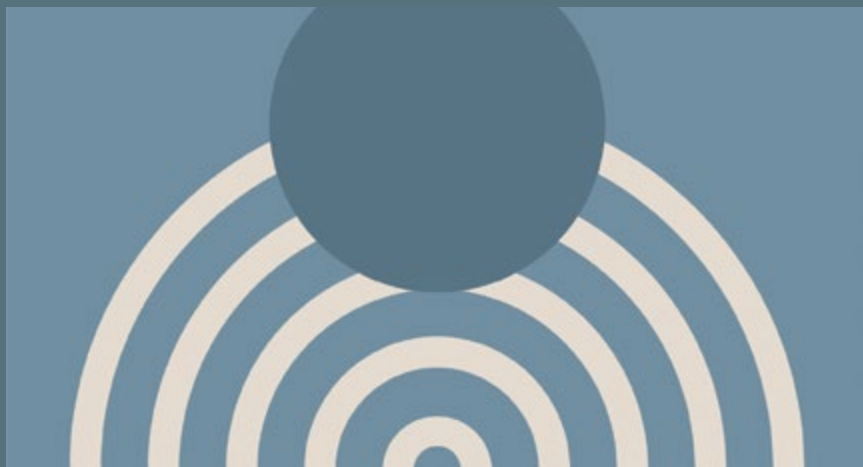




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PoMOSTy



PoMOSTy, namely how to strengthen the agency and other social competencies among youths and the mentor-leader approach among the teachers and caregivers working with youths

One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.

André Gide

Developed by Ludmiła Kruszewska and Karina Cieniła, PoMOSTy is an innovative method of working with young people who, due to their limited sense of security, manifest behaviours hindering social functioning in their peer group and at school. The main idea behind this approach is the introduction of participatory budgeting to the community of sociotherapy youth centres (MOS), but also beyond them. Developmental workshops for youths accompanying the initiative stimulate imagination, creativity, and out-of-the-box thinking in the ideation process, additionally broadening the knowledge about ourselves as an element of a larger community having impact on the common space.

PoMOSTy also provides coaching and respite support to teachers and caregivers, based on four pillars of mental resilience: knowing your own needs, building wellbeing, awareness of resources and letting go understood as self-compassion.

These two channels of support – workshops for youths and for the staff run simultaneously – help consolidate the bridge (*as the Polish name of the initiative refers to bridges*) of relations, trust, dialogue and mentor-leader cooperation between both groups.



Who is the innovation is targeted at?

- Young people attending sociotherapy youth centres.
- Young people attending day-care community centres.
- Pupils of public, community, and private schools.
- Staff working at sociotherapy youth centres.
- Caregivers at community centres.
- Teachers and educators.



Who can implement the innovation?

- Sociotherapy youth centres.
- Social organisations and other institutions supporting youths facing difficult situations.
- Community centres.
- Public, community and private schools.

What problems does the innovation address?

PoMOSTy is an attempt to practically address at least several problems. Sociotherapy youth centre are attended by:

- children and teens whose difficult life experience impairs their social functioning at home, at school, and in their peer group,
- experiencing low self-esteem,
- having limited sense of security and problems with establishing interpersonal relationships resulting from it.

At the same time, MOS staff struggles with emotional exhaustion, negative perception of improper behaviour of their dependants, and the sense of competence deficit, drop of enthusiasm and energy to continue new activities undertaken (sense of helplessness), reduced satisfaction with professional achievements and depersonalisation – indifference towards their dependants and a tendency to objectivise them.

How to implement the innovation at your end, step by step?

PoMOSTy assumes activities involving the following three groups:

- MOS dependants,
- The leader group – serving as a bridge between young people and adults,
- Teachers and caregivers.



Prior to PoMOSTy implementation, it is necessary to:

- estimate the available MOS community budget (participatory budget),
- ensure diversified composition and optimal number of participants in each group,
- book a venue for meetings at MOS, and for the staff outside the facility,
- schedule the entire enterprise, remembering about public holidays, trips, winter or summer breaks,
- follow the principles of transparency, equality, and equality.

12 steps to introduce PoMOSTy:

1. Promotion of the enterprise at MOS – an info meeting for youths.
2. Promotion of the enterprise among the MOS staff – an info meeting.
3. Recruitment for the leader group.
4. Workshops and meetings of the leader group.
5. Empowering and coaching workshops for the MOS staff.
6. Workshops for youths.
7. Generating ideas within the MOS participatory budget.
8. Individual consultations for originators.
9. Promotion of projects within the participatory budget.
10. Voting for projects within the participatory budget across the entire MOS community.
11. Announcement of results and celebration.
12. Execution of winning project.

Based on experience gathered during the pilot phase of the innovation, it seems that PoMOSTy can be implemented in three versions, depending on needs and the financial and staff capabilities of a given entity.

- **Full version:** the innovation is implemented on all three levels – work with youths, leader group and teachers/caregivers. Complete coaching and respite support offered for the staff is the differentiating element of this option.
- **Standard version:** the innovation is implemented on all three levels – work with youths, leader group and teachers/caregivers, but the number of workshops for the staff is limited to one or two meetings devoted to situational leadership and advantages of mentoring.
- **Basic version:** the innovation is implemented only on the level of work with youths and the leader group meeting the key objective of the innovation – introduction of the participatory budget, strengthening the sense of impact, agency, and communication competencies, as well as cooperation of staff representatives within the leader group.

What is particularly noteworthy?

From the point of view of building PoMOSTy (*bridges*) it is essential to:

- ensure enthusiasm and passion throughout the implementation of the entire enterprise,
- ensure financial means for winning projects,
- organise several info meetings attended by a smaller group of dependants,
- run regular meetings at two-week intervals for dependants, monthly meetings with the leader group and biweekly coaching and respite meetings for the staff,



- ensure a large number of dependants in the leader group, as it strengthens their voice and the sense of agency thanks to decisions they make,
- organise a campaign promoting projects within the participatory budget,
- run workshops for teens in a tandem,
- ensure varied and attractive work methods.

Does it work? How does the innovation help its beneficiaries?

With work on young people's resources and potential as its main advantage, PoMOSTy can in the long-term perspective positively reinforce the educational impact. It also helps equip MOS dependants with tools that will make it easier for them to function in adult life as self-sufficient individuals, aware of their strengths, believing in themselves and in their impact on their own life and reality surrounding them.

But it takes years of educational and caregiving work rather than one-off support to help youths achieve such maturity. Nevertheless, the execution of the PoMOSTy initiative shows how much positive experience it has introduced to the life of the entire MOS community.

For youths it is a developmental process enabling them to:

- engage to an extent allowing them to fully complete tasks they have undertaken 'from a dream to completion – from an idea to execution' – participation in workshops, preparation of projects, preparation of voting, project execution;
- gain a sense of impact on the reality around them;
- gain a sense of responsibility for the centre and other dependants;
- gain a sense that via engagement and action they can tackle such a demanding challenge as the entire voting process (the leader group), or prepare a single project (applicants);
- collaborate with others in an effective manner, in the atmosphere of kindness;
- better understand and name their emotions;
- talk about themselves via their strengths.

This gives them a tangible proof that there still are other people and other activities that function this way. This is such a moment when they can see that there is something different to choose. Such external activities are highly supportive for the entire therapeutic process.

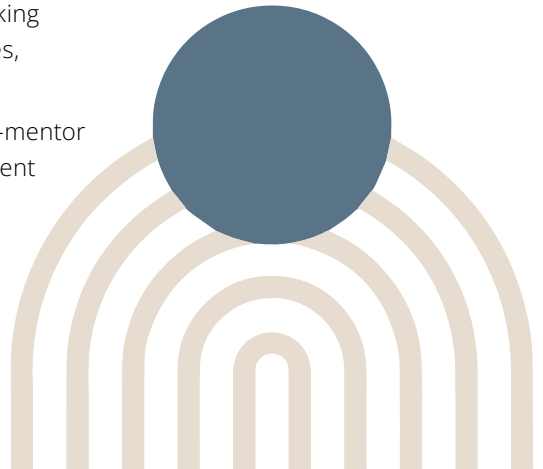
MOS instructor

The need to experience a situation in which I have impact on what is happening around me, because this is the kind of experience that these children never have. Because they often never in their life have the sense of having a say or being able to have a say.

MOS instructor

For the MOS staff the respite process will allow them to:

- create safe experience and thought exchange space,
- free themselves from emotional burden and release the tension,
- get familiarised with tools helpful in preventing professional burnout,
- discover tools broadening the perspective, such as question thinking, thinking in terms of needs and resources, work with metaphors,
- get familiarised with the leader-mentor management style and implement its selected elements to their professional practice.



It is generally to the point, because people working at such facilities strongly need support, including time to have fun, to relax, to look inside themselves. This is very important to me, as we tend to be overlooked in this respect.

MOS teacher

PoMOSTy can effectively support the process of developing emotional and behaviour self-regulation that takes place at such facilities as sociotherapy youth centres.

How much does it cost?

The full version of the workshop requires means to spend on:

- execution of a winning idea, ca. PLN 5,000,
- paper and art materials, games and tools used during classes,
- refreshments for participants,
- rental of a workshop venue for the facility staff,
- remuneration for experienced workshop facilitators.

The cost of a full version of the workshop amounted to ca. PLN 4,000 per month. The process lasted for six months.

These are obviously only estimated costs, and they can change depending on human and material resources available at a given facility or that can be utilised (such as a free venue, workshop materials).

Who are the authors of the innovation?



Ludmiła Kruszewska – originator of the PoMOSTy innovation, culture animator, youth worker, social art (2021) and cultural science (2018) graduate at the University of Warsaw. At work, she strongly believes in engaging local groups, youths, and communities at risk of exclusion in action. She wants the creative impulse to come from the community that should talk about itself using its own voice. Currently she works at the Warsaw Praga District with girls from difficult backgrounds.

Karina Cienciała – psychologist, personal development coach, innovator. For years, she has been accompanying young people in the process of growth and development. She believes that regaining agency and ability to make one's own independent decisions starts from boosting one's own

self-esteem, and every change starts from acceptance. Her approach to growth is essentially about building motivation and engagement by discovering one's own values, needs and opportunities. Her experience in supporting people either at risk of professional burnout or affected by it, especially those whose work is about helping others, has resulted in enriching the innovation with tools building mental resilience, meant for teachers and caregivers.

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