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SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF A YOUTH WORKER: GROUNDED THEORY

Abstract. The article, based on the analysis of the scientific literature and the strategy of the constructivist grounded theory, highlights the socio-educational aspects of the activities of a youth worker working with young people with fewer opportunities in the region. The first part presents the concept of recreation in the context of socio-educational work, revealing the prevailing perception of the concept of recreation in modern society. The second part highlights the specificity of the youth worker's activities by discussing the relationship between formal and non-formal work. The third part analyses the socio-educational aspects of the youth worker's activities in connection with the non-formal leisure environment and connection with the performed recreational activities. The results of the research showed that it is important to research socio-educational work through recreation and develop recreational activities in the youth social work.

Keywords: socio-education; recreation; young people with fewer opportunities; youth worker; grounded theory.

Introduction

The purpose is that work with young people with fewer opportunities (hereinafter - YFO) is focused, open, and oriented not only towards the individual or his / her characteristics, but also towards the whole environment (Zastrow, Kirst-Ashman, & Hessenauer, 2019; McClelland, Giles, 2014). Brueggemann, 2013; Woodman, Wyn, 2013; Kučikas, Malinauskas, 2008; Conrad, 2004; 2005). Therefore, alternatives to institutional work with YFO are being sought, considering the role of the social environment and understanding the ever-changing factors of risky behavior (Lisauskienė, Aleksienė, Štuopytė, 2018; Laureckis et al., 2015). Socialization and education in a non-formal (leisure) environment are associated with leisure activities (Surg, 2014; Ullah, Bodrogi, Cristea, et al., 2012), which are an integral part of a youth worker's activities. In Lithuania, based on the best practices of the European Union countries, open youth work was started in 2010, a description of the activities of a youth worker was approved in 2013, an order on the approval of the description of street work with youth and mobile work with youth was approved in 2019. Until now, the activities of a youth worker in the field of social work have been more researched (Gudžinskienė, Ramanauskas, 2017; Švedaitė-Sakalauškė, Eidukevičiūtė, 2015; Šinkūnienė, Savickaitė, 2008), however, there is a lack of research in the recreational socio-educational context. Thus, the article raises a **problematic question**: what are the socio-educational aspects of the activities of a youth worker?

The **purpose** of the article is to highlight the socio-educational aspects of the youth worker's activities.

The following questions are raised:

- How is the concept of recreation perceived in the context of socio-educational work?
- What are the characteristics of the specificity of a youth worker's activity?
- What are the socio-educational aspects of the youth worker's activity in the non-formal leisure environment and about the recreational activities carried out?

The article is based on the social constructivist philosophy of education, which states that education is not closed, isolated from the social environment. It also takes place outside the school, in a society where all members of the society interact: adults and children, both directly and indirectly interacting with each other (Vygotsky, 1978).

The article applies the method of the scientific literature analysis, based on the research strategy of constructivist grounded theory. The result of the constructivist grounded theory is the socio-educational theory of the invisible hand, based on empirical survey data, based on an interpretive position that has been tested and interpreted in conjunction with the invisible hand theory described by economist A. Smith (1776).

Methodology

Grounded theory (GT) is probably one of the most evolving and most popular research strategies in the social sciences in the 20th century. Constructivist GT is a methodology of inductive and abductive strategy (Bryant, 2017, 2019) that consists of systematic and flexible guidelines for data collection and analysis in constructing a theory. GT starts with inductive data, is based on interactive “back and forth” strategies

for data collection and analysis, data is constantly compared, and is included in the analysis process every time (Charmaz, 2006, 2014). One of the essential and inseparable elements of the underlying theory is the researcher's memoirs, which were written throughout the study. Free-form memory helped researchers maintain openness and objectivity in analyzing the data. With the help of graphical memories, the highlighted categories were described, distinguishing their essential properties, looking for connections with other categories.

The study was conducted in different rural areas of Lithuania, from August 2020 to September 2021. The survey data was collected in the context of a global pandemic when the researchers had to overcome several data collection challenges - remotely establishing and maintaining close contact with survey participants and continuing the conversation in the event of technical problems and disruptions. However, the pandemic highlighted the relevance of the topic under analysis. Leisure is a necessity in overcoming everyday challenges meaningful for young people with fewer opportunities and living in rural areas.

Sample and sampling

The primary selection criteria for the study were based on an analysis of the scientific literature, the researcher's memo. Theoretical sampling was used to identify the study participants, eleven young people with fewer opportunities living in rural areas and seven people working with young people participated in the survey. The participants were recruited in the way by word of mouth by talking with youngsters in the rural Open Youth Center. According to the constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2014), the development of inductively based theory requires both similar and different cases to empirically contain individual aspects of the phenomenon under study. Based on this principle, we sought participants with some similar characteristics, such as gender, status, and some different characteristics such as experience, responsibilities, working in different rural areas. We had interviews with four youth workers, two youth coordinators, and one director of the Rural Open Centre. In this way, the general criteria for the study sample were met.

Data collection

Participant interviews were scheduled at times of the participants' choice and conducted on a virtual platform. Before the interviews, the participants were introduced to the topic and purpose of the study and informed of their confidentiality and participant rights. Each interview was recorded on a voice recorder. The overall demographic data of the study participants are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

We used semi-structured interview methods to collect empirical data. A semi-structured interview helps the researcher to see the researched phenomenon from the participant's perspective, shows the researcher's sensitivity to the topic, and helps to assess the context and environment of the situation (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Several questions were composed to guide the interview (e.g. 'Please describe to me your work, how do you feel while working and after work?'; 'Please describe what kind of young people with fewer opportunities come to the Open Youth Center, what activities do you mainly organize') Each completed interview was fully transcribed and coded by the same researcher. The duration of all interviews is 13 hours and 21 minutes. Important analytical ideas that emerged in the early stages of the data analysis

were further pursued during the next interviews and analysis. In this way, interview collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously, allowing the researchers to go further and deeper into the research problem (Charmaz, 2014).

Table 1. The demographic data of participants (people working with young people with fewer opportunities and living in rural areas)

	Participants (Code)	Status	Gender	Number of interviews	Rural Area
1.	D1	Youth coordinator	F	1	Aukštaitija
2.	D2	Youth coordinator	F	1	Dzūkija
3.	D3	Youth worker	F	1	Dzūkija
4.	D4	Youth worker	M	1	Žemaitija
5.	D5	Mobile Youth worker	F	1	Aukštaitija
6.	D6	Youth worker	F	1	Aukštaitija
7.	D7	Director of the ROC	F	1	Dzūkija
Total	7	YC-2; YW-4; D-1	1-M; 6-F	7	D- 3; A-3; Ž-1

Table 2: The demographic data of participants (young people with fewer opportunities and living in rural areas)

	Participants (Code)	Age	Gender	Number of interviews	Rural Area
1.	R1; R4	18	F	2	Dzūkija
2.	R2	19	M	1	Dzūkija
3.	R3	20	M	1	Aukštaitija
4.	R5	16	F	1	Dzūkija
5.	R6	16	F	1	Aukštaitija
6.	R7	16	F	1	Aukštaitija
7.	R8	19	M	1	Dzūkija
8.	R9	16	F	1	Dzūkija
9.	R10	18	F	1	Žemaitija
10.	R11	18	F	1	Aukštaitija
11.	R12; R13	18	F	2	Dzūkija
Total	11		3 -M; 8-F	13	D- 6; A-4; Ž-1

Data analysis

Data analysis was started on the first day of data collection which was aided by transcription, memo writing, coding, constant comparison. During the analytical process, we followed the steps outlined by Charmaz (2014): primary (initial) coding, focused coding, theoretical coding, and theory development. Each step of the analysis presents specific results that reflect the interrelationships of the CGT process. The result of the initial coding is coding, which is like anchors that allow the main data points to be collected. The result of the second stage is concepts, which consist of sets of codes with similar content that allow the grouping of data. The result of the third stage is categories, broad groups of similar concepts used to develop a theory.

During the initial coding, connections are "established" between the researcher and the data, also between the researcher and the subject. The researcher examines the data, words, snippets, lines, events in detail, as if breaking them down to see the whole, and begins to analyze the data (Charmaz, 2006). Data were coded using strategy incident by incident the gerund form recommended by Charmaz (2006). The researcher says this is how simple, accurate, and concise codes are formulated to help reveal the ongoing action. Also, memos were written asking, "What's happening here?" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 161).

Focused coding is targeted coding that uses the most significant codes derived from a large amount of the estimated data. Codes are grouped, combined, and generalized concepts or subcategories are created. This stage is important in that the chosen theoretical drop in data analysis is continued through all subsequent steps (Charmaz, 2006), i.e., the researcher decides which of the codes is more appropriate for further analysis.

Theoretical coding. The term category used in theoretical coding indicates a higher level of analysis, during which data are summarized and symbolic names are assigned. Theoretical coding defines the relationships between categories and, as it were, assembles analytical units broken down into a whole - a central category is distinguished (Charmaz, 2006).

Ethical consideration

Research ethics includes general agreements and rules about the conduct of research (Hopf, 2004), in other words, defines the rules of the relationship between the researcher and the study participants during the research and the presentation of its results. The following ethical principles of qualitative research were observed during the research: ensuring the voluntary participation of research participants; maintaining the respect and dignity of the participants, maintaining a relationship based on trust; maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the information provided.

Due to the scope of this article, the current study presents the component of the qualitative research findings: the socio-educational aspects of the youth worker's work with the connection between the non-formal leisure environment and the performed recreational activities.

Findings

The concept of recreation in the context of socio-educational work

The analysis of the scientific literature in the context of the grounded theory (hereinafter - GT) is a matter of debate - the aim is to prevent the researcher from forming a preconceived notion when entering the field of study, so the classical GT representatives (Glaser, 1978) advocate literature analysis at the end of the research. Other GT researchers reject this assumption and argue that Glaser naively viewed the researcher as *a tabula rasa* - the researcher must know the issues of the research topic, and not rely on scientific literature, but look for solutions in practice (Gibson, 2021; Silverman, 2020; Charmaz, 2014; Parahoo & Fleming, 2010; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Lempert, 2007; Clarke, 2005; Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). K. Charmaz (2006), a representative of the constructivist GT, argues that critical literature analysis encourages the expression of the researcher's ideas, creates a dialogue between the researcher and the reader, and reinforces the researcher's arguments and credibility of the research. Thus, based on the analysis of the scientific literature, the concept of recreation in the context of socio-educational work was revealed.

In modern society, the terms leisure and relaxation, which are synonymous or otherwise complementary to recreation, are often used to describe recreation. *Leisure time* is more analyzed and explored by scientists as it is a multidimensional construction that encompasses both structural and subjective aspects (Newman, Tay, Diener, 2014). *Relaxation*, meanwhile, covers only the subjective aspects that lead to the spiritual senses - it renews, regenerates, and "recharges the batteries". Recreation involves the whole process - both activities and feelings. Stebbins (1999) also seeks clarity in concepts and suggests dividing the concept of leisure into two concepts: "serious leisure" and "casual leisure". Casual leisure is hedonistic, associated with relaxation and enjoyment. Meanwhile, serious leisure requires knowledge, the ability to manage it, and is focused on personal development and socialization. Whereas Kleiber (2012) emphasizes the increasing benefits of casual leisure, arguing that it is not easy for people to relax under the circumstances of constant rush, and growing stress, and therefore the development of personal self-reflection, observation and reflection skills, the ability to be on one's own is necessary.

Recreation is perceived as work, entertainment, natural recreational areas, health promotion, involvement, education, or learning. American researchers Mclean and Hurd (2015) singled out the following types of recreation: tourism, outdoor recreation, recreational therapy, community recreation, and the science of recreation named separately researchers. Recreational concepts defined by the European researchers could be attributed to these types: work (Torkildsen, 2012), entertainment (Ohta, Nishida, Okuda, & Sano, 2021; Shores, Scott, 2007), health promotion (Gómez, Hill, Zhu, Freidt, 2016; Driver 1997, 1998) and education (Surg, 2014; Kleiber, 2012; Stebbins, 2007; 1999).

Recreation as **a job** is discussed in the context of tourism, it is a type of business where leisure professionals are hired and leisure services are provided, contributing to the development of the country's economy, creating jobs for leisure professionals, where relaxation and enjoyment are created for people. Outdoor recreation is associated

with **entertainment**, outdoor activities, as well as activities related to the preservation of recreational areas in cities and settlements. The aspects of **health promotion** are revealed through the prism of recreational therapy, also called therapeutic relaxation. It is a systematic process in which relaxation is used as an intervention to meet the needs of individuals in need of specialized care due to illness, disability, or social conditions. There are two dominating approaches: recreation therapy, which aims to intervene and improve functional skills, and involves people in therapeutic recreation, which focuses on the person and the changes in the living environment. **Education** in the context of recreation is usually classified as a non-formal form of education, however, Stebbins (1999) notes that it is possible to analyze education during leisure and leisure education, which is prevalent informal education, the recreation research is carried out, philosophical trends are singled out, education programs are developed. For young people with fewer opportunities, education in leisure time is much more attractive, as it is much more diverse and associated with pleasure, it is a direct link with intrinsic motivation.

All these aspects complement each other and highlight the **socio-education** process. During recreation, personal development and socialization take place in a socio-cultural context (Glover, 2015). Community recreation is a recreation that seeks to provide positive and enjoyable leisure time for all residents of the community (McLean and Hurd, 2015). It contributes to personal development when a person feels better physically, psychologically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. The aim is for a person to reach his/her full potential by integrating into society.

The social value of recreation is recognized through the utility aspect, where a positive change in the environment (safe, pleasurable) presupposes a positive change in the condition and state. Based on the analysis of the scientific literature, the following benefits of recreational activities in socio-educational work are distinguished:

- Recreation makes a significant contribution to meeting basic human needs such as social interaction, recognition, excitement, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-satisfaction, and satisfaction with others (Crompton, 2008).
- Helps maintain a balance of a person's physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social health (McLean and Hurd, 2015; Godbey, 2009).
- Through recreational activities, the change in the behavior of young people with fewer opportunities is achieved by arousing excitement/enthusiasm, showing joy/pleasure, helping them to develop skills, and helping them to form close relationships with others (Caldwell et al., 2004).

Thus, in modern society, recreation can be perceived and analyzed as entertainment, work, education, or health promotion, but all these aspects complement each other and highlight the process of socio-education. Recreation can make a significant contribution to personal and social development if a recreational environment conducive to education and personal development is created that seeks not only pleasure as a hedonistic satisfaction, but pleasure as a spiritually fulfilling, healing, admiring effect. According to the concepts of lifelong learning and inclusive learning, it is assumed that recreation in socio-educational work is not a requirement but a necessity, helping to change the lives of people with fewer opportunities.

Specificity of the youth worker's activities

The categories emerged from the entire process of data collection and analysis and are not bound to any particular part of the data. Quotations from the research participants are intended to show each category clearly.

The analysis of the CGT revealed two categories of specificity of youth workers' activities: a) specificity of non-formal work, when no official documents provide or define aspects of the activities, b) specificity of formal work when the survey data highlight the performance of formal youth worker functions approved by the laws of the Republic of Lithuania.

The profession of a youth worker in Lithuania is relatively new, it has been officially in existence since 2013 when the description of the activities of a youth worker was approved. Thus, talking to the participants of the research, the specificity of the profession became clear, which would be expedient to publicize to create more clarity, knowledge, and understanding of the importance and need of this work (Fig. 1).

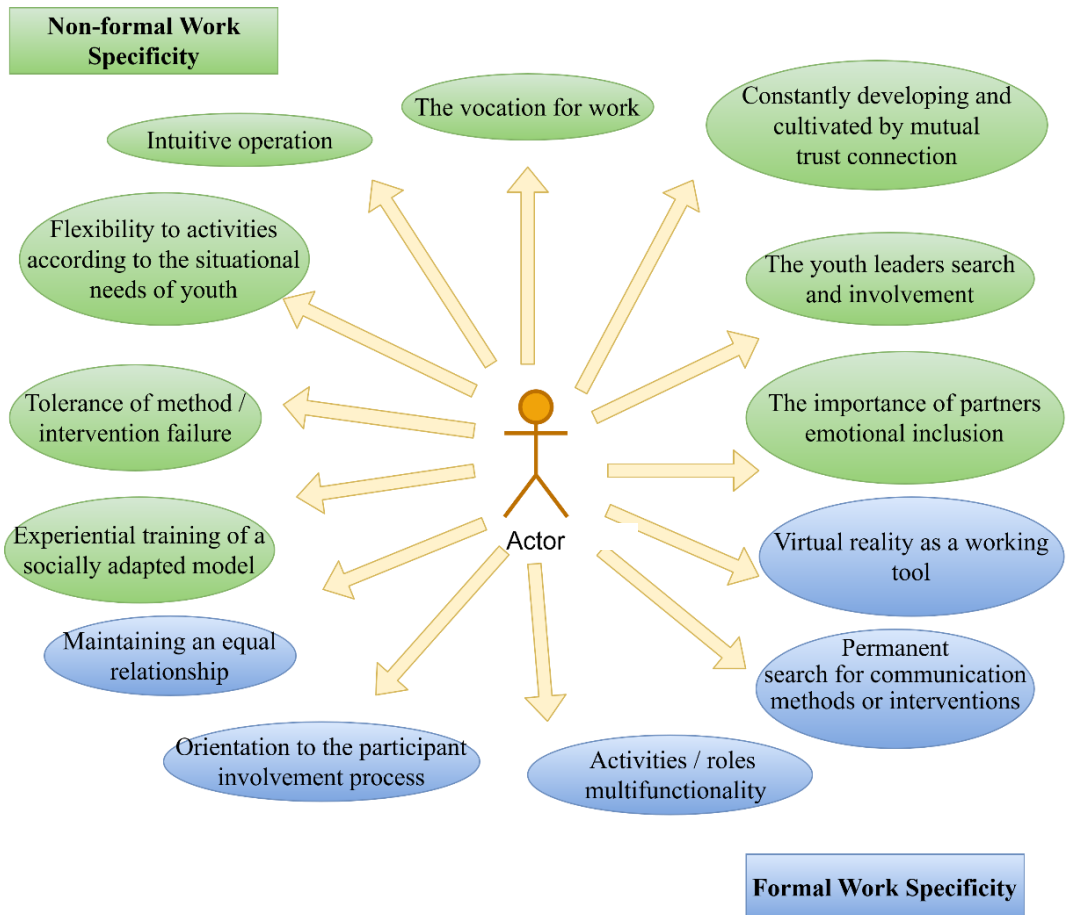


Fig. 1. Specificity of Work of Youth Workers

Specificity of non-formal work

First of all, a vocation is necessary for this job, for example, for a teacher's profession, if it is to be done well. One just should feel love for the youth, show sincere care and joy *You may have nothing, and many young people will come to you that you are the most important person (D7).*

Although the activities are defined and planned, **intuitive operation and realistic assessment of the situation** are of special importance in this work: *Sometimes we feel that we need a psychologist. Sometimes you do it by intuition. Such consultation with a psychologist is needed, just to advise us on how to behave (D4)* when it comes to responding to spontaneous situations: *This is what one says, "yes, I tried to commit suicide. I drank pills, and they were vitamins and nothing happened to me. " And I sit down and think about how I can get out of this situation (D3), or the unexpected reactions of the participants, the changed behavior of YFO. There is constant **flexibility in activities according to the situational needs of young people**, which, although perceived, is still somewhat emotionally exhausting for workers: *young people who were older gathered there last year, they were already twelve-formers, went out and went to study. There are no more those young people, you start all over again, and that change is normal (D5).* Tolerance to the **method/intervention failure** is constantly expressed when methods such as discussion, presentation, reflection are not effective for YFO, although they are necessary for this work. Thus, there is an intersection between theory and practice: *Well, the point is that we don't discuss it a lot, because we discuss it ourselves. After all, it's very unusual for them. <...>. And I'm saying that they are not those active young people and they can express their thoughts very openly. It seems to them shameful, well, that they look around somehow (D3).* Another element is the **constant creation and cultivation of a relationship of mutual trust** when trust is expressed in the young man with fewer opportunities, although he/she has been disappointed more than once: *Of course, it is also very difficult to earn their trust here because really enough time should pass. Some just give him a talk, and some are practically impossible to make talk about even now, four years later (D3).* Often in this research, according to research participants, a **socially adapted experiential model** is used when a YFO from a family or society develops a negative attitude and practices inappropriate behavior. The youth worker then tries to change it by showing an example, explaining, informing, providing some knowledge: *Where do you see if there is a Christmas tree to decorate? "Let's do it guys, we have to." Or we organize Halloween, prepare decorations. But we all do. Although "why do you hang this nonsense every year?" <> Well, they do too, if their families don't celebrate those holidays, don't pay attention, people will never understand why you make efforts, why you are doing this (D3).* The data revealed that the **search for and involvement of young leaders** in working with YFO is of particular importance. They are also being worked with, trying to realize their ideas, to enable them to act: *They come. But, how to say it, some like to work more with such ones, others with the active ones. Thus, we offer different (D1) or it is like an important part of the youth worker team, as a support to the worker: They have their organization, and they come, but they are also helpers to organize more than participants (D5).* Another very important point was the*

importance of the emotional involvement of partners in quality work with young people. According to the research participants, this is the basis for creating and implementing effective activities for young people: *In most cases, however, if workers find mutual communication, that's where it starts (D4).*

Specificity of formal work

The research data has shown that **to maintain an equal relationship with young people**, there is a need to be able to access them in a variety of ways: by observing young people, just talking, being with them, paying attention, or taking the initiative: *Well, sometimes it's difficult, sometimes not. It depends on the young man. In some places, we are still trying to make contact, and in some places, there is already that contact, the relationship is good and we can write and call each other and just communicate like friends (D5).* It turned out that a horizontal emotional connection is created with the participants when the principle of equivalence is observed in communication with young people: *Just here when you get used to it, it naturally comes, just like friends, in a sense that neither I am, nor they are superior. We are all the same people and do not show some sort of "I am this" (D4), dressing in simple clothes: You need to be as simple as possible. We, too, are dressed as simply as possible and communicate as simply as possible. There is no high material <> (D3), there is interest in the modern tendencies of young people's behavior: And that communication is like that, you still pick them up quickly. You follow youth fashion, all trends, or at least try to follow, watch TikTok (D4).* The analysis of the answers of the interviewees revealed the **multifunctionality** of activities/roles, when many roles have to be performed *<It is difficult to find specialists, although there are many unemployed, in such spaces you have to be a teacher, you have to be an employee, but you have to feel social isolation, not to be afraid of them (D1).* According to the data, an important aspect is a **constant search for communication methods/interventions when reaching YFO without restricting them,** using a positive attitude in communication with them, inviting people to share their experiences, trying to get them out of the current environment, showing something, arousing their curiosity: *In general, they like to do something like that. Because we often do something, go somewhere, have some fun trying out climbing, go-karting, all sorts of things, it's clear that they like it more, but they also remember such memorable things, more than simple meetings (D5), just simple, sincere conversations: Talking, non-binding at all. Where you don't have any material ready and don't speak in front of an audience. Feel free to talk about it at the table. And they think a lot more, it works so much better (D3).* **Orientation to the participant's involvement process,** when the situation is realistically assessed, no expectations are set for the activity, there are no personal priorities: *We try to involve him somehow, but no miracle will happen if he is lazy at school, sitting in the same class for several years. When he comes here, he will not be the first to organize events (D4).* Finally, something that goes without saying, especially in the context of the pandemic, is **the use of cyberspace as a work tool** to work with young people, when there is a way to reach young people, to establish a relationship with youth: *Even on Facebook it is very easy, you see what they like and whether you like it. You talk about where you got it from, where you bought it, why this music, because I like it too, start a chat and he will always reply (D3), to support him, to get feedback about activities, and*

just a means to plan activities: *And anyway, it's fun that the event was publicized only on Facebook, <..> It was not a discovery for me, but just a hit on the youth that they liked and this mini-commercial was sufficient, and they come who are interested in (D2).*

It can be stated that the position of a youth worker differs from others in many aspects: intuitive functioning, constant flexibility to act according to the situational needs of young people, tolerance for failure of the method/intervention, etc. However, its specificity is revealed through visible and invisible, otherwise formal and non-formal factors of socio-educational work (Fig. 2).

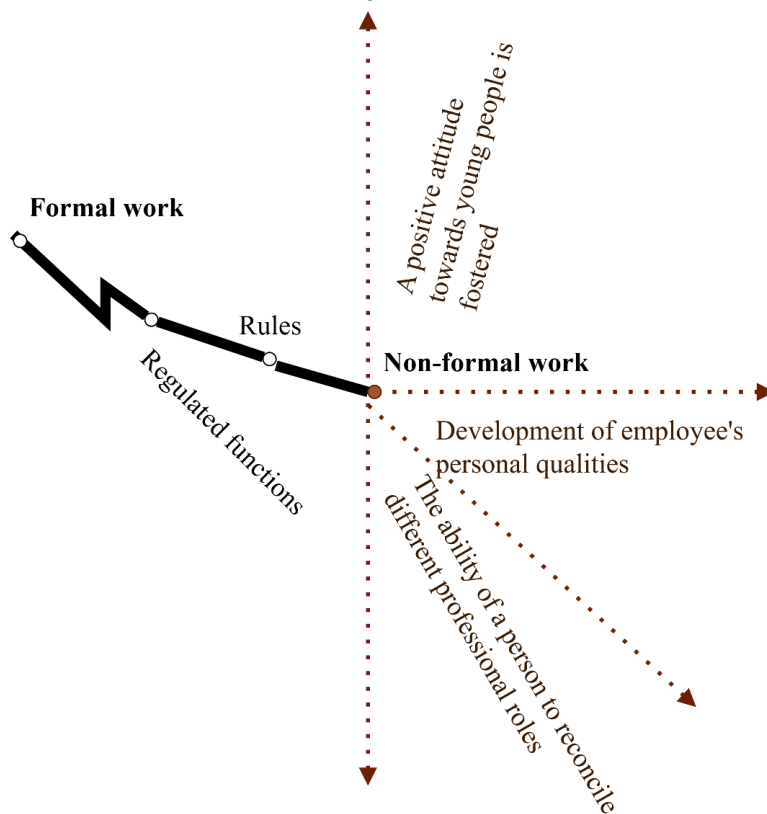


Fig. 2. Visible and Invisible Trajectory of the Socio-Educational Movement

In the constructivist grounded socio-educational theory of the invisible hand, it is stated that the specificity of the activities of a youth worker is part of the effectiveness of the available socio-educational power of a youth worker. This means that formal work, regulated functions, rules are like a trajectory of the socio-educational movement, but its accuracy and effectiveness depend on a person's ability to reconcile different professional roles, foster a positive attitude towards youth, develop their personal qualities, otherwise - non-formal work specificity.

Socio-educational aspects of youth worker activities

Two socio-educational categories of youth worker’s activities have emerged: a) the impact of the non-formal leisure environment; (b) the impact of the recreational activities carried out.

The analysis of the data from the interviews of the research participants revealed the impact of the non-formal leisure environment (Fig. 3). According to the research participants, it is primarily **social (inclusive) impact**, where YFO are much more easily and simply involved in activities than being in a formal environment (e.g., at school), which often evokes negative associations: At school, when I work as a teacher, I had to do creative work on a free topic, something about the Covid ... I don't remember, but the thought got so stuck that I got 5 or 6 works about dreaming of a "burning school". Wow, I think "what love". (D4), over some time, they begin to feel a part of the center and are willing to participate in the activities: But most of those who agreed, participated in other activities, in a summer camp, or went somewhere. They are already beginning to feel part of the whole thing here, "how space needs here, how I won't help here" (D4). A non-binding, non-framing environment motivates YFO to participate.

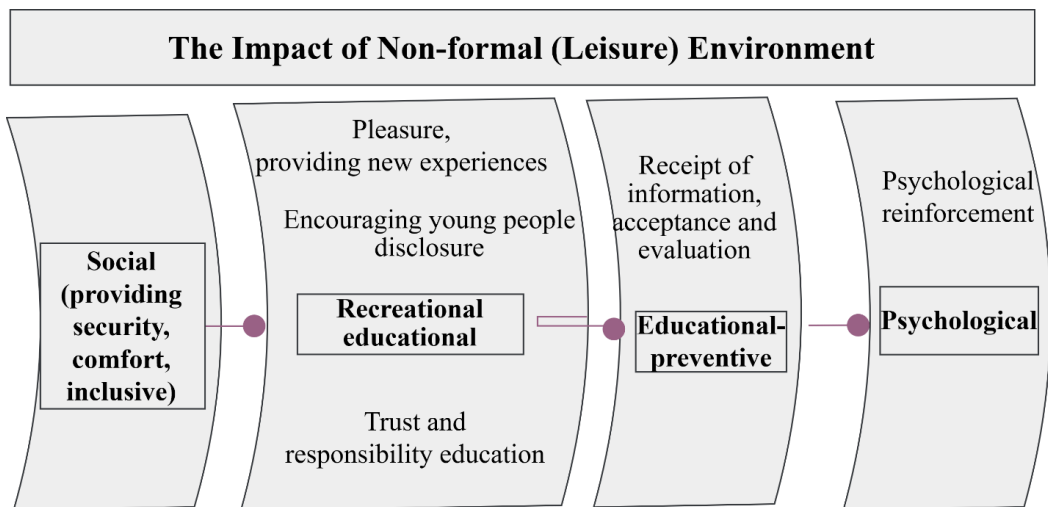


Fig. 3 The Impact of Non-Formal (Leisure) Environment

The educational - preventive impact, according to the research data, is evident when YFO follow the rules of behavior in an open youth center, do not curse, do not drink alcohol: *there were situations when on the street I saw some child who was cursing, spitting, and now I come to the space and see how he normally communicates with other people, plays, smiles (R10)*, preventive information is best conveyed through simple conversations, when the YFO is provided with the information, it is accepted and evaluated: To talk, no commitments at all. <> Feel free to talk about it at the table. And they think a lot more, it works so much better (D3).

The recreational-educational effect of the environment, when it not only provides relaxation, gives pleasure, brings joy, but also educates and teaches. The

phrase “like a second home” named by a young man says a lot: *You come, you are very welcome there, the worker says, make coffee, then take cookies. It is very hospitable (R2)* The elements of the educational environment are that it is a place where one can get involved in the activities, where new experiences are gained are also established: *for example, I did not know that such a place exists. Somehow, we had nothing to do, we were maybe more time sitting at home (R1)*. Young people are encouraged to unfold: *The infrastructure itself outlines that activity for us, like a basketball court near the youth center, has appeared, an event that takes us to America appeared, as workers and young people like to say, because it’s night basketball with nice lighting, music, teams from all over Lithuania (D7)*, trust and responsibility are developed: *The responsibility is very important here, I was trusted, whether I will do it or not, I will implement it or not*. According to the data, **the psychological impact** is manifested through psychological reinforcement, when the open youth center does not solve the young person's problems but is genuinely interested in them, shows concern: *the youth center usually cannot solve those problems, but it cares, he receives support, help, and that psychological reinforcement. That someone cares about me, maybe my mom, dad doesn’t care about me, maybe for my classmate I’m someone, but that youth center worker shows that he just cares about you (D7)*.

Thus, the socio-educational aspects of the youth worker's activities in connection with the non-formal leisure environment become apparent through the creation of a safe, cozy home environment, when a young person in the YFO region experiences pleasure, joy, calmness, and other positive emotions. However, the pleasure experienced is not only hedonistic but also nurturing, when during informal conversations, a sense of concern is felt, he receives preventive, educational information accepts it, values it and applies it to himself. His attitude, view, and ultimately his behavior is changing. Young people in the YFO region are increasingly willing to get involved in the activities and start developing and nurturing meaningful leisure time. In the socio-educational theory of the invisible hand, we emphasize that the non-formal (leisure) environment determines the effectiveness of the socio-educational power of a youth worker, namely through social, recreational-educational, educational-preventive, psychological effects.

Socio-education takes place through participation in recreational activities. The analysis of the research data showed that there are two main types of activities - outdoor and indoor recreational activities, which include and/or integrate all other types of activities.

- educational (discussion festivals, lectures, etc.)
- preventive (sharing experiences by famous people, participating in preventive events, etc.)
- creative (singing, playing, drawing, etc.)
- sports (sports competitions, exercise, etc.)
- social (camps, trips, board games, conversations, etc.)
- psychological (walks, watching films, etc.)

The need for the activities is determined according to the needs of the young person: *We do surveys, <> the following periodic ones are carried out. There are, but such more on-demand (D2)*, available infrastructure: *There are those who want to*

skateboard, but we have no possibilities (D3). Recreational activities are organized in the preparation of projects: *Without projects, it would be very difficult, without some extra money, because you will not organize, will not create interest and will not try something new, you will not go anywhere, you will not see anything (D5), working together with young people: whether the young person or the worker burns in the sense of the activity implementation, then everything will work out. Because that's what happens ... and they find each other. If it is such as some kind of coercion, then it somehow doesn't work (D7), given the seasonality, the search for recreational professionals, etc.*

The range of effects of recreational activities itself is very wide, different types of activities can have different effects, whether educational, preventive, creative, sports, psychological. (Fig. 4). The impact of the activities was highlighted by analyzing the responses of the research participants about the experiences and perceptions of participation, and the observations made by the participants. We would like to draw your attention to the figure below, which shows that social activities that are least defined or otherwise regulated by the Lithuanian laws have the widest impact.

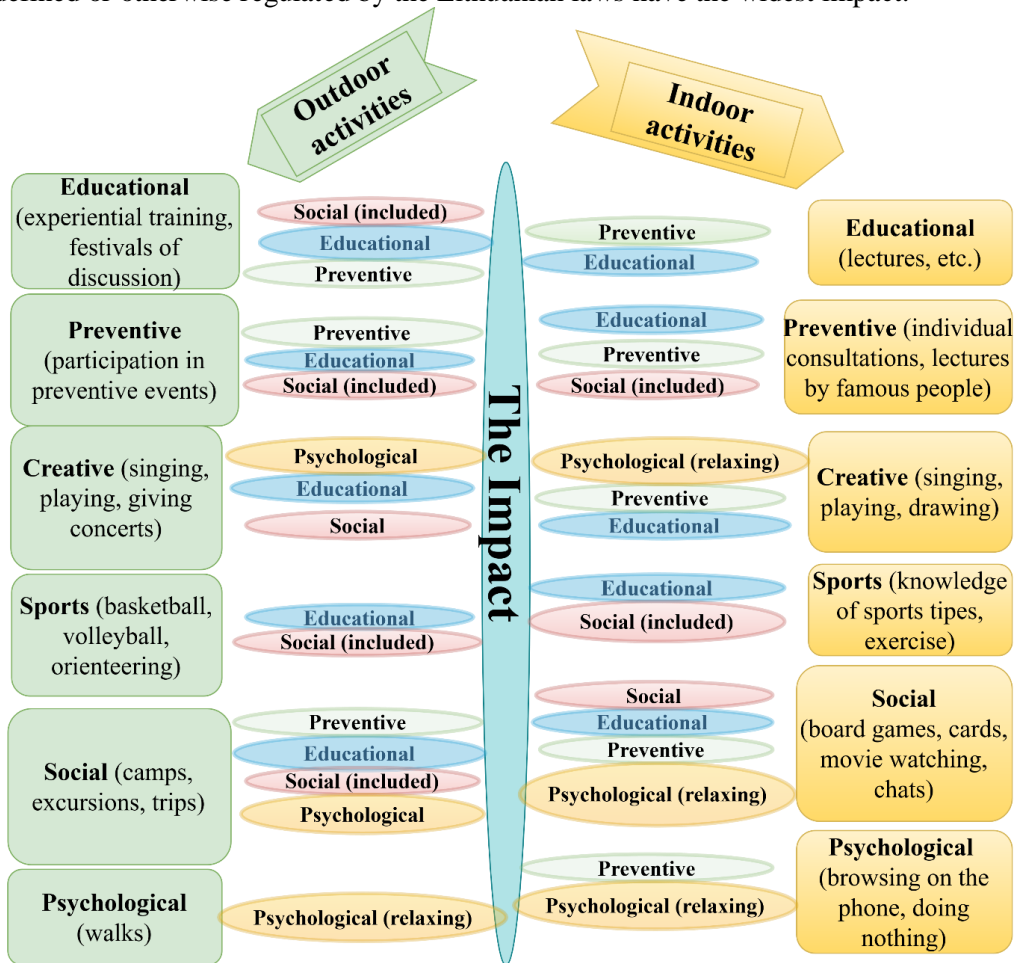


Fig. 4 The impact of Recreational Activities

The **preventive** impact of social activities, when non-formal communication and play seem to give deeper importance to recreational activities: *To speak, without any commitments. Where you don't have any material ready and don't speak in front of an audience. Feel free to talk about it at the table. And they think a lot more, this works so much better (D3).* A close relationship is nurtured: *You play cards with young people, but you keep in touch, you make contact, establish trust, and that young man comes and tells you more than his mother. (D3).* With the help of social activities, the improvement of a person's psycho-emotional state takes place, he/she is listened to and understood: It's already possible to open up more and talk about such personal topics (R2). Close contact is made with both staff and other young people: *Janina advises something, sometimes something from her life experience (R2).* **Educational**, according to the research, young people learn by playing board games: to teach others: who don't even know at all, but at least we try to explain how to play, also to teach (R1), through the game they can evaluate others: as it seems that we know how to play, everything is simple, how can one not know. But it turns out to be too difficult for some people (R1) It is also a way to exchange information: There was a man who worked there, maybe a couple of years older than me, who worked like X, and he played billiards with me, we talked (R2): through the conversations also communication skills are developed: *I don't know how it gets, but it gets automatically. Because I really like new acquaintances and maybe because of that, I somehow know how to communicate with others (R4),* **Social (inclusive)** when YFO are willing to get involved in preparation for it: and, for example, fishing, kids get ready to go fishing tomorrow in the early morning. Then all sorts of activities involving here and now and not necessarily those events have to be big (D7) when new contacts are made with the help of board games: *And what does that game give you? Just new acquaintances ... <> sit playing with those new people and somehow get to know each other, (R5).* During the conversations, there is an opportunity to get to know yourself, to educate yourself <this is what one of the leaders of the youth center said I speak very well in public. And there was "oh really, oh my God, no, I'm very scared" (R4). According to the analysis of the study, the **psychological (relaxing) impact** was that young people improve their psychosocial feelings by playing cards: they experience positive emotions: *what activities, I play billiards in, table football, so that not to sit at home all the time (R3)* and develops a sense of community that is valuable to young people. They feel like members of a community, a group: *Everyone, when they come, sits down at a common table, which means that he sits at a common table (R2).*

Thus, recreational activities carried out by youth workers, especially social ones, provide a wide range of socio-educational effects on disadvantaged young people in the region. When young people not only have a good time participating in activities but also learn indirectly from both peer experiences and the positive example set by the worker. Social recreational activities are those activities that provide meaningful leisure time, develop and socialize a young person in the YFO region. These activities, in the context of the socio-educational theory of the invisible hand, are like a ball that is purposefully thrown at young people with fewer opportunities. Recreational activities

create the impression that a socio-educational process emerges from nothing, just being together and having a good time.

Discussion of results

Focusing on the obtained research data, the socio-educational aspects of the youth worker's activities are inseparable from the interdependence and coherence of the creation of a safe, enjoyable non-formal leisure environment and the performed recreational activities. As both, the concept of recreation is not widely understood in Lithuania (Lisauskienė, Aleksienė, 2017) and open work with young people is a recently established way of working with young people with fewer opportunities (Balšaitytė, 2019), stereotypes prevail in the society that prevents understanding and evaluating the aspects of socio-educational work. In the non-formal leisure environment, recreational activities have an indirect but much broader socio-educational impact on young people with fewer opportunities than other activities, so it is assumed that the activities of a youth worker have a great power to change the lives of YFO.

Activities not only provide relaxation or engage in positive changes, such as a better psycho-emotional state, but is also a way to make contacts, exchange information, learn from others. This highlights the concepts of modern recreation defined by scientists in the first part that recreation is entertainment, education, health promotion (Ohta, Nishida, Okuda, and Sano, 2021; Gómez, Hill, Zhu, Freidt, 2016; Kleiber, 2012). The research data showed that the youth worker has an indirect power to manage socio-educational processes in the recreational context, which are in the spectrum of activity, environmental pleasure. Economist Smith's (1776, cit. From 2004) description of the invisible arm theory argues that money is either the society's general aggregation or national capital costs. In naming the capital costs, he emphasizes that money keeps productive or unproductive workers, which means that the first type of expenditure (i.e., maintaining productive workers) always contributes to the growth of the welfare of society (p. 404). Explaining the socio-educational theory of the invisible hand it is stated that the goal of recreational activities and the underlying socio-educational goal is a tool to achieve the results of socio-educational activities, i.e., recreational activities aim to meet the participants' expectations of pleasure. However, as the results of the research have revealed, pleasure can be hedonistic or spiritually fulfilling. And it is the orientation towards the creation of meaning through pleasure that is the purposeful professionalism of the leisure educator, which presupposes socio-educational processes through recreation, changing YFO attitudes, destructive behavior, developing responsibility, increasing self-confidence and trust in others, and it shows the elements of increasing the social welfare. Thus, both market and socio-educational theories emphasize that, in one case, money, and in another, recreational activities lead to major changes in society and contribute to the well-being of society. To foster socio-educational work with young people with fewer opportunities, it is important to research socio-educational work through recreation, develop recreational activities and improve the competencies of youth workers to work in the field of social recreation coordination.

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СОЦІАЛЬНО-ПЕДАГОГІЧНІ АСПЕКТИ РЕКРЕАЦІЙНОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ МОЛОДІЖНОГО ПРАЦІВНИКА: ОБҐРУНТОВАНА ТЕОРІЯ

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Анотація. У статті, на основі аналізу наукової літератури та стратегії конструктивістської обґрунтованої теорії, висвітлено соціально-освітні аспекти діяльності молодіжного працівника, який працює з молоддю з обмеженими можливостями в регіоні. У першій частині подано поняття рекреації в контексті соціально-виховної роботи, розкрито переважаче сприйняття поняття рекреації в сучасному суспільстві. Друга частина висвітлює специфіку діяльності молодіжного працівника шляхом обговорення зв'язку між формальною та неформальною роботою. У третій частині аналізуються соціально-освітні аспекти діяльності молодіжного працівника у зв'язку з неформальним дозвіллевим середовищем та зв'язком із здійснюваною рекреаційною діяльністю.

Результати дослідження показали актуальність дослідження соціально-виховної роботи через відпочинок та розвитку рекреаційної діяльності в соціальній роботі молоді.

Ключові слова: соціально-педагогічна діяльність; відпочинок; молоді люди з обмеженими можливостями; молодіжний працівник; обґрунтована теорія.

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