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# HOW WE SUPPORT HIGH-RISK FAMILIES AND TEENAGERS TO PREVENT SEPARATION IN LATVIA

*SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES LATVIA*

*Sandra Braunere*

*RIGA, 30.09.2021*





# SOS programs and services

More than 20 years of experience in Latvia -  
since 1997

In 2021...

- FSP **510** children
- FBC **770** children (130+640)
- Support to >50 kindergartens



**Children who are at risk of losing parental care:**



- Prevention
- Social rehabilitation

**Family Support Centre Riga**

Support for mothers with *newborn children*

Grieving program for *children whose parent has died*

**Complex social work with families and children**

**Social work with teenagers in conflict with law (and their families)**

Crisis intervention program

**FSC 2**

Support for families of children for special needs

Family Assistant services

**FSC 3**

Family Strengthening service

**2007**

Complex prevention program in *kindergartens*

Advocacy;  
Child rights protection

**Education and Competence Centre**

**National Office**

Trainings for professionals



**Children who have lost parental care:**



- Family like care
- Support to foster parents and guardians

**Out-of-family care support centre**  
1

**Children Village**  
1

+ Integrated families

2

**Children Village**  
2

+ Teenagers house

3

4

**Youth House**

Youth care for non-SOS youth

5

**2018**

**1997**



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# Projects = opportunities for growth

“Project GEPAP”

*EU action Transfer of Innovation, Leonardo da Vinci  
Lifelong learning programm  
46 000 EUR, 75% cofinancing, 10/2010-10/2012*

Interreg V-A Latvia – Lithuania

Programme 2014-2020;

*European Regional Development Fund  
2018-2019*

“Development and implementation of Family  
Strengthening program in Cesis region”  
*142 000 EUR (100 000 LVL), 100% ESF financing  
01/2012-06/2013, then till 01/2015 sustainability by our and  
municipality financing, afterwards – by municipality*

**EEA/NORWAY  
grant**

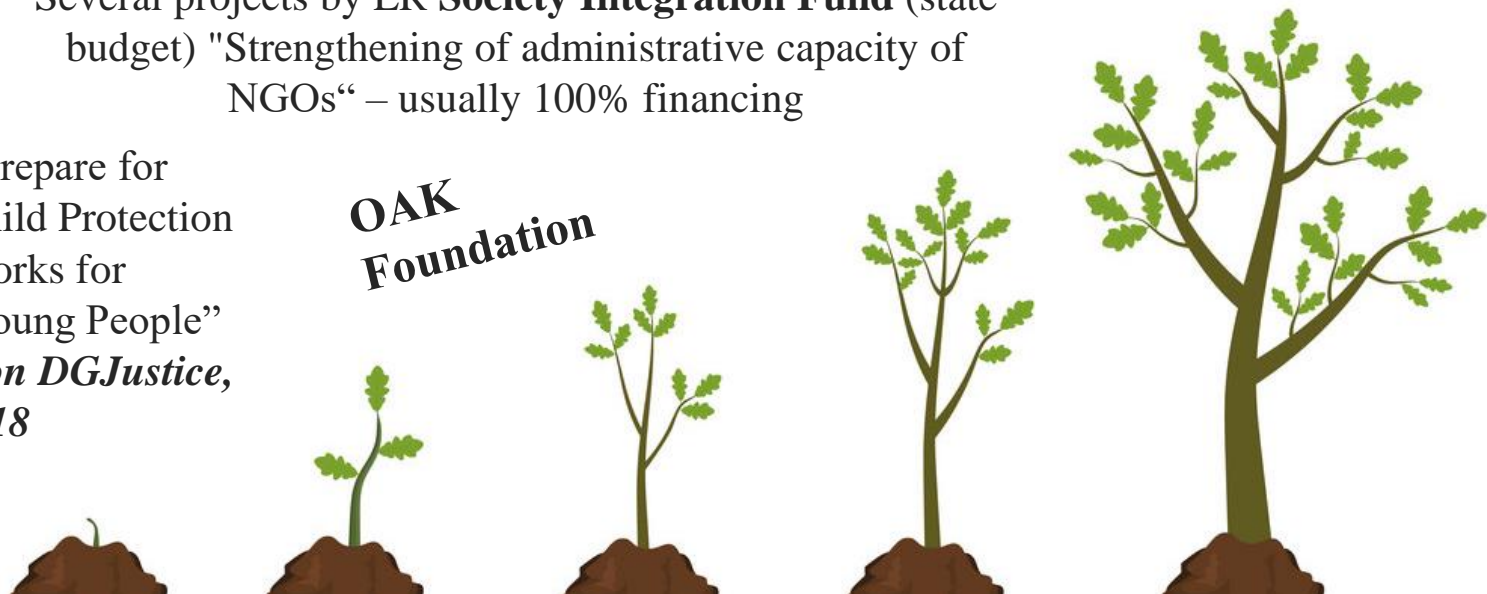
Partnership in “Prepare for  
Leaving Care – A Child Protection  
System that works for  
Professionals and Young People”  
*European Commission DG Justice,  
2017-2018*

“Inclusive family, kindergarten, school and  
community – FS in Bauska region”  
*Latvian-Swiss cooperation programme; 130 000  
EUR, 90% cofinancing; 01/2011- 06/2012*

Partnership in Nordic Council of Ministers (NGO programme)

Several projects by LR **Society Integration Fund** (state  
budget) “Strengthening of administrative capacity of  
NGOs” – usually 100% financing

**OAK  
Foundation**





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# SOS RIGA Family Support Centre

## ■ Main profile of **high risk families**:

- Parents with addictions (especially if having small age children);
- Possible violence in families;
- Parents with low social and parenting skills;
- Parents with mental disorders;
- Parents with mental illnesses (sometimes not yet diagnosed);
- Poverty is not among the risks for separation in Latvia.

To reduce risks of child abuse, neglect and social exclusion by providing specific services.

**Complex social work with families and children**  
**= Social case management;**  
max. capacity **140 families**

**100%**  
**financing**

**Riga**  
**Municipality**



**Social work with teenagers in conflict with law (and their families)**  
**= Social case management;**  
**30 families**



## ■ Main problems of **teenagers**:

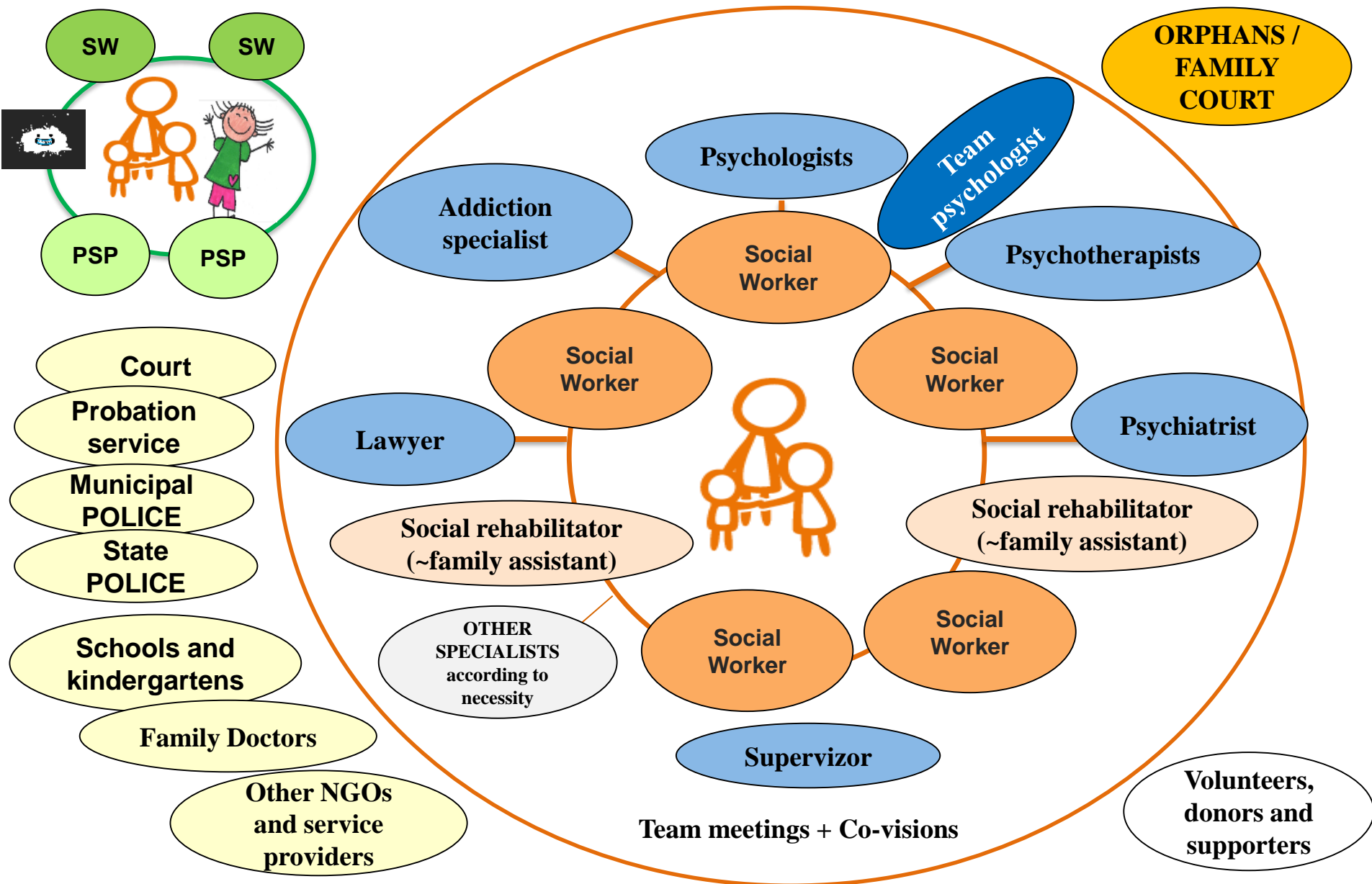
- Problematic relationships with parents;
- Depressive symptoms / depression / low energy;
- Behavioral difficulties, absenteeism;
- Wandering or spending time aimlessly, skipping school;
- Addictive substance use episodes / increased interest / selling?;
- Learning difficulties;
- Criminal offenses;
- etc.

Programme for teenagers "MATE or FRIEND or BUDDY"



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# Social work with family





**AGE:** 11-17 y.o.;  
**Boys and girls**

We are working with **whole family** – parents, siblings (Social Worker) and offering more **individual help for the teenager** (Support Person)

- Participation
- Establishing contact
- Flexibility
- Vitality
- Casual atmosphere
- Raising awareness of different life situations
- FUN

## INDIVIDUAL WORK :

Conversations ; Meetings combined with an activity, such as cooking, playing games, etc. ; Meeting indoors and outdoors, incl. in schools, parks, cafes, going for walks.

Accompanying a teenager to specialists, to co-operation institutions.

Career education, incl. "shadow days"

**Since 2008 –**  
social work with  
families – FS projects  
**Since 2018 -**  
teenager program;  
average length of  
participation - 2 years

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION + TRADITIONS :

Trail race series "Deer buck" ;  
Excursion for families ;  
"Partner's Academy" ; Family  
activities; "Partner's" birthday;  
Christmas event for families

Covid



## GROUP ACTIVITIES :

Short hikes; Classes for  
teenagers on health, protection,  
relationships, etc. ;

Covid



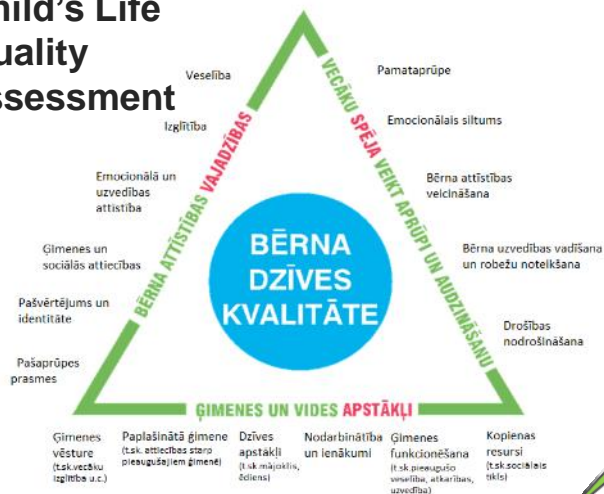


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# Principles of work

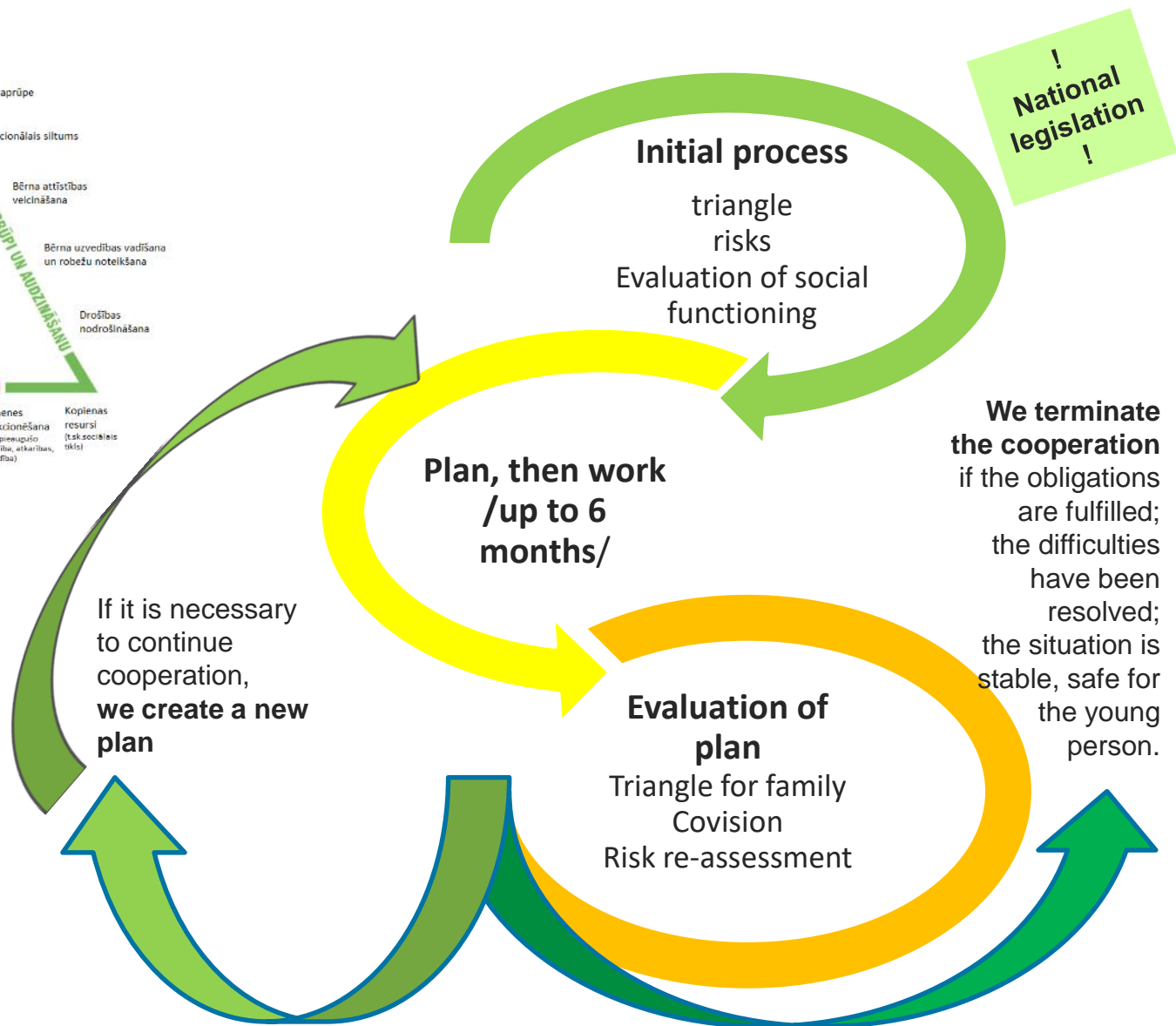
## Child's Life Quality assessment



- child's development needs;
- parenting capacity;
- family and environmental factors,



Teenager is  
in the centre

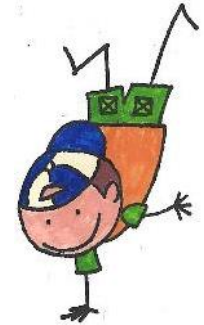




## Daughter Anna (15 y.o.), mother (38 y.o.), father (41 y.o.)

How did we meet? Referral from Riga Social Service. 02/2019

**Initial problems:** parents came to ask for help as Anna together with friends had several cases of small thefts from shops, wandering around, skipping school. Several cases of alcohol abuse. Anna had to finish basic education next school year.



**Problems and risks (after assessment):** problems with parental roles – respect and authority; discipline problems and conflicts with parents, bad understanding of borders as well as causes and results of certain behaviour; gaps and bad marks at school due to skipped classes.

**Strengths (after assessment):** parents are ready to collaborate, there are inner resources; Anna also is not totally against.

### Activities and specialists involved:

[03 - 10/2019 social rehab.plan I.](#)

**Social worker (SW) + individual support person (ISP). Addiction specialist** – several consultations about substance abuse. ISP – individual meetings to establish contact, together to specialists; group activities, summer camp. SW – with parents; legal agreements with victims regarding police cases.

[11 - 02/2020 social rehab.plan II.](#)

ISP – more attention to school and choice of professional career. Visits to technical schools. Support with learning. **Psychiatrist** – to be sure there is no serious mental health problems (depression). Activities, film festival, Christmas event. Parents attend group activities with other parents.

[03 - 08/2020 social rehab.plan III.](#)

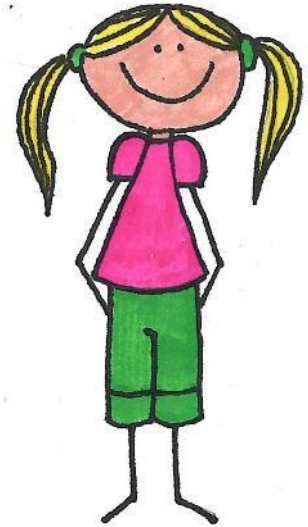
Due to Covid – more individual consultations, distant. Summer camp in June. Contacts and praxis in film industry.





## Results for ANNA:

- 08-09/2020 after evaluation it was decided to stop cooperation – goal reached.
  - Anna (17 y.o.) started learning in secondary school grade 10 in September;
  - Anna continues to be engaged in film industry projects, this is her interest;
  - Anna does not skip school, results are better;
  - There have been no more cases of wandering, thieving, good relationship with parents.
- ~ 3 months after closure case is monitored



## Lessons learned: + and -

Program success rate - **~50% of families exit as self-reliant**, problems solved, no more issues with law.

Much higher risks when parents are not willing to cooperate.

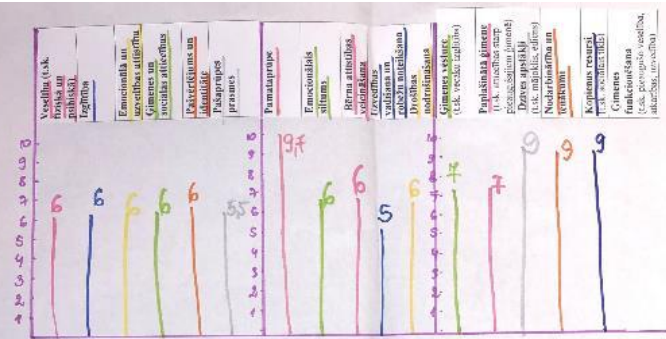
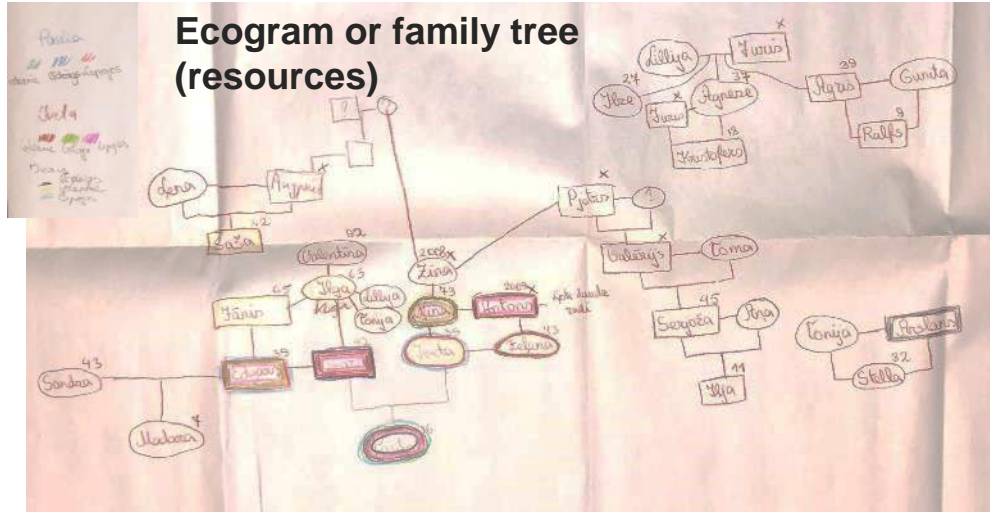
Our TEAM of SWs and ISPs:



Inner problems - change of specialists (especially if it is ISP).

Really good opportunity for teenagers to change their lives in positive way.

## Ecogram or family tree (resources)



+ emose. veritaba-komkautana pöö minnida

\* *neotoma pictetii*; *proles* (faint)

\* Intelligence, depression, anxiety, panic

\* Wohlfühlraum

\* *mapālcuātlā, āyē* ok

✓ Na onaj način, jedna učenika iz mene dobiše.

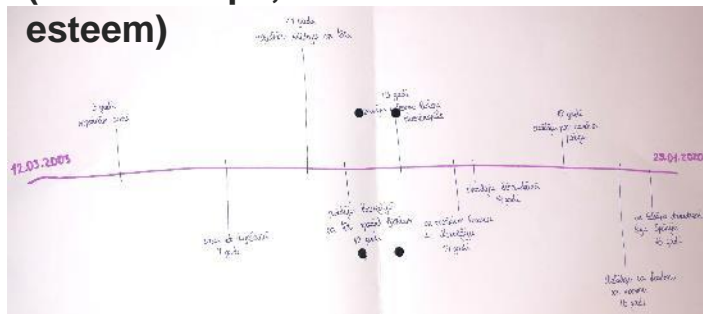
✓ Ku ppey munda  
kur tundi piepiti?

4. Atšķirīgi nolikumi, robežas; vāji izprot vadības un komandu hierarhiju.

v prístupoch k nim, keď Paula prichádza ok.

## Evaluation of Child Life Quality

# 10 most important events in life (relationships, self-esteem)



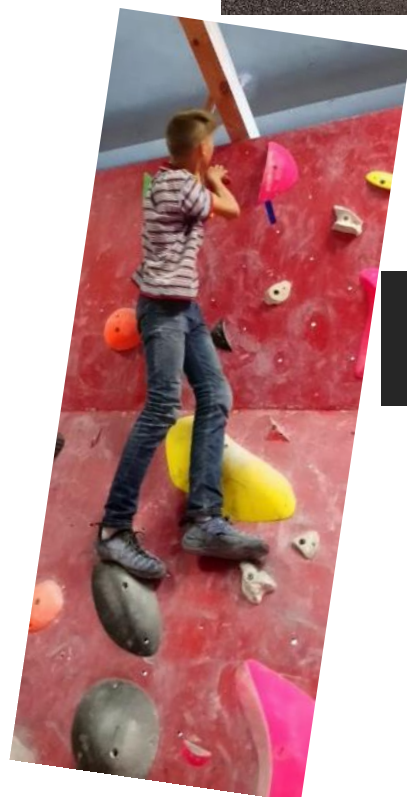
**Family plans  
developed by  
family  
themselves  
(principles of  
Family Conference  
Method)**

[illegible]

**And lots of documents to be filled + state database**

■ ■ ■ ■









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**SANDRA BRAUNERE**

**Family Strengthening  
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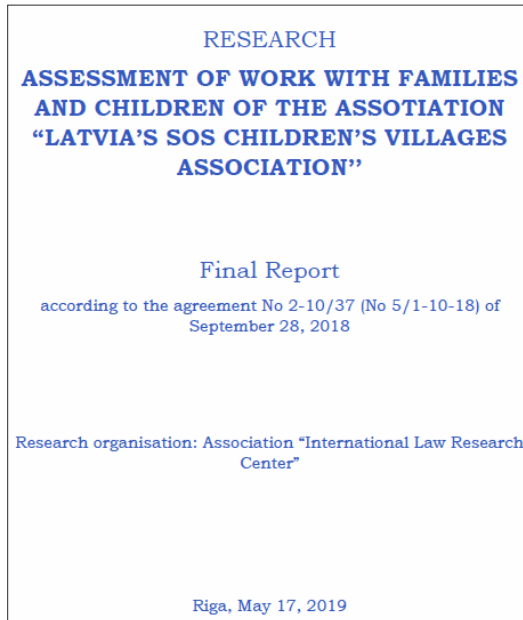


# THANK YOU!!!

<https://www.sosbernuciemati.lv>

<https://www.facebook.com/sosbernuciemati>





..new and  
innovative services..

The demand for the program is growing,  
the program is gradually evolving, .., and  
it can be transferred.

The need and the demand for the  
service are higher than the  
Association can provide.

The association's approach to solving the case by  
focusing on the child's needs and interests can  
be developed and transferred to other  
municipalities.

Professionally trained staff, developed  
implementation system/training materials.  
A system for team-work is in place.

Transparent reporting system for reporting  
to co-operation partners, financiers.

Together with the teenager, the work is being  
done to promote the personal growth of his/her  
personality by thinking and working on  
education, leisure, employment, social and self-  
care skills and health.

The service is implemented in accordance with the  
regulations set by the Riga Social Service,  
supplemented by a special approach, focusing on  
the needs of the child ..

..it can be developed by transferring the  
training of new professionals.