

Research report

Conditions of the efficient support for youth at risk of social exclusion

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Wrocław 2016

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The present publication has been realised under the project “Integration through Inspirations. Non - formal education as a tool of the equalization of opportunities of youth at risk of social exclusion” with the financial support of the European Commission, under the ERASMUS + programme, Key Action 2: Strategic Partnership for youth – agreement no. 2015-2-PL01-KA205-017512.

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

The existing documents of the Council of Europe (Lisbon Strategy, European Social Model, Social Policy Agenda, Revised Cohesion Strategy) define the direction of the socio-economic development, which heads to full employment and to economic cohesion. According to these documents, “properly designed and implemented social policy constitutes an investment from which every citizen and all society profit”. The concept of active social policy is based on the active involvement of public services in solving social problems, mainly by implementing the activation programmes. This concept concerns mainly the employment policy, the social assistance system or the education system, especially when it comes to continuous education. The concept of active social policy connects with the objectives of “Europe 2020” Strategy, in particular concerning the reduction of the number of Europeans living below the poverty line and the problem of people who finish their education prematurely. The lack of the education results in fewer opportunities in the labour market, and thereby increases the risk of excluding these people from working and social life. As the survey proves, the factors that influence the premature abandonment of the formal education are: poverty of the family of origin, lack of employment, various educational barriers, especially these concerning finances, low level of parents’ education, low cultural and social capital of the entourage, as well as psychological barriers – lack of the sense of security and fear of the unemployment, young people’s incapacity of dealing with life, lack of self-confidence. The difficult start of young people results also from: lack of educational aspirations in the environment where they live and grow up; limiting their social activity by staying only within their family circle; limited access to the institutions; insuffi-

cient support from their schools in overcoming the educational barriers; unstable help of the municipality, that makes the overcoming of the financial barriers in further education impossible; copying the lifestyle of their parents and the strategy of surviving in difficult conditions. The research concerning the life of the young generation growing up in poverty shows the role which the institutions that influenced essentially their life perspectives and possibilities play, as well as the impact that the lack and the absence of such support has on the life of these young people. The prevention of the social exclusion of the youth requires modern services supplied in the local environment by properly prepared staff. The professions connected with social work are characterised by not being able to be described by precise working methods. Each time – according to the circumstances, the kind of impact entities, the institutional and social surroundings – the actions connected with various areas of life that require specific qualifications, knowledge and experience from the representatives of the professions are undertaken. The process of advising requires including various methods and tools in order to be able to work efficiently with the family experiencing various deficits. The necessity of making key decisions or actions requires from the specialists the appropriate knowledge and qualifications that will enable them to see the needs of the people while undertaking social actions. The professional development is essential to be able to act and support people, groups and societies efficiently. The indicators of changeability of social life (changing family life model, effects of economic migration, evolution of the way of functioning in the youth groups, world crises, globalisation etc.) require active approach to the education, quest for knowledge, development of the educational methods, activation of new channels of information flow, acquisition and reinforcement of didactical competencies from the representatives of welfare institutions.

The answer to one of the most important challenges of the modern Europe, which is to prevent unemployment and social exclusion of youth, is the project “Integration through Inspirations. Non - formal education as a tool of the equalization of opportunities of youth at risk of social exclusion”. Next to the school, the institutions that are directly or indirectly involved in the process of equalizing the young people’s opportunities of being socially excluded, are public welfare organisations. The lack of modern work standards, as well as limited access for the staff of the said institutions to the trainings that improve their qualifications, result in the maladjustment of the offered support to the modern requirements concerning young people. As a result, the support and the help for young people are provided too late. As it results from the experience of the organisations engaged in this partnership project, using the methods of non-formal education constitutes

a chance of increasing the effectiveness of the actions of public welfare organisations in the context of counteracting the social exclusion of young people. Learning through practice and through experience constitutes one of the most important tools of creating in young people the sense of self-steering and responsibility for their own work and educational choices.

The main objective of this project is to increase the level of social integration among young people at risk of social exclusion by the propagation of using the methods of non-formal methods of education in public institutions.

Specific objectives:

- Increasing the professional competence of the representatives of social professions in the field of using non-formal methods of education during the work with youth at risk of social exclusion
- Establishing a new form of social support addressed to the youth at risk of social exclusion by adjusting the methods and techniques used in non-formal education to the conditionings and practices of public welfare institutions

The participants of the project are mainly the representatives of public institutions that work for the benefit of socially excluded people and families – social workers and family assistants, probation officers, teachers, coaches, pedagogues or therapists.

The most important addressee of the influence of the project is the youth at risk of social exclusion, that is to say the final recipients of the activation actions undertaken by the target group.

What is more, the process of creating and spreading the results of the project predicts its effects not only on the representatives of the target group, but also on other stakeholders that have the potential and real influence on the situation of the youth: local, regional and national (in every partner countries) decision-makers of the social policy and education, experts and widely understood staff working with young people.

Achieving the goals will be a direct consequence of producing the following results under this project:

- The online educational platform “Integration through Inspirations” – interactive educational tool addressed to the project’s target group and to any other person interested in the topic of the project. The platform will contain ready scenarios of workshops and of private

conversations using various non-formal methods that target above all: motivation to self-development, continuation of the education, professional consultancy, discovering talents and passions of young people.

- Focus group interview report, entitled “Conditions of the efficient support for youth at risk of social exclusion” containing the analysis of the needs of the target group, as well as the expectations of the beneficiaries of the support system in the context of utilising non-formal educational methods in order to prevent the social exclusion of the youth
- E-book: “Integration through Inspirations. Non - formal education as a tool of the equalization of opportunities of youth at risk of social exclusion”. The manual of the methods, tools, techniques of working with young people likely to be used in everyday practice by the representatives of the target group”.

The key activities for the process of creating and distributing the results of the project are the following actions:

- International project meetings, during which the experience and good practice will be exchanged between the partner organisations;
- Researching the needs of the target group using the FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW method;
- Trainings for the social workers and family assistants – each of the direct participants of the project will take part in a training focused on using the tools of non-formal education in work with the youth at risk of social exclusion;
- Study visits for the representatives of the target group, during which the participants of the trainings will observe the work of their colleagues from partner countries;
- Testing the developed methods and tools in everyday work with young people
- Conferences publicising the results of the project carried out in every partner country addressed to the regional and national decision-makers of the social policy and education, experts and widely understood staff working with young people.

Our partners are:

Regiovision GmbH – an organisation that specializes in services connected with widely understood activation and professional reintegration. Regiovision has experience in realisation of numerous national and international projects, which aim to equalise the chances of socially excluded people. The

organisation has conducted as well the educational workshops for the staff working with the youth preparing the participants for adapting the methods: theatrical, experimental and the authorial method StoryTelling (focused on so called narrative techniques). More - www.regiovision-schwerin.de

Decroly SL – Spanish vocational training organisation that has as its objective the professional integration of the people that abandon the education system prematurely. The activity of the organisation is defined by the rule of perceiving the varieties and of the individualisation of the educational purposes. The coaches and the teachers that work in the organisation adjust the programmes and the methods to the individual qualities, abilities and talents of the students. The organisation has a rich experience in using non-formal methods of education, including learning through play and experience, using experimental methods, as well as engaging young people in international educational initiatives. More - web.auladecroly.com

Within the scope of strategical partnership, a new, innovative approach concerning the work with youth at risk of social exclusion will be elaborated, in particular the tools, by means of which the representatives of the public institutions (whose task is to help and support the families that live in material and cultural poverty etc.) will be able to create individual space of building the relationship of support with client will be developed. The innovativeness of the project consists above all in “contemplative learning from practice, through practice and for practice”. The project assumptions are to enable the workers of the welfare institutions to open themselves for the innovations and changes, and for the knowledge and “the reflection in acting and reflection on acting”, the project is an answer to the search for new ideas and solutions while committing to social activities.

The present research report entitled “Conditions of the efficient support for youth at risk of social exclusion” is a first step to the realisation of the activities leading to the increase of the level of social integration among young people at risk of social exclusion by promulgating the using of the methods of non-formal education in public institutions

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research report entitled “Conditions of the efficient support for youth at risk of social exclusion” contains the analysis of the needs of the target group (representatives of the social professions), as well as the expectations of the addressees of the support system (young people) in the context of using non-formal methods of education for the purpose of preventing the social exclusion of young people.

The research was conducted on two levels:

1. Cognitive – through:

- a) recognising the resources and the ways of acting of the workers of social services (including knowledge about the functioning of young people at risk of social exclusion, resources, needs and expectations, evaluation of the chances and dangers, forms of help considered as useful for the youth);
- b) recognising the functioning of the youth at risk of social exclusion (their knowledge, preferences of social activity, continuation of the education, as well as the conditions of increasing their activity).

2. Pragmatic – through:

- a) developing the methods and the tools addressed to the workers of social services that constitute their work environment while working with the youth at risk of social exclusion.

The final report contains, next to the analysis, the recommendations and the guidelines for preparation of the next result of the intellectual work – the e-book: “Integration through Inspirations. Non - formal education as a tool of the equalization of opportunities of youth at risk of social exclusion”.

Goals and research problems

The main objective of the present research was to recognise and define the needs of the representatives of social institutions who work and who are preparing themselves for work with the youth at risk of social exclusion (social workers, family assistants, probation officers, pedagogues and educators who work in educational care centres, teachers, coaches, specialists etc.), as well as the addressees of their services (youth at risk of social exclusion, including: people from neglected family environments or educational care centres, but also these with educational or social problems etc.)

As a result of consultations of the experts, in every partner country the research areas concerning each of the groups submitted for the research have been determined.

Concerning the representatives of the social integrations institutions, the following research areas have been determined:

- The conditions of the work environment and social space in the context of implementing non-formal methods of education in work practice
- Young people in the eyes of the representatives of social professions (including knowledge of the group, their problems, interests and needs)
- Foregoing practice of the work with the youth at risk of social exclusion
- Non-formal methods of education as a tool of work with the youth at risk of social exclusion in work practice

Concerning the youth, the following research areas have been determined:

- The social situation of the youth at risk of social exclusion
- The educational and social activity of young people
- The aspirations and life priorities of the youth
- The problems of young people and the expectations towards the help of the professionals

Research methods

The research has been conducted using the methodology of qualitative research by applying the *FGI (Focus Group Interview)* technique. The qualitative research is aimed at examining “the external world” [...] and describing, interpreting, and sometimes explaining the social phenomenon from the “internal” perspective in many different ways:

- By analysing the experience of the entities and groups
- By analysing the interaction and the acts of communication while they are being performed
- By analysing the documents (texts, pictures, films or music) or other similar traces of people’s experience and interaction.¹

The focus group interview (FGI) consists in conducting a group interview that involves a joint discussion of the groups of respondents on a predetermined topic. The interview is conducted by a moderator and is based on a scenario that determines the questions and topics which have to be discussed during the meeting. The moderator’s task is to lead the discussion in such a way that it makes a free expression possible and, at the same time, to get the answer to the asked questions. An experienced moderator, who is able to lead the discussion in a manner that does not disturb the natural way of a conversation, guarantees achieving the objectives of the research.

The most important advantage of this technique is the apparition of the group processes, when the answers of the respondents stimulate themselves mutually to the discussion, which has its effects in the quality of the research material.

The group interviews have been conducted using a scenario of the interview. Regarding the differentiation of the two research groups – the workers of the social integration institution and the youth – two scenarios of the interviews, which take into consideration the questions regarding the purposes of the project and the character of the problems of the examined groups, have been elaborated.

¹ R. Barbour, *Badania fokusowe*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2011, s. 11

Organisation and the course of the research

The present report shows the outcomes of the research conducted in all partner countries of the project: Poland, Spain and Germany. In each country the research has been organised by the following plan:

1. Recruiting the participants of the 3 focus groups containing the representatives of the social integration institutions
2. Recruiting the 3 focus groups containing the youth at risk of social exclusion
3. Conducting 6 group interviews
4. Making the interviews' transcription
5. Elaborating the report of the national research
6. Preparing the final report which summarises the national research

As a result of such a plan, 18 deliberately chosen focus groups containing 10 to 12 participants each have been created. The research were registered using a voice recorder. The research have been realised from February to May 2016.

The participants of the research conducted in Poland were:

- Social workers, family assistants, social probation officers, psychologists, pedagogues and educators - the representatives of the public help and support institutions, educational care centres, district courts. Due to organisational and logistic reasons, the major part of the research participants came from Lower Silesia, both from big and small urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, the research group contained as well specialists from Warsaw (2 people) and from ŁódźVoivodeship (1 person)
- The youth at risk of social exclusion – people from neglected family environments, with social and educational problems, as well as people placed in educational care centres. Among the participants there were only the inhabitants of Wrocław.

The participants of the research conducted in Spain were:

- Social workers, pedagogues, special needs education teachers, psychologists and specialists in the field of mediation and conflict resolution – the representatives of the non-governmental organisations that perform public tasks for the benefit of children and youth at risk of social exclusion: educational care centres, social day care centres, public vocational training schools. The participants of the research originated from Cantabria community and from the city of Santander.
- The youth at risk of social exclusion – people finishing the education prematurely, having experience with drugs, violence and crimes, originating from neglected family environments from Cantabria community, living and learning in Decrolyschool. Among the participants of the research there were also young people from immigrant families – Latinos and Africans.

The participants of the research conducted in Germany were:

- Social workers, special pedagogues, teachers, coaches, psychologists – the representatives of the 3 educational institutions specialising in working with the youth from the NEET group and having their headquarters in Schwerin. Nevertheless, they offer their activities to the inhabitants of whole Region.
- The youth at risk of social exclusion – people finishing the education prematurely, unemployed, including children of the immigrants. The respondents who took part in the research were the participants of the socio-professional activation projects realised by these institutions. The research has been conducted in Schwerin

PART TWO

PERCEPTION BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIAL PROFESSIONS OF THE CONDITIONS OF CONDUCTING SOCIAL WORK WITH YOUTH AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION USING NON-FORMAL METHODS OF EDUCATION

In this part, the results of the qualitative research conducted with the representatives of widely understood socio-professional integration institutions have been described. The interviewees have been asked various questions concerning the specifics of their profession, workplace and organisation of work considering the possibilities of being able to realise the non-formal methods of education in work with the youth at risk of social exclusion. The important element of this part of the report is answering the question – how the representatives of social professions perceive young people and their problems and needs. From the point of view of the research assumptions, it is essential to get to know to which extent they know the subject of influence, that is to say the youth at risk of social exclusion. In the opinion of the executors of the project, knowing the subject of influence constitutes a basis and a first step to the efficient support from the specialists of various institutions for the youth.

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SOCIETY AS A PLACE OF WORK AND SOCIAL SPACE

In every partner country of this project the participants of the focus group research were the representatives of the professions and specialisations who in principle work with the youth at social risk: social workers, teachers, probation officers, psychologists and pedagogues. But, due to the conditioning of the national social policies concerning help and support for the youth, the workplaces of these specialists are not the same

Table no. 1: Participants of the research

Poland	Spain	Germany
<p>The representatives of public institutions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social workers working in local environment • social workers working in educational care centres • family assistants • social probation officers • psychologists, pedagogues and educators who work in educational care centres 	<p>The representatives of the non-governmental organisations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social workers • pedagogues • special needs education teachers • psychologists • specialists in the field of mediation and conflict resolution 	<p>The representatives of the educational institutions, training centers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social workers • special pedagogues • special needs education teachers • psychologists • profession's teachers

The workplace of the Polish respondents were exclusively public institutions. Each of the institutions implements their own statutory objectives, which include the tasks connected to solving the problems of children, young people and their family of origin.

Social Care Centre (urban, municipal). Social Care Centre is an organisational unit that performs the tasks concerning social assistance in a municipality. Social assistance makes the overcoming of difficult life situations possible to the people that are not able to do so by themselves by using its own powers, resources and possibilities. Social assistance support them in the efforts leading to satisfying their essential needs and enables them to live in conditions corresponding to human dignity. The task of social assistance is also to prevent difficult life situations by taking the measures leading to the independence of people and families, as well as their integration with the society. The main purposes of social assistance in Poland are:

- ✓ Supporting people and families in overcoming difficult life situation, making it possible for them to – as far as possible – become independent and enabling them to live in conditions corresponding to human dignity
- ✓ Providing the income at the level of social intervention – for the people who do not have the income, or whose income is low, who are past the working age and for disabled people
- ✓ Providing the income up to the level of social intervention for the people and families with low income that need temporary support
- ✓ Providing professional help to the families affected by social pathologies, including domestic violence
- ✓ Integration with the environment of socially excluded people
- ✓ Creating social services networks that will be adequate to this kind of needs².

Educational care centres. They are the element of institutional temporary aid, addressed to children and youth deprived from the parental care. Young people may be sent to the educational care centres, when the possibilities of providing help to the family are exhausted. The sojourn of a child in this institution should be temporary, up to the return to the family, the adoption or the placement in a foster family. The main tasks of the educational care centres in Poland are:

- ✓ Providing round-the-clock care and upbringing for the child and satisfying his essential needs, in particular the emotional, developmental, health, living, social and religious ones

² www.mpips.org.pl

- ✓ Realisation of the child's support plan prepared in cooperation with the family assistant
- ✓ Enabling the child to have contact with family and other close people, unless the court decides otherwise
- ✓ Taking the measures that will enable the child to return to the family
- ✓ Providing access to the education adequate to the child's age and developmental abilities
- ✓ Providing any necessary therapeutic aid.

An educational care centre takes care of children at different ages, including those who grow up and become independent. Within the scope of helping the people in their care to quit the crisis situation, the employees of the institutions collaborate with the court, with the district family support centre, with the family assistant and with other institutions and people that undertake the support for educational actions of the educational care centres³.

The service teams of judicial probation officers of the district family courts. The probation officers, as the public officers, fulfil their tasks connected with education, resocialisation, diagnostics and prevention, which are connected with implementing the court rulings. They fulfil their duties both in the environment, that is to say the place of residence of the people in their care, and in the institution where they sojourn, e.g. educational care centres. The main tasks of the probation officers are:

- ✓ Planning the prevention, resocialisation, as well as the welfare and educational activities for the people in their care
- ✓ Cooperating with the family of the young person in care while planning the activities
- ✓ Helping the young person in care with organising his education, work and free time, and with solving any life difficulties
- ✓ Controlling the young person's behaviour in his place of residence, sojourn, education and in his workplace
- ✓ Cooperating with the organisations, institutions, associations and other subjects whose goal is to provide help to the people in care⁴.

The workplaces of the research respondents in Spain were various private and public organisations which perform public activities for the sake of chil-

³www.wcpr.pl

⁴ The regulation of the Minister for Justice from 12 June 2003 concerning the special way of exercising the probation officers' powers and duties (Dz.U. 2014, poz. 989)

dren and young people at risk of social exclusion. Each of these organisation take care of the prevention and resocialisation for the benefit of the youth with the most difficult problems: addictions, conflicts with law, immigrants etc.

- S.O.A.M (Servicio de orientacion y Ayuda al Menor) – a private institution that supplies the support and advisory services for minors. As a part of its activity it runs three youth centres in Torrelavega – a preventive and advisory institution, a round-the-clock educational care centre and a social day care centre for minor boys. Within the scope of its activity, it provides services regarding the minors for the whole population (the so-called universal prevention), for the youth at risk of social exclusion (the so-called specific prevention), as well as the legal prevention services
- Cantabria ACOGE – a non-governmental organisation devoted to social integration of the immigrants
- The Ministry of Health and Social Services under the “Youth and Drugs” Programme. Within the scope of the programme, specialised advice services are provided for the young people and/or the families with difficulties resulting from taking and/or abusing addictive substances (cigarettes, alcohol, drugs)
- Diagrama Foundation – a non-profit organisation, whose main goals are the promotion of the development of programmes and research aimed at the prevention, treatment and integration of all social groups that are in difficult situation or that are at risk of social exclusion, especially children, young people, families, women and addicted people
- CUIN – a non-profit organisation that takes care of and provides support for children and youth in Cantabria. The main goals are to guarantee a better quality of life and educational care for the minors and the advocacy of their interests. CUIN cooperates with the government of Cantabria. They develop and control both the housing stock and the assistance in various areas. The preventive and safety measures are undertaken by a team of thirty specialists (psychologists, social workers, social pedagogues, social integrators and teachers). They work on an informal educational model on the basis of a cognitive behavioural approach and individualism.
- UTS (Unidad De Trabajo) – a public institution providing social services. It is the only one institution that is very close to the citizens. It responds to the social needs under the programmes or actions such as: social support and counselling for the whole population, promotion of autonomy and care, as well as children and family care. With-

in the scope of its activity it works directly and indirectly with all the organisations from Cantabria.

- Decroly SL – a private education and vocational training organisation that has as its objective the professional integration of the people that abandon the education system prematurely. The activity of the organisation is defined by the rule of perceiving the varieties and of the individualisation of the educational purposes. The coaches and the teachers that work in the organisation adjust the programmes and the methods to the individual qualities, abilities and talents of the students. The organisation has a rich experience in using non-formal methods of education, including learning through play and experience, using experimental methods, as well as engaging young people in international educational initiatives.

The workplace of the respondents in Germany were three organisations specialising in professional activation of the youth in the worst situation on the labour market: people with low or with lack of professional qualifications, addictions, immigrants, etc.

- Regiovision GmbH – an organisation that specialises in services connected with widely understood activation and professional reintegration, mainly concerning young people and immigrants. Regiovision has experience in realisation of numerous national and international projects, which aim to equalise the chances of socially excluded people. The organisation has conducted as well the educational workshops for the staff working with the youth preparing the participants for adapting the methods: theatrical, experimental and the authorial method StoryTelling (focused on so called narrative techniques).
- BilSE-Institut - Institut für Bildung und Forschung GmbH – an institute of the education and research. BilSE, as an educational institution, promotes the education based on an innovative educational model. The students and the teachers are natural partners in education, they can expect mutual tolerance, respect, honesty and appreciation. The role of the teacher is seen as a role of a consultant and guide in education. The processes of education are inspired by learning on your own, by the teachers and by the environment of the education. As a result, all of the parties are mutually responsible for the educational results. In the process of learning the most important things are independence and the greatest possible acceptance of the obligations by the students. They have rich experience in working with young people aged 16 to 26, especially when it comes to developing the social skills and to socio-professional integration of young people.

- IMBSE – Institut für Modelleberuflicher und sozialer Entwicklung GmbH (the Institute of professional models and social development). It specialises basically in vocational counselling aimed at personal professional development, especially concerning young people

Organisation of the work

Introducing the non-formal educational methods of the young people's education into everyday professional practice depends from various factors: the organisational possibilities in the workplace, including worktime, own competencies and the approval of the management staff for implementing modern and innovative activities adjusted to present social conditions. As a part of the research, we asked the respondents about these specific conditions.

The organisational structure of the time of professional work enables the major part of the participants of the research to implement new methods of working with people in their care. All of the interviewees declared that the direct work with a client is a dominant part of the structure of the workday. The organisation of the workday depends from the kind of the strategies implemented for the benefit of young people. These are both before noon and afternoon activities, and this time depends mostly on the age of the young people in their care and from their duties, e.g. school education. The only group taking part in the research that has a fixed work time (7:30-15:30) consists of the social workers of the social care centres in Poland. But even in this professional group, with the slightest modification of the organisation of the work, there is a possibility of performing the tasks in the afternoon, by adjusting to the youth in compulsory education. The workday of social workers is divided into desk work (mainly between 7:30 and 10:00 or 11:00) and work with the clients.

This is not a rule in my case, I determine my work time by myself, while my colleagues have to go out in the field at 10 am, and I do it independently. Sometimes I come later, I plan the afternoon, sometimes I work on Saturday, and sometimes I leave with the young people in my care during weekends. It is not standardised in my

case, sometimes I work in the afternoons, because my work requires it.

The Spanish research underline the voluntary work of the specialists during the afternoons and during weekend, but even in this case the modification of the organisation of the work is required, so that more specialists have the opportunity to be available for the youth during their free time

All the participants of the research are extremely autonomous in their work. They choose the methods and forms of working with clients on their own. They are not limited by the managers/directors in implementing innovative solutions in work, the ones that are constructive while solving the problems of the young people in their care. In many cases, the direct superiors even expect their workers to implement these strategies

Yes, our director even expects the educators to suggest some activities to the children, so that they won't spend the entire weekend in front of TV watching films. The educators have to show the initiative and find something nice for the children.

We have a lot of liberty in our work with those papers. To a large extent it depends on us how we work. No one prohibits us to choose our way of work.

Table no. 2: Organisation of the work

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the time is devoted to the work with the client • There is the possibility of working before noon and in the afternoon • The approval of the management staff regarding the implementation of innovative solutions in order to work efficiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of the day depends on the forms of the help that is provided to the youth • School and extracurricular activities • The approval of the management staff regarding the implementation of innovative solutions in order to work efficiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of the work consists mainly in working with client • The approval of the management and substantive staff regarding the implementation of innovative solutions in order to work efficiently

Project activities – their type and effectiveness

One of the questions of the realised focus group interview was to get to know, using the project method, what kind of work experience the respondents had. Realisation of the activities under various projects gives the opportunity of professional development, of implementing new methods and tools in professional work. The advantages of using the project method are: the ability to work in small, homogenous groups, the possibility of introducing diverse innovative actions and the possibility of conducting permanent and deep evaluation of undertaken actions. Another important aspect of the realisation of the actions within the scope of various projects is the possibility of being able to apply modifications and changes to them when needed.

The analysis of the respondents' answers has shown some differences in the experience in working with the project method. The respondents from Spain and from Germany perform their tasks mostly under the projects that were previously developed and accepted by public institutions responsible for it. The specialists from non-governmental private organisations and institutions who perform public tasks have the experience in realising the projects for the benefit of the youth at risk of social exclusion. The situation in Poland is entirely different. In general, the majority of the representatives of public social care centers who took part in this research had little experience in working with the project method. The experience that they have they gained between 2007 and 2013 while taking part in system projects realised under the European Social Fund's Operational Programme Human Capital.

We take part in projects constantly. Above all, there is one big project that have been realised for years [...] It has such a broad scoop, because the beneficiaries are the people that are in danger of social exclusion, that's to say disabled and unemployed people, as well as those having trouble with raising their kids. Within the scope of the project we arrange various activities: courses where the beneficiaries may obtain new qualifications, consultations with psychologists, pedagogues, career advisors, lawyers, family consultants, family assistants financed also from the project's funds, courses improving the pedagogical competences, self-help groups, voluntary groups, in-

tegrating trips, but also therapeutic ones. Thus, this is a very rich project. It has been very successful. It has positive results and there are many people who succeeded in finding jobs afterwards [...]

From the information collected throughout the research it results that there were mostly projects aimed at adults concerning their professional activation. The activities conducted for the benefit of young people were organised “as a addition” to the ones destined for adult, unemployed clients of social services.

Yes, but it was rather for the parents than for the children. If the family enters a project, the kids are provided with some kind of support, but we do not have any special activities prepared for them. Rafał has invented some activities, but they are for the youth. They can be a part of a self-help group there. There is circus pedagogy there, cooking classes, they run a voluntary group. There is also a theatrical group there. They take part in any activity that may help them to overcome the difficult situations

The commitment to the project activities of the professionals taking part in the research was different. Spanish and German specialists who took part in the research mostly take part in developing the projects for the benefit of troubled young people. They diagnose the problems, try to find the most adequate solutions to these problems and realise the activities on every step of the project. On the other hand, the participation of the Polish professionals concentrated mostly on recruiting the participants to the project, on maintaining the motivation for continuation and on the control.

Everyone had to recruit the young people in their care, keep an eye on them and coordinate so that they take part in the project, because their work consisted in arranging the meetings, making sure that the young people take part, that they finish the courses. We may say that it consisted in guiding them through the course, accounting for it every month, meeting these people, [...]

Only some of the participants of the research were involved into direct work with the participants of the project activities realised under their institutions. In most cases their involvement consisted in creating self-help groups for the unemployed clients of social services

The method of project activities has come to life in Poland in 2007. Nevertheless, we may list some examples of introducing the activities verified during the realisation of the projects into everyday practice. The activities that

were the most successful, in the opinion of the respondents, despite the completion of the projects (and their financing from the funds of the European Social Fund) are still being conducted.

In our case, this self-help group for the young people, but also for the adults, had such great effects, that it was a pity to close it when the project has finished. All of the participants were willing to attend further meetings, but there was the problem with financing them. And now I know, that this group meets once a week and the man that takes care of this group and is the animator there is paid from our SCC funds, not from the project. His payment is lower, and it means that he can provide less activities than before.

[...] On the basis of this [project activities] there has been founded a self-help group that I run [...] outside my work time and it is not connected to the activities that we perform in our daily work[...]. We meet in the afternoons, there are various kinds of activities, workshops, visits in the educational or cultural institutions, and so on.

The important element of the discussion on working by using the project method was defining the barriers and chances connected to working with the youth at risk of social exclusion

In the opinion of the specialists that took part in the research and who have experience in working with the youth, no matter from which country they come and in which country they work, the youth does not show any kind of activity. They are not interested in taking part in any projects, their interests concentrate only around their own pleasure. And, how the partners from Spain and Germany underline, it involves mainly meetings with friends, video games, drinking and smoking. The Polish respondents underlined the difficulties in organising the activities that could be interesting enough to keep the young people in the project for some time longer. From the Polish experience it results that young people declare themselves for the projects willingly enough, but they get bored too early and give up the activity. The next barriers mentioned by the respondents concern the problems with communication between young people, their parents and experts. The Spanish respondents underline that the lack of support from the parents very often has a really bad influence on the whole agreement concluded between the experts and the young people in their care. Some of the parents do not want to accept the fact that the family has a problem at all, the others do not see the problem, and another group of them does not know how to deal with the problem and how to resolve it. The lack of the cooperation from the part of the family constitutes a significant barrier in the effectiveness of the actions

undertaken by the experts. Respondents from Germany underlined the communication barriers in the contacts with young people. According to them, the youth lacks in basic competence concerning expressing their own emotions, plans and passions, and it has its effects in the process of integration.

Interestingly, the respondents' answers in all countries concentrated in the vast majority on the barriers that are present among the youth. The Polish and the Spanish group, even though ambiguously, named their own expert barriers. The answer *"it is hard to interest young people enough to keep them in the project for longer"* or *"it is hard to find new, innovative methods"* may signify two situations. Firstly, we cannot or we do not have the idea how to organise the activities that would be interesting for the youth, or secondly – we are not familiar with the needs or the interests of young people. The reflection of the respondents on this subject came to their minds during the discussion concerning the chances of succeeding with the integrative actions.

For the Polish participants of the focus group research, the effectiveness of the activities offered to young people depends mostly on the quality and the attractiveness of the offered activities that should constitute an answer to the interests and the needs of young people. The effectiveness depends also on the fact that the participation in the courses should be voluntary. It is impossible to help the youth when they are being forced to undertake various activities (by the social workers, probation officers, teachers, parents).

It is hard to enlist young people, because it has to be attractive to them, right, so it would be nice to organise some activities during a trip [...] It is possible of course to sit down and have a talk, but the youth will come to one meeting, to the second one, and then they will get discouraged. It has to be in an attractive form in order to interest them.

The indicator of the effectiveness of the actions that was strongly underlined is the cooperation with the parents or the guardians of young people. Supporting the youth in their activities by the parents and the specialists will at the same time will translate significantly into their participation and involvement in the realised projects. The participants of the research conducted in Spain and Germany underlined the importance of short-term actions, divided into various stages adapted respectively to the addressees and to their specific problems. The important factor that has an influence on the effectiveness of the work with young people, underlined in the group of Polish respondents, is the meaning of the leader – the animator of the activi-

ties. The leader who has something “to offer” can attract the whole group. Thus, he is able to organise such actions and animate them in such a way that the young people can get interested in them. But, what was also underlined in the group of Polish respondents, even the best leader will not be able to do anything alone, if the youth (and indirectly their parents/guardians) will not get involved in the actions.

It surely depends on the leader, but also on the group. It is mutual, because the leader certainly gives some good energy and attracts the group, but also the personal traits of the group that will find the time and will come to this kind of meeting are important.

Table no. 3 – Project activity – possibilities and barriers

Poland	Spain	Germany
BARRIERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The youth is not interested in taking part in the projects It is hard to interest young people enough to keep them in the project for longer POSSIBILITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of the offered actions Attractiveness of the activities that will constitute an answer to the interests of the young people Cooperation with parents or guardians Voluntary participation in the activities Leader-animators well-prepared to the work with young people 	BARRIERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The youth is not interested in any kind of activity. They want just go out with friends, smoke, drink and play video games ... It is hard to find new, innovative ideas Lack of the communication between the youth, experts and family Lack of the support from the part of the family POSSIBILITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for a right free time management The actions suited to the specifics of the group Short-term actions, divided into separate stages 	BARRIERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people are not motivated to exercise any kind of activity. They are interested only in their own pleasure, in meeting with friends, smoking, drinking, playing video games Lack of understanding and problems with communication It is hard to find any level of cooperation, integration of young people POSSIBILITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term actions, divided into separate stages

YOUTH IN THE EYES OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIAL PROFESSIONS

From the point of view of the assumptions of the research realised in the project, the important factor that has an influence on the effectiveness of the work with the youth at risk of social exclusion is the knowledge of the group, its needs, chances and limitations. However, while talking about young people, it is important in every situation to determine the age range that remains within our interest. In general, the youth is defined as the people aged 15 to 29 years. It is a very wide age range, what raises great difficulties with the socio-demographic characteristics of this group. The development process of a young person aged 16 and e.g. 28 is entirely different. These are two different persons with different problems, needs and situation, e.g. the family one. The period between 15 and 18 years is, according to the developmental psychology, the age of the early adolescence, which characterises in very rapid developmental, biological and social changes. It is the time that the young person in general still passes with his relatives. „It is the age of the problems, the age of worries, the age of the mood changes, defiance, rejection of the authority figures, but also the age of creating your own identity, independence, autonomy, passing from the childish form of behaviour to the ones that characterise the adults. It is also the period of moving towards greater stability of the attitudes and behaviour, of making choices connected with your own life, but also the period of dreams, activity, of getting involved in various actions, experimenting with the roles.” The development psychology defines a few of the characteristics of young people in various areas of their functioning. The emotional functioning is characterised by the emotional lability, mood changes, sense of loneliness and lack of understanding, excessive and strong emotional reactions caused often by the restrictions of freedom, by the differences between the ideals and the reality or by not being able to deal with the tensions and burdens. The social functioning is characterised by the rebellions, negation and resistance, by experimenting and violating the barriers, by intransigence and black-white thinking. In their relations with parents, young people adopt the attitude of the severe judge towards the adults, but when it comes to their peer environment, they

have a need of being a part of the group and they have a conformist attitude towards their peers. In this period young people expect understanding, warmth, acceptance, kindness, respect and love, but at the same time setting limits, making requirements, being consequent - predictability. And, what is important, if the previous relations with the adults were positive - despite the tensions and internal distance - the internal emotional attachment remains strong .

That is why, on the basis of the above, two groups of young people were characterised in the assumptions of the research - young people aged 15 to 18 years, as well as young „adults” aged 18 to 24 years. This differentiation is particularly important, especially when it comes to building relationships with young people. The teenagers in the early stage of adolescence, while discovering their own identity and building their independence, are particularly „sensitive” to any symptoms of questioning their privileges and freedom, but the young people at further stages of adolescence are already more emotionally stable.

YOUTH AGED 15 TO 18 YEARS

Many respondents indicated that the period of adolescence and the process of the emotional changes connected to it determines the young people's behaviour and choices.

I will characterise this group as a very lost one, not knowing which path to follow [...] it is a rough time. I think that the adolescence is connected with some kind of searching. I think that at the age of 18, deep inside, they are looking for some good, because all these tendencies to follow the wrong path appear at the age of 15-16, while at the age of 18 they are starting to look seriously at everything and start to do some good. As it results from my experience, the adults have a greater influence on them at that time.

The respondents of the international research underlined that even though every situation is different and special, the experience indicates some general traits that may characterise the whole group of the people aged 15 to 18 years. The detailed analysis of the description of the young people by the representatives of social services focuses on three levels:

1. Problems
2. World of values
3. Interests

Problems

The problems of young people at risk of social exclusion result from their experience in functioning in family, school and peer environment. There are also other causes that are a part of social environment, as well as individual traits of character of young people. The problems that the participants of the

research recognise are related to using psychoactive substances (alcohol, tobacco, drugs, substitutes e.g. designer drugs), presence of domestic violence directed at young people, aggression and peer violence, unequal access to health care, developmental deficits, environmental negligences, adaptive difficulties that derive from cultural differences, educational differences and early abandon of school education. The new problem that is underlined above all by German respondents is a problem of the addiction to the video games and hazard.

So I say troubled families, troubled children with big problem, also with big resources, but with big problems. E.g. I have a 14-year-old girl who I think is already addicted to sex. I have a boy who has been selling drugs, who was also addicted to drugs.

Maybe I will tell now something about my city, about my clients, I mean my clients' children, because we are talking about children aged 15 to 18 years. I've noticed that one of the major problems within these families is the children's health situation. I'm talking mainly about somatological treatment, and in my opinion the problem is caused by the families' poverty, but also by some kind of the parents' carelessness. The parents don't see the need for treating the teeth of their children, not to mention other health problems.

According to the respondents of the international research, the difficult situation of the youth at risk of social exclusion is caused by the reasons deriving from family, school and peer environment, from the society and system of support, as well as from the area of personal functioning.

Family environment

While describing young people and their problems, the respondents from every country taking part in the research indicated the limitations resulting from growing up in the families with multiple problems - poverty, unemployment, parents' addictions and their helplessness in the field of taking care of and raising their children, as well as growing up with only one parent (mostly with mother). Growing up in a dysfunctional family is pointed out as a basic problem of young people being in the field of interest and support of

the specialists who took part in the research. It is the closest family and its attitude towards the young person that determines his development and chances. The family constitutes a basic educational environment, where the basic needs of children and young people are satisfied: the need for security and belongingness, the emotional needs. The family constitutes a source of shaping the attitudes and values, it teaches the ways of fulfilling the social roles, the moral principles and the social coexistence. Every family influences the adolescents differently.

The dysfunctionality of the family's educational role was the one that was underlined the most often by the respondents in all countries. The lack of interest from the part of the parents/guardians is a factor that influences the functioning of young people the most.

I see as well the parents' lack of interest in their own children, because it is comfortable, when they go out and there aren't any problems with them, yes? And I am left alone.

Some of the respondents indicated, that the families of origin of young people did not provide them with the appropriate conditions for their psychophysical development.

From my experience I see that, generally, while I have been working with these families, the ones that had crossed my path, I had the opportunity to get to know these young people at the age that interests us. They are very often emotionally charged, they are sort of gasping for love. And this is caused by two reasons. The first reason is often the parents' lack of time, and even if these parents are there and function somehow, they don't have any arguments today, because, as we know very well, the parents and the teachers are an authority, but they stop playing that role at a certain point of the child's life. There are no people that could be role models for them and spend time with them, who would do something for them. And it results in searching these authorities and, above all, searching love. The family may not satisfy the emotional needs of these kids, but they still have them. They don't disappear. The kids look for them in some different places and we know how it often ends. It may results in establishing sexual contacts with... you know, it depends from their sex. From my experience I know that if the emotional needs are not satisfied at some point, it may end in malfunctioning of the young people and the kids, and that situation can last to the adult age

Growing up in a dysfunctional family may result in copying the culture of poverty and learned helplessness of their parents. The lack of interest from the part of the parents/guardians leads to a low self-esteem, lack of interests and lack of life goals within the youth

It seems to us that the children quit their family environment, that they have this learned helplessness which, to a large extent, is passed on to them by their parents, and thus they are not able to function on their own.

According to me, the main problem is a low self-esteem, which has many disadvantages and side effects.

According to the respondents from all countries, the family and its negligences concerning the realisation of family functions constitutes a barrier in the young people's development, even though they have their own ambitions.

[...] the purpose was not to go to a vocational school or to a scout troop, as his peers did. He was a good student, so he went to a general secondary school, but he still remains in his family home. He had every opportunity to go to a boarding school, but he didn't want to, even though we tried to convince him. He is now in the same room with his pathological parents [...]. We don't know what will happen to him next, but I don't think that he will go to a university, to think of attending a profiled school. He will come back home, I don't think that he will start a job, and the situation will remain the

School environment

The family environment with its defects very often results in school problems of young people. The aversion to the education, the educational problems (frequently caused by the lack of appropriate conditions – lack of place to study, of a peaceful atmosphere and of acceptance), as well as lack of interest from the part of the teachers (especially underlined by the Polish and Spanish participant of the research) results in the apparition of new problems connected to the early abandon of the school education. The early

abandon of the school education as a problem of young people was particularly underlined in German and Spanish research. As a cause of this situation, the experts from Germany underlined the young people's dissatisfaction with the atmosphere, with the teachers or with the peers, as well as the problem with attending the school on a compulsory basis. Next to the young people's involvement, the German experts pointed as well to the teachers' roles. The teachers are not able to make their classes interesting for all students, they are not familiar with the methods of work adequate to the civilisational development. They do not change their techniques of work, their way of teaching (it concerns mainly elderly teachers who await the retirement). The participants of the German research underlined that the youth who does not finish the school does not have any certificates, and therefore the future problems on the labour market arise for them. According to the respondents of the research conducted in Germany, the formal education constitutes a very important factor of preventing the social exclusion of young people.

Peer environment

During the rough time of adolescence, a young person expects to be understood, accepted and treated with respect. The sense of security and the correct relations with the adults constitute the factor that protects them decisively from emotional problems and wrong choices. If a person does not get it at home, he searches the acceptance within his peer group, and this group, in a major part, expects conformism. The peer group and its values become a reference for a young person who starts to behave accordingly to the majority. The children who grew up in a dysfunctional family with multiple problems and a disrupted value system are especially prone to making wrong life choices. The lack of parental control may as well result in adopting risky behaviour.

[...] my experience as well shows this kind of relationship within families, where everyone lives in his own world, even though they live in the same apartment, which is often very cramped and thus they bother each other. They aren't at all together, because parents think only about their own problems, the kids are left on their own.

We know that every young person searches his own solutions, and then they find friends at school or outside of it, but they are not always the best role models.

O1 – we may add as well the fact of being influenced by the others. For example, there was a boy, who was a role model and who was ambitious until the end of the junior secondary school, but now he went to a professional technical school. It is a very positive fact, but it suddenly turned out that he missed almost every practice, he is lying to his grandmother. He was influenced by his colleagues, so the age between 15 and 18 is crucial for undertaking these actions.

O2 – the peer environment which becomes more important than grandmother, mother, grandfather

O3 – the family values lose all their importance

The participants of the German and Spanish research indicated one more factor concerning peer environment that they believed important. It is, according to them, the fact of being surrounded only by the people who have the same status. Having friends with similar problems limits the young people's developmental possibilities, their chances of getting to know other values, and thus the chances on ameliorating the quality of their lives, so that it can be different from the one of their families or their childhood friends.

The young people have a very small group of friends within the environment that they live in. These are mostly friendships from previous school years, with similar or bigger problems

The young people have a need of being a part of a group, they want to be accepted, but they want to be among the people with the same or similar problems.

Society and support system

In the eyes of the participants of the research from all countries, the system of supporting young people is highly limited. The lack of the sufficient number of places where young people could spend their free time (organised and

controlled) is the most often underlined factor. There are various kinds of institutions (culture centres, sports clubs, interest groups), but the access to the activities they offer is limited for the youth at risk of social exclusion. The participants of the research from the social care centers from bigger cities pointed out, that the problem with the participation is caused by the financial issues, while those from the municipal social care centers mentioned the limited possibility of accessing such places.

Truthfully, in my opinion, in my city there are no places where the people at this age could meet. There are the therapeutic day care centres, but they are destined for younger children. People at this age, as I observed in my area of work, spend their free time somewhere outside, in the stairwells, sometimes even at home, but without any supervision, without really knowing what to do with their free time, how to organise it, how to use it well. They often meet and play computer games, or try, I don't know, drugs, alcohol, I sometimes see that they smoke cigarettes or other things.

[...] In our town there is this culture centre that works very efficiently. There are lots of activities organised there, but there is the problem with transport. There are the villages 10 km away. There is the school bus that drives there in the morning and the kids or the adults have the opportunity to go to this municipality and take care of their affairs, but there is nothing in the afternoon. Nothing at all. And they don't have cars, because they can't afford them.

[...] even though they have [the interests], they don't have any place to exercise them, in my opinion, because the social day care centres are not for them, right? The family doesn't have any money and doesn't have the time [...] There is the St. Michael's church in the city centre. It cumulates this youth and runs some classes for them. Someone who is close to church may participate, but the others...

Table no. 4 – Young people aged 15 to 18 years – problems

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact of originating from dysfunctional families (unemployment and parents' addictions) • Lack of right role models • Low self-esteem • Lack of interest from the part of parents, school • Lack of interests and life goals • Copying the culture of poverty and learned helplessness of their parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact of originating from problematic families - divorces, lack of money, addictions... • Lack of interest from the part of parents/guardians • Educational problems caused by lack of interest from the part of school • Lack of supervision during their free time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact of originating from problematic families - religious problems, divorces, lack of money, addictions • Lack of right family models • Educational problems resulting from lack of interest from the part of school • Lack of understanding and of appropriate communication • Lack of supervision during their free time • Experience with drugs, alcohol

World of values

Within the scope of the international comparative research, we asked the respondents about the values of the young people that they encounter during their work. There is a crucial question – in the context of the project assumptions – how to support young people in their quest for their own way of life. This question is important, because it is the system of values that constitutes the basis for the choice of the way of life and life goals of young people. Their values constitute a factor that shapes their behaviour.

The analysis of the research material showed that the world of the young people's values, in the opinion of the specialists of social professions, is only a world of material values. Money, material goods (computers, mobile phones, designer clothes) constitute a determinant of their functioning, es-

pecially in their peer environment. This was the opinion expressed by the specialists from all three countries that took part in the research.

Relating to your words, I see that for these children aged 15 to 18 years this hedonistic values are very important during this period of their development. The will to impress the others or to fit in and to cooperate with the peer group where they spend their free time or from which they come is really important to them, right? Not to stand out – does he have this phone? I don't have that phone [...]

And these children are at a very difficult age, so we have to take this into consideration and take their age and the lack of role models into consideration. What are the values for them? Money. Nothing else.

The money is the main topic of their conversations, the problem to solve and, at the same time, the happiness

Part of the respondents, especially from Germany and from Poland, pointed at the lack of life goals, of educational and professional aspirations.

Apart from this, they don't have any goals. They aren't capable of defining their dreams. When I started talking with the families, I asked what their dreams were – it is an abstract thinking for them, they can't define them and they aren't seeking it.

The majority didn't have any life goals, they can't describe their strengths and weaknesses, they have no professional career aspirations, they are only interested in financial rewards.

For the Spanish respondents, a young person aged 15 to 18 years dreams only of being adult and deciding about themselves on their own, and thus being free from education, from parent's control. The adulthood is, according to them, a time when a person gains respect.

Many respondents (especially from Poland) see the young people in their care through the prism of their families of origin. Their system of values is the same as the one of the families that they grow up in.

01 – The culture of poverty and copying the schemes of this culture of poverty. This is also our kind of malady, because the youth...

02 – My mom haven't been working her whole life and still she copes.

Table no. 5 – Young people aged 15 to 18 years – system of values

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material values • Position in a peer group • Lack of ambitions • Lack of respect for education • Looking for acceptance • Survival skills (copying with the difficult reality) • Independence from the world's norms - rebellion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to be adult • Being a part of a group • Being a group's leader/ a chance to survive • Rebellion • Gain of respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of respect for work and education • Choosing the easiest way to survive • Money as a sign of happiness

Interests

The question concerning the interests of young people aged 15 to 18 years caused many difficulties to the specialists who took part in the research. The answers to these questions were strongly stereotypical: the youth is not interested in anything at all, and if they are, the objects of their interests are computer and computer games, meetings with friends, and perhaps some kind of sport. But defining the kind of sport the young people practice brings many difficulties. Only the respondents from Germany said that it is football and basketball.

Besides, when I go out and look at these young people, they don't want to go out, even when I talk with them. Their biggest interests are mobile phones and Facebook. Even those relationships are built through the Internet.

Frequently, they don't have any interests at all.

The major part of the respondents focused on the answers concerning the barriers that make the development of young people's interests impossible. Lack of money, lack of desires, lack of true family models. There are also the barriers connected to the limited infrastructure of the system of social support, e.g. *lack of that kind of places in the neighbourhood of the young people*. The participants of the research from Germany pointed also to the time constraints of young people. The youth that they cooperated with was composed mostly of the oldest ones of the siblings, who generally look after their younger siblings and take care of other domestic duties.

Interestingly, during the Polish research, the thought concerning the interests, the passions of young people appeared. Actually, this age group was not in the circle of interests of social workers up to now. If they were not causing any behavioural problems, no one cared about them. There were enough problems to solve within the families, so the young people were less important. Other social workers indicated that they do take care about younger children – until the end of primary school: summer, winter leisure, social day care centres, educational centres. For the older ones the system of social assistance does not provide any offer, and that is why there is very little information concerning their interests, problems and needs. Another issue, underlined by the participants of the research in Poland, was the direct superiors' approach to the fact of providing help to the children and the youth within the institution. The internal instructions concerning the aiming of the activities at certain groups of the addressees of the specialists' services influence in some way the decision concerning the direct aid provided to young people.

I have to confess that me and my colleagues avoid this problem. I think that it is caused by the fact that, up to now, there was no one in our centre who was interested in those young people's problems. We take care of the children at the school age until the junior secondary school. We offer some kind of leisure for them, I think that up to 12-14 years is max. This leisure is guaranteed for them. Some kind of holidays or something else. To tell the truth, the rest is left on their own.

At our place the superiors are not scared that this young person should be at any kind of risk, because he is almost adult. We have to focus only on the younger children, so that there is no scandal, no television. Our job is kind of defined by this fear, which sets the goals here. That's why they are not taken into consideration, because they are adults, we treat them as adults.

Or, if nothing happens, we assume that... I have for example this family of five and, let's say, there is the problem with mother and father there, with one of the siblings, but when I describe it, when it comes to this 17-year-old, I write that everything is OK, because he is the least of the problems, right? But there is so much time to sacrifice for the parents, so much things to do, as you say, when we talk about the youth, we say that everything is OK.

Table no. 6 – Young people aged 15 to 18 years – interests

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New technologies, computer, Internet • Sport and physical activity <p>BARRIERS CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERESTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of motivation and of finances • Lack of developed interests and of the will to develop them • Environmental barriers - lack of sufficient number of places where the youth could spend their free time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video games • Communicating with others • Meeting friends <p>BARRIERS CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERESTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interests • Lack of money • Lack of motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New technologies - computers, Internet • Sport (football, basketball) • Meeting friends <p>BARRIERS CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERESTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of motivation • Only physical activity, the one related to sport • They do not understand the need to work • Environmental barriers

Methods of work with the youth aged 15 to 18 years

While analysing the answers of the respondents concerning the methods used in work with the youth aged 15 to 18 years, the differences in work in every country can be perceived. This differences result above all from the

previous professional experience. The choice of appropriate methods of work depends on the specifics of the institution or the organisation employing the respondents and on their duties and tasks.

The respondents of the Polish research were the social workers from the social care centers, family assistants, employees of educational care centres and probation officers. The social workers focus in their professional work on providing help with solving the problems – addictions, poverty, care and educational problems, disabilities – to the whole family as a social group. The family assistants concentrate mostly on solving the care and educational problems of the families with dependent children, while the probation officers, educators, psychologists and pedagogues of the educational care centres concentrate their aid mostly on young people. That is why there are differences in the respondents' answers concerning the choice of work methods.

Some of the participants of the research conducted in Poland admitted honestly that they do not have any experience in working with the youth aged 15 to 18 years. The social workers employed in social care centres, because we are talking about them, indicated various reasons for this situation. And they result definitely from the organisation of the work, from the former institutional practice.

We are limited by the time here, because, for example, the youth that I could work with is at school during my work time. If I wanted to meet them, it would be after my work.

I will tell honestly, I take care mostly of younger children and their parents, and this group is ignored.

The family assistants and probation officers implemented a method of private conversations with young people in their professional work. They described their work using various examples of their actions. The probation officers focus on finding the strengths and the interests of the young people in their care. By showing them their interest, they indicate them other possible ways of life.

Generally speaking, I noticed that the families that I meet with are on the edge of pathology or even worse, and the parents are not able to find out what it is that their children are interested in and what can be developed in them. For example, I noticed that one boy has an artistic talent, and now he takes classes in the Youth Culture Centre. This is to show the possibilities, the solutions that already exist. The individual work, "I won't sit with them and draw, I don't have

the time and I even don't know how to do that". That is why we have to show him how to use all the possibilities. The parents won't do that for sure

There are sometimes simple solutions. I came up with the idea of changing the girl's class, she quitted her dreamed sports class for the normal one, and everything started to fall into place.

Part of the family assistants that took part in the research concentrated their actions on helping them to do their homework. The private lessons are treated by them as a way to improve the young people's self-confidence, which strongly influences their further development

Taking the education into account, these children are really neglected. I work with these children, we are learning, and they say "I'm stupid, don't say anything, because I don't know it". It takes some time before I make them sit down. I tell them "sit, we'll see, if we won't succeed, then we won't". And then it comes out that their problem e.g. with mathematics, chemistry or physics suddenly seems to disappear. "Really, it is that easy?"

I think that this kind of teaching the child may as well increase the child's self-esteem. I help them with their work, but I try to show the parents my interest in their child. It is not always necessary to take a book and study mathematics with them, but it is enough to take the notebook and check it. And if there is a 5⁵ there, a complement would be nice.

But there is also the work with the communicational competencies, finding these positive things in them. They don't know it at all, they are withdrawn, they don't see any good things in themselves, so there are these workshops where they can develop their personal competencies, where they can see what they have inside of them. These children are in fact very nice, they have lots of strengths, but they aren't aware of them, because none of the parents, guardians tells them these important things.

The methods of group work in the Polish group of respondents are very often used by the psychologists and the educators of the educational care centres. They constitute mostly an answer to the dangers that appear in the sur-

⁵ Polish equivalent of German 2

roundings of the young people in their care – family, school, institution's environment.

[...] When you work with children you see the specific problems that arise. You hear that the children start to talk about the designer drugs, we notice that the children start to talk about their sexuality. There is this loose community of the specific age groups, we have the children aged 6 to 16 years, so usually we divide them into two groups, depending on the problems. Now we have a problem, because there is this one boy who has been rejected by the whole group, so we started conducting those meetings that have for its purpose to encourage all the age groups to accept him. We have to support the educators, the parents and the kids, so that this boy can re-enter the group. It is sort of extinguishing the fire, what gives the impression that this problem may become a major one in a while. We act au courant.

The methods of work with the youth aged 15 to 18 years used by the German respondents result from the character of the actions of the institution whose representatives took part in the research and from the purposes of the programmes that are currently being realised. The most often these are the individual conversations that aim to develop the personal competence (coaching and psychotherapy, teaching, mediations, private consultations) and group work.

The coaches or the psychologists conduct the individual conversations or discussions in a way that enables them to find the best things about young people and, at the same time, to help them solve their problems.

The learners and the teachers are the natural partners in education, they can expect the mutual respect, honesty and appreciation. The role of the BiLSE teacher is seen as a role of a consultant and guide in education. BiLSE encourages to take part in an open conversation in order to create the atmosphere of trust where it is possible to arrange the conflicts and to solve them.

On the basis of the respondents' answers we may assume that they seek modern solutions that concern the most effective methods of helping young people. They are aware that the acquired skills and the coaches' experience in one group does not result in the effectiveness within the second group.

The work with the youth has changed this past few years, because, due to various reasons, the conditions of this work have changed. Now you can offer even more support and help in various life situations to young people. We have to remember that today's youth is our future.

Nevertheless, despite the changes in the civilizational development and new technology, the most effective method of work with the youth at risk of social exclusion, according to German respondents, is the right personal communication, individual conversations, as well as respect and partnership between a teacher/coach and a young person.

The Spanish experience gained during the work with the youth at risk of social exclusion indicated to the need of the constant update of the implemented methods over the course of time. Every action has to be adequate to the actual situation of young people, their problems and possibilities. The characteristic of the respondents from Spain is “the lack of routine activities”. I use the same methods as the others specialists (individual work, workshops), but it is very important to adjust the work methods to a certain group – e.g. the classes focused on the problem.

We notice that these are ordinary things – there is nothing special or magical in the young people's behaviour – that is why we have to proceed normally. Set the limits, execute the tasks.

In general, on the basis of their own experience, the respondents from all countries underlined that the work with young people is very difficult to them. These difficulties do not arise only from the traits of character of young people. Of course, the basic problem remains that “*young people are not interested in cooperation, they do not want to work*” and “*it is hard to get to them*”, but also the changes in the adults' work preparation need to be implemented. During the discussions in each country they were aware of the need to seek modern methods applicable in the work with young people, in response to the diagnosed problems with the cooperation with this group. The tasks that they aim at concern mainly the need to stimulate the young people's interests by showing interest in them, engaging them in various additional activities, e.g. voluntary work. The specialists paid a lot of attention to the method of engaging parents/guardians, teachers into the joint drafting of the support plan for the youth.

Table no. 7 – Young people aged 15 to 18 years – work methods

Poland	Spain	Germany
WORK METHODS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Conversation • Workshops TASKS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking and stimulating the interests • The question of listening and observing • Accompaniment • Focusing on the young people's problems • Showing new experience (voluntary work) • Developmental stimulation • Engaging parents/guardians in work with young people 	WORK METHODS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research focused on the topic • Workshops • Individual work • Lack of routine activities TASKS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods adjusted to the work with young people have to be useful, economical, designed for a particular situation and constantly updated 	WORK METHODS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual conversations with the youth • Observation • Group work • Consultations TASKS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking and supporting the interests • The question of listening and observing • Accompanying the youth • Concentrating on the partial solution of the problems • Developmental stimulation • Engaging parents/guardians in work with young people • Cooperation of school, social worker, student and his family in drafting the support plan for the student

YOUTH AGED 18 TO 24 YEARS

The purpose of this part of the report is to show how the knowledge of young people aged 18 to 24 years, of their problems, values and life goals influences the quality of the offered support and cooperation. The psychological, social and economical knowledge of this group of young people constitutes a basis for preparing the recommendations in the field of the actions supporting the physical, social and professional activity of the youth at risk of social exclusion.

Problems

The characteristic of the people aged 18 to 24 years made by the representatives of social professions was aimed only at the possibility of starting the professional work. The professional work is an indicator of the independence and good functioning of the young people in their care. The work as an indicator of social inclusion or exclusion. The basic problem of the people aged 18 to 24 years is the lack of work as a result of low level or lack of education or professional qualifications. That was the opinion of all the participants of the research in every country. The reasons for the professional inactivity are mainly the fact of originating from dysfunctional families and copying their parents'/guardians' models of behaviour.

But listen, if the majority of parents doesn't work, has no education, their children don't really study, they see that their mother or father earns some extra money moonlighting and they survive somehow, so why the kids shouldn't copy this model of behaviour?

I think that the youth aged 18 to 24 years, these are the children of our former clients, the ones that we worked with, and they grew up in those families that benefited from social assistance, it wasn't

great, but it wasn't bad either. Very often they start their own families at this age, they have dependent children, and this is their comfortable lifestyle. Learned.

Part of the participants of the research admit that within this group there are people who lack in confidence in their own abilities in achieving their goals. It results in low self-confidence, passive attitude and not undertaking any activities.

Maybe I'll mention this, yesterday I was visiting my clients – our care center got an information that one of the companies in P. will be conducting a training for kindergarten and social assistance house assistants and for elderly people carers. They are recruiting people aged 18 to 24 years. I visited 4 such families to whom I proposed this training, because these are the people with educational deficits, but they don't undertake any studies. There was only one person among these four that I visited yesterday who was willing to participate in this project. It was a person who has been working for three months and is still on a probationary period. [...] I don't know, maybe it is caused by low self-esteem, "maybe I won't be able to make it, maybe I don't want to, maybe it is easier the way it is now, it is hard to say. Maybe it won't do any good." In one case I thought this exact thing, because the girl benefits from the social pension, but she is able to work. She wanted to talk to her mother, to get some advice from her, because she was afraid that she could lose the pension.

During the discussion, the participants expressed their opinions that it is not always young people's fault. They very often want to do something, but the objective conditions (labour market and employers) become an obstacle on their way to economical independence.

It may result from the fact that they know that these trainings have no effects afterwards. They attend this cash register training, but they can't find any job later. There is this 20-year-old girl who I help with finding the job. She went to a supermarket to ask for work, but they want people who have attained secondary education, and she has only finished junior secondary school. "Here in J. there is a job in Żabka⁶, but I've only finished this course, and they want someone

⁶ Name of a network of shops in Poland

with experience. How I'm supposed to gain the experience when no one wants to hire me?"

We are talking about the extreme cases here, but they often want to do something, they try different things, but they get discouraged and they let go.

The Spanish respondents underlined that the lack of autonomy of the young people aged 18 to 24 years results from being chronically dependent from their parents. They underline as well that it is even stronger than during the period of adolescence. They live within a toxic family and it is very hard for them to free themselves from this dependence. The characteristic trait, underlined by Spanish specialists, is the emotional immaturity of the people in this age group. There are as well early relationships and early motherhood, for which young people are not emotionally ready.

01 – I know young women within this age group who, unfortunately, become mothers very early. There is a 28-year-old mother who has 6 children. [...] It is a tragedy that those people, especially women, end one relationship and start another one straight away, and the most important person for them is their new partner. Being with a partner and having children and sort of pretending to have a family.

02 – It shows as well that these are difficult children. They reach sexual maturity, but they still have the need for love, for care. They seek it, they think that it is love that brings them and their partners together. They don't have just one child, but more, and each of them with a different partner, and it proves something.

Table no. 8 – Young people aged 18 to 24 years – problems

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack or low level of education • Lack of work • Growing up in families with little resources and copying the models of the family of origin (inheriting the poverty) • Learned helplessness • Emotional immaturity • Early emotional relationships and early motherhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic dependence from the parents - stronger than during childhood • Living within a toxic family and not being able to free themselves from this dependence • Lack of future plans, they do not expect anything from life • They have children - they are not ready for the role of adult (parent, husband, wife) • Unemployment • Emotional immaturity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack or low level of education • Lack of work • Lack of professional qualifications • Problems with access to social assistance • Early emotional relationships

World of values

Defining the problems of young people aged 18 to 24 years was not problematic for the respondents, but indicating the values that are important for them was not an easy task. None of the respondents from the three countries was capable of indicating those values. It is a highly alarming phenomenon. A group of experts that is supposed to be helping other people to overcome difficult situations and to become independent is not able to indicate what the young people in their care actually think and what the values that are important to them in everyday functioning are.

Interests

Also in the case of the research concerning the interests of young people aged 18 to 24 years, the respondents were not able to answer the question. Only the German partner indicated that the people at this age are interested in sport (but passively) and in Internet computer games. These answers are the evidence of the stereotypical perception of the youth rather than of the knowledge of the subject of their activity

Work methods

Similarly to the case of young people aged 15 to 18 years, the specialists' work with young people aged 18 to 24 years is focused mainly on individual conversations. This method is chosen especially by the Polish and German participants of the research. The respondents from Germany have tried the group work, but, according to them, the effects of these methods were not as spectacular as the effects of work with the individuals. All of the actions undertaken by the specialists are focused on the stimulation of the professional activity of the young people in their care. The choice of methods depends on the psychophysical or environmental possibilities. It is a very hard task, taking into consideration the capital of these young people. The participants of the research focused mostly on describing the barriers and difficulties in the work with the youth at risk of social exclusion: lack of motivation for undertaking any actions, lack of interests and life goals, frequent absence from classes and their ill health. But, there is also the lack of appropriate social infrastructure – e.g. lack of places where those young people could meet together. This barrier was underlined by the Spanish respondents. They mentioned that the social services for young people aged 15 to 18 years may be on a high level, but in the case of the youth aged 18 to 24 years there are very little organisations that provide help

Changing the behaviour and the habits of young people requires changing the specialists' approach to the problem. The discussion on the topic of work methods focused mostly on seeking new solutions resulting in more effective help. Respondents from Germany and from Poland analysed above all the possibility of engaging young people socially or professionally by the means of voluntary work. Voluntary work as self-help and as help provided to others through one's own experience. But, most importantly from the point of view of the project assumptions, the discussion resulted in reflexion on one's own actions.

In general, when someone forces me to do something, I resist. And we forget that they are just like ourselves. I like what Agnieszka said, that we are trying to act as God and we know better what is best for young people, but we don't spend enough time with them, we don't observe, listen, make suggestions, encourage them or wait for them to start acting. And then, as a result, we will be happy, but above all they will be happy too, right?

Table no. 9 – Young people aged 18 to 24 years – work methods

Poland	Spain	Germany
WORK METHODS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the competencies • Support groups • Observation • Conversation TASKS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking and stimulating the interests • The question of listening and observing • Accompaniment • Showing new experience (voluntary work) • Developmental stimulation 	WORK METHODS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses focused on a problem • Focusing on work • The attempts to escape the poverty/the lack of work/the addiction 	WORK METHODS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual conversations • Observation TASKS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking and stimulating the interests • The question of listening and observing • Accompanying young people • Focusing of solving the problems • Developmental stimulation • Engaging guardians in work with young people

NON-FORMAL METHODS OF EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR WORK WITH THE YOUTH AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

A key factor for a right definition, and, as a consequence, the right understanding of the essence of non-formal education and the effective use of its qualities in everyday practice is the distinction between the three types of education⁷.

“Formal education consists in learning by taking part in the educational and training programmes leading to acquiring the registered qualification”. In other words, it is an institutionalised system of education that takes place in organised, structured conditions. The system hierarchically organised that involves pre-school, school, university education, as well as various courses and vocational trainings. The participation in this system, differently from the participation in other forms of non-formal education, is in most cases compulsory (at the initial stage) and leads to obtaining the certificates, diplomas confirming the acquired qualifications and permissions. In the context of our conversation, the characteristic of the institutionalised system of education is the presence of the student – teacher hierarchy. The first one is a passive recipient of the knowledge passed on by the expert. Examples of formal education – school education system, vocational trainings, university, etc.

“Informal learning – acquiring the knowledge, qualifications and social competencies by undertaking various activities which do not involve the organised forms of learning.”

The term “informal education” can be easily substituted by “learning through practice”. Throughout the whole life we acquire various qualifications, we shape our attitudes and value system by taking part in numerous activities, social groups, by growing in a certain culture and environment. The informal learning is not institutionalised, most of the time it is incidental – subconscious. Example: life with all the situations, challenges, etc. Even the contact e.g. with the social worker and obtaining information can be defined as informal learning.

⁷ This distinction has been mentioned in „Słownik podstawowych terminów dotyczących krajowego systemu kwalifikacji”, red. S. Sławiński, Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, Warszawa 2014 [http://www.bjk.uw.pl/files/pdf/Slownik_na_strone.pdf]

“Non-formal education – institutionally organised learning, but without educational programmes and trainings leading to the acquisition of a registered qualification”.

Non-formal education means: learning through practice and experience according to the rule: **“Tell me, and I will forget, show me, and I will remember, let me take a part, and I will understand”**, which is based on a student – teacher relationship that is different than the traditional one, the roles and relations between the teacher and the learner. The first one becomes a facilitator/mentor/coach, who instead of passing on the “truths”, the knowledge contained in books supports the process of voluntary learning of the participant of the educational process, who has a role of the partner.

Example: workshops, project method, events, experimental methods, sports clubs, interest clubs, youth exchanges

The first indicated way of learning is connected with non-formal education by the institutionalisation of the process of acquiring knowledge. The participation in learning does not finish with acquiring the official qualifications. This type differs from the formal learning by being voluntary, and from informal learning by being intentional – having the awareness of the purposes of learning. Finally, the non-formal education is not based on partnership, on the participation of both partners in the process of learning. Thus, the non-formal education can be treated as a “third way” which penetrates, connects and completes the kinds of learning mentioned above.

Example: workshops, project method, events, experimental methods, sports clubs, interest clubs, youth exchanges

Table no. 10 – Differences between the three types of education

	Formal education (intentional)	Non-formal education (intentional)	Informal education (incidental)
Aim	yes	yes	no
Plan	yes	yes	no
Participation	Mainly compulsory; voluntary in further stages	Voluntary	Automatic

Leader, teacher, person conducting classes	Directive	Supporter, moderator, facilitator	n/a
Relationship between learner and teacher	Hierarchical	Partner	n/a
Effects of learning	Knowledge, information, rarely practical skills	Competencies, practical skills	Competencies, practical skills, attitudes, value system...
Mistakes	Are punished, classified	Are admissible, it is appreciated to draw conclusions, to see your own mistakes and weaknesses and to be willing to overcome them	We learn through mistakes
Responsibility for results	Educator	Participant, group, educator	Individual
Group - age	Peer	Intergenerational group	Intergenerational group
Role of the group in the process of learning	Has an influence, but is not important	Important	If exists, plays a role
Relations inside of the group	Concurrence	Cooperation	
Methods	Standardised methods, e.g. lecture, lesson, training	Innovative methods based on experience and participation, responding to the individual needs of the participants, e.g. workshops, project method, events, experimental methods, coaching, voluntary work	-

Source: „NFE, Book The Impact of Non Formal Education on young people and society”; Monika Novosadova, and others.; AEGEE, Belgium; http://www.aegEE.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/NFE_book.pdf;⁸

⁸ It is worth to consult a similar statement prepared by Anna Szlęk in the publication „Uczyć się inaczej. Kompendium wiedzy o edukacji pozaformalnej na podstawie doświadczeń uczestników/

Effectiveness of formal, informal and non-formal education in the eyes of the representatives of social professions used in the development of personal professional competence

Within the scope of the focus interview research, the participants were familiarised with the definitions of the formal, informal and non formal education and asked to indicate which forms of education they used most frequently while developing their own professional competence. According to the majority of the respondents, regardless of the country where the research has been conducted, every of the presented forms of education helps them in gaining and deepening the competence indispensable in their professional work. Each of the forms introduces something different into their work, but during the conversation, especially with the Polish participants of the research, the effectiveness of all forms of education has been analysed. In the opinion of the majority of the respondents, the most effective form of education is the informal education. In their professional work they indicate mostly their life experience, conversations with colleagues and the exchange of experiences as the forms that are the most useful for them in their work practice. The participants of the German research expressed similar opinions – the method that was used the most frequently by the specialists in order to develop their competences was the informal education.

I think that informal, because we learn a lot from each other, right? If someone is more experienced, we can always ask, find out, see something. I think that this is the most efficient way of learning.

We profit a lot from ourselves, from the experience. What my colleague said here is really important, because it is worth it to benefit from the experience of the more experienced people, but it is also important to learn from our own mistakes. We have our own situations that are very similar and even the same. We may try other solutions, other forms of support, of help, we can always consult with the others.

The job of a family assistant obliges me to get further training, I also take part in various workshops which I try to choose correctly. Indeed, I take part in some courses or trainings, but I learn also a lot through the work with those families, I have some experience, I know how to react more quickly. Besides, the work of a family assistant concerns helping, educating, feeding and other things. It has such a wide range that I try to use the informal contacts that I established with people I work with. Midwife, doctor, legal adviser. If I don't know how to do something, I try to read about it somewhere or ask my colleagues or social workers who will tell me directly: you have to do it in this way.

During the conversation in the Polish group of respondents, even though sporadically, there were still the answers concerning the importance of the formal education in professional work.

The theory is also important, because e.g. you can't use the same tools or work methods in work with a difficult client as you use with the others. It is important to influence every different person, because this is how we gain our experience. We have many possibilities at work.

Yes, but I didn't learn a lot at university, in fact I learned nothing there.

The opinions of the respondents on the subject of non-formal methods of education and their usefulness at work differ one from another. The participants, who took part in educational trainings or workshops that developed their professional competence, evaluated these trainings through their adequacy and the possibility to implement the knowledge acquired there in their work practice. This situation is well illustrated by one of the participants of the research:

These trainings won't do any good, because if the level of this training is low, what we are going to learn there? Nothing, if someone will be just showing the presentation for 3 hours.

The participants of the research in Spain had the most experience in developing professional competence through non-formal methods of education. They also preferred this method as a most efficient one, according to them. The respondents from Germany developed their competence using this kind of education very rarely and that is why their answers were not constructive.

In general, concluding this part of the research analysis, this question posed problems to the participants. The difficulties in differentiating the definitions appeared, what resulted in the difficulties with determining the usefulness of a certain method in professional work. On the basis of the analysis of all respondents' answers, we can conclude that the representatives of social professions who took part in the research are not interested in using formal and non-formal education in developing their own professional competences. Curiously, they base their work on their life experiences to a large extent. The theoretical knowledge, according to them, does not have a major influence on the quality of their work. This quality is built through experience and intuitive actions.

Table no. 11 – Effectiveness of the formal, informal and non-formal education used in developing personal professional competence in the eyes of the representatives of social professions

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing personal professional competences through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formal education - informal education - non-formal education <p>The most appreciated form of education in professional practice is the Informal education - life experience, conversations with co-workers, exchange of experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most appreciated form of education in professional practice is the Non-formal education Formal education is very important to the teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the competences through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formal education - informal education - non-formal education Informal education is the most practised one Very little of non-formal education

Effectiveness of formal, informal and non-formal education in work with the youth at risk of social exclusion

During the discussion conducted with the representatives of social professions we asked them which of the presented forms of education is the most effective in work with the youth at risk of social exclusion. In general, each of the forms of education – formal, informal and non-formal – is important to young people. Each of them teaches something different, but all of them influence the quality of the young people's social functioning together.

01 – Let me take a part, and I will understand.

M – I understand that this one would be the best form them?

01 – Yes, so that they could create something

*,
03 – Yes, but this informal one is really important as well.*

04 – I think that both of them.

01 – Yes, but you have to have the basis, because the school education is important too.

02 – They are still in the course of their education.

04 – But tell me, which one of the young people likes the school?

M – How it is possible to encourage them, so that they would want?

01 – I think that firstly we have to let them take a part in a small project, so that they can understand it, like it and get some knowledge from us, the specialists in this field. And later it turns out that it was interesting to them, so they will continue their education by signing up to a school, for example. I think that it should be that way. It would be the best way to get them interested in something

The importance of all of the education forms for the young people was underlined in all three countries, whose representatives took part in the research. In the German research, the teachers, coaches and social workers underlined that in the present times, the formal education is the most important to young people. Attaining the official education and thus the permissions necessary to exercise certain professions is basic, but I realise that the experience acquired through informal education and gaining various social competencies is also extremely important. Both of these forms are related one to another.

When it comes to the effectiveness of the indicated forms of education in professional practice, the non-formal methods of education are the leading ones

I think this non-formal one – what even I noticed in my work, as the others write here - tell me, and I will forget, show me, and I will remember, let me take a part, and I will understand. In most of the cases, when I was looking for the apartment for them, I took them with me. First time the child didn't say a word. Second time the child was able to tell something about him, he was more self-confident and had some abilities. Third time I didn't go with them, because they went on their own.

The effectiveness of non-formal education has its supporters too, especially among Polish and German experts. Curiously, the specialists for whom this form is the most effective in the development of their own professional career, indicated it as the most effective one in work with young people.

01 – I use my own experience too, but the life one, not the professional one, and that is what helps me the most in my work. I had different experiences in my life and that's why I understand them when we talk, meet. It is mostly aimed at tolerance

02 – So the informal ones are more effective

01 – But the experience...

03 – The traits of character have an influence on the way of getting to know other people too.

01 – Yes, it is very important. We are the tool and, truthfully, without our developed personalities and without all those experiences that we may not have had in our lives...

M – But you think that the informal methods have...

01 – In my opinion, yes. I was at the university, but I didn't learn a lot, practically nothing.

04 – Yes, from my perspective these informal methods yes, but at a certain point we get used to it. It would be nice to feel some freshness, to experience something new sometimes. And then these trainings show us another perspective. That's why when I work with children, in addition to the informal work, I organise sort of mini-training for them, so that they can get another perspective. I have to learn about these things too, I don't know much about the designer drugs, so I benefit from it. We work together, but sometimes we have to introduce something new, learn something new. I think that this is the non-formal method.

Concluding this part of the research, we can say that there is the belief among the Polish and Spanish participants of the research that the most effective method of work with the youth at risk of social exclusion is the non-formal method of education, in accordance with the rule “Tell me, and I will forget, show me, and I will remember, let me take a part, and I will understand”. The respondents from Germany underlined the strengthening and improving of all three forms of education, according to the rule that each of them influences the quality of life of the youth at risk of social exclusion.

PART III

FUNCTIONING OF THE YOUTH IN THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF DETERMINING THEIR FUTURE LIFE CHOICES

The idea of the project “Integration through Inspirations. Non - formal education as a tool of the equalization of opportunities of youth at risk of social exclusion” is to develop and implement into everyday practice of the institutions whose statutory tasks are to help and support young people the new methods of work, which will respond to the needs of the young people in their care. The present situation – the style of work, the organisational level of the institutions – does not satisfy the needs of young people. A reflexive action consists in maintaining the balance between organisational culture, values and practice. But, this balance will not be maintained if the workers will not know the subjects of their actions – problems, values, interests and needs of young people.

In this part of the report we show the results of the research conducted with young people, where we analyse social situation, educational and social activity, life aspirations and priorities, as well as problems of the youth at risk of social exclusion.

YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THEMSELVES

In general, young people who took part in this research are satisfied with their lives despite some problems they are facing, such as family, school or lack of money.

I think we take it easy, normally. We can get everything very easily, we don't have to look for anything, we have all we need.

They have their dreams, plans. Those concerning their future jobs as well. They are full of optimism and hopes, although they know that not everything is, or will be, within their reach. On the top of the life goals of the young people who took part in the research are family, travels, getting a dream job and a good life in general.

My dream is to travel around the world or just go for a very long trip, something like that guy... I want to meet my idols, like most of us, but I want as well to have a happy family, make some money, not billions, but enough to live on a decent level.

My kinda real dream is to finish school, have a family and be happy. And, afterwards, to work in the profession I've learnt.

I want my dancing dreams to come true. I'd like to dance somewhere, in the opera or so. In general I have everything related to dance. I'd like to travel, go to Spain. Have a family there, and study before that.

Well, I'll just take things as they're gonna be. I just want to have a good grown up life, and to get into the school I choose after junior secondary school.

And I have a dream to become a confectioner.

It seems that the youth has both feet on the ground and they are very realistic about their chances and possibilities. Their answers to the question „do

you think is it possible for you to achieve your goals, do you need anything that could help your dreams come true?" are the best evidence:

01 – I need money.

02 – Yeah, that too.

03 - And why do we need money, all we need is ourselves.

02 – Well, that's true too. We need to find a well-paid job.

03 – All can be done in the right conditions, we just need to try.

04 – You just need to strive.

05 – You really have to want it to come true.

06 – And you have to work really hard.

During our talks we asked young people what is the most important thing in their lives. Young participants of research (mainly from Poland) listed passion, respect, friends, family and contact with other people. For young Spanish the most important were family and friends, and for young Germans money, good job and a lot of free time.

Home and family relations in youth's opinion

Young people's opinions concerning their homes and family relations, were based on their current situation. Two groups of respondents took part in the research: youth who lived with their biological families and youth who lived in educational care centres (Polish responders).

In the first group of respondents, the youth spoke positively about their families. They feel loved, although sometimes there are some misunderstandings between them and their parents (despite the family structure they grew up in). Relations with parents are considered good regardless of the conflicts between parents and their children. Those disagreements consider school, contact with other young people (especially boys-girls relationships), and

parents' engagement in professional work which results in lack of proper emotional contact with children and in conflicts between siblings.

I live with my mom and dad. I have a sister but she moved in with her boyfriend when she turned 18. I have better contact with my dad than with my mom. I have often quarrels with my mom about stuff... about school, that my marks are bad and so. And that I have responsibilities that I don't fulfil, so now she pays me every single time I clean up my room, because I wouldn't do it otherwise. But I don't complain. And my relations with my sister are good since she moved out.

I live with my parents; I have two brothers and one sister, and except that I have two other brothers and one sister. What can I say? My parents are trying to take me seriously, because I'm old enough. It's not always working that way, though, because they don't let me do stuff, because that's the way of parenting. I do have my duties, of course, like others have already said. The house needs to be cleaned... It's more like my dad tells me to clean up, to help. So relations are rather OK, better with dad than with mom, 'cause I like to argue with mom. It sounds weird but I just don't get along with mom. Beside that I don't complain.

The relations with mothers are considered as much better than with fathers. The relationship with mothers are said to be warmer. Fathers are charged with lack of understanding and excessive expectations.

I'm 16, I have a 11-year old sister, I go to professional technical school, to the class with electromechanical profile. I get along pretty good with my mom, not so good with my dad. Sometimes me and my dad fight. I have good relations with my sister. Well, we're siblings, we'll always be arguing at some point.

In many cases, relationships with fathers were so bad that the participants did not want to discuss them. That is the case of the German participants. Youth from Spain did not want to talk about that matter saying that parents don't understand them, and that is the reason of most of their conflicts.

They were at our age once, and now they talk as if they were grown up right away.

Despite the existence of these disagreements between the youth and their parents, they are aware that their parents use some bans and orders be-

cause they are worried about them, that it is not the result of their ill-will, but they care about their safety. On the other hand, the young people know that many of those disagreements appear as a result of their behaviour and responsibilities.

Because they want to protect us from making mistakes. They're afraid that we'll make the same mistakes they did, so that's why they want to protect us. I guess we learn on our mistakes, and they are not able to protect us from every one of them. To shut us in the house and tell us just to learn won't work out.

[...] that depends on me, too. If I studied more and did all those things my dad asks me to, I wouldn't have so many problems. Everything would be OK.

The youth who lives in educational care centres, did not want to talk about their families and regarding their history, it is comprehensible.

01 – my relations with my family suck, and I have nothing more to say about that. I don't really talk to my parents, just a little with my sister...

02 – but that depends if they left you or not.

01 – well, my mother gave me away...

Table no 12: Young people about themselves

Poland	Spain	Germany
WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion • Respect • Friends, contacts with other young people HOUSEHOLD DUTIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning, washing, cooking sometimes • Looking after the pet RELATIONS WITH PARENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small quarrels concerning bad marks or household duties • Expectations of being understood better- "I wish my dad wasn't so oldfashioned!" • Looking for bad consequences in innocent behaviours (going out with boys, going to concert, etc.) 	WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family • Friends HOUSEHOLD DUTIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of them have no household duties except of taking care of pets and making the bed; but there are kids who have a lot of duties and they are too young to fulfill some of them RELATIONS WITH PARENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts • They think that parents don't understand their problems 	WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have a lot of money • To have a good job • To have a lot of free time HOUSEHOLD DUTIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of other family members • Shopping RELATIONS WITH PARENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relations with mothers • Disordered relations with fathers, lack of contact

YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT SCHOOL

During the discussion concerning school, young people analysed two spheres of its functioning: the teaching methods and the student – teacher relationship. The participants of the research paid much attention (and emotions) to the school itself, to school relationships, because, as one of the participants said, “*we spend half of our lives at school and it is important to us*”.

Young people’s general thought concerning school

In the opinion of the young people participating in the research, regardless the country of their origin, the school is one of the most important aspects of life of a young person. They accept and understand that the school is compulsory up to a certain age and that the teachers have to implement a school programme imposed by the government. The fact of feeling contentment or dissatisfaction regarding school depends on multiple factors that include: student – teacher relationship (relations between them, as well as the teacher’s competencies), student – other students relationship, general atmosphere.

I don’t like school because: teachers don’t teach anything, they just talk that we have to learn all by heart, but we’ll forget it anyways. They judge us through our marks. If they are bad, the teachers think that we are idiots, but the marks don’t reflect our intelligence or knowledge. There are some swots that learns everything by heart, but when it comes to an exam, it is very clear who has been studying and who hasn’t. And they judge the level of our knowledge through our marks. It annoys me very much. I’ve heard from the teachers

that I am really stupid and I should be at primary school, not at junior secondary school. That's how it is. Some of the teachers are cool, but the majority isn't. We have this school rules, but if we point something out to them, they say that we are arrogant, we don't respect the adults, our language is horrible. But if they yell at us, it is perfectly OK, but if we raise our voices, we are rude. Who has raised us, street? They've already told me that I grew up on street. That's my opinion about school, I don't like it

In the opinion of the teenagers taking part in the research, the weaknesses of some of the teachers are, above all, the lack of the ability to pass the knowledge on, the tendency to favorise some students, giving unfair marks, and lack of respect towards young people (humiliating, insulting, repressing disliked students, etc.)

The school rules and the teachers are more concerned about our appearance, and they spend the half of the lesson on commenting our make-up, nails, clothes, everything that is connected to our appearance and what we do outside school instead of teaching something to us.

We have this English teacher who is more interested in modern technology and instead of learning English, we spend the half of the lesson on talking about a modern technology, and then we do just one exercise and that's it.

The young people taking part in the research appreciate the teachers who show their interest in them, are fair, even (or maybe above all) when the teacher is demanding. They are even capable of forgiving those teachers when they break the school rules.

01 – I like my school very much, there are not many teachers who think that they are better than us. There is one teacher, who breaks the school rules, but she likes us and we like her as well.

02 – And how does she break the rules?

02 – She doesn't check our tests for a month, and then we have just one week or one and a half instead of two for retaking them. But she is easygoing. She is nice and she teaches well.

There is a tough one (Polish teacher), but she knows how to teach. [...] She appreciates it when someone is trying, but if she sees that a

student is doing nothing, he can get into trouble. I was doing my best and she appreciated it.

In general, the respondents in Spain underlined that the teachers' bad approach to the students and badly conducted lessons do not encourage the students to learn. They want to work with the adults who try to understand their problems, who make the boring lessons look interesting by using the young people's hobbies and interests.

During the discussion, the word "respect" was very popular among the students. They expect their teachers to treat them equally and to respect their rights. They expect them as well to follow the school rules (e.g. correct the tests within the agreed time, not to be arrogant towards them, not to shout at them or disgrace them. If the teachers expect the respect from the part of the students, they should treat them with respect as well. But, curiously, there were also rational statements concerning the relations between teachers and students – the teachers treat us as we deserve.

01 – I just wanted to add that you are all complaining about the teachers, but look how we behave at school. I think that it is similar at your place. [...] If you mess up in the classroom, it isn't easy for the teacher to conduct lessons.

02 – You're right

03 – [...] during our lessons everyone swears, half of the class talks or throws chalk at the teacher, they spit into her mug or put pins on her chair...

01 – Yeah, and then you tell that the teacher is bad, that he screams, insults...

04 – It is not very bad in our school, because if you do your best, the teachers will be nice to you, they will want to help you. If they see that you're not doing anything and you don't care at all, you are in the classroom, but you don't take your notebook out, what are they supposed to do? "Take this notebook out" – they say – "Write something." It's not like he's going to be easy with you and kindly ask you "For God's sake, take out your notebook and write something down". And sometimes we deserve that. If you're trying, they will help you, but if not...

The positive opinions about school and teachers were more frequent among the secondary school students. They are more aware of the educational func-

tion of the school. It teaches the professions, gives future prospects, especially concerning the professional future, as well as the possibility of finding employment.

[...] Now I'll tell what I like. I'm not talking about teachers now, because you can't change a person. And I like school very much, because I've chosen my profession, if I didn't have it, I wouldn't be there, right? I do some practice, I learn things connected to my profession. That's why I've chosen it, right? So I may say that I like school.

I like school very much. If it comes to teachers, sometimes it's worse, sometimes it's better. [...] As I said, it is my school, it gives much perspectives. I've chosen it, because I wanted to do something connected with this profession and it's cool.

It's about education, not about your colleagues or teachers. You can always change colleagues. The things that you learn you keep forever.

Table no. 13 – General thoughts of the youth concerning the school

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They expect respect, but they do not respect their students • They judge the students through their marks, not through their achievements • They dedicate too little time to passing the knowledge to the students, and too much to unimportant things (stories from their own lives, criticising the appearance, the behaviour etc.) • They expect young people to follow the school rules, but they break them themselves regularly • Young people appreciate it when the teachers are fair in their judgements ("I have the Polish teacher who is really demanding, but she appreciates those who are trying") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interest in students. • Humiliating the students • Bad approach to the students discourages them from learning • The teachers do not understand the needs of the students • The frequent interferences and regulations of the system influence the students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrong relations between the teacher and the student • Lack of interest • Lack of communication • Lack of concentration • Lack of cooperation with parents

School of my dreams

During our research, we asked the young people how the school is supposed to be like so that they would gladly attend it. The discussions in different countries concerned changing the organisation of classes (the time classes start and end), changing the course of study (they wanted to cross off the list the classes they do not like: chemistry, geography, etc.), changing teachers for younger ones. The age of the teachers, from the point of view of the youth, is very important because, according to them, the older people do not understand them. They would like teachers to be more “*modern and open minded*”. However, the most important factor, from the point of view of the youth, is the way of conducting classes. The structure of conducting classes that exists basically in each public school - a teacher standing in front of the class and passing his knowledge on - does not evoke interest in students. It represents only the school hierarchy. Therefore, the way of conducting classes should be changed. Instead of boring lectures, they want classes that could help them to develop their interests. The theoretical knowledge is important, but for young people, the practical preparation for life is very important as well. The relations between teachers and students should be changed, too. The partnership and cooperation constitute the basis for this relation.

Talking about this practice, I'd choose the classes that would teach us real life. We learn math and other stuff, but we don't learn how to deal with life.

school is not about learning everything by heart, it's about understanding, so that our brains could be developed. School exists to help us develop our minds.

Table no 14: Young people about school - the school of my dreams

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developement of interests • Less theoretical lessons and more practical classes • Teachers' priority should be the children's individual developement, and not just teaching them rules • Teachers more adapted to present (teachers shouldn't be older than 40 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-prepered teachers who regularly have tests confirming their preparation for present times • Fewer exams • Fewer theoretical informations and more focus on basic and technical matters • Practical classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No marks • There should be only women working in school • Schools with modern technologies providing proper and efficient education • Less time spent on higher education • Deleting the classes such as music, sport, chemistry and physics

FREE TIME AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY OF THE YOUTH

In this part we will introduce the results of the research concerning the ways in which the youth spends their free time, what influences their interests, where and with who they like to spend time. The free time, from the rational point of view, should be used to regenerate the student's psychic and physical force. However, it is the way of spending this time that decides about the positive or negative influence on a young person's development.

Ways of spending free time

The shown analysis that concerns the ways of spending free time relate to two groups of the youth taking part in the research – teenagers living within their family environment and teenagers staying in educational care centres.

In the first group, the participants of the research spend their free time the most often with friends, very rarely with their families. They spend part of their free time on their own. The ways of spending the free time within their friends include mostly: meeting outside somewhere in their neighbourhood or downtown, participating in courses organised in youth clubs or associations that offer a variety of activities for young people. When young people spend time alone, they limit themselves to watching TV, playing computer games or surfing social networks. The respondents from this group rarely spend their free time on developing their own passions and interests, e.g. learning foreign languages, taking sport, music or dance classes. The ways of spending free time depend on the sex of a person. Boys prefer to spend their free time with their colleagues, do sport, play computer games or listen to music. Girls mostly meet with their colleagues, listen to music, watch TV, they play computer games rarely. They develop their passions more often.

Mostly when I come home from school and I don't want to go out, I sit, watch TV series, do something on my phone, listen to music, sleep a bit, sit with my parents or watch TV, or sometimes I go out with Asia and we walk a bit. I often come here as well with Asia [association organising activities for young people]

Drive somewhere, in the town – I love it, the trips. And sometimes at home, when I don't want to go out, because the weather is bad, I play games, but usually no more than an hour a day. At this time of day, like e.g. now, when I want to stay home, I learn to play music or I cook something with my dad.

I spend my free time here at T. [association organising activities for young people] or in explorers club in C., or at home in my bed with my phone.

Usually I sit here at T. [association organising activities for young people], or I stay at home, play games, or I go out with my people to clubs. It is mostly spontaneous, I play [in a music band]

I don't know much computer stuff, I can't use it very well. I dance. I learn Spanish. I'd very much like to go to Spain. I spend a lot of time with international volunteers that are there and I love to travel as well. I'm also a master in making my way home as long as possible, literally, all around the town.

I draw, I play football with my school friends. And if I'am really bored, I take a book and study a bit.

There is also another aspect mentioned in the discussion with the Spanish group that has to be taken into account. Admittedly, young people do not spend their free time with their families, but it does not mean that they do not want to. The family is important to them and they would like to spend more time together.

We should do some stuff together with the family, everyday, not once in a blue moon.

In the second group of respondents - the young people living in educational care centres - the ways of spending free time depend on the structure of the institution itself. The youth living in such institutions has time filled with obligatory activities, so they do not have much time left for themselves. Typical day at such institution starts with school, then the young people come back, do their homework and then they fulfil their duties on behalf of the institution (cleaning up, preparing meals, group meetings, etc.). The time they can have for themselves they spend mostly in solitude. They develop their passions and interests (poetry, art, creating comics, etc.). The employees of the institution - the group educators - plan as well the time that they spend outside of the institution. They indicate them sport clubs and clubs managed by non-governmental organisations where they can participate in activities other than the ones organised by the institution. Part of the young people, especially the older ones, may (as a reward for good behavior) participate in activities they are interested in, and in the places they indicate themselves. These are mostly sports clubs.

M – How do you like to spend your free time?

01– I play computer games or go out to workout.

02 – But in this institution it's a little bit different.

03– I go out to workout, too, but I need a permission to do so. And if I don't have it I just stay at home.

02– We can go to see our parents on Fridays but only for four hours. And in these four hours we have to meet parents, friends and deal with other stuff.

03 –We just don't have enough time for all of this.

M – Not enough time, and what about during the week?

02– We don't have time either. All the time it is just the school and returns. And some duties in the institution.

M – Can't you go out to workout or somewhere else?

01 – I can.

03 – Yeah, me too.

02 – But the trainings are organized by this institution. You're under ongoing control of the institution.

01 – I go out to workout without the institution.

M – And what are you practicing?

01 – Now? Martial arts. I used to play football, and even before the institution, I used to practice other disciplines. Wrestling, baseball.

Table no. 15 – Ways of spending free time

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time spent with friends (but it is not a problem nowadays, we have the Internet era) • Sport classes • Activities in Tratwa organisation • Club activities • Computer games • Playing in a music band • Developing personal passions and interests (dance, Spanish classes, writing poems, drawing, creating comics etc.) • Voluntary work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time spent with friends • Listening to music • Playing video games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with friends • Chatting • Shopping • Playing Internet games • Sometimes playing football together

Participation in extracurricular activities

Young people, especially at the age of personal development, have a strong need to belong, to identify with something or someone. To appease this need, they sign up to sport clubs, community centres or other youth organisations. This kind of membership has two meanings - first, it appeases the need of identification, and on the other hand, it lets the youth to spend their free time in an active way. The participation in extracurricular activities depends on interests and other factors that allow full and active participation in such classes (the list of available services, parents' financial possibilities, etc.). Only few of the participants declared having specific interests, such as: dancing, painting, drawing, football, learning foreign languages, sketching comics, military, etc., and even less of them declared participating in classes that develop their interests. The young people who were still living with their parents, as a reason why they do not participate in any extracurricular activities listed lack of suitable offer. Moreover, if they did sign up, they resigned soon after that because of these classes' bad atmosphere. Others nev-

er even tried to find a proper institution which would help them to develop their interests. The young respondents from Spain, as the research shows, often do not know what is happening around them, where they can go to spend their free time efficiently. They've heard of youth organisations, but they are not necessarily familiar with their offer. What is more interesting, despite the fact that they do not know the offer, they assume that it is not interesting for them. For young people who took part in the research in Germany, extracurricular activities did not seem to be interesting at all. They prefer to spend time with friends, without adult supervision.

For young people living in educational care centres, the main reason for not participating in extracurricular activities is lack of free time. This lack of time is caused by internal organisation of the institution. Often, before they were placed in such institution, they did participate in extracurricular activities and they were satisfied with that. Now they cannot freely choose what they want to do. If they did sign up for some activity, it usually is a sport club.

01 - Cause they take our free time away from us. They just plan everything for us.

02 - According to their schedule. The organisation of the activities sets limits for us.

M - Even if you're 16, 17 or 18

03 - Yeah, we need to stick to the schedule.

04 - I think it wouldn't be a problem if we tried to do something by ourselves.

02 - Not for everyone. The educator decides about that. He must give you his approval.

03 - Yeah, you do need educator's permission. But if you're here three or four years it's different. When I came here, even if I was doing many exercises, they still wouldn't let me go.

In general, young people who took part in the research, have various experiences with participation in extracurricular activities. Those who still participate in such activities, declare that they go there because of their interests and atmosphere. From their point of view, the atmosphere and the offer decide about their commitment to extracurricular activities. They are ready to dedicate their free time, but those two conditions must be fulfilled. The

young people from educational care centres underlined the free will to participate in extracurricular activities. As it was shown during discussions, they very often were obliged to participate in a particular activity because an educator told them to do so. They think that being forced gets them nowhere. They resigned after a few meetings. The activity the educator thought would be suitable for them did not respond to young people's expectations.

I took part just because they made me do so. Just because everyone from the group had this extra task. And just because I didn't have any, I was forced to go there. I was going there with disgust. I endured it for quite a long time because I met some cool people there, but later I resigned anyway because I could meet with those people anytime, and I didn't have to go there. I didn't want to go there anyway.

Table no. 16 – Young people's participation in extracurricular activities

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just a few of the respondents took part in extracurricular activities, including: • Sport clubs • Participation in activities organised by NGO <p>CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly atmosphere • Respect and understanding • Equal treatment • Possibility of realisation of interests and passions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just few of respondents participate in extracurricular activities, including: • Sport activities • Cultural activities (ballet) <p>CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion and interests • Money • Parents' decision • Plan of the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German respondents do not participate in extracurricular activities <p>CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly atmosphere • Self-respect • Open mind

Young people and voluntary work

The young people's experience with voluntary work differs among the respondents from particular countries. Young people who participate in the research in Poland have the most experience in this field. They gained their experience through the participation in the projects realised by the non-governmental organisations and in the schools they attended. The participation in this form of their activity was entirely voluntary, they accepted its rules and ideas.

O1 – I do voluntary work. I mean, my secondary school cooperates with the children's hospice. Yesterday there was a charity run where we had our stands, but in general we have various meetings with this clinic, various actions, also at school.

M – You have volunteered all by yourself?

O1 – Yes.

The participation in these projects and the experience gained through practice had an influence on seeing the voluntary work as an individual activity and as well on the perception of one's own life.

O1 – voluntary work is cool because you may help someone else

O2 – and then these people repay you somehow

O3 - with anything, for example with experience. When I came here no one could give me the money I could get at work, but the atmosphere is great here and T. gives much more than money. People, experience, atmosphere, the possibility to develop your passions.

The participants of the Spanish research had practically no experience with the voluntary work. Just one respondent confirmed that he worked as a volunteer with disabled people and he would like to repeat it.

Voluntary work is not interesting to German youth either and they do not want to provide help to younger participants of the research who have simi-

lar problems by being their “godfathers”⁹. Helping their own family (helping their grandmother when she has to go to a doctor or doing shopping for her) is more popular, but it is not regular. But can we talk about voluntary work in this case? Young people do not want to get involved into this activity, because they think that it is boring and routine (providing help every week at the same hour). In general, they do not even know that the voluntary work exists.

The Polish young people’s answers to the question “what the voluntary work can give” were: it is possible to help other people, to gain experience, there is the possibility of developing your interests, you can get to know and stay in contact with interesting people. For the Spanish youth the voluntary work constitutes above all a possibility of helping others, while the German youth could not name any advantages of the voluntary work

Table no. 17 – Young people’s general approach to voluntary work

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary work is not very "popular" among young people • Lots of young people do not even know what the voluntary work is • Only a very small number of young people have experience in this field • Many of them consider working without the remuneration as a waste of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally speaking, the participants have not had any experience with voluntary work. Only one student said that he worked as a volunteer with disabled people and he would like to repeat it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing help only to the members of their families • They do not want to help other families • They do not want to do it regularly • They usually do not know what voluntary work consists in and that it even exists

In general, according to the respondents, the voluntary work as a form of young people’s activity is not popular. The lack of interest is a result of the lack of knowledge. There were many ideas concerning the possible ways to engage young people in voluntary work - show them what it consists in,

⁹ „Godfather” is a proposition for actions concerning professional activation of the youth taking part in the research. Its objective is to encourage the youth that has already had experience with internship and with employers to take care of the people that are just starting their internships.

what activities may be undertaken, because it does not only concern helping elderly people or disabled children.

01 – Or even show them, so that they can see how we do this and then they would like to do the same thing

02 – Or at least make them aware

03 – The best thing would be to invite them here, to show them. Maybe some of them would stay [...]

As a result of the discussions conducted in particular countries, when the moderators presented them the ideas, the gains and the losses resulting from voluntary work, young people were rather willing to get involved in this kind of activity, but they had some conditions. Firstly, this work should be adequate to their interests. They could for example run sport activities for younger children. Secondly, it should not be compulsory. They should not be forced to get engaged in this activity. Thirdly, their friends and the people that are close to them should encourage them or participate in this activity as well.

Table no. 18 – Conditions of taking part in voluntary work

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work adequate to their interests • Understanding the idea of voluntary work by taking part in it • "An important person" as an initiator of the young people's involvement in voluntary work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type of work should be adequate to their interests • Family or friends should get involved as well • Short-term help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The German youth that participated in the research is not interested in getting involved into voluntary work

THE OPINION OF THE YOUTH CONCERNING THE SPECIALISTS THAT PROVIDE HELP

The majority of young people who took part in the research was or still is in contact with the professionals providing them with help in difficult situations. The social professions are well known to young people. The interlocutors were able to indicate the people who appeared in their lives or in the lives of their families. In the younger age groups these were mostly school pedagogues, educators in welfare and educational institutions, probation officers and, rarely, social workers and family assistants (Poland). In the older age groups the specialists with whom the participants of the research had contact were mainly social workers, teachers, therapists, vocational instructors, psychologists (Spain, Germany). The youth was not willing to talk about their problems, they did not name them, but the analysis showed that they are not unknown to them. The first ones that touch young people are family problems. They often derive from the lack of understanding between the parents and their children, from the lack of interest in them or from the overprotection. These deranged relations result in the opinion of being misunderstood by their parents. The second common problem is, especially within the younger age groups, the lack of acceptance and the pressure from the part of their peers. The further problems are the ones connected with school, which results in an early abandon of education (especially in Spain and in Germany). The problems that surfaced in the Spanish research are all kinds of addictions to the stimulants and to computer games. And, what is important, these problems are not imaginary, they really exist. Young people do not always cope with them and they seek help from adults.

The opinions concerning the “helping” specialists are divided. Part of the participants of the research have some very good experience but, curiously, it is not connected to the institutional help. It is not important to young people who helps them, but rather how he does that.

I had a few people in my life who helped me to overcome my problems, sometimes they were small things, but sometimes they could have ended badly. One of these people was my dance instructor – she

has helped me a lot. I owe K. very much and, generally speaking, the whole organisation [non-governmental organisation]

Part of these people (and they were the majority) had experience with bad treating and it would be difficult for them to change their opinion about the specialists. The negative opinions relate mostly to the fact that they were “acting superior”, to the lack of confidence and to the incompetence of the specialists. There were also the answers indicating that their intervention rather made things worse than helped.

I was at the pedagogue's office once in my life and it was my biggest mistake, because after that the whole school knew what my problem consisted in. The pedagogue talked with my educator, and it was supposed to be between us, but the whole teacher's room knew. There is this one teacher who loved to gossip during lessons and the whole school knew about my problem, which was private and was supposed to stay between me and the pedagogue. That's why I will never go to her office again.

There is a pedagogue in our school and I had a problem [...] So I went to her office and told her about it. She promised me that she won't tell it to anybody, even to my parents, but yesterday she told about it to everyone and I'm just disappointed, because she simply deceived me.

The young people from the educational care centres express their opinions about the workers of the public welfare organisations through their own experience – being taken from the family home. Their critic approach may indicate that they feel resentful towards the workers who took them from their homes and placed them in those institutions, but their opinions lack in maturity and in objectivity.

The probation officer had been visiting me, all neighbour were saying that I'm hungry all the time, I'm not dressed well, I don't behave well, while I was practically all the time well-behaved. My mom always provided me with food, I was always well-dressed. But the officer had always a bad opinion about me. But she didn't see me at all, she didn't see that I wasn't neglected and that I wasn't hungry and that was really why I have been placed in this institution. But, after all, I think that it ended well. There was the alcohol at home and I don't know how it could have ended if I stayed there.

O1 – In my case it wasn't me who had the probation officer, it was my father. I lived alone with him. The officer has been visiting us, she has been talking with my father, she heard multiple times that he was threatening me, but she did nothing. She has been visiting for three years, there were different possibilities to do something, but she did nothing. She came, she filled out some papers and that's it.

M – And there was no social worker?

O2 – At the end, yes, because the school showed some interest in this situation. He came, he of course informed my father before and he did some shopping and it was all alright. But after that my life became even harder. So there is school, there are probation officers and those social services, but they are there just for the sake of appearances. That is the experience that I have in my life.

O2 – There was also a probation officer at our place. It was everything all right, but she always thought that the things were bad, that we are all bad.

O1 – It was good at his place, it was bad at their place, it was bad in my home and it was all right for them. Where is the sense of all of this? The situation is always upside down, right?

Table no. 19 – Young people’s opinion about the professionals providing help – evaluation of their previous experience

Poland	Spain	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School pedagogue - lack of trust caused by not keeping a secret, imposing certain solutions instead of finding them together • Probation officer - lack of help in solving the family problem • Social workers - lack of help in a crisis situation, the help was provided too late, the intervention of the worker resulted in placing the child in an educational care centre • Educator in an educational care centre- the help adequate to the problems, the help in solving them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of trust • The opinions of the professionals are overlapping the perception • The professionals do not help with finding the problems' solutions • The professionals do not understand their problems • The professionals use the same arguments all the time and they repeat them constantly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is good that they are there • They should be young • They should be flexible

In general, despite the fact of having mostly bad experience, young people declare that they will accept the professionals’ help willingly provided that this help is adequate to their real problems. It is very important to them that the adults treat them and their problems seriously. They have the right to this, similarly to the adults.

01 – They say “how many problems do you have? You’re at junior secondary school, what kind of problems you may have?”

02 – Exactly.

01 – What problems may a junior secondary school student have? He has no money for smokes, he’d like to drink a beer, but he’s not 18 yet. Well, we have this kind of problems, but some adults don’t realise it. Our English teacher said: I wonder what problems you may have, I’d like to be at your age and have your so-called problems. They don’t realise that we really do have important problems.

02 – Sometimes we have important problems with my boyfriend, but they think that 13, 14-year-old doesn't have real problems.

01 – I was arguing once with my sister about... It generally annoys me that at the age of 13, 14 I don't know what a problem really is. Some people really have big problems. It annoys me that they say "what kind of problems may a junior secondary school student have? He has no money for vodka, for smokes or for a mobile phone".

Another important factor, from the point of view of the efficient cooperation with specialists, is partnership and equal treating. Young people expect the adults to help them understand the world around them, to appreciate their efforts and not to impose their solutions, but rather seek new possibilities together.

According to me, it is possible to talk normally with any adult, but he too has to open up to us. This person has to, I don't know how to say it correctly, respect the fact that we won't tell him everything if we don't know each other well. If we say something he can open up and say "it's OK, I did the same things when I was at your age, it will all be fine, you'll be fine."

Table no. 20 - Young people's opinion about the professionals providing help – expectations

Poland	Spain	Germany
<p>Young people benefit from the help of adults frequently, but they have some conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being treated as equals - young people have their problems as well and they are important to them 2. Keeping the secrets 3. The help adequate to the problems - even an attempt in helping is important, the final effect is not the most important 4. Helping the family in an early stage of the problem 5. The actual help and not its imitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to, help and respect young people • Let the young people focus on what they love • Seek new possibilities with them • Not to whine and not to complain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is good that they are there • They should be young • They should be flexible and available at any hour • The youth should decide when and where the meetings should take place and only when they decide on their own that they need this kind of help

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Organisation of the work of social care institutions, non-governmental organisations and other institutions whose statutory tasks are to take care of young people, as well as the organisation of the workday, enables the implementation of the work with the youth at risk of social exclusion into the everyday practice of the non-formal methods of education. There are no contraindications or obstructions on the part of the directors/the managers of the institutions concerning the implementation of new, innovative methods of work. In many cases, the direct superiors even expect the employees to act in that way.
2. The experience of the Spanish partner shows that working with young people using the project method has numerous desired results: many positive changes and the development of the youth. It is the method of work that has been indicated the most often. It enables other people to form right, partner relationships with young people, the relationships that they expect so much. It makes the constant modifications of the own actions possible – it even forces to think the actions through. The flexibility in the work with young people is very important – the reality changes very fast, and the young people have the strongest reactions to these changes
3. The specialists that work with young people in most cases see them through the deficits that result, according to the specialists, from the deficits of their family home. They see them stereotypically – as those who do not expect anything from life, who do not need any support from the part of adults and whose only problem is the lack of money for stimulants and for modern computer gadgets. The help provided to young people should constitute an answer to their real problems, and should not be schematic, “because we adults know better”. In the case of older youth, we cannot assume that starting the professional work will solve all of their problems. If they did not have any positive experience within their family of origin (sense of security, emotional stability, support), we should not expect that the economic stabilisation will result in the emotional stabilisation.
4. The main method of working with young people (in different age groups) in Poland and in Germany is private conversation. It is obvi-

ously conducted according to this scheme: I, adult, as a more experienced person, know better what you need. I will tell you what to do in order to live in a better way.

5. The category of experience as a guideline in the professional work is on a first place among the teachers, social workers, coaches or family assistants. The experience and the conversations with co-workers constitute a basic form of the specialists' professional development. They themselves take part in the workshops conducted using the non-formal methods of education very rarely – workshops, projects, events. The knowledge about the young people's lives they draw from their co-workers, from the Internet, from the television.
6. To young people, according to the specialists that took part in the research, all of the three basic methods of education should be important. Each of them provides them with different experiences that are important in their present and future life. Nevertheless, they underline the dominant role of the non-formal education, although, as they admit themselves, learning through experience has more positive effects
7. Young people have their passions, interests. They are willing to experience new things. They try to keep up with the ever changing social reality, but they do not always succeed. They expect the adults to show them the path they should follow, and not to give them advice that tell them how to live in order to make adults happy.
8. They want to cooperate with the adults, tell them about their concerns and problems, but at the same time they expect adults to treat them equally. The respect is the thing that they expect above all. The young people are very good observants. They are particularly sensitive to every sign of inequality, lack of competence and negligence.

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ANNEX NO. 1

The scenario of the focus group interview

Perceiving by the representatives of the social professions of the determinants of conducting the social work with the youth at risk of social exclusion by implementing non-formal methods of education

Group – the representatives of the social professions (social workers, family assistants, probation officers)

- | |
|---|
| 1. Introduction – the moderators introduces himself, the project and the whole research |
|---|

Time: about 6 min.

Moderator:

Good morning,

My name is and I am the employee of the In Posterum Foundation. We invited you today to a discussion whose purpose is to recognise the resources and the ways of acting of social services with the youth at risk of social exclusion. The meeting is a part of a project realised under the European Commission Erasmus + programme (devoted to education, trainings and young people). Our today's meeting will last approximately 120 min. Thank you very much for accepting our invitation

Information about the project: The project "Integration through Inspirations. Non - formal education as a tool of the equalization of opportunities of youth at risk of social exclusion" is a educational project. **Its main purpose** is "to increase the level of social integration among young people at risk of social exclusion by the propagation of using the methods of non-formal methods of education in public institutions of social assistance". **The specific objectives of the project** are:

1. Increasing the professional competence of the representatives of social professions in the field of using non-formal methods of education during the work with youth at risk of social exclusion
2. Establishing a new form of social support addressed to the youth at risk of social exclusion by adjusting the methods and techniques used in non-formal education to the conditionings and practices of public welfare institutions

The project is realised in the international partnership. Our partners are RegioVision GmbH from Germany (consulting and training company) and Decroly SL from Spain (education company). Similar research will be conducted also in Germany and in Spain. The discussion with you is really important to us, because we would like to change the approach of the social workers working with young people – develop the methods and tools, which will be interesting for you and will enable you to develop yourselves.

2. Notification of registering the meeting and explaining the techniques of the focus groups interviews and the role of the moderator

Time: 6 min.

Moderator:

During our discussion there will be numerous questions and different answers. I would like to tell you that each and every one of them is extremely important. That is why I ask you not to be intimidated or limited by my presence or by the opinions of other participants of this research. The rule of unanimity does not apply. Every participant has the right to express his own beliefs and opinions. They are all important and valuable. Please talk one person at a time, because our conversation will be registered using the voice recorder. Registering of our conversation is important, because I am not able to write down everything that you say, and I would not like to lose anything. This record will be used only by me in order to draw up the final report, it will not be used for any other purpose, it will be neither distributed nor published. My role today will consist in leading the discussion in such a way that all of you would have equal chance for expressing your opinion on given subjects. Next, on the basis of what you say today, I will draw up the research report.

3. Introduction of the participants of the meeting

Time: 10 min.

Moderator

Because we are going to spend the next few hours together, I think that we should get to know each other better. Please tell me a few words about yourselves. You may use this model:

My name is

I work in: As a/an

For years

Education degree:

[Moderator says a few words about himself, then he encourages the participants. At the end the moderator asks the interviewees to write their names on the special sheets of paper, and then put them in front of themselves, so that the moderator can see them]

4. Characteristic of the local environment as a place of work and social space, where the representatives of social professions realise their social tasks (evaluation of the work and local environment resources)

Time: about 20 min.

Moderator:

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to start the proper part of our meeting. I would like to ask you how the organisation of your workday looks like. In other words – how does your workday look like?

-Is every day the same, or do you perform also other tasks that “exceed” your everyday routine? *(If there are difficulties with answering, the moderator shall ask further questions concerning organising group classes, social events (festivals, meetings etc.)*

Moderator:

In the past few year we have been talking about the projects, implementing them, raising funds for the projects – as you can see these are all project activities. Were there any project activities conducted in your organisations? If yes, then what kind of projects they were, at which social groups they were directed? *(Moderator – if he sees that the participants of the research do not understand the idea of a project method, he should explain its purposes briefly)*

- Please explain shortly what kind of activities have been realised under these projects.

- What role did you play in their realisation?

Moderator: If the participants do not mention the projects intended for young people, ask: - Why there were not any projects directed at young people?

Moderator:

Looking at the project activity, at the implementation of the projects in retrospect, please describe their effectiveness. What kind of action had the biggest influence on the functioning of the young person in your care, and which of them, according to you, did not have any effects?

-Were there introduced any new solutions under these projects that you could implement in everyday practice? Please describe their use and the way in which they were innovative. And if you do not have any examples of good practice, could you think of any reason why?

5. The actions performed on behalf of the youth at risk of social exclusion in the eyes of the representatives of social professions (general experience of the interviewees related to everyday work with the youth at risk of social exclusion)

Time: about 30 min

Moderator:

The topic of our meeting relates to young people and the cooperation with them. That is why I would like to talk with you about the youth at risk of social exclusion. Generally, when we talk about the youth, we think of people aged 15 to 29 years. In our research we focus on the people aged 15-24. There is also an internal differentiation within this group, so I would like to suggest the following way of division: 1) young people aged 15 to 18 years – children of the clients of social services and 2) people aged 18 to 24 years as the clients of social services. On the basis of your own experience and observations please describe the group of people aged 15 to 18 years old with whom you work, to whom you provide assistance. The most interesting part to me in this characteristics will be the situation of the families where they grow up, their economic situation, the problems that are encountered within those families.

- Are there any problems that characterise this group of young people – e.g. pathologies, addictions, conflicts with law, educational difficulties, truancy etc.?

- Peer environment – do they maintain social contacts, with whom? (with people in similar situation or those in a different one)

- Do they have the possibility to pursue their own interests by taking part in extracurricular activities? The kinds of these activities, the reasons of lack of them.

Moderator:

And now please characterise this group using the psychological categories: how do they deal with the status of their families, do they have any psychological problems, disorders?

-What are their life goals? What are the values that could be the basis for starting the aid schemes?

Moderator:

For how long have you been working with young people in this age group? Do they expect any help from you? If yes, than what would it be, what do you think it is that they need the most – what kind of help?

-According to you, what is the young people's attitude towards working with you?

-Please describe the methods of working with people aged 15 to 18 years that you apply in your everyday work practice.

-Which ones of them do you consider as effective? Why they are effective?

-What does not work and why?

-Do you know any other effective methods? Why do you not implement them? Are there any people interested in using new methods in work? On what does such possibility depend?

Moderator:

Do you succeed in engaging the youth aged 15 to 18 years in any activities undertaken by your organisations (e.g. festivals, meetings etc.)?

-If yes, then how?

-If not, then what are (were) the obstacles/difficulties?

-How do you think it would be possible to increase the young people's involvement in local affairs?

Moderator:

Ok, we talked about young people aged 15 to 18 years. But there is also another group that I am interested in – young people aged 18 to 24. Do you think that this age group is somehow different from the previous one? On the basis of the characteristics of the environment from which they come, the problems of the families of their origin or the ones that they started themselves – their economical difficulties, everyday problems, please characterise this social group once more.

- Are there any problems that characterise this group of young people – e.g. pathologies, addictions, conflicts with law, etc.?

- Peer environment – do they maintain social contacts, with whom? (with people in similar situation or those in a different one)

- Are you familiar with their interests?

Moderator:

Would you be able to characterise this group once more, this time using psychological categories: how do they deal with their status of a person who benefits from social assistance?

- Do they want to change their status and how much they want it? What is the level of their determination?
- Do they use the mechanisms of rationalisation of their situation? If yes, then what are these mechanisms?
- Do they show an active or a passive attitude?
- Do they have any psychological problems, disorders?
- What are their life goals? What are their important values on the basis of which it would be possible to use some motivational systems in order to change their status?

Moderator:

For how long have you been working with the youth in this age group? Do the young people expect any help from you? If yes, then what would it be, what kind of help do they need?

- And what do you think is their attitude towards working with you?
- Please characterise the methods of working with people aged 18 to 24 years that you implement in your everyday work practice.
- Which ones of them would you describe as the efficient ones? Why are they efficient?
- And what does not work and why?
- Do you know any other effective methods? Why do you not use them? Are you interested in implementing new methods in your work? On what does that possibility depend?

Moderator:

Do you succeed in engaging young people aged 18 to 24 in the activities undertaken by your organisation (e.g. festivals, meetings, etc.)?

- If yes, then how?
- If not, then what are (were) the obstacles/difficulties?
- How, according to you, would it be possible to engage young people in local affairs?

6. The understanding of the work in the local environment, including non-formal methods of socio-cultural education (the way of understanding/ defining of the non-formal methods of socio-cultural education).

Time: about 40 min.

Moderator:

I will now describe 3 definitions of education: formal, informal and non-formal. *(To make it easy, the moderator gives to every participant a document containing the definitions of various forms of education – Annex no. 1)*

“Formal education consists in learning by taking part in the educational and training programmes leading to acquiring the registered qualification”. In other words, it is an institutionalised system of education that takes place in organised, structured conditions. The system hierarchically organised that involves pre-school, school, university education, as well as various courses and vocational trainings. The participation in this system, differently from the participation in other forms of non-formal education, is in most cases compulsory (at the initial stage) and leads to obtaining the certificates, diplomas confirming the acquired qualifications and permissions. In the context of our conversation, the characteristic of the institutionalised system of education is the presence of the student – teacher hierarchy. The first one is a passive recipient of the knowledge passed on by the expert. Example: school, vocational trainings, university.

“Informal learning – acquiring the knowledge, qualifications and social competencies by undertaking various activities which do not involve the organised forms of learning. The term “informal education” can be easily substituted by “learning through practice”. Throughout the whole life we acquire various qualifications, we shape our attitudes and value system by taking part in numerous activities, social groups, by growing in a certain culture and environment. The informal learning is not institutionalised, most of the time it is incidental – subconscious. Example: life with all the situations, challenges, etc. Even the contact e.g. with the social worker and obtaining information can be defined as informal learning.

“Non-formal education – institutionally organised learning, but without educational programmes and trainings leading to the acquisition of a registered qualification”. NON-FORMAL EDUCATION MEANS: LEARNING THROUGH PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE according to the rule: **“Tell me, and I will forget, show me, and I will remember, let me take a part, and I will understand”**, which is based on a student – teacher relationship that is different than the traditional one, the roles and relations between the teacher and the learner. The first one becomes a facilitator/mentor/coach, who instead of passing on the “truths”, the knowledge contained in books supports the process of voluntary learning of the participant of the educational process, who has a role of the partner.

The first indicated way of learning is connected with non-formal education by the institutionalisation of the process of acquiring knowledge. The participation in learning does not finish with acquiring the official qualifications. This type differs from the formal learning by being voluntary, and from in-

formal learning by being intentional – having the awareness of the purposes of learning. Finally, the non-formal education is not based on partnership, on the participation of both partners in the process of learning. Thus, the non-formal education can be treated as a “third way” which penetrates, connects and completes the kinds of learning mentioned above.

Example: workshops, project method, events, experimental methods, sports clubs, interest clubs, youth exchanges

Moderator:

Taking into consideration these differences, please tell me what kind of the forms of education did you use while developing your own professional competencies?

From the point of view of the aims of this research (and thus the project) I would like to know if you took part in any projects, trainings or courses that were conducted by using methods of non-formal education.

-If yes, then what kind of courses were they? Can you tell the differences between these courses and the formal education? Were they interesting to you? Why do you think so?

Moderator:

Taking into consideration our discussion about young people that you are helping, please tell which of the shown forms of education is the most appropriate for the youth at risk of social exclusion. Please justify your answer.

-And do you know any institutions or social organisation that work with the youth using the methods of non-formal education?

-If yes, then what kind of activities do they undertake? Are you familiar with the effects of their work?

Moderator:

Let us proceed to the practice now. Do you use the methods of non-formal education or some of its elements while working with young people?

-If yes, then how do you judge their effectiveness?

-If no, then why?

Moderator:

The active social policy is now a permanent part of the social policy system. The main idea of this policy is to create appropriate strategies and social programmes that can prevent the formation of difficult situations, and when they do occur, to provide help in becoming independent. Now I have a forward-looking question. Do you think that non-formal methods of education can become permanently present in your work practice while working with the youth at risk of social exclusion?

- Does their implementation require any organisational changes in your workplace? If yes, then what kind of changes would be necessary?
- On who does the implementation of the changes in the work at you workplace depend? (On your direct superior or maybe on the local government, or maybe the change requires some solutions at the central level?)
- Do you think that the implementation of the active social policy – new methods of work, new approach to the client – depends somehow on your superiors (team managers, directors)? In other words, do your superiors have any influence on the methods that you or other social workers apply while working with socially excluded people? Have you ever encountered any obstacles in this field?
- Please give me some examples of the openness of the superiors to the implementation of new methods of work – or their reluctance to those changes.
- Is there a need for specific training of the workers (education, reinforcement in fulfilling their professional roles)? Please justify your answer.

Moderator:

What are the possibilities of your involvement in any additional activities for the benefit of young people in local/work environment? Are you willing to take part in trainings, to accumulate new experience and modify your own activities that you implement in work with young people at risk of social exclusion?

-If yes, then have you ever modified the methods of working with other groups of your clients? Please provide some examples of such modification.

-If not, then what would have to change to make you ready to implement changes in your work methods?

Moderator:

In your opinion, what conditions have to be fulfilled or need to be created at local level to prevent the social exclusion of young people? (*creating places where young people could spend their free time or develop their competences, founding new social organisations by the youth, school involvement, etc.*)

7. Conclusion

Moderator:

Thank you very much for taking part in this research. The information gathered during our discussion will be important in the next steps of our project. Thank you for all of your opinions and comments, which are extremely important to us and constitute an important material for analysis in the whole

project. Thanks to our discussion I found out a lot about the institutional, social and private possibilities for implementing non-formal methods of education in everyday practice of professionals working with youth at risk of social exclusion. Once again, thank you very much for your help and for this discussion. The research report will be available on the project's website by the end of May 2016. I encourage you to consult it and to make your own remarks and suggestions regarding our analysis and conclusions.

ANNEX NO. 2

Scenario of a focus group interview

Recognition of functioning of the youth in local/family environment in the context of determining their future life choices

Group – youth people at risk of social exclusion aged 15 to 24 years.

1. Introduction – the moderators introduces himself, the project and the whole research

Time: about 4 min.

Moderator:

Good morning,

My name is and I am the employee of In Posterum Foundation. Our work consists in implementing the activation programmes targeted at people of different ages. We provide as well trainings and educational programmes during which we use the innovative methods of working with young people and adults. We are trying to ensure that our actions satisfy the real needs of the people we are helping. We invited you today to a discussion whose purpose is to get to know the life situation of the young people from Lower Silesian Voivodeship. We want to get to know you and your situation in order to be able to help you and support you. This meeting is a part of a project realised under the European Commission programme Erasmus + (devoted to the education, trainings and young people). Our today's meeting will last at most 120 min. Thank you very much for accepting our invitation.

Information about the project:

The project “Integration through Inspirations” is an educational project, co-financed by European Commission under the Erasmus + programme. Our partners are RegioVision GmbH from Germany (consulting and training company) and Decroly SL from Spain (education company). Similar research will be conducted also in Germany and in Spain. The discussion with you is

really important to us, because we would like to change the approach of the adults working with young people – develop the methods and tools, which will be interesting for you and will enable you to develop yourselves. We would like the adults to acknowledge your expectations and needs, and understand even a little bit your point of view in the situations that are important to you. As a consequence, we would like that in your environment there be more possibilities of the activities utilising your talents and interests, meeting places, people that would have the time and patience for you

2. Notification of registering the meeting and explaining the techniques of the focus groups interviews and the role of the moderator

Time: 3-4 min.

Moderator:

During our discussion there will be numerous questions and different answers. I would like to tell you that each and every one of them is extremely important. That is why I ask you not to be intimidated or limited by my presence or by the opinions of other participants of this research.

The rule of unanimity does not apply. Every participant has the right to express his own beliefs and opinions. They are all important and valuable.

- You may ask questions both to the moderator and to each other
- Please talk one person at a time, because our conversation will be registered using the voice recorder

Registering of our conversation is important, because I am not able to write down everything that you say, and I would not like to lose anything. This record will be used only by me in order to draw up the final report, it will not be used for any other purpose, it will be neither distributed nor published. Please, express your consent for registering the sound. Do you agree? My role today will consist in leading the discussion in such a way that all of you would have equal chance for expressing your opinion on given subjects. Next, on the basis of what you say today, I will draw up the research report. You are the experts today, and the opinions that you share today will enable us to formulate the indications for the people who work with young people.

1. Introduction of the participants of the meeting
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Time: 10 min.

Moderator

Because we are going to spend the next 2 hours together, I think that we should get to know each other better. Please tell me a few words about yourselves. You may use this model:

My name is

I'm years old

I study/work in (name of school or workplace)

I live

[Moderator says a few words about himself, then he encourages the participants. At the end the moderator asks the interviewees to write their names on the special sheets of paper, and then put them in front of themselves, so that the moderator can see them]

4. Introductory question

Time: 10-15 min.

Moderator:

How, in your general opinion, does the youth live today?

What are the most frequent problems that young people face?

What is important for young people nowadays? Why?

How do you perceive the adults? What it is about them that irritates you?

Are there any advantages?

What are the dreams of today's youth, what are their aspiration?

According to you, are these dreams real?

Is it easy for them to achieve their goals, plans?

Why yes? Why not?

Who, what makes it easier for young people to make their dreams come true?

What may make it harder/ easier to achieve your goals?

5. Characteristics of the local environment as a place of own activity (family, studies, work, free time)
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Time: about 60 min.

Moderator:

Now a question concerning something entirely different. How could you describe the place where you live?

- How is your family? Who do you live with (parents, siblings or maybe wife or husband, children)?
- How do you feel at your own home? What are you responsible for at home? What are your household duties?
- With who you are on good/bad terms, who do you trust the most?
- And maybe there is someone with whom you argue frequently? Who is it? And why do you think there are these conflicts between you?
- Is there something that you would like to change in the family relations (contacts)?

Moderator:

And what about your school? How do you feel there or how did you feel, when you were attending it?

- What is (or was) nice about the school?
- What didn't appeal to you? What did you like and what did you dislike and why?
- Do you like/ did you like learning, what are your most frequent ways of studying?

And the teachers, other students? How did you get along with them? How can you describe the Me-teacher or Me-other students relationship?

Moderator:

Imagine now that you are the Minister for National Education and you implement changes in the system of school education. What would the changes consist on? What, according to you, has to be changed in school, so that the students could feel good there and frequent it with pleasure?

Moderator:

What are your interests, how do you like to spend your free time?

- Who do you spend your free time with the most often?
- Do you have the so-called permanent "bunch" of friends?
- Who are these friends?
- How do you like to spend time with these people?
- Where do you like to spend your free time the most?

Moderator:

Are there any places where you may spend your free time in the place where you live or in your neighbourhood? (sports or interest clubs, places for practicing sport activities etc.)

- Are these places available for everyone?
- Is the entrance free or do you have to pay for it?
- Do you take part in any activities there?

- If yes, how do you feel there?
- If not, then why? Is it because they are payable, or maybe because you feel bad there? What would have to change there to encourage you to take part in these activities?
- Do these activities respond to your interests?

Moderator:

Do you have any plans concerning your professional future?

- Do you know already what you would like to do in the future?
- What would you like your profession to be?
- Was there anyone to help you make that choice?
- Who would possibly help you?

Moderator:

What do you think about the voluntary work? *(if the moderator notices that the participants of the research do not really understand the idea of the voluntary work, he should explain to them what does this activity consist in)*

- Is the voluntary work popular in your environment or rather there aren't many people showing interest in it? Do the young people in your environment – where you live – get themselves involved in any local activities?

Moderator:

Imagine a situation where you would like to get involved in some kind of activity. Dedicate your time for free. What would encourage you to make the decision of starting voluntary work?

- What kind of activity would it have to be? (helping older people, helping children with their homework, running a sports team etc.)

Moderator:

And maybe there are some people in your neighbourhood for or with who you would be able to take part in some activities, e.g. voluntary work. In other words, is there a person of such importance to you that you would devote your private time and do something for this person, even if it doesn't bring you happiness?

Moderator:

I have a question concerning your participation in various projects organised in the place where you live (courses, trainings, extracurricular activities, etc.)

- Did you take part in such projects?
- Was the way of conducting them interesting to you?

- How should they be conducted in order to be attractive to you and other young people?
- Did you decide on your own to take part in them, or did someone tell you to do so (if yes, then who)?
- Has anything changed in your life after the project?
- Are these positive or negative changes?
- Having the knowledge that you have now, will you be willing to take part in another projects? Justify your opinion.
- Does the fact, that the project were organised by the clerks, have any influence on the participation of young people in these projects, or does it depend mostly on the genre of the project and the young people's level of the interest in particular activities?

Moderator:

And now I would like to hear your opinion on the subject of helping young people. Surely you've met various clerks in your life (teacher, school pedagogue or psychologist, social workers, probation officers, officers of the employment agency). Did you have personal contact with them or maybe they contacted your parents, siblings etc.?

-What was, in your opinion, good about these contacts, and what was that you didn't like?

-Why do you think so?

Do you think that their help was adequate or in contrary? Can you give me some examples?

Moderator:

And now imagine that you are the officers of the employment agency, teachers, probation officers or social workers (*if the moderator sees that the participants do not know these professions and their occupations, he should explain it to them shortly*) and you have to help young people.

Please describe the examples of the help that would be the most appropriate for young people in various situations.

Moderator:

Imagine your future. Describe one day of the future of your dreams. What would you like it to look like?

-Where are you? Why in that specific place?

-Who are you?

-Who are you with? Why with these people?

-What do you do?

Moderator:

What has to be done to make your dreams come true? Who may help you with this? According to you, what are the barriers/limitations in realisation of these dreams?

6. Conclusion

Moderator:

Thank you very much for taking part in this research. The information gathered during our discussion will be important in the next steps of our project. Thank you for all of your opinions and comments, which are extremely important to us and constitute an important material for analysis in the whole project. Thanks to our discussion I found out a lot about young people, their problems, needs and expectations especially from us, adults, who work as specialists that help people who are in the need. Once again, thank you very much for your help and for this discussion. The research report will be available on the project's website. I encourage you to consult it and to make your own remarks and suggestions regarding our analysis and conclusions.