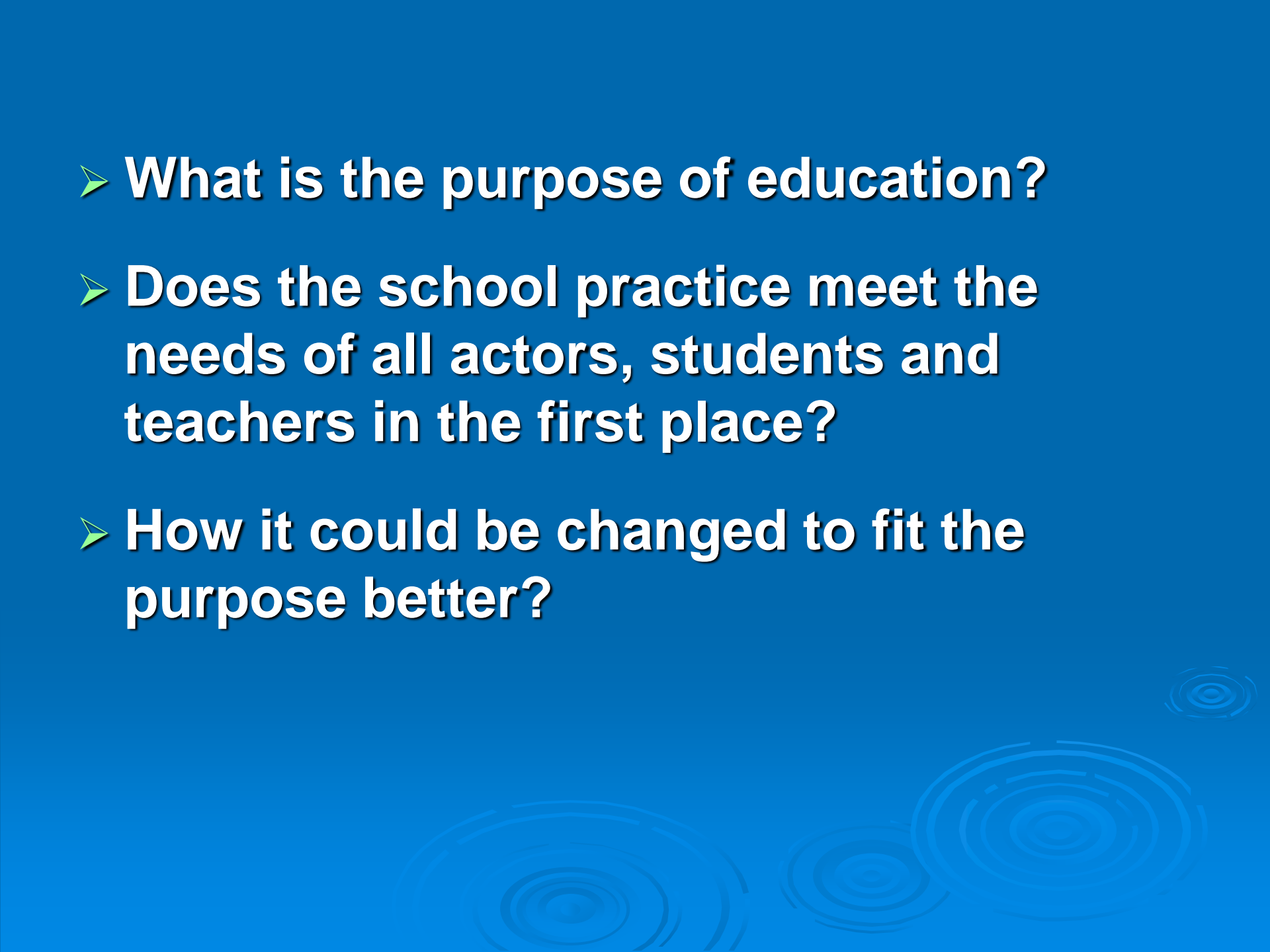


Nada Ignjatovic-Savic, Beograd, Serbia

**THE RELEVANCE
OF COMPASSIONATE
COMMUNICATION IN
EDUCATION**



- **What is the purpose of education?**
 - **Does the school practice meet the needs of all actors, students and teachers in the first place?**
 - **How it could be changed to fit the purpose better?**
- 

➤ **The purpose of school:**

- developing heart and soul as well as body and mind,
- to foster the development of personal integrity and interconnectedness,
- to nurture love for learning,
- to make studying in the school meaningful and life connected

➤ **obrazovanje** (education) = **obraz** means personal integrity

Life alienated versus life serving education, resumed in 13 D's;

- **DISCONNECTED vs. CONNECT** before educate
- **DICHOTOMIC**- either/ or vs. and/and
- **DENYING FEELINGS** vs. feelings as guides to our needs
- **DIAGNOSES** vs. observation, judgments translated into OFNR
- **DENIAL OF CHOICE** , have to vs. **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**
- **DEMANDS** vs. **REQUESTS**; *Naked requests* or saying *what we do not want* instead of what we want and how
- **DISCIPLINE**, obedience of rules vs. creating them together
- **DESERVING PUNISHMENT AND REWARD** – locus of control outside vs. inside
- **DRAMATIZING MISTAKES AND FAILURES** vs. invitation for new ideas and trials
- **DOMINEERING RELATIONSHIPS**= Power over vs. power with.
- **DISTRUST**, uniformity vs. celebration of diversity,
- **DEFINITE**, serious- fun, play, adventure of discovery, not knowing
- **DISPIRITED**, ineffective No one is enjoying, celebration missing

THEORETICAL STANDPOINT

- Our **interactivistic - constructivist approach** to the nature of human development
- **Self awareness development** relaying 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 see www.CNVC.org
- **“CONNECT COMPASSIONATELY BEFORE anything else -** teaching, problem solving, searching for solution in conflicts...
- **Radical shift in the approach to education**
- It **redefines methods of work, what is valued and how, methods of assessment, methods of dealing with discipline and challenges...**

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.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTATION

- **1993-2001: 8000 teachers** and about **200 000 children** involved, with the support of **UNICEF**
- **2001 -ongoing:** 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
- 3 Manuals **WORDS ARE WINDOWS OR THEY ARE WALLS 1,2,3** for teachers working with children from 5-10,11-14,15-18
- 4 manuals **Civic Education 1-4**, for teachers working with Primary schools children
- **2003-2004 – “Smile Keepers”** TV serial of 33 workshop episodes
- **2001 -ongoing-** Spreading abroad

➤ **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 or 48 hours, followed by additional trainings up to 96 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 observation/feelings/needs/values/requests

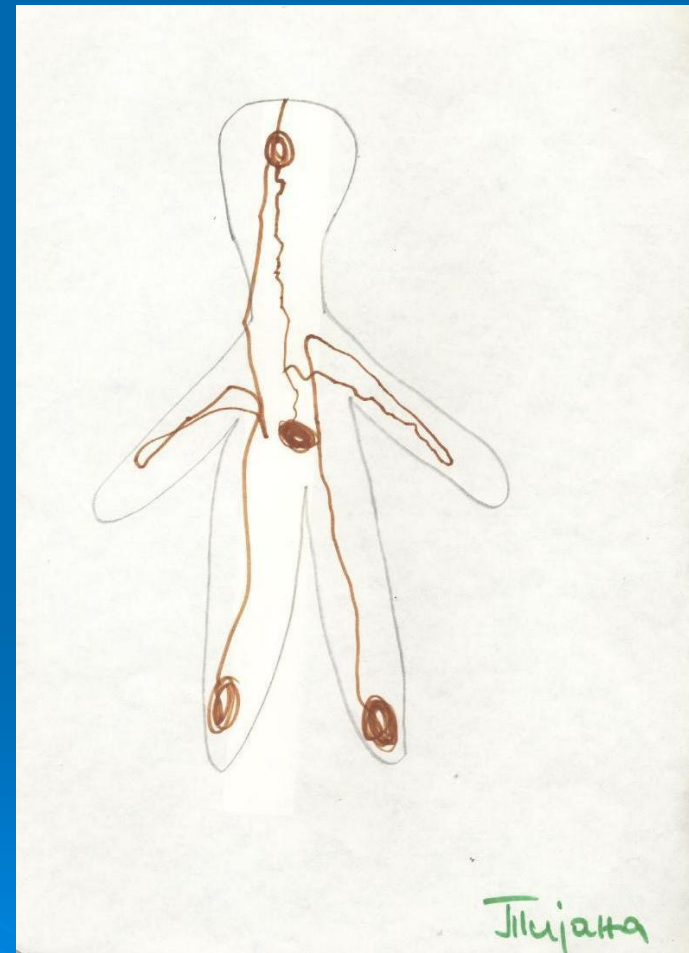
KEY FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

- **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 “SMILE KEEPERS “ PROGRAM EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

1. To draw inner, visceral experience of feelings

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



TYPES OF TASKS IN “SMILE KEEPERS “ PROGRAM EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

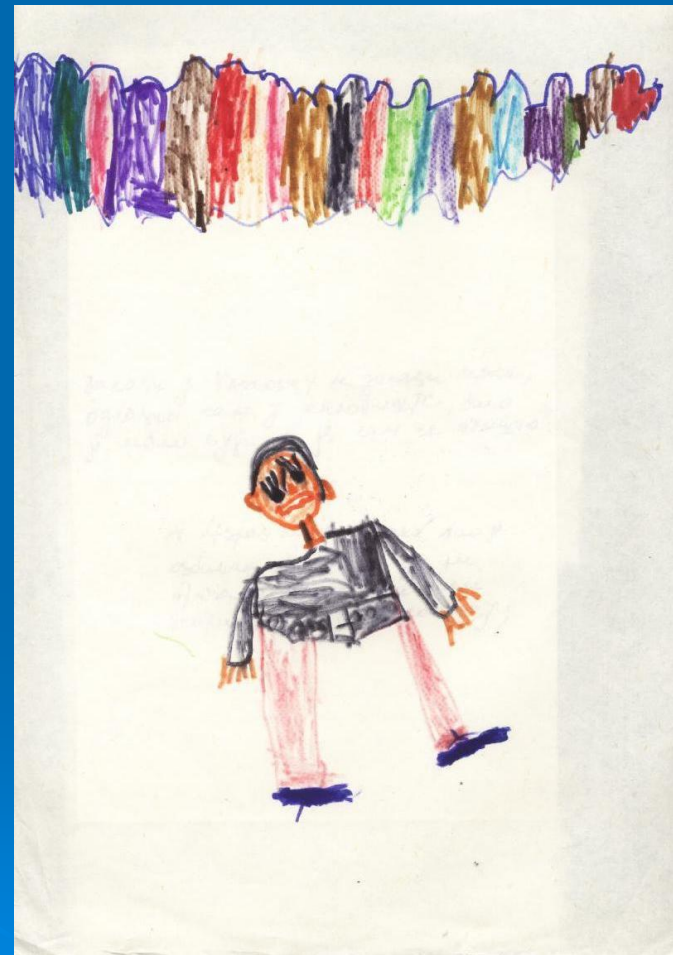
2. to find **symbolic expression** for the particular feeling



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

TYPES OF TASKS IN “SMILE KEEPERS “ PROGRAM EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

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



Me and my feelings, boy,
age 6

TYPES OF TASKS IN “SMILE KEEPERS “ PROGRAM EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

- 4. symbolic representation of inner dynamics of feelings



Inner dynamics of feelings,
16 years old girl

Specific components of the training of teachers

- Clarifying intention before any action
- Translating self critique into language of need and constructive action
- Accepting responsibility for the requests (expressing I am requesting it because I am needing)
- Accepting responsibility for their own acts (translating "I don't like it, but I do it" into "I do it because")
- Using language of needs, values and positive action: translation of "I don't want children to do ..." into "When I tell that, I would like children to do (offering alternatives). because I want, need... ."
- Estimation of accomplishments of children in terms of observation, feelings, needs and requests - when it is and when it isn't in harmony with values of adults
- Expressing appreciation in NVC terms
- Using NVC alternatives to punishment and rewards
- Creating school rules together with children, expressed in values/positive action language
- Receiving empathically children's behaviour >not taking it personally

SOME CHALLENGES IN TEACHERS' LEARNING OF NVC

- 1. Expressing needs and requests**
- 2. Translating “I don’t want children to do...”**
- 3. Static vs. process evaluation**
- 4. Expressing appreciation in NVC terms**
- 5. Receiving NO**
- 6. Agreements vs. rules**
- 7. Alternatives to punishment**
- 8. Translating labels**

EVALUATION: SOME INTERESTING FINDINGS

Table 1. Type of change in way of communication (percentage)

type of change	with colleagues	with children	with parents	with boss	with family
better expression	14.7	7.4	8.5	6.9	15.7
better receiving	36.7	33.4	19.9	11.2	27.4
less conflicts	27.4	50.1	37.5	25.0	40.7
undefined change	8.7	4.3	5.7	3.4	8.1
no change	12.0	4.9	11.3	40.5	8.1
answered	150	162	141	116	172

EVALUATION: SOME INTERESTING FINDINGS

Table 2. Teachers Self-confidence in their own NVC skills in communication with different partners

partner	not confident	partly confident	confident	mean value	stand. dev.
children	2%	34%	63.9	2.62	.53
colleagues	17.6 %	54.1%	28.3%	2.11	.67
family	6.6%	41.2%	52.3%	2.46	.62


1-3 scale, where 1=I don't feel confidence, 2=I'm partly confident, 3=I'm confident

EVALUATION: SOME INTERESTING FINDINGS


Table 3. Difficulties in applying the Model of NVC

Personal inhibition, skills not yet developed	37.2%
Reactions of others (resistance, mocking)	41.2%
Not specified	8.8%
No difficulties	12.8%
Answered	226

THE EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM ON CHILDRENS BEHAVIOUR

- better able to understand the consequences of their behaviour
 - better able to manage their feelings especially anger
 - better at conflict management, negotiating disagreements
 - have fewer fights and upsets
- 

THE EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM ON CHILDRENS BEHAVIOUR

- more positive feelings about self and peers
 - better able to focus and take other's perspective
 - have improved empathy and respect for the feelings of others
 - better at listening to others
- 

THE EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAM ON CHILDRENS BEHAVIOUR

- have more sharing, co-operation and mutual respect
- have better relations with teachers
- have more willingness to learn
- have school performance better

LESSONS LEARNED

➤ We noticed:

- that with a bigger number of professionals trained from one school,
- with the school principal participating in the training,
- and more continuous education of the same group,

the overall atmosphere in the school positively changed ensuring sustainability of the program

➤ **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