Empowerment

Introduction and principles

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Aim for the kick-off seminar.

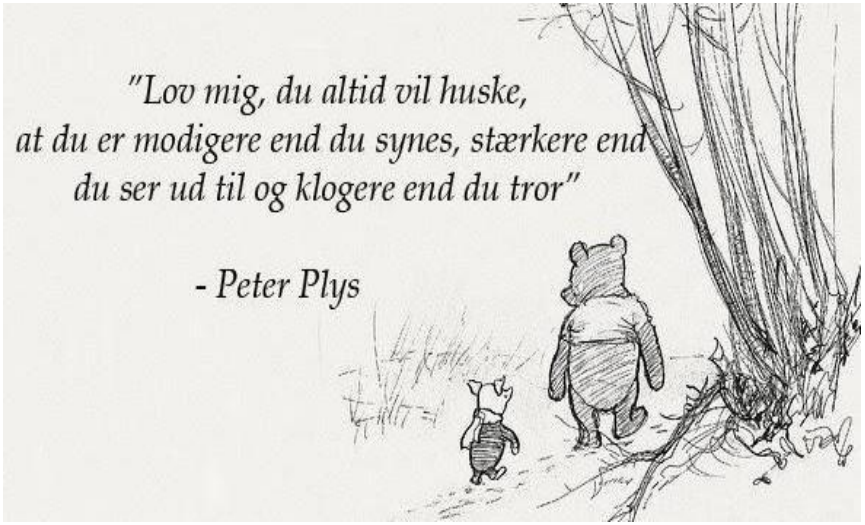
- To introduce the empowerment concept and the action learning method for future training

- To look for ways how to implement the empowerment concept and the action learning method in the practice of the support group

Empowerment. The power to name – the power to act.

Promise me, that you always will remember, that you are braver than you can imagine, stronger than you look like and wiser than you think.

(Winnie the Poo)



Empowerment and the humanistic view of human nature.

A believe in and a respect for the individual.

Everybody has the ability to name his or her own reality

Everybody has authority and competences to make a change in life

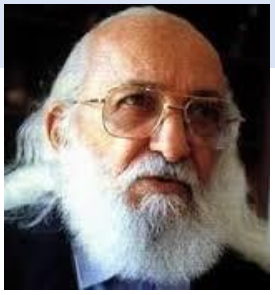
Empowerment – a classical definition

Critical and radical social work

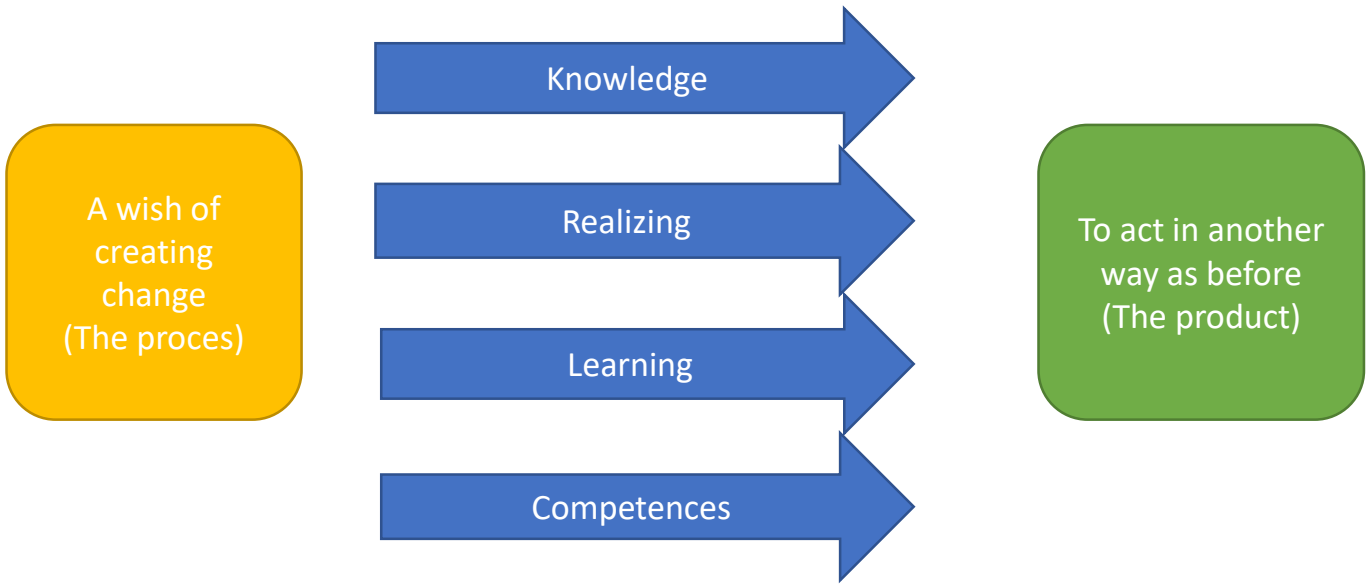
Empowerment is a *process,*
where *power* is developed, facilitated, or confirmed with the purpose of , underprivileged *Individuals and groups:*

- can increase their *ressources*, strenghten their *self-concept*
- build up their *ability to act* on behalf of themselves
- in psyhcological, sociocultural, political and economical areas.

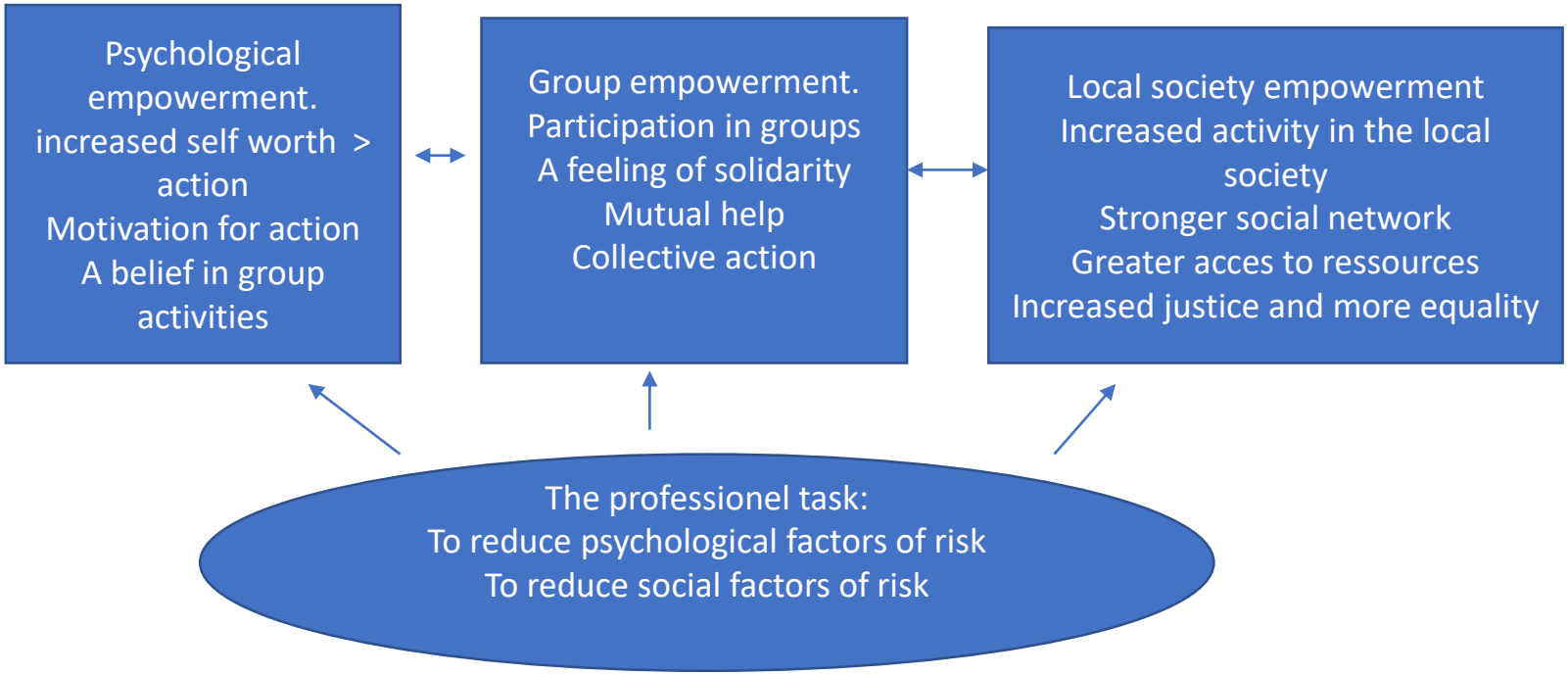
Paulo Freire (1921-1997)



Empowerment – an open proces of change



The professionel task relating to empowerment on the three levels.



The aim for the social service providers is:

- That the citizen ends up taking responsibility for their own lives.
- Define problems and the wish of change by themselves.
- Develop competences of empowerment by their own efforts, facilitated by social service providers.

A new role for service providers

The traditional view on end users

- Clients.
- Passive.
- Individuals.
- Relative helpless.
- There is a lack of capacity, skills and expertice.
- The powerlessness is seen as an individual and psychological problem.

An empowerment view of end users

- Consumers/users/membership of the local community.
- Active.
- Individuals, families and members of the local society.
- The users are competent.
- The users are experts and have knowledge about their own lives.
- The citizen belongs to a powerless group.

Two levels: vertical and horizontal empowerment

To strengthen the position of power

in relation to dominating actors:

Society, organizations, institutions etc.

To mobilize and strengthen the capacity to act between actors on the same level according to power.