DCTDt

Design and Creative Thinking Toolkit
METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE

DISCLAIMER

The project "Creative and Design Thinking Development Toolkit" is financed with the support of the European Commission's program "Erasmus+: Youth in Action" administered in Latvia by the Agency for International Programs for Youth. This publication reflects only the author's views, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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ERASMUS+ strategic partnership project led by Latvian Design Centre in collaboration with Baltic Regional Fund (Latvia), Estonian Design Centre (Estonia),AGERHOLM FLOK (Denmark).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview. Project "Design and Creative Thinking Development Toolkit"

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the role of design and creative thinking among adolescents to facilitate their future employment and encourage their self-expression.

Education systems around the world have been dominated by a fixed way of thinking, with the result that young people have low intrinsic motivation, confidence in themselves and their skills, leading to the emergence of categories such as NEETs (*Young people not in employment, education, or training*). Often this status is not a voluntary choice, adolescents are affected by various risk factors, including migration, financial insecurity, social and territorial exclusion, family factors and many others.

While questioning both education workers and professionals working with youth in the NGO sector during the project preparatory stage, it appeared that there is a lack of one solid tool targeting young people aged 13-16, that would be based on demands and current trends of the labour market and findings within the realm of well-being of young people. Methods used at schools or after school activities can be well-written, but outdated resulting in small or no progress and affecting young people's motivation, self-esteem etc.

PROJECT GOALS:

1. To promote the development of creative thinking in the adolescent age group by using age-appropriate design thinking development tools.
2. To promote the interest and awareness of non-formal education teachers and other specialists in the field about the specifics and significance of creative thinking by providing methodological material for further independent work with adolescents.
3. To promote the exchange of experience and opinions between the strategic partners of the project, ensuring learning mobility activities during the project implementation.
4. To reduce the stigma about the incompetence and competitiveness of the creative professions in the labour market by emphasizing the multidimensionality and the value of creativity in the examples of the world's leading companies.
5. To promote a set of preventive actions to reduce the quantitative and qualitative numbers of the NEET group.

PRIMARY TARGET AUDIENCE OF THE PROJECT

Adolescents aged 13-16 years, in the last grades of primary school. At this age, adolescents learn to think in abstract categories, to make decisions by evaluating different perspectives, to control and disport different impulses, to analyse multiple choice and a causality.

PART 1

Overview. Creativity as important 21st century skill and its development

"21st century skills" – has this word combination already settled in your vocabulary? This concept is said to become essential for everyone wishing to thrive both in private and professional realms. Throughout the preparatory and research phase of the "Creative and Design Thinking Development Toolkit" project we analysed the relevant documents laying out the framework for work life of current and future generations.

ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work has stated "today's skills will not match the jobs of tomorrow and newly acquired skills will quickly become obsolete". OECD's Future of Work and Skills (2017) document starts with a mention of three ongoing trends affecting the nature of work, its quality and quantity and performance of the workforce: globalisation, technological progress, and demographical and climate change. Among myriad different challenges humanity is facing: e.g. new working positions that have to be created and unemployment issues that have to be solved in the meantime, poverty, wage gaps, working conditions, time and ethical matters, require a person centred approach focusing on facilitating the transformative capabilities and enhancing the necessity of a lifelong learning.

It is necessary to address "existing and anticipated skills gaps, paying particular attention to ensuring that education and training systems are responsive to labour market needs and enhancing the capacity of workers to make the best use of the opportunities available for decent work. Core skills are critical for enabling workers to attain decent work and in improving living standards. (ILO, 2019)

Creativity can be viewed as a product, a mental process, and a psychological construct. Creativity itself if not excludes then reduces the necessity to be narrowed down to a well-shaped single definition rather offering guidelines and possible components to succeed in one's path of becoming and staying creative. Within the framework of the current project, we have looked at creativity from various perspectives. Hereby we include a summary of answers to relevant questions about the development of creative thinking skill during adolescence that were useful during the modelling of the current toolkit.

- **Can the concepts of creativity and creative thinking be used interchangeably?**
- **What are the components of creativity?**
- **What are the determinants of creative thinking development among adolescents?**
- **What are the essential skills and personal traits for development of creative thinking?**

1. Creative thinking and creativity

The *OECD Programme for International Student Assessment PISA 2022* defines creative thinking as the process that leads to the generation of valuable and original ideas. A typical creative process involves investigating a problem or issue, exploring multiple viewpoints and options, generating and testing out ideas, developing, refining and communicating solutions and evaluating whether or not they have worked.

In some resources creative thinking is used when referring to mental processes while creativity includes both mental processes and behaviour based on them or as an outcome of thought processing. (Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993)

Within this project we have agreed to use creative thinking as a process of "doing and creating" consisting of various components, meanwhile creativity is a combination of these same components being successfully and gradually developed.

Distinguishing the concept of skill from competency instead of using them interchangeably is important. Skill is a specific strength, learned ability: programming, knowledge of language, time management, etc. required by a selected profession. Competence on the other hand is a combination of knowledge, skills and behaviour, a group of related strengths. Creative skills are those skills which contribute to an individual's capacity to understand and apply a creative process. The core creativity skills are curiosity, open mindedness, imagination and problem solving.
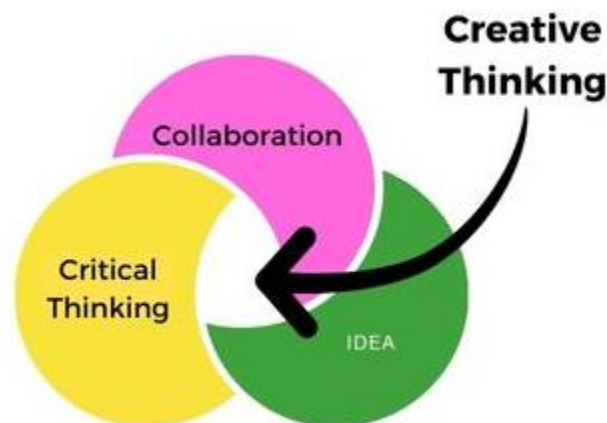
1.1. Combinational creativity

We have already established that creativity is a *hot dish* in contemporary menu, hence there are numerous approaches to define its ingredients. One compelling approach is known as combinational creativity and has three ways of expressing creativity: problem driven, similarity driven, and inspiration driven. First implies filling up the gap between problem and solution, while the two later ones presume generating new ideas either

based on similar concepts or completely unrelated ones. Problem driven approach will supply ideas that might seem unique at the beginning but is the retrospective of previous experiences and knowledge. Imagination driven approach on the other hand encourages original, bold, and ground-breaking solutions however there is a risk of them being less practical.

1.2. Big "C" and small "c" or the 4C's model of creativity

MINI-C — INTERPRETATIVE CREATIVITY   LITTLE-C — EVERYDAY CREATIVITY   PRO-C — EXPERT CREATIVITY   BIG-C — EMINENT CREATIVITY

The 4Cs model of creativity consists of 4 levels of experience, and offers a step by step path of creative maturation. First, it anticipates that nearly all aspects of creativity can be experienced by nearly everyone. On a "mini-c" level people are driven by curiosity, exploration, playfulness and experimentation. Those qualities are to be encouraged in children, adolescence during the cognitive development stages, as well as in adults who want to train their creativity muscle or explore new domains of self expression.

"Mini-c" level is where we try out the popular "think outside the box" and "try something new" approach by simply giving ourselves new experiences and therefore expanding our possibilities.

"Little-c" is the level that best corresponds to the classical creative thinking definition ensuring the generation of new, purposeful and useful solutions to problems or situations. Critical thinking, ability to weigh and evaluate options and think multidisciplinary are the skills that should be enhanced at this level. A great deal of people find these two levels completely satisfactory, and do not feel the urge, curiosity and determination to proceed to levels three and four. One could also be at a Big-C level in certain domains and occasionally experience smaller insights at mini-c or little-c levels.

"Pro-c" level can be reached with consistent work, and reaching a certain expertise in a given domain, usually this stage is achieved during adulthood as it requires years of practice, analytical approach, evaluation, mentorship and transformations.

"Big-C" or genius level is the peak of the creativity mountain and can be reached only by few. It is important that "Big-C" is not perceived as a goal, rather as a decision to pursue a certain path with full dedication. Many individuals use creativity to expand their possibilities to express emotions, cross dimensionally test their ideas and strengthen such personal traits as self-esteem and self-confidence.

1.3. Divergent thinking and creativity

Creative thinking is the way of thinking that leads to the generation of valuable and original ideas *(OECD, 2022).* As we established already, creative thinking involves both, convergent and divergent thinking. Convergent thinking is known as analytical when decisions are made based on ordinary reasoning and logical thought pattern whereas divergent thinking is characterised as critical and broader. While the first one offers most predictable good answers, the later one produces as many answers as possible, including the non – ordinary, innovative, and unexpected. Divergent thinking has lately been in the spotlight because there is a growing demand for authentic, customised and speedy decisions. As divergent thinking is more flexible, it also correlates more strongly with creativity. All young children start as divergent thinkers and become gradually more convergent thinkers as they grow and become socialised.

1.4. Growth mindset and creativity

"A growth mindset is when students believe that their abilities can be developed," says Carol Dweck, renowned Stanford University psychologist.

Widely interpreted concept about the set of beliefs about intelligence determining that intelligence or personality is something a person can develop during lifetime, as opposed to point of view that it is a fixed trait. World, including educational systems, are slowly but constantly shifting from fixed to growth mindset, from being afraid of obstacles to bravely facing them, from avoiding challenges to embracing them, from perceiving mistakes as punishment to turning them into new possibilities.

It is especially relevant among adolescents as they learn and experience things for the first time. Simple change in addressing mistakes or difficulties may become a turning point for further choices.

> **Fixed mindset:** *You are not succeeding.*
> **Growth mindset:** *You are not succeeding <u>yet</u>!*

In a poll of 143 creativity researchers, there was wide agreement about the number one ingredient in creative achievement. And it was exactly the kind of perseverance and resilience produced by the growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). Growth mindset leads to more

flexibility, exploration, playful attitude and ability to take risks. Failures and creativity go hand in hand, because growth literally means ability and willingness to stand up after each fall and close the possible achievement gaps when found. According to growth mindset theory if a person lacks a certain skill, he/she should be encouraged and led to develop or replace that skill before giving up the idea to perceive a chosen goal.

By choosing or creating the tools for the creative thinking skill development, we understood the importance of focusing on what else can be done rather than focusing on one thing or one obstacle an adolescent cannot overcome. In regards to creativity, our biggest keywords from the growth mindset approach were: flexibility, openness, resilience, positivity, playfulness.

1.5. Intrinsic motivation ar creativity

Research shows intrinsic motivation is the main mediating mechanism through which personal and contextual factors influence creativity (Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004). In a nutshell, the source of intrinsic motivation is internal, not external. Interest, challenge, competition, playfulness and willingness to learn new things are the factors playing the leading roles to keep the motivation level high and persistent at all times. Motivated creative workers are typically much more productive and innovative than those who are not.

2. Creativity in the period of adolescence

Within this project, we were interested in tailoring the creative and design thinking toolkits to meet the needs of the adolescent target group aged 13 - 16. These are young people in their last years of basic education facing the first big challenges of their lives. There has been a vast body of research about the importance of creativity among adults, yet very few have been done focusing on youngsters.

Adolescence is a maturation to stable identity, a period marked by bodily changes, ambivalent emotional shifts, separation experiences. This transitional age is crucial for the development of cognitive abilities *(Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008)*, when adolescents' brains demonstrate changes in structure and function *(Luna, Padmanabhan, & O'Hearn, 2010)*. Creativity develops considerably during adolescence with different developmental trajectories for insight, verbal divergent thinking, and visuospatial divergent thinking. According to latest findings adolescents do better on experimental tasks than adults, indicating an advantage for this age group for issues that require exploration and shifting between representations *(Kleibeuker et al., 2016)*. Simply put, adults have too many prejudices and established patterns that might deprive them from effectively thinking out of the box while adolescents do not have these limitations. Therefore, adults often need to relearn and re-train creativity while for adolescents it is more of a natural behaviour and thought process.

The perception of oneself as a creative person or acknowledgement of creative thinking skill typically begins in adolescence and lasts throughout one's lifetime. The same creative identity then motivates further pursuit of various other creative endeavours and necessary skills to succeed in them.

Research within this realm is still in its dawn, but current discoveries encourage the development of different tools to enhance, expand and diversify the possibilities to develop creative thinking skill and measure it for further research and observations. Majority of activities included in this Design and Creative Thinking Development Toolkit address the creative performance on divergent thinking, insight and critical thinking.

3. Design thinking process

According to Wikipedia Design thinking refers to the set of cognitive, strategic, and practical procedures used by designers in the process of designing, and to the body of knowledge that has been developed about how people reason when engaging with design problems. This explanation is not enough for describing what design thinking is.

Design thinking is both an ideology and a process, concerned with solving complex problems in a highly user-centric way. Design thinking is a powerful framework with the capacity to renew your approach to just about anything.

The pioneer of design thinking, founder and partner of the Design Thinking Academy, Arne Van Oosterom, has said that "design thinking is the glue between all disciplines". This definition describes the nature of design thinking quite well, because design thinking really encompasses many different disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, marketing, economics, etc. When combining different approaches, there's no worry about academic fit or anything like that - the important thing is to choose a tool that works. Thus, design thinking is very practice-oriented in nature.

Design thinking is to be more as creative thinking. Creativity is not a skill that belongs only to people from creative background as it was years ago. Creativity is more associated with keywords such as user-centricity, creativity, innovation, new solutions, out-of-the-box thinking, flexibility. Creativity, or the ability to come up with new ideas and solutions, is innately present in all of us. But we must work purposefully to give creativity a chance in a rational and analytical world. To let creativity to be present it is needed to have a positive and open attitude, a certain process for arriving at new ideas, and an environment that supports a new approach, allows experimentation and, of course, mistakes.

Design thinking is not intended to be a linear process, nor would that be desirable in most situations. Instead, the design thinking approach is to create potential solutions as quickly as possible. Design thinking uses traditional industrial design processes and tools, but the main difference is the involvement of non-designers, rapid prototyping and multidisciplinary. The design thinking process is often led by design thinking coaches or

facilitators, who mostly do not have a traditional design education, but still need proper preparation and experience.

Design thinking is user centered. At the heart of design thinking is the person for whom we create solutions, i.e., the user, in our topic especially adolescents. It is an approach that aims to generate and develop creative ideas. Design Thinking is that it puts humans first which means youngsters first.

This means understanding the user - first identifying, then researching and empathizing with him, then defining the exact problem, and only then conceptualizing solutions, prototyping, testing, and learning from constant feedback. That all means identifying problem youngsters have, then conduct survey amongst them, then conduct workshop, test and keep on track how the solution work i.e. ask youngsters from time to time feedback or ask them to do it.

Design thinking solves problems, but not all problems. Design thinking, with its in-depth research and prototyping phase, is suitable for solving complex, multi-stakeholder, or multi-competent problems. To solve problems that are not quite well defined and do not have one definite solution. New products and services are just such problems. Do not expect perfection - to get "there" you need to create.

Design thinking is a methodology and a toolbox. The steps to follow: understand the user and create empathy, define the problem, ideate solutions, prototype, test and implement. In each step, it is possible to use many different tools or worksheets, the best known of which are persona and customer journey.

The short form of the design thinking process can be articulated in five steps or phases: empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test.

As you see from the chart above the design thinking is divided into five paths.

Once again it would be good point out that design thinking doesn't follow a strictly linear process. There is likelihood that at each stage in the design thinking process you make new discoveries that require you to go back and repeat a previous path. In this process it is important that the right questions asked, and people can begin to search for answers subconsciously at their own pace. Creativity is not a rational process and finding a creative solution inevitably takes time. Some good examples to use, for example Empathy Map

https://www.ideo.com/blog/build-your-creative-confidence-empathy-maps or Build Your Confidence: 30 Circles Exercise

What makes the process of design thinking interesting is that the application of design thinking in schools, youth centers etc. has brought benefits that were not initially seen. One such unintended positive consequence is the improvement of team spirit and cooperation skills. Design thinking allows youngsters from different backgrounds and fields to quickly get on the same page thanks to the use of a process manager and visual tools.

Another important benefit is the easier implementation of the idea which was the result of the process. If the team participating in the design thinking process, they can come up with a new feasible idea and it becomes the basis of a new vision/idea/solution that youngsters can feel they have been part of the process and their thoughts have been heard and solutions worked out with them. However, getting an idea off the ground is just as important as developing it.

Design thinking approach was used during the creation of the Design and Creative Thinking Development Toolkit, and also is included in the tool itself for adolescents to use.

4. Youngsters here and now

We all understand that youngsters nowadays are not the same as youngsters a few years ago. The world is rapidly changing, a few last years have been challenging for everybody and especially for youngsters who needed to live in new circumstances, to learn in a new way and to be isolated from friends. But even without these last challenges, youngsters are different and when it comes to the learning, the same old methods can't be used for different reasons as they are not working anymore as good as they worked before.

Dr. Paed. Zanda Rubene highlights that children and youth of the information age (generation Z), who live both in the digital or online world and in the real or offline world, need an education that includes both of these environments, thus not ignoring a significant part of their experience. It is about the formation of a new culture of learning, which would reduce the gap between academic knowledge and the current needs of society, as well as between generations.

The researchers' focus is on how the changing social environment in which children and young people live has served as a background for the construction of the new generation's life world. Respectively, how they form an image of themselves, their relationships with others, shape their social, emotional and also cognitive skills, how they fit into society as a whole. Thus, research in the social sciences about the social identity, habits, emotional attitudes and life goals of young people is important to understand our everyday life as well.

It is clear that clarifying the needs, competences and life goals of the younger generation becomes an essential aspect of the educational process, because lifelong learning

presupposes the constant improvement of human potential throughout life. Thus, the current shift in the focus of education from "teaching" to "learning" presupposes a much deeper recognition of the subject of learning, since only in this way can the student-centered learning process be implemented.

UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth – 2014-2021 highlight, that around the world, young women and men are driving change and claiming respect for fundamental freedoms and rights; improved conditions for them and their communities; opportunities to learn, work and participate in decisions that affect them.

All member States' need to work and further improve the educational and learning environment for youth to acquire skills and competencies for the transition to adulthood. Including in terms of addressing youth unemployment and supporting transition from school to work, career guidance, qualifications, curriculum development, teacher training and gender mainstreaming.

5. Well-being of Young people

Young people face different issues related to challenges of adolescence and transition period which may include self-perception and self-management, school, family and relationship problems. When young people get overstressed or find the pressure too high to manage, the consequences for mental health are destructive behaviours such as self-harming, mild depression, difficult relationships at home and with friends, anger management issues, low self-esteem and self-confidence, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, disengagement, isolation and dropping out from education.

European Youth goals define well-being and mental health as priority aspects of a life of a young person and a priority area to be thoroughly paid attention to when developing up-to-date policy initiatives and youth work responses. Mental health and well-being are core qualities of life and a prerequisite for a constant development of a young person's potential, readiness to take responsibility and care about their life, build healthy relationships, choose educational and professional paths, be autonomous and active members of society.

Moreover, the mental health of young people has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Young people's (15-24 year-olds) mental health has worsened significantly in 2020-21 and in most countries, mental health issues among this age group have doubled or more. With adequate support and timely intervention, young people may be able to bounce back as we recover from the COVID-19 crisis, but there is a risk that the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis continue to cast a shadow over the lives of young people and their mental health. It is crucial that youth workers and organizations working with young people on an everyday basis take in consideration this aspect and would be equipped with educational approaches, methodologies, and tools to enable and empower young people to take care of their mental health and strengthen their well-being.

The intention to define well-being has been expressed by different scientists and studies, but honestly saying there is no one that would be universal for every situation. For example, the World Health Organization defined positive mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community".

The psychologist Carol D. Ryff stated that well-being is combined of six different factors of positive functioning: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, and self-acceptance, which are the important factors to be happy and live purposefully.

Martin Selingman's PERMA theory defines that well-being is combined of 5 fundamental blocks that enable flourishing – Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, and Accomplishment.
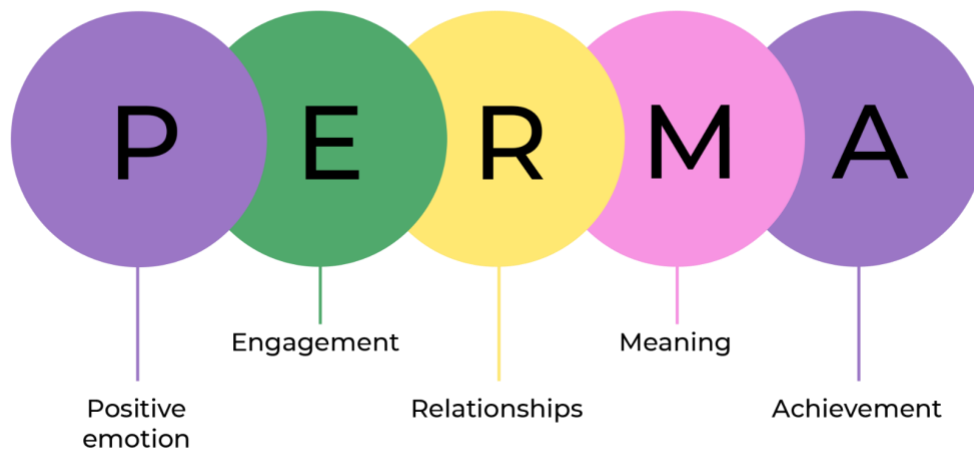
In the study "WELL-BEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN BALTIC STATES" it was found that young people appreciate that they have the opportunity to choose a profession and occupation that they like (62% in Lithuania, 67% in Latvia, 73% in Estonia). However, the opportunities to find a job that they like were evaluated more critically (64% in Lithuania believe that there are no such opportunities, 52% in Latvia and 40% in Estonia). Even lower were the assessments of opportunities to do business - only 20% in Lithuania, 35% in Latvia, and 46% in Estonia consider such opportunities available to them. Despite the fact that diverse activities are provided at the EU and national level to promote youth employment and entrepreneurship, these data nevertheless show that the implemented measures are insufficient.

The questions affecting both, the preparation of young people for the changing work environment and educational challenges, as well as what kind of support young people receive to choose a professional direction according to their personality, interests, abilities and wishes, are equally influential. By making the most appropriate choices at an early age, young people can better understand that by combining personality traits, interests and abilities, it is possible to find a professional direction that brings joy, satisfaction, promotes motivation and generally creates positive emotions in life. Thus, the well-being of life and the young person's satisfaction with life will also be improved.

Working with the development of the Toolkit, methods and activities which are included in the Toolkit will help young people to identify their personal traits, discover interests and individual abilities in order to design life scenarios and find the most suitable professional directions.

PART 2

Overview. Getting ready for the developed model

We are getting one step closer to implementing activities developed in the Design and creative thinking toolkit. However, before you start to implement activities we would like to draw your attention to some important issues and aspects that have been covered in this chapter. What has to be taken into consideration in order to create an atmosphere that encourages and motivates? How do you create a Judgement Free Zone which is a prerequisite for adolescents to train creative thinking and design personal life scenarios? Learning types; how do you engage everyone in the learning process and, of course, not forget about the facilitation process.

Facilitation of the developed model is an important aspect because meetings of large groups of people can be very hard to organize and control when they are in progress. The facilitator can also help group members to get to know each other and learn to cooperate. Some of the key factors for a successful workshop are the following: everyone's involvement, a safe environment, supporting individuals and group learning needs. In order to implement and run the developed model activities smoothly, some preparation work is needed. This part includes some important aspects that will help facilitators to prepare for activities.

1. Judgement Free Zone

A Judgement Free Zone – a prerequisite for adolescents to train creative thinking and design personal life scenarios

Definition

A Judgement Free Zone is a human ecology, group or context where the people involved experience to be accepted just as they are – with regard to gender, appearance, introvercy or extrovercy, education, level of skills and other factors. A Judgement Free Zone also matters in the many micro dealings between people. The term is used in different and sometimes more casual contexts; however we see this as a pivot point for any successful dealing, development and exchange with young people, and absolutely also in this work.

Philosophical background

The term, as we define it, is very inspired by Amy Edmonson's research and work on "Psychological Safety" (Edmonson, 2018) and Brene´ Brown's research and work on "Vulnerability and courage" (Brown 2018).

Creating psychological security is difficult – a neuroperspective

"Although psychological safety sounds simple and easy to implement in theory, it has proven to be quite difficult. Otherwise, we had to assume that psychological security in teams was the norm. When we as individuals feel that interactions or environments have minimal interpersonal risk and we feel psychologically safe, then we share our thoughts without worrying about any negative consequences. On the other hand, when there is psychological insecurity in the environment, we are less likely to share" (Edmondson & Nembhard, 2009).

How do you create a Judgement Free Zone?

Our research and work with young people, as well as interviews with professional youth workers have made us understand that the responsibility to create a Judgement Free Zone (JFZ) in a context with adolescents lies with the adult youth worker. Part of this responsibility is to share it with the whole group, so that everyone in the group sees themselves as responsible for creating a JFZ on an on-going basis.

Behaviours empowering a Judgement Free Zone

These behaviours are suggestions to be modelled by the adult and elaborated with the young   people.

1.Create ownership of the Judgement Free Zone with a simple set of house rules that supports it.
- *Possible areas of house rules to talk about: How do we foster a culture of honesty? Remind group members that they don't have to like each other to be together and respect each other. Discuss ways to talk to each other in a conflict? Affirm collective responsibility. Highlight the importance of developing and practicing listening skills. Do we honour the agreements we have decided upon together?*

2. Create a curious and open group atmosphere to thoughts and ways of going on that are different from the group "normal".
- *Examples: "What you say (or do) is so different to what I think, tell me more about why you think xyz is right.", "I really don´t agree with that, but I would like to hear why you think it´s a good idea". "Ok, we know what half of you think, and we haven't decided anything yet. Are there other ideas on what kind of party we want to have?"*

3. Respond productively and forgive mistakes. If people experience that it is ok to make "mistakes", then everyone begins to learn that everyone occasionally misses the mark, is clumsy or does not look impeccably smart.
- *Examples: "It´s ok, I am sure you did not mean to do that on purpose", "I got hurt by what you said. Can we talk about what happened?". "Just to say – I know my hair looks like s#it, but I feel greeeeat today".*

4. Be a role model and show that you (the adult), too, can sometimes be vulnerable and imperfect.
- *Examples: As an adult it is ok to let teenagers know that you, too, can have a bad day or get hurt, or struggle with things. That does not change the fact that you are a safe and secure person that is always ready to help.*

5. Ask for feedback and give feedback only when asked.
- *Examples: Be careful with too much commenting on other people's behaviours (that applies to both teens and adults). Feedback works best when someone has either asked for it or if someone is breaking the agreed house rules or agreements. In the latter case the feedback is not emotionally charged – it merely points out that we have house rules. We understand that this is difficult for most of us, so this has to be trained.*

6. Facilitate group session. Facilitation with groups of teenagers does not mean performing a formal facilitation with agendas etc. It means that the adult (and sometimes even the teenagers) gently manage sessions, meetings, musical rehearsals etc., so that the group experiences the benefit of getting input from everyone.
- *Examples: Here facilitation means setting up simple frameworks that allow teens to get the best possible experience. In its simplest form, it can be conducting round-talking, where everyone is given some time to express their thoughts. It should mostly be done in a simple way, without talking too much about it, so that the young people do not feel like a gathering is being facilitated.*

7. Remember to actively create circumstances where everyone gets a voice. If not done, the alphas of the group will dominate and others will feel subordinate.
- *Examples: Use the One/Two/Many method. The method is simply working in the way that the adult facilitating the processes, deliberately shifts between people working alone, working in two and two and working together as a group. This will ensure that everyone experiences to be heard as well as feel the good energy of the larger group. It can be used when you generate ideas, develop a theatre project, write lyrics to music or plan a party. Other ways to include everyone: give different young people leading roles (if they want). Make a round table talk so that everyone is being heard.*

# What are the benefits of creating a Judgement Free Zone

Studies show that psychological security makes room for moderate risk-taking, speaking your mind, creativity and the courage to stick your head out. (Delizonna, 2017). Psychological safety in groups increases learning behaviours (Edmond, 1999). Psychological safety releases energy, as one no longer uses mental resources to deal with impressions and avoid mistakes. (Edmond, 1999).

In this project we have found that having a high focus on creating what we here call A Judgement Free Zone is a prerequisite for working with creative thinking processes and designing life scenarios with young people.

2. Learning and Non-formal approach

The moment we are born we start to explore the world and learn, and this process continues until our last breath. Throughout our lives we acquire new understanding, develop skills, change attitudes, shape values and improve behaviours. There are periods when we learn more intensively, but there is always something new to gain, acquire, study, find out, because learning is a lifelong process. Learning happens at different places, under various circumstances, in diverse ways, by us and in groups.
What are the types of learning?
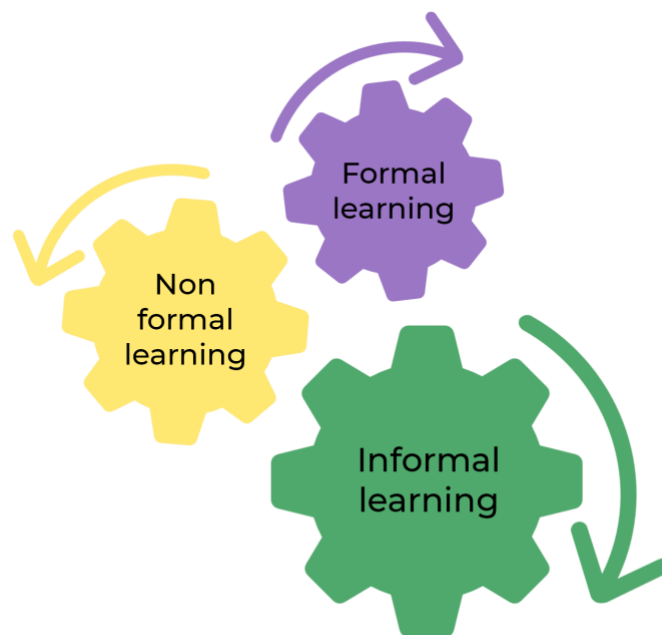
Educational systems exist to promote *formal learning,* which follows a syllabus and is intentional in the sense that learning is the goal of all the activities learners engage in. Learning outcomes are measured by tests and other forms of assessment.

Non-formal learning takes place outside formal learning environments, but within some kind of organizational framework. It arises from the learner's conscious decision to master a particular activity, skill or area of knowledge and is thus the result of intentional effort. However it doesn't need to follow a formal syllabus or be governed by external accreditation and assessment.

Informal learning takes place outside schools and colleges and arises from the learner's involvement in activities that are not undertaken with a learning purpose in mind. Informal learning is an involuntary and inescapable part of our daily life. Informal learning, however, is exclusively incidental.

Grid differences Formal learning, Non-formal learning, Informal learning

Characteristics	Formal learning	Non-formal learning	Informal learning
Curriculum	✓	✗	✗
Learning aims and objectives	✓	✓	✗
Teacher-centered	✓ (most of the time)	✗	✗
Learner-centered	✗	✓	✓
Use of different methods	✓ & ✗	✓	✓zz
Voluntarily	✗ (until a certain age)	✓	✗
Examination	✓	✗	✗
Diploma	✓	✓ (Certificate)	✗
Happens accidentally	✗	✗	✓

In this project our focus was on non-formal learning that takes place outside formal learning environments. Let's see how non-formal learning takes place.

There are many theories about learning and here is one of them to explore – the Experiential Learning Theory that focuses on learning by doing. The Experiential Learning Cycle was developed by David Kolb (educational theorist) in the early 1970s.

The experiential learning cycle is a four-step learning process: **Experience – Reflect – Think – Act.**
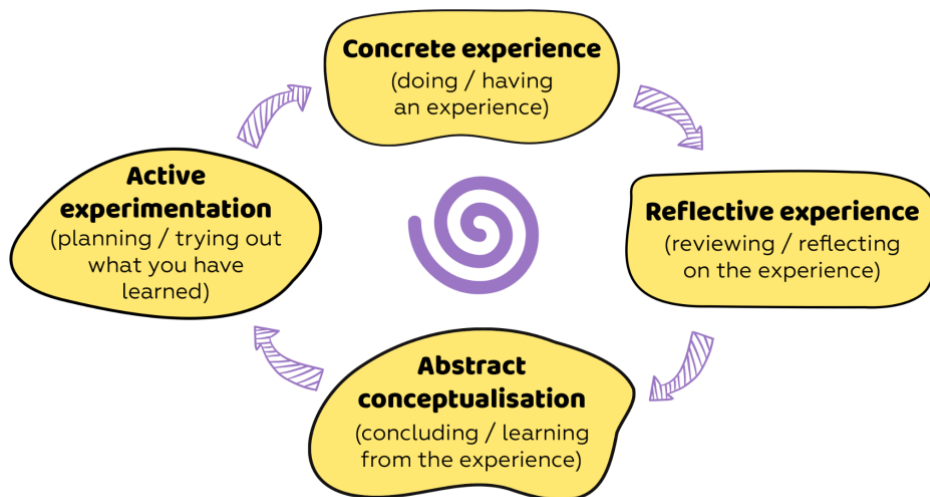
It is a learning process initiated by a concrete experience, which demands reflection, review and perspective-taking about the experience; then abstract thinking to draw conclusions and conceptualize the meaning of the experience; leading to a decision to act, engaging in active experimentation or trying out what you have learned.

Learning is an emotional process – we feel excitement when gaining a new skill, embarrassment about mistakes and fear of being misunderstood. Fostering positive emotions in your classroom/ training will motivate participants to learn, while negative emotions such as stress and alienation will inhibit their learning.

Choosing the right methods can sometimes be a daunting process. But the most important thing is to remember that before deciding on a specific method, many factors should be taken into consideration.

When choosing a method important are to think of the following:
- Aims – what are the specific objectives for this session, what do you want to achieve with the sessions;
- Target group – who are the participants, what is their age, experience, background, expectations, how many participants are there, participants with fewer opportunities or specific needs;
- Frame/settings – how much time do you have, what is the environment and the space, what resource can you use;
- Sequence – what precedes this session, what will follow, the group dynamics stage of the group;
- Institution/organization – what is the culture of our organization, what is the format of your work, what principles/ethics do you follow;
- Trainers/ facilitators – what knowledge and experience do they have, what are their preferences.

Only when we go through all the factors listed above, can you find the method that suits best. The Toolkit provides a set of methods that we recommend implementing in a certain sequence, but, of course, we do not want to limit you only to methods included in the

Toolkit; should you have other methods that could help achieve the same aim, you are welcome to use them.

A few ideas of how to create an open and supportive atmosphere for non-formal learning, growth and development:
- encourage people to be active, involved, participating;
- promote and support the individual's discovery of personal meaning and application;
- recognise and encourage people's right to make mistakes (in the safe environment created);
- embrace and accept the beauty of differences;
- tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity;
- encourage openness, self- and mutual respect;
- foster a collaborative process.

3. The role of teachers and facilitators

First of all, any activity which promotes learning should be facilitated accordingly and thoughtfully. What should educators, teachers and facilitators keep in mind during the educational process?

1. Always be ready for unexpected situations, reactions, challenges, obstacles. As in real life so in the learning process different aspects can appear. Your mind-set should be open to any experience and not stuck in a stressful situation.
2. Create a psychologically safe environment where participants feel free and are safe to ask, try, risk and make mistakes.
3. Mind your thoughts, attitudes and language! The process of learning can be affected by simple comments, limiting statements or emotional reactions.
4. Use different learning tools and combine them. Try both formal and non-formal tools to see how they work and what works best for the participants.
5. You are a very important person in the educational process; more or less you are a role model for your participants. You can also show good examples, share some personal learning stories, some inspiration and motivation.

To be effective, facilitators must juggle many roles in a session. At times you will need to strive to keep the group focused, at other times you should help them go deeper into a topic, and occasionally you will try to keep them from attacking each other! The Leadership Strategies Centre has identified eight distinct roles for a facilitator to be effective.

8 Roles of a Facilitator

GUIDE

The facilitator must know the steps of the process from beginning to end and must carefully guide the participants through each phase.

MOTIVATOR

From the rousing opening statement to the closing words of cheer, the facilitator must ignite a fire within the group and keep it well lit. The facilitator must establish momentum and keep the pace.

BRIDGE BUILDER

Where other people see differences, the facilitator must find and use similarities to build bridges to consensus.

CLAIRVOYANT

Throughout the session, the facilitator must watch carefully for potential signs of strain, weariness, aggravation, and disempowerment and respond in advance to avoid dysfunctional behavior.

PRAISER

At every opportunity, the facilitator should praise the effort put forth, the progress made, and the results achieved. Praise well, praise often, praise specifically.

PEACEMAKER

While it is almost always better to avoid a direct confrontation between participants, should one occur, the facilitator must quickly step in, re-establish order, and direct the group toward a constructive resolution.

TASKMASTER

The facilitator is ultimately responsible for keeping the session on track. This means tactfully cutting short irrelevant discussions, preventing detours, and maintaining a consistent level of detail throughout the session.

ACTIVE LISTENER

At every opportunity, the facilitator must make a conscious effort to hear and understand the content, intent, meaning, and feeling of what is said.

PART 3

Overview. Developed model

Design and Creative Thinking Development Toolkit is a set of methods and activities. The toolkit consists of nine consecutive steps divided in two parts:
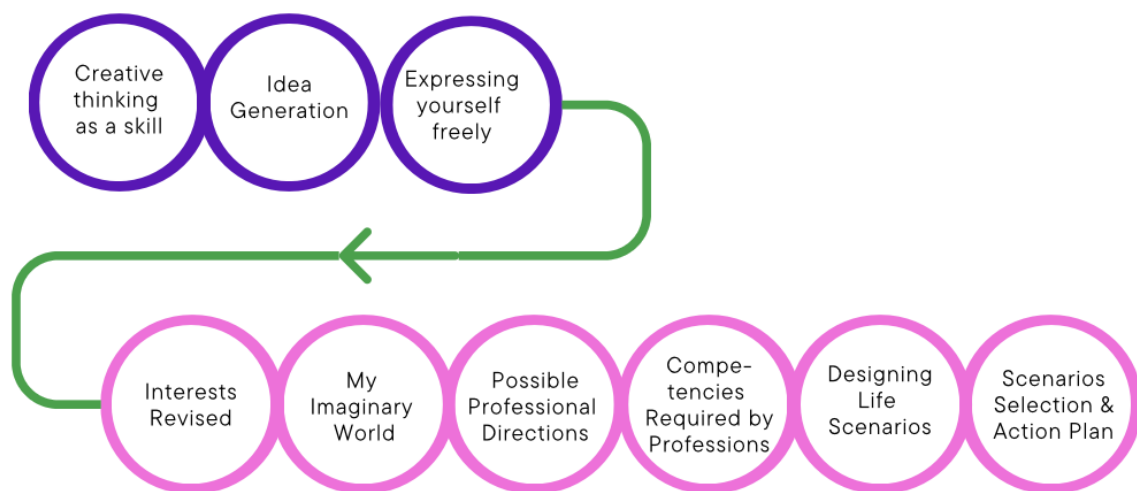
- the first part focuses on understanding and developing the concept of creative thinking skills;
- the second part focuses on the practical application of design and creative thinking skills in the decision-making process.

The toolkit was created with the intention of helping youth to understand how personality traits, interests and abilities can be successfully combined when choosing future professional directions in life. The activities are planned in such a way that the adolescent can design life scenarios in different professional directions, be able to make informed decisions about the growth path after obtaining basic education: continue studies, learn a profession or start working. Awareness of opportunities helps to navigate better complex situations, understand the sequence of events, see non-standard solutions and make alternative choices. Creative and design thinking skills are crucial in this toolkit.
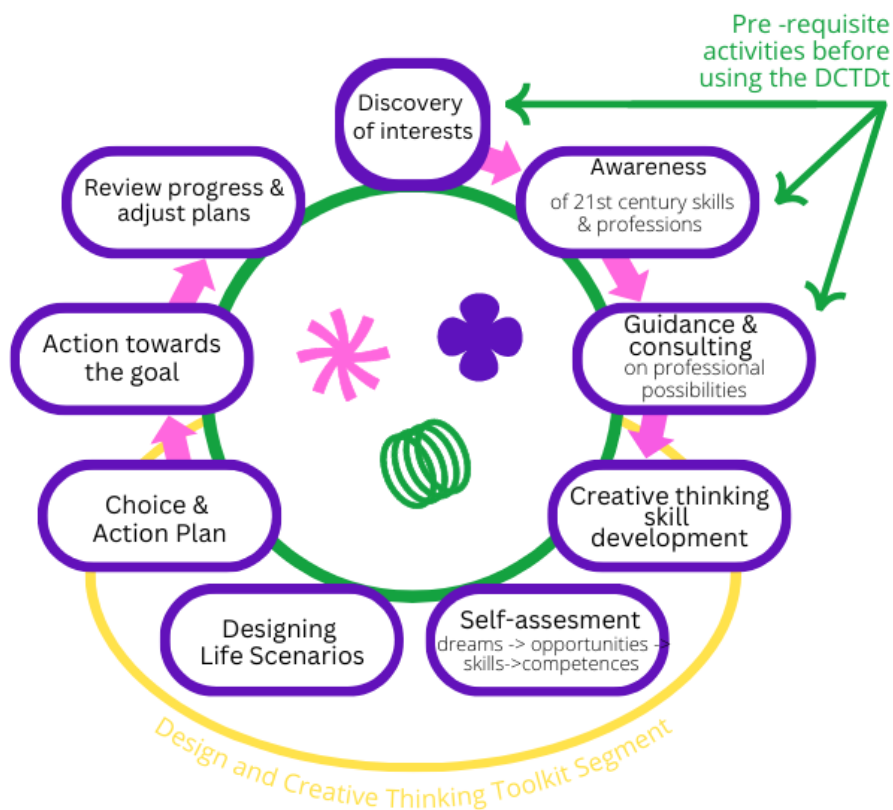
The process involves a set of consecutive stages: first, each participant is asked to evaluate the characteristics of their own personality, talents and interests, and then is

encouraged to create a vision of their future life and its quality. Initial step is followed by linking knowledge about professions with one's own personality, helping the adolescent to identify possible professional directions to express oneself as well as providing the desired level of quality of life. Once three more interesting professional directions have been identified and some essential competencies required by these professions clarified (possessed and to be developed), the process of designing life scenarios begins by visually depicting the result to be achieved and most important things to be done towards it. The adolescent then chooses top priorities for the near future, and prepares an action plan to get to know selected professions in depth and/or develop the necessary skills, so that after completing basic education, one can successfully continue to progress towards achieving the goals. The methodology provides for regular evaluation of the implementation of the plan with the possibility of changing your choice.

Creative Thinking Skills Development
The first three steps focus on the understanding and practical application of the concept of creative thinking. They will help form an idea of the versatility of creative thinking and develop the components that make up this skill: critical thinking, flexibility, freedom, originality, etc.

Designing   Life   Scenarios
Steps 4 through 9 if accomplished sequentially highlight personality traits, interests, and skills, help to model ideal life paths, and professional opportunities in order to demonstrate that all above mentioned entities interact as variables in designing life scenarios.

Each part of the developed model is important and has some specific aims which in details are described in the Toolkit which can be found here: https://latviandesigncentre.com/en/projects/

1. Possible scenarios on how the Toolkit can be used

As already mentioned above, Design & Creative Thinking Development Toolkit **"Designing Life Scenarios"** was created with the intention of helping young people to understand how personality traits, interests and abilities can be successfully combined when choosing future professional directions in life. The Toolkit is a set of methods and tools and consists of nine consecutive stages, divided into two parts: the first part focuses on understanding and developing the concept of creative thinking skills; the second part focuses on the practical application of design and creative thinking skills in the decision-making process.

In order to ensure the achievement of the goal that youngsters are able to design their life scenarios and professional directions, to make balanced and thoughtful decisions about the growth path after obtaining basic education and to make alternative choices, the developers of the toolkit recommend organising activities according to the described plan and sequentially implementing all 9 stages of both parts. When choosing the methods and activities that were included in the toolkit, both the long-term experience of the project participants in working with young people and non-formal education activities, as well as the recommendations of youth workers from Latvia, Estonia and Denmark were taken into account. The total time required fo quality implementation of all stages is at least 12 hours.

How to implement the activities?

Activities can be implemented according to several scenarios:
1. As two-day classes, devoting 6 hours to each day. Recommended action plan:

Day 1/ Topic	Day 2/ Topic
Creative Thinking Skill (1h)	My Imaginary World - II (1h)
Idea Generation (2h)	Possible Professional Choices (1)
Expressing Myself Freely (1h)	Competencies Required by Professional Choices (1.5h)
Interests Revised (1h)	Designing Life Scenarios (1.5h)
My Imaginary World - I (1h)	Scenarios Selection and Action Plan (1h)

2. Organize long-term activities for young people, for example by meeting once a week and implementing one activity at each meeting. The implementation of such a scenario will require 12 meetings/weeks.
3. Organize a "Designing Life Scenarios" camp for young people, in which all activities will be carried out over several days, incl. paying in-depth attention to

those lessons that young people need more time to learn. Both using new methods and devoting more time to implementing the recommended methods.

Tips for facilitators

- If other activities have been implemented with young people previously, the purpose of which is similar to the one indicated in the tool, for example, reviewing interests, then individual activities may not be implemented according to the plan, however, we would like to emphasize that the sequence is essential in using the developed tool, so we recommend sticking to the plan.
- Be creative and if you know other methods that can help you achieve the desired goal, feel free to change methods and use those that you have already tested in your practice and that have proven themselves.
- If more time is available, spend more time on each step, both by slowing down and repeating activities.
- Apply the methods to the young people you work with. It is possible that a young person will need a more individualised approach and will need additional explanations.
- Don't forget to arrange for the participants to get to know each other (if they haven't known each other before). Introduce yourself and/or other facilitators. If necessary, organize some "getting to know each other" games.
- Explain how much time the activities will take, and what is going to happen during them. Highlight the importance or the respect for each other and that there are no wrong or right answers.
- Observe participants and if energy level is down, offer short breaks during classes and offer drinks and snacks to the youth.
- Think carefully and prepare all the necessary materials in advance - writing papers, printouts of worksheets, etc.
- Prepare yourself for activities but be also ready for unexpected situations. at such times that you can use your creative potential!

2. What to do further and how to support youngsters

We believe that you, as a leader of the activities, managed perfectly to conduct all the activities of all 9 steps, which revealed a lot to the young people about themselves and better also revealed their future life scenarios. However, every finish is the beginning of something new and it is important to continue what has been started. Going forward, young people will definitely need your continued support.

Moving towards the goal

The action plan needs to be active, so make sure it doesn't stay on paper. It is valuable for a young person to know that help, guidance and encouragement are available. Invite

young people to involve the people around them - family members, friends, youth workers and/or other youth support persons on the way to the realisation of their goal. It is possible that the young person can be assigned a mentor who will regularly communicate with the youngster, inspire and motivate him, provide some practical help or simply ask:
how are you? how are things on the way to the planned? are you getting closer to your goal etc?

Remind the youngster that various obstacles may also need to be overcome in order to achieve the goal. Invite young people to implement the five-step rule in their everyday life!

Plan what you can do *every month* to get closer to your goal!
Plan what you can do *each week* to get closer to your goal!
Plan what you can do *every day* to get closer to your goal!
Think about what you can do *today*!
Every day, write down at least five things that you commit to do to get closer to your big goal!

Small things to support young people in achieving their goals:

- regular meetings (agree with the youngster on their frequency, form, type);
- messages of reminder, encouragement, inspiration, which can be sent to the youngster from time to time;
- if the young person visits the youth center, post some motivational messages on the walls;
- organize additional activities, such as trainings about goals achievement;
- invite a person who inspires youngsters to tell about their personal experience in achieving goals;
- invite young people to create a mutual support system/group and help organise regular meetings.

Review progress & adjust plans

It is advisable to set some evaluation criteria and timeframe to review achievements and, if necessary, corrective actions. Yes, plans can change, or just part of them and adolescents need constant support to stay curious. Mastering design and creative thinking helps to adapt quickly to new circumstances and to seek unconventional solutions. Motivate the young person not to give up in case something fails.

Start from where you are. Use what you have. And do what you can do!

Professional tennis player Arthur Ashe

3.Useful links and support materials

Here are some links where it is possible to find some additional resources and materials that could help working with youth on the topic of creativity, personal growth and professional directions. Information is divided by countries as different languages in each of them are used.

Latvia
- https://karjerasmateriali.lv
- https://testi.niid.lv
- https://www.lkaaa.lv/node/1
- https://www.profesijupasaule.lv
- https://www.tavasmetodes.lv
- https://www.viaa.gov.lv/lv/darbibas-virzieni-karjeras-atbalsts

Estonia
- https://minukarjaar.ee/et/karjaar/karjaaritee/tuleviku-karjaarikusimus-opilane?selectedCardTitle=Ei%20tea,%20mida%20teha%3F
- https://sites.google.com/view/tooriistakast/avaleht?authuser=0&pli=1
- https://www.sm.ee/et/noortegarantii
- https://mitteformaalne.ee/opimeetodid/
- https://rajaleidja.ee/juhendid/
- https://www.hm.ee/ministeerium-uudised-ja-kontakt/ministeerium/strateegilised-alusdokumendid-ja-programmid#noortevaldkonna-aren

Denmark
- https://www.ucviden.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/103154322/Rasmussen_A._R._2007_kilden_til_kreativitet_et_dramap_dagogisk_perspektiv.pdf
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www.verywellfamily.com/16-year-old-developmental-milestones-4171922

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https://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/formal-non-formal-and-informal-learning

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