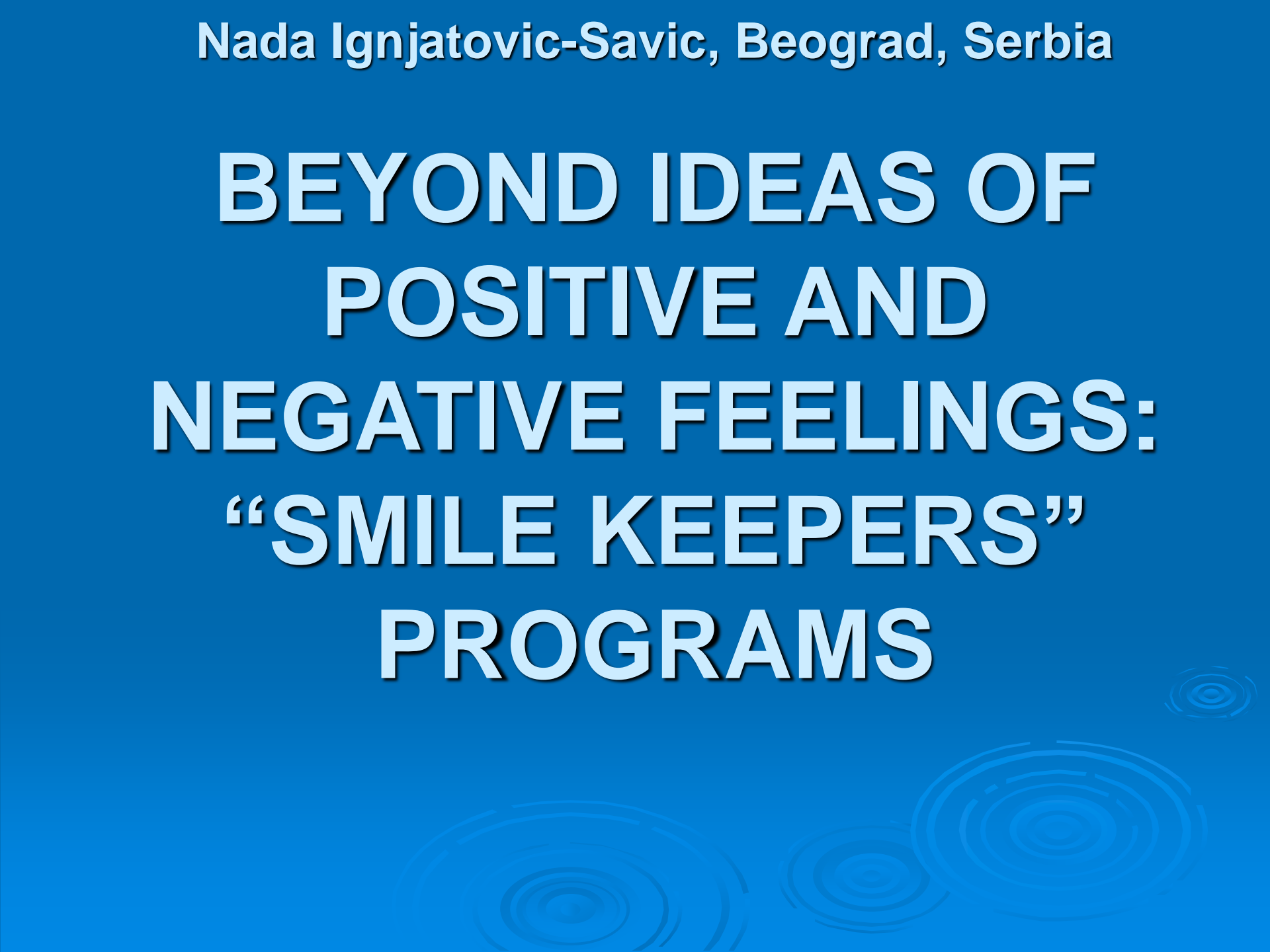


Nada Ignjatovic-Savic, Beograd, Serbia

**BEYOND IDEAS OF
POSITIVE AND
NEGATIVE FEELINGS:
“SMILE KEEPERS”
PROGRAMS**

The background is a solid blue color. In the lower right quadrant, there are several faint, concentric circles that resemble ripples in water, creating a subtle decorative pattern.

“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.**



Basic assumptions

derived from M.B.Rosenberg's model of non-violent communication

- Division of feelings into positive and negative is alienating us
- Our feelings are messengers about our needs
- In the core of our connection to ourselves as well as to the others is our **awareness of needs**
- **our feelings are generated by our needs:**
directly (like sadness, joy) or via judgmental thinking (like anger, guilt, shame, despair)
- So to be aware of and express **only our feelings** without relating them to the needs is **not bringing connection to self and others.**

➤ **WHEN WE STARTED : in 1991**

WHY WE STARTED “SMILE KEEPERS” PROGRAMS

1 Urgent need triggered by **war** and influx of refugee children - to support children healthy development

With the war emotional, personal, relational issues entered in our schools in full power revealing how little they were prepared to deal with them

2.long lasting intention -to contribute to the reform of educative practice to fit all developmental needs of children,

To focus education on personality development, emotional health, life skills and abilities relevant for living in harmony with self and others

Education was predominantly focused on knowledge acquisition i.e. subject teaching and

Emotional Education was approached sporadically, only when some problem appears

THEORETICAL STANDPOINT

Our **interactivistic - constructivistic** approach to the nature of human development

Self awareness development relies on

- Social interaction in the zone of proximal development and
- interplay of both iconic and verbal means of expression

M.B.Rosenberg's model of non-violent communication (NVC)

It redefines the purpose of education by putting in the first place principle

“CONNECT COMPASSIONATELY BEFORE anything else - teaching, problem solving, searching for solution in conflicts...

It redefines methods of work, what is valued and how, methods of assessment, methods of dealing with discipline and challenges...

THE GOALS OF “SMILE KEEPERS” PROGRAMS

To promote:

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

COMPONENTS OF TEACHERS TRAINING

- **Personal empowerment**
- **promoting educative competence by learning KNOW HOW**
- **preparation to facilitate the workshop program with children**
- **Basic training was 32 hours, followed by additional trainings up to 64 hours**

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

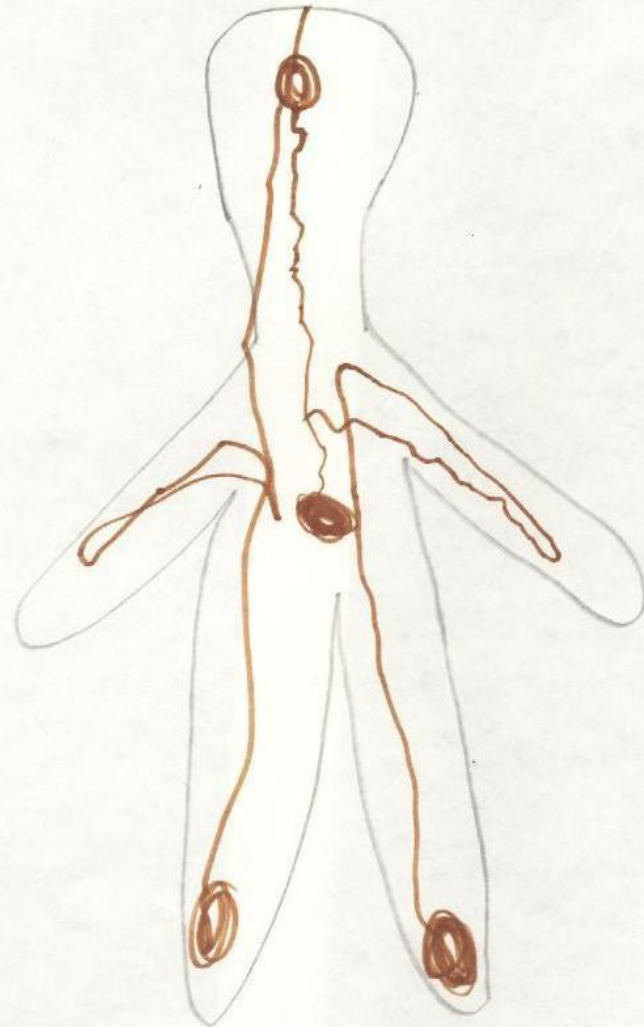
KEY FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

- **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
- **32 workshops , 1 or 2 per week**

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



Jitujata

TYPES OF TASKS IN EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

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

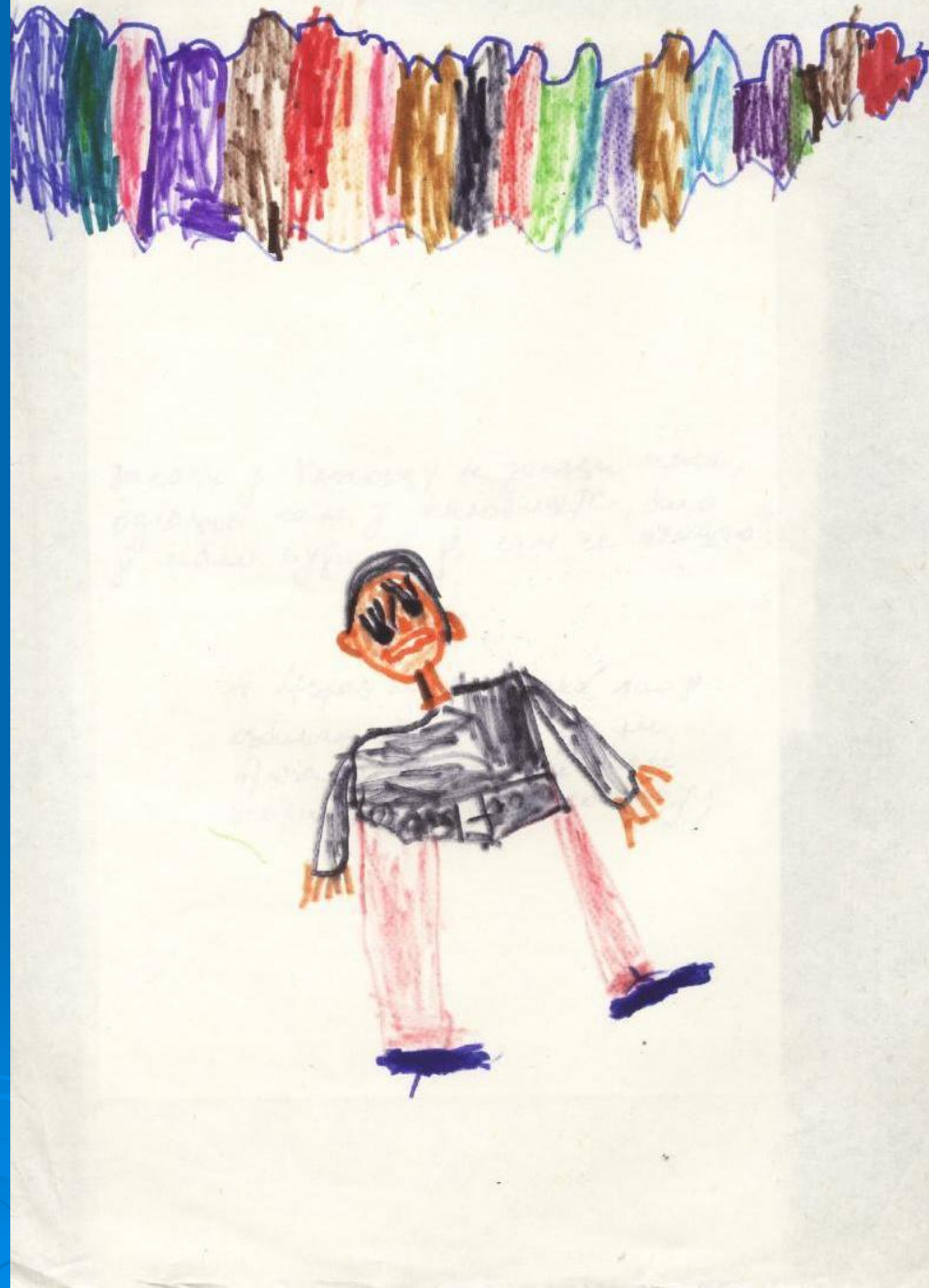


“My **anger** is like a drill spinning in my head”, boy age 6

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

Evaluation data from 2002

Questionnaire for CE teachers

Did you see the changes in CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR, which could be attributed to CE PROGRAM?

1.Changes in the mutual relationships (in the class) =42.2 %

(better collaboration, friendship, stronger emotional bonds, listening to each other more attentively, better in resolving mutual conflicts, better in understanding the needs of the others)

2. Changes on the personal plan = 57.6 %

(children are more relaxed, patient, joyful, more expressive, more calm, more imaginative, honest, have more self- confidence , more open and free..)

3. no changes = 0.2 %

total of responses:1886

Evaluation data from 2002

Questionnaire for CE teachers

- What do you see as the most important gain for yourself from the teachers training seminar?

1. improved teacher's educational competence = 76.6%

2. improved quality of mutual relationships in the group of teachers after the training = 10.4%
(friendship , openness, mutual listening, understanding, free expression of opinions, sense of belonging, mutual empowerment)

3. method of work and facilitation = 13.0%
(playfulness, creativity of work, competence in facilitation..)

Total of responses=2305

LESSONS LEARNED by being AGENT OF CHANGE IN EDUCATION

- **WHY-** constant checking of my own motivation

Not to intervene out fear, hate, despair, judgment of wrongness) but from love and compassion

Not changing others / but for myself, to meet my own needs to make a difference, to contribute, to learn

- **HOW** -Keep the vision and face reality as it is with compassion
- **STEP BY STEP**➤ start where you can
- **IT IS TRANSFORMATION-** integrating old and new, focus on what to keep what to change
- **HAVE A GROUP-** shared vision, energy, creativity, support when difficult, and togetherness
- **HAVE FUN-** playful energy opens the hearts
- **CELEBRATION-** of every step
- **FACING DIFFICULTIES AS A GIFT,** stimulus to grow
- **DANCE** between passionate commitment and letting go
- **RISK** – not knowing, going out of the comfort zone, breaking the rules...
- **ENJOY** the **PROCESS** over the **OUTCOME**
- **GRANT ME PATIENCE LORD BUT HURRY** with institutional change

Timothy Gallway, The inner game of tennis

The rose

- When we plant a rose seed in the earth,
- we notice that it is small,
- but we do not criticize it as rootless and stemless.
- We treat it as a seed, giving it water and nourishment
- required of a seed.
- When it first shoots up out of the earth,
- we don't criticize the buds for not being open
- when they appear.
- We stand in wonder at the process taking place, and give the plant the care it needs
- at each stage of its development
- The rose is a rose from the time it is a seed
- to the time
- It dies.
- Within it at all times,
- it is constantly in process of change,
- yet at each stage, at each moment,
- it is
- Perfectly all right as it is.