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EMOTIONAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: “SMILE KEEPERS” PROGRAMS

“SMILE KEEPERS” PROGRAMS

- **are not about “keeping smiling”**
- **are about welcoming every feeling**
as a valuable guide on the journey of
exploring our inner self and others’

RUMI: "GUEST HOUSE"

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning is a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

**WHEN AND WHY
WE STARTED
“SMILE KEEPERS”
PROGRAMS?**



THE GOALS OF “SMILE KEEPERS” PROGRAMS

To promote:

- **self and social awareness development of children and young people (5-18 years old)**
- **children as active participants in the process of education**
- **personal and educative competence of the teachers especially in socio-emotional domain**

THEORETICAL STANDPOINT

- Our **interactivistic - constructivistic approach** to the nature of human development
- **M.B.Rosenberg's model of non-violent communication (NVC)**
NVC is not only about communication, it is **radical shift in the approach to education.**

THE KEY FEATURES OF THE TEACHER'S FACILITATION SKILLS:

- **compassionate, non-judgmental, non-directive presence**
- **intervention** in the zone of proximal development of the child
- **openness** - there are no desirable, expected or correct responses
- **honest expression** of their own personal experiences

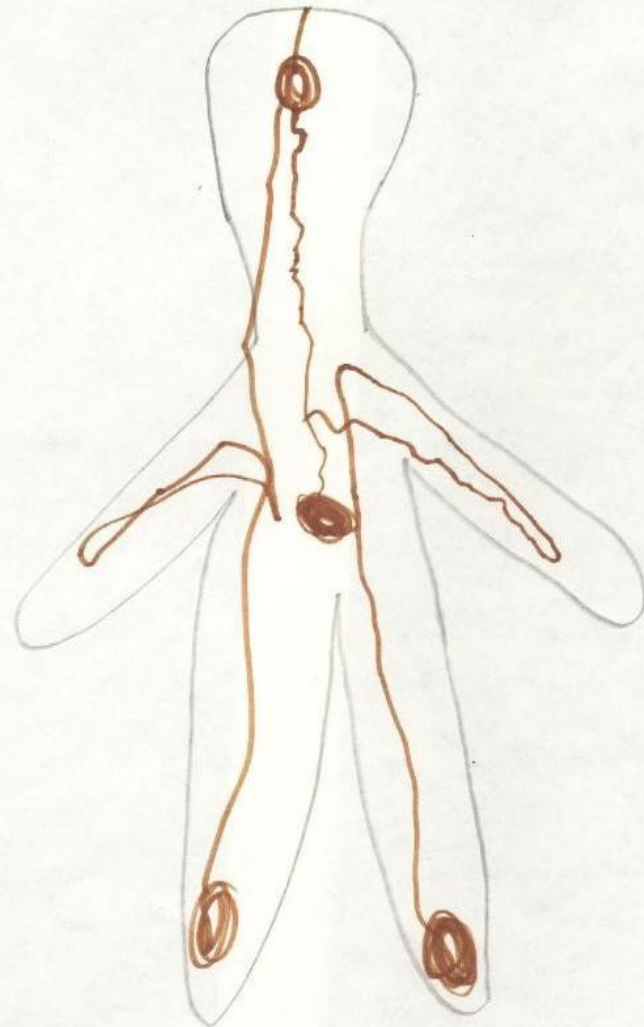
KEY FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

- **Circular seating arrangements**
- **Active learning methodology**
- **Playful context of interaction**
- **Symbolic expression (drawing) of feelings and sharing about it around the circle**, that allows children articulate and reflect on their inner experience

TYPES OF TASKS IN EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

1. To draw **inner, visceral experience** of feelings

Here is a drawing of **fear**,
done by girl,
age 5-6



Jilujana

TYPES OF TASKS IN EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

2. to find **symbolic expression** for the particular feeling

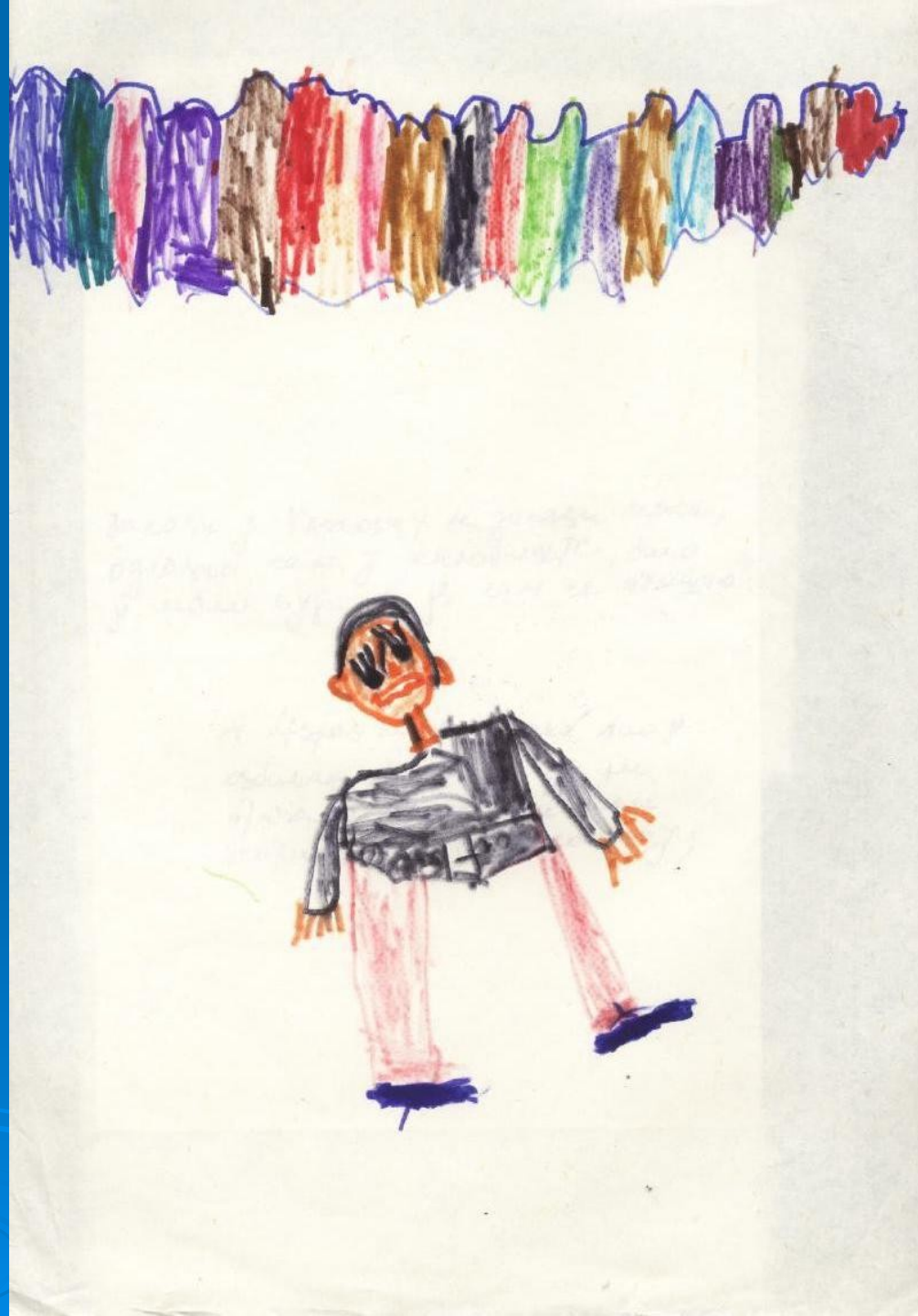


“My **anger** is like a drill spinning in my head”, boy age 6

TYPES OF TASKS IN EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

3. to find **symbolic expression** for inner dynamics of feelings

Me and my feelings,
boy, age 6



TYPES OF TASKS IN EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

➤ 4. symbolic representation of inner dynamics of feelings

Inner dynamics of
feelings,
16 years old girl



OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTATION

- **1993-1998: 4000 teachers** and about **100 000 children** involved, with the support of **UNICEF**
- **2001+:** integral part of **Civic Education** in Primary schools in Serbia
- **6900 teachers** with the support of **MoES**
- 3 manuals “**Smile keepers 1, 2, and 3**” with programs for children aged 5-10, 11-14, and 15-18
- **2003-2004** – “Smile Keepers” TV serial of 33 workshop episodes
- **2001+:** Spreading abroad


EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAMS

- **Several internal (done by our team) and**
- **external evaluation (done by UNICEF's expert team)**

- **significant positive changes in the behaviour of:**
 - preschool children,
 - school children
 - children labelled as problems
 - adolescents
 - teachers

CHALLENGES WE MET / ARE MEETING

RESISTANCE:

- IN PSYCHOLOGICAL CIRCLES
 - IN UNICEF
 - WITHIN THE SCHOOLS
 - IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
 - IN PUBLIC
- 
- The background of the slide features several faint, concentric circles in a lighter shade of blue, resembling ripples in water, located in the bottom right quadrant.

STRATEGIES OF DEALING WITH RESISTANCE

- SELF EMPATHY
- MUTUAL SUPPORT IN OUR TEAM
- FACING DIFFICULTIES AS A GIFT
- COMPASSIONATE LISTENING OF OPPONENTS
- TRUSTING IN CHANGE
- STEP BY STEP - do what you can
- DANCE between passionate commitment and letting go
- RISK – going out of the comfort zone, breaking the rules
- HAVING FUN, CELEBRATION
- TV AS A SUPPORT - SERIAL
- GRANT ME PATIENCE LORD with institutional change BUT HURRY