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**Participant-reported Impact of the Non-formal Educational Activities for Teenagers:
an Example of the Empowerment Program for Boys**

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract <p>Capability to communicate with other people and build relationships is the vital factor for survival in the modern society. Therefore it is important for the young people who enter adult life to acquire these skills necessary for everyday life. Non-formal education gives young people the possibility to develop their values, skills and competencies not in a conceptual but in the real world.</p> <p>For a successful passage from childhood to adulthood the education of young people at this age should be under construction proceeding from the satisfaction of the following needs: 1) Developing the life skills 2) Possibility to make mistakes 3) Learning from their experiences. However the modern education system is focused more on acquiring knowledge, not skills. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the dominance of boys in the early drop-out from the school system.</p> <p>The basis for this study is the non-formal educational project "Boys to Men!", which was organized and conducted by three NGOs: Estonian School of Citizen Journalism, Estonian Academy of Childhood and Skydive Club Dropzone. The aim of the project was to find out how 15-16 years old male participants would evaluate the impact of this non-formal educational project concerning their personal development. The author used the method of interview for collecting this data.</p> <p>The main focus was on the everyday problems of the participants and how the activities of the project helped the participants to alleviate them. Participants' self-reported results of the project show that it has had a positive influence on the development of the self-confidence of the participants, which may result in a long-term increase in their social capital.</p> <p>These changes will also be beneficial for the whole community. For this reason the author suggests improving the curriculum of basic education by including in it the methods of non-formal education.</p>	
Keywords formal education, non-formal education, adolescence, activities outside of school, empowerment, impact, NGO, interview as a method, participants' life problems, self-confidence, communication, social capital, risk element, adventure education.	

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the major directions in development of any democratic state, for that simple reason the level and quality of education create the future of the state. Methods and approaches in an education system permanently change, are permanently enhanced. Present time is not an exception either.

In the educational system of Estonia there are a number of problems, however in the research operation the author would like to discuss one of them, namely the education of boys at basic school and non-formal education as a necessary addition for helping boys in the general education system.

In the Estonian educational context, the one most serious problem present is the students dropping out of basic school, especially the dropping out rate of boys. In the academic year of 2005/2006, 71% of basic school drop-outs were boys. This phenomenon has not changed since the academic year of 1999/2000 (Leino 2009, 28). The most crucial ages are 15 and 16 that is the 7th till the 9th grade (Müнди 2006, 11-12). This shows that the well-being of boys at school is lower and they are more dissatisfied with school than girls. That probably means that the school system favours girls over boys (Kask 2008, 44). The percentage of young people dropping out from basic school is about 15% (Kraav 2005, 10). The statistics of the year 2011 inform that the share of those who quit decreased at the secondary school level, but even increased a little at the basic school level compared to the previous year (Eesti statistika aastaraamat 2011, 72).

All this occurs against the background that the amount of students in Estonia decreases every year. Under the age of 18, the number has dropped from 220 000 in the year 2000 to 166 000 in 2006 (Leino 2009, 28), and according to the statistics (Eesti statistika aastaraamat 2011, 67) the outlook for the next 50 years is not so optimistic. Therefore, it is essential to keep the youth at school and give them a good education, which is one of the most important tasks in our society.

The early leaving and "underachievement" of boys is not a new phenomenon in education. For example, the Schools' Inquiry Commission in the UK in 1868 was the first

systematic public inquiry in that jurisdiction into the issue of gender differences in performance. They found significant differences in performance favouring girls. It noted that "Girls come to you to learn; boys have to be driven" (Lynch & Feeley 2007, 41).

In the year 2010 three non-governmental organizations - Estonian School of Citizen Journalism, Estonian Academy of Childhood and Skydive Club Dropzone - decided to integrate their efforts and to test in practice a non-formal method of training boys. As a result we had the project "Boys to Men!" which was granted financial support by Open Estonia Foundation.

It is possible to name this thesis *action research* because it was "a democratic participatory process with the goal to create valuable practical knowledge" (Laherand 2008, 133). Founders of such approach in pedagogics are John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Kurt Huhn. However, the current thesis would not stop on the theories of these researchers. From this research the author would like to receive specific practical knowledge which can be implemented in our educational system.

Being engaged in the given research, the author came to the conclusion that the society would need both formal and non-formal education. However, these two directions of development of the young people, in real life, extremely rarely find anything in common with teamwork. Frequently they go parallel ways, independent from each other. The non-formal education possesses the big variety of methods in training while the comprehensive school is rather restricted in its choice of such methods. In that sense, they could complement to each other, but such habitual state of affairs does not change. Dewey believed that "it is a mistake to suppose that the mere acquisition of a certain amount of arithmetic, geography, history, etc., which is taught and studied because it may be useful at some time in the future, has this effect, and it is a mistake to suppose that acquisition of skills in reading and figuring will automatically constitute preparation for their right and effective use under conditions very unlike those in which they were acquired" (Dewey 1997, 47).

It is not only the variety of methods that shows the difference between the formal and non-formal education, whereas the approach of non-formal education derives from the needs of the learner. During that educational process a common interest occurs which

leads both sides to a *dialogue* that increases the effectiveness of education. The modern school system has the problem of students do not want to attend school. Probably one of the reasons is the *model of monologue* between the teacher and student, which is dominant in formal education. But “only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education” (Freire 2010, 92-93).

Another very important aspect in non-formal teachings is the actuality and closeness to real life. In the project "Boys to Men!" we also used some elements of *adventure education* (experimental learning). The goal of the present paper, however, is not to talk about *adventure education*.

Although attention should be drawn to quite important details. The author has dealt with adventure education for six years already and has noticed that games and playfulness dominate in that field. For example, in her research “The experiential-based trainers comprehension of learning in adventure training” Katrin Soidra-Zujev defines learning in adventure training as a way of obtaining new skills and experiences through playful situations (Soidra-Zujev 2005, 5). But in this project the author would not connect adventure activities with playing or gaming situations. The task was to connect the participants with real life situations and by doing that making sure they knew how to analyse the situations so that they would have the analytical approach in their future life. The reason is that “only experience does not teach. Reflection is important, because this leads to changing of behaviour” (Märja et al. 2003, 156). The second important moment in the reflection is that “Reflective thinking requires ongoing dialogue with oneself and others, activities, a new way of approach and experimenting“(ibid.).

Therefore by research to the aim was to reveal factors of the greatest positive influence on the development of boys at the given age and in the given project. In general the study would give the possibility to focus on developing new methods in the future for helping to keep motivated and for motivating young boys to continue learning at a comprehensive school.

That is why the aim of the present research is:

- **To find out the self-reported impact of the non-formal educational project „Boys to Men!“ in the personal development of 15-16 years old male participants.**

In social-pedagogical plan it is very important how the individual sees and designates relations with the world surrounding him. Theoretical viewpoints and their implementation on human behaviour help less if we do not know how the individual defines themselves when communicating with others (Õunapuu & Kaldma 2007, 86).

The task of this research:

- To give an overview of problems in secondary school.
- To define the term non-formal education
- Describe the concept of the project "Boys to men!"
- To interview the participants
- To analyse the data
- To suggest improvements in the study process.

Methods used:

- Statistical overview
- Source analysis
- Interview
- Content analysis.

Conducting the given research the goal was to receive answers to the following questions:

1. What is non-formal education and what is the difference between formal and non-formal education?
2. What is specific in the education of boys?
3. What are the problems the participants of the project often face in their everyday life?
4. Has involvement in the project „Boys to Men!“ helped the participants to solve these problems?

5. What moments during the project have played a more significant role for them from their own point of view?
6. What do the participants value in such a method of educating?

In this empirical research the author used qualitative and quantitative research methods and it mainly consists of four parts:

1. Theoretical part
2. Research methodology
3. Results and discussion
4. Conclusion.

The first part explains the concept and necessity of non-formal education, and also its influence on the development of young people; concept and importance of the adolescent age, and also distinction of development between boys and girls.

The second part is devoted to the description of the project: who are the organizers, who are the participants, what kind of activities have been used and what kind of method was used for getting necessary information.

In the third part the analysis of the data and discussion of the results are provided.

It is necessary to note that the given research does not claim to be finished and conclusive. However, the author hopes that the reader would receive the specific and necessary information in favour of non-formal education in the education of boys. "Research-based knowledge interacts with other kinds of knowledge that derive from experience, hunch, prejudice, commitment to principles and self-interest" (Hammersley 2002, 64) and finally, all of it can be useful to all our society.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Non-formal education

The goal of teaching at school should be educating the young person. The education should support and value the skills of everyday life (Kraav 2005, 15-16). This way the young person should have a better understanding of his surroundings; it should teach him to cope with his own life. Otherwise the student may feel a lack of control and cannot decide on his own. He cannot see any purpose in his actions and this leaves a big gap between the person and the society after leaving school.

An American philosopher, psychologist and influential figure in an education sphere, John Dewey (Dewey 2007, 210-214) says that knowledge gained from school should not just be remembered as facts but should be used in observations, different experiments and situations so that the pupil would have some practical knowledge to match with the fact-based information. In education the tendency is to treat the sciences as separate fields of studies. The educational system should present the opposite and there should be a correlation between the different subjects.

The education problem all rises before our society more sharply: what and how to teach our children. One of the principal limitations of today's education to be pointed out – excessive formality and very poor diversity of methods. Mark Smith in his research brings out Charles Leadbeater's thoughts (Smith 1999, 2008):

We must move away from a view of education as a rite of passage involving the acquisition of enough knowledge and qualifications to acquire an adult station in life. The point of education should not be to inculcate a body of knowledge, but to develop capabilities: the basic ones of literacy and numeracy as well as the capability to act responsibly towards others, to take initiative and to work creatively and collaboratively. Too much schooling kills off a desire to learn.... Schools and universities should become more like hubs of learning, within the community, capable of extending into the community... More learning needs to be done at home, in offices and kitchens, in the contexts where knowledge is deployed to solve problems and add value to people's lives.

For the modern school system it is unfortunately not a priority to teach the young people to learn by themselves, their strengths and weaknesses to manage the emotions,

thoughts, desires and to be able to analyze them. More likely, it is all hindering the factors of the education process and forcing teachers to achieve, at any cost, mastering of the general educational school program by students. Pihlak points out (Pihlak 2007, 36) one such answer by a teacher to one question at the interview:

Getting through with the curricula is under high attention. But for what price? Where does it leave self-management, managing one's emotions?

From the viewpoint of the school the pupils manage and realize themselves, their analytical ability, weak and strong sides, coping with issues, skills and courage for communication, organizing their activities seems not important.

As a result, the statistics of 2006 (Rummo 2008) indicate that from the 11-year-olds only 15% liked going to school, from the 13-year-olds it was 8% and from the 15-year-olds the number of pupils who liked going to school was 6%. Looking at these numbers we can assume that the negative tendency from an early age accumulates a negative attitude towards studies which has a deconstructive effect on our society. Probably this situation has grown out of fact-based teaching methods that are currently used in our school system. The things that are taught in school are not applicable in everyday life.

If we compare the state of affairs between Estonia, Finland and UK, we will see that the figures are not pleasant and make us think:

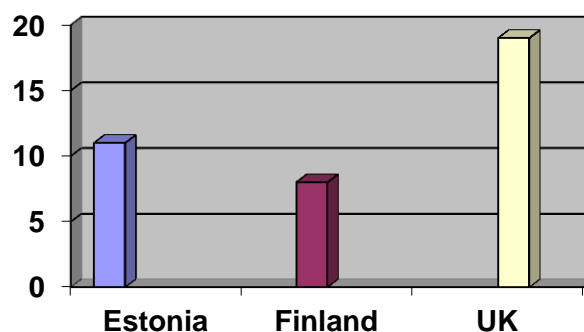


Figure 1. Percentage of students aged 11, 13 and 15 who report liking school a lot (Bradshaw, Hoelscher & Richardson 2006, 69).

Two factors (Biggs 2003, 57-58) make students want to learn something:

1. It has to be important; it must have some value to the learner.
2. It must be possible to do the learning task; the learner has to expect success.

That is why in pedagogics it is important to balance the cognitive, affective and practical approach in the study process. In my opinion, up-to-day comprehensive school is not in a state to solve this task in a complex way. "People are not educated just through school systems, but also through non-formal experiences and learning" (Verschelden, Coussée, Van de Walle & Williamson 2009, 14). That is why the non-formal approach is especially important when dealing with young people, because the concept of life is established at an early age, including values, attitude and beliefs. Therefore "schools should place more emphasis on the development of prosocial behaviour of the pupils" (Kõiv 2006, 159). This is the point where the formal and non-formal education should merge with another.

The author strongly assures that in a society the paradigm of education should be changed. Formal, non-formal and informal educations are complementary and mutually reinforcing elements of a lifelong learning process (Novosadova et al. 2008, 10). However the process of conversion is difficult enough and occasionally painful. Therefore the process of recognition of non-formal education is one of the hottest topics nowadays (Radinja 2008, 18).

What is non-formal learning and from what side does it differ from formal education?

Lynne Chisholm - Professor of Education and Generation at the University of Innsbruck (Austria) is an international specialist in education, training and youth research in the comparative and intercultural context. She gives the following definition for non-formal learning (Chisholm 2008, 58):

Non-formal learning is purposive but voluntary learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily their sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be intermittent or transitory, and the activities or courses that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders). The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured by conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects. They usually address specific target groups, but rarely document or assess learning outcomes or achievements in conventionally visible ways.

Non-formal education (Novosadova et al. 2008, 9) is an organized educational process which takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to certification. Individuals participate on a voluntary basis and as a

result, the individual takes an active role in the learning process because “non-formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view” (Colardyn & Bjornavold 2004, 71).

Non-formal education (Euroopa Noored Eesti büroo 2011; Fennes & Otten 2008, 9-12), this is learning that occurs outside school, it happens consciously and with the aim to develop oneself. Non-formal education can take place in very different environments: social, cultural and natural.

The characteristics of non-formal education are:

- Purpose-oriented and structural
- Voluntary, which means more motivation for studying
- Student-oriented study process
- Flexible approach towards the study process
- Accessible for everyone
- Balance between individual and social study process
- As a rule, it is not certification
- Balance between different dimensions of learning
- Close to real life. Oriented to the principal “learning by doing”.

Non-formal education is used in the following methods:

- Communication-based methods (dialogue etc.)
- Activity-based methods (experience etc.)
- Socially-focused methods (teamwork etc.)
- Self-directed methods (discovery etc.)

Non-formal education programs are effective when they require learners to participate actively rather than to sit passively. Programs that encourage learners to interact with each other and try new behaviours, and that reward independence, planning, and achievement, help learners take responsibility for their performance (Moulton 1997, 33).

On the basis of the table of 15 criteria of distinction by Monika Novosadova (Novosadova et al. 2008, 8) the author of the current paper would select five rather essential distinctions between formal and non-formal education:

1. TYPE OF LEARNING – the main direction of formal education is for getting “**information, knowledge**”. The main direction for non-formal education is for getting the “**competences**”.
2. ROLE OF A GROUP – For formal education the group role “**has influence, but is not important**“. For non-formal education the role of the group is “**very important**“.
3. GROUP-INTERACTION – In formal education, there prevails a “**competitive**“ approach. In non-formal education, there is the “**cooperative**“ approach.
4. MISTAKES – The attitude of formal education is “**punished – classification**“. Non-formal education takes it as “**allowed, appreciated and being worked with**“.
5. PARTICIPATION – In formal education the learning process is “**compulsory**“. In non-formal this is “**voluntary**” and it is quite a significant moment in the educational process, because “voluntary involvement is further developing skills and attitudes, important for students’ development” (Muresan 2010, 10).

People need to be social since all of us live in a society. Therefore our life in a society demands from each of us not only knowledge, but also abilities to apply this knowledge; to be able to be considered, live and work together with other people, instead of opposing ourselves to one another; to have the right for an error, because of the “right to make mistakes”, the closer link to young people’s interests and aspirations” (Novosadova et al. 2008, 11).

Extremely important for the young people who enter adult life, is the acquisition of the practical skills necessary for everyday life and non-formal education gives young people the possibility to develop their values, skills and competencies other than the ones developed in the framework of formal education. Those skills (also called ‘soft skills’) include a wide range of competencies such as the interpersonal, team-work, organisational and conflict management, intercultural awareness, leadership, planning, organising, co-ordination and practical problem solving skills, self-confidence, discipline and responsibility. What is special about non-formal education is that individuals, the participants, are the actors actively involved in the educational/learning process. The methods that are being used are aimed at giving young people the tools to further develop their skills and attitudes. Learning is an on-going process, one of its crucial features is learning by doing. Non-formal education is not simply unstructured, but the

process of non-formal learning is shared and designed in such a way that it creates an environment in which the learner is the architect of the development of their skills (Novosadova et al. 2008, 9).

Competence in non-formal education means the ability to apply knowledge, know-how and skills in a stable/recurring or changing situation. Two elements are crucial: applying what one knows and can do to a specific task or problem, and being able to transfer this ability between different situations (Chisholm 2008, 56).

Schrey suggests following the ASK-model (Schrey 2008, 14) which divides competencies into three categories of what we are, what we can do, and what we know – attitudes, skills and knowledge. Knowledge (K) is the mental part of competencies and refers to the things you know. The second category, skills (S), is concerned with the practical competencies. Skills are something you can do if you want it – by yourself or by using something. The deepest levels of competencies, attitudes (A), are the competencies that are based on the way you are and on the way you behave.

A vivid example of obtaining experience in non-formal education for young people at the European level is possible by Youth in Action programmes. The development of young people's skills and competences is also supported through the actions funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). However, there are important differences in the specific objectives and instruments: ESF programmes are mostly run within national or regional contexts, and lack a transnational dimension, which is a particular strength of Youth in Action. Only limited attention within ESF is put on mobility and exchange, and hence the intercultural dimension. Furthermore, ESF targets more the unemployed and inactive and low-skilled, whereas the focus of Youth in Action is on all young people in general (European Commission 2011, 17).

Inherently youth work is a vital non-formal educational process of personal and social development, through which young people can develop their knowledge, understanding, attitudes, confidence and personal as well as inter-personal skills. Young people have the right to expect that it will be accessible, affordable, high quality and flexible to meet the changing needs and a changing environment (Department of Education 2005, 5).

Youth work is a whole network of the various organizations and a variety of methods of operation with young people; plays an invaluable role in society life, helping young people to find themselves and to construct their own future: “the general aims of youth work are the integration and inclusion of young people in society” (Verschelden, Coussée, Van de Walle & Williamson 2009, 16). It has a socio-political value for the society and “to ensure the stability, harmony, growth, and care of population: to contribute to the “government” of modern societies” (Harrison & Wise 2005, 58).

Along with the development of certain abilities and personal qualities, the creation and development of the social capital has also been brought out in youth work. Piret Talur in her research “Youth Employability Development: The Role Of Youth Work“ refers to professor M. Lauristin “Creating supportive and inspiring networks is highly important. Social capital collected from the collaborative and trusting networks plays an important role in modern society” (Talur 2010, 85).

Confirming to it are the World Bank words, stating that investing in human and social capital is an essential condition to achieve those ambitious growth targets. Such investments can yield even better returns when they are focused on the young generation “Countries that invest in their young people reap the benefits of that investment through greater growth and social well-being for generations to come (European Commission 2011, 8).

It is also very important, that the approach of non-formal education raises chances of the young people in the labour market. “Employers are the most important providers of non-formal education and training activities in many countries and the weighted EU average is almost 40%” (Boateng 2009, 8). Researches in this area show that employers tend to be more and more aware of the necessity of soft skills (management skills (especially project management, time management, and resource management in general), leadership skills, communication skills, social and organizational skills, language skills, and other “non-routine” skills) when recruiting their employees, in addition to practical experience, personality and technical skills (Muresan 2010, 3, 18). In this question Estonian employers are not an exception.

The Baltic states in general (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) are characterized by a comparatively low general level of social protection, under-financed labour policies and a relatively high percentage of long-term unemployment (Eamets 2011, 81). The quantity of the unemployed who have not finished education at the age of 15-24 years compared to the age group of 25-64, is much higher: 24% vs. 9% (Kraav 2005, 11). European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion stresses that "worrying trends in the number of young people who are neither in education nor in employment underline the need to step up the broader range of policies supporting young people as agreed in the European Youth Strategy 2010-2018" (European Commission 2011, 8). Therefore early and scalene training of young people is one of the main tasks of all our society and "comparing with the formal education methods the outcome of non-formal education methods could be with better results or with additional importance"(Talur 2010, 89).

The main challenge of the European education and training systems nowadays is to equip citizens, and in particular young people, with the competences that will prepare them for a demanding and rapidly changing labour market, as well as for an increasingly diverse and ageing knowledge-based society. In this challenging social and economic context, young people are confronted with rising levels of knowledge and multiple skills requirements, a need that cannot be satisfied by the formal education sector alone. "School-based" learning and apprenticeship are no longer sufficient to "last" the whole life-course. Human capital is more than ever before about learning to learn, social skills, adaptability, etc. Therefore nowadays Europe needs to extend and broaden learning opportunities for young people as a whole, including supporting the acquisition of skills through non-formal educational activities (European Commission 2011, 8-12).

By Titley (Titley 2003, 13), boys and young men seek role models as an important source of self-identity and in contemporary consumer societies celebrity heroes and other prevalent representations communicate unattainable standards of potency, wealth, power and control. Boys and young men may be open to influence, but their minds are not like buckets waiting to be filled. Instead, they interpret in relation to their existing knowledge and values, the channels through which they discuss and share, and the skills they possess. Youth work has a role to play in providing 'heroes in their context', but also in recognising and discussing with young men how they understand and value the images they engage with.

2.2 Teenagers

Adolescence is the period of transition between childhood to adulthood. It is a period when rapid physiological changes and demands for new social roles take place. It is the period when the child moves from dependency to autonomy. That is why the teenage years are an extremely important period in the life of young people, because the main directions of moral and social settings of the person are formed at this time. In other words, it is possible to name the teenage years a defining stage of maturing and formation of consciousness of the person. “The adolescents suffer from an identity crisis! What am I? What will I be?” (Sen 2006). Principal activity at this age is communication. Communicating, first of all with the peers, the teenager receives necessary knowledge for life.

The professor of Cognitive Neuroscience, Sarah-Jayne Blakemore states that adolescence is also defined as the period of life between puberty and the attainment of a stable, independent role in society. Adolescence is characterised by psychological changes in terms of identity, self-consciousness and relationships with others. Compared with children, adolescents are more sociable, form more complex and hierarchical peer relationships and are more sensitive to acceptance and rejection by peers. While the causes of these social changes in adolescence are likely to be multi-factorial, development of the social brain might play a significant role (Blakemore 2011, 5).

A paradox emerges where young people are both *young* and *adult* at the same time, those that arguably need the most support and time in transition get the least, and traditional transition trajectories exist alongside new ones. Certainly, such passage has the risk factors, but also factors of a successful passage. In research carried out by Trust (Trust 2010, 8), the dangerous moments he names are as follows:

- Having low aspirations and low self-esteem (parents' low aspirations have the greatest impact)
- Wanting to gain empowerment to offset early discrimination (e.g. girls' risky sexual behaviour to gain power)
- Experiencing early parenthood
- Suffering mental illness

- Living in unstable homes
- Engagement in offending
- Living in poor housing
- Having a disability.

However, success in transition into adulthood is also attributed to a range of factors. Promoting a successful transition to adulthood is about supporting young people to develop the life skills required in later life. Key to this process is providing flexible support to young people as they inevitably make mistakes and being there to help them draw lessons from their experiences (Action for Children 2010, 23).

From the aforesaid, it is crucial to pay attention to three very important points, necessary for a successful passage childhood to adulthood:

1. Developing the life skills
2. Possibility to make mistakes
3. Learning lessons from their experiences.

In other words, the education of young people at this age should be under construction proceeding from the satisfaction of these needs. Therefore the modern education system should put focus on the development of life skills and competencies young people need. It is very important because social and emotional skills have proved to be more open to development than academic skills during the adolescent years giving weight to the argument for their value in secondary schooling (Trust 2010, 8-11).

Social and emotional capabilities are now understood to be as important as academic skills in determining how well young people do in their education. Personal and social capabilities are also becoming increasingly important to young people's abilities to forge successful careers in the modern workplace (Bazalgette 2010, 15). Carneiro et al (Carneiro, Crawford & Goodman 2007, 29) also demonstrated that there is substantial evidence that non-cognitive skills are important determinants of schooling and labour market outcomes - both directly and indirectly (through their effect on educational attainment). Numerous studies showed that employers want young people with social and emotional skills more than ever before (Trust 2010, 12). Moreover, non-cognitive skills are very strong predictors of engagement in risky behaviour – for example,

involvement in crime or exclusion from school - which impose costs not only on the individuals, but also on the society as a whole (Carneiro, Crawford & Goodman 2007, 29). With this we have the right to conclude that social and emotional capabilities determine future success of young people.

Participation in positively structured activities outside school was most significant in developing psychological well-being for young people (Trust 2010, 14). In the researches Casey, Ripke, and Huston also say (Casey, Ripke & Huston 2009, 78-81) that analyses support a modest association between participation in organized, structured activities and young people's psychological well-being. Out-of-school activity offered opportunities for developing social competence for boys more effectively than for girls. This kind of public programs providing out-of-school activities can be especially useful for adolescents living in high-risk circumstances, but there is considerable debate about the types of programs that best serve the needs of such youth.

The same time in the Estonian context, it is quite difficult to achieve gender equality in activities outside school. In "Youth in Action" programme in Estonia from 2007 to 2009 years, the proportion of young men is considerably smaller than that of girls: 73.5% of the surveyed participants are female and only 26.5% male. Young women are far more active than young men. Therefore they are more likely to attend, while men are more sceptical and often need support from their friends. Recruiting young men is made more difficult by the fact that women dominate among youth workers as well as among teachers (Murakas et al. 2010, 17-23).

2.3 Different aspects of development of boys and girls in their teens

It is not right to think that the differences between boys and girls mean that one gender is better than the other. There are moments in which boys are more capable than girls and on the contrary. The reason is normal physiological processes in a young, developing organism.

In the case of boys, the right half of the brain, and in the case of girls the left, is more developed. A part of the brain called *corpus callosum*, which connects the right and left

half of the brain, is approximately 20 % bigger in women than in men. Therefore in the case of girls both cerebral hemispheres are in more tight contact than in the case of boys (Gurian & Ballew 2004, 23-24).

Girls develop psychologically faster than boys. On the average, girls reach the age of puberty two years earlier than boys (Krull 2000, 169). Girls concentrate too much on their own and on the emotions of others. Boys do the exact opposite. Girls feel comfortable opening up emotionally to their friends and boys tend to keep their emotions to themselves. They struggle with their emotions and usually with tragic consequences (Kindlon & Thompson 2003, 38).

Men and women have identical hormones. However, in women oestrogen and progesterone prevail, but in men testosterone is dominant (Gurian & Ballew 2004, 23-24). The functioning of these hormones is absolutely the opposite and as a result, we can observe differences in learning capabilities between boys and girls.

Difference of perception in the educational process between girls and boys (ibid. 33-38) allows description as in the following table:

Table 1. Difference of perception in educational process between girls and boys

	Boys	Girls
Deductive and inductive thinking	Prefer deductive thinking	Prefer inductive thinking
The abstract and concrete thinking	Rather abstract thinking	Rather concrete thinking
Linguistic performance	Work more in silence	Use more words
Logic and proofing	Hear less and ask for more proof for the arguments	Better listeners. Instructions suit better than logical discussion
Tedium	Bored easily	Manage better with boredom
Necessity for space	Need more space	Need less space
Movement	Stimulates their brain and helps to control impulsive actions	Do not need as much movement while studying

Sensitiveness and dynamics of group	Concentrate on fulfilling the task but do not notice people's emotions.	Can notice and follow the rules of social communication while studying.
Usage of symbols	Tend to use symbols, diagrams and schemes in higher classes.	Prefer written text.
Group work	Try to create structured teams and focus on achieving the goal.	Create groups with more freedom.

However, Pihlak comes to the conclusion (Pihlak 2007, 33-34, 59) that Estonian teachers in they work with young people are more likely guided by stereotypes, than scientific knowledge (girls are more emotional and boys are more withdrawn), and more than half of the interrogated teachers did not reflect at all who was before them: a boy or a girl. As a result it could be said that the current teaching methods and school culture are slightly out-dated. Boys with norm intellect who do not cope express this case clearly. Teacher-centred reproductive teaching does not motivate boys. Very often the school system shows teachers as experts who have power to decide over others, who impose and who know what the right knowledge is, assigning what is right and wrong.

It is probably for this reason that the early leaving from school is also a gender issue which requires more attention. In the EU, 16.3% of boys are early school leavers, compared to 12.5% of girls. During compulsory education, boys tend to experience more difficulties than girls in adapting to the school environment and generally have lower levels of achievement. They are over-represented among pupils with disabilities (61%) and are more likely to show emotional and behavioural problems, or specific learning difficulties (65%) (European Commission (1) 2011, 5).

Researches indicate that by the third grade students have accumulated certain learning habits that will influence their further studies. This happens in particular with boys: the first two years are the most important for their further wellbeing in school. Their relative immaturity and feeling of inaptitude which they often feel in school may result in failure (Kindlon & Thompson 2003, 38).

In her research Pihlak also marks (Pihlak 2007, 3) an explicit disproportion in how many boys and how many girls leave secondary school: In the 2003/2004 academic year it was 1235 boys versus 547 girls. She too comes to a conclusion that the high level of male drop-outs from school system is between the grades 7-9. Among those who continue training at high school, the amount of boys hardly reaches one third.

Looking at the education system as a whole, approximately from age 17 the amount of girls starts to prevail over the amount of boys, and already at universities there are more females and these indices show no tendency to change. However, education is one of the determining aspects of self-realization and wellbeing by adult life in the modern society.

Therefore Toivo Niiberg comes to a conclusion that boys and girls need to be taught using different methods and programmes. This approach increases motivation for learning in great detail and results in a greater number of male students in high schools and, maybe, most importantly, this will help them to cope with their studies in high school (Niiberg 2006, 76).

Such circumstances are a problem for the society. Dropouts from school are one of the reasons for delinquent behaviour in youth environment: „they have an antisocial behaviour much more often, than at those who continue study at school“ (Lindgren, Suter 1994, 65). Suicides among teenage boys are on the third place regarding the reasons of death within young boys. On the second and first place there are accidents and murders. The same situation also applies in Estonia (Kindlon & Thompson 2003, 20).

It is possible to state that the modern school system is insufficiently oriented on high-grade development of boys that speaks about serious omissions in the education system. It is necessary to see this problem and such state of affairs requires changing. Seven recommendations that Kindlom and Thompson give (Kindlom & Thompson 2003, 244-259) to help any adult communicate with boys:

1. Admit that boys have a rich emotional life; help them to develop emotional vocabulary so they could communicate more freely and understand each other.

2. Accept the fact that boys are more active and create a safe surrounding where they can offload their energy.
3. Talk to boys in their own language – in a way that appreciates their pride and masculinity.
4. Teach them that emotional courage is courage and that combined with empathy is the true source of vitality.
5. Use discipline to evoke personality and consciousness.
6. Guide the young boy towards an affectionate adulthood.
7. Teach them that masculinity can be expressed in different ways.

It is mostly boys who display disturbing behaviour. This is backed by scientists, teachers and the students themselves. More often than not, this provocative behaviour is exhibited for protecting their dignity (Leino 2009, 29). The professor of psychology in the university of Helsinki, Liisa Keltikangas-Järvinen notes that grading in school, which should reflect the acquisition of knowledge, actually portrays the impression of the students – people with a certain temperament leave a more talented impression and it is difficult to give a very high mark to a disagreeable student and vice versa. According to Pandis and Juki (ibid. 27-29), girls do slightly better than boys in the standard-determining tests in the third and sixth grades, in their mother language and mathematics alike. 2/3 of the girls and a little more than half of the boys that took exams at the end of basic school in year 2006 got fours and fives. There was no subject in which the boys scored higher than girls. This draws the conclusion that the school environment is best suitable for the temperament of the average girl, which also makes the boys feel like they are less valued than the girls.

When having spotted problematic behaviour, competition in the school system should be lessened: „Nobody wins when fear is the motivating factor because the price of winning is far too high“ (ibid.). Teachers should motivate their students to study rather than focusing on avoiding failure. This is proven by a recent comparative study of young people's difficulties in school in Estonia and Ireland found the socio-emotional climate of the school, notably the attitudes of teachers, level of social engagement etc., to be of considerable importance for retention at times of transition (Lynch & Feeley 2007, 44).

It is important to teach boys 'masculinity' in all its positiveness, complexity and contradictoriness since starting school. In this vision, men move from saying "*I am a man*, with all of the assumptions that carries to *I am a man* who thinks, acts, and interprets roles in ways that are not circumscribed by limited masculinity" (Titley 2003, 20). A lot depends on the adults because „boys will simply be boys – if only we would allow them“ (Martino & Meyenn 2001, 12).

It is obvious that boys are in a more difficult situation in the school system than girls. It is also true that the situation in the labour market will be the opposite (Leino 2009, 28). Both sexes have their own problems, it is easy for neither and this has to be worked with. The author recollects that this research work is mainly directed at finding ways for solving the problems that boys have in school.

2.4 Concept of empowerment

As already mentioned above, on the European level the program "Youth in Action" is one vivid example of non-formal education. In 2010 the University of Tartu conducted a research (Muraks et al. 2010, 35) about evaluation of the "Youth in Action" programme in Estonia during 2007-2009. Answers to the question, "Through my participation in this project I learned better..." were of especially great interest for the author of the paper. Not all answers of the respondents will be discussed, however, the most popular ones will be reviewed. According to the results the following table was compiled:

Table 2. Answers given by Youth in Action respondents.

Answer	Definitely	To some extent	Total, who were thinking that way
...how to cooperate in a team	71%	25%	96%
...to get along with people who have a different cultural background	67%	21%	88%
...to communicate with people who speak another language	58%	21%	79%

...to negotiate joint solutions when there are different viewpoints	53%	39%	92%
...to say what I think with conviction in discussions	44%	46%	90%

Respondents agreed that through the participation in different projects young people learned to communicate better with people who spoke other languages, to cooperate in a team, to negotiate joint solutions when there were different viewpoints. When looking at these answers attentively, it can be noticed that they can be combined in one group called “communication skills“. These skills, as we know, might improve chances for young people on the labour market and this is a powering motivation for the future.

The strength of pupils’ motivation depends on their self-effective expectations (self-effectiveness is a conviction that certain objectives can be achieved) and on certainty of their ability to achieve or not to achieve specific objectives. High school teachers often use verbal persuasion in hope of motivating the pupil. This tactic does not usually give results because it does not have any effect on the pupil’s self-conception. Already in kindergarten the system of one’s comprehension and perception is created. Representatives of humanistic psychology call it “self-structure” incorporating perception of their self-conception, of their intuitive “me” and their intuitive environment. Teachers’ inability to acknowledge different self-structures of their pupils causes misinterpretation of their behaviour (Lindgren & Suter 1994, 243).

The concept “survival“ is mainly used in the case when a person is in a special situation in a natural environment: a plane crash, lost in the woods, extreme tourism etc. The truth is that these situations happen rarely or not at all while it is true that each child, each individual is constantly connected with society – his life is bound to social environment. Often the biggest obstacles occur here. Solitude, displacement, greed, fear, violence etc. – these “illnesses“ are widely spread and very common in our lives. Sometimes people are inept, they do not know, they cannot depict how to deal with themselves, how to deal with people and the world that surrounds them. It is not easy for the adult or young people. It is obvious that nowadays we must speak of survival in the social environment. It is important that a person does not get lost in the crowd and that he can preserve and develop his “self“.

Besides developing individual knowledge, skills and attitudes, there has been highlighted the point of view of a more general benefit in the context of youth work efficiency - networking and growing social capital. Professor Marju Lauristin (Lauristin 2009, 5) says: „I especially value /.../ the development of counter-supportive and inspiring networks. The cooperation in networking and the social capital that grows from trust is playing an ever bigger role in the development of modern society.“

Therefore, the author of the MA thesis is firmly convinced that the capability to communicate with other people and build relationships is the vital factor for survival in the modern society. “Relationships are one of the most important aspects in the development of a young person. Sadly, there is almost no individual approach in today’s school system” (Valk & Lilles 2008, 6).

Capability to communicate and the ability to create a social network – these are very important factors that depend upon the background of the family. According to a research by Beekhoven and Dekkers, boys living in single parent families are five times more likely to be subject to risk of dropping out from school (Mündi 2006, 17). The *Figure 2* accurately shows that Estonia is the negative leader in this field.

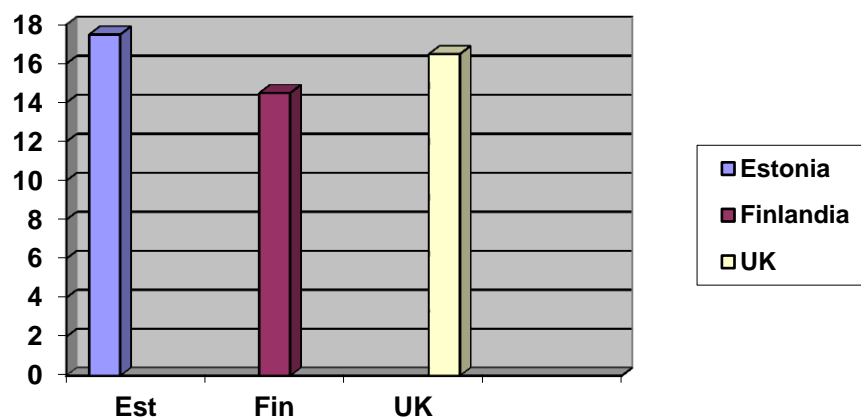


Figure 2. Percentage of young people (age 11, 13 and 15) living in single parent families (Bradshaw, Hoelscher & Richardson 2006, 58).

In Estonia, the group of poor families include: large families, families with unemployed parents and single-parent households. The researches conducted in Estonia show that children from poor families face a variety of the extremely difficult problems:

1. relations with relatives
2. the problem of cope with everyday life
3. problems in behaviour (aggression, apathy)
4. fears, feelings of vulnerability
5. problems with self-affirmation
6. problems with health (Kraav 2005, 18-19).

Another important criterion is the education of the parents. A research conducted by Bowlby and McMulle shows that in comparison to the students who graduate, the children who drop out of school are three times more likely to have parents who have not graduated from high school themselves (Mündi 2006, 17). It once again says to us that the family, in the life of the child, plays an invaluable role.

The reason for the dropping out of children from the school system can not only be caused by specific features of the young people or problems in an education system, but rather by the quality of internal family relations in which the child lives. Than more often the child sees examples of constructive behaviour of parents, then more qualitatively her/she is prepared for adult life and on the contrary. As a rule, the social environment forms the person.

2.5 Impact of non-formal education

One of the major strengths of non-formal education is that it stimulates the learners to use more than one of the learning styles. By doing this, non-formal education provides two important benefits over formal education. Firstly, each participant gets to learn by using their preferred learning style. Just think of the agony of a person preferring hands-on learning, sitting in a theoretical lecture (or the other way around). By addressing all of the learning styles, non-formal education can keep more people interested and motivated than by just using one of the styles. Secondly, the learning of every participant is enhanced by them using all of the learning styles. If you prefer learning by putting theories into practise, you will learn more if you stop watch and observe what is going on every now and then (Schrey 2008, 16).

However, based on the materials of the European Commission about *Impact Assessment on Youth Actions* (European Commission 2011, 29-37), the impact of non-formal education has wider circulation and is not limited to the direct benefits for individual beneficiaries (personal development), they also reach a more systematic level and have the following impacts:

1. Social impact

The benefits of young people's active participation in society are immense both on a personal and on a societal level. On a personal level, building decision-making abilities in young people empowers them when it comes to making decisions about their own health and well-being. Young people who participate actively in civil life are more likely to avoid risky activities, to take responsibility for their legal rights and to navigate their way through the array of challenges they encounter on their journey to adulthood. When they become adults, this empowerment will inform the decisions they make. Participation is one of the best ways of informing young people of their rights. This knowledge, in turn, is crucial to ensuring that these rights are respected. Bringing young people closer to decision-making processes and encouraging their involvement in the development of policies that affect them through consultation and dialogue contributes to strengthening young people's sense of belonging and commitment to their community at all levels while being fully in line with EU objectives.

2. Economic impact

The development of key competences and soft skills which are useful for employability as well as the exposure to other realities acquired through international or cross-cultural exchanges, or other social activities can stimulate young people to be more mobile also at later stages in their personal and professional life. Social networks that can be helpful later in life and on the labour market, for instance by helping develop the ability to work effectively with other people. It is however expected that such impacts will mostly arise over a longer period of time, often well after the considered actions will have been completed. The accumulation of social capital plays an increasingly important role in the new world of work.

3. Environmental impact

Youth programmes can play an important role in raising young people's awareness and mobilising them vis-à-vis environmental issues. The current Youth in Action programme already supports a variety of projects that deal with environmental issues, aimed at

making young people more attentive to these challenges. It is intended to maintain and possibly reinforce this aspect in the future.

Researches by Jeanne Moulton (Moulton 1997, 18-35) inform us that non-school programs for women can affect their economic behaviour. An age-old premise of schooling is that it creates good citizens; studies have shown that non-formal education does this too. Thus, it seems reasonable to extend our theoretical framework to include links between non-formal education and economic growth, and non-formal education and participation in civil society. Through observations of behavioural changes and self-reports by participants, many reports demonstrate that non-formal education and other organized interventions have noteworthy results. Moulton provides the conclusions made by Clark and Gakuru that on an individual level, such a program can indeed assist in achievement of personal goals: self-confidence, new health behaviour, and increased income. On a community level, it yields increased involvement in community life and new sources of goods and services. Other research on non-formal education programs found that a mother's self-image is positively related to the health and nutrition of her children. For example, programs in Cameroon, Turkey, and India demonstrated that mothers who lacked self-confidence failed to apply what they were taught about caring for children, while those with self-confidence did apply what they had learned. They acquire new knowledge and skills and the sense of self-efficacy needed to adopt new behaviour. These and other statements by individual women and women's organizations indicate the extensive amount of information that remains to be pulled together in systematic studies of the effectiveness of non-formal education for women.

The non-formal approach comes from the fact that it touches upon emotions and attitudes, where formal education does not usually reach. It is complementary to school and higher education – develops different competences. The learning process of non-formal education goes to a deeper level of personality (Piskunowicz 2008, 34). Such an approach in training helps young people to become high-grade members of society, and also to girls in the future to become good mothers, so it is possible to assume that boys will thus become good fathers. All this, anyway, influences healthy climate in all society.

In research Moulton gives also a sceptical view of non-formal education (Moulton 1997, 33-34) supported by such authors as Browne, Barrett and Jejeebhoy. The main problem

selected would be such a factor as *duration*. Some have argued that non-formal education does not provide enough exposure to new knowledge, skills, and/or organizational norms to have an effect. Because non-formal programs offer only brief exposure covering a specific issue (e.g., agriculture, literacy, and immunization), the prospect of deriving large indirect benefits from adult non-formal programs seems unpromising. This argument raises two questions: How much exposure to a learning environment is needed? And at what age? However, Moulton here puts arguments to Levine who questioned the notion that we can specify the number of years of schooling required to affect reproductive and health-related behaviour, as the effects of school on reproductive behaviour are evident even when girls have had only a few years of schooling. But it is not yet clear that the duration of schooling or non-formal education is a meaningful variable.

Answering the second question, it is necessary to point out that “schooling and non-formal education may be most efficient when girls and boys reach puberty. The age factor, like the exposure-time factor, probably varies from one social context to another” (ibid. 34).

However, here an even more important question possibly should be asked: By whom and how is the non-formal activity organized? Pedagogical psychologists Henry Clay Lindgren and W. Newton Suter state (Lindgren & Suter 1994, 5) that the future of our lives is mainly imposed by teachers than any other professional group. The world of tomorrow world is not only shaped by WHAT pupils learn from their teachers, but also HOW they learn. The method of how knowledge is presented appoints how pupils learn to solve problems. Hence the question “How?” does not only cover teaching methods but applies also to the teacher’s attitudes, values and demeanour in the class. Teachers are models whose attitudes, values and overall demeanour is imitated more than they can imagine: their influence exceeds what they primarily acknowledge.

Despite the scepticism, non-formal education has numerous advantages in personal development in comparison to traditional formal education. Formal education tends to have a bias towards certain competencies and certain learning styles. It seems that formal education, especially higher education, focuses on the learning of knowledge. Practising skills is done less than studying knowledge, and by the time we have reached university, the amount of attitudinal learning is often almost non-existent. Non-formal

education, on the other hand, is often much more based on skills and also has attitude-based learning objectives. Attitudes, on the other hand, can be learned and developed only through practise. Given that attitudes are visible only through what we do. People must change their behaviour (through practising a skill) to develop their attitudes. (Schrey 2008, 16-17).

The basis of success of non-formal education also consists of that non-formal education methods adapt to the needs and interests of its participants and allow them to steer the direction of their own learning. The challenges and crises followed by adaptation and practical experience which led to developing this competence must be based in the real world, not in the conceptual (Arnold 2008, 25). Therefore, young people who experience a diverse range of educational relationships in different contexts develop a stronger sense of confidence in social interaction, and a better understanding of how relationships work (European Commission 2011, 13).

Asia Piskunowicz (Piskunowicz 2008, 34-36) names such spheres of influence in non-formal education as:

1. Social inclusion
2. Conflict resolution
3. Active citizenship
4. Capacity building (Through capacity building, communities are learning to stand on their own feet. If people discover and develop their competencies – they build self-confidence)
5. Sustainable development

The five above listed fields show that non-formal education can have real impact on the society and support changes. These areas are actively explored by some international organizations that realize their social missions also by use of non-formal education. In the European context most relevant are the Council of Europe and the European Commission, globally it is mostly UNESCO.

3. METHODOLOGY

The aim of the present research was to find out the self-reported impact of the non-formal education project “Boys to Men!” in the personal development of 15-16 years old male participants.

3.1 The short description of Project “Boys to Men!”

The general aim of the project “Boys to men!” was to strengthen institutional and administrative capacity of the network and its member-organizations (Estonian School of Citizen Journalism, Estonian Academy of Childhood, Skydive Club Dropzone NGO) by creating and testing on the basis of pilot project new social service “Boys to Men!” (“Poisid meesteks!”). This social service must help motivate 15-16-year-old teenagers to continue their education and create a positive attitude towards life. During the project, network organizations try to develop and test services mentioned above, providing different activities for the participating young people.

3.1.1 The description of the participated organizations

Estonian School of Citizen Journalism

One of the main activity objectives of school is the organization of qualitative and accessible social and multimedia education for youth, private persons and NGO-s. The school’s main aims are: 1) developing democracy and a civil society, 2) improving education of the responsible and loyal citizens, 3) creating conditions for Life Long Learning, 4) creating conditions for freedom of speech, 5) improving the quality of media channels, 6) promoting innovative in media area, 7) lifting up the prestige of Estonian civil society on the international scene, 8) developing and extending models of media channels of a civil society in Estonia and abroad.

Estonian Academy of Childhood NGO

The mission of the NGO Academy of Childhood is to create conditions and space for secure informal communication for children, teenagers and young people. The Academy runs regular workshops and classes for Russian-speaking children since 2004. These activities include: creative thinking classes for children of different ages, arts, acrobatics, and musical development. The activities for teenagers include meetings in school on different themes and issues such as communication, sexuality, conflicts at school, friendship etc. The activities for young people include a course for minority youth leaders, taking part in youth exchanges. Academy with its partners and with the support of Municipality of Tallinn organizes camps for children and youth from Tallinn.

Skydive Club Dropzone NGO

One of the main objectives is to promote parachuting and development of it in Estonia, and to develop teamwork between all interested persons and organizations, to promote a healthy way of life. The club regularly organizes theoretical and practical trainings, actively cooperates with other skydiving clubs, with various organizations and firms both in Estonia and abroad.

3.1.2 Project activities

Each organization, in this multidisciplinary group, had their own direction and carried out specific actions. However, this activity had one and the same general pedagogical purpose.

Estonian School of Citizen Journalism:

- Coordination of project
- Planning of activities and the budget
- Negotiations with partners
- Official registration of papers
- Co-ordination of activity for young people
- The analysis of results of the project and granting of the report to foundation
- Workshop in media and a course in video editing for young people.

Responsible for these activities in this project were **Natalja Kitam** (psychologist and journalist) and **Darja Saar** (project manager).

Estonian Academy of Childhood NGO:

- Testing the participants of the project;
- Keeping in contact with the parents of the young people;
- A course in how to write a letter of application and how to find work;
- A course in working with children;
- Working in preschools in Tallinn;
- A course in how to solve conflicts;
- First aid course.

Responsible for these activities in this project was **Jelena Parfjonova** (child psychologist).

Skydive Club Dropzone NGO:

- Anger Management course;
- Practical climbing course;
- Getting acquainted with the youth work in Tallinn;
- Practical parachute jumping at Nurmsi aerodrome;
- A three day hike in Soomaa National Park.

Responsible for these activities in this project was **Sergei Drõgin** (skydiving, hiking instructor).

3.1.3. Project participants

To find participants for the project, the project manager Darja Saar sent out e-mails to all Tallinn-based social and youth workers as well as managers in basic schools, where the target group is studying. The letter described the project and introduced the aims, also characterized the criteria of participants. School workers familiarized the students with the project. Those who were interested were invited to an informational seminar. The project team chose 15 main and 3 back-up candidates.

The participant had to meet the requirements:

1. 15-16 years old male
2. Studying in one of the schools in Tallinn.
3. Wanting to participate in the project.
4. Parents allowing him to participate.
5. Attending the project activities.

3.2 Interviewing as a method in the research of educational impact

A conception of research is a process of individual discovery, whereby the researcher sets out to investigate some phenomenon and, by using rigorous methods or getting into direct contact with it, brings back knowledge (Hammersley 2002, 126).

Interview is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research. It allows considering the person not as an object, but as the subject. Meri-Liis Laherand (Laherand 2008, 177) brings out the classification of interview by Hirsjärvi and Hurme where the interview can be divided into:

- Therapeutical with the goal to change behaviour and attitude
- Informational with the goal to collect some data:
 - Practical interviews to collect data for solving a problem.
 - Research interview to systematically collect data.

The task of this qualitative-quantitative research is a collection of practical information, which can be used in the education of boys. Combined methodology allows the quality to be formulated in a quantitative way. Such an approach enables a more detailed outcome.

According to Martyn Hammersley (Hammersley 2005, 87) professional practice should be based on research evidence and research has an important role to play in providing information for policy making and practice. It can frequently offer knowledge about how policies have actually been implemented, about variation in this across contexts, and about the effects of policies or practices, intended and unintended, foreseen and unforeseen.

However, it is necessary to remember that social and educational researchers often argue quite rightly that the phenomena they study are more complex and more difficult to investigate than those with which most natural science deals with. Given this, it seems to us that in social and educational research even less reliance can be placed on the results of single studies (Hammersley 2002, 126).

Most qualitative researchers' action is based on interpretation: it involves people making sense of the world. However, it also superimposes obligations. Many, though not all, qualitative researchers have rejected not only functionalism but also the kind of *correctionalism* that often follows from it; which treats the task of social science as to identify and remedy social problems. This requires a different starting point from correctionalism. According to Hammersley we must begin not from societies or institutions as a system but from the activities of human beings. Moreover, those activities are viewed not in behaviourist terms, as automatic products of prior learning, but as artful productions, as exemplifying some form of practical rationality. Indeed, their rationality is a starting assumption: a key analytic task is to discover the rationality in what, from a conventional point of view, may be regarded as irrational (ibid. 88-90).

Nevertheless, according to Marie C. Hoepfl (Hoepfl 2011) qualitative methodologies are powerful tools for enhancing our understanding of teaching and learning. Moreover, she states that some researchers as Strauss, Corbin, Patton believe that qualitative and quantitative research can be effectively combined in the same research project. Such approach in the present research will expand the informative basis for a better analysis. "In pedagogy we need to analyse what and how to teach and what and which direction to grow" (Hirsjärvi & Huttunen 2005, 86).

In the article Hoepfl says that Patton writes about three types of qualitative interviewing: 1) informal, conversational interviews; 2) semi-structured interviews; and 3) standardized, open-ended interviews (Hoepfl 2011). The present research has used *standardized, open-ended interview* (see APPENDIX 1), where all interviewees are asked the same open-ended questions.

In this project the author of the present paper was not only one of the organizers, but also had to carry out following courses and activities due to his qualification and experience:

1) anger management course; 2) practical climbing course; 3) practical parachute jumping at Nurmsi aerodrome; 4) a three-day-hike in Soomaa National Park.

Before the project the author was not familiar with the participants. However, his direct involvement in the activities allowed him to establish a very trusting relationship with them. This has had a positive impact on the accuracy and truthfulness of the interviews. That is why before the interview it was possible to make an agreement with the respondents that all the answers must be true. The author thus tried to avoid giving “socially desirable answers for the interviewees” (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2010, 193). The interviewees were explained about the confidentiality and the purpose of research.

It was not possible for the author of the paper to meet all the participants in the project for different reasons. The main causes were:

1. different work schedules
2. changes of contacts and addresses of the participants after the project ended.
3. Substantial physical distance.

The author did avoid electronic means of communication because he was convinced that it was most important to meet the interviewees face to face to get the full and diverse information. From the 15 participants 9 interviews were obtained. This was enough to show the main tendency in the answers and give authentic results for the current research.

This was not the author’s first experience interviewing. A conclusion was reached that there cannot be two identical interviews and every meeting with the respondent would be a meeting with the inner world of another person. This imposed a certain burden of responsibility for the correct understanding and using it in the present research paper.

During the interview the author used active listening, rephrasing and reflection. All the interviews were recorded by dictaphone which was acceptable for all the interviewees. The average duration of an interview was 35 minutes. The interviews were made in the downtown of Tallinn.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In this section the author presents the results from the respondents' interviews and gets answers to the following questions:

- What are problems the project participants often face in their everyday life?
- Has the involvement in the project "Boys to Men!" helped the participants to solve these problems?
- What moments during the project have played a more significant role for them in their own point of view?
- What do the participants value by such a method of educating?

4.1 Results from interviews

Data was collected during the period from May 27, 2011 to November 22, 2011. All were *face-to-face* individual interviews. The author assumed that during the interview, respondents may have difficulty in understanding some of the issues and have difficulty in constructing answers. Therefore, for the best understanding of some questions, the author offered auxiliary, absolutely not mandatory responses, which would show the direction of my thoughts, in the framework of what the answer would preferably fall (see APPENDIX 2, 3, 4). From 15 young people, 9 gave their interviews, mostly the active project participants.

4.1.1 Respondents' background

First of all, the author of the paper wanted to know what experience of involvement in similar projects these young people, who were participating in this project, had.

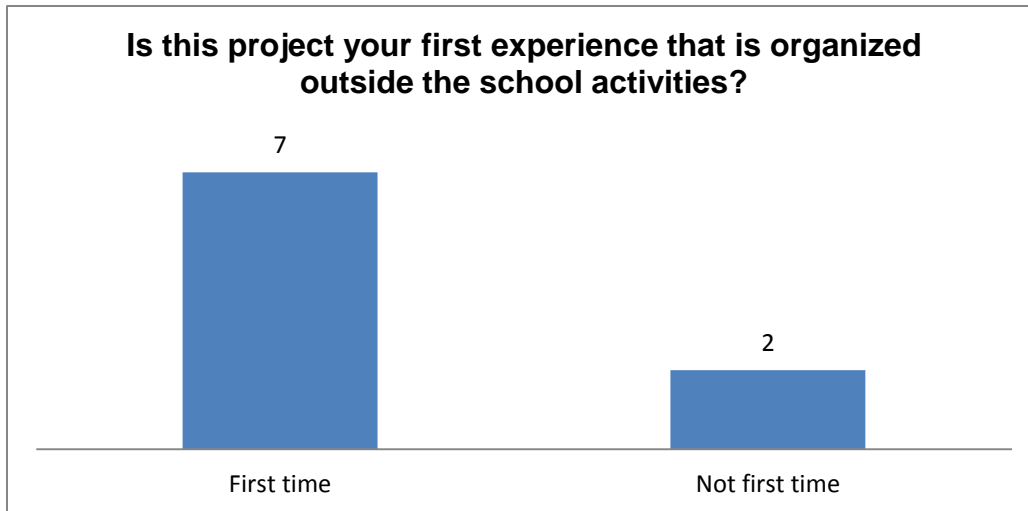


Figure 3. Experience of participants with an outside school activity before.

The majority of respondents responded that it was their first experience of involvement in such a project, in spite of the fact that many of them visit sports clubs or summer camps. Two persons reported that it was not their first experience. However one of them very positively noted that “... *but the first experience, where there were only boys*“. Upon the question what would have been different if the group of participants had been mixed, he responded, “*First, the camp would separate directly into girls and boys, these are 100%! Secondly, boys would wish to do other things than girls would like to do...*“ (participant G). This result confirmed the hypothesis that the real life based approach to teaching boys in Estonia is not common in the modern school system.

The extremely important factor in the education of boys is the family format. According to researchers Beekhoven and Dekkers (Mündi 2006, 17) boys living in single parent families are five times more likely to become subject to risks of dropping out from school. It definitely shows that the family, in the life of boys, plays an invaluable role. “Among the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, the Nordic countries and the UK are at the top end of the scale” where in Estonia this percent is 17.5%, in Finland – 14.5% and in the UK – 16.5%. (Bradshaw, Hoelscher & Richardson 2006, 57-58).

By results of the interview, project participants “Boys to Men!“ have the following situations in families:

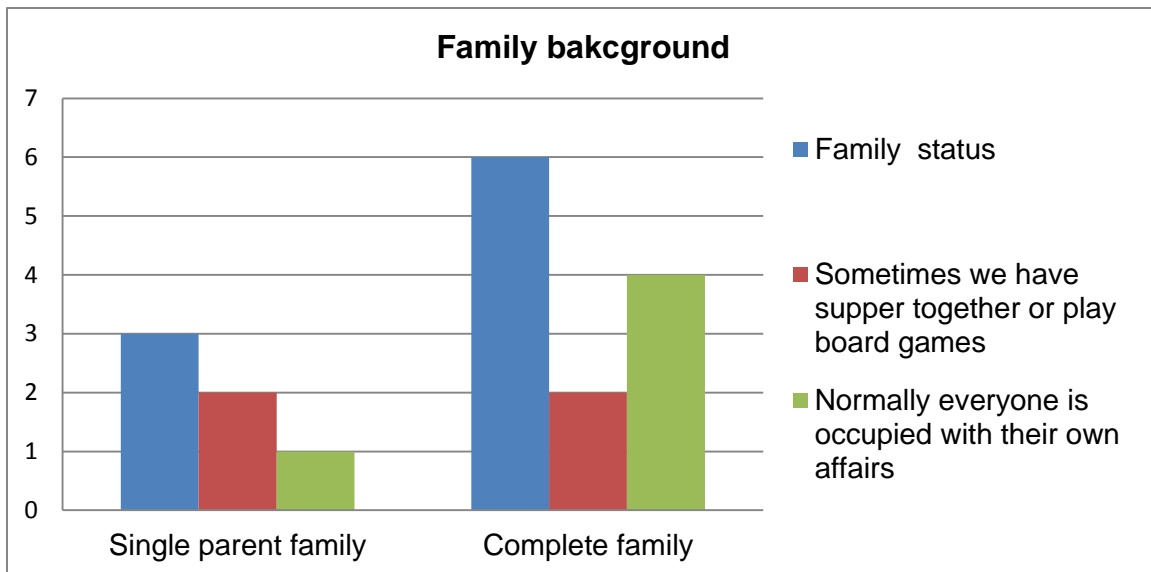


Figure 4. From what kind of family the participants are from.

As we can see in *Figure 4*, generally participants have a complete family status. However, a significant role in a family is played not only by *quantitative*, but also by the *qualitative* relations. Therefore one of the questions was connected with leisure time for the whole family, and here it is possible to notice that the data is slightly different. The aim here is not to tell that such tendency takes place in complete or incomplete families only. It rather aims at drawing attention to the fact that education in family should be considered in a complex way. “It is possible to become a good father and a person despite the family status one comes from or if the person comes from an orphanage” (Niiberg 2006, 116). *Boys living in single parent families are five times more subjected to the risk of dropping out from school* and this problem, in my opinion, needs deeper studying. It is important to understand that the reasons young people have for leaving school early are complex. Leaving school early needs to be understood in the context of personal, social, educational and cultural factors that have an impact on decisions, not all of which are negative, especially from the student’s perspective (Lynch & Feeley 2007, 43).

4.1.2 Participants' life problems

The author believes that education should also be based on the needs of the young person. It is therefore important to find out where they are experiencing difficulties on their path to adulthood, and what kind of knowledge, skills and experience they lack.

The way of forming the results came from the respondents and how often during the interview they talked on one specific topic (for interview questions see APPENDIX 1). However, sometimes the topic of conversation was repeated in a simple conversation after the interview had ended.

Most often, teenagers are facing their own laziness, which they see as a problem. However, conducting interviews and analyzing the responses of 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5, the author will take the responsibility to assert that under the concept of *lazy* teenagers in reality have a hidden problem, which lies in their self-confidence. This situation seems to be quite common. To recognize and show their "male" weaknesses in society is not accepted. So it is probably easier for the respondents to just say that *I'm lazy* rather than to say that *I'm indecisive*.

That is how the participants described their own problems:

- *"Sometimes I am just lazy"* (participant F).
- *"First of all, the big problem for me is that I am lazy". /.../ „Lazy, cautious"*(participant H).
- *"I am lazy by nature"*(participant E).
- *"A big problem for me is that I am lazy". /.../ "I am lazy"* (participant A).

Sometimes their lack of confidence was expressed in the way they replied:

- *"I am perhaps calm and maybe social, I do not know, maybe I am an interesting person."* (the words are underlined by the author) (participant E).

Sometimes they talked about their uncertainty and indecision directly:

- *"I was afraid to address another person"*(participant D).
- *"My little problem is that I am shy. I am used to waiting until all the others have spoken and if asked I will answer"*(participant H).

- *“A little bit anxious/.../ timid “(participant I).*

His own laziness the respondent often connects with studying at school. Based on the conversations during the interview, the author can conclude that this is also due to the lack of motivation towards learning within young boys. It finds its echo in the data presented above (see Figure 1 p.9). Here are some statements made by respondents:

- *“A little problem by studying at school is that I am a bit lazy“ (participant E).*
- *“Problems at school are connected with laziness“. /.../ “I am not doing very well at school, I know I am capable of much better results...“ (participant A).*
- *“I am lazy to do any extra work at school“ (participant F).*

The author finds that the question nr. 5 in the interview (see APPENDIX 1) has been somewhat incorrectly formulated regarding the time format. This conclusion was reached based on an answer given by one of the respondents, "In fact, the reason why I did not mention some of the problems was because they disappeared after the project..." (participant G). Unfortunately, this nuance has been detected at the stage of analyzing all the interviews. However, the author believes that, despite this, the trend in responses was not distorted.

According to the participants' point of view, the second most important difficulty involved relationships with other people. Here are some examples from their statements:

- *“Not good relationships with friends, bullying..“ (participant A).*
- *“I tried but I could not maintain good relationships with teachers“(participant D).*
- *“Suddenly I can become angry and aggressive“(participant B).*
- *“My peers became inappropriate friends for me“(participant G).*
- *“Relationships with peers“. /.../ “Generally is associated with communication with other people. I just do not know how to communicate properly“(participant I).*
- *“When I had a fight with my family it also influenced my relationships with friends in a bad way. This is causing stress for me“(participant C).*
- *“I had times when I was bullying my peers and I did not think how they might have felt“(participant F).*

The next most important problem for our respondents was associated with their plans for the future:

- *“My future is a problem for me, because I cannot decide what I want to do with my life“. /.../ “I have not decided what I want to do in the future“(participant E).*
- *“The problem of all problems for me is the future“. /.../ “My future looks uncertain“. (participant C).*
- *“I have not decided who I want to become“. /.../ “I am not sure what I want to do in a year or two“(participant F).*

Judging by the number of responses they do not have big problems with studying and with subjects in school:

- *“Studying at school.“ /.../ “I am struggling with subjects“(participant D).*
- *“I have problems with Estonian language“ (participant B).*

Even fewer problems they linked with their physical condition, addictions and financial difficulties.

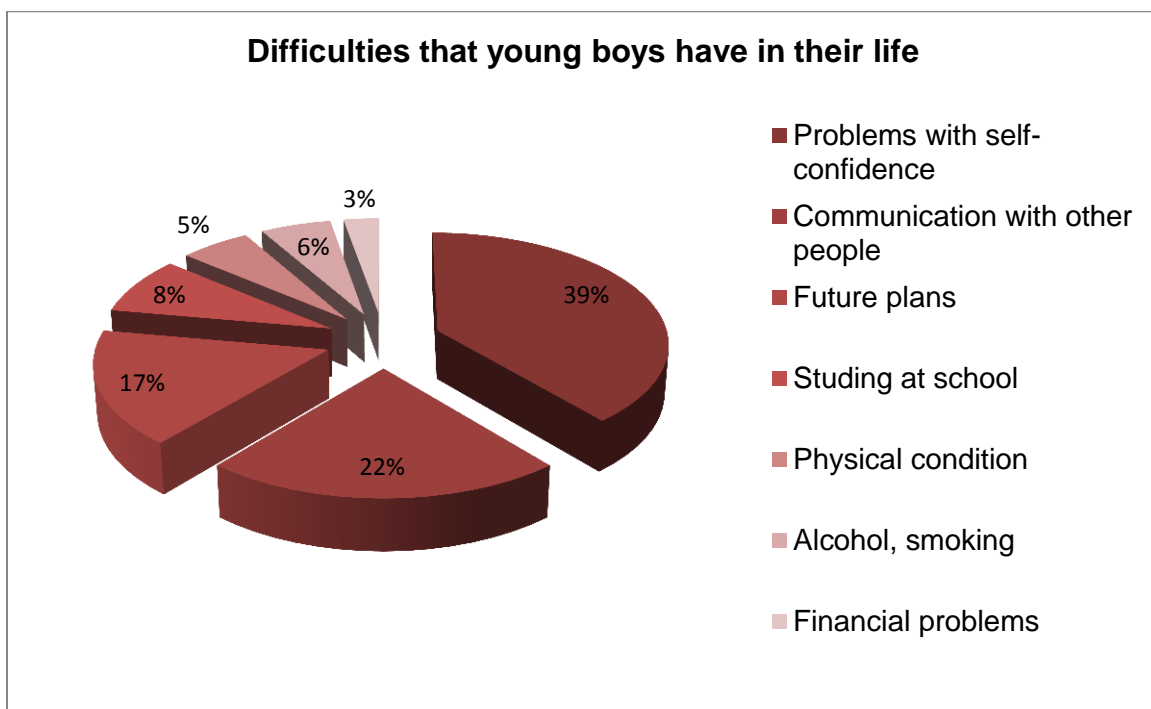


Figure 5. The main life problems for project participants.

Based on that data I conclude that the main difficulties faced by the boys who participated in this project are:

- Problems with self-confidence
- Communication with other people
- Future plans

These problems can be attributed to what Freire calls the *thematic universe*. “*Thematic universe* – the complex of their “generative themes” – inaugurates the dialogue of education as the practice of freedom” (Freire 2010, 96). According to Freire it is to the reality which mediates men, and to the perception of that reality held by educators and people, that we must go to find the program content of education. He argues that the object of the investigation is not persons (as if they were anatomical fragments), but rather the thought-language with which men and women refer to reality, the levels at which they perceive that reality, and their view of the world, in which their generative themes are found (ibid. 96-97). Thus, for learning we have to create realistic situations from where we can take the material for analysis and development.

4.1.3 How the project affected the solution of life problems for project participants

According to the participants’ point of view, the project had the greatest effect on improving their communication skills with other people and increasing self-confidence. These topics were equally important for the respondents.

The following statements refer to communication with other people:

- *“I became more sociable with people I do not like”(participant F).*
- *“I used to be unsociable. Now I am more positive and smile a lot more. Before the project I was a boring person”(participant H).*
- *“I began to realize that I have to be more sociable“ (participant B)*
- *“I became less aggressive“. /.../ “People told me, “You have become more friendly”“ (participant D)*
- *“I avoid conflicts: if I am wrong I accept it and this kind of behaviour is new for me“ (participant D).*

- *“I have understood that it is possible to make friends in a short time /.../ and get close to them“(participant G).*
- *“Before the project I was uncommunicative“. /.../ “Before I communicated seldom, even in school, now I communicate easily, very easily“(participant A).*

About the increase in self-confidence it is possible to judge according to what the participants have cited in the following statements:

- *“This gave me more confidence, more self-confidence“. /.../ “I think I can easily make a decision now that will affect my future events“(participant F).*
- *“After that [the project - author] it is somehow easier to do things that I sometimes could not or did not want to do“. /.../ “I became braver. /.../ For example, to approach a stranger and say something to him“(participant E).*
- *“I used to be lazy and stay at home all the time. The project made me realize I can accomplish different things when I put my mind to it“(participant H).*
- *“Previously I was less sure of myself and doubted my every step and now I try to be confident in what I do, even if it does not work out I can laugh at it“(participant H).*
- *“Previously, for example, if someone was lying on the ground for some reason, I was afraid to approach this person. But now I have many times helped a person in need“(participant B).*
- *“In fact, why I did not mention some of the problems earlier was, because they disappeared after the project. It became easier to talk to strangers, that is for sure and more complexes have disappeared“ (participant G).*
- *“I became less timid“. /.../ “Around strangers I feel myself more confident than before“(participant I).*

However, the project had very little positive effect towards improving attitudes to studying in school:

- *“I have realized that we must learn“(participant B).*
- *“I began to study more. I did find something new for myself“. /.../ “The project pushed me to find new things for myself“(participant B).*

- *“I have started to think what is wrong with me.. Looking for the reasons of problems for solving them and beginning to study normally“(participant D).*

According to the participants, the project activities had absolutely no impact on their future plans. When asked in an interview how much the participation in the project changed their future plans, respondents were unanimous in answering:

- *“No. I think the project was not intended to change my plans for the future. I have to solve this by myself“(participant E).*
- *“Some plans emerged after the project, but I do not think they are associated with the project“(participant I).*
- *“I doubt it. Because the plans I have had for a long time“(participant B).*
- *“I do not think so. They [plans for the future - author] have not changed“(participant A).*

Figure 6 clearly demonstrates the proportional effectiveness and shows problems the project has helped to solve.

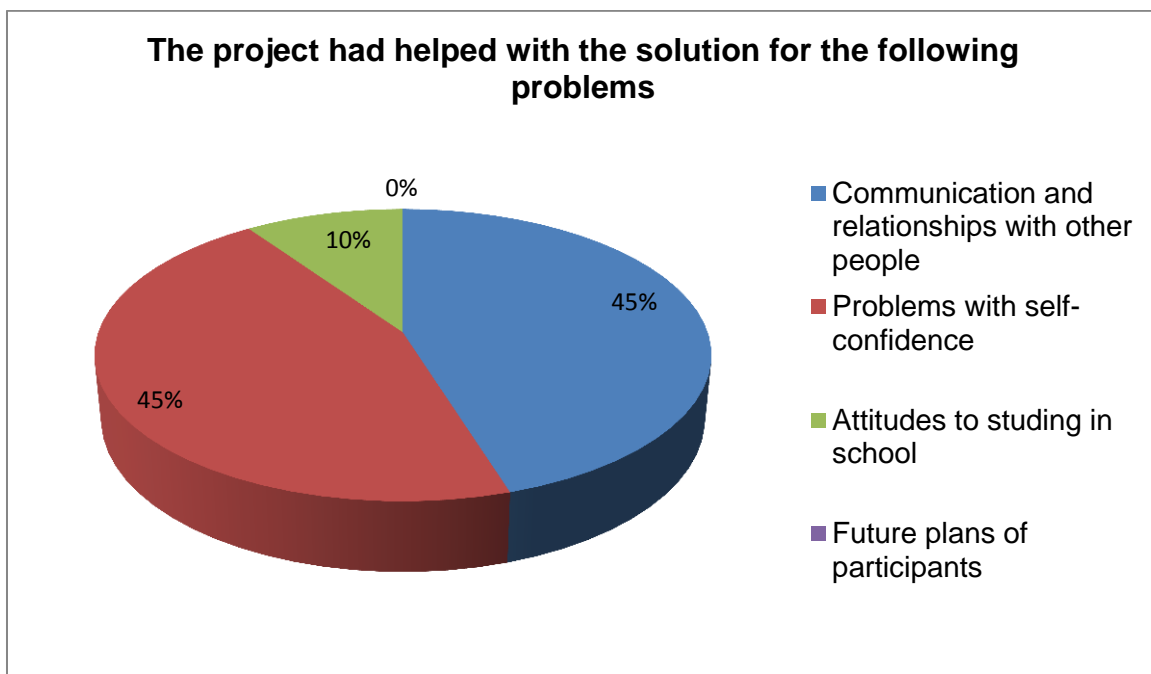


Figure 6. The main directions of project success.

According to the respondents, the project had no effect on their future plans. However, this does not mean that the project had no effect on their future in general. Attention must be paid to the answers in connection with self-confidence. Almost all of the answers are directly or indirectly related to relationships with other people and society. This is why the author believes it necessary to combine two points – *self-confidence* and *communication and relationships with other people* – into one, which is called development of *social capital*. Social capital means focusing on social relations that have productive benefits.

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu 1986.).

This allowed the author to draw the conclusion that 90% of the efficiency factor was directed towards the development of social capital of the male participants

As of now, the boys have not yet connected the impact of the project with their future plans. It is important to understand that because people are highly social, the level of social capital is closely connected with realisation of ideas and future plans. These situations portray the importance and necessity of such pedagogical approaches by teachers in education. All of these conclusions give the author confidence that the project activity was aimed at substantial improvements in social well-being of the participants of the project. Because the social capital can be lead to social inclusion in wider social networks and social integration and participation in society (Helve & Bynner 2007, 6).

4.1.4 What moments in the project, in the opinion of the respondents, played a more significant role for them

The next step was determining that the project had played a more significant role and what activities and factors influenced the results discussed above. The following is what the respondents had to say:

- *"I know I'm capable of doing things. / ... / I was pleased to prove this not in words but in deeds. A parachute jump ..." / ... / "A parachute jump - it was my dream"(participant F).*
- *"I always felt insecure in unfamiliar situations. And by remembering the parachute jump, and "alright, go!", it helps to overcome myself. I became more courageous"(participant E).*
- *"The most interesting thing I missed - hiking. I have always enjoyed physical activity / ... / something practical. In my opinion, everyone participated in this project because of the hike and an opportunity to jump with a parachute"(participant C).*
- *"The hike – it definitely had an impact on my inner self. Before, I did not want to do anything, go anywhere but now I have begun to do and organize by myself" (participant H).*
- *"The hike – it created a sense of support. When people are together, they learn from each other"(participant H).*
- *"A parachute jump and hiking ... I like extreme conditions / ... / plenty of emotions / ... / together with a group of people"(participant G).*
- *"The anger management course taught me what can happen when you know how to manage your anger and also, what happens when you do not"(participant A).*
- *"Difficult situations bring people together and reveal their true selves. / ... / I've never seen a person in a critical situation and watched it all from the sidelines" / ... / "You can look at people, their attitudes, actions and behaviour." / ... / "These critical situations open up the true self of the person" (participant A). "Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as being who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation"(Freire 2010, 84).*
- *"I liked the hike because we had to communicate with each other a lot" / ... / And a parachute jump, because I had never done it before/ ... / I like the fact that there were many different people who were all very"(participant I).*
- *"Hike. There we could communicate clearly. When something went wrong, people asked each other and learned something new: how to read the map, use a compass etc."(participant D).*

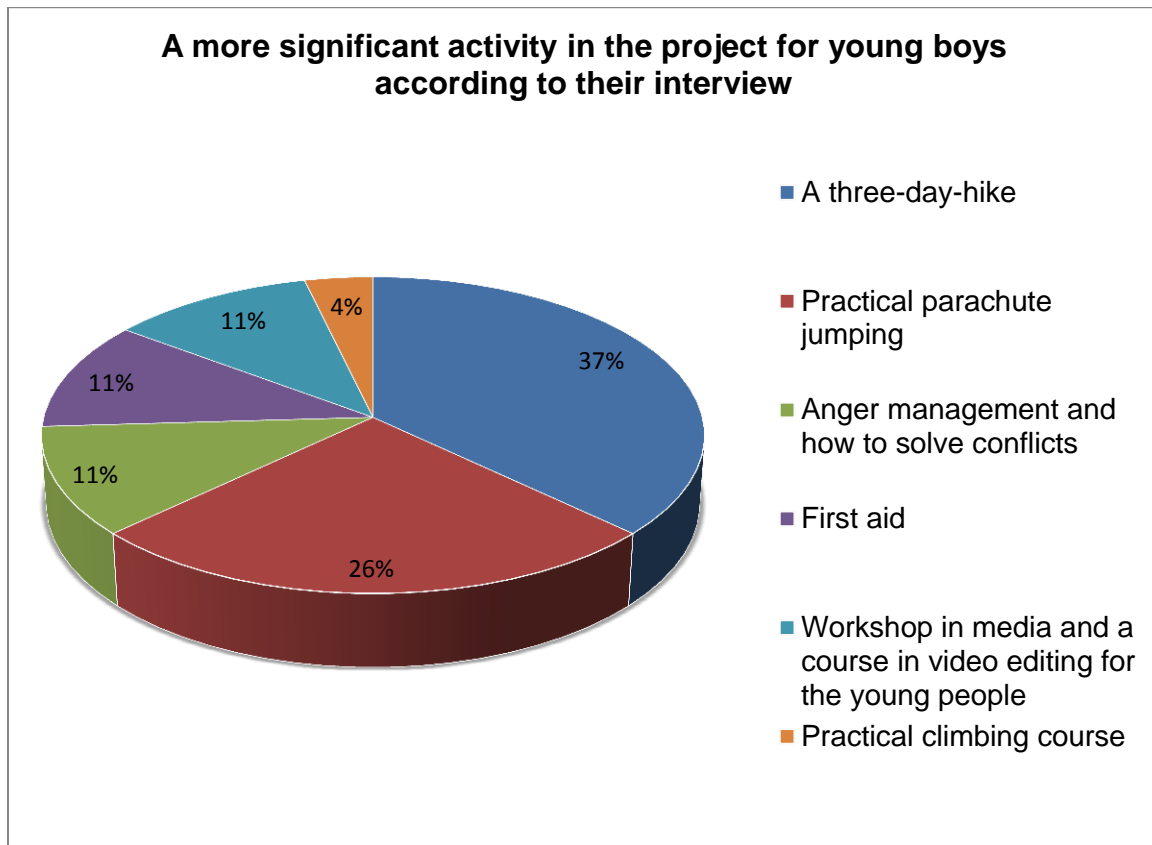


Figure 7. Favourite parts of the project for the male participants.

Analysing the respondents' answers, the author came to the conclusion that the main factors of positive impact on the boys in the project included:

- Personal interest
- Physical activities
- Risk elements
- Work in group

Personal interest in participation in educational activity is the basis for dialogue between a student and a teacher. In part 2.3 it was already stated that physical activity was very important for boys. This was further confirmed by the respondents' answers. Another very important factor in the harmonious development of boys was the risk factor. Indeed, "risk is an essential element to the growth process"(Wurdinger 1997, 45). The author maintains that in the up-to-date education system there are not enough elements of risk in the upbringing of boys and this situation is quite dangerous. In the author's diploma paper *"Common features of juvenile inmates' self- images in the example of*

Viljandi Prison” he concluded that “it was very often the need for extreme experiences that resulted in committing a crime” (Drögin 2005, 48). Therefore in a case where adults are not capable of helping boys to satisfy such requirements legally, these requirements will be satisfied in some another way - as a general rule in the criminal way.

Another important factor in this project in the opinion of the participants was teamwork. Working in groups allows people to see the different behavioural models of their teammates and it also enables behavioural reflection in the group.

The fact is that for the participants of the project, this approach was more about the learning process rather than just for entertainment. The respondents' opinions are divided as follows:

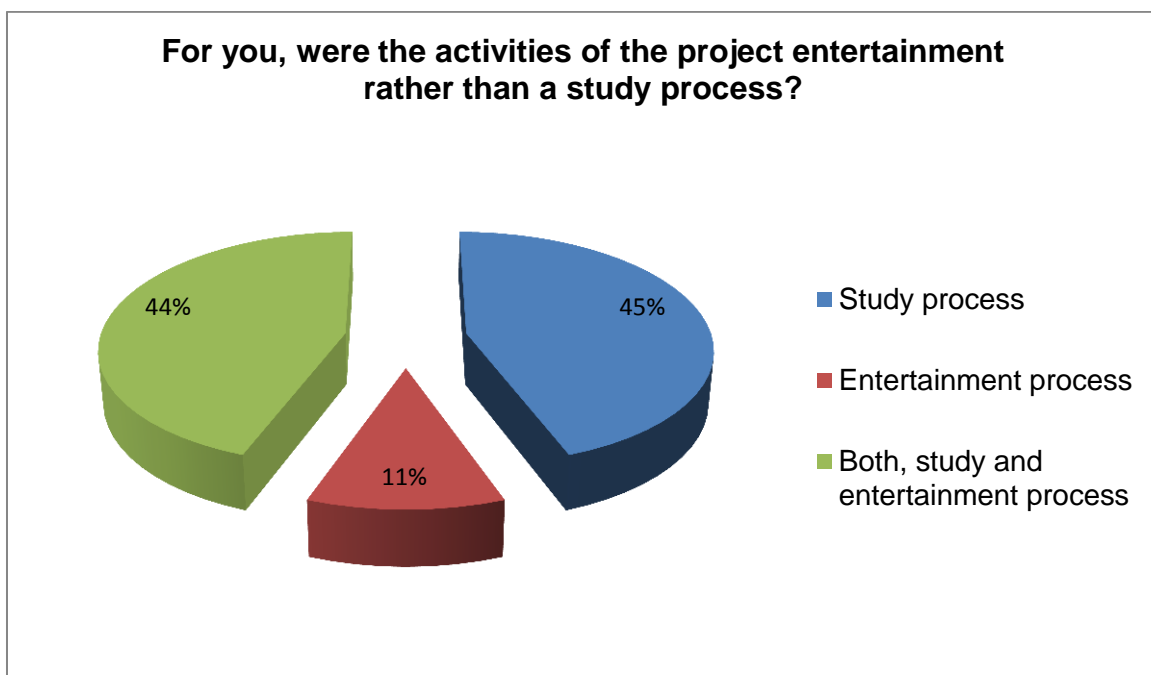


Figure 8. Participants' opinions about project activities.

- *“I think it’s something in between“(participant G).*
- *“It’s more of a learning process than an entertainment activity. This is because you learn something new and you think about it often, which is why you remember“(participant D).*
- *“Both. For me, it was very interesting. I don’t personally enjoy learning things that I’m not interested in but if it’s interesting, I learn it with pleasure“ (participant A).*

- *“This was entertainment. In my opinion, the learning process is a little bit more connected with other things“(participant I).*
- *“I think that it is a learning process because I have been finding out new things about myself“(participant B).*
- *“This is not entertainment. This is a study process, because we are learning survival skills“(participant H).*
- *“Rather a study process because I have learned something“(participant C).*
- *“I enjoy the study process, so for me it is both a learning process and entertainment. /.../ Not all school curricula are as interesting and fun, sometimes it can be boring“(participant E).*
- *“Both“(participant F).*

4.1.5 The limitations of this project according to the participants' point of view

- *“I did not like it that the project took such a long time.“ /.../ “More courses in psychology.“ /.../ “I would like a longer anger management course“(participant E).*
- *“I'd include more things related to the development of communication between people“(participant I).*
- *“I did not like the long periods of time between the activities.“ /.../ „The project dragged on for nine months, although it could have been done in three“(participant A).*

Respondents said that one of the major drawbacks of the project was the length of it. The author is compelled to agree with them. The number of activities and related time must be balanced, the lack of which was a major drawback of the project. We believe the project took so much time because of us not wanting to interfere with the educational process at school and conducting the project during the summer. However, at the end of the project we realized that this had, in fact, had a negative effect.

4.1.6 Value of this project according to the participants' point of view

This part of the paper is for explaining how the participants described the value of this project.

- *“But this is educating!” /.../ “The value lies in the fact that this is taught nowhere else”. /.../ “This is not taught in school. At home, my parents have not taught me these things“(participant E).*
- *“This increases the thirst for life for young people. Not just for having a drink at the bar but for doing things of more value“(participant F).*
- *“There were many useful things. It was very interesting. /.../ The value is in the acquired knowledge“(participant C).* It is important to point out here that this young man, after the project, was a real case. His new knowledge and skills gave him the ability to stop the bleeding of a victim in the street before the arrival of the ambulance. In fact, he saved the life of the man.
- *“This (project) tempers the spirit and alters a person in its own way. Everyone has changed in their own way. / ... / People learn how to behave in different situations. / ... / The more situations, the more feelings. The more feelings, the more you find something new in yourself. / ... / Above all you know what communication is and how to interact with each other” (participant H).*
- *“It was interesting and fun. I don’t regret taking part in it.” /.../ “The value of this project is young people finding something new in themselves. /.../ Finding their issues and solving them“(participant I).*
- *“This kind of project changes a person. It has changed me.“ /.../ “The value is in getting to know oneself, understanding the surrounding world and people.“ /.../ “This was a very good age for the project; the age in which young people do not know what to expect or want from life, take life lightly. In that age the opinion on life has not yet been fully developed and rooted. This kind of project can show people life as it should be – real life“(participant A).*
- *“The value is in the experience, especially if the you’re not going through the project alone but as a group“ (participant G).*

The educational system of today is mostly based on factual knowledge and is focused on collecting information about the world. However, this method of teaching does not

provide students with knowledge about themselves, their true wishes and abilities in the real world.

Based upon to answers given by the participants of the project, I have come to the conclusion that the main value of the project is made out of the following:

- The activities in the project helped young boys to take a closer look into their inner world and build a model for developing that world. After having looked into themselves, they were able to discover their true potential, which gave them the desire and confidence to be creative in everyday life.
- This also helped the participants to acquire knowledge of real life and get real life experience, which the basic education system does not usually provide.

4.2 Discussion of the results

One of the main problems in the educational system is children not wanting to go to school. The negative consequences of this situation are increasingly reflected on boys. The number of students in schools in Estonia decreases every year but the number of boys who drop out still remains high. This is why it is important for the country to create programs for saving as many students as possible not only in the learning process but also, ultimately, within the framework of the society. This enables boys to become active members of society.

According to the survey, the most common problems in everyday life for boys aged 15-16 can be called:

- Problems with self-confidence
- Communication with other people
- Future plans

This may tell us that young people today feel insecure about their present and future. Moreover, there is no model of learning that can ensure that students not only have the skills to survive in the society, but will also be an active part of it. However, the modern education system by itself is not capable of coping with the solution of such

problems. “Two obvious conclusions may be drawn in a modern society: either the teaching of social skills during the past 100 years has not been fruitful or upbringing and the teaching of such skills is a collective illusion“ (Õunapuu & Kaldma 2007, 85). The statement of one of the participants in the project proves this: “...*the fact is that this is taught nowhere else*”. /.../ “*This is not taught in school. At home, my parents have not taught me these things*“(participant E).

Unfortunately, the modern school system is not sufficiently focused on solving the problems of the education of boys. It is important to remember that the majority of teachers are female whereas the students who have problems at school are mostly male. But “boys need male teachers and headmasters that would be their role models in the areas of academic education, professional commitment and moral, athletic and emotional education“ (Kindlom & Thompson 2003, 61). Researches have shown that altruistic or pro-social behaviour as well as antisocial behaviour stem mostly from imitation. Therefore it is important that teachers behave accordingly to the ideals they promote (Lindgren & Suter 1994. 242). But if all the teachers are female, how is it possible for boys to find “male“ role models to imitate? This is why the author believes that boys in the education system are in a more difficult situation than girls.

Such activities as were in the project can greatly increase the effectiveness of school education. This in particular is connected to the education of boys. According to this research paper, the participants have reported an increase in self-confidence after the project, which increases the level of social capital of the participants of the project. This benefits the boys’ self-esteem, which makes them feel more secure about their place in the society. “The self-esteem of boys should be kept at a high level during their school years. This is what influences their success and mental health“ (Kindlom & Thompson 2003, 49).

Boys require a slightly different approach in teaching than girls. “*It was much easier to go hiking rather than sit in one place and listen*“ /.../ “*It is much more difficult to keep a boy in one place and make him listen. It is very difficult for them. There should be a good amount of activity so they can move their arms and legs, have something to do*“ (participant G). This is confirmed by experts. “Boys achieve remarkable self-control and discipline in an environment that lets them be physically active“ (Kindlom & Thompson

2003, 61). However, in today's world there is a tendency that not only are the differences of boys and girls not considered in their education, but children are deliberately made "sexless". For example "Nicolaigarden" in Stocholm. There "boys are taught from an early age that it is alright to cry, to be shy and cowardly, and to wear a pink dress..." (Salu 2012).

Personal interest, physical activities, risk elements, work in group – these were the main factors of positive influence from the participants' point of view. The most effective activity in the project was the hike. This allows the author to conclude that it is important to add elements of adventure into the educational system. "The aims of adventure education are relatively clear: teamwork, communication, risk taking, leadership, personal growth, and morality" (Wurdinger 1997, 80). Many studies have concluded that adventure education should be included in the curriculum. For example, Seppo Karppinen concluded in his research that:

...that outdoor adventure education and experience pedagogy is connected with the reform-pedagogical approach, constructivist interpretation of learning and reflective learning. Through these pedagogical approaches outdoor adventure education could be added in the comprehensive school curriculum as an alternative teaching and learning method. It could be implemented as a rehabilitative method of special education without any massive projects or resources. The pupils thought that their experiences of outdoor adventure education and experience pedagogy were positive from the viewpoint of their own development, social interaction and school satisfaction. We can maintain on the basis of the current study that the method implemented here provides one way to add to school motivation and thus to prevent exclusion from education. The observations would appear to show that the method could help to integrate the goals of growth and learning in the modern educational system so heavily focused on information and technology (Karppinen 2005, 5).

The project showed, in the author's opinion, that was difficult to organise events outside specified school time. This is why the participants thought the project was too long. Therefore, the author considers it necessary to organize training for students studying to become youth workers and teachers to be qualified to organize and conduct hiking in schools. In the future, such elements of adventure education like hiking can be regarded as part of the basic education curriculum.

In the next stage of the present research the author would like to extend a program of organising hiking for boys and the search for opportunities to integrate the program into the curriculum. The program should include joint experience of three non-governmental organizations that organized the project "Boys to Men!".

5. CONCLUSION

- In the educational context of Estonia, the single most serious problem present is the dropping out of students from basic school, especially the dropping out of boys while the amount of students in Estonia decreases every year.
- The education problem rises before our society more sharply: what and how to teach our children. I would like to name one of the principal limitations of today's education – excessive formality and very poor diversity of methods and approaches.
- Three non-government organizations - Estonian School of Citizen Journalism, Estonian Academy of Childhood and Skydive Club Dropzone - decided to create and to test activities of non-formal education on the basis of a pilot project „Boys to Men!“

That is why this research aimed at receiving answers to the following questions:

1. What is non-formal education and what is the difference between formal and non-formal education?
2. What is specific in the education of boys?
3. What are the problems the participants of the project often face in their everyday life?
4. Has involvement in the project “Boys to Men!“ helped the participants to solve these problems?
5. What moments during the project have played a more significant role for them from their own point of view?
6. What do the participants value in such a method of educating?

- In this research the conclusion was reached that one of the main differences between formal and non-formal education is the *type of learning*. The main direction of formal education is for getting “information, knowledge”. The main direction of non-formal education is for getting the “competences”. Non-formal education gives young people the possibility to develop their values, skills and competencies such as interpersonal, team, organisational and conflict management, intercultural awareness, leadership, planning, organising, co-

ordination and practical problem solving skills, teamwork, self-confidence, discipline and responsibility (Novosadova et al. 2008, 9).

- These five fields show that non-formal education can have a real impact on the society and support changes.
 - Social inclusion
 - Conflict resolution
 - Active citizenship
 - Capacity building (through capacity building communities are learning to stand on their own feet. If people discover and develop their competencies – they build self-confidence)
 - Sustainable development (Piskunowicz 2008, 34-36).

Therefore, the author holds that elements of non-formal education could be a useful part of the modern educational system. This promotes the use of dialogue in the process of education. The modern school system is dominated by the *model of monologue* between the teacher and the student. But “only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education” (Freire 2010, 92-93). The ability and skill to engage in a dialogue is one of the basic skills of survival in the social environment and also an important factor for building relationships. “Relationships are one of the most important aspects in the development of a young person. Sadly, there is almost no individual approach in the modern school system” (Valk & Lilles 2008, 6).

- Very often, teachers in the school do not differentiate between boys and girls when teaching. This affects the wellbeing of boys in school negatively. But for the successful passage from childhood to adulthood, young boys need to:
 1. Develop the life skills
 2. Possibility to make mistakes
 3. Learn from their experiences.

Thus, for successfully educating boys we have to create realistic situations from where we can take the material for analysis and development. “*This kind of project can show people life as it should be – real life*” (participant A).

- Based on the research data it can be concluded that the main difficulties faced by the boys who participated in this project are:
 - Problems with self-confidence
 - Communication with other people
 - Future plans

- During this research the author came to the conclusion that the project greatly increased the boys' sense of confidence and as a result, improved relations between the participants of the project and other people. This leads to the successful development of social capital in young boys, which can enhance their social protection and social status in contemporary society.

- The main factors of positive influence from the point of view of the participants in the project "Boys to Men!" were:
 - Personal interest
 - Physical activities
 - Risk elements
 - Work in group

These four factors are in short supply in the modern educational system. From research it becomes clear that such goal-oriented methods as hiking in the process of education for boys, prepared and conducted by experts, may give rise to significant improvement in their position in the modern educational system.

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APPENDIX 1:

Interview questions

Background questions:

1. Is this project your first experience that is organized outside of the after school activities?
2. Who is your family?
3. What does your family do together during your leisure time?
 - Why do you do these things together?
4. What are your usual activities during your free time?

Defining life problems:

5. Could you name some of your smaller and bigger problems that occur in your life? (for help, see appendix 2).
 - Does participating in this project help you to solve these problems? How does the project help with the solving?

Defining attitudes:

Cognitive aspects:

6. What is good in your life? What is bad in your life? (for help, see appendix 3).
 - Did participating in the project helped you to understand and define the 'good' and the 'bad' in your life? How?
7. What do you think, is there are differences how people see and describe you before and after the project?
 - How do you feel about it?
8. How (which) do you see yourself?
 - Describe yourself in 5 words.
9. What do you value in other people?
 - Do you think the values you like about others apply to yourself? In what extent?

10. What new you discovered about yourself during this project? (for help, see appendix 4).

- Did the discoveries surprised you, scared you, made you happy or made you indifferent?

11. What do you think – what is the meaning of life? Why do we exist?

- In what extent your definition fits with yourself and your life?
- How did participating in the project influence your attitude towards life?

Affective aspect:

12. What parts of the project were your favourite? Why?

13. What parts of project you disliked? Why?

Intention:

14. What do you plan to do in the future?

- How much the participation in the project did hanged your future plans? Why?

15. Would you recommend this project to your friends? Why?

Additional questions about the project:

16. In your opinion, what is the value of this project? Why?

17. For you, were the activities of the project rather an entertainment or a study process? Why?

18. What would you do differently if you could be the organized of the project?

19. Would you like to add something in terms of the project that was not asked previously?

*APPENDIX 2:***Help for interview question nr.5**

Life problems	Small	Big
Problems within family		
My fears		
Studying in school		
Communication with teachers		
Communication with parents		
Communication with peers		
My free time		
My appearance		
My behaviour		
Using drugs		
Drinking alcohol		
Smoking		
Health condition		
My future		
My past		

*APPENDIX 3:***Help for interview question nr.6**

In my life:	good	bad
My attitude towards life		
Family		
Friends		
School		
Interests		

APPENDIX 4:

Help for interview question nr.10

I learned that:

- I am quite brave
- I am a bit cowardly
- I am quite smart
- I am honest
- I am an happy person
- I get irritated easily
- I do/don't know how to behave in difficult situations
- I avoid conflicts
- I am hard to please
- I am inquisitive / indifferent
- I am good-hearted / ill-natured.
- Others feel with me that...
- I make friends easily
- I don't trust people
- I feel secure / unsecure with strangers
- When I am having hard times then I...
- When I feel good than I...
-
-
-