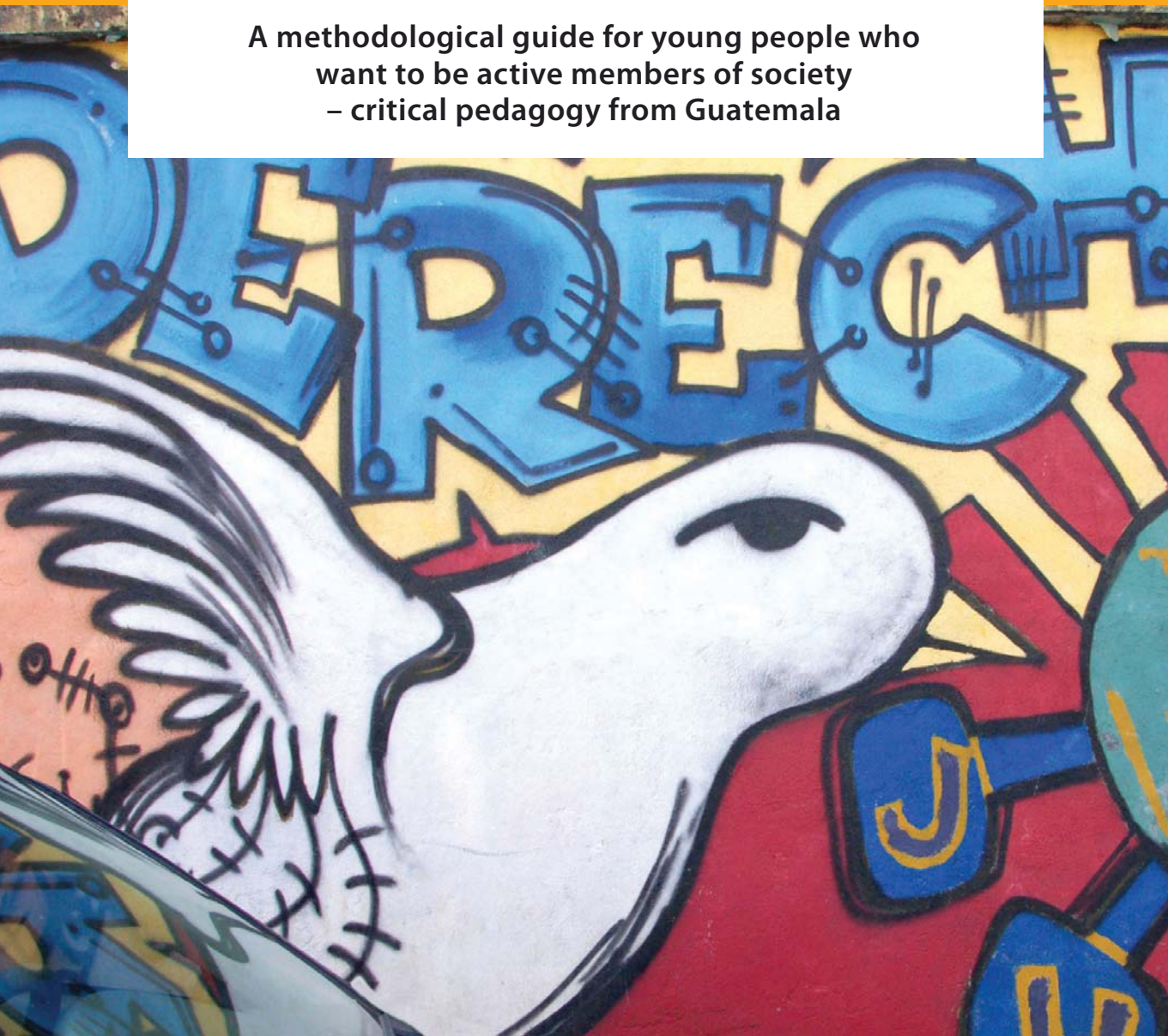


MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

A methodological guide for young people who
want to be active members of society
– critical pedagogy from Guatemala



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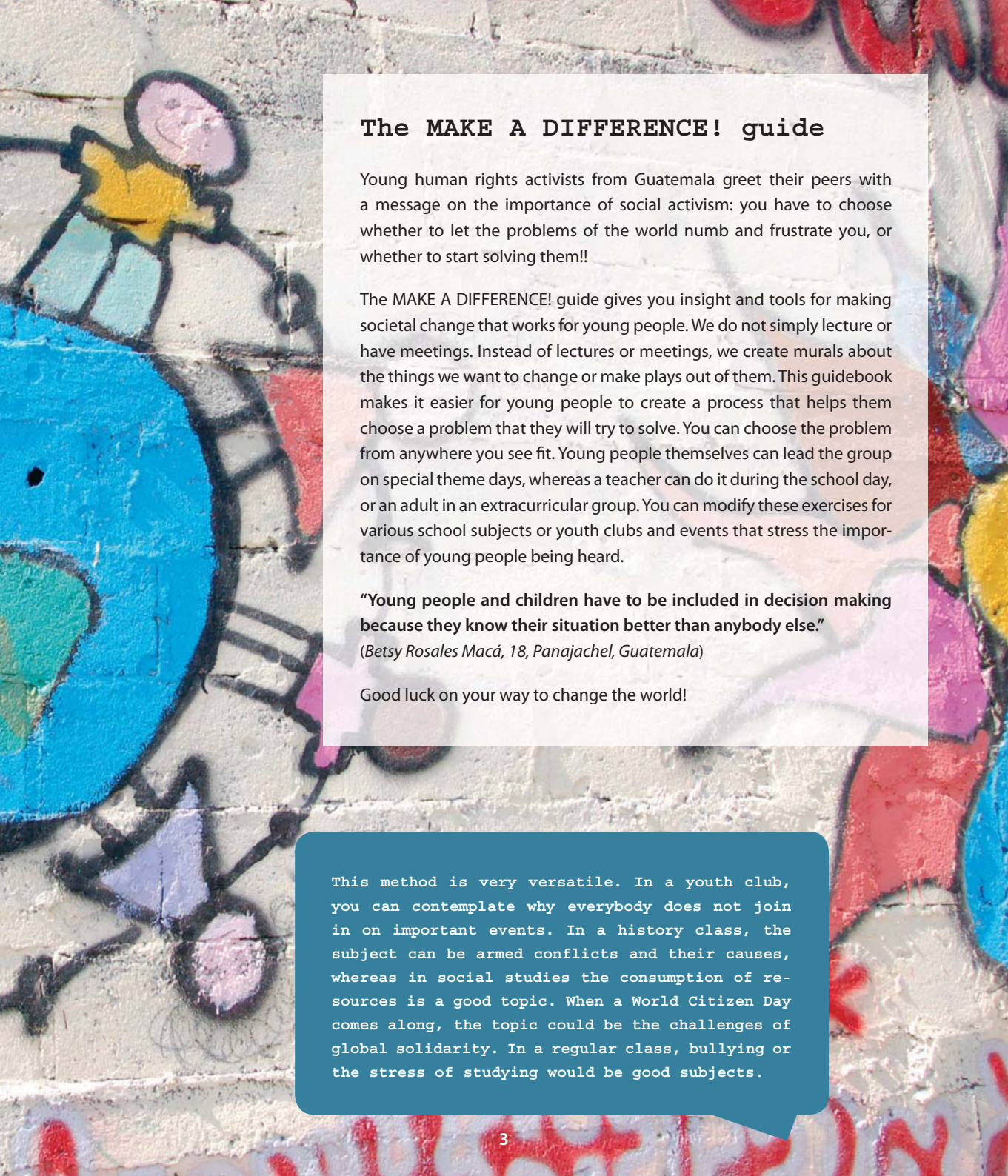
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Helsinki, 2013





The MAKE A DIFFERENCE! guide

Young human rights activists from Guatemala greet their peers with a message on the importance of social activism: you have to choose whether to let the problems of the world numb and frustrate you, or whether to start solving them!!

The MAKE A DIFFERENCE! guide gives you insight and tools for making societal change that works for young people. We do not simply lecture or have meetings. Instead of lectures or meetings, we create murals about the things we want to change or make plays out of them. This guidebook makes it easier for young people to create a process that helps them choose a problem that they will try to solve. You can choose the problem from anywhere you see fit. Young people themselves can lead the group on special theme days, whereas a teacher can do it during the school day, or an adult in an extracurricular group. You can modify these exercises for various school subjects or youth clubs and events that stress the importance of young people being heard.

“Young people and children have to be included in decision making because they know their situation better than anybody else.”

(Betsy Rosales Macá, 18, Panajachel, Guatemala)

Good luck on your way to change the world!

This method is very versatile. In a youth club, you can contemplate why everybody does not join in on important events. In a history class, the subject can be armed conflicts and their causes, whereas in social studies the consumption of resources is a good topic. When a World Citizen Day comes along, the topic could be the challenges of global solidarity. In a regular class, bullying or the stress of studying would be good subjects.

YOUNG PEOPLE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!


Guatemala is a country of 14 million people, located in Central America just south of Mexico. It has huge social problems, such as poverty, low status of women and children, and lack of healthy food. Poverty leads to people working like slaves and the lack of food leads to exhaustion, which makes studying or working impossible. The possibilities for youth to have a say in their lives are limited as many of the children are working to support their families.

Despite these problems in their country, a group of young people has decided to take on the challenges that surround them. They have joined PAMI, which is the Guatemalan partner organisation of ODW Finland (Operation a Day's Work Finland, a non-governmental organisation), and have committed to the cause of its youth networks. With the help of PAMI they have been able to influence their communities. Instead of working like adults, young people have their own ways of influencing others. They create opinion murals and plan radio ads, organise parades and debates, work with theatres and educate children. Their topics are the ones that society keeps quiet about: sexual abuse, domestic violence, drugs and pollution. They have their own powerful voice, and they use it to tell people about their ideal world while being active in the issues of their communities. They encourage others to act. Young people can make a difference!

"It is said that children are our future. That's not true! Half of the citizens of Guatemala are teenagers or children, so we are the present of our country as well as its future. Despite this, we can't change our society." (Betsy Rosales Macá)

It is also rare for young people to take part in public debate. They usually are left outside the decision-making process. They have experience and information about the hot topics of today's world, such as immigration, social disparity and climate change, but they lack the will and tools to make a change. Why is this? According to the Council of Europe, the reason is that young people have not been able to choose the means that they might use to influence their society. The attitude is that you can only take a stand with tedious meetings and boring speeches. Can we change this?





According to an international study (IEA/Civics, 1995 2001; ICCS/ International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, 2009), young people in some countries know their society quite well. Despite this, they are less interested in politics and civic activity than their peers abroad. A report by the Council of Europe states that proper societal structures exist for young people to take part, but a hierarchical mentality gets in the way. The fact that young people themselves have not been able to develop the ways of participating is also an obstacle.

Critical pedagogy

This guide encourages people to take a stand in creative ways. These Guatemalan exercises are based on critical pedagogy, created by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921-1997). According to Freire, the basic ability to read is not enough on its own to make people in rural areas improve their standard of living. Freire wanted to make people analyse their lives and help them become more independent as well as encourage them to be the pioneers of necessary societal changes. Instead of telling people what to do and how to do it, this guide aims to make people want to take a stand and to enable them to do it. If we want to change the world, we have to start with ourselves.

This guide will also introduce you to five Guatemalan activists. Through their interviews, we start to think about the lives of young people and the possibilities for social activity in Guatemala.

PAMI is a Guatemalan organisation that has been operational for almost 30 years. With the help of ODW Finland, PAMI has created youth networks in 11 cities. These networks help inform young people about their rights and about how to search for information and gain tools for improving their society. The photos in this guidebook portray the members of youth networks and the impressive murals they have painted.

THE MAKE A DIFFERENCE! PROCESS

Group size: six to fifteen people, but more is fine as well.
Age: twelve to eighteen years.

Anyone can lead the group, as long as they know that they are the ones who make the group work but at the same time do not influence the activity with their opinions.

Time required: 90 minutes to 5 hours. All you need to do in advance is to read the instructions and get the necessary equipment.

This process has four stages:

1. DEFINING THE PROBLEM

What specific problem do you want to act upon?

2. PROBLEM ANALYSIS

What kind of problem do you have?

What created it and why, and what kind of effect does it have?

3. ACTIVITIES FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

You are changing the world with your deeds!

4. REFLECTION ON YOUR ACTIONS

What did you accomplish? What comes next?

The third stage can be changed depending on the interest of the group, the possibilities for action and the time available. The other stages stay the same.

The examples in this guidebook come from Guatemala. The first example is visual as solutions are sought by using opinion murals and posters. At the end of this guidebook are two examples of other ways of influencing that are used by the youth networks in

Guatemala. The young Guatemalans deal with difficult subjects through theatre and radio advertisements. They also organise parades, festivals, seminars, create TV shows and make appeals to decision makers. Different problems require different solutions. The only limit is your own imagination!

The fourth stage of the process is the most important one as it calls the group to continue its work with the chosen problem or a different one. This is how the process starts from scratch again, but you will have already made a difference and learned from this experience.

The interviews with young people from Guatemala can be read and analysed as a small intermission to the stages of the process. These interviews and the questions they raise can be used as material to analyse ways of being socially active.

At the end of this guidebook, two Finnish experts on pedagogy, Lissu Lehtimaja and Tuukka Tomperi, share their experiences and discuss these matters.

MARIA GUADALUPE McLAUGHLIN VILLEDA, 17

Puerto Barrios, Guatemala
student of psychology, dancer



“There are different ways to do things in life”

I got into a youth network when one of its instructors came to our school to talk about violence. I got interested immediately because I was almost attacked once. The discussion and group activities made me think that someday I might help other young people. I could help them speak their mind and know when to say “no”, regardless of the situation.

In this network we do all kinds of things. We arrange workshops to prevent violence and bring up other topics that concern young people like sexual abuse, prostitution, child abuse and drugs. We don’t just talk about these things, but we deal with them with critical pedagogy. We have all kinds of exercises and games that teach us a lot.

This work is important because my hometown, Puerto Barrios, is one of the most violent places in Guatemala. In particular, the young people and children are having a very hard time. Many young people have lost their way in life, and a lot of children are being abused. It is important that people doing this work are young themselves. Young people understand things better when others from the same age group speak to them. This works for adults too. Young people speaking from their own experience might make them wonder “How is it possible that they know more than I do?” It really works.

Speaking and discussion is of course a part of critical pedagogy, but it’s not limited to that. In schools there is a lot of talking and then punishing. We do things in a completely opposite way. We teach in a way that gets the young people to

participate. This way they can realise their own situation and want to do something about it. You hear a lot of things like “I can’t change this, it’s impossible.” We like to think that everything’s possible, everything!

I used to be shy and dispirited. Today, I’m much more positive. People know me as a person who wants to change herself, her community and her country. I want to pass on “the power of change” attitude – we can achieve a lot with positive thinking.

This kind of education helps to achieve something new. The key word for me is always ‘change’. In schools teachers might talk about the same things as we do, but this talk doesn’t reach the students. They get bored and doze off in class. In our classes, on the other hand, young people are on the move and participate actively. We help them to get out of their shells. Doing things opens your eyes and mind to see what is happening around you. There are different ways to do things in life, not just the way we’ve been taught.

I feel happy now. I am an educator of critical pedagogy, and the children I am working with sometimes come to me and say that they want to be like me. They also want to start educating others like I do, which also motivates me.

The first thing I do when I start to prepare a class is to choose the topic carefully. In the first class my goal is that everyone will become familiar with the phenomenon and its causes and effects. Sometimes we play games, sometimes we read and put on plays. I always choose a specific working method for all the different topics. At the end of the class I might ask the group to write about what they have learnt and what they would still want to learn. This helps me to plan the next class.

- *What made Maria interested in the youth network?*
- *What groups and facilities resembling a youth network are there in your country? Where can young people participate and make a difference?*
- *What problems concerning children and young people was Maria talking about?*
- *What kinds of problems do young people have in your country?*
- *What is critical pedagogy like and why does it work so well, according to Maria?*

STAGE 1: DEFINING THE PROBLEM

What specific problem do you want to act upon?

Making a difference is teamwork. First you have to know each other and trust each other. Here are some fun games to break the ice.

RAINBOW

Time required: 10 minutes

Purpose: to break the ice

Ask the players to form a circle and step inside it. Point randomly at somebody and say "yellow". The players pointed at have to respond to this by saying their name. Once this is running smoothly, add the word "red" into the game. This means that the people pointed at must say the name of the person on their left. After these rounds, add the word "blue". This means that the people pointed at must say the name of the person on their right. The game starts getting faster and faster: "red-yellow-red-blue!" When this gets too easy, shout "RAINBOW", which means that everyone has to change places and will find themselves among new people. Learning new names is something that can work for any group!

Once the ice has been broken, ask the group to start thinking about what kind of problem they want to look into and solve.

According to critical pedagogy, people can have a significant effect on problems that are found near them. These issues are the ones that really matter to them. This means that the issues should always be picked from people's own environment, the reality they live in. Is there something that specifically bothers you? At home, in school, or among friends? What should be changed in your country? Is there an issue that you can no longer live with?

If this exercise is part of a class or you want to include a specific theme in it, now is the time to define the topic accordingly. Examples of defining questions could be: What challenges do upper secondary school students face in their last year? What obstacles are there on young people's way to active citizenship? Or even a wider approach: What specific problem in the world should be tackled right away?

SPIDER WEB

Time required: 10 to 20 minutes

Materials: a ball of yarn, a large piece of paper, a marker

Purpose: the group defines a problem and starts to solve it

First, the group needs to define the topic and form a question about it. Everyone takes turns answering it. If the purpose is to discuss problems in school, the question could be, "What challenges do students face in our school?" Or if it's a matter of the environment, one could ask what kind of environmental problems we cause.

Throw the ball of yarn to someone in the circle. They then answer the question defined earlier. After answering, they throw the ball to another person in the circle while holding the yarn. Make sure that everyone has a chance to tell their opinion. As the answers go by, the yarn forms a spider web in the middle of the circle.

Ask someone in the group to write down all the ideas on the large piece of paper.

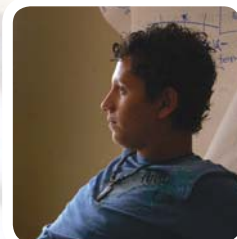
As you go through the results of the brainstorming together, the group members will see what kind of themes arise among them. Discuss these themes together and choose one or more of them for more thorough processing. As a group, define the problem as clearly as possible. This makes it easier to get into its causes and effects later on.



WILMAR OTTONIEL (OTTO) MORALES VÁSQUEZ, 17

Puerto Barrios, Guatemala

youth group advisor



"I would like Guatemala to change"

I've been involved in the youth network ever since I came to Barrios five years ago. My first contact with PAMI was when the organisation ran a pilot project in our school. I was immediately interested in the themes they were working on and the way they did things in general. They didn't have the traditional and boring approach of "Hey, let's talk", but instead they had exercises, workshops and games!

Things that especially worry me are sexual abuse and human trafficking. I have at least three friends, all of them girls, who have been abused.

Young people face lots of violence on the streets in Guatemala. I can't go outside without being afraid that someone might attack me. In the worst case, I could even get killed. There are a lot of problems among students in school as well. The reason for that is usually envy. Those who have more in life are beaten and threatened, their school work is stolen, or bullies demand money from them. This is especially common in secondary school.

You can see sexual abuse and human trafficking on the streets, but abuse happens in families as well. There are also some students that abuse their female friends. As I think I already said, I have a friend who was abused by her own father. He threatened her and ordered her not to tell her mother.

My friend's situation was solved. She didn't want to hide it anymore, so she wrote a letter to her mum and ran away. She was thinking about moving to another town where they had

relatives. Her mum read the letter in despair. In that letter, the girl said that she couldn't stand being constantly abused by her father and that she would go somewhere he could never find her. Her mum went looking for her at the bus station, since the girl had written she would take a bus to the capital. They contacted the bus, and the girl was told to get out. She was then locked into an office so that she wouldn't run away before her mum got there. When her mum arrived, the girl told her everything: how dad had abused her since she was 11, and that he had threatened to kill mum and granny if she didn't let him do that.

This is what happened then: the girl's mum went to the authorities and the dad got punished. He has now been in prison for ten years and is getting out this year. I think the girl has gotten over it because she has changed a lot. When she was abused, she was quite a rebel at home and fought with her mum, but it was all because of that one thing. Today, she herself is a mother of two.

Children and young people face domestic violence at home. When a father abuses a mother, the children suffer too. They look for a way to relieve their own pain and beat up their own children in turn.

There are several doors open for young people in the society. Some of them lead into good things, some into bad things. Many young people get drawn into school violence – "If you're not on our side, you're against us." There's also organised crime, such as the Mara youth gangs that pressure and threaten their members. Even your own friends might cause you problems because some of them might be involved in some bad things. One of my friends had this kind of experience. He got into bad company and started drinking.

You can find better company, for example, at different kinds of youth group meetings organised by the church, PAMI and the Red Cross, among others. I always feel good after the meetings. Especially PAMI and the Red Cross pay attention to environmental problems, solidarity and helping others. In addition, we have a programme here called The Safe Haven. It provides facilities and computers for school work. You can also get help with your homework.

This kind of participation is good for you. And when young people find these groups, they will invite their friends and acquaintances to come along as well.

The Mara gangs are a big problem, though. The only thing they want is to cause trouble and hurt others. They attack and blackmail people or even kill them. In the capital city the Maras attack buses, rob the passengers and shoot the drivers. The gang members are about 15–25 years old. I've seen on TV that those who want to join the Maras will be beaten senseless by the gang leaders. If they survive the beating, they will be admitted into the gang. The gang members have tattoos and wear bad clothes, and they carry guns and use drugs. The gangs are not that visible in Puerto Barrios during the day, but sometimes the gang members come during the night and cause trouble.

Young people also have to deal with financial problems. If the father loses his job and the family has to tighten its belt financially, the child may have to drop out of school and look for a job. That's not easy and that is when some people join the gangs. By the way, going to school is quite expensive. Although the elementary and secondary schools are free in theory, this is not really the case because schools demand that parents buy the school uniforms, books, folders etc. In addition, parents have to pay for computer education and English lessons separately every month. In reality the bill is almost as big as in private schools, the only difference being that public schools don't collect tuition fees.

I would like for Guatemala to change. People always say that Guatemala is a dangerous place, and that is true. It's one of the most violent countries in the world. Young people should establish stronger social groups, show initiative at home for finding the solutions, invite more young people to work together and create a better tomorrow. Even the difficult issues can be discussed. You shouldn't get on the wrong track.

- *What factors threaten children and young people according to Wilmar?*
- *What methods do you have for the protection of children and young people against these threats in your country?*
- *What do Guatemalan students need money for?*
- *Can all children afford to go to school in your country?*

STAGE 2: PROBLEM ANALYSIS

What kind of a problem do you have?

You have to know the problem in order to solve it.

You have to make use of all the knowledge that you already have and let everyone express their ideas. Meanwhile, you have to keep in mind that changing the world requires responsibility. You have to be critical of your own way of thinking because you may be trapped in wrong assumptions and prejudices. In addition, you have to remember that the situation will not be improved by hurting and blaming others. In fact, problems often arise from misunderstandings and bad communication – that is, your involvement should in no way mess up the situation even more!

If the group is large, you can divide it into smaller groups. Every small group will discuss one issue.

PROBLEM TREE

Time required: 20 to 45 minutes

Materials: coloured cardboard sheets, sticky tape or Blu-Tack, scissors, markers

Purpose: to clarify the problem in question and to reflect on its cause-effect relationships and proposals for a solution

Make a large tree from cardboard sheets (or draw it on the blackboard), and write the name of the problem on the tree trunk.

Have the group members think of different causes for the problem and write all the causes on separate cardboard sheets. Attach these sheets to the tree roots. You can arrange the sheets so that similar causes are close to each other. The group will make sure that every cause has been accounted for.

When the roots are ready, have the group move on to the fruits. Ask each of the group members to think about the effects of the problem and write them on round cardboard sheets. Attach these to the treetop. You can arrange the fruits in the same way you arranged the causes in the roots. Finally, ask the group to make sure they have written all the effects down.

After this, have the group write proposals for a solution to bug-shaped cardboard sheets. Attach the bugs to the tree according to which cause or effect they can solve. Usually the best solutions are the ones that solve the cause and not the effect!!

At this stage, if there is something in this phenomenon that the group members have too little information about, have them research the issue further. Ask each group member to investigate different causes and effects. What causes this and that? Is that really the case? School books, grandmother's interview, Internet... Anything goes as long as the information is accurate and treated with caution. Your message won't be worth anything if it's based on wrong assumptions or prejudices. Have the group members share their findings with the rest of the group, and ask the group to revise and improve the problem tree on the basis of the new information.

Information retrieval is a good task to work on at home or otherwise independently.



YONATAN BUCH, 18

Panajachel, Guatemala
car mechanic



"I've started to express my opinions"

I've been active in a youth network for little over a year now, and I really like educating children and young people. We talk to them about sexual abuse, violence, environmental issues and political influencing. We make it clear to them that they have the right to grow up in a good home, the right to be loved, and the right to be treated well.

We're doing this job because we find it necessary. At least here in Panajachel, many children are abandoned and vulnerable and can end up being abused. It's easier for adults to abuse children if children don't know their rights. Children have a legal status as well, and they have their own voice. They shouldn't be manipulated, nor should their rights be trampled on.

I used to be very shy and didn't like speaking much. One achievement of mine here in this youth network is that I've started to express my opinions. I'm not scared anymore to talk to other people. Participating is also important. I used to stay quiet and sit back, but here I understood that I can also make a difference, that I have power in me, the power to help others.

Usually young people participate very little in society. It's partly because of the lack of opportunities and partly because young people don't take any interest in bigger problems – I don't know any other social group like this. They only care about themselves. But I'm sure that this would change if they understood the importance of making a difference and, overall, had the opportunity to do so.

Adults take part in the society in a different way than young people. Even if they knew something was important, they'd be afraid to speak up. They get threatened easily. Besides, adults start arguing more easily than young people. Often when we arrange street events and invite the whole village to fight against violence, the adults just stand aside and do nothing.

I find the situation in Guatemala difficult. The economy is a mess: there are no jobs, adults don't have any food to give to their children, and children have to get jobs to help their family. No opportunities. We are ranked at the bottom in all statistics. My dream is that one day Guatemala will become stronger, and we'll rise to the top of the rankings.

I try to help my family and friends by speaking up about these things. Many people don't have a clue. I have also brought new members into the network, and they in turn talk about these things at home. So at least I think that I've done something.

One concrete example is from a family I know. The father of the family hit his son continuously. After a friend of mine spoke up about the violence against children at home, my friend's parents took the bull by the horns and went to talk to the man who hit his son. Everyone was well aware of the situation. Apparently, the father started thinking about the situation because after that he hasn't hit his son anymore. The boy's life changed remarkably; he's a lot happier now.

- ***How has Yonatan's participation in the youth network changed him?***
- ***What kinds of situations increase your self-esteem and build your courage?***
- ***What does Yonatan say about the different ways in which adults and young people participate in society?***
- ***Do adults and young people participate in different ways in your society? How?***
- ***What does Yonatan say about the boy who was beaten by his father?***
- ***Do you know any cases of someone being helped when someone else spoke up?***

STAGE 3: ACTIVITIES FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

You are changing the world with your deeds!

Now it's time for you to do something concrete! A picture is worth a thousand words. Here you have two methods with which you can have an impact on your surroundings by using a visual message. A mural is an effective way to express your thoughts – it will last long and people will notice it. Meanwhile, an opinion poster works in a situation where there is no time or permission to paint a bigger surface. Both methods start with sketching.

(More tips on activities on page 24.)

SKETCHING

Time required: 15 minutes to 2 hours

Materials: paper and pens, possibly also magazines and newspapers, scissors and glue

Purpose: to come up with ideas with which you can visually express your opinion on the problem in question

You can draw inspiration from this guide, art books, posters and graffiti.

First, have each group member sketch some ideas on the paper independently. The aim is to answer a specific question that arises from the problem. Ask the group members to think about how they want to describe the problem and express the feelings related to it. The idea is to come up with ways to propose solutions for the problem. Good drawing skills are not needed; the most important thing is to express an idea clearly and simply. The group members can exploit newspaper articles or take examples from books.

When everyone has at least one idea sketched out, have the group look through the sketches and discuss their content together. At this stage, you can remind the group that they shouldn't evaluate the sketches or laugh at them. Have the group discuss the reactions the sketches provoke in them and how they interpret the message in the sketches. Little by little, the group will form an idea of the best visual way to get the message across.

If the group wants to paint a mural, have them choose one or more of the sketches and together develop them further. They can also choose a couple of sketches, for example by voting, and make a collage of them. In addition, each group member can make an opinion poster directly from a sketch, possibly making changes to it on the basis of the ideas that came up in the discussion.

MURALS

Time required: one whole day or several different sessions

Materials: a wall or another large surface, paint and painting equipment, protective tarps and clothes, charcoal. The surface can be primed beforehand.

Purpose: to paint an impressive mural

Walls are everywhere, but walls that can be painted on are scarce. You can ask the city hall, schools or construction sites for a wall that you can paint on. Show them a plan of your mural, so they know what you want to do. This way you can justify the project and tell about the message of the mural – you might get permission where you would least expect it. To get your message through, a central location for the mural is vital. Paint is expensive, so asking a sponsor for funding might be a good idea.

Clean the wall, prime it white and let it dry. When the wall is dry, draw a sketch of the mural on it with charcoal. Participants can be divided into groups, each of which is responsible for their own portion of the mural. Get some brushes, latex paint and old clothes, add sunny weather, and you are ready to make a difference in your society! Pack some lunch and have some music with you too because painting a mural can take a long while.

This is your own way of dealing with an important issue in your society. People asking about your work or looking at your mural are potential messengers and helpers for your cause. Speak with these people and invite them to paint with you. Show them that you are serious about what you are doing!



POSTERS

Time required: 30 minutes to 2 hours

Materials: cardboard and tape, pens, paint or markers

Purpose: to make impressive posters

Decide on the size of the posters and how many people will be working on each poster. First draw a sketch with a pen, then colour it with paint or markers.

It is important to hang the posters in visible locations and in places where your target audience can easily notice them. For example, if you make the poster about wasting food and its effects on the environment, a good place to hang the poster would be a school cafeteria, where other students and the school staff can see it.

History of murals in Latin America

Latin American metropolises are colourful and chaotic. Ice cream vendors have beautiful parasols in their ice cream carts, buildings are decorated with flashy advertisements, and people wear bright colours. Murals that are several metres high stick out of these colourful landscapes, marking the existence of social movements.

The mural tradition was born in Mexico in the beginning of the 20th century to speed up and support social reformist movements. Murals were on public walls to be seen by all members of society, independent of race or social class. These murals carried political and social themes, often inspired by Marxist ideas. Diego Rivera (1886–1957), spouse of Frida Kahlo, is the world's most famous muralist. His works still decorate the capital of Mexico.

The Mayas have their own graphic traditions in several Guatemalan villages. Their murals tell about their customs and culture, and as such strengthen the native

communities against the pressure of cultures rooted in Europe. The Mayas have inherited their naïvist art form from their ancestors, who painted murals about their myths and significant events before the Spanish colonised South America. There are at least 22 Mayan peoples in Guatemala, each of which has its own language and traditions.

Murals in the Guatemalan capital tell about the civil war: the American flag decorated with skulls as a reminder of USA's involvement in the coup; Maya women with photographs of their loved ones who disappeared during the war, demanding to know what happened to them; doves symbolising the people's wish for actual peace 14 years after the signing of the peace treaty.

Nowadays, criminal youth gangs have begun to paint the walls of the Guatemalan capital. Their graffiti tell about the power struggles and territory markings of the gangs.



GUILLERMO GABRERA, 19

Coatepeque, Guatemala
graphic design student



"I wanted to change the image of Gardenia"

I have been painting murals with my friends for six years already. Originally I wanted to vent my anger and anxiety through painting, and I asked some friends to come along. I had already painted some pieces myself, but it was time for something bigger. My friends didn't want to join me at first because all I wanted to paint was demonic pictures, skeletons and other dark stuff. They asked me to think really hard about what to paint: "The mural needs to be pleasant for anyone to look at. Painting demons on the wall doesn't help anybody." I thought about what they said, and we ended up painting dragons, cartoon characters, landscapes... oh, and we wrote some poems on the walls too.

Three years ago we painted a mural in Gardenia, the area where I live, which I think changed the atmosphere of the area. Gardenia is regarded as a dangerous place, and it's known for its gangs that mostly use the area as a hiding place. Or at least that's what most people think. I wanted to change the image of Gardenia and started to paint on a wall I came across. And what happened? People were amazed when the young people they imagined to be criminals, junkies and con artists came to help me with my mural. They realised that those young people are kind and helpful towards others. People weren't so afraid anymore.

Since I joined a youth network, I have started to paint specific subjects, for example solidarity. With the help of local school kids, we painted a huge mural in the nearby village, Silencio. The mural shows how the world is today, full of violence and

crime, and how the kids want to change it. The first part shows the Earth with two hands holding a knife and a gun, and the picture has dead bodies and drugs in it. The other part shows the Earth full of flowers and smiling children, and there's a dove flying in the sky symbolising peace.

I used to paint about bad things, and people thought I was a Mara gang member. But when I changed my style, something else changed too. Nowadays people congratulate me when I paint. In Santa Ines, a bunch of young people came to see us paint and they said they liked our work. They told us that "others come here to paint their gang signs, but you show that you want to help." This was a surprise to me, as I hadn't thought that art could have this kind of power.

I'm not scared to express myself through painting anymore. I encourage others to paint too! Art is good for children and young people, and adults are supportive when they understand what it's all about.

- What happened when Guillermo and his friends started to paint a mural in Gardenia?

- How has Guillermo's attitude towards painting changed?

- How can young people in your country help solve problems in their environment?

STAGE 4: PONDERING YOUR ACTIONS

What did you accomplish? What comes next?

The mural is ready and the posters are on the walls, everyone is happy, patting each other on the back and... then everyone goes their own way? No. Now the work really begins!

Congratulations, you have reached the final and most important step in the Make a Difference! process. This step opens a door into another process.

No one thinks that a mural or a poster will fix a problem immediately. Pictures help raise awareness and hope in the community, and making pictures increases the group's vision and confidence in expressing themselves. The challenge is now outlined and visible, but real change takes much more. However, you have taken the first step now – the step where everything starts. It is time to analyse your work.





ANALYSIS SALAD

Time required: 20 to 45 minutes

Materials: paper (three different colours, e.g. yellow, blue and red), pens and Blu-Tack or tape

Purpose: to understand the effects of the process and find new solutions to problems

Everyone gets three pieces of paper, one of each colour, and answers the following questions independently:

- How did the process and painting a mural affect YOU? (*yellow paper*)
- How did they affect your GROUP? (*blue paper*)
- How did your ENVIRONMENT react to your work? (*red paper*)

Gather all the answers. One group member will read the yellow papers out loud, one by one, and displays them for everyone to see. Others tell about their own experiences regarding these comments. Then the blue and red papers are read out loud, and they are discussed together as well.

Now do the same exercise again. Everyone is given three new pieces of paper. The goal is to think and analyse how the action affected the problem. Is the problem solved already? If not, what else can be done? Everyone answers the following questions independently:

- How did the action affect the problem? (*yellow paper*)
- Is the problem, or a part of it, solved? How? Has the problem changed? (*blue paper*)
- What could be the next step in fixing the problem? (*red paper*)

The answers are gathered and read out loud again, and then they are discussed together. Think also about how the group can continue to make a difference, or what each member can do on their own.

Before you even realise, you are using critical pedagogy again: analysing the problem and thinking about how you could solve it.

Having a hard time in making a difference?

No, it's very concrete - you've already started it!



Ronald Evaristo Velásquez Barrios, 18

Puerto Barrios, Guatemala

port worker



"Murals express the tragedies of our society"

I joined PAMI six years ago. I was a second-year student in secondary school when people from the organisation came to talk to our school. Since then I've been an active member of PAMI. What first caught my interest was that their actions were focused on children and young people. They also understood the specific role of Puerto Barrios. Because it's a border city and a bridge to Honduras, human trafficking and smuggling are significant problems here. Even authorities in high positions turn a blind eye to them.

Making changes is difficult in a community where many things are denied or they are not accepted. Sexuality, for example, is a forbidden topic and seen as taboo. But by taking part in the youth network we young people show the way for change. We are interested in the matters of children and youth. We study and practise handling their problems, then we go to them to discuss those problems, and they pass on the information. Complete denial of problems isn't an option. We are all vulnerable, even those of us that belong to the youth network. But by sharing information and being aware of dangers we can avoid difficult situations. Even if you get pulled into one, you'll at least know how to react.

Murals express the tragedies of our society. When people see them, they begin to form a better idea of what is happening around us. Sometimes we don't see what is right in front of us. Looking at murals might make somebody think "I've been through this too." At its best, a painting says more than a thousand words.

A mural won't solve anything on its own, but it makes people think, and hopefully it arouses a need to do something about the issues. A mural can be a great source of information and an engine for action.

After the mural is finished, you need to give people more information about the pictured topic. There are many things that still aren't widely known, or the information may be outdated. That's why you should highlight the problems, the reasons for why the mural was painted. You can organise group discussions or hand out flyers and leaflets. We've also run theme parades where costumes express what is wrong with our society. Sometimes we stage plays and we've even done puppet shows. Media is a fantastic tool: we have spoken in the local news and radio discussion shows whenever invited. We'll be happy to share more information.

- *What kinds of challenges that prevent problem-solving does Ronald mention?*
- *What kinds of challenges to solving social problems does your country have?*
- *How do the murals work according to Ronald?*
- *After the mural is finished, what options does Ronald suggest for fixing the problem?*

Other means of action for STAGE 3

Theatre? Or a radio advertisement?

Sometimes you might wind up wracking your brain when trying to work out a problem with no success. That is when you should take creativity and group dynamics into use! Image theatre, a group drama exercise, can help you approach the issue from a different angle.

Radio advertisement is an excellent way to share information and thoughts. You can, for example, offer your ads to a local radio station.

IMAGE THEATRE

Time required: 45 minutes to 1.5 hours

Purpose: to understand a problem better and more creatively

Divide the participants in groups of four to six people.

Each group will have 15 minutes to think of a concrete situation that has a certain problem and give appropriate roles for each member of the group. The aim is to find a situation and circumstances where the problem is most obviously brought to a head. The groups will form a still image, a so-called frozen theatrical scene, of these situations.

The first group presents their image to the others. Group members will not explain the scene, but instead the others will ask them questions to understand the situation: "How do you feel? Why do you act that way?" Each member will answer from the point of view of their character. Once the audience realises what the situation is and possibly even where it arises from, they will begin to look for a solution together. What could these characters do to fix the problem? Those acting the image can also take part in the discussion.

Once the groups have exchanged enough ideas for improvement, performers will then change the scene so that the problem no longer exists. The group will be applauded and the next group will continue.

HINT: You can also have the groups perform a play that has been rehearsed beforehand and which freezes at the moment the situation is at its worst. Then ask the audience why the problem exists, what its consequences are, and how they could solve it. The actors will then improvise a happy ending based on everyone's thoughts in front of the audience.



RADIO ADVERTISEMENT

Time required: 45 minutes to 1.5 hours

Materials: paper and pencils, a voice recorder; you will also need a quiet space

Purpose: to create short radio plays which explain the reasons behind a selected issue

Divide the participants into small groups.

Groups will have around 15 minutes to write a short radio play script of four acts. Each group will perform a problem they have chosen together. The first act introduces a reason for the chosen problem, and in the second act the problem itself is introduced. The third act brings out one consequence of the problem, and the fourth act will offer solutions. Group members can write down notes while planning if they wish.

After the script is ready, the group will rehearse the radio play. Group members will choose their actors and discuss what other sounds could be used in the play. The whole advertisement will be recorded live, so the groups should make different kinds of sounds to create lively surroundings. The human body is also a great source for sound effects!

Next the groups will record their advertisements. This requires a quiet space and a voice recorder. Finally the groups will listen to all the advertisements together. During each play, the group members will discuss the addressed problems and the solutions for them.

To get these mini radio ads a larger audience and to have information spread even wider, they can be played on a local radio station or uploaded to a website.



Finnish experts on critical pedagogy

Who are you and what is your job?

Lissu: I am Lissu Lehtimaja and I work as a cartoonist and a teacher.

Tuukka: Tuukka Tomperi, researcher and teacher from Tampere.

How did you come across critical pedagogy?

Lissu: When I was studying art education at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture, I began to look more thoroughly into the pedagogical texts that spoke to me and seemed to be similar to my own values. Soon I found myself in the arms of critical pedagogy.

Tuukka: While I was still a student, I ended up as a philosophy teacher in upper secondary school in the mid-90s. A couple of years later I studied teacher education in order to receive an official qualification, and I happened to read Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in English. Many of its issues were familiar to a philosopher: critical theory, social philosophy and dialogism.

How did it influence you?

Lissu: I felt I was on the right track, looking for a job with a meaning.

Tuukka: I encountered something I had tried to achieve as a teacher and that I had considered to be important in my philosophy studies: encouraging questioning and searching for alternative options. Critical thinking is essential in education and upbringing. I read Freire's other works and newer critical pedagogy and later on I did the editing for the Finnish edition of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and wrote its foreword. We also edited a book which contains Finnish viewpoints of critical pedagogy. Thus critical pedagogy became a part of my job.

What is the most important thing in critical pedagogy in your opinion?

Lissu: Questioning. In everyday life a teacher will sometimes sound like a conservative pedagogue cramming instructions and setting limits. This happens especially with small children and large groups. Even so, critical pedagogues must constantly question themselves. That is the only way you can teach the art of questioning to others. Critical pedagogy is linked to thoughts of spontaneous action and political influencing.

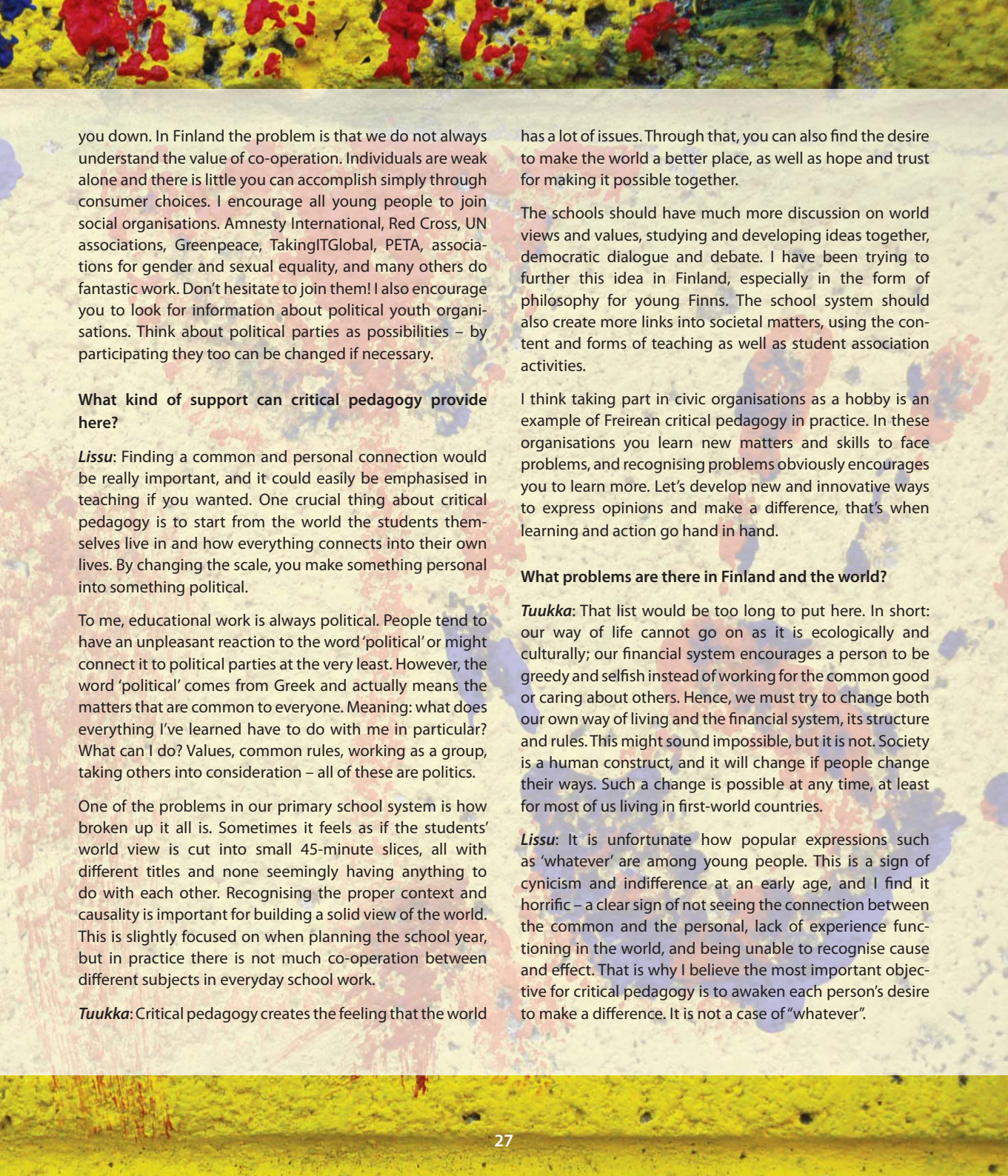
Tuukka: Wondering, asking, questioning, and practicing independent as well as communal thinking which can lead to a desire to change the world for better together with others. The dialectic of thinking is important in the way philosophers used the word: confronting arguments and counter-arguments, and weighing different views. People have to get used to learning from others, admitting their mistakes and identifying positive thoughts.

Is it easy for youth in Finland to be active members of society? Why?

Lissu: Yes and no. On one hand, we have institutions that guide the way to participating and make it possible. Student bodies, sports clubs, music and art schools, political youth organisations and church's youth activity are examples of ways for young people to participate.

On the other hand, a culture in which participation and influencing is highly systematic does not support independent influencing from outside the institutions. Doing it just for the sake of it, following others' lead, or other external reasons do not guarantee the same kind of devotion as independent action.

Tuukka: Before coming of age the options for participation are naturally more limited, but you should not let it get



you down. In Finland the problem is that we do not always understand the value of co-operation. Individuals are weak alone and there is little you can accomplish simply through consumer choices. I encourage all young people to join social organisations. Amnesty International, Red Cross, UN associations, Greenpeace, TakingITGlobal, PETA, associations for gender and sexual equality, and many others do fantastic work. Don't hesitate to join them! I also encourage you to look for information about political youth organisations. Think about political parties as possibilities – by participating they too can be changed if necessary.

What kind of support can critical pedagogy provide here?

Lissu: Finding a common and personal connection would be really important, and it could easily be emphasised in teaching if you wanted. One crucial thing about critical pedagogy is to start from the world the students themselves live in and how everything connects into their own lives. By changing the scale, you make something personal into something political.

To me, educational work is always political. People tend to have an unpleasant reaction to the word 'political' or might connect it to political parties at the very least. However, the word 'political' comes from Greek and actually means the matters that are common to everyone. Meaning: what does everything I've learned have to do with me in particular? What can I do? Values, common rules, working as a group, taking others into consideration – all of these are politics.

One of the problems in our primary school system is how broken up it all is. Sometimes it feels as if the students' world view is cut into small 45-minute slices, all with different titles and none seemingly having anything to do with each other. Recognising the proper context and causality is important for building a solid view of the world. This is slightly focused on when planning the school year, but in practice there is not much co-operation between different subjects in everyday school work.

Tuukka: Critical pedagogy creates the feeling that the world

has a lot of issues. Through that, you can also find the desire to make the world a better place, as well as hope and trust for making it possible together.

The schools should have much more discussion on world views and values, studying and developing ideas together, democratic dialogue and debate. I have been trying to further this idea in Finland, especially in the form of philosophy for young Finns. The school system should also create more links into societal matters, using the content and forms of teaching as well as student association activities.

I think taking part in civic organisations as a hobby is an example of Freirean critical pedagogy in practice. In these organisations you learn new matters and skills to face problems, and recognising problems obviously encourages you to learn more. Let's develop new and innovative ways to express opinions and make a difference, that's when learning and action go hand in hand.

What problems are there in Finland and the world?

Tuukka: That list would be too long to put here. In short: our way of life cannot go on as it is ecologically and culturally; our financial system encourages a person to be greedy and selfish instead of working for the common good or caring about others. Hence, we must try to change both our own way of living and the financial system, its structure and rules. This might sound impossible, but it is not. Society is a human construct, and it will change if people change their ways. Such a change is possible at any time, at least for most of us living in first-world countries.

Lissu: It is unfortunate how popular expressions such as 'whatever' are among young people. This is a sign of cynicism and indifference at an early age, and I find it horrific – a clear sign of not seeing the connection between the common and the personal, lack of experience functioning in the world, and being unable to recognise cause and effect. That is why I believe the most important objective for critical pedagogy is to awaken each person's desire to make a difference. It is not a case of "whatever".

GUATEMALA

The Republic of Guatemala is a Central American nation of approximately 13.8 million people. It neighbours with Mexico, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. Its area is 108,890 km² (42,043 mi²), making Guatemala one of the largest countries in Central America.

About half of Guatemala is covered in forest. The middle part of the country is split by two mountain ranges: the Altos Cuchumatanes and Sierra Madre, consisting of 33 volcanoes. The climate is tropical. Earthquakes, tropical storms and volcanic eruptions are common.

Before the arrival of the Spaniards, the area now known as Guatemala was ruled by several Mayan cities. One of the most prominent of these cities is Tikal, a city of ruins that is part of UNESCO Cultural Heritage list. The Mayan influence can be seen in Guatemala's culture to this day. The Mayan reign was followed by Spanish colonisation, until Guatemala gained independence in 1823. A brutal civil war raged in the country from 1954 to 1996, leading to the deaths of 200,000 civilians.

The majority of Guatemalans belong to one of the country's indigenous populations, of which there are more than twenty. About 60 % of Guatemala's population speaks Spanish as their first language, and the rest speak one of the various indigenous languages, 23 of which (such as Quiche, Cakchiquel, Kekchi, Mam and Xinca) are official. Political power has traditionally belonged to the part of the population with European roots. More than half of the indigenous population live under the poverty line. While the 1986 Constitution is meant to protect the rights of the indigenous people, in practice this rarely happens because, for instance, constitutional rights are not widely known among the population. Less than 70% of people over the age of 15 can read.

Coffee, bananas, sugar, corn and cotton are important exports for Guatemala. Approximately half of the people of working age earn their living from farming, but about 60% of Guatemala's gross domestic product comes from services. The main ingredients in Guatemalan cuisine are corn, black beans and rice. Every meal includes tortillas made from corn. Fruit and vegetables are widely consumed as well. Prominent features in the Guatemalan street scene include food vendors' stands, colourful cloths and textiles, and football. As is common for Central and South America, football is the most popular sport in Guatemala as well.



PAMI is a Guatemalan NGO founded in 1989. It aims to promote children's and young people's rights, both on the grassroots level and through political influencing. The idea behind PAMI is to support young people as active citizens by providing them with information and skills to make a difference in society.

Currently, approximately 400 young Guatemalans are actively involved in the youth networks founded by PAMI. The members of the networks are promoting public discussion about children's rights by self-publishing the *Entre Amigos* magazine and creating programmes for local radio and television networks. Other means of influencing include campaigns, parades and events. For example, in spring 2011, network members arranged highly visible local campaigns in order to encourage victims of sexual crimes to pursue legal action instead of staying quiet. Through the spread of information and peer education, PAMI reaches out to thousands of children, teens, and adults all around Guatemala.



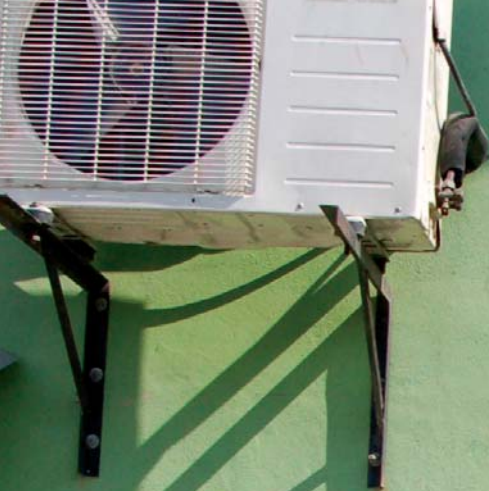
ODW Finland (Finnish: Taksvärkki ry) is an NGO that is one of the first development co-operation movements created by young people themselves. ODW Finland has enacted development co-operation projects using profits from the ODW campaigns for Finnish school children and students since 1967. These multi-year projects strive to improve human rights, life skills and chances for children and teens in developing countries to get their voices heard. The goal is to have these young people become active participants in their communities in order to further development.

ODW Finland wants to encourage young Finns towards global responsibility. ODW Finland produces study materials on global education for schools and teachers. They aim to promote tolerance and human rights by describing the life of young people in developing countries, but also by inspiring Finns to think of and break away from prejudices and stereotypes about life in developing countries.

From 2007 to 2011, ODW Finland and PAMI enacted a development co-operation project in Guatemala. The aim of the project was to the human rights of children and young people as well as prevent sexual abuse. ODW Finland continues to support PAMI's work for the human rights of children and young people, giving them more ways to make a difference in society.



The societal message is displayed strongly in murals by young Guatemalans.



Derecho a la Participación Política y Ciudadana de las Mujeres



LEY DE CONSEJOS DE DESARROLLO



Código Municipal



**LEY DE LA
DESCENTRALIZACIÓN**



**LEY DE DIGNIFICACIÓN
Y DESARROLLO
Integral DE LAS
MUJERES!**





Mural? Radio ad? Image theatre presentation?

Should you try to make yourself heard? How?

Young members of PAMI, the Guatemalan partner organisation of Operation a Day's Work Finland (Taksvärkki ry) share their skills and experience in social participation and active citizenship.