Evaluation of the 7 courses

Inhoud

empowerment
college

Introduction to this evaluation

The relevance of evaluations is clearly stated in the Manual of the empowerment college. We developed specific evaluation tools, which are more or less the same as those used in recovery colleges in Great Britain. All evaluation tools are added as supplements to the Manual. As are the tools for writing an individual learning plan (ILP). It is important to acknowledge that some of the questionnaires used in the ILP are relevant for evaluations. The ILP can be seen as a zero measurement. Making an ILP, a student decides about his/her learning goals for the college. And he/she does an assessment about his/her present state of empowerment and future plans. At the end an assessment is done about whether the these goals are met. And both assessments of empowerment and future plans are done again at the end in order to be able to find out whether any changes have come about in the period of following the empowerment college. Apart from these evaluations we also developed a small questionnaire about how participants value a course and we developed an evaluation sheet for the trainers who gave the course. Trainers are asked to do a small evaluation directly after each session of a course. All these tools are added as supplements in the Manual.

In summery we have had the next design for evaluation:

Schedule 1: evaluation design

Zero Measurement		Post Measurement	
ILP	Assessment of goals	Feedback	Assessment of goals met
	Empowerment questionnaire		Empowerment questionnaire
	3 questions about future plans		3 questions about future plans
			Evaluation of a course by participants
			Evaluation of a course by trainers

The evaluation we present here has two goals. It is in the first place meant to report about practice of using an ILP and doing evaluations with the tools presented in the Manual. Except for the British none of the partners had experience with doing this in a systematic way. We are, however, convinced that it is necessary to adopt a systematic way to do it. During the project all of us have practiced it. In this evaluation we will give an account of this exercise and so we will describe what went well and what did not work so well in the ILP and evaluation procedures.

It is only in the seconds place that this report presents an evaluation of the courses which have been developed and tried out. We will, of course, present some of the data from which we can draw some conclusions, but we must be very cautious about that in this state of development.

We must acknowledge that the contexts in which our courses were tested, were very different. Both national situations in mental health and social care vary and so are the concrete contexts of our own organisations which organised the courses. We had different opportunities for spreading information, getting support from mental health organisations or community organisations, develop fruitful cooperation with other organisations, recruit or enrol participants and find places where to do a course. So actually the situations in which the tests are done differ in many ways.

Moreover, at this moment, it is important to be conscious of the fact that in our countries where empowerment colleges are in a developing state, these colleges do not have a large number of courses to offer. Most of us only have the courses we are developing in this European project. We neither have at our disposal enough money to extend it rapidly, nor we have a solid corpse of trainers who can develop and give the training program. This is an important difference with the situation in Great Britain.

The consequence is that we cannot offer many choices to the participants. The ILP and evaluations must be, at this moment, limited to the single courses which are offered and tested. The tools for the ILP and evaluations as presented in the Manual of the empowerment college are, however, developed to use is a college that does have a broader prospectus of courses to offer.

So we deal with two questions in this evaluation:
1) What are the experiences of the partners when trying out the ILP and the evaluations in practicing and trying out the courses which are being developed
2) What may, in general sense, will possibly be the outcome of the modules which are developed and tried out.

International cooperation

Seven specific modules were produced and tested. Every module was produced in two countries. During the project meetings and in between, countries who were responsible for a specific course, deliberated about ideas, goals and practical schedules and session plans.

Schedule 2: the courses

Module 1 (O4)	Health and wellbeing	Germany	Poland
Module 2 (O5)	My rights	Bulgaria	Italy
Module 3 (O6)	Talking about money	Netherlands	Italy
Module 4 (O7)	Participation and social inclusion	Poland	Bulgaria
Module 5 (O8)	Stigma	Italy	Germany
Module 6 (O9)	Self exploration/body and mind	Netherlands	Germany
Module TtT (010)	Train the trainers	Great Britain	Germany

The experiences to work with a team from another country were generally positive. The cooperation consisted on discussions during the project meetings, exchanging emails and discussing topics via the phone. Through this work each learned how to better organize the subject, how to underline the role of the participants in the courses and deal with different views and opinions in other countries.
The exchange of information between countries was helpful. All profited from the experience of the British. The work consisted on exchanging information, examples of the exercises, working on the schedule. At the end there were a lot of changes and differences between the same courses in two different countries. The basic reasons for that were different experiences, different contexts and different needs of the participants. All countries had to put a lot of effort to adapt a theme to local needs and contexts. Coproduction means that you do not run a course which has been developed elsewhere as a ready-made product, but you develop it in active partnership of experts by experience and experts by education in a specific context.
We refer to the Manual for the principles of coproduction. Here we will share some practical experiences with coproduction.
In general all of us made preparations in more or less the same ways. Most of the times concrete preparations were done by the co-trainers, and in close cooperation with the organization which is responsible for the empowerment college or module. The coproduction process during the preparations were very important for the result. Preparations dealt with all relevant questions and topics like what would be important for the participants to know, what would be of practical value for them, what would be their learning-goals, what kind of questions they would possibly raise. Also to figure out the background of the participants, their regular way of life and the every-day situations they experience, in order to predict the adequacy of the topics.

Experts by experience who were involved in the co-productions, tried to imagine real-life situations from their own past experience or to remember some shared experience – by colleagues, clients of social-services, patients' relatives etc. In this way they rose questions or opened discussions that would be relevant to the topics of the college.

A next step was that course materials were gathered and/or designed, most of the times specific for each country and context. The content of each topic was discussed – what were the relevant and important issues, where should be the focus of the presentation, how should the time of the presentation be managed, etc. Some brainstorming was made on the practical exercises, role-games, case discussions, e-learning, etc. The role of the expert by experience was to share his own needs and difficulties, as well as to say whether the topics planned were relevant to the real-life situations.

With regard to the partnership of Italy we must notice that the Italian partner indeed run three courses as planned and also produced evaluative data about each of these three courses. At the end, however they were not able to contribute to the final versions of these courses which implied that other partners had to take over their tasks, and spent quite some extra time in bringing this to an end.

Overview of data gathered

As described above, we developed a number of instruments to evaluate the courses. Each partner in the project was asked to use these instruments. In the beginning assessment of goals and assessment of empowerment. At the end assessment of the results and evaluation of the course. In the schedule below an overview per country.

Schedule 3: instruments used per module

		Assessment of goals	Trainers evaluation per session	empowerment evaluation form	Course evaluation form	Goals evaluation form
Health and wellbeing	Germany	x	X	X	X	X
	Poland	x	x	x	x	x
My rights	Bulgaria	X	X	X	X	X
	Italy	x	x	x	x	x
Talking about money	Netherlands	X	X	X	X	X
	Italy		x	x	x	x
Participation and social inclusion	Poland	X	X	X	X	X
	Bulgaria	x	x	x	x	x
Stigma	Germany	X	X	X	X	X
	Italy	x	x	x	x	x
Self exploration	Germany	x	x	x	x	x
	Netherlands	x	x	x	x	x
Train the trainers	Germany	x	X	X	X	X
	Great Brittain		x		x	

Assessment of goals and the 0-measurement were not done in a systematic way. In the beginning of the project there was a lot of confusion about the ILP, how it should be done and that the assessment questionnaires were obligatory. Specific confusion existed about goals assessment: should it be general recovery and empowerment goals or should they be specific goals connected to the subject of the course attended?

The British partner, testing the *Train the trainers* module, did not assess specific goals for this module and did not use the empowerment evaluation questions.

Participants and attendance

All partners recruited participants for the courses by advertising on the their websites, spreading information sheets and by direct addressing and inviting candidates. In some situations it was done in mental health services and in other situations the advertising was done in self-help organizations, training organizations and colleges. In schedule 4 we present the results.

Schedule 4: number of participants

	Topic	N at start	N at end
Bulgaria	My Rights	17	9
Germany	Health and Wellbeing	12	8
Italy	Speaking about money	25	19
Netherlands	Speaking about money	8	6
Poland	Health and Wellbeing	20	10
Bulgaria	Participation and Social Inclusion	8	6
Germany	Stigma	12	6
Germany	Self exploration	10	6
Italy	My Rights	25	22
Italy	Stigma	20	20
Netherlands	Self exploration	10	7
Poland	Participation and Social Inclusion	14	12
Germany	Train the trainers	12	12
Great Britain	Train the trainers	14	14
Total		207	157

As shown in the table there was some fall out. In total there were 207 candidates who were inscribed at the beginning. In most courses not all showed up at the first session and in during the courses some fell out. In most courses not all participants attended all sessions. It happened regularly that participants left a session before it was ended. It was also noticed that attention declined at the end of a session. It was not sought out systematically what were the reasons for staying away or leaving a course. At the end 157 participants finished a course and were given a certificate. So there was a fall out of 24 %.

Diversity

One of the fundaments of the empowerment college is to strive for inclusion and be open for all people and not only for users of mental health care. Information from Bulgaria is missing.

Schedule 4: diversity of participants

	Topic	diversity
Bulgaria	My Rights	Only service users
Germany	Health and Wellbeing	1 professional, other students were service users
Italy	Speaking about money	7 professionals of which 1 from the public service and 6 from the social cooperatives, others were service users
Netherlands	Speaking about money	3 service users, 3 peer experts, 1 entrepreneur, 1 student social work
Poland	Health and Wellbeing	most of participants were (ex) service users having done Ex-in courses
Bulgaria	Participation and Social Inclusion	All students were service users

Germany	Stigma	1 professional, 11 service users
Germany	Self exploration (Mind and body)	2 professional participants, 3 peer workers, 5 service users
Italy	My Rights	Service users(9-13), 3 peer support workers, 1 professional from the public service, 6 from the social cooperatives, 2-4 students, 1 parent, 1 citizen
Italy	Stigma	Service users, peer support workers, professionals from the public service and from the social cooperatives, students
Netherlands	Self exploration	7 service users, one of those working as a policemen, 1 psychologist
Poland	Participation and Social Inclusion	Ex-users, service users, family members, students people interested in the subject
Germany	Train the trainers	Trainers and aspirant trainers all (ex-) service users
Great Britain	Train the trainers	7 service users, 1 previous service user, 5 staff, 1 member general public

All partners tried to get both service users and professionals and others like family members or people from the public in the courses. This was done with varying success. All were successful in finding candidates among service users and ex-service users. In those countries where they have Ex-in courses (Germany, Poland and the Netherlands) they could arouse interest among experts by experience. Finding persons from the group of professionals was more difficult and was only very successful in Italy. In other countries this most of the times was limited to one or two persons. Am important reason is that professionals must get permission from their employer. In Italy this was agreed by the employer who actually was involved in the project as a partner.

Assessment of goals and Individual Learning Plans (ILP)

For students, as is described in the Manual, it is important to make an Indiviudual learning plan. None of us, however, used the individual learning plan (ILP) as a tool to determine the starting level of the course. Participants did not enrol on a broader program from which to choose one or more courses that sticked to an ILP. Nor was there in most places, like in the recovery colleges in Great Britain, a coach or advisor who could assist a student with making a plan or setting goals. Coaching of students to asses goals were, however, active in Italy and Bulgaria.

Italy: *" Registrations to the first empowerment college course were opened one week before the start at the 'Article 32' office (a participation group within the Mental Health Department) in fixed dates and times. During the procedure of filling out the forms, one or more tutors have helped as support to explain the goals of the course and to invite people to outline their personal goals in relation to their own experiences, needs, desires and interests. In these forms each participant has so stated his priorities in terms of needs and goals. An abstract was composed considering what has emerged and comprising the entries which were suggested most frequently"*

All courses, so, were not part of a wider offer of education or school program. They were single courses, and participants did not make an individual learning plan which encompassed wider goals and broader perspectives on empowerment and recovery. For the participants it may have been a more or less isolated activity. However we do have the impressions that all of them tried to in one way or another include it in personal strivings and problem solving. When professionals attended, they also were in the role of students, like the others. For them also, it was an interesting experience because it gave them the opportunity to meet people and learn about details of the difficulties in life they live. Although the professionals are part of the system and may defend the rules of the systems

and may advise about how to adjust to the system , there was also compassion and insight that adjustment should come from both sides.

When assessment beforehand was missed, it was necessary to adapt the course during the course itself. Poland: "We were surprised about the knowledge and self development level of the participants. It was clear that they have worked on themselves and analysed their mental state previously. Based on the exercises we could follow the needs of students. We didn't want to get rid of the schedule so we let the students speak in the context of the themes".

In schedule 5 we present some general data about the goals which were set in each module and which are describes in the module descriptions. We also present the data gathered about goal attainment on a 5 point scale.

Schedule 5: goals and gaol attainment

scale			1	2	3	4	5
		Number of goals	Not at all met	Met only to small degree	Half way	Met to large degree	Completely met
Bulgarije 1	My rights	7	1	3	21	24	20
Bulgarije 2	participation en social inclusion	8	1	2	8	19	10
Netherlands 1	Talking about money	7			3	12	6
Netherlands 2	Body and Mind	6		15	4	23	
Italy 1	Talking about money	5	4	8	20	9	1
Italy 2	My rights	7	3	4	29	8	
Taly 3	Stigma	7	3	4	27	8	
Germany 1	Health / wellbeing	15	12	7	24	40	13
Germany 2	Stigma	12	2	5	19	17	5
Germany 3	Body and Mind	6		2	10	18	6
Poland 1	Health / wellbeing	*					
Poland 2	participation en social inclusion	*					
Germany	train the trainers	6		2	6	52	24

When we look at the overview we see in the 3rd column that the number of goals belonging to a course is between 5 and 8. The tow modules in Germany we see more goals, but these are subgoals under broader ones.

On the 5 point scale of goal attainment we see scores which are most of the times in the middle (3) or at the positive side (4). Completely met does not happen so often. Best scores are in Bulgaria. From our data we can observe that no single goal has been estimated as «*completely met*», the evaluation marks always tend to be drawn in the middle column, *3 or 4*. In some cases single goals were «*not met at all*». "Not at all met" is however an exception. The high number or 12 "not at all's" in the German course on *Health and Wellbeing* is completely in line with the others, when taken into account the number of (sub)goals in this module.

In this schedule we see no data from the Polish. They missed the assistance from the manual how to do the goal assessment and they used a different way of assessing goals and reviewing them. That's why they are not filled in, in this overview.

In Poland, the assessment of needs was done in the first sessions of the courses they delivered. Every participant could say what his expectations were and or his needs. Neither were the results assessed with a closed questionnaire but with the question: What are the top three things that you have learnt from this course today which have been most helpful?

All participants responded to this question with positive results like:

I learn how to deal with my weaknesses.

I learn about the places, services where I can find help

I have been given a chance to get to know the experiences of other people and the discussions was interesting.

Listening carefully to what someone is saying without having prejudices

I got to know more information about the mental illness and the way of perceiving it by society

I learnt how to communicate with the world in an understandable way

I learnt how to pass from the state of being excluded to an inclusion.

I learnt how to organise and systematize my own resources-potential of recovery

Ability to listen

Ability to express myself

Ability to be myself

Handling my own emotions

Becoming conscious of the problem

Understanding that there are others with the same problem

The ways of effective communication and cooperation

Empowerment status

Results of an empowerment college may not only be shown in relation to specific goals of specific courses but may also be shown in the measurement of empowerment and participation in society. About empowerment we adopted a short questionnaire with 9 statements and about the future we asked 3 questions.

Schedule 6: answers on the empowerment questions

scale	1		2		3		4		5	
	None of the time		Rarely		Some of the time		Often		Al of the time	
	O	P	O	P	O	P	O	P	O	P
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	5	8	14	35	15	50	8	18
I've been feeling useful	2	1	7	6	11	26	18	48	5	19
I've been feeling relaxed	2	3	11	8	15	19	13	57	4	19
I've been dealing with problems well	2	2	9	1	8	25	17	79	4	2
I've been thinking clearly	1	2	9	3	13	17	14	62	6	74
I've been feeling close to other people	1	4	6	5	9	13	16	47	10	44
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	4	3	4	5		18	19	50	6	32
I have knowledge and understanding to manage my own mental/physical health	0	2	1		4	11	14	43	7	38

& wellbeing										
I have the skills to manage my own mental/ physical health & wellbeing	1	2	1		5	13	15	38	4	39

In this schedule we see a 5 point scale and we see the results of two measurements: the zero measurement (O) and the post measurement (P). In accordance with what is stated before about the limited implementation of ILP's we see much lower numbers in the columns of the O – measurements. An extra reason for this is that from our data it also appears, where this questionnaire was used, that not all participants actually filled it in. The consequence of this is that we can only make comparisons between the two measurements very cautiously and that we must be cautious also to draw strict conclusions from the quantitative data about changes in time. When however doing this and also when we do a T-test on the numbers we do find positive results, although not very strong. In schedule 6 we see that in general the numbers on the positive scores (3, 4 and 5) are higher under P than under O. This indicates a growth in empowerment.

As for the negative scores (1 and 2) we see no real significant changes. It would be positive when the numbers under O would be higher than the numbers under P, but we do not see that.

In general it can be concluded that the participants have shown to have a very positive orientation about their empowerment: feeling good, relaxed, having skills and thinking clearly.

In general we can also notice that a lot of participants already have quite high scores at the beginning of the courses. This means that the participants in the courses were viewing themselves as empowered persons to some or even a large degree. When we would present the data more in detail we could see that the largest variety in this perspective of empowerment is among the service users. More of them are at the disempowered end of the scale. Most of them only grew in empowerment to some degree.

Future plans

We asked three question about future plans in relation to work, education and voluntary work. We had a 5 point scale in which the answers are shown in schedule 7. we did two measurements: one zero- and one post measurement.

Schedule 7: Overview of Future plans

	1		2		3		4		5	
	I am not thinking about that right now		I'm starting to think about it		I'm starting to look		I am actively seeking		I am now employed / volunteering / in education	
	O	P	O	P	O	P	O	P	O	P
In relation to work	10	13	8	4	4	6	4	15	18	54
In relation to education	10	10	5	4	4	19	4	710	20	48
In relation to voluntary work	18	30	3	16	3	8	4	5	15	36

As in respect to the empowerment questions (schedule 6) we notice that the number of O scores are much lower than the post scores (P). Again we also see that in general the numbers on the positive scores (3, 4 and 5) are higher under P than under O. This indicates a growth in empowerment.

As for the score under 2 ("I am starting to think about it": this might of course also be a positive score when but we don't see a real positive tendency except for the voluntary work, question three: there we also see a much higher score under the P (=16) in comparison to the O (= 3)
As for the score 1 we do not see significant changes for the first two questions. A very large one however on the 3rd question which means that in the post measurement, after the courses a lot of participants were not anymore considering to do voluntary work. More of them became more positive about voluntary work.

In general we can also notice that a lot of participants already have quite high scores at the beginning of the courses. This means that the many of the participants in the courses were already in a participating mood. And this certainly is the case for the train the trainer course. So the results shown in schedule 7 are also flattered by this circumstance.

Evaluation of the courses by the participants

The course evaluation form was used by all countries. There were 8 questions to evaluate the course on a 5 point scale. Not all questions were used by all countries. Some skipped the questions 3, 4, 7 and 8. Apparently they did not acknowledge the relevance of these questions. The arguments behind these questions are that the quality of a course is not only determined by what the organization and the trainers offer but is also determined by what participants themselves contribute. That's is why we also put questions which evaluate yourself and your fellow participants.
In Schedule 8 we show the results of this questionnaire.
The general score in the final column is an index indicating the general appreciation on that topic.

Schedule 8 : evaluation by participants

	How would you describe or rate	excellent	Very good	good	Could improve	negative	General score
1	your pre-course welcome and the communication & guidance (e.g. registration, administration, telephone, e-mail or face to face contact with the Empowerment College?	38	40	28	7	1	456/105= 4,34
2	the value of the training materials (e.g. Handouts/reading material)?	28	33	35	10		393/106= 3,71
3	your participation during the meeting?	3	16	24	7	2	167/52= 3,21
4	your own contributions during the meeting?	1	8	29	7		108/45= 2,4
5	the value of the course for your own recovery or for the recovery of someone you support?	36	44	10	9	3	407/102= 3,99
6	the trainers' communication skills & responsiveness to your needs?	24	54	24	6	1	405/107 3,79
7	your contact with fellow-participants?	10	17	19	6	1	188/53= 3,55
8	the contribution of your fellow-participants to the course?	10	18	20	10		202/58= 3.48

The scores on the different topics show some interesting results: Most positive is topic 1 about the precourse welcome and information. Second is the value of the courses for recovery and empowerment! This score is followed by topics 2 and 6 about what is offered by the organization and the trainers.

Next is the appraisal of the other participants in topic 7 and 8. Least is the appraisal of oneself in topics 3 and 4.

Apparently one is more prone to compliment others than oneself and apparently one is quite strict to oneself to set high standards.

When students are asked to value the course in their own words, they say a lot of very positive things and hardly any negative. Like: *Essential, Sharing, Empathy and empowerment, Enriching, To open closed doors, etc.*

When asked what helped them most they for example say:

"The constant attention to the students also through group's work"

"More knowledge of the subject of rights and how to make them worth it"

Some people mention very concrete things:

"The address of the Legal Aid Bureau,"

"The institutions to address,"

"How to solve a case,"

"I learned I need to have a personal assistant."

Others refer to certain areas that have been commented on within the course:

"For the guardianship,"

"Use of social assistance,"

"My rights, how to stand up,"

"Protecting our rights in society,"

"Reflecting my own situation"

"We did learn a lot about ressources to relax and loose tension."

"It is important to take some time to relax and look after myself"

"Exchange with others /in group work"

There were a lot more reflections on these open questions by the participants which were relating to the specific goals and exercises of the specific courses. They both reflect the positive feelings mentioned above but also it was sometimes not so easy when confronted with own personal troubles and obstacles. In the courses about selfexploration ("body and mind") and about health and wellbeing, these were for some participants deep personal questions while they were stimulated to confront themselves with more or less uncomfortable topics. In other courses like the one about My rights or participation and inclusion, it was not easy for all participants to understand and accept the background of recovery and empowerment, when they stick to the traditional psychiatric or medical paradigm. In Bulgaria, for example, a strong negative reaction was provoked by the topic of recovery from mental illness. The presentation and discussion generated tension and the feedback was linked to the feeling of the deep despair that the participants are experiencing in trying to live fully, and the reluctance to "lose" the secondary benefits of the disease expressed through the insistence on various "compensations" and the feeling of disability. Although some of the participants cover a large part of the recovery criteria, they do not themselves agree with such an interpretation.

Evaluations by trainers

The trainers were asked to evaluate every session of a course and make a final and general judgement afterwards. A questionnaire for reviewing a session is added to the Manual and used by all partners.

The main experience in all courses delivered is that a lot went very good. Students were moved by the subjects, involved themselves and were motivated. The trainers got involved into the personal

stories of participants. There were no serious escalations although tensions and drawbacks could not be avoided all the time. The programmes have been done, more or less as prepared. During the session most of the times there was a wide participation and a relaxed and playful atmosphere. Accomplishing courses in practice, means also co-facilitating these courses. Doing this, some went well, and some less well. However well prepared co-trainers were, oftentimes they also met unexpected problems, difficult situations to deal with, or disappointments.

In general, what helped was that the participants were interested in the topics, keen on learning new things and motivated. Oftentimes participants were posing a lot of questions. The presence of a co-facilitator - expert by experience - stimulated the participants to share personal experiences and the actual problems, anxieties and questions that have risen from it.

The drawbacks, on the other hand, were associated with certain group processes. An important moment, for example, concerns respect for the frame of the whole process – to know when it is time for the presentation and when it is time for discussion. Tensions arise when a participant is asking too much time or is too dominant. It may be hindering when participants interrupt during a presentation, and also when there are interpersonal discussions outside the group discussion or when participants become unkind towards others. If this is disrupting, it requires intervention in the group dynamics and the frame by the co-trainers.

Another point in the coproduction was the number of attendants. Where there was a large presence, like in Italy, this made a strong impact. It asks then for extra efforts to engage everybody and value the single contributions, in terms of presentations, group-work, training exercises and general discussions. Given a large audience, it is more difficult to consider the various levels of information and skills of the single participants. In Italy, f.e. to achieve such a goal, they have tried to use these data in the following sessions, on one hand involving more peer support experts in the management, on the other hand increasing the number of practical exercises, like role-plays, thematic group-work, or the reading of a brief illustrative text.

All modules used simple exercises as introduction and further on the exercises became more complex and adjusted to the level of self-development and needs of the participants. Participants started to share their experiences quickly. They tried to understand each other, exchange thoughts and experiences and referred to each other or compared themselves with others to explain oneself. Poland: "This personal involvement and the tendency to answer to what the other person says is a good method when we conduct a short workshop. People have a difficulty to get used to express their own point of view without comparing and referring to the other students words." This works quite well under the conditions of mutual respect, no artificial distance between student and teacher, openness and ability to listen carefully.

The sessions were warm and full of enthusiasm. Trainers had a double role: not only facilitating the discussions and exercises, but also participating in the discussions and exercises. The planning beforehand of the training program was followed in a loose way. When thought necessary parts were skipped and the discussions allowed to take more time when this was thought productive. In fact this is a consequence of striving for honest and open discussions where all can participate in and where persons can work on personal hesitations, thresholds or resistance. It is often difficult to foretell what will happen on this level.

Regularly quite serious and difficult situations were discussed. Sometimes there were emotions, excitement, irritations and agitation. Going into these emotions seriously helped to manage these and to resolve the problems.

Poland: "The differences and similarities between the workshop and the Open Dialogue method: The Open Dialogue is a therapeutic intervention in a crisis situation of a person and his social network. During the workshop we didn't have the students in a severe crisis so the situation was different. Also the approach was more educational then therapeutic. In addition we didn't use the reflecting team which is very important in the Open Dialogue.

The final results of how the courses were done show that on the one hand they followed the descriptions as agreed upon when developing the courses. On the other hand in practice there were quite some modifications of the exercises during the workshop. The schedules for a session were almost all of the times too full. One could not do the complete program due to lack of time. What was done during a session was not only following the schedule, but also adapting to the participants rhythm and needs. Sometimes slower, sometimes faster. Some exercises needed more time and sometimes discussions were so important that it was not at all wise to stop them.
A concrete point is that all strictly sticked to the closing time of each session.

About the results, the trainers are mostly positive. In some courses, more than in others, students were self aware and were more able to concentrate on the topic and learn to deal with it in their own lives. In others there was more distress, anxiety and more difficulty to handle the subject. But the students felt comfortable more or less in the groups and they felt the support from the trainers. They asked questions also during the breaks and had fruitful conversations with the other participants and the teachers as well.
Results which were noticed by the trainers were that students left the classroom feeling "more arranged " inside, they were motivated to act, had plans. Some of them complained that they didn't get the ready answers how to behave, what to do, but they made a work on themselves and probably profited from the workshop. In general we can conclude that participants finished satisfied, empowered, left the course with new questions, hope and the feeling that something positive has happened through their engagement in the subject and exchange of the thoughts.
For a lot of participants it was a new experience, creative and valuable. It deepened knowledge of the raised themes, broadened horizons, helped to look at certain things wider or from a different perspective. For others it gave the feeling of self-esteem. Students were prepared to invest a lot of themselves.

Some recommendations, hints and warnings

1. Courses should support participants to discover themselves and support recovery. They should follow a recovery oriented look at mental health and stimulate to share experiences. For that it is necessary to be open and even be generous to others, leading to a rich exchange of thoughts, ideas and interpretations. It is important that the courses create an opportunity to talks about own experiences, about who we are, what defines us, about the reflection on social inclusion etc.
2. It is important to prepare a course with more co-production meetings and involve many people to set how to deal with the course topics;
3. It is very important to implement the Individual Learning Plan procedures. By doing this, future course modules of Empowerment College can be more personalized. Individual tutorship for the participants, will lead to more personal satisfaction of their personal needs.
4. Although not all schedules were done as planned, nevertheless it was very important to have a schedule per session beforehand. Do not plan to many things in one session. One should, f.e. not have more than one expert speech in one meeting.
5. Plan enough breaks and create a relaxed and engaging climate, with ample space available. The courses must be conducted in a careful and inquisitive way in a nice atmosphere.
6. Literature offered can be concrete and factual or mare conceptual and abstract. When information is provided on different levels, this means that not every participant is expected to read all of it but select that literature which fits him or her. The trainers cannot expect that all participants did the same preparations and have the same information.
7. When having a big group it is important to divide the group and to work in smaller groups.
8. A practical focus is a plus and helps the participants to integrate the information quickly and easily. What has been considered a minus was the proportion of practical exercises, case discussions etc. and the proportion practice/theory as a whole. Enough practical exercises

should be scheduled in the courses. It is important to present concrete cases from real life and concrete examples.

9. Courses which are goal directed and looking for solutions, inspire to go further.
10. Pay enough attention to communication skills, like giving and receiving feedback.
11. Trainers must have some skills to track and manage emotional processes in the group. A discussion is about how much a trainers should let himself be involved in the emotional states of the students. But when a personal problem arises, it is important that it is not neglected. The person should not stay alone with the problem. It is important that problems are shared and discussed and that possible solutions are given or rather that the students have been directed to find their own solutions. Because of the reaction of the trainers to difficult situations and mental states, the group become more open and shared freely their emotions, feelings and thought with others. They trusted the teachers and the other students. The train the trainers course is important to implement.
12. Results are more clear when a course deals with the themes and problems of the persons. It is important to avoid general discussions and theories. Linking to concrete experiences and problems of participants is necessary.
13. It is important that students find both the time for themselves and for the others. Being able to help others in f.e. participating in society, is a positive thing and courses it is important that courses provide the tools to help others.
14. The goal of using E learning was, as said, skipping the classroom. E-learning was effective for those who indeed used the e-learning as an opportunity to work on the goals at home, do the homework, talk about it at home, try out at home and come to the meetings of the lessons to discuss the results, ask questions, and find out about experiences of other participants in different roles. Negative were a number of practical points which can be held responsible for the minimal use of the E-learning tool. We learned about implementing such a tool and we probably also can conclude that using such a tool on a one-time basis is not very effective. Participants must get the opportunity to get used to it, both to the technical aspects as to the didactic principles which are behind it.
15. A more technical point is that first experience with moodle is that it is a bit inflexible and not really user-friendly for our goal.
16. Most difficult to meet are goals which need more time to fulfil. For example to try out what you learned during the course in practice outside the course. In a short program there is not much time to try out what is learned. Nevertheless there was some positive feedback from the participants on this point. It helped when participants did some homework, used E learning and skipped the classroom.
17. And it is an important expectation that the courses can play a role in changing the system: Poland: "It should take place in every Polish city. I have a great hopes for this, that if the project will develop, the mental health state of the society will significantly improve. It strengthened my faith in success."