

Power from Participation: Experiences of Youth's Art Workshop

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**Power from Participation:
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Youth's Art Workshop is a practical training period for young unemployed people providing them with a work experience of a multiform creative group work included with future-planning. Drama and a variety of other creative methods are used in order to offer an opportunity for a collaborative, action-based learning and social strengthening in a socially encouraging environment. The purpose of this action-based tool for community work is to support young people's comprehensive growth, development and life coping in order to prevent them from social exclusion.

The purpose of this study was to define and describe young people's experiences of Youth's Art Workshop in order to gain the understanding of how creative methods can be used as tools for empowerment in youth work. The meaning was also to chart the societal function of workshops as an educational institution preventing young people from marginalisation.

The theoretical framework is based on the understanding of youth education as a socio-pedagogical activity. By constructing and proposing societal perspectives for the phenomenon of interest, it includes an examination of the essential concepts and practices concerning Finnish workshop activity and the transition of youth, as well as an outline of the Youth's Art Workshop as social work fostering empowerment and creativity.

This is a qualitative study which aspires to understand the phenomenon of interest by exploring human experiences. The research method was a semi-structured interview, which was used with the purpose of gathering data of the five participants' personal experiences of the workshop participation and their professional development since that. The actual interest of the study was to search for elements of empowerment as a personal process of social change. The data was analysed by content analysis, which highlighted interpretation as a research method.

The results indicate that the participants had experienced empowerment. The workshop participation had offered mostly encouraging experiences of creative methods and group work in a socially supportive and stimulating environment. The workshop period was described as a socially intensive learning experience where power was gained through an open-minded experimentation. Active participation characterised by experiential learning, had fostered young people's social strengthening and professional development, opening new perspectives for future-planning. It was considered as an impressive, unique and meaningful time of life, characterised by social encouragement and activation. Based on these findings, it was discovered that the workshop participation had promoted the empowerment-process of the youth.

Key words: Empowerment, creative methods, workshops, youth education, prevention of social exclusion

Milla Salonen

Kokemuksia Nuorten Taidetyöpajasta

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Nuorten Taidetyöpaja on nuorille työttömille suunnattu työharjoittelujakso, jonka tarkoituksena on tarjota monipuolinen työkokemus luovasta ryhmätoiminnasta sekä tilaisuus tulevaisuudensuunnitteluun. Työmenetelmään draama ja muut luovat toiminnot, paja tarjoaa mahdollisuuden yhteisölliseen ja toiminnalliseen oppimiseen sekä sosiaalisen toimintakyvyn vahvistamiseen kannustavassa ympäristössä. Se on myös toiminnallinen ryhmätyöväline, jonka tarkoituksena on ehkäistä nuorten syrjäytymistä ja vahvistaa heidän kokonaisvaltaista kasvua, kehitystä ja elämänhallinnantaitoja.

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää ja kuvata nuorten kokemuksia Nuorten Taide-työpajasta sekä lisätä ymmärrystä siitä, miten luovia menetelmiä voidaan käyttää voimaantumisen välineenä sosiaalityössä nuorten parissa. Tavoitteena oli myös kartoittaa työpajojen yhteiskunnallista tarkoitusta nuorten syrjäytymistä ehkäisevänä kasvatuksellisenä toimintana.

Työn teoreettisen viitekehyksen pohjana on ymmärrys nuorisokasvatuksesta ja työpajoista sosiaalipedagogisena toimintana, jossa korostuu kasvatuksen sosiaalinen luonne. Tämä osuus koostuu yhteiskunnallisesta nuoruuden nivelvaiheeseen ja työpajatoimintaan liittyvien käsitteiden ja käytäntöjen tarkastelusta sekä taidetyöpajan hahmottelemisesta voimaantumista ja luovuutta edistävänä toimintana.

Kyseessä on laadullinen ja ymmärtävä tutkimus, jonka kohteena ovat inhimilliset, osallistujien henkilökohtaiset kokemukset. Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytettiin puolistrukturoitua teemahaastattelua, jolla koottiin viiden nuoren kokemuksia taidetyöpajatoiminnasta sekä pajajakson jälkeisestä ammatillisesta kehityksestä. Varsinainen tutkimusintressi oli etsiä voimaantumisen osatekijöitä sosiaalisena muutosprosessina. Aineisto analysoitiin aineistolähtöisellä sisällönanalyysillä, jossa korostui tulkinnallinen tutkimusote.

Tulokset kertovat voimaantumisen kokemuksista. Pajalta oli saatu enimmäkseen rohkaisevia ja innostavia kokemuksia ryhmässä työskentelystä ja luovista menetelmistä kannustavassa ja virikkeellisessä toimintaympäristössä. Pajajakson kuvauksissa voimaantumisen osatekijöinä korostuivat yhteisöllisyys, virikkeellisyys, aktiivinen osallistuminen ja kokemuksellinen oppiminen. Kokemus oli vahvistanut osallistujien sosiaalista toimintakykyä ja tukenut heidän ammatillista kehittymistään avaten uusia näkökulmia tulevaisuudensuunnitteluun. Työpaja koettiin ainutlaatuisena, ja merkittävänä osana mennyttä elämää, sosiaalisen vahvistumisen ja aktivoitumisen ajanjaksona. Tutkimustuloksiin pohjautuen voidaan todeta, että työpajaan osallistuminen oli edistänyt nuorten voimaantumisprosessia.

Asiasanat: Voimaantuminen, luovat menetelmät, työpajatoiminta, nuorisokasvatus, syrjäytymisen ehkäisy

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1 Introduction

Our rights, duties and status in society are largely defined by different societal institutions. They produce resources for our social action and socialisation, which they also control by setting different norms and models. (Komonen 2008, 167-169.) In our society, an active citizenship is always tightly due to our participation to different communities. Thus, education can be described as an environment for possibilities and choices, but also as a one of different risks; a place where the integration or marginalisation of young people is actualised. Finnish education system is highly respected in many ways, however failing to offer all students necessary tools for future. Growing educational inequality has been a problem in 21st century. (Huotelin & Komonen 2006, 3.) Our society has awakened by the fact that the wellbeing of young people is not “equally divided”; there seems to be a growing gap between “the successful youth” and the hard core of the troubled ones. This phenomenon of polarisation typically is described as a situation where the majority of young people behaves and manages fairly well with their lives, while the others have more and more different social problems and damaging behaviour. This causes growing need for specialised services; the problems are seen as drug abuse, poverty, health problems, anti-social behaviour, and low level of education and employment. (Eräranta & Autio 2008, 8.)

The transition of the youth passing from education to working life has become more and more complicated and uncertain. Because of the scattered nature of our life course today, the tightened competition of study places, as well as instability and unpredictability of our labour market, young people’s future planning and fastening to education is challenging and often troublesome. Development of different models and practices are needed to facilitate young people to move on between different education and institutions, according their personal needs and resources. Different projects and work shops can be seen as new institutions as part of education and coaching services beside the established institutions to reinforce our education system and to remedy the faults in it. (Komonen 2006, 37.)

This study concentrates on Youth’s Art Work Shop (Nuorten Taidetyöpaja), which is one of these efforts to promote young people’s socialisation and active citizenship. It serves the purposes of employing young people in risk of marginalisation and activating them for a future-oriented action. By utilising creative methods, it aspires to prevent them from social exclusion. Westman (2007) has charted, collected and brought out a publication about the different ideologies, methods, practices and experiences behind and generated by this particular workshop, however not presenting any comprehensive theoretical framework for this professional activity. It is described rather as a combination of different elements from several disciplines; constituting a unique kind of a working tool for youth work, which has esta

lished its status in employment services of Jyväskylä. Because of its multi-dimensional professional roots this workshop remains ambiguous to define, thus challenging to research.

However it's been an interesting target of study for me, as it combines social work with creative methods. An essential part of the study has been to gain also a theoretical understanding of the target of interest. This is why it may appear "unbalanced" or theory-based. The main purpose of this study however, is to explore young people's experiences of the workshop participation, in order to gain an understanding of how creative methods can be used as tools for empowerment with young people. This study also aspires to explore the function of Youth's Art Workshop as educational youth work. I consider workshop activity as socio-pedagogical activity which emphasizes the importance of social and structural battle against social problems; a social work promoting empowerment and active citizenship.

In a sense, we could consider YAWS as a "social innovation" referring to "new strategies, concepts, ideas and organizations that meet social needs of all kinds - from working conditions and education to community development and health - and that extend and strengthen civil society" (Wikipedia 2011). Creativity and innovativeness are essential resources for developing our society and offer keys for the success of future Finland. The challenge of promoting these issues concerns all the players in our society. Innovations present today's "new creativity" meaning an invention, a product, a service or an operations model, having some commercial and economic value. Key words are economic productivity and benefit which lead towards economic growth. (Sava 2007, 39-48.) Wellbeing of individuals obviously reflects on the wellbeing of society and our "effectiveness" as members of it. I consider creativity as an essential resource for wellbeing. In this sense, the task of the social innovation "YAWS" is to enhance young people's participation as "productive" members of society by promoting their active citizenship and wellbeing by cultivating their creativity. These questions have been the very fundamental interest of the study: How can we use creative methods to foster people's wellbeing? How can we cultivate creativity as a human resource of individuals and communities, in social work promoting young people's active citizenship?

2 Young people in transition

Youth is period of contradictions in human life: it's time for dreams, open chances, waiting and freedom, but also a transitional phase of life prone to different threats, when you're not "ready" yet but not either without responsibility. It's a transition from childhood to adulthood; one is "something in between" those two. It's a biological, psychological and social process of growth and maturing. (Nivala & Saastamoinen 2007, 10.) It is a transitional phase of human socialisation, which can be described by three "careers": 1) becoming part of labour market, 2) moving away from home and 3) starting a family. These three "careers" don't

follow each other straightforward, but are rather overlapping and complementing each other; also changing through the times. These days our society is much more unpredictable and uncertain in many ways, than in the past, which can be seen in the nature of the transitional processes. (Veijola 2005, 23.)

Youth is time for creating life-coping-tools and life-management skills for the rest of one's life. These tools are created with different choices; we all have the responsibility for our own life and our individual chain of choices, where education and employment play an essential role. Growing to adulthood has become more and more demanding phase of life; young people's transition from education to working life is becoming more and more difficult and long process. There isn't any ready-made education line available which could lead them to a safe and sure employment to assure life earning, family-forming and house-holding; the life isn't so straightforward anymore than it might have used to be. Today it's all more and more about pondering and rethinking different education and employment possibilities; one needs an ability to make good choices towards new challenges and possibilities in our different life-projects. (Linnossuo 2004, 18-47.)

On the 21st century, "the well-being of the majority of youth has increased, but for a minority of 15-20 percent, it has decreased. Difficult problems accumulate among a small minority (3-5 percent) and their problems are very severe. Ministry of the Interior Affairs has brought social exclusion into the forefront as the most important internal threat." (Koste 2010, 27.) This chapter aspires to gain an understanding of the different processes leading to young people's social exclusion, and the ones of socialisation. Finally I will introduce Finnish workshops as an institution promoting young people's active citizenship; as an educational intervention against social exclusion.

2.1 Marginalisation

Young people participate into the society through different "*fields of coping*" such as education, work life, hobbies, family, other relationships, employment office, and subculture. When not integrating or having no contact on any field, one can lose the control and coping of life. A short and temporary period of unemployment may serve as a fruitful and liberating experience offering a chance for a deeper self-reflection, but in the long run, it may be damaging. One needs some "gaming eye" on the playground of life, balancing between one's resources, goals and expectation's of society. One needs to consider oneself as an active subject having the power to influence one's future and to see the effects and the importance of one's own actions. (Vehviläinen 1999, 198-199.)

When one loses the control, coping or management of one's life, and the socialisation doesn't proceed in a desired way; one may become marginalised, "socially excluded". Marginalisation is a multi-layered and ambiguous phenomenon, always affected by different societal structures and circumstances. It can be considered as an accumulation of shortages in human welfare; referring to a human state of being as well as to the process producing it. (Linnosuo 2004, 16.) These processes are always long-termed and each individual has own factors, such as low level of income or education, long-termed or repetitive unemployment, different problems with life management or participation into society, possible illness or disability, deviant behaviour, criminality, use of intoxicants, etc. (Rönkä 1999, 9-16.) The process is always connected with different kinds of societal, cultural and life-situational factors as well as one's individual conscious and unconscious action and choices. One case of problematic or deviant behaviour such as withdrawal, may be a very complicated result of different happenings, thus it's often difficult to understand and analyse. (Piri, Lehtoranta, Leivo & Nurmi 1998, 3.)

The phenomenon of marginalisation can be described by five features of a *negative change* in life (Lämsä 1999,49-60): 1) drifting away from crucial areas of society, 2) overwhelming accumulation of problems, 3) contradiction between individual and community, 4) losing control of life and 5) a feeling of alienation. All the conscious choices however, have their influence on one's life course. Human nature and identity are open to different changes; we all have our resources and failings. Life is never simple, linear and coherent; everything in life is relative. Lämsä sees identities as images of a moment; varying according time and context. All changes can bring something new for us. She presents a pattern called "*a ladder of marginalisation and life-management*" to describe this fluctuating nature of life situations. It demonstrates how people may be sometimes in risk of marginalisation, or even on the step of dropping out, which may lead even in elimination, but they can always cope with it and climb back up to the highest step of the ladder.

Särkelä (1994, 16-20) sees marginalisation as a loose or development of so-called *functional arenas*, outer tools and functional preconditions for life situations. These are different kinds of concrete or idealistic areas of life such as work place, friends, family, social networks, culture, which all have their own systems of norms and rules directing one's life; by a conscious or by an unwritten form. In each of these arenas one always has a role of some kind, which describes how one's action is in relation to others. The arenas are created by people themselves; they are expecting and empowering people for different activities. They support and reproduce certain activities as well as they disclose some others. In case of marginalisation, one's functional arenas have a tendency to narrow and develop "like a snow-ball" towards an antisocial behaviour. To break down the process of marginalisation it is crucial to create new functional arenas and reshape the old ones.

This "chain reaction" seems to develop as a circle; the result of one problem becomes the new reason for another problem. Rönkä (1999, 9- 14) describes the process of marginalisation with three *channels of the accumulation of problems*; external, internal and the one of "vulnerability of behaviour". The basic idea is that having problems in school age produces a tendency to accumulate social problems also in the adulthood. The essential is to see the life situation as a whole; the balance between the forces and counter forces of marginalisation. The forces in the external channel may change ones 1) living circumstances difficult and unfavourable, meaning ones opportunities to narrow down on the different spheres of life and thus destabilizing one's job career. The internal channel of accumulation refers to our 2) own thoughts about our selves and our possibilities; one's own conceptions may lead to continual disappointments and failures. The third channel of 3) vulnerability of behaviour includes our different ways of behaviour like aggressiveness or anxiety, for instance. Rönkä stresses the meaning of our own behaviour and she states that the process of accumulation isn't always so straightforward; people aren't "victims of their living conditions" but actually they are able to choose environments and relationships. The preconditions for "social success" are managing with the human steps of development and adapting to the norms and demands of our society; socialisation and well-being go hand in and.

2.2 Unemployment of young people

Unemployment can be regarded as one essential risk factor for an accumulation of problems. The Finnish recession on 90's had a great impact on the young people and their employment. This period of low economic success of the state raised remarkably the rate of youth unemployment and because of this; the transition of young people from school-life into the labour market became more and more complicated and problematic. In addition to the high unemployment, another typical phenomenon today is so-called secondary labour market. This means that the job opportunities offered today, are more and more short-termed and project-oriented; which makes it difficult for one to establish a labour market position these days. The job careers of the young people today are more and more scattered, because employment, unemployment and education periods alternate in their life course. The employment position of the young has been affected by these two major factors; the structural changes in the labour market as well as Finnish social policy aiming to activate the youth. (Veijola 2005, 26.)

All the participants of the YAWS have unemployment on their background; for shorter or longer period of time. The meaning of the training period is to break down their unemployment; to bring about changes in their life situations. Some of them may have bigger problems with mental health, family relations, drugs or anything. However it's not a precondition for

being chosen; most of the youngsters are just ordinary young people in need of a “time out” for reflecting oneself and life situation. The motivation is essential, as well as other factors effecting one’s situation. One needs to have mental and physical sources to be able to engage oneself to the activity. It also demands taking responsibilities. (Westman 2007, 15-18.) The fundamental purpose of the workshop seems to be offering a regular every-day work to get started with action-based learning and future planning.

2.3 Socialisation: Social interaction

Socialisation develops by a *constant interaction* between people, as we create social structures for communication and relations with environment. It’s the basis for developing strategies for social action and life management. It’s also growing, joining others and integration. But it’s especially one’s experience as an independent individual in relation to the people nearby; to different communities and to the whole society. Building up one’s autonomy, identity and ‘self’ happens in relation with other people; this enables human socialisation. (Ulvinen 1999, 39-48)

Different communities are precondition for socialisation, as they enable human communication and social action. The processes of human growth and development always occur in interaction with other people; one becomes a human being only as a part of a community. This social phenomenon is actually a continuum of interactional situations that all the time shapes our behaviour, personality and individuality. Education is a tool for influence these processes of change; it’s always more or less conscious action affecting development of individuals and communities. One needs to be ready to learn, develop and change in order to adapt to the constantly changing living environments; we need to process our individual personality and subjectivity to change and develop to keep up to the rhythm of the life-long educational thinking prevailing our society. All these elements of human growth and social change should be in balance with each other, in order to avoid social problems. Different communities offer different grounds for growing, and environments for education and learning. They can be seen as necessities for our daily living, well-being and socialisation; a well balanced human growth and education. (Kaipio 1999, 17-147.)

Socialisation is linked with all human activity, through which we become members of society but also individual human beings and persons with different identities. Our life course is shaped by theses processes where our professional careers and family roles are essential. By adopting different roles in this chain of meaningful life-happenings, we socialise ourselves in different institutions. Life course is a product of constant interplay of an individual and one’s life experiences. In the interplay of individual and environment we build up our personalities by applying and developing our abilities to receive, control and change social and material

reality. This happens in different *agencies of socialisation*; organised groups and contexts or environments for social action. (Antikainen 1998, 101-112.) Workshops offer these kinds of spaces of socialisation for the youth; opportunities and places for learning and participation.

Workshops have become an institution of youth, socialisation, work and education. This activity is needed in transitional phases of life; when one is preparing oneself or looking for professional education; or when striving for working life from education or unemployment. In relation to other societal institutions, work shop can be placed in between social services, official education system and open employment market; it's a place for non-formal learning. The task of the work shop institution is primarily educational and "counselling" or "coaching"; the activity always aims at relatively permanent changes in individual's behaviour and thinking; in one's learning, growth and development. It can be seen as an institution that promotes maturing, movement, progress and social change. It serves as a temporary placement and waypoint pushing people forward; as a springboard for future. The meaning of this institution is to prevent young people from marginalisation and to support their societal participation. It offers opportunities to explore working life, to discover fields of study, to gain practical work experience and to strengthen one's life-coping skills. (Komonen 2008, 167-169.)

2.4 Finnish workshop activity

First workshops were developed as a tool of youth work at the beginning of the 80's. The workshops were targeted for the unemployed and uneducated youth in risk of marginalisation. The activity expanded and developed further in the beginning of the 90's, as the Finnish recession caused growth in client groups. Because of the growing need for workshops, the activity spread around wider and new strategies were generated. As a result of joining the EU, ESF-funding became available and the number of projects increased considerably. At the turn of the millennium, the workshops were spread to almost all the municipalities, while the client group had expanded: the clientele consisted now also of growing groups of long-term unemployed and drop-outs. New methods and practices were implemented, which has continued further in the 20th century. The activity has become more and more professionalised and varied, facing with new challenges and diverse needs of our time and society. Good practices have become models for operation, and the workshops have established their place in the Finnish society. (Korpela 2009, 11-13.)

Defining workshop has been very fluctuating and multicoloured depending on the context; there isn't any universal definition because each workshop is different and the working fields are formed according to the local needs. All of them, however, strive for *preventing clients from marginalisation* and promoting their *life-coping-skills*. These are the main principles

behind these customer-oriented operations of employment policy; their aim is to support trainees for an active, future-oriented action and to increase their functional readiness; their capacities for action pursuing to proceed in education and working life. Their task is to offer trainees work experience, where different manual skills and self-expression are developed through practical work. Working methods promoting clients' self-confidence, independency and responsible action are invested in, as well as the importance of workshop community as interactive environment is highlighted. (Korpela 2009, 8-14.)

Workshop is a community (as well as a multi-professional method), where individuals -with the help of work and training- are supported to develop their skills and abilities to apply for education or employment; as well as to take control over their daily living. The workshop method is based on "Learning by doing"; at the workshop one can learn both life-management-skills and different working skills. The workshops offer also an optional path towards education; in case of drop-out, no interest or no prerequisite. Alongside with practical work, the work methods are work coaching and individual coaching: the one to promote work performance and know-how, and the one of supporting one's ability to act and development of every-day-life-coping. A workshop period is a part of service package, where the co-operators are i.e. employment administration and communal social administration. The length of the period is 6 months in average. (Työpajayhdistys 2011.)

In all workshops, one can learn different kinds of work practices and skills, and to get acquainted with different fields of work. The services offered and the working tasks are formed according to the local needs. The age structure of the workshop clients also vary with the local employment situations. A variety of employment sectors and subcontracting services are represented in Finnish workshops. The most traditional fields are metal-, woodwork-, textile-, car-, and transportation. Recycling, media and communication are increasing trends. Especially youth are interested in creative workshops such as art-, theatre-, music- oriented ones. (Työpajatieto 2011.)

Workshops often can be regarded as social employment (sosiaalinen työllistäminen). It's an umbrella term used for different activities supporting people in weak labour market situation, promoting and maintaining their performance. In this context of workshops, it means both preventing marginalisation and comprehensive work supporting people's entrance into working life. Besides workshops, this domain covers different units on public- and third sector, different projects, social enterprises, productive work centres, foundations, associations and work units for handicapped people. This domain offers pragmatic forms of education as options for theory-based education. At the workshops it's possible to complete professional degrees, parts of them or professional continuing education. There is no unified model, but

the services are built according to and based on the local needs, traditions and practices. (Työpajatieto 2011.)

These days the Finnish workshops constitute a network of multiform professional activity that is represented in Valtakunnallinen Työpajayhdistys (TPY) - National Workshop Association (NWA), founded in 1997 by these professionals. Every year there are 10 000 - 20 000 trainees in 545 different training units in the workshops of almost 200 member organisations; half of them municipal. NWA strives to be a trainer, developer and communicator inspiring discussion, building bridges between workshops, authorities and public administration. The Association's three fields of activity - membership services, training, and projects - serve collaborating partners as well as members. This non-governmental organization produces training, development and information services due to workshop activity and social employment for its member organizations and interest groups. The goal is to support the development of the know-how and professional skills of both organizations and workshop workers through close cooperation with the field. (Työpajayhdistys 2011.)

3 Defining Youth's Art Workshop

Youth's Art Workshop is a combination of many different elements; its function can be studied from many different angles. As a social work, it's a form of youth work or employment service placed in between official education system and working life; it can be defined as an action-based tool for community work with young people. The very essence of "the action" however, is to promote and cultivate art and creativity; to foster the well-being of youth by creative methods. As professional practice, I consider it as socio-pedagogical work, because I see it as social work having educational purposes. It is youth work based on the Finnish Youth law, but I would further define it as youth education (nuorisokasvatus) using creative methods as tools for work; as cultural youth work (kulttuurinen nuorisotyö). I would describe it as education in community, with community and for the purposes of community; which strives for encouraging individuals and groups for a spontaneous and enterprising action, self-help and self-education (Ventola & Renlund 2007, 35). The intention of this chapter is to introduce the YAWS as a workshop method promoting societal participation of the youth, as well as to explore its ambitions, purposes and role as a social work practice; to propose approaches for discussing its societal function as youth education.

3.1 Action-based tool for community work

Nuorten Taidetyöpaja ("YAWS") is a practical training period for young unemployed people of age 17-29 in Jyväskylä. This project was born at the turn of the millennium, as an endeavour to fight against the growing numbers of youth unemployment. The process of development

required co-operation and engagement between many authorities and different institutions; the model for operations was created through various developmental steps. The three people behind the birth of this project brought their professional expertise together combining elements from *drama-, art-, and social education and handicraft*. As a result was born a new kind of working tool, a unique format for youth work, that doesn't exist as such anywhere else in Finland. From 2001 until 2008 YAWS was funded by ESF (European Social Fund), since which it has had a permanent status in the employment services of Jyväskylä region. Time has demonstrated the need for this kind of activity and "YAWS" has rooted its place into Jyväskylä's soil. (Westman 2007, 3-26.)

The physical workshop environment is situated close to city centre and all kinds of services and communications. The workshop periods of 14 persons each, are run twice a year and around four months in length. The target group is ordinary young people in risk of marginalisation, chosen by their motivation, resources and length of unemployment. Some participants have bigger problems, others don't. The meaning is to cut off their unemployment, to bring about new perspectives, and to offer tools for life-coping and self-expression. This "action-based tool for community work with youth"- as I have translated it- strives for improvements in young unemployed people's life-situations. The cornerstones behind this work are *sense of community, positive thinking and active working*. (Westman 2007, 3-26.)

In this "positively thinking and solution-focused" work shop ideology, employment is seen as a positively-charged life situation creating urge, enthusiasm and joy of doing. A young employed person is seen as an "energy package" waiting for the opportunity to work off the energy and to discharge tensions on different doings. The loading for action comes from the people as well as from inspiring environment. One is always seen as an active subject of one's life; not as an object of different operations. The activity is always goal-oriented; believing that people have only problems to which they possess the solutions, too. It's future-oriented, real working; always striving forward, aspiring after young people's own wings to support. This is the shared goal behind all the activities. Some young people just need this kind of an interval phase to foster their social and emotional encouragement; pursuing them to face with new challenges and expectations of society. (Westman 2007, 27-31.)

Variety of *creative methods* is used in the workshop, to support participants' life-coping-skills, work performance, self-expression and comprehensive wellbeing. The aim is to offer trainees a high-level cross section of different manual work and art forms, to make them familiar with new techniques and materials: drama and drumming, handicrafts and visual arts, physical exercise and cooking, but also career planning. The art as such, however, is seen as just a tool for stimulation, action and social strengthening; not as the actual significance or therapy. Art only gives the frames for the work shop action. Creative activities may open

senses from blockages, awaken one's thinking for new perspectives and motivation for action. The work shop gives a chance to explore various ways of creative work, guided by professionals. Drumming and drama are in the very core of the activity, both of them supporting group-building processes; offering an opportunity to play. In the drama rehearsals improvisation is used, as well as socio drama exercises. Play is seen a tool for social change and growth; it makes learning easier, which enables one to proceed in life. Many games are played also in different forms of *physical exercise*, as well as healthy meals are cooked together, to foster a comprehensive well-being. Other forms of art the workshop tool box can consist of, are carving wooden masks, ceramics, acryl painting, felting, glassblowing, ceramics, sculpturing, woodcut- and intaglio printmaking, forging, photography, textile working, creative writing and body percussion. (Westman 2007, 32-66; Nuorten taidetyöpaja 2011.)

The workshop community is seen as a ground for growing. Its purpose is to offer a safe, encouraging, interactive and tolerant community; an open forum of expression, where the participants can reflect themselves in relation to other peers. Solidarity, trust between people and feeling of security are considered as essential elements for building a well-functioning workshop community; the work atmosphere and team spirit are seen vital for a good workshop experience. An interactive environment and tight co-operation enable young people to learn respect, accept and care for other people, as well as to work on creating a feeling of togetherness. Together with peers one can chart different possibilities and plan their future. But it's not certainly just about having fun; the workshop is real work. Engaging the workshop demands also commitment to shared norms and rules, and taking responsibilities. Everyone's motivation and contribution is needed. (Westman 2007, 15-32.)

The community serves as a mirror for self-reflection: in a well- functioning community, one can get a positive group experience to foster one's self-confidence, well-being and life management. In a straightforward, easy-going and safe workshop atmosphere and a positive working spirit, people can enjoy of togetherness, surpass oneself and find new strengths. One can discover one's creative resources and get a new spark to one's life. The work shop may open new doors; one can find the belief in one's resources and skills. YAWS is a place of learning tools for life; it's all about attitude, stimulation and challenges; about learning to learn, learning skills for independency and autonomy. In the workshop action, enthusiasm is the key word; not results or talents. Concentration, flow of active doing, humour, acceptance and tolerance; these kinds of elements there can be found in a creative workshop atmosphere. The most essential is to awaken and foster people's motivation and inspiration through active doing and trying, because new courage can be fostered by challenging oneself, learning by doing and learning from mistakes. Young people can learn co-operation skills and increase their abilities and resources towards studying and working life. (Westman 2007, 15-32.)

3.2 Youth Act

As part of youth work, YAWS follows the norms, rules and principles set by the Finnish Youth Act (Nuorisolaki 2006/72). Its aim is to contribute young people's *growth, development and independency*- processes as well as promoting their *active citizenship and social strengthening*; as well as improving their conditions of growth and living. When putting these goals into the practice, the starting points are communality, joint responsibility, parity, equality, multiculturalism, internationality, healthy lifestyle, respect for environment and life. The ministry of education is responsible for developing youth work and -policy in general, while the Finnish government approves the development program of youth policy every fourth year. Youth policy refers to improving young people's circumstances of living and growing.

The youth work and -politics belong to the tasks of Finnish municipalities. In this context, the youth is referring to younger than 29-year-olds. According to the Youth law, *active citizenship* can be described as "young people's goal-oriented activity in the civil society", while the *social strengthening* means the different measures taken towards preventing youth from marginalisation and promoting their skills for life. Youth work and -policy is implemented in multi-professional team work and in co-operation with the youth, youth organisations and other associations dealing with the youth work. The variety different work is done to cover educational guidance and steering, the functional premises and opportunities of recreational activities, information- and counselling services, the support from youth associations and other groups; physical educational, cultural, multicultural and international youth work activities, environmental education, as well as the work shop activity and "*searching youth work*" or other forms of work needed in the local contexts. (Nuorisolaki 2006/72.)

That's what YAWS is striving for; to bring about changes into young people's life-situations, well-being and life management, widening their playgrounds for future. It has a multi-dimensional function rooted on Finnish Youth law. The importance of it can be seen in colourful lights. It serves the purposes promoting the well-being of individual as well as the one of the whole society. By activating the youth, it tries to prevent the development of different social ills weakening the functions of the "societal machine", so to say. Creative methods are used as tools for supporting young people's comprehensive growth and development; as tools for empowerment. Within an interactive and encouraging community, work-shoppers are guided and supported for a constructive self-expression to strengthen the actors. On their journey of self-actualisation, one's creative resources can be awakened and taken into use. The work shop offers an opportunity for multiform learning, where an active participation is needed. It provides the young unemployed people with a safe, supporting and stimulating environment to work on with their different skills and abilities; as well as their dreams and future plans. It gives them an opportunity to make an exploration into themselves as well as

in others in similar phase of life. By using variety of creative methods with the professional leaders and support, it functions as a practical training placement reaching for positive development and change in young people's life situations. By activating the youth it tries to alleviate social problems; to awaken new aspirations, motivations and strengths in its participants towards a better self-realisation. The work shop offers tools for building up one's self-confidence which can block the accumulation of problems leading to marginalisation.

3.3 Social pedagogy

I consider social pedagogy as a good theoretical ground for any social work; especially for workshops promoting the active citizenship of people "in risk of social exclusion". This is a field of learning, education, work and research that can be interpreted in many ways, depending on the perspective. This ambiguous and tensioned concept is described in many levels in the field literature, such as a *social movement* emphasizing the pedagogical progress of humanity, spiritual values and communality. It can be seen also as a general principle or a part of scientific pedagogy or as an independent scientific discipline. Another perspective is to regard it as a social system preventing and alleviating social problems mainly by pedagogical methods. In this view the social pedagogy is seen as professional activity, a field of education and work and all the related institutions together. The word "pedagogy" in this context doesn't mean some certain institutions or any work methods. Rather it's about a dynamic way of thinking due to pedagogic principles, possibilities of human growth, integration-problems, social distress and promoting welfare. In general, this word means a doctrine of education. But the word "social" instead has several meanings depending on the context; it may refer to society and its structures, to communality and communication between people or to solidarity and generosity among us. (Hämäläinen & Kurki 1997, 13-15.)

Social pedagogy is a tradition reaching to combine theory and practice in a functional way. It is always understood through society and history and it's constantly changing. Understanding and implementing social pedagogy is always affected by different societal factors as political circumstances, social problems, general level of culture and specific cultural features. In the history, the socio-pedagogical thinking and activity originates from the processes of industrialisation, modernisation and urbanisation which broke down the lifestyle of the traditional estate-community and its social structures and especially beginning from the end of 19th century reshaped European societies. The structural change of society broke down the socialisation and the old forms of unity. Social pedagogy developed from the efforts to prevent and alleviate the social problems caused by this, especially the one of children and youth becoming neglected because of families' weakened education capacities. Social problems needed to be fought against in a systematic way. Along with political actions, the prospects of raising and education became more and more into the attention. The development of social peda-

gogical thinking was due to a general developmental optimism and a change of the image of humanity. In this transition the science and rational thinking took place from the belief of poverty and other social problems as a destiny. (Hämäläinen & Kurki 1997, 11-12.)

The nature of social pedagogy is basically reformist, as the activity aims at social improvements. All this includes the promotion of the pedagogic struggle against social ills, supporting the welfare of the unprivileged, the justice, individual freedom and social peace for all. This tells about the tight relation of social pedagogical theories with different socio-ethical principles and objectives. Integration is a key word in social pedagogy as the target of it is marginalized people who have -of a reason or another- problems to integrate into the society in a desired way. These issues are interpreted in the socio-pedagogical framework aiming at pedagogical solutions; encountering and solving social problems often needs some political actions, too. (Hämäläinen & Kurki 1997, 14.)

Social pedagogy- as all educational and social sciences- is sensitive to the impact of different ideologies. Psychological, socio-psychological, sociological and political theories present different kinds of images of humanity and society, and naturally bring their impact on social pedagogy as well as other ideologies. The orientation of social pedagogy can be applied in any human work dealing with people struggling with life crises due to social problems or in work preventing social problems and marginalisation. The content and forms, work field, target groups, methods and the nature of the client relationship of the socio-pedagogical work vary with the era and societies and follow the change of social structures. The multiplicity and the variation of the work are caused by the varied and changing nature of the social problems in different forms. (Hämäläinen & Kurki 1997, 20-30.)

Based on this, the workshop activity can be seen as social education (sosiaalinen kasvatus) which is the socio-pedagogical praxis. Its' purpose is to of help individuals to develop into a "real social creatures" and persons; to promote their successful growth and socialisation as active members of society. It's striving for a qualitative change of people's integration in communities and in whole society; social education is *education for participation*. I think workshops can be seen as goal-oriented "social interventions"; efforts which strive for affecting the processes of human socialisation and growth. (Hämäläinen & Kurki 1997, 188-191.)

3.4 Youth education

To go further, I could call the "social intervention of YAWS" as *youth education* (nuorisokasvatus). It's an umbrella term comprising different educational practices and research targets of educational sciences, which hereby give the frames for youth work. Human growth is generally understood as a life-long phenomenon where youth fall in between childhood and

adulthood. Youth education covers a wide field of activity, but doesn't constitute an independent brand of science, such as early childhood education or adult education. Youth education as practice refers to all educational activity striving for support and guide young people's growth and learning. It's implemented in different educational environments, such as home and family, high-school, vocational institutions, higher professional education and youth work. (Nieminen 2007, 30-59.)

Youth work offers young people different places, spaces and environments for learning, growth and action. The very core of youth work is educational, because its purpose is to influence young people's understanding, values, knowledge, skills and future action. Youth work can be defined as supervised, structured and communal activity, which strives for helping the youth to affiliate with society and for offering them learning opportunities to develop personality, society and culture. Youth education has a challenging task to support these processes of human growth strengthening young people as individuals and members of society. (Nieminen 2007, 30-59.) This is what the work shop activity strives for; to promote young people's socialisation and societal participation.

The YAWS uses artistic action and creative methods as a tool for youth education. This is why I would define it as *cultural youth work* (kulttuurinen nuorisotyö). It's a term used for a specific branch of youth education: its task is to support young people's self-expression and realisation of their own initiatives and ideas. It provides the youth with different arenas to produce own culture; to become visible, seen and accepted as an important part of communities. In these activities young people get experiences of different functional roles and taking responsibility. Young people are encouraged to bring forward their opinions and to use their creativity. This is to support their growth and identity-building as well as to offer tools for developing their self-expression. By participation, self-realisation and creativity-utilisation guided by encouraging professionals, young people reflect themselves to produce their own kind of culture and happenings in their every-day environments. Large variety of forms of expression is used as tools in the cultural youth work. (Jyväskylän kaupunki 2011.) We could of course further discuss what art is and what is culture; however in this context I rather concentrate on creativity as a resource for societal participation and self-expression; as a resource for empowerment.

4 Creative methods: tools for empowerment

The most essential of my study was to gain an understanding of how creative methods can be used as tools for empowerment in social work. My main interest was to explore what kind of elements there can be found in the creative group work of the YAWS and what kind of learning it strives for. The purpose of this chapter is to present some approaches for exploring

empowerment as a social work practice and social phenomenon, aspiring to see how it functions on the level of individuals, communities and societies. Furthermore, I will present creativity and creative group work as a resource for empowerment, especially concentrating on drama education.

4.1 Empowerment

Based on presented reflections above, we can discuss further the function of YAWS as generating or promoting empowerment. I think it's what all social work in its different forms strives for; to support people's complicated processes of change concerning their concrete life situations and mental resources. This term is crucial and widely used in English-speaking social work discourse, corresponding to Finnish translations such as 'voimaantumisen', 'osalisuus', depending on the context. This concept can be examined from many different angles; it can refer to different methods, principles, ideologies, practices and processes promoting *social change*, aiming at people to get their resources and strengths in use, working towards people to *gain power* of their own. It can be interpreted in many ways but it's typically is described as a three-level-phenomenon; it can occur on levels of individuals, communities, and societies. It means different processes where people become able to take control of their living circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby able to work towards helping themselves and others to maximise the *quality of their lives* (Adams 1996, 5).

In the context of unemployment and rehabilitative social work activating and employing people, empowerment work can be described as reducing personal or social obstacles to one's professional development with the help of such activity that has clear goals and gives strengths to influence on one's life with different meaningful people and communities in it; such activity that diminishes the lack of power and the feeling of helplessness. It can be approached from three different angles:

- 1) Empowerment as an *operations model* initiating, supporting and advancing the change of social structures and communities. In this context social work is clearly political and reformist by its nature and social worker serves as a critical and reflective advocate in the dialogue between the citizens and the state.
- 2) Empowerment as *communication and co-operation* between the worker and the client, promoting the social change. This perspective concentrates on different processes and methods of client work supporting and aiming at rehabilitation and empowerment.
- 3) Empowerment as a *personal process of change* of a client, as well as the one of a worker. The essential here is gaining the feeling of control. This means also becoming critically conscious of the interrelations between oneself and the surrounding communities. However, the power comes from inside; no-one can simply "give the power" to another person as such. (Tuusa 2005, 37.)

Dalrymple & Burke (1995) see empowerment in a similar way; as a work towards social change. Their model of empowerment has also three levels: *Feelings, Ideas and Action*. These stages are interconnected as the process develops. On the level of feelings, people's 1) *personal experiences* are worked on with, by facilitating their confidence- and trust-building, by providing them with a secure and comfortable forum of expression and by demonstrating engaged listening. By this way the personal themes can be linked with wider social issues. On the level of ideas then, the attempt is to 2) *strengthen client's abilities* to control their own lives, feelings and capacity to act. The work concentrates on one's feeling of self-worth, developing and changing one's ideas and the living circumstances. On this "journey of self-actualisation" different ideas can be reshaped reducing self-blame and immobilisation and awakening a belief in one's personal power. A new insight can be reached. Further, the stage of actions, means moving from personal to a 3) *political action*; seeking changes within an organisation and addressing obstacles in social welfare provision.

Thompson & Pierson present "*PCS-model*" for analysing empowerment. The letters come from words *Personal, Cultural and Structural*, meaning three separate levels, however closely interrelated to each other, on which the empowerment can be seen. On the personal level, individuals are supported to 1) *gain greater control* over their lives in different ways; by developing their self-confidence and self-esteem, for instance. Further, on the cultural level empowerment is characterized as 2) "*conscious-raising*", meaning people to become aware of different ideologies; power of ideas maintained by the dominant groups to maintain existing structures and social relations in society. On this level, stereotypes can be challenged attempting to break down an oppressive culture. The empowerment on the structural level then, addresses to battling against the 3) *structured inequalities* of the society by a collective political response; a program of action for social change; because the power relations are seen rooted in the structure of society. According to Thompson & Pierson, we live in a society that has various stratifications, differential groupings and divisions, where inequalities exist, because power and living needs are not equally divided. In order to gain power, we need to become conscious of ourselves; our resources, needs and possibilities. Only then we can reach greater power over our lives; to work towards gaining some social changes. Empowerment initiates from basic human needs to survive every day. The essential in social work practice is to let the clients to be creative by themselves in order to find solutions to different problems. Consequently, we could regard creativity as an essential component of empowerment. Problem-solving requires often imagination and open-minded attitude. The essential of these processes would be also to find one's inner motivation as a conscious-raising-process. Otherwise, no results can be reached.

Based on these descriptions of empowerment, I could say that the social work practice in YAWS is concentrating on the first two levels of personal and cultural or feelings and ideas; not that much on the political actions. The aim of YAWS is to activate young people towards a more active citizenship by providing them with tools for finding their personal resources, thus getting more power to make changes in their lives. I see the work shop as a good forum of expression; a stimulating and encouraging environment to work on with young people's different skills, abilities and feelings, and thoughts. They are provided with different tools for a better life management and quality of live. In the work-shop the participants are exploring and reflecting themselves in tight relation with the other people; on their journey of self-actualisation. The artistic tools and encouraging atmosphere are aiming at awakening their belief in own power to decide over their own lives and different possibilities.

The essential in the workshop is to work on participants' self-confidence and trust-building as they are working in a tight community with professional leaders demonstrating engaged listening. Each of the participants is supported on their processes of empowerment on an individual and collective level. Everybody is considered equal and unique. By gaining a better self-confidence young people can reach also better capacity to act; to become subjects of their own lives. The work-shop period may serve as a bridge between unemployment and career. But the empowerment needs to initiate from a young person oneself; the work shop only provides the framework for it. The work shop has the conscious-raising task to awaken people's belief in their selves, competence and future. It's a challenging but not impossible. Through a more positive self-dimension and better knowledge about society, young people can gain new insight and a greater control over their lives; thus become more active citizens.

4.2 Creativity

I think the YAWS as empowerment work highlights the importance of creativity. That is a part of a human personality, a mental resource that we need for balancing between our "self" and environment. It's a mental event where new ideas, thoughts and emotional images are joined together creating a combination that is "more than just a total of combined elements". Creativity is a *symbolic process of mental activity* through which one constructs new meaning-relations enabling to gain harmony. It has an essential meaning for the balance of our mental world. The basic feature for our mental wellbeing is an ability to live and act spontaneously and creatively. We cannot measure our health only by counting illnesses and diseases, but rather including all different factors affecting our comprehensive wellbeing and self-fulfilment. We need creativity for fulfilling ourselves, our ambitions, to realise our dreams and wishes. This journey of self-actualisation is a life-long process that is shaped by our individual choices and responsibilities. (Ahonen 1994, 23.) Thus, creativity is needed for socialisation. Every human being is creative by ones basic nature. Different arts offer channels for expres-

sion of this creativeness. Generally speaking, creativity is a natural way of survival for human race. (Sava 2007, 15-25.)

According to Meri-Helka Mantere (2007, 11) an artistic expression or action doesn't happen in the control of conscious thinking. The creation of a new form, demands even a giving up of ego. It's about freeing one self to feelings of insecurity and new processes. A fear of letting go prevents from going into this. A certain kind of "let it go"- attitude, as well as a feeling of security are needed in art. Through different forms of art one can find new kind of joy and meaning to the life. One may find new strengths, trust on one's life-management as well as new ways to act in harmony within the community.

Arts and tightly related to a human instinct; they develop our intuition which is at least as important as intelligence. The intuition develops our individual characteristics and human resources to their full potential. In this process there exist no ultimate criteria what is right and wrong, good and bad. According to Way, we need to use methods using imagination and emotions when working with young people, in order to let them develop their abilities to develop their personalities. This means that they should be allowed to enjoy their experiences without any systematic rational observation and analyse. Through art we can reach for positive experiences to widen our intuitive information and not just passively accept negative phenomena around us. Art plays a very essential role in human life. If we want to prepare young people for life and not just for future work, so we need to concentrate on their personalities. The skill for living needs practice and drama offers a great tool for this. (Way 1976, 16-18.)

4.3 Creative group work

The meaning of YAWS is to offer participants an experience of creative group work, where artistic action is used as a tool for empowerment. Timonen & Törmi (2009, 133-137) describe art as a tool for self-exploration and self-confidence-building; as a resource for the growth of individuals, communities and whole society; a tool for socialisation. According to their experiences of artistic work with young people, creative group work has positive effects on actors' well-being. They consider artistic action as a possibility for young people to become heard and appreciated; as a possibility to bring out one's subjective reality and experience, to tell one's story to others; to reflect on one's spirituality and to "deepen one's experience of existence". Art enables young people to find new paths to one's body as well as to sort out one's world of feelings.

Timonen & Törmi emphasize the importance of creative group work, where the core power of art can be seen in *symbolic expression*. The art has the "ability to tolerate weakness"; vul-

nerability is part of human nature in all of us. By dealing with sensitive issues through art, this feature can be inverted into a new sensibility of maintaining and respecting life. In a safe and confidential group environment young people can gain positive experiences and a better understanding of oneself as well as of other people. Art is a tool for sharing and releasing joys, sorrows and anxieties (deriving from the pressures set by society) in a process that needs to initiate from free will and personal resources. By taking humour and satire into use, negative feelings and experiences can be turned positive. Social ills are the same for all. Art can awaken young person's thinking, harmonize communities and individuals; it's a good tool for improving one's well-being and quality of life, however not repairing the faults easily. It can strengthen one's resources but bigger changes take time. Art may work as a key for a better future. Timonen & Törmi have stated that artistic action in group is always sharing, which may increase participants' happiness and decrease their sorrows. It gives tools for storytelling, self-acceptance, social encouragement and spiritual reflections; it can strengthen the actors' mental resources and capacity to act.

Also Janhunen (1997, 2-28) has discovered creative group work (community theatre) as an enriching tool with young people. According to her experiences of "Legioonateatteri" art is a good tool to work on people's feelings, a tool for scrutinizing and analyzing them, in order to gain a better understanding. Emotion awakened by creative action is an active occurrence in human mind. This can enrich one's emotional experiences, and one can gain a better self-awareness. Artistic examination of feelings promotes human growth and development; it can increase one's quality of life. Through an artistic expression of emotions, we can experience comprehensive empowerment; it also develops our senses, observational skills, as well as communication skills. Creative action strengthens our self-awareness and consciousness, which is a great human resource and functional capacity. These youngsters have experienced the participation as a socially activating exploration.

4.4 Drama (education): social play

The social nature of the creative group work in YAWS is largely characterised by drama, which challenges trainees for a social play. It is a versatile method that allows a comprehensive stimulation and learning. Drama is imaginative activity, where a person uses one's body and voice to perform different characters and situations. It can help one to understand different issues through experience. Theatre is largely concerned with communication between actors and audience, drama is largely concerned with *experience of participants*, irrespective any function of communication to an audience. (Way 1976, 14) Two essential concepts behind the nature of drama are *spontaneity and creativity* (Nieminen & Saarenheimo, 1981, 3). Drama education can be defined in many ways, depending on the perspective and context, while the drama activity can be divided into different forms according to the goals, and to its therapeutic

tic nature. Therapeutic trends are psycho-, social drama and drama therapy. The other trends are pedagogic drama, role play and community theatre. All the types of drama use same kind of exercises using senses, emotions, perception of body, speech and improvisation. (Keränen, Nissinen, Saarnio & Salminen 2001, 113)

Brian Way's ideologies brought drama education better known also in Finland in the 70's. It is an umbrella term covering different sectors of drama activity that occur in educational settings. Education (*kasvatus*) here refers to a human activity of which the purpose is to create conditions for comprehensive human growth. It's communication between educator and learner, where the essential is to provide and control different stimulus for growth, in order to transmit knowledge, know-how and cultural heritage among other things. It's *steering for socialisation*. Drama can be seen as "a space for opportunities", a sector between art and traditional education; drama education reaches for opening new perspectives and options for future-charting. (Heikkinen 2002, 11-17)

Heikkinen (2002, 41-43) examines drama education as a playful activity offering tools for many kinds of learning. In the frames of playful drama, stories are used for exploring issues of human significance while "normal rules" of time, place and identity are suspended. Drama is social activity and a communal art form, driven by rules and conventions. Play should never be boring but an opportunity to learn and understand the world of living; a ground for growing open for children as well as for adults. We actually create our culture by playing together; playing and learning always has a meaning.

Socio-cultural and artistic learning are essential components in drama education. This activity gives tools for identity-building and social understanding of culture and community, as well as for exploring experiences; it challenges us to create meanings of our living realities. Drama is about playing imaginative and real happenings with the help of different roles and situations. Drama enables groups and individuals for exploring, forming and symbolically performing thoughts, feelings and their consequences. It enables people to move back and forth between two worlds of "reality" and the one of drama, as well as to create fictional realities. In drama education different phenomena can be observed, expressed and studied as deeply as needed and ventured; by these measures one can scrutinise and analyse one's visions of the world and identity. (Heikkinen 2002, 111-112.)

Play ("leikki") has been researched through the ages because it is a very basic feature of us and a natural element for human growth. There shouldn't be any contradiction between our imagination and reality; they just complement each other. We use our imagination to interpret our experiences and emotions, of which we connect the meaning and contents in our consciousness. This is a precondition for the development of individual human being. Playing

enables us to create new meanings for our actions, while it also develops our abstract thinking. It's a tool for education, enabling us for work. But it can be regarded also as art; enabling us to use our creativity to build our culture. In other words, any art can be seen as play. All human culture is actually built and formed by playing. It's an essential component for building different communities and human communication. But no play is created without language; we need language for learning. The drama education can be seen as a social play created in interaction between people speaking same language, based always on a common agreement of the purpose of the play. (Heikkinen 2002, 49-55.)

This agreement creates a certain kind of "space of opportunities" where new meanings can be built for different experiences. It's a fictive reality, a mental state, where education and learning can occur "free from power"; free from different norms and rules set by the surrounding society. It should initiate from free will; this social play should foster freedom and a break-away from "ordinary world" of every-day-life. Other features for this social play are that it has certain limits of time and space, as well as each playground has its own rules for creating unconditional order. The play is organised but also charged with tensions, insecurity and coincidence; waiting for explosion. The play is full of energy, movement and harmony that can be maintained and transformed by using spontaneity and improvisation; one needs to live in the moment to play this game. Drama can be characterised as a journey to unknown, aspiring to solve a mystery. Essential is participation: performing, watching and discussing. Playing allows us to explore things we want to study. The "serious playfulness" of drama enables us to deal with even the most difficult issues of our living realities. The meaning is to open eyes for observing and exploring the world from two different realities; through drama role and as ourselves. (Heikkinen 2002, 58-69.)

Drama is a tool for telling stories, which always have meanings. Through stories it's possible to understand ourselves and the world we're living in. The learning is seen as an active and creative process, as well as all the experiential learning. The core of this learning method is that the learning proceeds by reflecting concrete experiences and action towards a more theoretical understanding and better patterns of action. It's about *processing experiences*; reflection is the key word in experiential learning. It's intellectual and affective activity, where one explores one's knowledge and experiences in order to reach a new level of understanding. Processing and evaluating experience may enable one to find and create new perspectives and approaches for life. In interaction these processes can be brought out; they become "visible"; which enables evaluation, questioning and feedback-giving. Thus, the creative process of drama offers an opportunity to learn new things which were hidden or unclear in the beginning. (Heikkinen 2002, 92.)

5 Methodology and data collection

Qualitative research can be characterized as an exploration- a story of searching. Researcher is always looking for something and reaching for find it; aspiring to obtain a certain goal. In another words, it's as a story proceeding by a red line or a plot. In the writing process the researcher can analyse one's knowledge constantly, by taking new aspects, by clarifying one's perceptions, by conceptualizing, looking for models for explanation and by developing one's theoretical visions. The research approach is inductive; one proceeds from individual perceptions to generalisations. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 1997, 245-246.) This chapter gives a description of the empirical part of the study, which strives for exploring human experiences as a phenomenon of interest. The purpose of the study will be reflected on by discussing different dimensions of human experiences, and by approaching qualitative study as "understanding" research. This chapter also explains how semi-structured form of interview was chosen and implemented, as well as how the gathered data was further analysed by applying content analysis.

5.1 The purpose of the study and research questions

The purpose of this research was to define and describe young people's experiences of Youth's Arts Work Shop, as well as to understand YAWS as a social phenomenon. By describing participants' personal experiences I reached for an understanding of the importance and function of this work shop activity. My actual interest was to look for elements of empowerment in order to gain knowledge and understanding of how creative methods can be used as tools for empowerment in social work with young people.

The research question for the study was:

What kind of experiences do young people have from Youth's Arts Work Shop?

5.2 What is experience?

In order to answer this question, I explored phenomenological approaches for the examination. I wanted to sort out my self, what experiences actually are; what experiences actually consist of, and how they can be understood; as I wanted to take a look into the heads of this bunch of people having similar experience in their past. According to Perttula (2005, 120-122) human experiences are built on us by our understanding, which can be either "*subject-immersed*" or "*constructive*". In our processes of understanding, we tend to immerse ourselves into different subjects; and secondly, we are able to construct ourselves different *life-situations*. In "subject-immersed" understanding, experiences develop immediately, in the moment. However no understanding happens without our body. It's a *place* where to have an

experience; because it is always present. Most of the experiences are also about one's body; or about the *life situation* where the body has carried us. Body makes us alive. The life situations are built often in relation with "life-formal" issues such as different norms, rules, principles and practices by which different communities and institutions of our society function. This understanding enables us also to "take distance" and proportion things.

Intentionality can be seen as the core of cognitive activity. We tend to orientate ourselves towards something, out of our actions. When the cognitive activity chooses its target, a person gets an *experience*; reality isn't anymore meaningless. Sometimes the target is easy to recognize, but sometimes it's difficult or even impossible to discover where one's experience originates from. Even if the target of experience remains unclear, the experience is real. Phenomenology defines experience as a *relation of meanings*; a combination of subject and object. Our *life situations* are composed of all that which *we are in relation to*. These different realities- or dimensions of life situations- can be divided as *material, ideal, life formal and physical*. Furthermore, all this means also that without the *relation to the reality*- thus without reality to become life situation- cognitive being is without understanding; one is unconscious. A living bond to daily life is a precondition and no experience is wrong, abstract or weird to a person. (Perttula 2005, 116-119.)

Life situation always has multiplicity of elements. According to Perttula (2005, 150-151), we can have experiences of four kinds of *realities*; we can be in relation to four dimensions of life situation. All that we imagine, anticipate, recall or evaluate in our consciousness; can be called 1) "*ideal reality*". This process of creating new subjects in our minds is open to continue endlessly. We create new experiences on the old ones all the time. The second reality could be called 2) *tangible, material or physical*; it consists of all the things outside our body that we can sense with our senses. They have a physical state. The third reality would be called 3) "*life-formal*"; meaning all the different rules, principles, customs, manners, and practices, according to which the life of different communities comes true. The life situation in this reality often is multifaceted, because people usually are in several forms of life at the same time. Thinking of this reality, as a researcher, I need to think what kinds of these "life forms" I'm interested in and where I can find this kind of people. The fourth reality could be called 4) *corporeal or body-related*. Our living body is one dimension of a life situation, as it shows us the place to experience from. The organic, living body is a precondition of life on the whole of course, but the body in itself doesn't give any meanings to us. We can only "read" our body. All the life situations with their different subjects fit in the picture with phenomenological, hermeneutical and narrative research methods. But the best matches would be phenomenology with tangible and corporeal; hermeneutics with ideal; and narrative with life-formal experiences.

Furthermore, our cognitive activity has two functions: *psychological and spiritual*. We build our experiences in our understanding by creating different meanings of our life situations. The psychological side functions *without language, concepts and socially shared meanings*. Along with this activity, the relation to the life situation is *instant and direct*. One isn't aware of oneself however; to understand one's life situation in more *active way, one needs spiritual activity*. This enables us to take a certain distance to concrete reality, to detach oneself. The spiritual function creates meanings of life situation *through language and the social world*. It also makes people cognitively *inter-subjective* beings; one is able to understand others a bit and one is able to describe own experiences to others. People can go to *dialogue* about different ways of understanding and reasoning. One get conscious of oneself; one can *understand one's own understanding*. This enables us to evaluate our own activity. Furthermore, these ways of understanding develop different sorts of experiences, such as feelings, intuitions, knowledge and beliefs; which we can call *qualities of understanding*. (Perttula 2005, 117-132.)

In this study my interest was to hear how people had experienced the Youth's Arts Work Shop; how they have perceived its meaning and importance in their live situations. I reached for "all kinds of experiences": developed by subject-immersed and constructive understanding; in all realities of material, ideal, life formal and physical. All the described experiences had a living bond to the daily life of participation the YAWS or to the life after it. In the heart of my interest were their experiences about themselves in relation to other people (=community) and the work shop environment as well as to the working tools such as drama (=creative methods), as well as to chart their professional development since work shop. My interest was to hear descriptions of different processes of change, to discover what participants had gained from the work shop experience; what they had achieved and profited. This was to look for elements of empowerment.

5.3 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a term recognized in many disciplines. However, two common elements can be seen by all researchers. Qualitative research is about a concern with 1) *meanings* and the way people understand things. Members of social groups make sense of things by symbols and meanings and human activity can be seen as a product of this. The other element of qualitative research is that it concerns 2) *patterns of behaviour*. This means an interest on different activities of social groups such as rituals, traditions and relationships which are expressed as patterns of behaviour; cultural norms and types of language used. Another essential character of qualitative research is an own special approach to the collection and analysis of data differing a lot from the quantitative one. It has usually the emphasis on words rather

than quantification. This research strategy can be defined inductive, constructivist and interpretive but all researchers do not always follow these principles. (Denscombe 2003, 267.)

According to Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2006, 27-32), we can research different phenomena either by explaining or understanding them. I consider the nature of this study as "understanding", because I'm interested of human experiences. The 'understanding' can be connected to qualitative research tradition as human research representing "spiritual sciences"; while 'explaining' is typical for natural sciences. This understanding as a research method has a psychological hue, as I have tried to set my self into the shoes the YAWS participants; into their spiritual atmosphere, thoughts, feelings and motives, in this study. It is intentional activity, when we want to understand different meanings of phenomena. The difference between the two research traditions can be described also by the contents of the knowledge; in "spiritual sciences" the research has the target in human reality of meanings or the world constructed by human mind. Human research always is about studying phenomena; about studying what the world represents to human beings as different meanings. Human sciences consist of very different kinds of sciences as psychology, linguistics, history, sociology, economics etc. What they all have in common is "the mind-constructed-world" transmitted as different meaning-contents to us. They vary from large concepts as different ideologies or systems of norms, to concrete things such as an individual work of art. All the societal practices as target of research exist only through human beings. They are always intentional and meaningful for the actors and they can be understood only through these meanings and purposes. Consequently, all these targets of research always are characterized by human values. In contrast, the nature as such always exists as a target of research, regardless of human meanings or values.

More specifically, I could describe this study as "phenomenological- hermeneutic" research, as the essential concepts for my study are *experience*, *significance/meaning* and *community*. These emerge from conception of humanity both in hermeneutics and phenomenology. The research is always based on this conception; how a person is as a target of research; and the concept of knowledge; how the human knowledge can be produced and what it is like. Understanding and interpretation are the essential features for this knowledge-concept. The specific feature for this approach is that the target of study and the researcher, both are a human being. Phenomenological- hermeneutic thinking represents one of the three main trends of the philosophy of 1900's, which of the other two are logic-analytic and Marxism. As this philosophy presents, I recognize that the target of my interest is the world of living; human relation to one's reality of living. In phenomenology, experience is the key word; human being perceives the world by ones ability to experience. An individual can become understood by researching this "world-relation". It is intentional by its nature, while all the phenomena mean something to us; so the experience is formed by meanings. Thus, phenomenological research interest is meanings of human experience. However, these different meanings aren't

innate in us; they are inter-subjective, connecting us as subjects. The source for them is in our communities, where we grow and where we are educated. Through these meanings the world opens to us as it is. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2006, 33-34.)

This sounds logical to me, having the intention to understand people and their individual experiences of the YAWS; to understand human behaviour and different meanings formed by it. I could say that my aspiration is to realize the meaning of this phenomenon, thus I could talk about “hermeneutic understanding”. I see that the understanding is my interpretation, because the base for all our understanding is what we know and imagine already. Our understanding doesn’t come out from nothing; but from what we understand already; from our “pre-understanding”. It can be seen to progress like in a form of circle, “hermeneutic circle”. While the target of the research is the phenomenon (YAWS), the destination of this circle is to conceptualize the meaning of this experience. In “phenomenological- hermeneutic” research, the aim is to bring out something that is faded out by the routine and custom or something experienced but not consciously thought. It can be called as interpretative research, as the need for interpretation defines the hermeneutical dimension of phenomenology. As a researcher, I have a material to be interpreted as well as the principles and keys for the interpretation, but I need to draw the lines for the phenomenon of interest; through my interpretation. Interpretation enables me for a conceptualization and appropriate understanding. Interpretation is the main method for qualitative research studying the experience-world of an individual human being. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2006, 34-35.)

I think I have identified myself with this kind of thinking while doing this study, as presented above. I have embraced an idea that as a researcher of a qualitative study I need to consider myself as an active part of it. As the qualitative data is a product of a process of my interpretation, I need to recognize that my ‘self’ plays a significant role in this process of data production and interpretation. My identity, values and beliefs cannot be entirely eliminated from the process; my ‘self’ is inevitably an integral part of the analysis. (Denscombe 2003, 268.)

5.4 Choosing the method

An empirical research of human experience doesn’t produce universal understanding about the target. The understanding always is tightly related with the individual experiences of the participants. Researcher studies different meanings formed in the relation and understanding of human being and a subject. Reaching for a more general understanding of the experience means describing the essential meanings emerged from all the participants’ answers, on an appropriate level of generality. One can describe both the general (concerning experiences of all the participants), and the itemized (concerning the individual experiences) perceptions of the experiential phenomenon of interest, in the same research. However, it’s not possible to

“generalize the general”; create universal knowledge to be applied in other contexts. (Perttula 2005, 153-154.) I was interested on individual experiences of YAWS, but I also reached for finding general elements of empowerment, and typical features of this activity.

When choosing the method, one needs to be well aware of what kind of understanding one is reaching for and how strictly one need to follow one’s initial study interests. According to one’s approach, one takes a stand for structuring the interview situation. My aspiration was that “all kind of experiences are welcome”; I couldn’t expect anything for sure. I thought that the contents of interviews -and thus the gathered data- will be formed according to each participant; I considered my approach rather flexible. Even if I wished for hearing experiences of empowerment, I was interested also about “no-empowerment”. However, I recognised that the interview require the dialogue between the researcher and the participant and directions given by the researcher. Conducting research requires interaction skills and a “loving attitude” towards the participants. You need a skill to be mentally present and authentically interested. Research is a unique chance to get to know another person. You need to show that you take her/his experiences true and for real. You need courage to be face-to-face. (Perttula 154-156.)

5.5 Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured (or focused) interview seemed natural for choosing the method for data collection, as the purpose of the study was to explore participants’ individual experiences, different meanings created in their world of living. The intention was to describe and understand human behaviour. I was interested to hear their individual stories described by their own words; their memories, feelings and knowledge; their personal relation to this topic of interest. I wanted to hear the voice of human experience by giving the speech to these different personalities with their different outlooks and visions about the given subject. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2006, 47-48)

Qualitative research is comprehensive information- and data gathering, which happens in real and natural situations. Human being is seen as principal instrument of data gathering, where the aspiration is to trust on discussions and observations. The method is chosen to allow informants’ perspectives and voices to be brought out. Inductive data analysis is typically used for a multifaceted processing of material, as the meaning is to discover new, unexpected data, instead of testing old theories or hypotheses. Participants are chosen appropriately following the purpose of study, not by random-sample. Research plan is formed according to the circumstances during the process; the study is implemented flexibly. Each informant is considered as unique case and the data analysed according to this principle. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2007, 160.) These kinds of elements there can be found also in this study. I used

focused (or semi-structured) interview as a method because the study interest is in people's individual and unique stories. I chose this because it was suitable to respond to my research question following the purpose of my study. I wanted to meet the informants face-to-face, to discuss about the chosen themes in peace and calm in an environment where they felt themselves comfortable. I wanted to interview young people who have had their work shop experience already some years ago, so that I could hear something also about their lives after the actual training period.

Semi-structured interview can be described as a method between open interview and form interview. It's based on spoken language and interaction. In this conversational-like interview the communication is in major role; this enables the researcher to approach phenomena such as consciousness, aspirations and experiences. This form of research enables a natural free expression of speech as well as deeper discussions revealing issues that couldn't be researched by other measures. This method considers human being as thinking and acting creature. Qualitative interview reaches for collecting unique and trustworthy data relevant to the research problem; it is well-planned, intentional and goal-oriented activity. The researcher's task is to conduct the conversation, as well as to motivate the participant, leading the other to describe the target of the study. Conducting research is a constantly changing, human activity. Different stages of the process depend on each other; they have a symbiotic relationship. Interview as an empirical part of it, offers researcher an opportunity to explore another person's world of experiences; however based on the theoretical background. Data gathering has to be properly planned, goal-oriented activity. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1993, 7-27.)

Typical feature is that the topic areas, themes, are ready-decided. The questions are not formed and put in that precise manner as in a structured interview. The themes are formed in order to describe the phenomenon of interest, based on the gathered theoretical knowledge. These theoretical basic concepts are collected in a list form covering the main topics as well as the "undertopics" specifying the features of the main themes. In the interview situation this list of themes serves as a "check list" or as the "red line" to be followed in the conversation. This list need to be as clear and the concepts as loose and easy to understand as possible, so that the phenomenon of case can be described in a comprehensive and multifaceted manner. The way how the phenomenon of interest finally gets its form depends on how the participant interprets and expresses it from one's life situation, understanding and way of thinking. Theme interview enables a colourful and meaningful data gathering. The deepness of the nature of the interview depends on the need and interests of the study, as well as on the qualifications, abilities, motivation and interests of the interviewee. Material gathered by semi-structured interview is usually rich and abundant by its nature. It reflects the infinite multiplicity and complexity of human life. Researcher has aspired to get deep into this reality; one has stored a wide-ranging data. The deeper the dialogue has been, the richer the

recorded and/or written material is. One has captured and documented a piece of another's life circle. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1993, 35-108.)

5.6 The participants

An essential feature to recognize in empirical human research is that it's not just about choosing people to describe their experiences but it's especially about people to voluntarily engage in the interview; people participating of their free will. They can be described as persons whose life situations include the subject of my interest of research or certain individuals whose life situation is interesting in some particular way. There must be an adequate correspondence between the interest of the study and people's life situations. When having chosen the participants, you need to think thoroughly, what is necessary to know about the experiences. Selection of participants needs to be justifiable. (Perttula 2005, 153.)

The target group of this study consisted of five young people who had attended the Youth's Arts Work Shop a few years back. All of them were originally unknown persons for me, which promoted my "professional distance" in the interview situation. Originally it was planned to co-operate with the work shop authority in order to find participants, but they finally withdrew appealing to ethical reasons due to privacy policy. This was a turning point that changed the approach of my study in a certain way. As my study wasn't so "official" anymore, my focus and purpose of research was more defined by personal aspirations. Consequently, I needed to use my own social relations (4) and a newspaper announcement (+1) to find the informants (=5). Finally it was rather easy. The five people I found met the criterion that there had been at least one year between the work shop experience and the interview. My aspiration was that they could look at the work shop experience from a distance, in order to see how it had affected their life course. They needed to describe the experience of the work shop participation, but also their professional development since that. I found five people as a good number of informants to catch these experiences.

The participants consisted of four females and one male person of ages from 23 to 27 years, who had attended the work shop rather soon after high school graduation. Some of them had been studying, working and in military service in between (=less than 1,5 years). Unemployment had been the criterion for work shop participation, as well as they all had an uncertain life situation in some way; somehow "in risk of marginalisation". One had dropped out from education, one had been depressed, but none of them had "any bigger social problems". They all had rather good resources and motivation for participation. They had been actively looking for their career already before the work shop and they were striving for professional development. This target group was pretty homogeneous by their backgrounds, which was a coinci-

dence, however. Everyone was creatively oriented by one way or another which had also affected their motivation towards work shop participation.

5.7 The themes of the interview

The themes of interview (see appendix 2) need to be loose enough to unveil and explore the rich reality of the phenomenon of interest. As my aim was to collect information about individual experiences of work shop participation and to give the voice for these different realities, I strived for open-ended questions offering space for personal descriptions. The themes for the interview were defined and formulated on the basis of theoretical framework and the essential basic concepts derived from it, pursuing to answer the research questions. As the phenomenon of study interest was experiences of YAWS, including the aspects of 1) *Empowerment*, this was an essential theme for the interviews. The other two thematic areas were 2) *Activities* and 3) *Life after workshop*. These three themes included 22 sub-topics forming the subjects for questions, aspiring to collect participants' experiences from the work shop period and life after that. These areas of discussions covered the study interest of how creative methods were used as tools for empowerment and how the participants had experienced the creative group work; as well as how they describe their professional development and the importance of the work shop experience. By these measures, interview discussions were implemented to gather appropriate data for the purposes of further study. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1993, 41-42.)

5.8 Data collection

These themes were directing the flow of the interview. The data was collected in five individual interviews in five different places chosen by the participants, as it was important to create as relaxed atmosphere as possible. It was essential that participants could feel themselves comfortable and free to talk about their experiences. The interview discussions took place in their homes, cafés or at campus environment. Four of them were in Jyväskylä and one was in Helsinki. The interviews were *implemented in Finnish* as it is the mother tongue for all of the participants. The interviews lasted from 30 to 90 minutes. All the interviews were recorded on tape as it was the easiest way to preserve the material. All the informants seemed to be rather comfortable about the recorder so it was good equipment for the data gathering. It enabled the participants to talk pretty freely without the interviewer taking notes all the time. By using the recorder the discussion could be also interrupted if needed to have a break or in case of different disturbances.

The issue of the discussions was emotionally sensitive for many, which often is the starting point of a semi-structured interview study. In this kind of an interview the participants were

vulnerable because they were expected to open up in the interview situation and to give a deep thought about their past and present life. In this kind of an encounter the participant was also prone to the different effects of different factors in the context in case, such as different voices around, life situation, current relations and on-going happenings, physical and mental state of the person. They were also very prone to the factors set by the interviewer; it was essential to create the interview situation in a constructive manner in order to get a comprehensive and appropriate material out of it. The discussions were pretty deep by their nature, because the talk was also about people's values, norms, ideals and goals.

All of the informants had an open-minded attitude towards our discussion; they all were eager to tell about their experiences. All of them had mostly positive experiences so the subject was easy to talk about; the discussions were conducted in a nice and peaceful atmosphere, as the issues were not that sensitive to the respondents. Essential was to make the interviewees feel comfortable, so I wanted to keep the conversation as light and smooth as possible, following my themes and questions in an organised way. I found myself important to be actively present in the discussion situation. The interviews were rather dialectic by their nature, however each of them very different. Personal chemistries played an important role on mutual understanding and flow of communication. It was really interesting for me to meet these people, and some interviews actually seemed to be more like discussions between two friends known each other already long time. My role as an interviewer and researcher obliged me to keep my "professional distance" following the research purposes and lead the conversation, however. I was interested of the participants' individual stories described in their own words in order to catch the reality on their life in work shop period and life after that.

5.9 Conducting content analysis

The data analysis started by listening to the recorded tapes. The interviews were transcribed from word to word. The data consisted of five transcripts on 35 pages of interviews (line spacing 1); I had gathered a rather rich and abundant collection of colourful stories. The implementation of full transcript was important because the meaning was to write down everything said in the interview situations and not to use only material that I would like myself. The challenge then was how to organise and use it for the purposes of the study.

Data collection can be seen as an inspiration for the actual data analysis. The purpose of the analysis was to approach the YAWS as a social phenomenon, trying to understand it, in order to make conclusions of the data. This process was interesting and challenging because of my topic was researching people's individual experiences. I used content analysis in order to organise different phenomenon, searching for meanings and trying to interpret the answers of my interviewees. The analysis is a meaningful phase of a research; a process tightly due to

the research problems given in the beginning of the study. The different decisions made by the researcher form the structure of the study, where the different phases as the analysis follow each other. The analysis belong with interpretation and conclusions are the essential parts of a research, because usually these give the answers to given questions. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2007, 216-220.) I used content analysis in my study, because my intention was to analyse language as “picture of reality”; I was interested of the contents of the communication. (Tuomi& Sarajärvi 2006, 48)

Content analysis is a method that can be used in all the traditions of qualitative research, but it is also a wider theoretical framework meaning the analysis of different contents being written, heard or seen; enabling us for various kinds of research. In the beginning of the analysis, I needed to decide the target of my interest; what I am looking for to reach in my material. 1) The outline of the interest is very essential issue in doing analysis, because it has to follow the meaning and purpose of the study; it has to cover the research question(s) but not more. It is important to follow the red line of the study, so that the material doesn't get too thick and analysis too complicated. It sounds simpler than it is in practice, I noticed. The purpose of the study wasn't always evident at all; it was rather grown, developed and specified during the process. I needed to rethink again and again what I am actually aspiring to with my thesis. The first phase of the analysis consisted of marking down the topics and unities relevant to my interests. 2) The second phase of the content analysis was coding, implemented according to the needs and aspirations of this particular study. Each research is different; each analysis as well. Practically it can consist of different memos and notes analysing the essential contents of the material in the case. They are tools for describing the text and testing the analysis. They also help to look and check the different parts from the text when needed. It needs to be implemented in a constructive and appropriate manner. 3) The third part of the analysis consisted of reading and re-reading the transcripts looking for similarities and differences in order to find themes and to develop categories. This was a laborious phase of the study. I had to think about the material as a whole and sort out to myself what the essential was in order to answer to my research question. I needed to rethink again and again what the essential themes were and how they were related to each other. The interest of my study was not to deal with numbers and quantities of expressions but rather “the quality” of the interviews; the contents of the expressions in interviews. (Tuomi& Sarajärvi 2006, 93-95.)

Right from the beginning of the analysis it was actually pretty clear that the participants had experienced empowerment. The collected material gave clear indications for that. The purpose of the analysis was just basically to interpret the different expressions and meanings of the spoken language into the “professional” one. My interest was to explore the different processes and factors of empowerment in participants' experiences. The meaning was to concentrate on the individual and personal level of clients' experiences; not the one of the social

workers. However I aspired to see this phenomenon as a whole; not concentrating too much on some part of it, such as encouraging leaders. I reached for an understanding of the typical elements of empowerment, aroused by the creative group work.

My primary technique was colour-coding. I underlined and cut the texts into pieces according to the topic discussed and collected them in groups. These pieces of paper were the original expressions of the interviewees, which were easy to divide in groups. After underlining and cutting papers I had 18 bunches of paper slips underlined in different colours. These were the sub-themes based on the questions presented in the interviews. I looked for similarities and differences from the answers, marking notes for my self in the margins and a notebook. I started the huge translation work from Finnish to English to implement a data reduction.

After writing down all the reduced expressions (in English) I started to reorganise them according to their similar meanings and grouping them again in new order. I had a long list of expressions that needed to be arranged in a logical manner. Having text black-in-white again in an electronic form I was able to return working with my categories on computer. I realised that I got a pretty long list of these expressions that I needed to make some sense of. It was difficult to draw the lines what the essential was, because almost everything in the material seemed important. I was interested about all kinds of experiences, however mostly concerning the empowerment process of the participants. I tried to see the common features between the answers as well as the personal highlights of the experiences. I was interested of the participants especially as individual human beings but also as a group representing a shared experience. My aspiration was to understand the phenomenon of the Youth's Arts work Shop; to see the meaning or importance to the life of these five young people. All of them had empowering experiences of the work shop, so it was possible to analyse the different processes due to this phenomenon. I wanted to find out the different features that made the experience empowering to these people.

Originally I had cut down my material in paper according to the themes and questions of the interviews. During the analysis, however, I noticed that these topics were not enough to cover the essential issues. They were on the background all the time but I needed to supplement and reorganise them. Another challenge was the language; the interviews were implemented in Finnish but I needed to write text in English. I decided that I need to conduct whole the analysis in English. Translating the material was not a simple task due to the different meanings and expressions between languages. There were some words and expressions that could not be translated to mean exactly the same thing. In the process of the analysis I needed to familiarize myself properly with the vocabulary due to different creative and self-confidence-building processes in English. It was challenging and time-consuming, but also rewarding and interesting. I found very interesting word groups and ensembles. All this gave

more depth to my understanding, as I needed to take deep thoughts about the meanings of the words and expressions, to be translated as faithfully and verbatim as possible. Some topics were described even better in English but for some expressions it was challenging to find suitable correspondence. For example the words “innostua, innostaa, innostunut” were essential and present in all the interviews. Depending on the context, these can mean excitement, enthusiasm, inspiration, urge etc... Thus, I needed to make compromises. The interpretation became obvious. Especially during the analysis, I discovered that the YAWS can be actually regarded as socio-cultural animation (as a form of socio-pedagogical youth work). The Finnish term “sosiokulttuurinen innostaminen” is more commonly used than the English version. We could also talk about “community work”, which is more used in the English literature, but then it would lose the meaning of “innostaminen” which I see essential here. The original term is “animation socio-culturel” in French, so I consider “socio-cultural animation” as best term to use, as these languages belong to the same group.

From the list of reduced expressions I collected groups according to expressions meaning similar things; I started building my categories. As the empowerment was the essential concept in the material, I needed to reflect what I actually understand with this concept. I needed to define its meaning before I could really organise my categories. In my material I was interested about the personal processes of change; about the individual growth and empowerment and the different factors affecting in it. The activities and the Youth’s Arts Work Shop served as tools for this empowerment, aiming at better control and quality of life. I also reached for a general understanding about this phenomenon. I wanted to take a look about what the work shop really is.

I had decided to leave out my other initial research question about the effects of the work shop, so the analysis concentrated on the different experiences (created in different “realities”). Experiences always include some meanings, so the core of my interest was “importance or significance” of the work shop experience. I wanted to think about their lives and careers as a whole; not only the experiences about the work shop it self. I included my analysis their life situations before the work shop and something after work shop. I was interested about their interests; thinking about their career choices. I was interested to know about the changes that the work shop brought into their thinking and awareness of themselves and of their future. I wanted to know if their self-image changed during the work shop in a way that they saw more possibilities opening to them; especially thinking about their professional education. I was interested to know how they approached creative work methods and creativity in general; if they had offered good tools for self-expression.

All my interviewees happened to be pretty “art-oriented” already before the workshop; so this “sample” may not be a good example presenting work shop youth in general or even the

“YAWS-participants”. This bunch of people was quite homogenic; they had a lot in common. However they were really different by their personalities and by the way of speaking. Doing the analysis was easy in a way that they all had mostly positive and empowering experiences to describe and they spoke quite much about same issues, only emphasizing different things. However, the more that I started to think about the meanings of the words and expressions the more complicated and difficult it got. “What did she really mean by this”? “Why did he express that in this way, in those words?” Or “What this tells about her attitude”? These kinds of questions I needed to reflect on.

Some interviewees’ explanations were long, taking up to one page in writing, whereas others summarised the same topic in one sentence. Another note was that in many connections I could have asked for some more specifications and extra questions in order to get a better understanding. For example, it came up several times that the leaders had a great role in the development of a group spirit. It would have been interesting to hear more about this, as I believe that the different leaders and teachers play an essential role as motivators in our learning processes, in different spheres of life. Enthusiasm and inspiration were essential features of all the described experiences, so we cannot pass the meaning and importance of good leaders in this context. However, this was not the very core of the interest in my study.

The process of analysis very challenging, because as a beginner it was difficult to “find the right way to do it”, and there are no universal guidelines. The most understandable guidelines I applied from Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2006, 97-117). In practice, I was just cutting and organising pieces of paper to make some sense of the material, in the beginning. The English literature describes the analysis as coding: “Coding data is the formal representation of analytic thinking... As coding progresses, the researcher sees the ways in which data/codes group or cluster together and behaviours and sentiments appear concomitantly or in some patterned sequence... Gradually, using both the readings of the data, and the conceptual framework for indications, the researcher sees how the data function.” (Marshall & Rossman 2011, 212-213.) This sounds something like I have done. Finally I found some logic in the work. (Appendix1.)

6 Experiences of Youth’s Art Workshop

In this study it was discovered that the participants got mostly encouraging work experiences from the Youth’s Art Workshop. The period of workshop participation was described as a socially intensive, stimulating and inspiring experience characterised by experiential learning; the creative group work was a source of energy, power and well-being. It was considered as impressive, unique and meaningful experience, which had boosted their professional development, as well. The meaning of this chapter is to bring out the results of the study; to describe these multi-dimensional experiences more in detail. Based on my interpretation, they

are grouped into four categories (or “realities”) of experiences, resulted by the content analysis: creative methods, interactive participation, social strengthening and professional development.

6.1 Creative Methods

The work shop tool box consisted of drama and a large variety of other creative methods, offering an opportunity for a multiform learning. Young people were provided with new tools for self-expression and collaborative action; giving a comprehensive stimulation for both collective and individual learning.

The setting for learning was described stimulating in many ways: inspiring environment, fascinating activities, education& support given by professionals, low threshold on doings and freedom of expression gave the framework for the activity. The physical environment was described colourful and cosy and the action was multidimensional. Stimulation was given for all senses; body and mind. All the groups had been heterogeneous, including people of different ages and both sexes. The work shop activity itself was described interesting and fascinating in many ways; people had the possibility to grab different challenges “*never done before*”. This “*new adventure*” was full of surprises and because of the unexpected nature of the activity; the action were described as captivating and inspiring, because everything was new. During whole the work shop period, participants were guided by professionals: different artists and the principal coaches providing education and support of any kind. Furthermore, all the activities had been easy to participate; every participant told there was a low threshold to begin with work, thus easy-approachability was an essential feature for the activity. Nothing was too demanding and no special skills were expected; the stress was rather on doing than results. Participants had a freedom of expression in all activities; a freedom to choose and decide subjects for work, using imagination and manual resources. The final contents and form of the activities-such as the drama process- were shaped according to the different needs, interests and motivations of each group’s members during the process.

Large variety of different creative activities had been provided during the work shop period. Besides drama, the tool box had consisted of different physical movement, music and different happenings, as well as of different creative doings with hands. *Djembe-drums* had been played by all participants, as well as different *physical exercise* was included in program; such as different ball games, afro dance and outdoor recreation and stretching sessions. Different *camp, trips and visits* were done in each work shop, such as a cottage trip, art exhibitions or an ending camp with the group. One part of the work shop experience was also bigger *projects and performances*, such as work shop art exhibition, theatre plays with a real audience, organising a social evening with friends and family, djembe-drum-performance, mural

painting in old people's home, or shooting theatre pieces. An essential part of the work shop activity had also been creative doings with hands: *visual arts, handicrafts and manual skills*. Visual art forms were painting, drawing, photography and video shots. Handicrafts were such as wood carving, metal graphic arts, stone cutting, glassblowing, felt-making, others were also cooking and everybody did creative writing.

Drama as a principal tool was described socially activating; all the "playing together" had cultivated team spirit and strengthened participants' social performance. It was always implemented as a group process, which required active participation and social interaction. It had consisted of different group exercises and producing theatre, which had served as tools for group-building and social encouragement. *Drama rehearsals* had been in program throughout the whole work shop period, while the other activities had been implemented in shorter periods. The drama exercises had consisted of different plays & games, funny role plays, improvisation; everybody had performed in front of other people. One dimension of the drama was also *producing theatre*; it was described "theatre-like activity" and all the groups had prepared smaller or bigger performances, plays or shows. Two of the participants had prepared and performed their piece of theatre for a whole audience, for several times. All the plays were produced by the own motivation and inspiration of "work-shoppers". One participant had been in a major role writing the whole script for their play. He described that the work shop atmosphere had been so inspiring that "*it just happened, the idea for the project was just thrown out and realised piece by piece*" (P2).

I consider this a remarkable indication of inspiration, as he even had no experience of writing theatre text before, and he had been writing mostly on his free time at home. Moreover, drama had served as a *good tool for group-building*: for introducing and getting to know people, as well as for breaking down tensions, building trust and cultivating group spirit within the community. Drama was connecting people in many ways; it was a tool for raising the feeling of togetherness and just for learning new things about oneself and about the others. Drama was characterised rather empowering, only one participant didn't like drama that much. It was a *tool for social encouragement*, as well: most participants described it challenging but rewarding, encouraging, energising and inspiring in many ways; even as the best part of it all. At first it was a bit scary for some, but finally, it had been just fun and liberating. Drama was in essential role for developing social skills; social courage and confidence was gained especially through the drama rehearsals. For one girl (P1) it served as an efficient tool against her shyness; she was absolutely enchanted by the drama. Drama had offered many experiences of success, vital for personal growth.

6.2 Interactive Participation

The workshop participation was an interactive experience; the community was described as a socially intensive environment, characterised by social encouragement and interaction, where general team spirit and atmosphere was mostly positively charged. Active participation-stimulated by the creative methods- had required motivation for learning and involved typically experiential learning. The creative work could be characterised as a dialogue of action and reflection; learning by experiencing.

Motivation for learning was a precondition for participation; everyone's initiative and commitment was required for the workshop action. *Uncertain life situation, creative interests, open-minded attitude and enthusiasm for learning* were motivational factors common for everyone. All five had attended YAWS pretty soon after high school. For some of them, there had been some studies, work practice or military service in between, however not assuring them about their professional interests. Unemployed and uncertain about one's career plans and when nothing else to do, they had discovered YAWS as a good option to take in an uncertain life-situation, new phase of life. "Being adrift" after dropping out of a school, as one described, another having gone through a period of depression, YAWS had offered a safe place to take a deep breath before moving on with their professional paths.

Everyone had a need for a break and self-reflection; for charting different possibilities and goals to strive for in their lives. They were motivated also by the creative nature of the workshop, as they all had creative interests on their background: one's passion was photographing or writing, another's were visual arts, and others' artistic inclinations were in dance or theatre. There was set no great goals for the participation, but the aspiration was basically to learn new things about one-self and to look new directions for one's career. P2 mentioned that producing theatre play had become one very concrete goal especially because he had a great role writing the script for it, where he could utilise his talents.

Despite some initial hesitations, everyone had rather a good motivation for participation, which had appeared as an open-minded and relaxed attitude, such as: "*let's see what happens*", "*taking it easy*" and "*nothing to complain*". The activity usually didn't feel like compulsory work; it wasn't any force-feed measure for anyone. The participants rather "seized the chance" as they were ready for experimenting new things and taking actions with open mind. Everything was mostly "fun, useful, interesting, inspiring and even wonderful". One said that she just "*embraced what was given*" (P3). They certainly had an enthusiasm for learning: they were excited to go there and eager to try out everything, they had an urge to work, one "*always woke up in good mood, waiting for what's coming* (P5)".

Experiential learning can be considered characteristic for the participation, referring to *learning by active doing, learning by experimenting* and *collaborative learning in group work*

and *exploring one's resources*. These kinds of elements there could be found; all the interviewees described the participation as experimenting new things, and active group work. The stress was rather in active doing than in great results. The essential was to “start out doing with courage and try out everything, challenge oneself and venture bravely into new activities, explore unfamiliar things, fling into the work and indulge into the flow of action”, because daring was experienced also rewarding. Everything happened in a close collaboration and interaction with others; doing, being and learning together was most important. Group work with different people had been mostly rewarding and people had got along with each other. Activating and socializing together was the essence of the work shop which had been actualised for everyone. It was all about *discovering new skills, abilities, and strengths, aha-experiences, overcoming one's inhibitions, testing one's boundaries and surpassing oneself*.

Social encouragement & interaction was one dimension of the participation; the community offered a setting for peer group support, education & support from professionals, friendship-building and active communication. This close-knit peer-group was described an interactive environment where the coaches were also experienced mostly encouraging and motivating; offering different steering, support, advice, guidance and education. The work shop community was described as “*a tight bunch of people, like another family, where you had close contacts and good company*”, where one was “*surrounded by nice people and friends*”. Getting to know new people and building friendships was experienced especially significant; each participant had created new friendships in the group. Their social network had widened through an active every-day communication, where good discussions, sharing and cooperation with different persons were essential features for the socializing. The coaches as group leaders were seen in essential role, creating good spirit in the group, but also as “*mother and father characters*”. Thus, they were seen as creators of the work shop spirit but also as “*care-takers*”:

“*They were sincerely interested on us, the atmosphere was like... really caring.*” (P3)

“*They were always so inspiring and they were there to encourage us. We were spurred by them. The leaders created the positive atmosphere.*” (P4)

The general atmosphere and team spirit was experienced mostly good: relaxed, encouraging, inspiring, supporting and motivating. The work shop was experienced rather as “*a living room*” where was no hurry, pressure or anxiety; where people were “*hanging around, having fun together, encouraging, supporting and caring each other*”. Respect and acceptance, as well as consideration-showing and feeling of togetherness were other elements of *solidarity* to be found in the community. The drama was described as essential tool for creating positive work atmosphere. The creativity was seen as a source for positive energy and team spirit; the creative atmosphere was connecting people, developing sense of communality and feeling of

togetherness. Social relations were seen as an essential source for wellbeing and social activation, as new friends were found.

However there had been some *fluctuations on team spirit*; the social atmosphere wasn't always just wonderful and inspiring. There was lack of enthusiasm, interest and motivation, as well as passive participation and absences occurring in group participation, as well as different tensions and negative changes caused by drop-outs and even use of drugs, which affected negatively on the team spirit. One participant (P4) described in great detail how problematic behaviour of certain people had brought divisions within the group; she also criticised leaders' problem-solving methods in these situations. It wasn't the only thing she criticized. She was outspoken also about negative experiences, mostly due to the coaches' principles, practices and behaviour in certain situations. She brought up that the coaches didn't treat people equally; some people's problems were neglected while others' taken too seriously; she thought there was one person kicked out of the work shop with wrong reasons and judgments.

6.3 Social Strengthening

The work shop experience was described as socially strengthening in many ways; the creative group work had been a source for gaining positive energy, as well as for building up one's self-confidence- and gaining autonomy. These processes of growth had promoted participants' well-being and quality of life. *Positive energy* from participation was gained in many different forms such as *joy, pleasure, inspiration, courage and enthusiasm*. The creative work was experienced mostly encouraging and inspiring. A typical expression was "*I was feeling good and enjoyed everything*" (P2). New joys for life were found. One girl repeatedly brought up that "*everything was just brilliant and wonderful*" (P5).

Everything was described mostly interesting and even new hobbies were found. All the participants had been eager to try on different ways of creative work; the most important thing was to experience different things and try out everything. Everyone was glad about the unique opportunity. Much because of the experiential nature of the learning experiences, participants had experienced a great pleasure of the action, because it was "so exciting and captivating". Typical expressions were "*trying out everything was encouraging, daring and experimenting was rewarding, everything was worth trying, and experimentation was fun and liberating*".

By active doing and participation people had gained achievements and experiences of success. All the new possibilities and experimentation had brought inspiration and courage; those nice aha-experiences "*Yes I can do this*" had accumulated in the work shop process strength-

ening the actors. New interests, inspirations, excitement and enthusiasm were found for several new things and activities. Everyone had gained new skills and abilities, and some expertise in different arts. The work shop had been a combination of many inspiring activities and stimulation:

“Yeah, well I got excited about so many things, not only one something. The whole spirit of happening just swept me along, so to say. Even though many activities were unfamiliar and never done before, so it was fun to start out experimenting and just through oneself into action where was a low threshold; the active doing was essential, the result could be anything; you did everything just for your self.” (P2)

It wasn't quite easy to define what the most empowering thing was, everyone got excited rather about several new things all together. The drama however, had been the major tool for the personal strengthening. It had been a new territory for everyone and except one girl; it was described highly empowering part of the experience. One girl described her new ardour as follows:

“Drama was absolutely the best thing! I just remember the feeling at the end of the day when I went out from the work shop, I just felt like... walking in clouds! It was unbelievable sensation, never experienced that before; it just felt so good! I'm such a shy person usually, not the talkative one in a group... but having that good group allowed me to play those funny role plays and everything... These kinds of nice feelings of success I got there. Having never done any of that before, it liberated me somehow.” (P1)

Well-being from participation was gained in many levels, which wasn't however quite easy to describe more in detail. The general idea caught from the descriptions was that being occupied and always having something to do that you like, fostered one's *well-being* on all different spheres of life. In other words: being inspired, motivated, encouraged, and enthusiastic about something, fostered self-confidence, positive thoughts and all kind of well-being, life management and social activation:

“Throughout the whole work shop I was so excited and inspired, that it brought this kind of feeling of life management; the enthusiasm brought self-confidence; that you can do really anything, just like that...” (P2)

Consequently, the work shop had initiated “an accumulation of well-being and energy”, we could say. It wasn't easy for the participants to describe different cause-effect-relationships exactly, but there were many elements that made the whole experience inspiring and energising all together. Everyone agreed on that. All they described improved their quality of life

and wellbeing. Friendships and the peer group bringing a feeling of togetherness, however, had been the major factor that brought meaning and contents for life.

Self-confidence-building was an essential part of the personal growth process. It was fostered by an active participation and positive learning experiences in it, as well as by social encouragement. YAWS had offered experiences of success which was the very core of these processes of growth. Self-confidence was fostered by exploring new challenges, courageous experimentation, performing in front of other people, by active working, concrete achievements, new inspirations & enthusiasm, and new skills & abilities. The other element was social encouragement from other group members and group instructors. Receiving positive feedback was vital, as well as becoming accepted and respected within the group:

“You never felt bad about yourself, or your work; you always did well.” (P3)

Participants' self-confidence was grown throughout the different processes of group-building within the work shop community. The drama had been in major role in gaining self-confidence, because of the social nature and every-day use of the method; the drama process lasted from the start until the end of each work shop. Four of the participants emphasized the importance of drama for their self-confidence-building. *The boosted self-confidence* was perceived as following features: positive feelings about one-self, trust on one's skills, abilities and knowledge, trusting yourself, growth of bravery, better self-initiative, grown know-how, new interests & inspirations, easier to approach people, better self-knowledge, better self-awareness, increased courage & boldness. One (P4) described the new courage as *“some kind of creative craziness”* that empowered her to take off travelling abroad.

Gaining autonomy was third dimension of the personal growth during the work shop, as participants' *life-management* had improved, *responsibility and independency* was also grown. The work shop was experienced as active and rewarding work, and the working days were regular in length. In other words, the work shop had offered meaningful daily routines and contents to daily life with a regular daily rhythm. Those were described as essential factors for a feeling of life-coping and as basic elements of a *“good every-day life”*:

“You always woke up in good mood and never knew what's gonna happen today...” (P1)

“It was somehow very easy and smooth when everything was well-planned and the every-day life was ready-programmed. You just needed to go there and do your best.” (P3)

The work shop was also seen as a transitory *“shelter”*, a safe place to spend some time, to calm own and restore some energy. The work shop had brought stability and feeling of life-coping, at least temporarily: *“Yeah it was a necessary occasion for me... Don't know how long I would have been just hanging around without school or work, otherwise.”* (P3)

The work shop experience can be seen as a step closer to “adulthood, or active citizenship”. People had recognised a *growing responsibility and independency* in their life. You had to make your own decisions and choices by which you could build your future. For many, the work shop was the next step after high school and everyone considered it as “an own project, an independent exploration, or new adventure”, where you had the power to decide over your own life. One had gained a better self-initiative through the work shop experience, as a result of all comprehensive stimulation. In the form of different creative methods, it had supported participants’ independency, self-motivation and autonomy.

6.4 Professional Development in and after work shop

“*Raising career-consciousness*” had been one dimension of the work shop experience, as *career planning* was included in the work shop tool box. It had consisted of individual and group discussions about career interests, plans and possibilities. Others were also practicing job-hunting together, and all had practical guidance in school-searching. Basically, the group coaches had been available for any discussion needed. The career planning as such wasn’t however experienced very significant by any of the participants, it was rather forgotten already “if there were some career discussions”. It wasn’t the essential of the experience. One girl (P4) however brought up clearly that she didn’t get enough personal career guidance.

Career reflections were taken in work shop: along with the practical every-day work, people had been planning their future together; building up different perspectives, reflecting different career choices, discovering new career interests and paths. During the work shop, they had widened their awareness of different possibilities as well as of their personal resources for career development. *Career ideas had cleared* more or less: for some of them, old thoughts got stronger, while the others had discovered new fields of interest. One girl (P5) had been balancing thoughts about career and arts and come to a conclusion that she want to keep art only as a dear hobby, however aspiring to utilise her creative skills in her future career. She had discovered communication field as a new possibility. Another participant (P2) described that the work shop definitely was an inspiration for the subsequent practical training in theatre environment. For one girl (P4) it was a pretty clear decision to apply for nursing school, while another (P1) discovered media field as her strength was in photographing and one (P3) went studying culture. Next after the work shop, all of the participants had found either studies or work.

Participants’ career development since the work shop experience had proceeded by gaining different *employment and education*. Only one of them (P5) was unemployed at the interview moment. She had been working on communication field, educated herself with graphics de-

gree, which she was looking for to get employed with. One (P3) had gained degree on “culture producing” and also different work experiences on that field, but also continued with studies on theatre sciences, which was her major occupation at the interview date. One person (P4) had work experience on several fields and was soon graduating from nursing school. The one, who was inspired for a practical training in a theatre(P2), had taken also another practical training before entering into the faculty of literature in university. One girl (P1), whose passion was photography, had attained media-assistant degree and different employment on that field, also photographing. Thus, all of the participants had progressed on their careers within the years after the work shop period; none of them could have been described marginalised. One had been unemployed for few months, but she also was actively looking after different possibilities to get employed.

Consequently, *creativity in career paths* was an outstanding feature to be discovered. Every participant had one’s creative interests, which had been more or less influenced on their career choices. Also the nursing student was dreaming of combing nursing with art; she was interested on art therapies. It was difficult to describe exactly how much the creative nature of the work shop influenced on their career choices, but all of these participants were still somehow creatively oriented, years after YAWS. One having first studied producing culture and continued with researching culture (theatre sciences), the other being specialised on literature, they all were using their creative capacities. Graphics-profession was described creative, too. One girl had discovered the media field during the work shop, which enabled her to utilise her skills in photographing. She had been employed also by the YAWS itself, to photograph activities and develop their web-pages.

Looking back at the work shop experience, it was seen in colourful lights. It was characterised as: *“a remarkable happening, a wonderful part of my life, great time of social encouragement and enthusiasm, as an impressive, exquisite, inspiring experience altogether, once in a lifetime-experience, a great privilege and unique& exciting opportunity to explore different things”*.

All the five participants had mostly good memories to tell about, that they were eager to share in the interview. They considered the work shop period as important part of their life, which had left marks on each and every one. Essential part of the whole experience had been new friendships, which were remained for four participants; only one wasn’t in contact with workshop mates anymore. The work shop had been a unique and meaningful experience for everyone:

“It was that golden period in my youth; I would still like to be there!” (P1)

7 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to define and describe young people's experiences of YAWS, as well as to understand this activity as a social phenomenon. My actual interest was on the elements of empowerment, however not excluding possible "not-empowering" experiences. My aspiration was to see how the creative methods can cultivate empowerment as a personal process of social change. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data about the phenomenon. By describing participants' individual experiences I tried to get an overall picture of YAWS, reaching for an understanding of the typical features of the work shop activity and learning, experienced by young people. The group of informants was rather homogeneous, which facilitated the analysis of data.

7.1 Experiences of empowerment

Based on the results of this study, the workshop experience as a combination of 1) creative methods and 2) interactive participation, had promoted participants' empowerment, described as 3) social strengthening and 4) professional development. As a conclusion of my interpretation, I suggest that participants had *experienced empowerment*, as several elements of *social change* were discovered: gaining positive energy, self-confidence-building, gaining autonomy, raising career-consciousness and career development.

In other words, they had gained power by the work shop participation. The work shop period had increased participants' well-being, quality of life and feeling of life management; fostering their ability to act. The work shop period was considered as a socially activating and strength-giving experience, which had left marks on everyone. The results show that the different creative methods used as work shop tools had given such a comprehensive stimulation altogether which had encouraged and inspired for an active participation. Together with social encouragement received from other group members, the learning environment had supported participants' social strengthening. My interpretation is that the very essential about this process of empowerment had been experiential learning, discovered as a typical feature for the work shop action. The creative activities had provided young people with new tools for self-reflection, -expression and -motivation; creative methods had served as tools for empowerment, awakening their creative resources and critical thinking. The work shop participation had initiated an accumulation of positive energy and well-being, which had fostered their self-confidence-building and autonomy, contributing to their professional development, as well.

In other words, the work shop experience can be seen as a process of gaining power; a personal process of *social change*, developed in different stages: *feelings, ideas and action*, as

presented by Dalrymple & Burke (1995). The work shop had offered open spaces and opportunities for learning; a secure and comfortable forum of expression, a community where young people were heard and seen, accepted and respected. Confidence- and trust-building were essential element for building good community spirit, enabling participants to move on their “journey of self-actualisation”. During the work shop period, their 1) *feelings and ideas were reshaped* in relation with others; they had gained a more positive self-dimension, experienced as a growth of self-confidence, strengthening their feeling of self-worth and life-coping-skills, as well as their capacity to act. The YAWS- project had given new tools for using one’s resources, skills and abilities. The peer group had served as a mirror in this process; having people around enabled one for a constructive self-reflection. The social support and feedback had been of the very essence in empowerment. In relation with other group members, participants had developed and changed their ideas about themselves as well as about their living circumstances. Active participation, characterised by experiential learning, had generated experiences of success and positive energy which had awakened one’s thinking and belief in one’s personal power and competence. Through the creative activities within an encouraging community one had built up one’s self-confidence and gained more autonomy as well. The work shop activity had a *conscious-raising function* as the participants had raised their awareness of their personal resources and capacities for career development, during the work period. Their awareness of different educational possibilities had widened, as they had gathered new information about society and planned their careers together with others. Along with the practical work, critical career reflections had occurred and a higher level of understanding was gained. The social change on the 2) *level of action* was then actualised after the work shop period, as the participants had actively moved on their professional pathways to become “autonomous, active citizens” of this society. This kind of “action” as a part of empowerment hadn’t been necessarily “politically reformist”, but promoting the social change on a personal level, anyway. Education and employment is our principal channel for a civil participation and civilisation, after all. It’s our right and duty, but also possibility to influence on our society. It’s a possibility to empower and become empowered. In this sense, the empowerment would be seen as a process of socialisation.

7.2 Empowerment through experiential learning

Whatever the context was, no empowerment probably occurs without motivation and learning. This is what I discovered during the analysis, when I looked for different elements of empowerment from the gathered data. Typical feature for the interactive participation was discovered experiential learning, which had required *motivation for learning* and consisted of such elements as *learning by active doing, learning by experimenting, collaborative learning in group work and exploring one’s resources*. I think this workshop provides young people a very peculiar setting for this kind of learning, as it combines so many different elements of

creative methods. The drama seems to be the mainstay for all the action; a source for power and a feeling of togetherness. I can imagine that the use of drama gives a certain spirit of action as a tool for group-building and social encouragement. In this workshop, it seems to be like a “glue binding people together”, mending group cohesion to uphold a positive spirit needed for all the other action in the work shop.

Experiential learning can be understood as a comprehensively stimulating action-based process using different sensory channels, feelings, images and imagination; human experiences. The essential is to support learner’s personal and social growth, self-confidence-building, “learning to learn”; raising awareness of one’s learning and the targets of it. Learning is seen as continuous process of deepening and understanding of knowledge; building up one’s know-how and consciousness. It’s all about transformation and extension of human experiences. Thus, it’s a comprehensive process of human adaptation. According to the experiential learning approach, deriving from humanistic psychology, human experiences and self-reflection are seen the keys for learning: it’s based on our ability to assess our experiences and learning as a foundation for new learning; it’s more than just processing information. Human being is seen naturally capable for a self-reflective, self-guided action promoting growth and realisation of “self”. Through a reflective activity one studies own perceptions of the world reaching for a new level of understanding. It’s always connected with motivation, free will and responsibility of own learning. In these processes we are active subjects of our own learning. (Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu 2011.)

I think this description matches well with the principles of YAWS, as well as the results of this study. Based on this, I would conclude that the experiences of empowerment in this context can be seen as processes of experiential learning, which the creative methods and the work shop community created spaces and opportunities for. However this is only my interpretation; it cannot be considered as an absolute truth. According to my understanding, work-shoppers can be seen as active subjects of their own learning, as their personal motivation and initiative was required; enabling them for an open-minded and active participation. The creative work was experienced mostly inspiring, encouraging and rewarding; where “learning by doing” was the principle for action. In this context, empowerment can be seen tightly due to “learning from experience”, as the work shop offered practical work experiences of multi-form creative activities: different opportunities for learning, challenging work-shoppers for an open-minded experimentation of new things in close collaboration. It could be characterised as a “plunge into a new adventure” where learning occurred by active work in tight interaction. According to my interpretation, spaces for experiential learning were created by stimulating activities and encouraging community. The combination of different art forms opened opportunities for multiform creativity, learning and growth: dreaming and planning, social networking and interaction, playing and gaming, movement and relaxation, drumming

and dancing, painting and sculpturing, acting and performing, writing and cooking, walking and talking, etc... One surely needs to use all senses in such kind of a work.

7.3 Socio-cultural animation

During this study, and especially during the analysis of the data, I have discovered that the best definition for the YAWS is socio-cultural animation, which includes all the theoretical elements presented in this work. This section gives an overview of the animation, which offers a comprehensive theoretical (and practical) ideology for the Youth's Art Workshop and any social work, especially when the interest is to cultivate people's creativity. This is what I have ended up with my question of how to combine social work with creative methods. So in a sense it's the answer for my "theoretical research question".

Socio-cultural animation can be described as a pedagogical movement aiming at people to participate a conscious, active building-process of their own community life. It's about activating people in general, but the word "animation" gives a deeper meaning of "dynamic giving life and spirit". Thus, it's about motivation to action, about positioning oneself in relation and about acting in favour of the community and society. The movement of socio-cultural animation was born in France as a method of social work in the end of the Second World War. It is discovered as an especially good philosophic and methodological base for the youth work in many countries. In Finland this is a pretty new territory as a concept and a theory, however spreading all the time. And as an activity it can be said having long traditions also here, but not actually recognized with this term. It's a form of social pedagogy fitted well to the purposes of youth education; stressing the meaning of dialogue and praxis. By daring to set in a full dialogue with other people, by a true activity and reflection, the aspiration is *transformation*; a qualitative change of the world. Nobody educates others; people are seen growing together, through a shared world. The aim is that each young person could feel oneself a real and full "self" every moment and able to express oneself freely and equally with others. (Kurki 2007, 201-228)

Socio-cultural animation has both an *individual and communal task*; reaching for young people to grow towards a full citizenship, as a person and a member of a community. The development of a person is always seen in relation to the community and society. Each valuable individual becomes stronger with the help of education, towards living a full everyday-life; to build the society even more human and equitable place to live in. The starting point for social-pedagogical youth education should be to understand that the society consists of valuable, unique and priceless persons; who can reach their full potential only by acting together with other equal persons in their communities. Based on this, the socio-pedagogical youth work praxis orientates in supporting the socialisation of each individual; especially in the

strengthening of the youth living in margins, the oppressed and distressed. The elements behind the socio-pedagogical concept of community are tightly due to the social activity between persons. Starting off, participation, and action are the necessities to bring people closer to each other, leading them in interaction. By a common decision to a responsible participation, by engaging solidarity in this communal activity, the members can reach a mutual understanding of the meaning of activity and a subjective, interactive relation to each other. The youth education praxis supports young people's socialisation into their communities and societies but also into an "imaginative utopia"; in a hope for a better future; in something that doesn't exist yet. The essential in this pedagogical activity is seen the nature of the dialogue between the animator/educator and the young person; because expressly in this dialogue, one's thinking can be awakened and one can be start off towards a conscious action. (Kurki 2007, 201-228)

According to Kurki (2007,201-228), the structures of the socio-cultural animation have always three dimensions: *pedagogical, social and cultural*; she sees them as essential elements of all good youth education. They are interrelated and rooted in wider visions of culture, which affects on the nature of the youth work praxis. Our understanding about culture defines largely the way we act as youth educators. The best way to see it would include the historical process, part of which a young person acts as its creator and producer; not only as a product. Culture should always have "a project of future", too. Culture should be open for everyone to take part in; not just a privilege for the most intelligent or some way of living that we passively socialize ourselves into. In the very core of the pedagogical dimension should be the *unique personality* of each young individual.

The aim of the educational activity should be a personal development, change of attitudes, arise of critical thinking, recognition of own responsibility, sensitizing and awakening of motivation. The social dimension then concentrates on the group and community: bringing youth together, considering all kind of unification as necessary tools for building democracy in the society. The participation and integration of the youth is the target for different kinds of work methods socio-cultural animation. Especially important are different forms of non-professional art such as community art, amateur theatre, dance, music, art craft, language and literature. In supporting the creativity of the youth, it's essential for the worker to take into use one's own resources of cultural creativeness, too. All the working methods are based on supporting participation; meaning basically any kind of approaches supporting interaction between young people. The starting point is to move on from the level of consciousness clients have at the moment and to settle one self in a dialogue facing their story. Each community is seen unique, having different needs for the action, basing on the analysis and interpretation in case. The animation at the best can be "action research" in collaboration with

adults and young, aiming at change, starting from the problems that the young experience and feel.

7.4 Ethical issues and trustworthiness

Collecting information about people raises ethical issues in the focus of attention. Throughout the process one needs to be aware of ethical principles of human research and recognise one's active role in it. In the analysis of data and dissemination of findings, one needs to maintain the respect for participants' rights and dignity, as well as avoid any harm to arising from their involvement; one needs to operate with honesty and integrity. The interest and privacy of participants was protected by ensuring a full safety of the data gathering circumstances, so that the informants could feel free talking about the given subjects in peace and calm, as well as they were ensured a confidentiality of information. The data was kept secure and used for only the purposes of this study. It was verified that the participants weren't exposed to any kind of harm because of the research. In order to avoid any deception, the informants were clearly described their role and the meaning of the study, so that there was a mutual understanding between the researcher and participants. They were also given informed consent; they voluntarily participated into the interview, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation. Interviews were conducted in a trustful atmosphere, giving the time and space for the informants to express themselves freely without any pressure. The participants were guaranteed a full right for anonymity, which can be seen in the consent form signed by the interviewees in the beginning of each interview (see appendix 3). In all other ways the interviewees were treated respectfully by the researcher concentrating on each individual case with a friendly and open-minded attitude, listening carefully and giving the chance for expressing them selves freely without any judgement or limits. (David & Sutton 2004, 17-19)

There are lots of different opinions and approaches to evaluate trustworthiness in qualitative research. As a researcher I have to be able to explain the reasons for my decisions during the data collection. The coherence of report is evaluated to gain trustworthiness. I believe that I have explained comprehensively the different phases of the study. I have also recognised my active role as a researcher of a qualitative study; I acknowledge that the work is constructed by me and not by any other. The researcher always plays important role in the process, so interpretation is more or less present in the final work. The research process has involved decision-making; it has proceeded step by step; decision by decision. In other words, the work represents the development of my understanding as a process of absorbing and adapting information. Decisions have been made according to the purpose of the study, which was to define and describe experiences of YAWS, as well as to understand the phenomenon. My aspiration was to see how creative methods can be used as tools for empowerment preventing

young people from marginalisation. This thought has given the red line for my story. I wanted to reach the individual experiences of work shop participants, because I wanted to bring up their perspective and not the one of workers. I strived for identifying the different features of empowerment as a personal process of social change, in the context of YAWS. I believe I have gained a rather good grasp on this phenomenon, based on the interviews. However, I also recognise that it's only a small sample of all the over 200 young people who have experienced the YAWS. Thus, the results cannot be generalised, but they can give indications of something. I have collected a pretty deep data of people's individual experiences.

The analysis was an essential part of the study, where the meaning of interpretation was highlighted. I was challenging to balance between the original expressions and the aspirations of conceptualisation, especially because of the language. As the gathered data was in Finnish, the work load was doubled in order to create findings in English. The language surely affects on the trustworthiness of my study, as I have translated most of the text. However the use of two languages has brought also advantages. It has brought dept to my understanding, as I've been obliged to reflect everything in dept, in order to make proper translations. However it has slowed down my progress really much.

7.5 Reflections on effects and experiences

When I started doing this study, I framed two research questions for it. The one was to discover and describe young people's experiences of the YAWS and the other one was to define the effects of the activity on their lives. I was interested to hear individual stories about their life course and the role of the YAWS in relation to it. I had an aspiration to see some "real effects" of this kind of activity on the different life paths and careers. I saw the importance of YAWS especially as a social work preventing marginalisation of the youth. I wanted to know if the YAWS has empowering effects on the life situations of its participants; to discover the meaning of its function. Thus, the emphasis of my study was slightly more on the word effect than experience.

However, during the study I got the insight that it would be better to concentrate on the experiences solely. During the analysis I faced with the fact that it would be really difficult to define what the "real effects" were. Somehow it just didn't fit into my way of thinking. Instead, it was easier, or more interesting, to explore different dimensions or "realities" of experiences, because the setting for the experiences (=YAWS) included so many elements (=stimulation for all senses). For me it was easier and more natural to think about "describing" than "evaluating" or "measuring". This was a good decision to make because it clarified my thinking. I understood that it was better way to outline the target of interest to make sense of my material. It was also difficult for participants to define exactly the effects of

YAWS in their life course. It was just “a wonderful part of lifetime” etc. I think I would have got very different results if my sample wasn’t so homogeneous.

However, I think it became clear to me that it was actually impossible to define the “real effects” so I rather concentrated on the experiences. Probably this was also because all my interviewees were not that much “in risk of marginalisation”; they didn’t have bigger social problems such as long-termed unemployment or drug abuse, for instance. All of them described to be in the need of this work shop, but maybe not in an “acute” one. Even though one girl described to have been depressed that time and another had been “adrift” after dropping out of school. It would have been interesting to get participants with even more varied backgrounds. The initial idea behind the “effect”-word was probably due to the other big word “empowerment”. Maybe I thought that “in empowerment there has to be some great effects”, but then I realised that “experience” is more interesting to research. I think I made a rather deep exploration in the YAWS; I almost feel like I was there myself. Based on the results, I could also conclude that the workshop had “empowering effects” on these five participants, but I rather stress that they have “experienced empowerment”.

7.6 Reflections on a fragile youth

Youth is a phase of life when we are fragile and prone to different kinds of factors which may lead us to marginalisation in a way or another. In our modern society we are dealing with different kinds of pressures and expectations from different communities around us and from our society in general. In the Finnish society the educational is highly respected and it certainly has a crucial meaning in all of our lives. The competition in its various forms may push people towards harmful results and finally marginalisation. The unemployment of young people is one of the social problems of our society, and it needs to be battled against, that’s for sure.

In this effectiveness-oriented modern society- underlining individuality and self-management- young person may feel rootless or adrift. However everyone have the need to belong to a group. Everyone needs to be seen and heard. In our world people are expected to be more and more effective as well as one should know what to do with life. Young people are expected to do their individual choices and solutions; they should know what the best is for them. Life is in a way easier for people who have clear goals and plans to reach them. However, a lot of youngsters are very unsure about what they want to do with their lives. All people don’t have the courage and strong will to make their own way towards their dreams. Young person is expected to move on from the childhood and family-oriented life towards a more individual life. In general, this means moving from one’s parents’ home to an independent accommodation, as well as making decisions about education and work- issues. One is

expected to create one's own career based on one's own interest. It's very demanding, but each and every one should make their way somehow directed to the future; it's very damaging and problematic for a young person to stay without anything "reasonable to do". You should always have some reason to wake up in the morning and something meaningful to build on your daily schedules. The most important is naturally, that this activity of some kind would be important to you on a personal level, but what moreover, there is always the societal perspective to be seen. Every citizen has one's own role in this community; we are building together our state. So our educational careers should be useful also for this society we are living in. The essential in this life is to earn one's own bread; the ideal for everyone would be to enter the working life in their adulthood. Young people are targeted to make their way there, in a way or another. Unfortunately a lot of youngsters are unemployed or in other ways drifting around or behaving harmfully for themselves. Our society is striving for to get all these people activated towards a successful education and employment career.

It is encouraging to see that art and culture is more and more invested in the Finnish politics these days. "The aim of the Art and culture for well-being programme is to promote well-being and health by means of art and culture and to enhance inclusion at the individual, community and societal levels. The three priority areas in it are: 1) culture in promoting social inclusion, capacity building, networking and participation in daily life and living environments, 2) art and culture as part of social welfare and health promotion, and 3) art and culture in support of well-being and health at work." (Liikanen 2010,5) Sounds like a good plan to me.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Table of content analysis

REDUCED EXPRESSIONS	SUB-CATEGORY	UPPER CATEGORY	HEAD CATEGORY	JOINING CATEGORY
Inspiring, colourful and cosy place Heterogeneous groups Versatile activities stimulating all senses, body& mind	INSPIRING ENVIRONMENT	STIMULATING SETTING FOR LEARNING	CREATIVE METHODS	EXPERIENCES OF YAWS
Never done before Unexpectedness Positive surprises New adventure Captivating doings Interesting activity	FASCINATING ACTIVITY			
Steering from leaders Professional teachers Guidance from leaders Advice from leaders Support from adults	EDUCATION & SUPPORT FROM PROFESSIONALS			
Easy to approach Easy to participate No special skills expected Stress on doing, not results Not too demanding	LOW THRESHOLD ON DOINGS			
Free hands Freedom to decide Freedom to choose Using imagination Optional subjects Interests charted	FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION			
Diff. plays & games Outdoor recreation Different ball games Afro dance Djembe-drums Creative exercise Stretching; relaxation Walking expeditions	PHYSICAL EXERCISE & MUSIC	VARIETY OF CREATIVE ACTIVITIES		
Museums & art exhibitions Cottage trip Excursions Camps	CAMPS, TRIPS & VISITS			
WS Art exhibition Theatre plays with a real audience Social evening Djembe-drum-performance Mural painting Shooting theatre	PROJECTS & PERFORMANCES			
Photographing Painting Drawing Video shots	VISUAL ARTS			
Wood carving Metal graphic arts Stone cutting Glassblowing	HANDICRAFTS & MANUAL SKILLS			

Cooking Felt-making Crafts Creative writing				
Soft drama mornings Performing in front of other people Improvisation Plays & games Funny role plays Different exercises for trust-building, introduction, group spirit, breaking down tensions	GROUP EXERCISES	DRAMA AS A PRINCIPAL TOOL		
Theatre-like activity Preparing & realisation of theatre play Writing-process of the text of the play	PRODUCING THEATRE			
Tool for trust-building processes Raising the feeling of togetherness Tool for developing team spirit Tool for learning about os. & others Tool for breaking down tensions	TOOL FOR GROUP-BUILDING			
Challenging, but rewarding Energy and inspiration from drama The best part of all Drama most empowering & enco Social skills especially from drama Performing to others important Good tool against shyness Drama was liberating Drama: succeeding- experiences	TOOL FOR SOCIAL ENCOURAGEMENT			

Good social environment People u like to be with People around you Friends around you Good company Close contacts Tight bunch of people Like another family	PEER GROUP SUPPORT	SOCIAL ENCOURAGEMENT & INTERACTION	INTERACTIVE PARTICIPATION	EXPERIENCES OF YAWS
Encouragement and support from ldrs Motivation from enthusiastic coaches Leaders created spirit "Mother and father"-characters	ENCOURAGING & MOTIVATING COACHES			
Social network widened Getting to know different people Creating real friendships Friends are essential Making friends Creating real friendships Friendships have remained	BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS			
Every-day interaction with people Active interaction with people	ACTIVE COMMUNICATION			

Intensive interaction Different persons together Social activation & co-operation Good discussions Sharing				
No pressure, No anxiety Not too serious, No hurry Like a living room, Hanging around Having fun together Inspiring atmosphere Intensive & captivating atmosph	RELAXED & INSPIRING ATMOSPHERE	GENERAL TEAM SPIRIT & ATMOSPHERE		
Supportive atmsp. Encouraging TS Good group despite of differences Energising TS Everybody got along with each other We pulled well together	ENCOURAGING TEAM SPIRIT			
Caring atmosphere A sincere caring Mutual respect and acceptance Show consideration for other people Interest on others' well-being Feeling of togetherness	SOLIDARITY			
Varying level of enthusiasm Fluctuating particip of diff. people Passive participat. Lack of interest Some people's lack of enthusiasm Lack of motivation	PROBLEMS DUE TO MOTIVATION	FLUCTUATIONS ON TEAM SPIRIT		
Drop-outs disturbed atmosphere Use of drugs: divisions & tensions Leaders' unfair behavior Difficult personal chemistries One was kicked out	OTHER TENSIONS IN GROUP			
No study place Unemployment Being "adrift" Uncertainty of plans Uncertainty of career interests Period of depression Need for reflection New phase of life Need for a break	UNCERTAIN LIFE SITUATION	MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING		
Interest in visual arts Interested in writing and music staff Great passion for different arts Theatre and dance since childhood	CREATIVE INTERESTS			

Passion for photographing				
Everything was fun,useful,interesting Everything was wonderful Nothing to complain Let's see what happen Embracing what was given Taking it easy Didn't feel like work	OPEN MINDED & RELAXED ATTITUDE			
Searching for new interests Learning to know yourself Looking for career No particular goals Reflecting your own profession The theatre play a concrete goal	GOALS FOR PARTICIPATION			
Always woke up in good mood Waiting for what's coming Excited to go there Urge to work Eager to try out	ENTHUSIASM FOR LEARNING			
Active participation Activating together Active work Doing& trying Flinging into work Learning by doing Stress on active doing, not results Throwing oneself into the activity Indulging into the flow	LEARNING BY ACTIVE DOING	EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING		
Starting out doing with courage Doing what you can Venturing bravely into new activities Meeting with new challenges Open-minded experimentation Exploring unfamiliar activities Challenging yourself Essential was to try out everything Taking actions with open mind	LEARNING BY EXPERIMENTING			
Doing& being together essential Everything in interaction with others Group work was empowering Team work was rewarding Working with nice people Communal activity Working & activating together Working in close collaboration	COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN GROUP WORK			
Discovering new skills and abilities Discovering new dimensions of you Learning new techniques& materials	EXPLORING ONE'S RESOURCES			

Learning about your strengths Aha-experiences Overcoming one's inhibitions Testing one's boundaries Surpassing yourself				
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Feeling good, enjoying everything "Walking-in-clouds-feeling" Satisfaction with doings Pleasure from creative work Joy of doing together Everything was interesting Everything was brilliant, wonderful Finding joys for life	PLEASURE & JOY FROM ACTION	GAINING POSITIVE ENERGY	SOCIAL STRENGTHENING	EXPERIENCES OF YAWS
Trying out everyth was encouraging Daring was rewarding Experimenting was rewarding Everything was worth trying Experimentation was fun& liberating	ENCOURAGING & INSPIRING ACTION			
Achievements by active doing Inspiration & courage from success Aha-experiences Experiences of success New possibilities brought inspiration Experimentation brought inspiration New interests & inspirations by active participation & experimentation	INSPIRATION& COURAGE FROM ACTION			
New ardour for drama Excitement& inspiration for diff. arts Enthusiastic of all the new activities Excited about drama Overall enthusiasm for everything New hobbies discovered Gaining expertise in different arts Gaining new skills and abilities	INSPIRATION & ENTHUSIASM FOR NEW THINGS			
A clear improvement in well-being WB from better self-esteem Well-being from new self-confidence Quality of life through inspiration WB from inspiration& motivation Sports+food improved wellbeing Regular&rewarding work fostered WB	WELLBEING FROM PARTICIPATION			

<p>Wonderful, meaningful part of my life The “golden period” in my youth A remarkable happening that time Great time of social encouragement & enthusiasm Impressive, exquisite, inspiring experience altogether “Once in a lifetime” I was privileged Unique & exciting opportunity to explore different things Friendships have remained Only good memories</p>	<p>UNIQUE, MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE</p>			
<p>Pos. feed-back from leaders & group Acceptance and respect from others Encouragement from friends Encouragement from group members</p>	<p>SELF-CONF. FROM SOCIAL ENCOURAGEMENT</p>	<p>SELF-CONFIDENCE-BUILDING</p>		
<p>SC from experiences of success SC especially from drama SC from new inspirations& enthusiasm SC through active working SC from performing SC from concrete achievements SC from courageous experimentation SC from new skills & abilities SC from exploring new challenges Drama brought SC</p>	<p>SELF-CONFIDENCE FROM ACTIVE PARTICIPATION</p>			
<p>Positive feelings about oneself Trusting your skills and abilities Trusting your knowledge Trusting yourself Growth of bravery “Creative craziness” Better self-initiative Growing know-how New interests & inspirations Easier to approach people Better self-knowledge Better self-awareness Getting courage&boldness</p>	<p>BETTER SELF-CONFIDENCE</p>			
<p>Meaningful daily routines Active everyday work Rewarding work Contents to daily life Transitory “shelter” Regular daily rhythm Regular working days</p>	<p>BETTER LIFE-MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>GAINING AUTONOMY</p>		
<p>Independent living Own project in YAWS Independency from self-</p>	<p>GROWING INDEPENDENCY & RESPONSIBILITY</p>			

confidence Power to decide Personal choices Away from parents Independency from self- motivation Better self-initiative Responsibility of oneself & own choices Independent work				
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Individual career- discussions Group discussions Not enough personal career guid- ance Job-hunting-practice Practical guidance in school- searching	CAREER PLANNING	RAISING CAREER- CONSCIOUSNESS	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN & AFTER WS	EXPERIENCES OF YAWS
Reflecting different career choices Balancing thoughts about career & arts Finding new career interests, & paths Old career thoughts got stronger	CAREER REFLECTIONS			
Art only hobby Communication field discovered Literat. clear choice Media field discovered Nursing pretty clear Sth to do with culture	CLEARING CAREER IDEAS			
Home economics & Almost Nurse Media assistant. Culture producer & theatre sci- ences. Graphics-degree. Literature-studies	EDUCATION AFTER WS	CAREER DEVELOPMENT AFTER WS		
Photographing & "media-assisting" Different jobs as "culture pro- ducer" Practical trainings on communica- tion Experience on many works Huoneteatteri, "Viestintäala Tu- tuksi"	EMPLOYMENT AFTER WS			
Producing & researching Art Graphics = Creative Nursing+Art= Art Therapy? Literature= Art form Media and photographing= Creative	CREATIVITY IN CAREER			

Appendix 2: Themes for the interview (English version)

Activities

- Arts
- Drama
- Career planning
- Music + sports
- Cooking+ trips
- Team spirit

Empowerment

- Something especially meaningful
- Personal growth and deeper feelings
- Self-confidence
- Dissappointments
- Achieving own goals
- Control and quality of life
- Well-being
- Rhythm of life
- Independency
- Social skills

Life after work shop

- Education
- Employment/ unemployment
- Marginalisation?
- Social contacts
- The change before/after the work shop
- The importance of work shop experience

Appendix 3: Consent Form (English version)

I voluntarily agree to participate in the thesis project "Experiences from Youth's Arts Work Shop" for the student from Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Degree Programme of Social Services). I understand that this study is being conducted by Milla Salonen to explore the importance of the Youth's Arts Work Shop activity and is also the basis for her Bachelor's thesis. I understand that the evaluation methods, which may involve me, are:

1. My participation in the recorded interview.
2. My answering of the interview questions.
3. My presence for the interview which may be about one hour.

I grant permission for the interview to be tape recorded and transcribed, and to be used only by Milla Salonen for analysis of interview data. I grant permission for the evaluation data generated from the above methods to be published in an evaluation report (Bachelor's thesis to Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Otaniemi Institute). I understand that any identifiable information in regard to my name will not be listed in the above-mentioned Bachelor's thesis or any future publication(s), as well as any of my comments, practices, questions etc. will not be discussed outside the research team without any permission.

Research participant

Date
