



POLICY BRIEF

TALK TO ME...

**The need to be heard
is one of the problems of youth**

Research using art methods: how to improve dialogue between adults and young people and what is a barrier to dialogue between generations.

This document was prepared by the Foundation for Tolerance International based on interactive events using art methods to conduct a dialogue on issues that concern young people within the Mobile Arts for Peace project.

***The goal of the project:
to support art-based communication between young people and decision-makers, with the aim of solving youth welfare problems.***

The project teaches school youth to express their feelings and experiences through various forms of art: theater, video, drawings, comics, poems, etc., and also teaches methods of building dialogue through art.

Young people raise issues: domestic violence, the use of child labor, restrictions on girls' education, early marriages, lack of positive communication and mutual understanding in child-adult relationships, bullying at school, etc.

Forum theaters, videos, drawings, comics, poems have emotional titles: "Triangle: student-parent-teacher", "Support girls' choice to study!", "Lost childhood", "Talk to me!", "Dad, mom, help me!", "A stranger among their own", "Loneliness: who to tell about their problems?", "Fear", "Talk to me!" and so on.

Youth, parents, representatives of various structures working with young people, decision-makers are invited to shows using art to create dialogue and jointly search for solutions to the problems raised.

Art helps to build dialogue, promotes the expression of feelings, emotions, thoughts.

Joint discussion promotes closeness and mutual understanding, gives participants the opportunity to talk to each other, each to understand the other's point of view.

WHAT HINDERS THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN GENERATIONS?

STATEMENTS OF ADULTS

"All parents love their children. But sometimes they don't know how to express this love and convey it to the child."

"Our parents never asked us about our feelings. We, as adults, also do not know how to talk about feelings and our experiences."

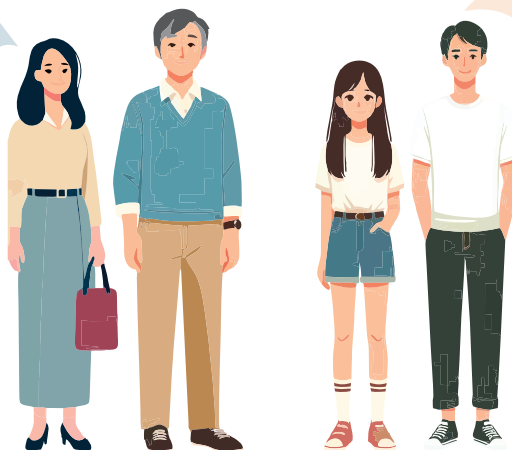
"Usually, parents lack the competence to actively listen to a child, advise them, work through their emotions, or give them self-confidence. This is all due to the immaturity of adults to be parents."

"Currently, parents prioritize earning money for the family. There is no time for conversations with children."

"Neither school curricula nor universities have a subject on building positive interpersonal relationships."

"Youth do not always know how to express their opinion in a way that is recognized and accepted by adults."

"Adults consider young people to be inexperienced and do not see them as partners in problem-solving."



STATEMENTS OF YOUTH

"Most of us feel awkward talking about our inner experiences because it is not customary in our mentality to discuss personal experiences."

"Modern society demands that we suppress our emotions."

"We don't always understand ourselves, don't know how to talk about our inner state, about what's happening to us. No one teaches us this."

"Sometimes it's hard to find someone willing to discuss your personal issues."

"I need to learn how to argue my requests; I often don't know who to turn to for help with specific issues."

"Youth do not always trust adults and doubt the power of their voice and actions, lacking the skills to promote their voice, including participating in decisions made about them."

"We need platforms where we could learn to talk, express our thoughts, and hear different points of view on the issues that interest us."



ART HELPS TO BUILD DIALOGUE, POSITIVELY DISCUSS PROBLEMS, AND TOGETHER SEEK WAYS TO SOLVE THEM (Statements of the project participants:)

"Participating in the project and engaging with artistic methods have allowed me to understand my own emotions and experiences. Additionally, being involved in forum theater and taking on various roles has given me insight into the emotions and experiences of others."

"The project has provided us with a new experience: the ability to engage in dialogue. I've realized that it's important for young people to communicate their views effectively to adults, who will then be more likely to understand us."

"I used to believe that my voice didn't matter. Through this project, I've learned to express my opinions confidently. I now realize that if we have our own perspectives and solutions, adults will surely support us."

"I've come to understand that ignoring a problem or turning a blind eye doesn't make it go away; it must be addressed head-on."

"I hadn't considered the structure of our community before. Now, I recognize the roles of local authorities, deputies, and other institutions. I've learned about their responsibilities and how to approach them with various issues."

"If articulating your problem is challenging, try expressing it through a drawing, a performance, or a poem. This can make it easier to discuss the issue as it's reflected in your creative work."

"Art liberates us. It allows us to convey emotions, feelings, and personal experiences that we often keep hidden. Expressing these inner states is crucial for being understood by others."

WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIPS DOES SCHOOL YOUTH WANT?

- Warm, understanding conversations with parents, at least during dinner time.
- Mutual understanding and support within the family.
- Trust and respect for the opinions of the younger family members.
- The ability to discuss their problems without fear of reproach or criticism from loved ones.
- A wish for parents to recognize not only their failures and weaknesses but also their successes and strengths, as they need their support.

FAMILY



- Respectful interactions between students and teachers.
- Reduced class sizes, allowing each student to receive more attention from the teacher.
- Classroom discussions in a relaxed environment, with opportunities for students to talk to each other and play various games together. This would foster better relationships and dialogue among students and between students and teachers.
- Inviting successful individuals and creative personalities to meet with students, enhancing their communication skills and aiding in their career choices.

SCHOOL



COMMUNITY



- Mutual respect for one another.
- The creation of opportunities to inform each other, discuss problems, and make decisions collectively.
- The inclusion of everyone's opinions in the resolution of community issues.

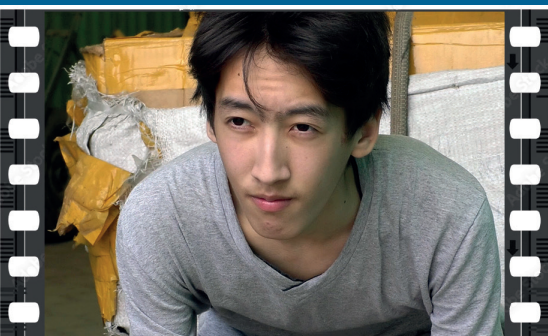
STATE



- Recognition, observance, and protection of citizens' rights and freedoms.
- Creation of opportunities for obtaining quality education.
- Provision of access to comprehensive development: intellectual and physical.
- Creation of employment opportunities for youth to motivate them in their studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PROJECT

- **Fostering Individuality:** To help a young person feel happy and successful, it's crucial to develop their individuality, discover and nurture their talents, and teach them how to interact with others around them.
- **Utilizing Art:** Art is a powerful tool for working with youth. Organizations that work with young people should leverage the opportunities provided by art to engage and communicate with them effectively.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS WORKING WITH YOUTH:

At the national level:

- **Integrate** into the educational programs of general education schools:
 - Incorporate conflict analysis, resolution strategies, and appropriate behavior during conflicts into school curricula.
 - Foster skills for building positive interpersonal relationships through targeted training.
 - Cultivate the ability to understand and express one's internal state constructively, using artistic methods.
- **Open** opportunities for artists to participate in the educational process, enhancing youth creativity and perspective.
- **Educate** youth workers in the use of artistic communication forms like forum theater and video production.
- **Require** art students to gain practical experience through training in schools, contributing to extracurricular activities.
- **Establish** collaboration between artists and educators to develop programs that engage youth in artistic methods.

At the local level:

- **Establish** spaces using creative methods such as forum theaters, video clips, mini-trainings, games, and competitions to foster constructive dialogue. These platforms should enable youth to meet and discuss their issues among themselves and with adults, including with experts on the issues being addressed.
- **Involve** professionals from the arts to conduct masterclasses, motivational meetings, and trainings to develop individuality in students, identify talents, and teach them how to interact with the people around them.
- **Welcome** various external specialists to schools, such as lawyers, psychologists, medical professionals, entrepreneurs, and local government representatives, to conduct conversations, masterclasses, and practical sessions. The more students interact with people of different professions, the broader their horizons, opportunities for growth, understanding of social structures, and skills in addressing adults with specific questions.
- **Hold** informational meetings for parents with the involvement of psychologists, lawyers, and other experts to enhance the psychological and pedagogical knowledge of parents regarding the development of skills and abilities for parent-child interaction.

About the Project:

The "Mobile Arts for Peace" project is implemented by the Foundation for Tolerance International (The Kyrgyz Republic) in partnership with the University of Lincoln (UK). The project is funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund (UK). The project's activities are aimed at promoting peace by teaching young people positive skills to express their own ideas and needs through creative arts. The main goal of the project is to expand the opportunities for youth to promote dialogue between young people and adults for peacebuilding.

For additional information, please visit the University of Lincoln's website: <https://map.lincoln.ac.uk>
Contact information for project staff:

Anara Eginalieva, Project Manager, eginalieva.fti@gmail.com