Being a leader in open youth work means that you are working supportive, coaching and communicative in a promoting way. This chapter is focused on how to develop those skills in youth workers as well as the youngsters.

## **Chapter synopsis:**

- The professional role of a youth worker
- Basic leadership types and theories
- Communicative leadership
- Situation based leadership
- To Promote or to Prevent
- Coaching
- Four basic styles in youth worker profession
- “Do It Yourself”

## **Learning outcomes**

To be able to:

- Formulate the professional role of a youth worker
- Explain different leadership styles
- Explain the concept of communicative leadership
- Explain what the idea behind the concept of “situation-based leadership”
- Explain the difference between promotional work and preventive
- Explain what coaching leadership means and be able to use it in daily work
- Reflect upon your own role as a leader

## **Session options:**

- Coaching
- Challenges!
- Communication
- Promotive youth work

## **Author**

Staffan Lindqvist

# THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE OF A YOUTH WORKER

Asking youth workers about their professional role can give a number of diverse answers: event manager, security guard, adult friend, animator, crime preventer etc. A way to make this role clearer is to identify field of work, values and competences. These roles may look like this:

## **Working field = Leisure time**

Leisure time is defined as time that one decides for oneself, when you are not occupied with work, studies, house holding or sleep.

## **Values = Democracy and a positive outlook on mankind**

Democratic values imply that all persons have the same value. To stand for democratic values means that you are standing up for the idea that all are equal. To have a positive outlook on mankind means that having a belief that all persons are potentially equal competent and that everybody wants to take responsibility and do positive things.

## **Approach = Promoting, salutogenic and coaching**

To have a promotive and salutogenic approach means that you focus on peoples healthy and positive assets instead of focusing on what is sick and negative. To have a coaching approach means that you have a belief in people's capability to solve problems and which leads to important learning.

## **Professional role = to expand people's room for action**

Room for action is about the possibility you have to control your own life and to make an impact on society. The youth worker's professional role then means to support young people to get the competences and self-confidence needed to realize how they want to live and to take charge over their own lives. This also implies that youth work must be a place of non-formal and informal learning.

## **Competences = A certain amount of skills are needed in order to live up to the professional role as a youth worker.**

Among the most important competences is to be able to create relations, understand group development processes, be able to coach, use democratic communication methods and know about self-organizing.

Contemporary research gives supportive evidence for youth workers who:

- Strengthen pro-social and proactive peer groups
- Promote young people's networking and meta networking
- Support development of young people's interests

- Support cultural expressions of young people
- Support broad learning and development
- Inspire young people's self-organization, and their ability to carry through their own projects
- Meet young people with high and realistic expectations
- Supporting participation and democratic procedures
- Supports empowerment
- Understands that young people need to be needed
- Support cooperation and safety in the neighborhood

# BASIC LEADERSHIP TYPES AND THEORIES

When viewing youth workers' leadership styles there are usually three main types of leadership:

The “**laissez-faire**” type lets the decisions and the activities “be as it happens”. The means to reach goals are seldom consequent or thought through, and the overall goals will seldom decide the activities. One is doing just about what one always has been doing and that have worked out earlier. Intuitive knowledge plays an important role for this type. The leader does what “feels” best.

The **authoritarian** type of leader is mostly goal oriented and is keen on deciding himself how goals shall be achieved and tries to pull them through with different instruments of power. An authoritarian type of leader is often instrumentally oriented which means that he thinks that there are objectively better and worse ways of achieving goals.

The trick is to choose the most efficient one. Decisions are mostly taken by the leader himself and without letting youngsters interfere with opinions. It is a rather common idea that authoritarian leadership doesn't allow much discussion but is more efficient and rational than the democratic style. The question to ask is how rational a decision is without discussions among the people who shall carry it through.

One variety of authoritarian leadership is to be strategical rational, or cunning. When a leader only seemingly pays attention to the opinions of others and is sometimes ready to take one step back to take two steps forward at a later point. So called “hidden agendas” is common.

To be a **democratic** leader is probably the most attracted type of leadership. I guess that most leaders you have met claims that they belong to this type. I am not so sure about that. Sometimes it is said that you are “democratic” if you only follow formal democratic structures. But the “democratic” practice is often turned into convention and used in a stentorian way. The fact that you are using democratic formal ways of decision making doesn’t always mean that decision are made in a real democratic way. How often have you not heard leaders say that they, in a good democratic way, have asked youngsters for suggestions about activities but they haven’t been able to answer. And therefor concluded that youngsters don’t want to do anything.

# COMMUNICATIVE LEADERSHIP

Talking about **communicative leadership** is probably a more relevant concept and theory. One researcher that has developed that theory is the Norwegian political scientist Erik Oddvar Eriksen. His theory suggests that the rationality and efficiency of the leadership is related to communication and how well you can make mutual agreements.

The following key points within the communicative leadership can be seen as parts in the outlook you should have as a successful democratic leader.

**Positive outlook on mankind** – Your basic view upon persons you meet must be that they are able to, and want to do positive and good things, are equal and that there are no limits for their capacity.

**Discussion** – The discussion is the arena where rational and democratic decisions can be made. You must give all participants the same opportunity to argue and everyone must have enough time for this. When decisions are being made after such a discussion, they will be sustainable and therefore rational.

**Argumentation** – Everyone must be heard. Everyone’s argument is as important to take into consideration.

**Reflection** – Everyone must get the chance to think and reflect. It is equally important to get the chance to prepare for the discussion. Also, that you as a leader reflect upon what is being said and not said. You can do that by asking “It seems as you think that...”, “I can hear that you are saying that...”.

**Consensus** - You should strive for decisions in consensus in all discussions which means that everyone agrees in the decisions. It is not always possible but a decision in consensus is a strong decision.

**Legitimacy** – A decision made in consensus following an open discussion gives strong legitimacy,

which means that everyone really accepts it. A decision that is carried through with instrumental power can never reach the same legitimacy.

**Non prestigiousness** – There should be no shame in changing opinion during a discussion. The reason for discussions is to affect and to be affected.

**Truthfulness** – You must act as if all participants are acting truthful and authentic. That means that everyone says what they mean and mean what they say and that no one have a “hidden agenda”.

**Democratic decision making** – Everyone in a group must know how the order in the decision-making is. Equally important what is possible to decide and not.

# SITUATION BASED LEADERSHIP

Another useful leadership theory is “situation based” leadership. The founder of the theory is Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey and they described it already 1969. They mean that that the leadership style you choose should be based on the situation you are in. There are four different styles in the situation-based leadership:

**Instructing** – In new contexts or when new things shall be carried through. An instructive leader is more related to problem solving than being relation oriented.

**Coaching** – When motivating and stimulating leadership is needed. Relation oriented.

**Supporting** – When self-confidence is lacking. Promotion and support are needed. Not problem oriented communication.

**Delegating** – when handling independent persons, not especially either problem or relation oriented.



# TO PROMOTE OR TO PREVENT

To Promote or to Prevent has been subject to discussion for decades in many countries. But what do we mean with these subjects?

To Promote is to find and use factors and methods that contributes to better health. To have focus on competences and resources assessed by the persons and groups you meet. It is also connected to knowledge about factors that promotes and protects.

To Prevent is to find and use factors that contributes to reduce bad health. To have focus on risks and risky behavior and try to reduce them. It is also connected to knowledge about risky and protective factors.

One way of showing the different outlooks is the following story:

“A family lived by the sea. The adults in the family was worried that the children should go to the sea and drown. But they had different ways of handling their worries.

The mother wanted to prevent drowning by forbidding the children to go to the sea and told frightening stories about drowning. The father wanted to build a high fence around the house with a locked door. Grandfather wanted the children to always wear safety vests when being out and playing. The grandmother wanted to follow the children to the sea so that they could play and learn to swim. She meant that this would make them understand what was dangerous so that they could decide for themselves to be reasonable cautious.”

A Swedish researcher, Hans-Erik Olsson, points out how impossible it is to have both outlooks at the same time in an article in “Mötesplatser för unga”, (Anthology, Ungdomsstyrelsens skrifter 2008:2). He means that we must decide if we want to focus on asocial and psychiatric disturbed young persons or if we want to run centers with the ambitions to be a sociocultural centers. His conclusion is that if we would like to be preventive, we must have much more numerous persons with different competences at the centers. With the contemporary preconditions the only possible way of working is to focus on groups and work in a promoting way.

There is also evidence for the idea that promotive work is more preventive than it is to work preventive.

So, let us concentrate on how to work in a promotional way. Here are some checkpoints for a promotive leadership:

- Are young people received by leaders who are expecting a good meeting that acknowledges and strengthens the good assets possessed by the youngsters?
- Do the leaders trust that youngsters are able to make reasonable decisions and to take responsibility for their feelings and actions?

- Does the leader promote communication and possibilities for the youngster to create and develop relationships with friends?
- Does the leader try to help the youngster to “handle their own business”, grow and develop?
- Is the center a place that provides inspiration and positive experiences?
- Has the center a well-functioning structure and regularity?

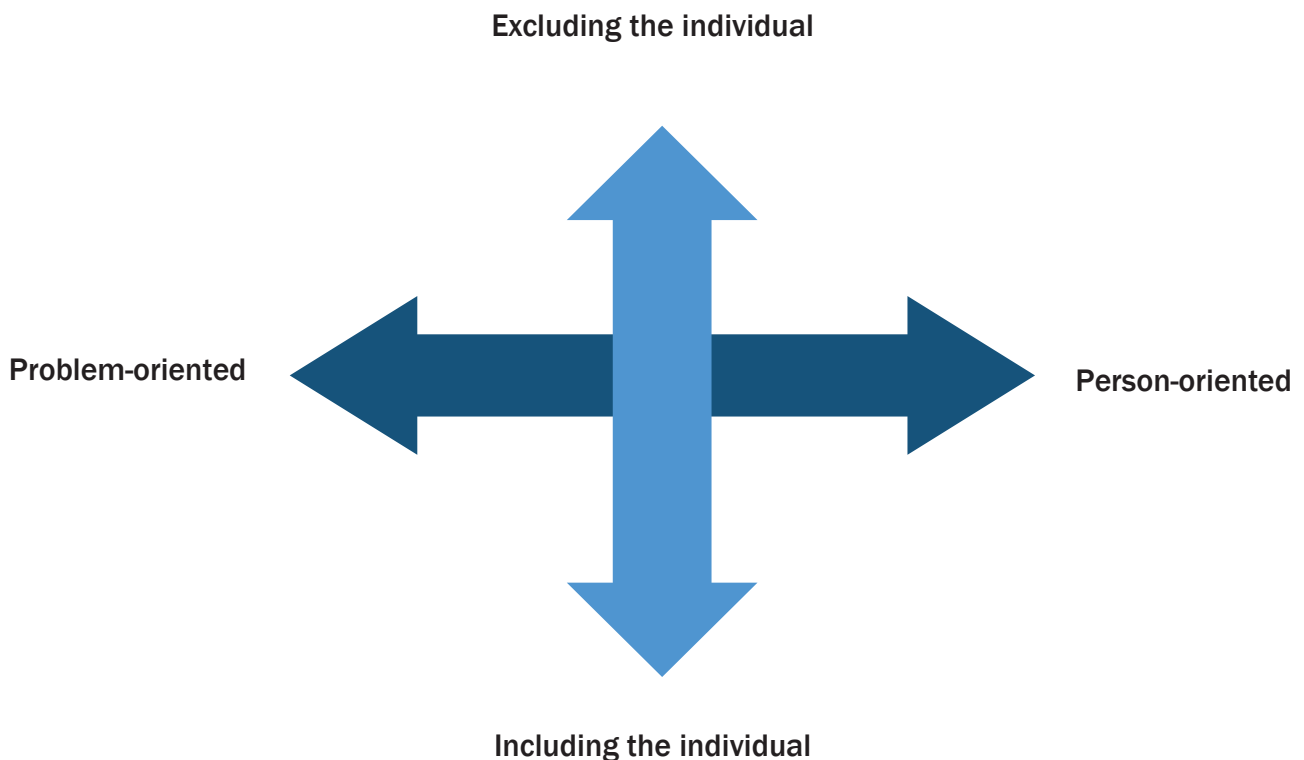
If you can answer “yes” to those questions you can be sure that you work in a truly promotive way.

# COACHING

The Swedish Youth worker and educator Thorsten Laxvik talks about four different types of helping styles when meeting youngsters; To tell and explain, to give advice, to manipulate and to coach. This can be illustrated by the following picture:

## A COACHING/GUIDING ATTITUDE/APPROACH

Four different fundamental approaches to assisting



The vertical arrow moves between the extremes “exclude person” and “include person” and the horizontal arrow between “problem oriented” and “individual oriented”.

The following example illustrates the different help styles.

A young girl asks her youth worker to help her arranging a concert at the youth center. The youth worker can choose one of the following ways to help her:

The youth worker tells the girl in detail what she must do. Where she can book a concert hall, how to fix spotlights, PA-stuff, promote it on social media and other things that must be done. He tells her how to do things and wants to show himself as an expert, is problem oriented and excludes the girl from the problem solving.

The youth worker uses the girl’s approach to ask the girl to help him to take care of the café at the Centre while he is doing something else and explains that it is good for her to learn how to handle the cash register. He manipulates her and uses her interest for his own purposes.

The youth worker gives the girl different suggestions of how she can take care of things that needs to be done like marketing, finding a concert hall, PA-stuff and so on. The worker gives advices by showing different alternatives. He is problem oriented but also wants to involve the girl in solving the problem.

The youth worker asks the girl how she wants to carry the concert through. If she doesn’t know he asks her questions that helps her to think in the right direction which will make her come up with the answers herself. He coaches her, is person oriented and includes her in the problem solving. The leader understands his professional role. He empowers the girl for life and are doing this by giving her the competence to explore her possibilities out of her own knowledge.

When coaching youngsters, the main interest is not the problem but the person and to involve him/her in the problem solution. There are big differences in this style in comparison with the other three.

First, the Youth worker doesn’t need to have any expert skills in the field of the problem. Instead he can rely in his interest in meeting the individual. Secondly, he never needs to formulate a solution. The idea is that the young one shall find her own solution. A coaching leader shall never give advice and never criticize the help seeker. This leader listens instead of talking and asks clever questions so that the young one gets the chance to reflect upon the problem with a different point of view; what will happen if you do like that, what obstacles are there, why do you want to do this, what needed skills do you already have, and so on.

## **To conclude; the coaching youth worker**

Presumes that the young one is an expert in his own life and gives questions instead of advices and answers

Reflects, examines and keeps the coaching conversation within the frames for what the person wants to achieve by active listening and presence

Puts up powerful questions in order to give the person new insights and solutions.

Powerful questions mean “open” questions, which are questions that you cannot answer with “yes” or “no”. Such questions start with:

- What...
- Where...
- When...
- How...
- Who...

In a coaching conversation it is needed to have a structure. One system for this is called

T-GROW and is an acronym for

Topic (what do you want to talk about)

Goal (what do you want to achieve/change)

Reality (how is it right now)

Options (what possibilities/obstacles are there)

Wrap up (what are you going to do and when)

This structure must of course be in the backbone of the coaching leader, but the following questions might be a help:

### **Topic:**

- What do you want to talk about?
- Can you tell me more about it?
- So, what is it really you want to talk about?

### **Goal:**

- What do you want to achieve in short terms?
- What do you want to achieve in long terms?

**Reality:**

- What is the current situation like?
- In what way are you interested in this?
- What can you change?
- Who else knows about your wish to do/change this?
- What do they think about it?
- What obstacles can you identify?
- What have you done so far?
- What stops you from doing more?
- What resources do you have (like time, skills, engagement, energy, money, support)?
- What more resources do you need?
- How does this affect you and your situation?

**Options:**

- What alternatives do you have in order to reach your goal?
- Pros and cons for the different alternatives?
- What else can you do?
- What is the best/worst that can happen?
- What have you done earlier when you have faced similar problems?
- How did it work?
- What would happen if...

**Wrap up (action plan):**

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- What obstacles can you predict?
- How can you meet them?
- What support do you need?
- How can you get that support?
- How motivated are you to do this?
- Do you want to talk with me again and, if so, when?

Of course, you cannot have a paper with these questions while you are having a coaching conversation but take it for what it is: help and inspiration.

# FOUR BASIC STYLES IN YOUTH WORKER PROFESSION

The Swedish sociologist Torbjörn Forkby has in his field research identified four basic styles among professional youth workers. He has categorized these styles as based on Protection and safety, Socialization, Facilitating and Social justice. focus. This research can serve as a tool for reflection on what and why you are working as you are in your center.

## PROTECTION AND SAFETY

- The world is a dangerous place, all young people are in a risk zone
- Emancipation processes are important but requires guiding and control
- Focused on psychological processes
- The leader represents the adult world
- Youth work is based on relations
- Young people are victims

# SOCIALIZATION

- Focused on psychological processes
- Setting rules
- Young persons are deprived and/or spoiled
- Young persons are lazy and lack capability to take initiative
- Fostering
- Young people are potential perpetrators

# FACILITATOR

- Positive outlook on mankind
- Societal analysis; a new world, new needs and expectations
- Support and coaching
- Salutogenic outlook in the job
- Not to protect and foster
- Focus on possibilities
- Informal and non-formal learning
- The power of expectations

# SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Focused on those most deprived
- Looks at people's needs
- Socioeconomic models of explanation
- Community work
- Self-organization
- Focus on groups
- Empowerment

All youth workers are probably a mix of these perspectives, but everyone is probably most focused on one of them. And it is interesting to reflect on how the youth organization that focus on one perspective are working in comparison with an organization that have another focus. This research can serve as a tool for reflection on what and why you are working as you are in your center.

## “DO IT YOURSELF” PEDAGOGIC

“DIY” is a concept that origins from the punk rock culture but has also connections to the “study circles” non authoritarian way of learning. The focus is on the “doing” out of the participants own assets, skills and interests. Erik Hannerz, PhD in sociology, and Mattias Persson, Youth worker from Lund, explains about the DIY pedagogics in *Coda*, an anthology about music and society.

This kind of pedagogic changes the role of the Youth Centers as a supplier of activities into an arena for non-formal learning through passion and interest.

It also leads to a change of objectives and means where the cultural expressions and activities will be means for individual growth and empowerment rather than being the objective for the center.

The group leader's role as a subject specific source of knowledge will not be important in this way of working.



The most important leader skills are here to coach, be a democratic guide and to inspire. Instead of supplying knowledge the leader shall give the group/individual tools to develop and use knowledge.

This combination of focus on “doing” and to help youngsters to understand and realize the assets they already have, entails the need to think differently in relation to traditional leadership. It entails that leaders, as well as youngsters, must find ways to overcome own limitations and to develop.

One of the most usual objections to this kind of leadership is “...but they don’t want to do anything...”. One way of dealing with this attitude among youngsters is to work actively with contrary strategies. The subcultural action strategies that is the origin for DIY is defined as thinking “outside of the box” and beyond the ordinary ways. Instead of asking youngsters only about what they would like to do you can turn it around and ask them to define obstacles. Then working with eliminating these obstacles step by step.

To conclude; DIY is a way of transferring the role of the Youth worker from a supplier of activities into leaders who coaches youngster through creative and learning processes.

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# LEADERSHIP SESSION PLAN

<b>Activity</b>	Leadership style
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	20 min
<b>Description</b>	<p>What kind of leadership styles are dominating styles at your Youth center.</p> <p>Reflect on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection and Safety</li> <li>- Socialisation</li> <li>- Facilitator</li> <li>- Social justice</li> </ul> <p>Give exemples!</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Pens and paper.
<b>Evaluation/ reflection</b>	Is your youth center basic style as you would like it? Is the whole staff behind it? Is it possible, if needed, to change?

<b>Activity</b>	Communication
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	30 minutes for a group of 5
<b>Description</b>	<p>This exercise is about showing how the communication process depends on the response the speaker gets from the listeners.</p> <p>One person shall be the speaker and the rest of the group are listeners. The listener to the right of the speaker is only an observer.</p> <p>The speaker tells the others about his/her morning. Start with the wakening, go on with shower, breakfast, transportation to job and so on...</p> <p>The listeners listen, are interested and active. Do this for about a minute.</p> <p>ways of the speaker was shown when the listening style changed?</p> <p>Let everyone in the group try the role of the speaker.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	A clock. Table and chairs for five.
<b>Evaluation/ reflection</b>	<p>How did it feel to be the speaker when no one seemed to listen?</p> <p>What changes in the ways of the speaker was shown when the listening style changed?</p>

<b>Activity</b>	Coaching
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	60 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>Set up groups of three persons. One act as a coach, one as a client and one is observer.</p> <p>The “client” puts forward a “problem” to the coach. The coach coaches and uses the coaching structure. The observer just observes and is responsible for keeping the time.</p> <p>Each coaching session shall last for 15 minutes at most. When one coaching session is over all three gets the chance to reflect upon the coaching.</p> <p>This reflection takes no more than 5 minutes. Then change roles so that everybody gets the chance to be coach once.</p> <p>Remember that the “problem” doesn’t have to be a problematic problem. It could be about wanting to arrange something, to change job, to achieving something as well as getting rid of something problematic. BUT... it must be real. It is not roleplay in that way. Otherwise it is not possible to do a good coaching.</p> <p>Also remember that the coach doesn’t need specialist competences and are not supposed to deliver a solution. He/she shall avoid advices and shall never criticize. And listen actively.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Pencil and pen to each participant. Table and three chairs for each group. A list of “help“ questions
<b>Evaluation/ reflection</b>	<p>What was difficult in the coach situation?</p> <p>Could this coach method be useful in your work?</p>

<b>Activity</b>	Challenges!
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	30 min
<b>Description</b>	<p>Define two challenges, big or small, that you face in your daily work at the youth center. Find ways to solve them in a promoting way.</p> <p>List your ideas, make a time schedule and who will carry it through.</p> <p>Work in groups with 3-5 participants.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Paper and pens.
<b>Evaluation/ reflection</b>	Present your plan. Think about obstacles and outcomes.

# DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION

Many people claim that democracy is threatened nowadays. And looking around at what is happening in our countries and in the world, it is quite easy to agree. We have taken the democratic society for granted for a long time and seem to have forgotten that democracy is something that must be conquered over and over again. We who are working with the future, (children and youth), are obliged to help young people to understand and to act according to democratic principles. That is the only way to secure democracy for the future. Some people mean that youth workers are the carriers of democratic values.

## **Chapter synopsis**

- The democracy stairway
- Empowerment
- Self-organization
- Circular techniques for group communication

## **Learning outcomes**

To be able to:

- Reflect upon the concept of empowerment due to youth work
- Know how to start an organization
- Explain, and use, democratic circular communications methods.

## **Session options**

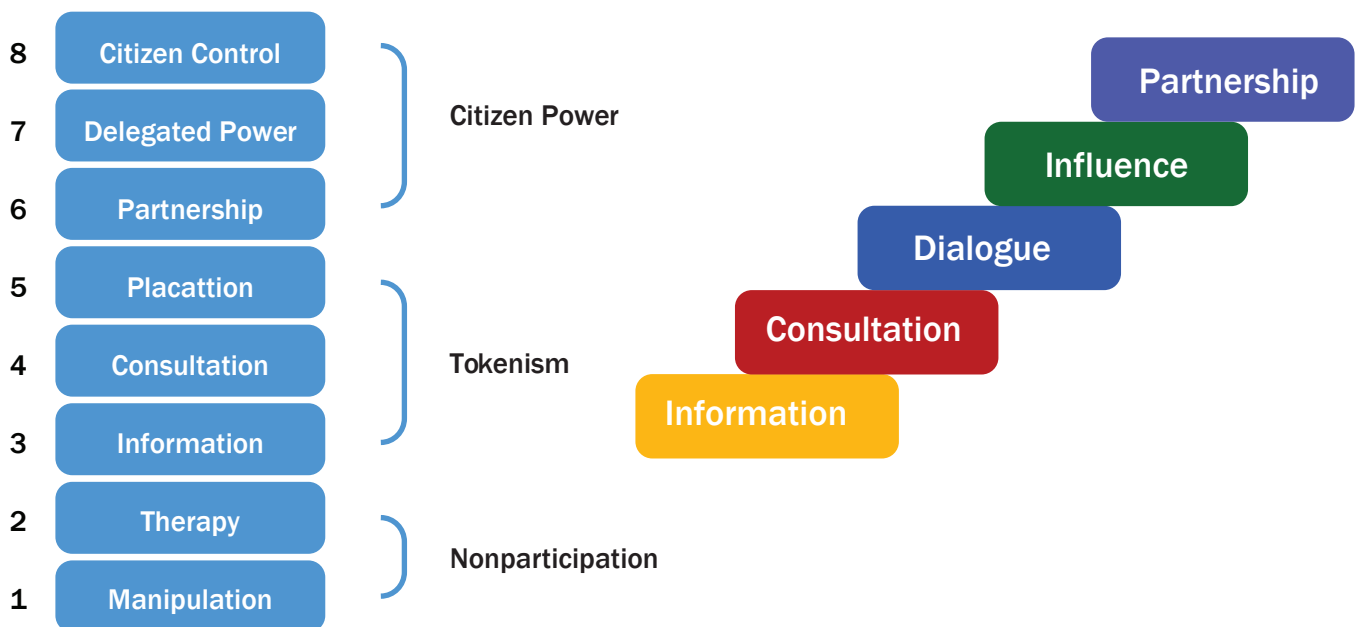
- Idea workshop
- Organize!
- Island of Monomulti

## **Author**

Staffan Lindqvist

# THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

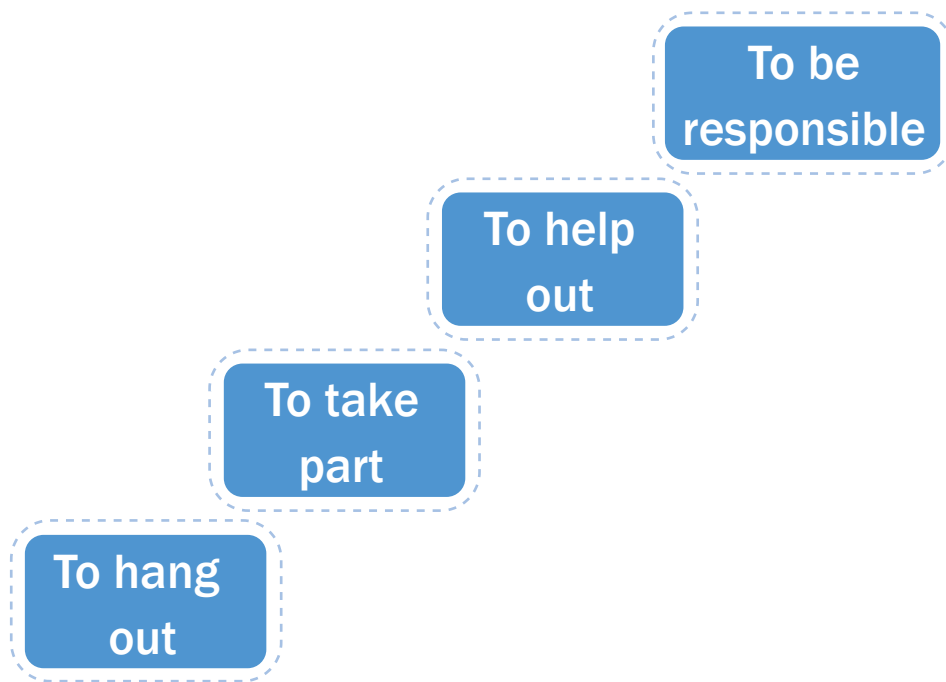
The youth center can, and should, be an arena where youngsters can experience democracy and participation for real. One tool that is useful in analyzing this is “the democratic stairway” (picture below). It was developed by American researcher Sherry Arnstein in 1969.



Use the picture and take a minute to think about what possibilities the youngsters at your youth center have to take part in the decision-making processes.



When you are analyzing how you best support and coach youngsters and groups at your center to take more responsibility for activities and maybe function as a “leader” there are a model for this called “the Danish stairway”. Hard to explain that name but probably it is because it is explained as a stairway and it was published by a Danish pedagogue. It looks like this:



With the help of this picture you can analyze where your young visitors and groups are. This model is not a measure of quality. It is of course so that youngsters “climb” up and down in this stairway over time. Sometimes they like to be in the “hang-out”-stage and sometimes in the “helping out”-stage and that is perfectly ok. But the model can be used to see which youngsters that needs to be a little bit “pushed” and which ones that are ready for meeting bigger challenges and taking more responsibility.

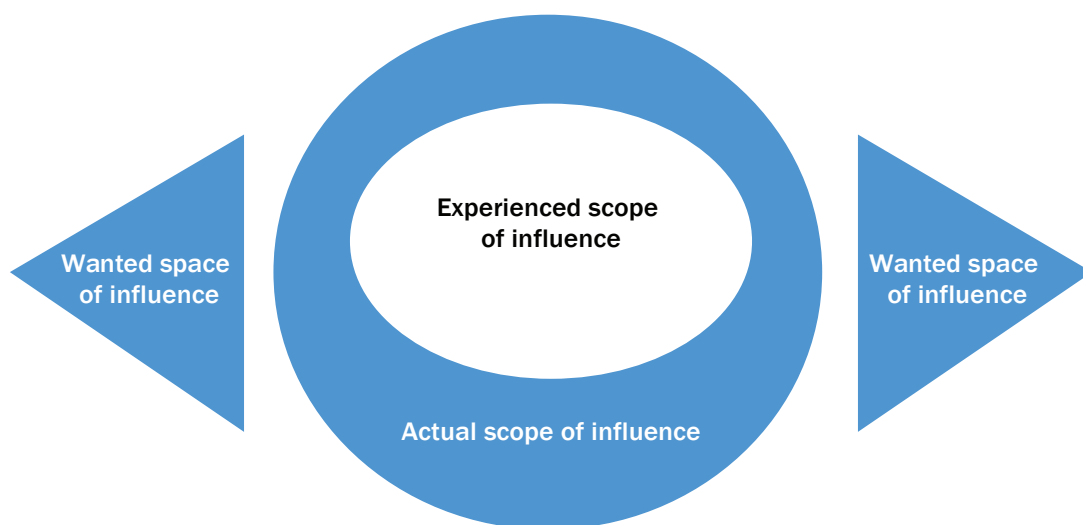
# EMPOWERMENT

The concept of empowerment is basic in our professional role. The idea about this is that every person is devoted to gain power over his/her own life and that youth workers shall support that process.

Another way to express this is supporting young persons to expand their scope of action. Scope of action can be expressed in terms of to what extent one has possibility to have impact in one's own life; at home, in peer groups, leisure activities, school, at work and in society as a whole.

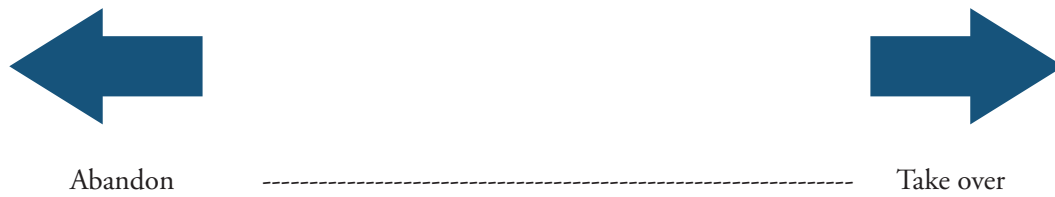
The picture below shows what experienced scope of action, real scope of action and wanted scope of action can look like:

(The profession is about expanding scope of influence for groups and individuals.



The inner circle symbolizes the experienced scope of action. This is usually less than the real scope that is symbolized by the bigger circle. The arrows show the wanted scope of action that can expand without limits.

The mission for the youth worker is to support this expanding process. How that is done depends of course on such things as age and maturity. For some youngsters it could be empowering to help out arranging a pool tournament, for others to plan and carry through a concert or maybe an international project. The youth workers role is here to promote and support in a good way; not too much but neither too little. To be able to do this is a true key competence. The Swedish pedagogue Mårten Roosvall has illustrated like this:



The trick for you as a youth worker is to place yourself at the right place on the dotted line in the picture. If you support too little and you abandon the group/person, the quest will be too difficult and there will be a failure. If, on the other hand, you help too much the quest will be boring and uninteresting. Which implies that there will be no learning process and the responsibility that would have followed the quest disappears.

So...the trick to support the person or group in order to empower is to not help too much and not too little. The amount of help depends of course on things like the groups/persons experience, age, knowledge and the quest.

Often it is a good thing to promote self-organization.

# SELF-ORGANIZATION CREATING YOUR OWN CLUB

It is common to measure the democratic temperature in a society by checking to what degree the citizens are engaged in NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations). In Sweden for example it is very common that you are a member of several organizations. But this doesn't necessarily mean that you are taking part in the democratic processes that NGO's are expected to have. If you for example are interested in playing football you will probably be a member of the local football club to get the chance to train and play with a team. But most often that only means that you play football and not that you take part of any democratic processes. The football activities could just as well be hosted by a private company.

If you want youngsters to experience democracy for real, it is a good idea to promote their self-organization.

A group that are interested in music, fishing, theatre, football, arranging events, doing e-sports or whatever can start their own independent club and as a youth worker you can help them through that process. In some countries, like Sweden for example, even small organizations, at least three persons between 7 and 25 year old, will get financial contributions from the state and municipality if they are organized in a national organization. This can serve as a carrot for them to make the effort to organize. And when they have done that they have gone through a democratic process (more about that further on in this text) and find out that they can get more contributions as an independent organization through funding. But most important, they get independent and gets the strength to make more impact in their own lives and in society. In short, they expand their possible scope of action!

**Here is a short and simple guide for starting an organization:**

1. Gather some friends and formulate an idea that will serve as an overall goal for the organization
2. Write by-laws. They should be written in a clear way and be easy to understand.
  - The most important things in the by-laws is:
  - Name of the organization
  - Where the organization is seated (municipality, community, youth center or something like that)
  - The goal of the organization
  - How you can become a member
  - When the org has its annual meeting
  - Agenda for the annual meeting
  - How many individuals there should be in the board
  - How the by-laws can be changed
  - How to end the organization
3. Make an agenda for a first meeting when you start up the organization.
4. Have a formal, founding meeting and make proper minutes from it. Decide about board and by-laws.
5. Ask for membership in a national organization.

# DEMOCRATIC AUTHORITY PROCESSES

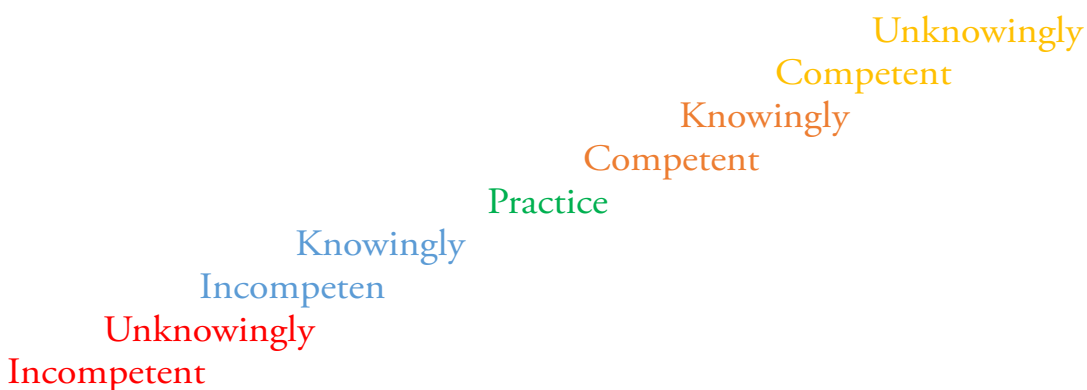
A group's democratic authority process is when the group decides who shall be in the group, how to make suggestions to the group and, most important, how to make decisions in the group. Maybe this is seen as simple and very obvious things, but it is not always so. Having long experience of living in democratic societies we tend to take democracy for given and quite seldom we take a real discussion about how a group shall make decisions. Democracy has turned into convention which means that we are using democratic procedures without really finding out what it really means.

When a group is being formed it must be united in all decisions until it has decided, in unity, how decisions shall be made. E.g. it is very common, when an organization is starting, that they use some kind of "normal" by-laws without really discussing what they mean.

The implication of this is that in many clubs and organizations there are only a few persons that are doing most of the work and make most decisions. There for there will be a lack of real democratic discussions around decisions which leads to declining engagement among the rest.

But a group/board where everyone is counted and make decisions after a thorough discussion will experience much more engagement in carrying the decisions through.

There is a model that shows how individuals and groups develops from incompetence via competence and into convention. It is called "the competence stairway" and it looks like this:



This process can be pictured through a child that is learning to ride a bike. At first, she sees someone who cycles, thinks it looks fun and wants to do it. At this stage she is “unknowingly incompetent”. Once she tries to cycle and immediately falls and then understands that she is not able to do it. She has become “knowingly incompetent”.

Then she starts to practice and learns to ride the bike even though she must be concentrated and really think about how to do it. She has become “knowingly competent”. Eventually she can cycle without thinking about how to do it and then she has become “unknowingly competent”.

It works the same way when it comes to a group’s democratic maturity process. At first the group thinks it understands what democracy is. After discussions around how to make decisions the group will understand that they don’t know. At this stage they understand that they need to practice and discuss the democratic procedures. This will be a process that will lead the group to constitutional authority which will make group knowingly competent. After some time, the democratic way of working will become natural and be in the backbone of the group members. The group has become unknowingly competent.

Your mission as a Youth worker is to guide the groups through this process. One way of doing it is by putting up questions such as: “How will you make decisions in your group?”, “how will the discussions be carried through in your group?”, “who will decide who has the right to speak in the group?”, “who can be a member of your group?”. But it is not your task to come up with the answers to these questions. But as always you shall adapt your support and coaching to the people you are talking to.

There are different ways of democratic deciding in groups. A group can choose between **simple majority**, **qualified majority**, **consensus** and **unity**.

Simple majority means at least 51 % of the votes. Qualified majority means majority but with a higher percentage, like e.g. 75 %. Consensus means that the group can accept a decision, unity that all members in the group really think the same way.

When a group has constituted itself, it is able to make decisions. At that stage the participants have also understood that responsibility follows power. This means that when the group has decided according to the group’s rules this have to be acknowledged and all members of the group are responsible for the decisions whether you like it or not.

# CIRCULAR TECHNIQUES FOR GROUP COMMUNICATION DEMOCRATIC WAYS TO DISCUSS

The basic idea of circular techniques for group communication is to give everyone in a group a voice. The techniques promote the silent ones and silence the most talkative and dominant personalities.

As a leader you can implement these techniques right from the beginning in a group. This will be helpful for the group to act and work in a democratic way. The prerequisites for everybody to feel responsible for decisions will of course approve when everybody has been given the chance to put their opinions forward.

Furthermore, these techniques also make all participants seen without being valued.

The following techniques are examples of democratic and circular discussion methods:

## SHARING

Sharing indicates that you are sharing a feeling. At the start of a meeting/activity all participants present themselves by name. The others answer by saying hello to the person by name. After that the person shares his thoughts and feelings. He is ending by saying “thank you”. The group answers by saying “thank you, XX”.

Sharing is a good way of starting a meeting. But be careful to do it in new groups.

It is always ok to “pass” instead of saying anything. It is not allowed to comment others sharing’s.

- the participants practice formulating feelings
- the participants get their existence confirmed
- the participants are being accepted for who they are and not being valued



# CIRCLE DISCUSSIONS

In a “circle discussion” everybody says something one after the other in the circle. The idea with this is to get to know what every single person thinks in a special issue and/or to make a decision in consensus. Anyone can suggest a “circle discussion” at any time of a discussion.

- the circle discussion makes talkers quieter and makes the more silent persons talk.
- always start your contribution with “I think...”
- never argue against an opinion
- concentrate on the speaker
- everybody has always the right to pass

## CIRCLE

The circle is a quick and simple question to the participants in a circle. It is most often a way to get fundamentals for a decision. Anyone has the right to ask the group quick questions as: what theme would you like to have at tonight’s party? Is the food included?

# DIALOGUE CIRCLE

The dialogue circle means stopping at the person who are talking. All participants can ask that person to get to know more about his/her opinions, feelings and so on. Only questions, no statements. When there are no more questions the talker says, “thank you” and passes the word on.

## RING

After an activity the leader puts up two questions to the participants:

- Value your own work
- Value the work of the group

The answer shall never be valued

Of course, it is possible to modify these methods out of your own experiences. And use only those methods that you feel comfortable with. Just don't forget why you are using them. And remember...even if some of these methods might feel strange to use for the participants in the beginning, they will soon implement them if you are steady and believe in them!

Good luck!!

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# **DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION SESSION PLAN**

<b>Activity</b>	Idea work shop
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	Ca 120 min
<b>Description</b>	<p>This method is about transforming a lot of wild ideas into one workable idea that are accepted by all participants, in short time and in a democratic way. Can be used in all kind of groups; working staffs as well as in youth groups.</p> <p>1. <u>Introduction</u> of the method</p> <p>Presentation of participants</p> <p>Discussion of subject</p> <p>Post-it notes to participants</p> <p>5 min</p> <p>2. <u>Individual work</u></p> <p>All participants write, individually, a number of statements out of the subject about a future state, like one year ahead. Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I/we ....shall/wish...</li> </ul> <p>It could be activities we want to realize, but also organizational changes and developed ways of working.</p> <p>One statement on each note, as many as you can think of.</p> <p>Fold the notes so the glue comes on the inside. 10 min</p> <p>3. Participants puts the notes in one heap.</p> <p>4. Put two flip chart papers on the wall that says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Wanted and possible</i></li> <li>- <i>Wanted but impossible</i></li> </ul> <p>5. Participants takes one note in turns and reads it for all to hear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Put up the notes on the big papers after a short discussion. This discussion shall only be about clarifying the idea and to see if it is possible or not. 40 min</li> </ul> <p>6. Pause 5 min</p>

<b>Description</b>	<p>7. New instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work only with the notes that are <i>Wanted and possible</i>.</li> <li>-- Put the notes in clusters on the big paper.</li> <li>- When all notes are done, let everyone individually think about what is most important. Everyone has all together 10 points each to spread among the different “clusters” of notes, by marking them with a pen.</li> </ul> <p>20 min</p> <p>8. Start working with the winning idea(s). Make sure you have a secretary and use the “support questions” below.</p> <p>30-45 min</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Flipcharts, markers, post-it notes
<b>Evaluation</b>	What idea did we come up with? Did everyone participate? Could we use this tool in our youth center?

## SUPPORT QUESTIONS FOR IDEA WORK SHOP

1. What is the most important in this idea/activity/change/statement about the future?
2. Is something similar already going on (that we must consider or regard)? Describe.
3. What can/shall/must we do? Plan of action.
4. How shall we start? How will the work go on? Time schedule.
5. Who can we cooperate with?
6. Who will be responsible for the continuous work?
7. When shall it start?

<b>Activity</b>	A focus on Intercultural cooperation, “The island of Monomulti” (3 cultures)
<b>Time</b>	1:30
<b>Description</b>	<p>The aim is to support the group in focus in on differences and similarities in culture</p> <p>By acknowledging the above it leads to intercultural dialogue and a move to positive interactions and acceptance of difference</p> <p>To look at briefly the theory developed on cultural integration and the 6 steps to experiencing cultural difference</p> <p>For individuals to acknowledge for themselves where they are in the steps for integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to raise awareness of diversity and consequences</li> <li>- to start the discussion about how to deal with differences</li> <li>- to experience a multi-cultural situation</li> </ul> <p>Explain to the group that we are going to do a simulation and that there is a need for the participants to participate as best they can.</p> <p>Split the group into 3 tribes. (it would be good to have this map out prior to the session in order to have people mixing together and learning from each other)</p> <p>Instructions</p> <p><b>The group is divided in 3 groups. Each group gets their role card and they have 25 minutes to prepare their culture as described on the role card. On all role cards it states that they should practice in order to get into character.</b></p>

<b>Description</b>	<p>You'll have to do it together with the other groups because there's not enough space and material to build more than one shelter.</p> <p>The material for building the shelter: cardboard, scissors, glue, rulers and pencils. The shelter must be stable and should at least be 100 cm high and 150 cm wide. It should have a roof and a door.</p> <p><b>You have 25 minutes to build the shelter</b></p> <p>Questions for observers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>How do they 'practice' their culture?</b></li> <li>* <b>Are there any differences, how people practice their role in this culture?</b></li> <li>* <b>Are they successful in working with the other cultures?</b></li> <li>* <b>What main problems do they meet in dealing with the other ?</b></li> </ul> <p>After 25 mins stop the simulation.</p>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Culture groups – 15 mins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>How did you feel during the simulation?</b></li> <li>- <b>What do you think about the construction-process?</b></li> <li>- <b>Were there moments where you felt insecure or not respected?</b></li> <li>- <b>What do you think are the characteristics of the other cultures?</b></li> <li>- <b>3-4 minutes feedback from observers</b></li> </ul> <p>Derolling in plenary – 5 minutes</p> <p>Bring back their symbols and any short comments to put in the middle. It's important to get individuals to quickly rename/reintroduce themselves back into the circle in order to close the simulation in the whole group.</p> <p>Plenary – 25 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can you see a link between this simulation and reality?</li> <li>- What can we learn from this simulation? – put results on flip chart</li> <li>- optional: focus on facts, feelings, interpretations</li> </ul>



Resources	<p>Material</p> <p>cartoon, scissors, glue, pencils, role cards (7 for each groups), 3 x observation questions</p> <p>Handouts 6 steps to experience cultural difference</p>
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# COLDONIA

In your culture 'intelligence' and 'hard working' are the central issues. Other cultures consider you as 'cold'. But you see yourself as a very successful and wealthy country, mainly because of your very effective way of working.

You don't discuss feelings, you like intellectual debates on logical arguments. Showing your feelings is considered childish. Self-control is seen as an important quality.

Religion totally disappeared in your country and is considered as 'stupid' and 'a waste of time'.

You greet other people by looking in their eyes. Freedom of space is very important in Coldonia. That's why you never touch people while greeting or communicating and you don't like to be touched. Touching other people is only used as an invitation for sexual intercourse, which in Coldonia has little moral implications and is mostly done as a relaxing and physical exercise.

Your body language reflects your culture. You only use small gestures, your back is straight and you stay always calm.

It's very normal in Coldonia to interrupt another person whenever you feel the need to do that.

An important characteristic of Caledonians is that they are very willing and see it as their task to teach and train other cultures in order to help them to become as efficient and as successful as you are. Whenever you have the opportunity to teach other cultures you do it.

**Coldonia is famous for building big oil-platforms and huge bridges.**

**Because your behavior is natural to you, you cannot explain it to strangers.**

**Now you have 15 minutes to prepare yourself in your own group. Practice the behavior! Also make sure that there is one thing that shows in your appearance that you are from the same country. (e.g. the way you dress, the way you do your hair etc.) It's very important to practice well because you will need it in the follow-up.**

# TURTELINA

**In Turtelina 'friendship' and 'taking care of each other' are important values. Turtelinians show their feelings all the time and personal feelings are always the central issue in communication.**

**Your face and your gestures show how you feel. You always touch each other. When you talk to someone you hold his or her ear.**

**You stand close to the other. A distance more than 30 cm is considered as rude. When you greet somebody you put his or her hand on your heart. Any reference to sex is taboo and considered offending.**

**Time is very important in Turtelina. You are never in a hurry. You like to take your time. When you work together you first want to be sure that the atmosphere is good. So you ask the others all the time how they feel and you inform them about your feelings.**

**Interrupting people when they are speaking is considered impolite. You wait till they have finished their story. When people interrupt you, you feel rejected and you react very emotionally.**

**Turtelina is well known for their round shaped colourful buildings. Houses are always built in round shapes because this reflects friendship and harmony.**

**Because your behavior is natural to you, you cannot explain it to strangers.**

**Now you have 15 minutes to prepare yourself in your own group. Practice the behavior! Also make sure that there is one thing that shows in your appearance that you are from the same country. (e.g. the way you dress, the way you do your hair etc.) It's very important to practice well because you will need it in the follow-up.**

In Smilia 'politeness' and 'friendship and harmony' are the most important values. You don't like conflicts; you consider arguments as impolite behavior. That's why you don't know the word 'no'. Even when you don't agree you say 'yes'. You always smile at people, also when you don't like their attitude.

When you are working together and somebody asks you to do something you don't want to do, you say 'yes' but you always find a way not to do it.

Smilia is a very religious country. In daily life this means that you pray often. Every five minutes you stop whatever you do to come together to worship your gods. You do that by sitting together and whistling.

The Smilians greet each other by rubbing each other's legs. While speaking to each other your feet or legs are always in touching others. You don't touch each other up from the waist; it's for example not allowed to touch shoulders, heads, hands or arms.

You have very strict rules towards tools and materials. Cardboard and scissors are male and cannot be used by women. Rulers and pencils are female and cannot be used by men. Glue can be used by both sexes.

Smilia is famous for its paintings and interior decorations.

Because your behavior is natural to you, you cannot explain it to strangers.

Now you have 15 minutes to prepare yourself in your own group. Practice the behavior! Also make sure there is one thing that shows in your appearance that you are from the same country. (e.g. the way you dress, the way you do your hair etc.) It's very important to practice well because you will need it in the follow-up.

**Activity** Organize!

**Time (hr:min)** 120 min

**Description** This session is about starting an organization. To organize is a good way for youngsters to experience democracy for real. And youth leaders need to know how to do in order to support this.

As Joe Hill once said: „Don´t mourn, organize!“

Work in groups of 4-5 persons.

**1. Decide about how you shall make decisions in the group.**

**Agree about the purpose of the organization.**

**Make a suggestion for by-laws.**

**2. Name of the organization**

- Where the organization is seated (municipality, community, youth center or something like that)
- The goal of the organization
- How you can become a member
- When the organization has its annual meeting
- Agenda for an annual meeting
- How many individuals there should be on the board
- How the by-laws can be changed
- How to end the organization

**3. Make an agenda for a first meeting when you start up the organization.**

**4. Have a formal, founding meeting and make proper minutes from it. Make a decision on board members and by-laws.**

**Resources**                      Pens and paper

**Evaluation**                      What support does youngsters need to do start an organization?

How can you support them the best way?

# GROUP DYNAMICS

## **Chapter synopsis**

1. Group development
2. Working in groups
3. Conflict resolution

## **Learning outcomes:**

- Participants should get a good grasp of theory in group development as well as gaining some practical tools that can be used in the field.
- Participants should be able to “read the room” better and have a good sense of what might be going on within a group by applying methods from this chapter.

## **Session options:**

1. Forming – icebreakers
2. Storming – roleplay and teambuilding
3. Norming/Performing – Intense teambuilding, skill assessment and self-evaluation
4. Adjourning – Reflection and ceremony

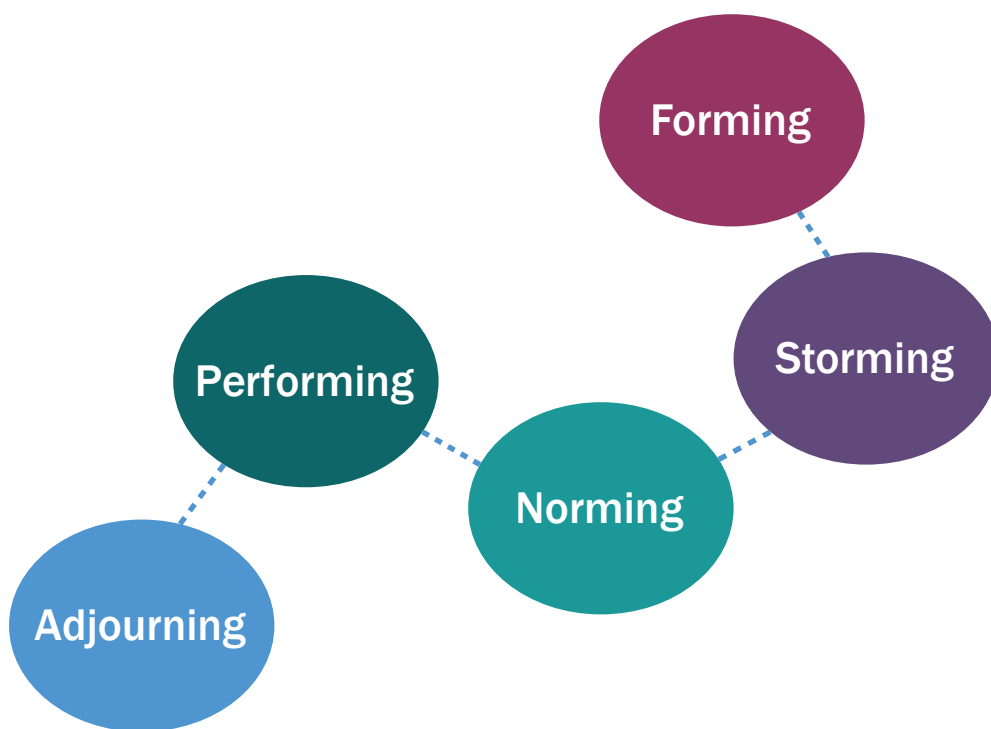
## **Author**

Þorvaldur Guðjónsson

# GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Groups are a living thing. They have values, a specific group culture and a purpose. Like many other living things, they don't stay the same from the beginning to the end. They evolve. They *develop*.

In 1965 Bruce Tuckman published his theory on stages of group development (with additions in 1977). According to the theory there are 5 stages of group development:



Forming

Storming

Norming

Performing

Adjourning

These stages describe the lifespan of a group. They start by *forming*. During this stage communication is usually polite. People tell white lies and try to project a positive image.

After a while of being polite to everyone, someone usually starts telling things as they are and sometimes that might offend another member of the group or start a discussion that helps shed the politeness and bring out the true selves of the group members. During this period there might be a lot of disagreements, arguments and discussions. This period is called *storming*.

When the dust settles from the disagreements and arguments the members of the group have found a way to co-exist with the other members, respect them and reach a common understanding of what is and is not acceptable behavior within the group. This phase is called *norming*. This phase often takes the longest time.

A group that understands acceptable behavior is a good start, but when a group has been together for a while the members starts to learn each other's strengths and weaknesses, form trust and codependence. A group that reaches this level is *performing*. These groups can be highly productive and it's important to note that not all groups reach this phase.

All groups have two things in common, they *form* in the beginning and the *adjourn* in the end. When a group comes to an end, whether it's by accident or intentionally it's called *adjourning*. Group members get a chance to say their goodbyes and they go their separate ways.

It's important to note that the flow between phases may not always be obvious and sometimes something might happen within a group to make them "jump back" a phase, i.e. a group might have settled their storming phase but a new member joins the group and his views might not be compatible with what other members have settled on being the group norm so a storming phase might have to be repeated.

Tuckman's theory on group development is of course not the only one of its kind and other similar or compatible theories been put forth over the past decades. As it is only a theory, like others of similar kind, it does not constitute a whole truth but is rather an attempt to categorize and understand behavior and dynamics within groups. All theories have limitations and this one is no exception. In 2010 Denise A. Bonebright from the University of Minnesota [reviewed Tuckman's model](#) in order to get a better view of the strengths and shortcomings of the model.

Other notable theories on group and/or individual development are:

- Will Schultz's FIRO theory
- Kurt Lewin's individual change process
- Fisher's theory of decision emergence in groups
- Poole's multiple-sequences model
- McGrath's Time, Interaction and Performance (TIP) theory
- Morgan, Salas and Glickman's TEAM model
- Wheelan's integrated model of group development
- Gersicks punctuated equilibrium model
- Hackman's multilevel perspective

# WORKING IN GROUPS

Most of open youth work happens in groups. They might have long-term goals or be temporary groups formed to complete one task and have one activity together. Depending on this the intensity of the development of groups might differ but the role of the youth worker is always to guide the group.

It might be tempting to try and force a group up a level by interjecting in their storming session or trying to project your own norms onto a group, but those tactics will not have lasting effect. It might rather do the opposite; the strong words of an authority figure might push them back to the polite forming phase.

It's also important for the youth worker to be aware of dominant personalities and to facilitate the process in a way that gives everyone in the group a chance to make their opinions heard. Facilitating group development can be challenging and to do it successfully many leaders like to use games or exercises and at the end of this chapter you will find a few ideas that might prove helpful.

The role of the leader evolves just as the group does and it's important for the leader to be mindful of his role and what is expected of him at any given time. For more information on the role and evolution of the role of a leader look at the chapter on **Coaching and leadership**.



# CONFLICT RESOLUTION

From the outside many people tend to think of youth work as playing games and stopping fights. Those who have worked in the field know there's a lot more to it, but conflict resolution is a very important skill to have.

During group development there are usually disagreements and arguments. That does not have to be a bad thing. These moments are learning opportunities for the participants and during those moments and the resolution it's important to facilitate the discussion rather than taking it over, to mediate rather than bringing the hammer down and to help the participants to understand and respect the point of view of others.

This sounds a lot easier than it is but there are some things that make it simpler, for the facilitator as well as the participants in the argument.

1. Make sure only one person speaks at a time
2. Mediate talking time and make sure everyone gets to finish their thought
3. Don't take sides
4. Ask open questions

Roleplay can also be helpful with conflict resolution as it helps the group members empathize with other people's situation.

# HOMEWORK

1. Have a look at some of the groups you're a part of and evaluate the stage your group is in. Ideas for groups could be:
  - Family
  - Group of friends
  - Your team at work
  - Study groups
2. Do groups develop differently in relativity to culture, religion or other social factors?

# GROUP DYNAMICS SESSION PLANS

These session plans will give you ideas for games and tools to use with your group depending on how far along they are in the group development process. It's important to give the group time to adjust and get to know each other before they are thrown into the deep end.

## **Forming**

1. Snowball fight – 10 min
2. Name and movement – 5-10 min
3. Earthquake – 5 min
4. Wall of death – 5 min

## **Storming**

1. The ideal friend/team member 20 min
2. Badge of compliments 10 min
3. Cancer doctors – 30 min

## **Norming/Performing**

1. I'm unique because... 10-15 min
2. Bridge of qualities 15 min
3. Magic carpet ride 15 min
4. The blind herd 40-60 min

## **Adjourning**

1. Break up ceremony

# FORMING SESSION PLAN

<b>Activity</b>	Snowball fight
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	10 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>Each participant takes one piece of paper and a pen/pencil and writes down their name. Then everyone rolls their piece of paper up to form a „snowball“. When everyone is ready the snowball fight starts and lasts for 20-30 seconds. People throw paper at each other and have a laugh. After 20-30 seconds the group leader stops the fight and everyone picks up one piece of paper and opens it. The leader asks a generic question and everyone must find the person whose paper they're holding, get the answer for the question and write it down on the piece of paper. Then the paper is rolled back up to form a snowball and another round of the snowball fight starts. After 20-30 seconds another question is asked and everyone finds the person whose paper they're holding and writes down their answer. This is done 3-4 times. At the end of the last round everyone stands in a circle and gives a short presentation of the person whose paper they're holding.</p> <p>Ideas for questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What did you have for breakfast?</li> <li>- What's your favorite TV show</li> <li>- Where do you live?</li> <li>- What's your favorite worldly object</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	1 pen and 1 piece of paper per participant
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Did you get to know one another a little bit?</p> <p>Was this fun?</p>

<b>Activity</b>	Name and movement
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	5-10 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>Form a circle. A random group member (or volunteer) starts by saying their name and doing a specific movement (jump, clap, a little dance or something everyone can do).</p> <p>The next person repeats the name of the person that went first with the movement and then adds their own name and movement.</p> <p>The next person has to repeat all the names and movements that have come before and then add their own. The last person has to repeat all the names and all the movements. Keep in mind that this is not a competition and it's OK to help each other out.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	None
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Did you learn any new names?</p> <p>Was this fun?</p>

<b>Activity</b>	Earthquake
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	5-10 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>The group is divided into groups of 3 individuals with one or two participants without a group. Two of each group form „a house“ by facing one and other and putting their hands forward at an upward angle. One of those two is „the door“ and the other is „the wall“ The third person stands between them and is „the tenant“ in the house.</p> <p>The players without a group decide what happens next and they have 4 options, they can yell:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Doors</li> <li>2. Walls</li> <li>3. Tenants</li> <li>4. Earthquake</li> </ol> <p>When they yell „doors“ all the doors must leave their house and join another. The players without a house will try to jump in and join a house as the door and leave someone else without a house.</p> <p>It tries to get in. All participants can change roles, so „tenants“ can become doors or walls and vice versa.</p> <p>The game ends after 5-10 rounds.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	None
<b>Evaluation</b>	Was this fun?

<b>Activity</b>	Wall of death
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	5-10 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>The group lines up, side by side, on top of a wall or on a line of chairs. When everyone is in line they have to line up in a specific order. If a group member falls off the wall they have to reset the line and try again. Ideas for line order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alphabetical</li> <li>- By age</li> <li>- From tallest to shortest</li> </ul> <p>To make the game harder you can have them finish this challenge without speaking.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Wall or a line of chairs.
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Did you learn anything about people in the group?</p> <p>Did this help break barriers?</p> <p>Was this fun?</p> <p>What was the hardest part of this game?</p>



# **STORMING SESSION PLAN**

<b>Activity</b>	The Ideal friend/team member
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	20 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>Each group member gets post it's and a pen. Then everyone gets 2-5 minutes to write down traits that they think are important or desirable in a friend or a team member. While the group is writing their ideas the leader draws a person/stick figure on the whiteboard.</p> <p>After the time is up the leader collects the post it's and starts putting them on the whiteboard and reading them aloud one at a time. All the post it's are anonymous.</p> <p>At the end of the exercise there should be a cluster of traits around the drawing. The leader then asks if there are any traits that shouldn't be up there or if there are any traits missing.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	A whiteboard, markers, post it's and pens
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Does the group share values?</p> <p>Does the group agree that the traits listed in this exercise are all desirable in a friend or team member?</p>

<b>Activity</b>	The Badge of Compliments
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	10 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>Each group member get's a paper plate with their name on it taped to their back. The walk around and write a compliment on each others plates. It's important that everyone write's on every other plate and that the compliments have substinence.</p> <p>When everyone is done writing the look at their plates (badges) and read aloud the compliments they got for everyone else.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Paper plates, duct tape, crayons/pens/pencils
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Was this fun?</p> <p>Did you get compliments you didn't expect?</p> <p>How did it feel to read compliments you got aloud for other people?</p>

<b>Activity</b>	Cancer doctors
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	30-60 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>The group is divided into teams of three „doctors“. They get a folder with limited information on a number of patients that all supposedly have cancer. Each team of doctors only has the cure for one person and must decide who they want to save. They can ask the leader for information on 5 blank boxes. Phrasing on questions is important.</p> <p>The Leader has all the answers on his sheet.</p> <p>After all teams have gotten all the information they're allowed they must decide on who they're going to cure.</p> <p>When all the teams have decided on who they are going to cure they present their findings for the other teams.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Folders with game information (attachment), pens
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>What was the hardest part about this exercise?</p> <p>Did the group always agree?</p> <p>How did the group make decisions?</p> <p>Does the group share common values?</p>

# **NORMING/ PERFORMING SESSION PLAN**

<b>Activity</b>	I'm unique because...
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	10-15 minutes
<b>Description</b>	The groups forms a circle with chairs and has a seat. One participant goes first by saying „I'm unique because....“ and adding a fact about themselves. Everyone else in the circle that has that in common with the person making the statement stands up from their seat and sits on top of the person that made the statement (if the group is not comfortable with sitting on top one and other they can stand behind the chair of the person that made the statement). That person must then make another statement until they make one that no one has in common with them, therefor showing what makes them unique within the group. Then the next person in clockwise order does the same thing and so on until all participants have taken a turn.
<b>Resources</b>	Chairs
<b>Evaluation</b>	Was this fun?  Did some facts surprise you?  What was the hardest part about this exercise?

<b>Activity</b>	Bridge of qualities
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	15-30 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>Each person gets 3 pieces of paper and a pen/pencil and writes down one personal quality or skill on each piece of paper.</p> <p>When all participants have finished writing down their skills a participant is chosen to go first. The first person reads aloud their first quality, puts it down on the floor and stands on it, then reads their next quality, puts it down, steps on it and repeats until all qualities are lined up in a straight line on the floor.</p> <p>The next person comes up to the first quality put down by the person that went first. If the first quality also applies to the person going next they step on top of that piece of paper. If not they read aloud one of their qualities and put it down beside the first quality, widening the bridge at the base and step on top of it. Then they read the quality in the next row, step on it if it applies to them as well, if not they lay down another quality next to it and go on.</p> <p>The aim of the game is to create a long or wide bridge of qualities that the group has to offer.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Paper and pens/pencils
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Are there certain qualities that many in the group have in common?</p> <p>Would it be harder or easier to write down qualities for other people?</p> <p>Was this fun?</p> <p>What was the hardest part about this exercise?</p>

<b>Activity</b>	Magic carpet ride
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	15 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>Each team gets one rug and all the team members stand on it. The idea is that the rug is a magic carpet flying 200ft in the air. The carpet is coming apart at the bottom and they must flip the carpet to fix it but they aren't allowed to touch the ground. The team must find a way to flip the rug without touching the ground.</p> <p>To make the game harder you can give them a few minutes to plan but as soon as they start the challenge they aren't allowed to speak.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	1 rug for every team of participants (group size depends on rug size)
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>What was the hardest part about this exercise?</p> <p>Did you have fun?</p> <p>How did the group make decisions?</p> <p>Did everyone take part in the decision making process?</p> <p>Is it important to have a diverse group in this exercise?</p>



<b>Activity</b>	The blind herd
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	40-60 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>The object of the game is to find a rope, hidden in an open space, bringing it to a specific place and creating a form with the rope (a heart, a spiral, a square etc.).</p> <p>The group must work together and formulate a plan on how to complete these tasks. The catch is that after they have finished planning they're blindfolded and they aren't allowed to speak.</p> <p>They aren't expected to complete the task on the first go and can stop at any time, have moment to adjust their strategy and start over.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Blindfolds for every participant, rope and a large open space
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>What was the hardest part about this exercise?</p> <p>Did you have fun?</p> <p>How did the group make decisions?</p> <p>Did everyone take part in the decision making process?</p> <p>Is it important to have a diverse group in this exercise?</p> <p>How did it feel to be blindfolded and speechless?</p>

# ADJOURNING SESSION PLAN

<b>Activity</b>	Break up ceremony
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	2-5 minutes per person
<b>Description</b>	<p>The group sits in a circle and the leader addresses the group reminding them that even though this group may not be a whole any more we will always have memories of our time together. Even though this group has been one whole we've all had different experiences within the group but now we'd like to focus on the positives.</p> <p>All group members take a few minutes to think about the group and memories linked to it. They are asked to tell 2 short stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one story about a fond memory from the early stages of the group.</li> <li>- one story about their favorite memory of the group.</li> </ul> <p>Everyone gets a few minutes to talk and it's important that they don't get interrupted.</p> <p>At the end the leader thanks everyone for sharing their memories and formally disbands the group.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Chairs
<b>Evaluation</b>	This exercise is in itself an evaluation/reflection on the groups progress.

<b>Activity</b>	Time capsule
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	5-10 minutes per person
<b>Description</b>	<p>This exercise must be prepared in advance and every member of the group asked to bring an object related to the group to the final meet up of the group.</p> <p>The leader addresses the group reminding them that even though this group may not be a whole any more we will always have memories of our time together. Even though this group has been one whole we've all had different experiences within the group but now we'd like to focus on the positives.</p> <p>Each person is asked to bring one small object to this final meet up of the group. The object will be put in a box and buried after the ceremony. When each group member steps up and puts their object in the box they tell a story linking the object to the group. It's important that the person telling a story isn't interrupted. When all the group members have put their object in the box they're asked if they have anything to add to what's been said or to the box.</p> <p>After anything might have been added the leader closes the box and seals it. The group then takes the box to a place that they've agreed upon in advance and bury it.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Shovel, duct tape, things from the group and the individuals and a box to store them.
<b>Evaluation</b>	This exercise is in itself an evaluation/reflection on the groups progress.

<b>Activity</b>	The blind herd
<b>Time (hr:min)</b>	40-60 minutes
<b>Description</b>	<p>The object of the game is to find a rope, hidden in an open space, bringing it to a specific place and creating a form with the rope (a heart, a spiral, a square etc.).</p> <p>The group must work together and formulate a plan on how to complete these tasks. The catch is that after they have finished planning they're blindfolded and they aren't allowed to speak.</p> <p>They aren't expected to complete the task on the first go and can stop at any time, have moment to adjust their strategy and start over.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	Blindfolds for every participant, rope and a large open space
<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>What was the hardest part about this exercise?</p> <p>Did you have fun?</p> <p>How did the group make decisions?</p> <p>Did everyone take part in the decision making process?</p> <p>Is it important to have a diverse group in this exercise?</p> <p>How did it feel to be blindfolded and speechless?</p>

