

Inclusion, Diversity, Equality in Non-Formal Education through the Optic of Youth and Youth Workers

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Abstract:

Introduction: The aim of the study was to find out what is the understanding of relatively new terms coming into the cultures of Middle-European countries – inclusion, diversity, and equality (hereinafter referred to as IDE) – from the point of view of young people (n=30) and youth workers (n=16) in Slovakia.

Methods: For data gathering, we used a method of focus groups (4 meetings). Data analysis was based on three criteria: consistency in understanding the terms, an overview of types of obstacles that keep young people from self-realisation and an explicit or implicit expression of understanding the basic principles of inclusion in education. The content of IDE terms was mostly from the area of the social field. The term diversity was closely explained in the psychological-personal fields.

Results: The most frequent obstacles for applying IDE approaches were seen in the social, health and religious spheres. From the pedagogical and methodological point of view, the problem is also in the difficulty of preparing the projects based on the principles of IDE while the youth workers proclaim autonomy in solutions and do not trust the possibilities of using general methods because of specific need resulting from the specific context of their work. Also, they proclaim natural applying of the IDE principles and the existence of specific needs in the informal education does not represent any problem for the inclusion of the group members in the activities of the organisation.

Limitations: Work with youth is very varied. Performs in different areas of life and also involves working with different groups of young people. The selected research sample consists of youth and youth workers who are only a partial sample of the sample. It is assumed that in a larger group of respondents (both youth

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workers and youths themselves), respondents' views may differ somewhat in some of the areas studied.

Conclusions: This research provides information on understanding, implementation and obstacles to applying the principles of inclusion, equality and diversity in practice. We believe that the information we receive is very valuable as it opens the imaginative door to the specific kitchens of individual youth organizations where these principles are directly implemented. They show their nature of application in practice, they suggest some risks, as well as a certain bias towards the application of the terms emerging (probably?) from theory. As can be seen from the results of our research, the emergence of specific needs in non-formal education in practice does not pose a problem in the inclusion of group members in leisure activities.

Key words: inclusion, diversity, equality, non-formal education, youth, youth workers.

Introduction

Inclusion, diversity, and equality are the top themes of the current policies in the transatlantic region (Shaw, 2005). Unfortunately, they are often connected to the agenda of certain politic groups and they become a means of politic battle. Because of this, the media are dependent on a specific ideological background and regarding creating a public voice they inform the public in a very selective way (Rončáková, 2015; Wiktorek, 2015; Golan, 2006). A lot of conceptual and methodical sources suggest support of inclusive approach, increasing sensitivity and accepting differences (Pasternáková & Krásna, 2015) to create equality in opportunities etc., mostly in a very committed and explanatory way, but without the pilot question – how the target group explains these terms. In the context of ideologically well-defined opinions, it is interesting to watch how these terms are understood by the youth practitioners and youth themselves.

The research in the field of an inclusive approach in the youth work has been in Slovakia only little saturated (Kováčová, 2007, 2008; Lenčo, 2011; Bizová, 2011, 2012; Brestovanský, 2015). In many cases, there are mostly secondary findings based on a larger research plan (Drnzíková, 2000; Lenčo, 2007; Kratochvílová, 2010). A much more developed is the research and theory of inclusive education in formal education (Požár, 2007; Lechta, 2009, 2010a, 2010b; Lechta, Kudláčová et al., 2013; Slezáková, 1998; Vašek, 2008), but these research studies are mostly focused on the problems of disabled people or the questions of inclusive education of Roma community. Many other fields (see classification in the Strategy) are still not being solved. None of the above-mentioned strategies has dealt with the hermeneutic explanation of the key terms in the context of the youth workers and youth.

The aim of the study presented here was to find out (1) what spontaneous concepts (preconcepts) are coming to mind of youth workers and youth regarding – inclusion, diversity, equality. We examined to what extent are the preconcepts of the practitioners and youth different from the theoretical definitions, the content and extent of these preconcepts in comparison to the content and extent of these terms defined in the key European documents and if the answers covered understanding/not understanding the principles included in the philosophical-anthropological base to inclusive approach itself. (2) The second topic was to get information about the real experience with the inclusive approaches in their own practice (or in the practice of their organisation). And it was not

only about the examples of good practice, but it was also about revealing those moments where the inclusive approach is proclaimed but in reality, it comes to the unintentional exclusion of specific youth groups or a practical negation of a particular principle.

1 Methods

The data gathering was organized in March – April 2016 as part of a wider international project focused on inclusive approaches in youth work, including five countries (the UK, Italy, Croatia, Turkey, and Slovakia).

The template was developed to gain consistent and valid data from various countries. The focus groups were organized with the heads of youth organisations and youth workers ($n_1 = 11$, $n_2 = 5$). For the group of youth workers, a purposive judgmental sampling procedure was used which was based on adequate experiences in youth work practice. The focus groups with young people as youth work organizations' clients included at least two different groups of young people ranging from 15 to 25 years of age ($n_3 = 16$, $n_4 = 17$).

From December 2015 to February 2016 the structure of the questions for the focus groups and individual interviews were developed, discussed and finalized. The focus groups started with a short introduction to the aims of the project and the discussion group; participants were also asked to shortly introduce themselves at the beginning of the discussion. They were informed that they were voluntary participants with the possibility to withdraw from the participation whenever they want and that all the content is recorded.

The heads of the organisations and youth workers were interviewed individually and their answers were recorded. Some of those interviews were undertaken face to face or via phone calls or e-mail communication, which was always the most convenient for the interviewee.

The comparison criteria in the content analysis of the interviews in the first and the second group of questions were:

- a) the consistency of understanding the content of the terms inclusion, diversity, and equality;
- b) an overview of the types of obstacles mentioned in the Strategy for inclusion and diversity (European Commission, 2014);
- c) explicit or implicit expression of interiorization of anthropological-axiological conditions and the ethical code in an optimal inclusion model.

In the Strategy (European Commission, 2014, p. 7), the following situations are described that often prevent young people from taking part in employment, formal and non-formal education, transnational mobility, democratic process and society at large.

- Disability (i.e. participants with special needs): young people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities, etc.
- Health problems: young people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions, etc.
- Educational difficulties: young people with learning difficulties, early school leavers, lower qualified persons, young people with poor school performance, etc.

- Cultural differences: immigrants, refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families, young people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, young people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties, etc.
- Economic obstacles: young people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on the social welfare system, young people in long-term unemployment or poverty, young people who are homeless, in debt or with financial problems, etc.
- Social obstacles: young people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.; young people with limited social skills or anti-social or high-risk behaviours, young people in a precarious situation, (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers, young and/or single parents, orphans, etc.
- Geographical obstacles: young people from remote or rural areas, young people living on small islands or in peripheral regions, young people from the urban problem zones, young people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities), etc.

2 Anthropological-axiological assumptions and ethical principles of an optimal model of inclusion

An optimal model of inclusion should be based on two basic anthropologic-axiological conditions that are human dignity and based on human relationships (relationality).

The term human dignity may be understood in various ways. This term is not perceived just as complying with individual autonomy, marking of morally desirable human action, or as a characteristic quality of a dignified life. Human dignity is attributing to human existence in ontological meaning; it is an evidence of the inherent value of each human individual, each member of a human family. This personal understanding of internal human worth is important in accomplishing other typical human values, because “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble – United Nations, 1948). The document of United Nations is devoted to the rights of disabled people which introduces “Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices, and independence of persons” (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 3a – United Nations, 2006.). It is necessary to mention that as well as the respect of dignity is connected to the situation of personal independence and individual autonomy, it includes the condition of dependence and reliance upon others.

Reliance upon others “refers” to the personal relevance of the relational dimension of being human. The human relationship is the reflection of some duality in unity: the fact that human beings find in the face of another their own appearance but simultaneously they can identify in it their otherness and dissymmetry. Uniqueness, non-repetition, and unpredictability of each human being are the first signs of this otherness. Dissymmetry and relationality are not evidenced only in the phenomena of the unpredictability of other, but it pertains to our internal dependence and human vulnerability. Our vulnerability expresses conditionality of the human condition, which could be hurt, lacking, disabled or exempted from existence. But as the Barcelona Declaration reminds: “vulnerability has been largely misunderstood in modern society as if all vulnerability,

i.e. suffering abnormality and disability should be eliminated in order to create perfect human beings. Respect for the vulnerability is not a demand for perfect and immortal life, but recognition of the finitude of life and in particular the earthly suffering presence of human beings” (The Barcelona Declaration, 1998, C:I:1:6). Taking into consideration the human vulnerability and dependence on others, the relationality that we have in our minds, will include the symmetrical relationships, equal and autonomous relationships, but also asymmetrical relationships that seem to be unequal and dependent on each other. The otherness or disability might lead to the natural dissymmetry of relationality, but it never leads to dissymmetry in acknowledgement of the dignity of involved subjects.

The acknowledgement of each human dignity and understanding of relationality in its symmetrical and asymmetrical connotation is the basis for appropriate inclusion ethics. The central anthropological foundations require the constitution of general ethic principles, which should be applied through pro-inclusive action.

- *The respect of human subject and his/her human condition*

The field which deals with diversity and disability has a norm that acknowledges and honours human existence is inseparably connected with the norm that respects specific human conditions that are undoubtedly individual autonomy, freedom of choice and personal self-sufficiency, but also definitely human reliance on others and human vulnerability and dependence.

- *The respect of diversity in human community*

Especially the experience with disability points to the fact that human dependence is one of the characteristics which are typical for the “condition” of being a human. Autonomous, self-sufficient and independent individuals are just “temporarily abled” (Kittay, 2011, p. 49), because the human life is naturally inferior to regularities, which include the passing through periods or states of dependence. The respect of dissymmetry of relationality means the respect of differences that are brought by these “situations”.

- *Responsibility for inclusion of the marginalized*

Apart from disability, the category of difference is tightly connected with categories such as sex, race, health condition, developmental period, religious confession and beliefs, actual life phase or times of need. Under the term periphery, we understand physical, material and social periphery as well as cultural, moral, juridical or spiritual periphery. Responsibility is a duty of caring for other beings which becomes a “concern” when their vulnerability is endangered (Jonaas, 1979). Responsible action is a concern about fragile individuals, who are exposed to displacement, but also an active concern about incorporating them into the common space, from which they were physically or mentally, consciously or unconsciously excluded.

- *Pro-sociability and social justice*

The emergency of pro-social approach is looking for the response on the individual level as well as on the institutional level. The civil society and the government should participate in application of this kind of justice with their own parts, which would not be based on the egalitarianism (Rawls, 1971) that is forgetting the issue of disability, but it would remarkably reflect the differences that flow from unequal capabilities of human individuals. The social justice is becoming an inclusive justice if the society chooses as its criterion the inclusion degree of disadvantaged people into the environment that has

always belonged to them, but it is still waiting for to be given to them again (Šuleková, 2016).

3 Findings

3.1 Understanding the terms - inclusion, diversity, and equality

Regarding understanding the inclusion we encountered a proclamation in the group of youth workers that inclusion represents a natural part of their everyday work while specific stress on diversity is understood counterproductively: *“Inclusion is so natural to us that pointing out that this is inclusive makes the differences.”*

In general, the inclusion represents the principle of diversity: *“Inclusion is about connection.”* *“In connection with something that is diverse but at the same time equal. (...) We try to strike a perspective that not everything that is different is also bad. It is only different without the evaluation part. (...)”* or *“Inclusion is about connecting various aim groups: Christians with a different religion, young people without religiosity, people from the mixed national environment, Roma communities, disabled people and people from the socially disadvantaged environment...”*

There are not specific youth answers that could be related to standard content of the word inclusion, however, some of the answers partly include the inclusive approach: *“When a new member comes to our social group, we do not follow our standard programe, but we adapt the programe (all the group), and we try to know the new member and leave a space for him/her to share something with us.”* The observed terms are in practice blended, and the participants did not know to name it separately. For example, in an answer of one female participant in the voluntary group working in the transit camp for refugees we could identify all the three terms: *“Also among the volunteers, there was not only the majority of the population. There were former prisoners, alcoholics, addicts. And all the differences were not anymore present... There was only one important thing: to warm up people who came there so they could survive in the bad conditions for at least 24 hours, despite night, cold weather, rain, snow.”* Similarly it was with the associations to equality, where mostly it was the process (inclusion) than the result (equity), for example during meeting the chances in the social field: *“...these children that live at the block of flats unit are not excluded, we do not have to bring them to society. It comes of the specific families they come from. It is more about their life experience in comparison to their mates; they do not have enough money to visit leisure courses, to have toys or their parents are so overwhelmed with their own problems, so they do not have time to do the homework with their children. It is more about leveling the chances of these children.”* Also in the answers of youth, we can follow that those who were involved in non-formal leisure activities understood the word equality especially in terms of equal opportunities or availability of the offered activities for all those who were interested.

A straightforward cultural difference in comparison to western countries is observable in the term “diversity”. While in the West (or more in English speaking countries) this term has an active character, in the middle European countries (culturally) the term diversity is an expression of individual differences. The participants did not understand the diversity as an obstacle but as an opportunity. Despite the fact that some clients could understand the diversity as a potential source of conflict formation, the youth workers dismissed this supposition. *“We have here various children. We have a good experience with that that the children are so different. We resolve conflicts only very little that arise*

from this diversity. Various other conflicts are solved everyday but not because of this reason.” or “Our clients are from different social classes and therefore it is so “colourful”. We would not like to identify our clients as problematic. We would rather prefer our activities to be preventive so that under our influence the children will not result in problems”.

The diversity of the clients lays higher requirements on youth workers and also on the activities. Because the clients come to organisations with various needs, it is necessary to update the offer of programmes quite often, regarding the specific needs and requirements of the clients *“the activities are adapted to clients, sometimes it is very natural, sometimes we need to work more with that. But we do not see that as a problem. It is set on low threshold principles. But sometimes it happens that the needs are very variable and then it is not possible to cover all the clients’ needs. But we try to settle a system where everyone can get a certain space to function.:* The diversity is also seen in youth workers groups: *“Our clients are very different. Also, the workers are different, so there is the parallel on both sides.”*

In comparison to youth workers, the youth placed the term diversity into psychological-personal field: *“I only see the difference that some are introverts and some extroverts”* or *“...some do not have the problem to prepare a performance or activity or to share what they experienced during the week and to enrich the others. The others have more the feeling of threat and seclusion, they are rather calm and will not solve anything”* or *“...sometimes there is a problem and there always comes someone who does not fit into the group and must be “excluded”.*

Both of the focus groups identically stated that in practice they do not separate the terms of IDE but they understand them as closely connected. The youth workers mentioned that they do not put the observed phenomena isolated in the documents, but they are implicitly grounded as a part of their basic documents, regulations, and guidelines of the organisation: *“We have this in the ethical code, principles, philosophy.”* They very often implement them spontaneously, based on a previous experience, without official policies: *“We do not have it formalized, but during each action, we suggest certain rules that we write and hang. It is also about experience with examples. The younger ones see that in the older ones as we communicate together and that is an important source for them. We do not have a formal education in this field, but we try to implement it through experience. It is a part of the organisation’s philosophy.”*

3.2 Observed obstacles of inclusion

In general, we can say that the answers of the youth workers do not include higher mentioned complex classification of the obstacles for selfrealization of youth. We suppose that (1) the participants have not met some of the categories of the obstacles in practice, (2) the inclusion of youth was very natural and therefore they did not mention that field, or (3) they do not realize those reasons for exclusion. Most of the participants’ expressions were related to the social sphere: poverty, disadvantaged environment, age, sex, culture, national and regional as well as language relevance.

The answers of youth workers addressed social and health disabilities: *“No one is excluded. But it is very difficult to include some groups, for example Roma youth, disabled (handicapped) or mentally disabled youth.”* The organisations try to overcome these obstacles by redirecting the clients to an organisation that specializes in inclusion with more segregation character. *“We had encountered a situation, where we had to*

reject a child on a wheelchair because it was a physical camp and we knew we would be going on motor boats and we redirected the child to a camp where we worked with children on wheelchairs.”

The obstacles are also present in the whole character of the institution's activities where the offer of the institution could not satisfy a specific need of the youth: *“In a dancing camp there were disabled people excluded and they would not even try to get there.”* An interesting finding is that the youth workers as well as the youth themselves give the reason for obstacles the young man himself/herself or his/her family, for example the prejudice related to value differences between an organization and a family: *“My parents did not let me come here, because you would wash my brain with values that the family does not honour.”*

Quite strongly were reflected economic obstacles: *“I did not visit the camp, because we did not have enough money and my parents are divorced.”* or *“We have camps which take one week and cost 50 Euros. We know that if a family wants to send 3-4 children 5-18-year old, we need to find donors...”*

We also recorded some obstacles in cultural or religious barriers: *“I think that if someone refuses to eat something because of the religion, it is not our problem. I do not think that we should provide the food according to someone's specific lifestyle. It is different to provide suitable food to celiacs than to someone who has religious reasons. I wanted to say that this work should not adapt to her but she should adapt to it!”* Based on these answers, we can suggest that the youth workers have their own hierarchy of values which is in controversy with the complex implementation of IDE in the work with youth.

A specific problem is also certain labels: *“We understand them as risky because they live in a specific environment and they do not have as many stimuli as they should have. But not everyone of them has something that can already be called a problem.”*

Certain proclamations do not correspond with the above-mentioned problems. As the basic principles of “choice” of the clients the youth workers named the principles of equality and voluntary participation of the clients in the work of the organisation. That means in practice not to exclude from the organisation's activities any clients. *“Because it is anonymous, it is open, so the restrictions are minimal and I do not think that exclusion has ever happened.”*

A specific problem is the dynamics of inclusion. In the work with excluded groups, there are arising specific solutions that are by their nature not inclusive but they can be understood as a step to inclusion. As the youth workers have mentioned, a good strategy in practice is to look for individual possibilities for excluded groups, how to change their situation as for example to create scout troops of the excluded young people: *“in 2010 the Roma scouting started to grace Roma children in the East Slovakia. They are thought good manners, and there have been some Roma troops established.”* This approach seems to be a step back, somewhere between segregation and integration (comp. Levels of inclusive approaches, Scholz, 2007).

Finally, a similar approach is observable in formal education where the schools create classes based upon pupils' dispositions regarding the best interest of a child and suppositions for an effective individual approach.

The centre of perceiving obstacles is in understanding of the youth workers moving from the category of external factors (as mentioned in European Commission, 2014) to the

category of personal approach and possible solutions for the youth worker or the organisation.

The answers of the youth workers were recorded in a not satisfactory capacity of the institution and absence of professional staff. *"I remember one boy. He could not work in that small space and this is also related to psychiatric diagnosis, ...we also have a border in our professional competences. Then we rather send our clients to other institutions..."*

An obstacle in implementation of the inclusive approach is the unsatisfactory legal policy: *"Regulations, documents and legal materials that do not respect individual life stories."*, that means the existing services are not available in some situations because they are not offered in the form which the client needs. Inclusive activities are often stopped by parents. There used to be a meaning that in work with youth, there are more important local regulations and policy implementation. The next obstacle was financing, where *"sometimes a not consistent idea means that we cannot guess the number of financial help that they get from the state; that means in practice that a well-started project can also disappear after its completion."* In terms of personal approach, the youth workers suggested as a good personal feature of a worker to be creative and flexible: *"He/she has to accept the youth opinions and look at their things from their point of view..."* The need for flexibility is related to the character of activities with the youth (especially with risky clients) which are planned and focused but also very changeable, unstable, involving a lot of risks. This results in frequent changes of the planned activities. As the next common feature we recorded was empathy *"...because understanding is the first step to work together."*, or tolerance: *"No difference should disturb the activity. All those things can be discussed or respected."* or *"Some parents wanted to have their child in church on Sunday, in our troop we had about 30 girls and all the troop went to the church, and who did not want to go was not there, the others were waiting in the park outside."* There were also other proinclusive features such as responsibility, patience, friendliness, sense of humour and truthfulness. Delivering truthful information was interpreted by the youth workers as building a mutual trust, sometimes very fragile, but essential for working with the clients. In the group of youth, we noticed a frequent feature of the youth worker purposefulness and this feature was not present in the group of youth workers. All other features were identical.

The inclusive approach has a specific importance in the period of adolescence. The youth workers focus their attention especially on building relationships, ability to communicate, active listening, accepting someone else's point of view: *"I like being no expert but only a guide... to guide a young man/woman on the right path."*; *"All the activities that we prepare..., it is about building relationships and these relationships can help a young man/woman to develop."*; *"the age is not important, important is to be on the same wave."* or *"...we have to go the way ourselves that we want them to go."*

Accepting diversity is in the youth worker mirrored in respecting individualities of a client, supporting his/her selfrealization, development of gifts and talent, sensitivity to needs and requirements. The requirements on youth workers predict using IDE principles with youth.

The next important feature of the youth worker was the ability to lead a group, to work with a team, to have experience with terrain work and experience of own activities as a young man/woman. On the other hand, there was the need to create a distance from the clients' problems: *"...a youth worker is a good leader, he/she can bring people to the*

finish line stated the beginning.” In connection with the statements of youth workers, this may be a paradox as they understood their role as a “guide”.

In the last group of obstacles, we focused on identifying the missing important sources and approaches necessary for the inclusive approach in youth work. The answers of the youth workers were oriented only on methods and guidelines to specific work they provide, they were not special for IDE, despite repeatedly used questions focused on IDE: *“We have an accredited system of the Ministry of Education for youth workers who do not have pedagogical education. A specific part for inclusion of people with specific needs is not mentioned there.”* As a reason for absence of guidelines for implementing IDE principles the participants mentioned that they consider these specific guidelines focused on IDE as excessive, while the IDE principles are included in the value system of the organisation: *“We have a lot of courses, methods, and guidelines, We do not have those principles so specified but because we are a Christian organisation, it is only called differently. Our starting animator is 15 years old and I think he/she could not identify it this way. Maybe equality. If we had a particular situation we would have to explain it.”* They would rather appreciate the recommendations regarding IDE principles as an integral part of work with specific groups of the youth. Similarly, in the answers of youth we found the absence of guidelines focused on IDE principles. *“They did not provide us anything like that.”* Acquiring the IDE principles is realized by a personal example, or in workshops and courses: *“We had a course during our early intervention and they taught us the basics, because not every volunteer is someone who studied humanities, we have all completed a one day course that was focused on early intervention in work with people.”* Most of the courses and workshops are focused on the work with majority population and on general needs of running an organization. *“I was taught to prepare projects in project management.”* or *“We do not focus specifically on specific needs, but in the organisation we have the General Assembly, and we talk there about what we do, what we need, we do not talk about this problems, we talk about activities that need to be organized.”* The question is if the youth workers themselves understand the training and methods related to IDE implementation as necessary. They prefer experience and personal example: *“We do this with the evangelism concerts, we involved a music band, we had a speaker, and we showed the youth that we can live as Christians without any limitations.”*

The youth workers do not consider as necessary to train specifically the members regarding the inclusive approach unless it is a larger organization. They very often initiate schooling based on current necessity: *“We organize courses in the way that we think about something that could be interesting and we look for someone who could teach us. So we initiate the course and find someone, a professional, to lead the course. The experience shows the necessity...”* They also consider as an important thing to acquire IDE in a natural environment of the particular organisation based on personal experience given from one worker to another: *“I do not think that creating a formalized structure for IDE is necessary, I do think that it could be even counterproductive, they could be discouraged... we try to define the things too much and these definitions sometimes curtail the process of inclusion. We sometimes pay more attention to terms than to the process itself in practice.”* An approved approach seems to be a good cooperation in the organisation focused on intergenerational passing of experience and cooperation with other organisations: *“We create methods, we have cooperation with a man in emergency – the Czech Republic where this kind of education works.”*, but there

is also an inspiration from other organisations at home or abroad: *“We create own activities, but we are also inspired by activities from abroad. IDE – in the cultural-ethnic display, it is strongly represented also in our country. Inspiration is always welcomed. A man always has something to learn.”*

3.3 Implicit understanding of the inclusion principles

It seems that among the Slovak youth workers there is a common understanding in the question of man’s dignity and a basic respect for the human subject.

But it comes to the collision of societal values and individual differences in values of individuals. We do not find acceptance of active inclusion of marginalized groups. Apart from organisations specialized in looking for excluded groups in the rhetorics of regular youth groups we find only a passive approach of waiting to *“request”* or *“expression of interest”* from the marginalized groups: *“When someone comes (...), we will adapt...”* or *“I do not know anyone who is disabled and is afraid to come.”*

4 Discussion

We did not notice any kind of thinking coming of the stable classifications of the diversity across race, cultural, language, religious and other diversities. This situation can be also caused by the fact that in Slovakia there still live only few people of other races, culture or language. Similarly, also the religion of most Slovak people is relatively consistent (mostly Christian-Catholics), although the authenticity of religion or living the religion is various. Very often we encounter more proclamations of values. Current cultural changes in a transatlantic region (for example rise and popularity of radical political movements) are also present in the Slovak political and cultural life, while the religion is very often misused by the radical representatives.

On the other hand, the most active youth organisations are Christian organisations or organisations established by Church. We think that this could be one of the reasons why the participants of the research did not mention the diversity in the religion or youth do not reflect the classification of diversity and therefore do not need to express themselves in this problem.

The interview analysis resulted in several findings which mirror the current situation of implementing IDE in the practice of youth workers and youth. Perceiving inclusion as a natural part of work and principle of uniting diversity can be understood as a very positive finding that comes into contrary with the experience of youth workers from the formal education environment. The question is the difference between reality and proclamation. The organisations declare the inclusive approach also by that the IDE principles are in practice not separated, they understand them as closely connected and implicitly grounded in the basic documents, regulations, and internal rules. Their inclusion into specific regulations in the organisation is perceived as counterproductive.

Understanding obstacles in implementing IDE in the youth work is closely related to disabilities and economic obstacles. Many other fields are left unnoticed, despite the fact that they are present in practice. This moment is probably related to the focus of organisations on quite specific clients (a certain way of exclusion) and the second group, larger and broader organisations do not have a proactive inclusive policy or strategic documents for supporting IDE. In general, only some larger organisations are active in organising courses for more effective work with the youth (none of them is preferentially

focused on IDE). Outcomes, processes, and effects of this further education are not objective and not reliably evaluated.

When considering the term youth worker, it seems clear in all four categories of answers that the emphasis is put on a spontaneous approach in practice based on experience and the relationship with young people. In contrary, there is observable a certain implicit distrust against the formal education in youth work. A further common sign of youth workers in practice is an exclusive status, preferring personal qualities of a youth worker. On the other hand, other competencies as for example administrative-organisational, financial, didactic, diagnostic, selfevaluation and planning selfdevelopment, social overview, etc. (compared to Starr et al., 2009) are completely absent.

It is not clear, if those competencies are considered by the youth workers so natural that it is not necessary to verbalise them, or are aware of them only partially and they do not take them seriously. One of the most important findings of the research was the absence of the term youth worker as a professional (although it is defined in the national qualification system, there is no appropriate study programme offered by universities). Many activities are performed by young volunteers.

The organisations are confident about the quality of their practice and they do not perceive the necessity of further professional development that the costs (time, energy, staff) related to further professional development are compared with the profit disproportionate. According to us, this problem is to large extent associated with a voluntary nature of youth work. The decision for voluntary service is, in general, fragile and the management of the citizens' associations should sensitively consider a range of demands against the volunteers. However, we can say that within non-formal culture of the organisation itself, there are performed many activities of inclusive character with an effective impact on the clients. The inclusive culture has certain limits in the organisations that could be defined such as: we accept almost everyone if they adapt to our regulations. Though, the organisations only rarely conform their own rules to the reflexion of the interest and needs of excluded young people.

Conclusion

The understanding of IDE principles differs in youth workers and young people especially regarding a degree of abstraction and diapason of offered classification of obstacles related to their adherence. The development of implementing IDE approaches is more or less spontaneous, based on experience with solving particular situations and needs. The youth organisations in Slovakia have neither formal policies, nor special tools or a system for further training and education.

The activities in youth work are to great extent organised by volunteers and therefore there is no excessive pressure on their professional development. The IDE approaches are only implicitly and not clearly defined in the proclaimed personal qualities of a youth worker with the emphasis on his/her personal, managerial, and practical skills.

Nevertheless, implementation of IDE principles is considered by both focus groups as important, but they do not encounter "schooling" or training necessary skills for their work in practice; young people are not familiar with any sources or documents that could help them implement IDE principles in practice. The youth workers are satisfied with a given situation, do not perceive the necessity to be specially educated in this field.

In implementation of IDE in practice, youth workers have their self-evaluation processes poorly developed, despite the fact they claim that they try to apply the IDE principles as proved by arguments in which they declare their efforts to overcome the obstacles associated with a successful IDE implementation in youth work.

We want to point at a certain reservedness of youth workers in the question of further education, for example by courses specifically focused on IDE, or achieving other sources for practice itself in a form of methods or documents particularly aimed at this research field.

Research findings also suggest that young people know the following terms: inclusion, diversity, equality, but the understanding of them is more implicit.

They do not understand those terms separately, as in the practice itself the implication of such terms overlaps. They reflect the obstacles, but also the possibilities of implementing IDE principles in youth work. They can name examples of good practice and also the ways how to use them in organisations.

They can not tell them about it in isolation, because even in the practice they work together. They reflect obstacles and opportunities in applying IDE principles to working with young people. They will be able to give examples of good practice and ways to work in organisations in this area. As a drawback in the research problem we can understand the absence of specifically focused sources (training, methods) for youth work. The IDE principles represent for young people the only possible way how to use services provided by youth organisations.

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