



**SEMPRE**

Training seminar on empowerment and  
action learning (Kick-off seminar)

Liepāja (Latvia ), 7th and 8th of June 2018

Gundi Schrötter Johannsen

## 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 Pooh)



# 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

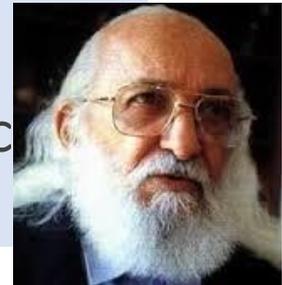
# Empowerment – a classical definition

Critical and  
radical social  
work

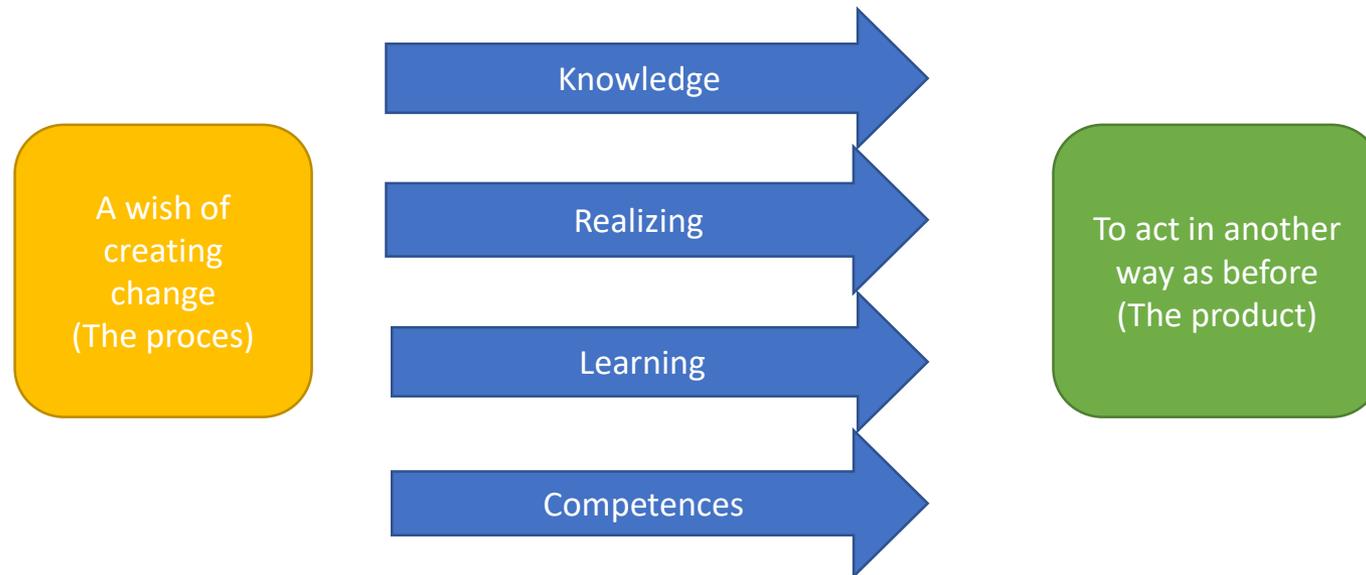
Empowerment is a *process*, where *power* is developed, facilitated, or confirmed with the purpose of , underprivileged *Individuals and groups*:

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

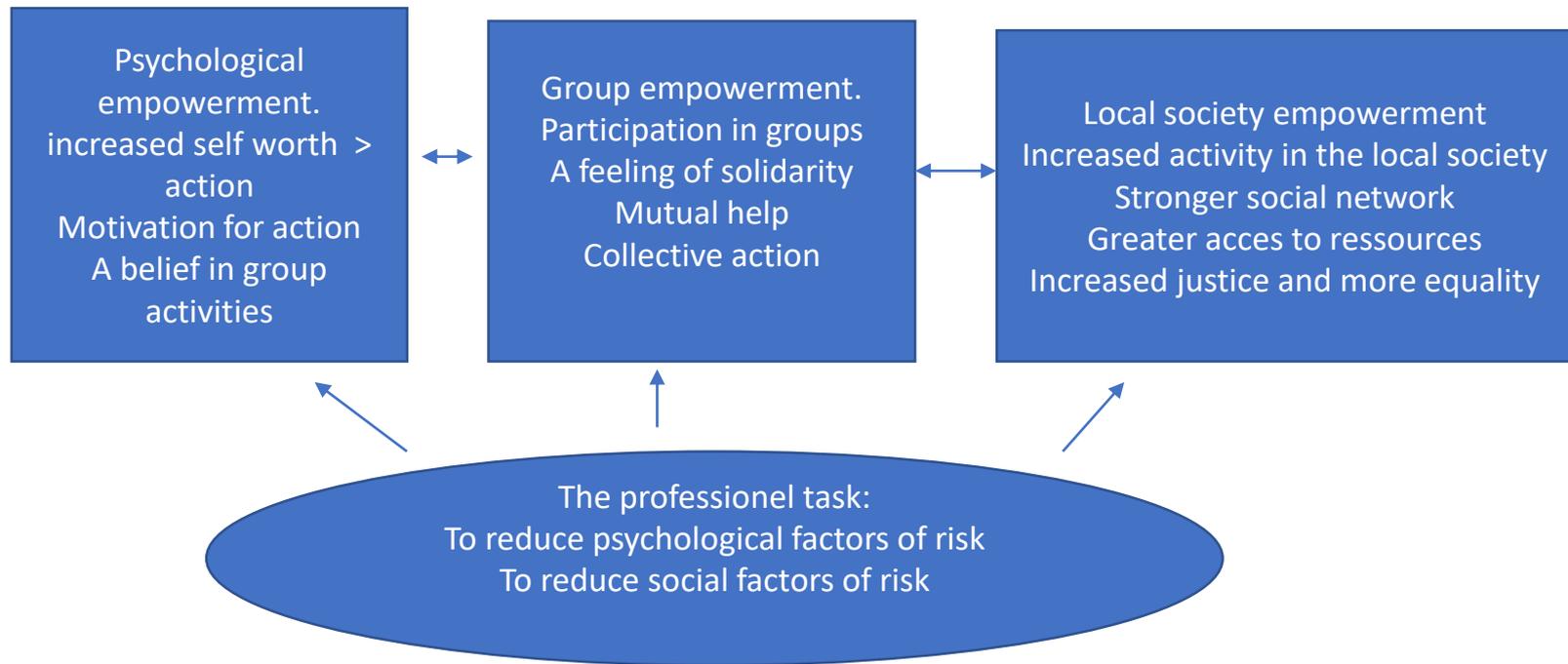
Paulo Freire (1921-1997)



# Empowerment – an open proces of change



# The professional 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 expertise.
- 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.

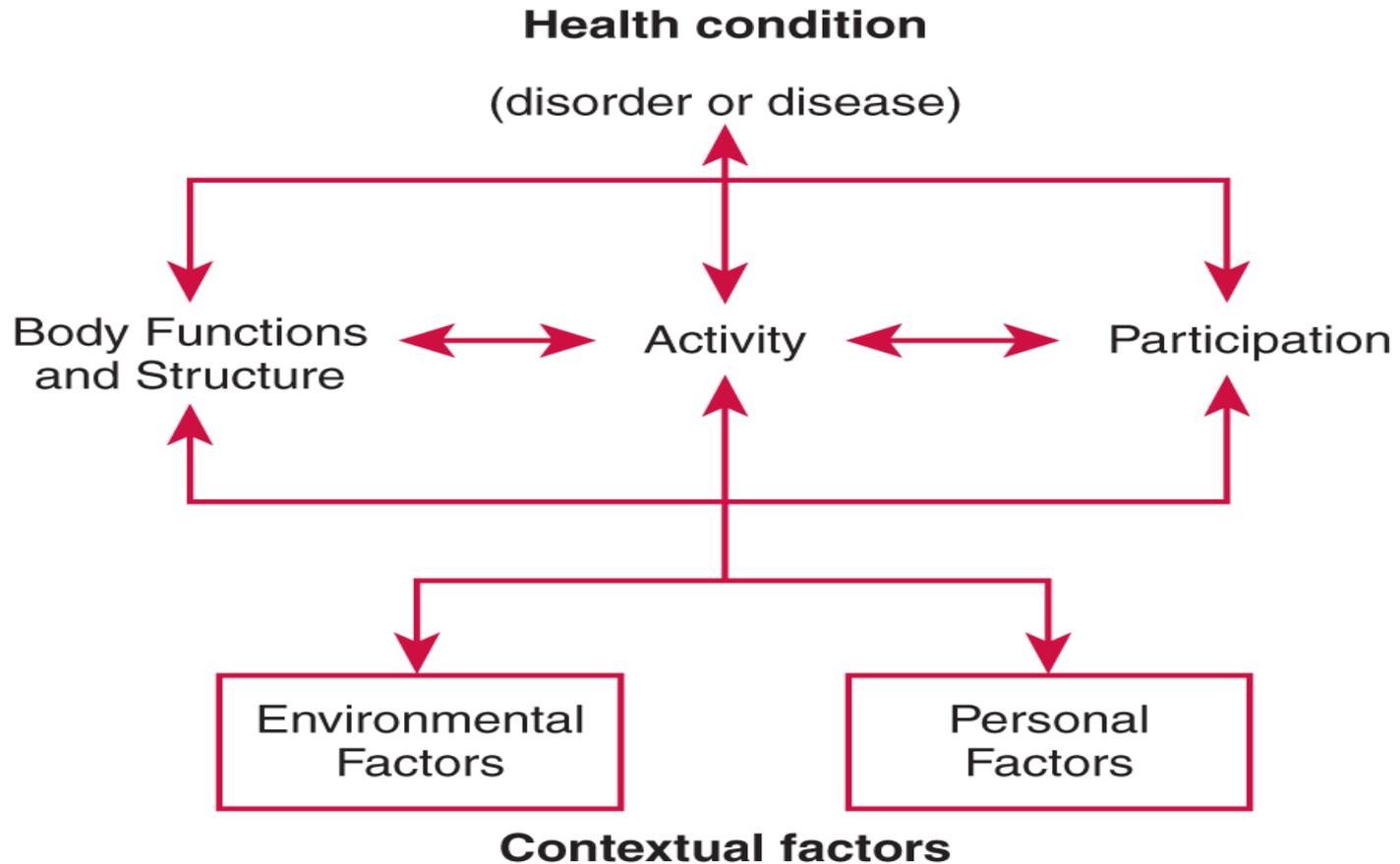
## To levels: vertical and horizontal empowerment

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.

# ICF – International Classification of functioning, disability and health.



Source: Susan B. O'Sullivan, Thomas J. Schmitz, George D. Fulk: Physical Rehabilitation, Sixth Edition www.FADavisPTCollection.com Copyright © McGraw-Hill Education. All rights reserved.

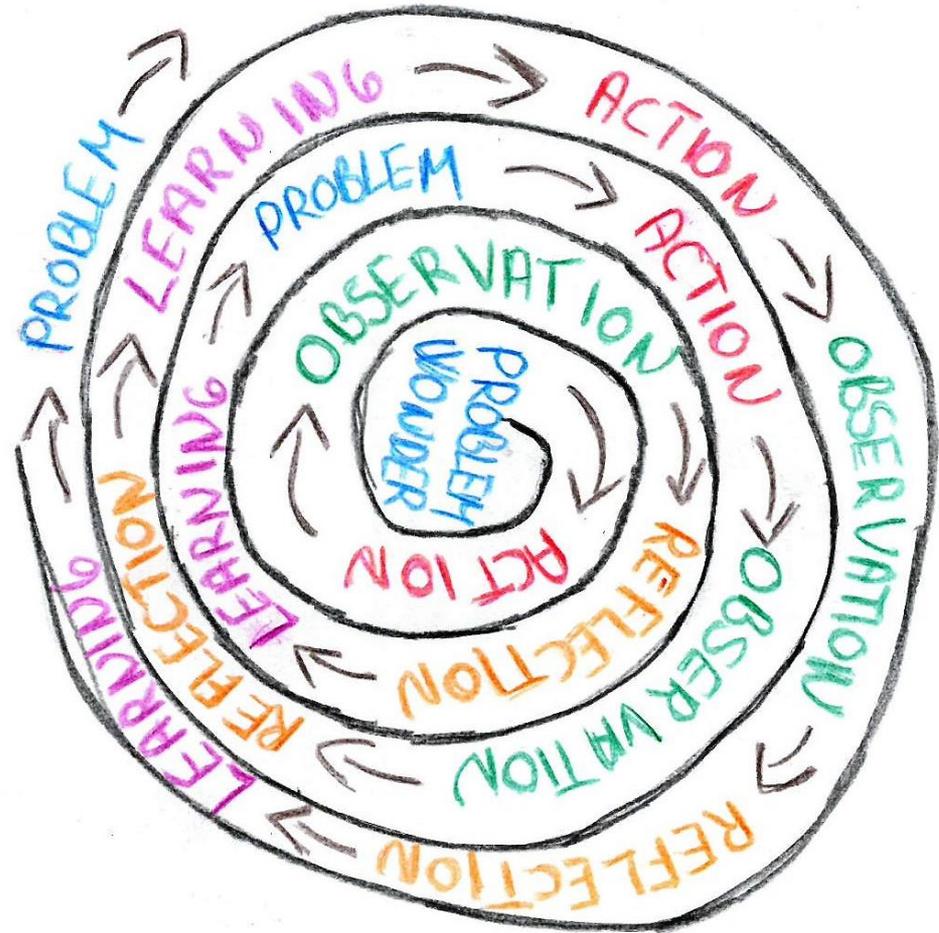
# Action learning

Action learning is joint learning through questioning, investigation and reflections in relation to participants actions

(projects, acts, practice, experiments)

And organized in special framed learning groups with voluntary participation

*Benedicte Madsen (2008)*



## To know where you are - to find the way where you go

- If you don't know where you are, you cannot point out the direction for the change, you want
- To develop an including practice it is important to take a starting point in existing practice
- Then consider if this practice is corresponding the core task and the wanted goals
- And then choose direction for change

# Two models of disability

## **The individual model**

- Personal tragedy theory
- Personal problem
- Individual treatment
- Medicalization
- Professional dominance
- Expertise
- Individual identity
- Prejudice
- Care
- Control
- Policy
- Individual adjustment

## **The social model**

- Social oppression theory
- Social problem
- Social action
- Self-help
- Individual and collective responsibility
- Experience
- Collective identity
- Discrimination
- Rights
- Choice
- Politics
- Social change

## Action and learning in focus

- **The terms of action learning are:**
- that the greatest learning takes place by solving actual tasks in limited projects.
- it takes place in joint communities with mutual support and challenge

## The action part

- You have to wish for an improving change of your own practice and/or a change of your home organisation or of surroundings in general
- At the beginning the AL projects of the participants do not need to be clear and well formulated.
- But relatively soon they have to be limited and focussed
- This makes it possible for project owners to risk their skin – projects should risk failure
- Projectowner(s) should have mandate, or the ability to take responsibility and ownership of main parts of the project

## Action learning

### Learning groups

Stage 1	Problem/wondering	<u>Choosing development theme:</u> What do I want to try out? (ideas, methods, roles, cooperation relations) What wonders me? What do I want to know something about? Formulate the development theme as a problem: Questions you can act on
Stage 2	Action	<u>Description and carrying out actions:</u> Make a plan for actions: action sequences, timetable, situation, participants Formulate success criteria: What do I/we want to gain? Carry out the action
Stage 3	Observation	<u>Observing the action:</u> Carry out your plan with the observer Carry out the action The observer makes notes the observer makes a note (immediate or reflective notes) Actor and observer meet Or: Actor(s) writes log book after some principles
Stage 4	Reflection	<u>Reflective dialog:</u> Each actor presents the action in a round: How was the action? What did I/we want to gain? What did I learn from the action?
Stage 5	Learning	<u>Formulating common learning:</u> What new did we learn about own practice (role, methods, concepts, relations) What new did we learn about the field of practice (children, parents, staff) What new did we learn about the organization (structures, procedures, cooperation) What did we learn to be implemented in future practice?

## Stage one: Problem/wondering

- When you are to find a problem 4 points should be considered:
  - Are you able to act on the problem
  - Does the problem have its starting point in practice
  - Is the problem formulated as a question which can be examined
  - Does the problem seem meaningful and relevant

## Stage two: Actions

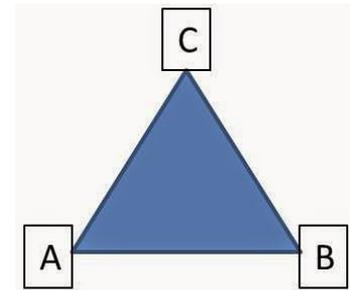
- An action is an experiment to be carried out in practice
- The action should relate to the problem
- The action should be limited and evident to actor and observer – described as a series of actions
- The action has a purpose – it must lead to something
- Make criteria of success

## Stage three: Observation

- The observer must know the action on beforehand: its problem, purpose (criteria of success) and consequences of action
- It is a very good idea to make notes, distinguishing between spontaneous (what you see) and reflective (what you think/consider) notes
- If you don't have an observer of the action:
  - The actor makes written notes with reflections on the action and its results (log book)
  - The learning group gets the notes and it is used in a reflective dialogue

## Stage 4: Reflection

- The reflection is expressed in a dialogue between actor and observer – either together or in the learning group.
- It is important to:
  - Keep your mind on the problem
  - The concrete action and practice are object for the dialogue
  - Put practice into words in the common dialogue.
  - Frame the dialogue as an interview where the point is to ask questions rather than suggest solutions.
  - Keep more interpretations and understandings open at the same time



## Stage five: Learning – new action

- At the end of the reflective dialogue the observer and/or the learning group help the actor clarifying:
  - What actions should be maintained in a new practice?
  - What new actions or initiatives are needed?
- Learning:
  - How did we work with action learning?
  - Which actions did we carry out?
  - Which reflections do we have in relation to the course
  - Which conclusions can we make?
  - Which knowledge do we now have about practice
  - What are we going to do in the future?

## Conclusion for today.

- Summary of the day.
- Questions and wonderings.
- Are the approaches usefull?
- How can you use them in your practice.
- .....