

# ANNUAL REPORT

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**COMMUNITY INTEREST ACTIVITIES**



**2013 / 2014**



**THEMPRA SOCIAL PEDAGOGY**  
**COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY**

## 1. WHO WE ARE

ThemPra Social Pedagogy Community Interest Company is a social enterprise committed to supporting the development of social pedagogy in the UK. Our name stands for a strong connection between theory and practice, which is fundamental to social pedagogy. In our understanding, theory meets practice for one single purpose: we believe that children and young people deserve the best we can offer, and we are dedicated to improving their life experiences through holistic and child-centred services.

We established ThemPra following a pilot training in social pedagogy, which we designed and delivered for the National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care (NCERCC) in 2007 and which clearly demonstrated the manifold immediate and long-term benefits that social pedagogy offers to children in and on the edge of care.

ThemPra contributes to the development of a UK construction of social pedagogy through the promotion and sustainable implementation of social pedagogy in organisations working with children & young people. We have been pioneering social pedagogy with statutory, voluntary and independent organisations across the UK since 2007 – through training courses and systemic implementation strategies – and also contribute more by writing publications, giving presentations and facilitating workshops and seminars. In 2009 we also started co-ordinating the Social Pedagogy Development Network (SPDN), which we set up in partnership with the Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy (CUSP) at the UCL Institute of Education and Jacaranda Development.

We believe that social pedagogy offers a clear and coherent framework that enables practitioners at all levels and organisations from a wide range of disciplines to make best use of their professional, personal and practical expertise. We want to help achieve this in dialogue with social organisations, exploring ways for a sustainable implementation of social pedagogy. In our experience, social pedagogy offers a coherent framework that many practitioners can relate to both professionally and personally, and which builds on their own experience. But social pedagogy is not just for the practitioners working with children directly, it requires a whole systems approach. As a community interest company we endeavour to ensure that whatever we do will ultimately benefit children and young people.

Behind ThemPra are our three directors Sylvia Holthoff, Gabriel Eichsteller and Andy Carter, our three UK-based associates Robyn Kemp, Alexandra Priver and Anthony Moorcroft, as well as our Danish associate Charlotte Firing. Back in 2007, Sylvia and Gabriel developed and facilitated the first social pedagogy seminars in the UK for the pilot project run by the National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care and funded by the Social Education Trust (SET). As part of that project Robyn introduced us to residential child care in the UK. Through this we also met Mike Tidball, former trustee of the SET, who helped us set up ThemPra and acted as third director and company secretary until his retirement in July 2010.



Since then ThemPra has grown, and we've met many more people who have become friends and supporters. Robyn Kemp and Alex Priver started work with us on the Essex project as co-facilitators in early 2009 and 2010 respectively. Andy Carter joined us in August 2010 with lots of excitement and creative ideas to take over Mike's role and expand it further. Charlotte Firing began her introduction to the world of ThemPra in February 2011 and has quickly become an important contributor to our projects, especially the EU Leonardo Mobility. And Anthony Moorcroft, who was one of the participants on our NCERCC social pedagogy course back in 2007, came on board in April 2015, having collaborated with us on the EU Leonardo Mobility projects before.

In order to drive social pedagogy forward and to expand from these experiences we have set up a social enterprise which symbolizes the synergy of social pedagogy in theory and practice: ThemPra. ThemPra stands for *TheorymeetsPractice*, which reflects our style of working and way of thinking. We have set ourselves the ambitious overarching aim to support the development and implementation of social pedagogy in the UK in various ways, some of which are outlined below.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Set up in September 2008, ThemPra Social Pedagogy has now been in existence for over six years, during which we have built an impressive track record of pioneering projects in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man along with a range of other activities aimed at improving professionals' understanding of social pedagogy in theory and practice. This short report aims to provide a brief overview of what we have achieved in our sixth year and how our work has benefitted the community of professionals and children in care we have set out to serve.

### Community Interest Statement

*ThemPra Social Pedagogy Community Interest Company provides benefits to various groups within the general community. Through its emphasis on social pedagogy ThemPra promotes a positive approach to children and young people, particularly those looked after by local authorities.*

*There is overwhelming evidence that children and young people benefit in their personal and social development where professionals are trained social pedagogues (see research by Thomas Coram Research Unit, University of London – Petrie et. al, 2006). This is especially relevant for those children and young people who are disadvantaged, as they can be helped to achieve better outcomes and improve their life experiences through a social pedagogic approach (cf. conference by the international child care organisation FICE International and National Children's Bureau, 18/01/2008).*

*The pilot training in social pedagogy, which we designed and delivered for the National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care in 2007 (see National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care/Social Education Trust report: Introducing Social Pedagogy into Residential Child Care in England, 2008), clearly demonstrates the manifold immediate and long term benefits that Social Pedagogy offers to children in public care.*

*The issues were discussed in a workshop in Ghent, Belgium in October 2007 involving several local authorities and voluntary agencies in the UK with social pedagogues from a number of European countries. The impact of this work on practice and thinking in individual children's homes managed by these agencies is now being independently evaluated by Dave Crippens, Reader in Children's Social Care and Education at the University of Lincoln.*

*ThemPra will offer a variety of services, described below, which will complement the interest in social pedagogy of the Department of Children Schools and Families and also the academic work of the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education, University of London.*

*Our focus will be to provide a service to local authorities, voluntary and private agencies, based on the assessment of their needs, to improve the quality and focus of their work practice, within a businesslike framework agreed between ThemPra and its clients. This has already generated very positive support from a number of local authorities and other agencies in the UK, with whom we have already worked, and we have received a number of enquires expressing interest for the future.*

*While we ultimately aim to contribute to improving the lives of children and young people, we are aware that this requires raising the quality of the children's and young people's workforce. Therefore ThemPra will predominantly educate and train professionals in social pedagogy.*

### **ThemPra Social Pedagogy Community Interest Company**

A Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England.  
Company Number: 6702509 | VAT Registration Number: 941 5086 27  
Registered Office: 2 Mount Pleasant, Church Road, Allithwaite, LA11 7RE

### 3. ACTIVITIES IN 2013/2014

From the outset, ThemPra defined its activities in four different strands and envisioned the benefit to the community as follows:

Activity	Benefit to the community
<p><b>Activity Strand I:</b> Providing personal and professional development courses and consultancy to children's and young people's workforce</p>	<p>Thoroughly trained professionals who are capable of using core pedagogic principles in their practice, thereby improving children's and young people's overall well-being and personal and social development. It must also be noted that this serves to improve professionals' self-confidence, knowledge, abilities and skills.</p>
<p><b>Activity Strand II:</b> Promoting social pedagogy through workshops, conferences, public speaking, publications, partnership working and networking with similar-minded or interested organisations</p>	<p>Professionals are offered opportunities to consider how they can adopt a social pedagogic approach.</p> <p>These activities are also suitable to drive the implementation of social pedagogy forward on a national level, raising awareness for the benefits of using social pedagogy and how this will reflect on the Government's strategy and outcomes for children and young people's in "Every Child Matters".</p>
<p><b>Activity Strand III:</b> Conducting research in adaptability and advantages of working with a social pedagogic approach</p>	<p>Since social pedagogy is still a new approach in the UK, though not in other European countries where it has been established for many years, much will have to be done in order to convince the children's workforce and their managers of the benefits.</p> <p>By conducting academic research and ensuring scientific evaluation of ThemPra's work, we aim to provide evidence as well as find out what approach in adopting social pedagogy is most viable.</p> <p>This will help other professionals to consider different options as to how they can make best use of social pedagogy within their work context. Our work will also complement the work of other academics in the U.K.</p>
<p><b>Activity Strand IV:</b> Developing accredited qualifications enabling practitioners to train in social pedagogic approaches to care and education</p>	<p>As most practitioners are qualified at NVQ level, we aim to provide opportunities for them to gain an accredited qualification in social pedagogic approaches for care and education.</p> <p>We hope this will have the double effect of qualifying the workforce better using present and familiar structures and will possibly encourage some practitioners to pursue an academic qualification during their career.</p> <p>The aim of up-skilling the children's and young people's workforce is very much in line with Government initiatives and the work of the Children's Workforce Development Council.</p>

Below is a list of the activities we have undertaken in each of these strands to benefit the community of children in public care and the professionals who look after them in children's residential home, foster care settings or are otherwise connected to looked-after children:

### **3.1 ACTIVITY STRAND I:**

Between October 2013 and September 2014 we were working together with a variety of organisations to support them in developing social pedagogy. Much of our work took place within the context of *Head, Heart, Hands*. The demonstration programme is led by the Fostering Network and funded by a consortium including Comic Relief, KPMG Foundation and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Its aim is to introduce social pedagogy into foster care. The programme includes 6 demonstration sites across England and Scotland. ThemPra is a delivery partner in 4 sites and working together with Jacaranda Development and Prof. Pat Petrie from the UCL Institute of Education to create unique learning situations for foster carers and social workers around social pedagogy. Work on the programme officially started in June 2012, with courses commencing in early 2013. In 2013/14, our support to the sites included strategic development and coaching as well as increasing the number of professionals reached. Through this, across the programme some 600 professionals participated in social pedagogy taster days and around 240 took part in more intensive 10-day courses. Further details about the programme are available at [www.fostering.net/head-heart-hands](http://www.fostering.net/head-heart-hands).

During the same period we have continued to work on other projects with a range of organisations. In Scotland these included Aberlour Sycamore Services in Kirkcaldy, the Dundee Early Intervention Team, Kibble Care and Education Centre in Paisley, East Ayrshire Council's Vibrant Communities team, Inspire Scotland and two of Camphill Scotland's adult communities, Blair Drummond and Tiphereth, as part of a Scottish Government funded pilot project; in England we continued working with Staffordshire County Council's Residential Services and ran introductory seminars for Chrysalis Care and Lancaster University; and in Northern Ireland we continued collaborating with the Camphill Community Glenraig. As part of these projects we developed social pedagogy in over 15 residential homes for children and 2 family support teams through a combination of direct work with teams, strategic support and intensive social pedagogy educational courses, which were attended by around 200 participants.

The interest within the social care sector in social pedagogy has further increased and experienced a boost through *Head, Heart, Hands*. This is particularly reflected in attendance at the Social Pedagogy Development Network (see below), which has continued to increase membership to well over 1,000. Furthermore, there are ever more case studies and emerging evidence about how social pedagogy can make a positive difference for children and young people as well as the professionals working with them.

## 3.2 ACTIVITY STRAND II:

### *The Social Pedagogy Consortium*

When the first organisations started piloting social pedagogy some six years ago, the Thomas Coram Research Unit (TCRU), Jacaranda Recruitment and ThemPra recognised that we wanted to collaborate in order to jointly support the development of social pedagogy in the UK. This led us to set up the Social Pedagogy Development Network and run the Jacaranda-sponsored [www.SocialPedagogyUK.com](http://www.SocialPedagogyUK.com). Together with other stakeholders we have since met regularly to discuss wider issues such as quality assurance and qualification frameworks for social pedagogy courses. Over the years, these relationships have grown into a strong partnership that is fuelled by a shared passion for social pedagogy and working creatively to improve services for children and young people.

The *Head, Heart, Hands* programme (led by The Fostering Network) has given us an exciting opportunity to synergise our collective expertise and form a Social Pedagogy Consortium. In 2013/2014 we decided to take the SPC one step further and submitted a joint proposal for funding through the Department for Education's Innovation Programme. Whilst the proposal was initially unsuccessful, we have since continued to develop its core ideas of creating a strong infrastructure for social pedagogy in the UK.

### *Social Pedagogy Development Network*

Between October 2013 and September 2014 we co-ordinated two meetings of the Social Pedagogy Development Network, which were hosted by Aberlour Sycamore Services in Kirkcaldy (28/29 November, 2013) and Derbyshire County Council (28/29 April, 2014). Both were extremely well attended, with over 170 participants joining us for dialogue, networking and learning around social pedagogy amongst professionals from a wide range of backgrounds. Further details about each event of the SPDN can be found at [www.thempra.org.uk/SPDNmeetings.htm](http://www.thempra.org.uk/SPDNmeetings.htm), and we have also included a detailed description of how the SPDN reflects ThemPra's efforts in serving the community.

In order to provide a forum for professionals who are passionate about social pedagogy and want to explore it further, we decided to set up the Social Pedagogy Development Network (SPDN) in late 2009. Co-ordinated and facilitated by us at ThemPra, it is organised in partnership with the Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy (CUSP) and Jacaranda Development. It is always hosted by a different organisation keen to share their experiences around social pedagogy. Over the course of eight events the SPDN has become a grassroots movement for people and organisations that are interested in social pedagogy and want to nurture it at a local and national level. The network is underpinned by social pedagogical principles of engaging in open dialogue, valuing people and their experiences, and connecting with others in a democratic way. Social pedagogy is thus brought to life in people's unique ways, and through the exchange and relationships with others we can ensure

that it grows on ideas and traditions from within the UK, whilst also being inspired by ideas and traditions from other countries. For this reason the SPDN offers an 'oasis' that encourages a rich and colourful diversity of social pedagogy 'flowers' to blossom together. This means we provide the conditions for participants to engage with each other around the themes or issues that people feel most passionate about, thus enabling shared ownership for the SPDN.

Most importantly, the network is based on the idea of parallel action (Burns, 2007) which suggests that change occurs where people can pursue what matters to them. By forming self-organised 'clusters' they can initiate multiple, creative and parallel action streams which reinforce each other, thus leading to change. Parallel action streams could be regional networks of organisations interested or engaged in social pedagogy, higher education institutions wanting to explore how to incorporate social pedagogy into qualifications, people with an interest in restorative justice or therapeutic child care getting together to think how these relate to social pedagogy, different providers forming alliances to promote social pedagogy at a political level, or interested organisations exploring opportunities for (inter-)national exchanges – the SPDN provides the forum for such groups to emerge. In a nutshell, the SPDN is about bringing together small groups of thoughtful, committed citizens in order to make a difference.

To keep the development of social pedagogy diverse and colourful, we want to enable as many organisations as possible to be part of this dialogue. Therefore places are free of charge, with different organisations agreeing to host one of the biannual meetings. So far, the SPDN has met ten times with a total of over 1,000 participants from more than 270 different organisations. Interestingly, there has been a fantastic mix of participants' backgrounds, ranging from frontline practitioners, senior managers and policy-makers to students and academics – some with an emerging curiosity about social pedagogy, others with a well-rounded understanding. All of them have been keen to bring their passion and expertise to the table and thus engage in the dialogue from a social work, youth work, residential child care, foster care, outdoor education, teaching, early years, children's advocacy, family support, community work, health care and psycho-therapeutic perspective. Through the enthusiastic interest within Camphill Communities we've also had participants working with adults with disabilities bring their tradition and philosophy to social pedagogy, thereby demonstrating the relevance of social pedagogy for adult services. In a social pedagogic spirit further perspectives are very much welcomed at the SPDN.

Each SPDN meeting aims to provide a flavour of social pedagogy to those who are relatively new to the subject whilst also offering opportunities to further develop the wider discourse around social pedagogy, for instance by exploring particular themes throughout the different meetings. Usually initiated by a short presentation from a leading academic and then further discussed by all participants, themes have so far included:

- ▲ the diversity of social pedagogy internationally (by Prof. Juha Hämäläinen, University of Eastern Finland);



- ▲ discovering traditions in the UK which are of a social pedagogical nature (by Prof. Pat Petrie, Institute of Education);
- ▲ the relationship between theory and practice in social pedagogy (by Jan Storø, University College Oslo and Akershus);
- ▲ exploring how social pedagogy could help rediscover the importance of ethics as first practice (by Mark Smith, University of Edinburgh);
- ▲ the relevance of non-violent communication in a learning perspective (by Bodil Weirsøe, University College Sjælland);
- ▲ resisting risk-averse practice and helping children develop risk competence (by Ian Milligan, Scottish Institute of Residential Child Care);
- ▲ rediscovering group work as a social pedagogical tradition (by David Crimmens, University of Lincoln);
- ▲ inclusion in a social pedagogic perspective (by Lotte Harbo, VIA University College Århus);
- ▲ the emphasis on creativity within social pedagogy and its potential for the creative arts (by Prof. Pat Petrie, IoE);
- ▲ how to use puppets in dialogue with children and young people (by Elisabeth Grønning, University College Oslo and Akershus);
- ▲ creating relational enrichment using the Circle of Courage (by Chris Walter and Manuela Costa, Camphill School Aberdeen);
- ▲ a theoretical foothold within social pedagogy practice (by Paul Stephens, University of Stavanger);
- ▲ aspirations for children and young people (by Tam Baillie, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People);
- ▲ and the importance of creating play spaces for children (by Wendy Russell, University of Gloucestershire).

What distinguishes the SPDN meetings from a conference though is the strong emphasis on dialogue and providing an open forum for participants to relate their own thoughts and perspectives to these themes. By jointly engaging in a meaning-making process we can arrive at a better understanding of what the key principles are in social pedagogy, how social pedagogy can be conceptualised in different practice settings and what it can contribute to improving these. This process is further made meaningful through several organisations sharing examples from developing social pedagogy within their organisational culture in different ways and their experiences, challenges and learning.

As social pedagogy is about engaging with 'head, heart and hands', SPDN meetings also have an active aspect to them. Besides the enjoyment and energy built up through these social pedagogical activities, they help provide participants with a practical understanding of what social pedagogy is about as they help build positive relationships between participants by engaging in a shared activity – or what social pedagogues call 'the Common Third'. For instance, the process participants went through when given a challenge – to build in small groups with very few materials a

protective device for a raw egg about to be dropped from a balcony – led to fascinating reflections about how relationships had quickly developed amongst people who had never met but had to solve an intriguing challenge together; how different roles were developed, allocated or claimed within each group and what contributions these roles could make within a group; how important it was to groups whether the egg would break and how they valued the process compared to the outcome; and how participants drew on their creativity to find unique solutions for protecting the egg, realising that their creativity was perhaps the most important resource.

Whilst the SPDN offers unique opportunities for participants' own professional development, its main concern is to help participants connect to like-minded professionals both regionally and nationally in order to influence wider change for children and young people. The idea is very simply to 'be the change you wish to see in the world' as Gandhi stated. This spirit seems to strongly resonate with participants who bring to the SPDN a palpable passion and determination to use social pedagogy as a catalyst for improving conditions for children and young people. For them, social pedagogy encapsulates why they decided to work with children and young people in the first place and connects to their professional and personal philosophies, which is why it brings out a level of passion which has much impressed international guests who have joined some of the SPDN meetings in the past. Considering the collective determination, the future seems a little brighter and we hope that more participants from a wider range of professions are eager to join us at one of our next meetings to help us develop more compelling visions of how to improve services for children and young people through social pedagogy.

### **Publications**

As an important aspect of reaching a wide audience and contributing to the discourse around social pedagogy, we have been keen to write both academic and practice-based publications. This has proven a central way to share developments, address gaps in the literature available and generally increase professionals' understanding of social pedagogy in theory and practice. It has additionally helped establish ThemPra's profile both within academic and practice circles.

- ▲ The most influential publication we have continued working on in 2013/2014 was the *International Journal of Social Pedagogy*. As an open-access online journal it is dedicated to contribute to the field of social pedagogy internationally through the publication of high quality peer-reviewed papers on theory, practice and research in social pedagogical settings. Its inaugural issue was launched at the Social Pedagogy Development Network event in October 2012 and included 4 articles from a range of international contributors. The follow-up issue was published in August 2013 with a further 4 outstanding articles. In 2013/2014, we've been busy preparing the third issue, published in December 2014, and a special issue on social pedagogy at a times of crisis in Greece, guest edited by Prof. Iro Mylonakou-Keke from the University of Athens. So far the journal has

received a warm reception and encouraged submissions from academics in the UK, the US, Canada, New Zealand, Finland, Greece, Norway, Poland, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Estonia, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and Azerbaijan. Editing the issues and publishing the journal has been a key element of ThemPra's community interest activities and is undertaken collaboratively with our co-publisher, the Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy at the UCL Institute of Education. Gabriel Eichsteller and Prof. Pat Petrie act as joint editors, supported by an international editorial board. Access to the journal is available at [www.internationaljournalofsocialpedagogy.com](http://www.internationaljournalofsocialpedagogy.com)

- ▲ In addition, Gabriel Eichsteller also wrote chapter titled 'Social Pedagogy and the Rich Child', which will be published in 2015 as part of the EAN conference proceedings (see below).

### *Conferences and seminars*

As part of our work around promoting a wider understanding of social pedagogy, ThemPra staff presented at several conferences in 2013/2014. Gabriel Eichsteller gave a 2-hour presentation on social pedagogy at a regional Ofsted conference for inspectors in the West Midlands (09/04/2014). He was invited as guest speaker at the European Anti-bullying Network's conference in Athens (11-13/06/2014) to share a social pedagogical perspective on bullying. Gabriel and Sylvia Holthoff were also invited to join an expert panel on risky play at the International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organisation's conference at the European Commission Headquarters in Brussels (18/06/2014) to talk about why children need to take risks and what happens if they don't have opportunities to develop risk competence.

We also ran 1-day introductory seminars on behalf of the University of Lancaster and Children in Scotland, both of which were well attended.

### *Website*

A further useful tool to increase the understanding of social pedagogy is our website, [www.thempra.org.uk](http://www.thempra.org.uk). Rather than just featuring details on our services, it contains an impressive amount of resources about the history of social pedagogy, key theoretical concepts, insights into social pedagogical practice, case studies, information about the SPDN, further learning options and much more. It also includes an overview of social pedagogy in the UK, specifying a number of different organisations actively involved in social pedagogy. We hope that this will become a useful tool in connecting people and organisations at a local level as well as beyond. We have also made more use of social media, embedding ThemPra's Twitter account (@SocialPedagogy) and sharing news via ThemPra's Facebook page. Over the last year we have continued to expand to an average of 25,200 unique visits monthly, with nearly 650,000 page views across the entire year. This demonstrates that the website has become an important, well-recognised and highly frequented online resource providing relevant background details rather than be a self-marketing tool.

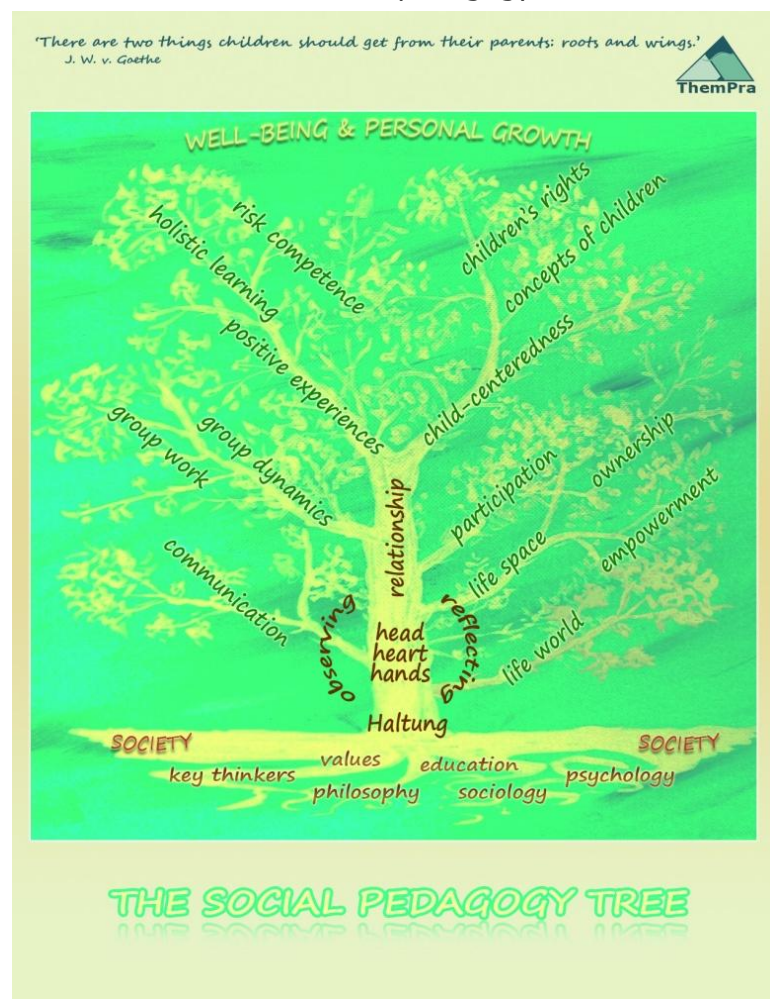
As previously, it has prompted several inquiries from students eager to learn where to find further resources and from social pedagogues elsewhere keen to work in this field in the UK, which we've happily answered.

### Social Media

Over the last year we have expanded our social media communication in order to share, raise awareness and educate. Our Twitter account (@SocialPedagogy) has attracted around 350 followers and is integrated on our website, thus providing the latest news and updates instantly. Our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/ThemPraSocialPedagogy](http://www.facebook.com/ThemPraSocialPedagogy)) has been another way of communicating with previous course participants and the wider world. We have also been active in posting in the Social Pedagogy group on Facebook, which has become an excellent way of connecting practitioners and members of the SPDN.

### Social Pedagogy tree postcards

As a more creative form of raising interest for social pedagogy and people's understanding of what it constitutes, we have distributed a further 500 postcards with a model we have developed to illustrate what social pedagogy is about. As the actual understanding of the roots, concepts and elements of social pedagogy is still somewhat vague amongst many professionals, these postcards with the so-called Social Pedagogy Tree (see image) helped to capture people's interest and were very positively received. Several inquiries reached us asking for further copies of the social pedagogy postcards, which we provided for free.



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### **3.3 ACTIVITY STRAND III:**

At ThemPra, we have been keen to contribute to the emerging research perspectives around social pedagogy in the UK and to provide more evidence about how social pedagogy can be put into practice. Thanks to European Union funding, we have been able to continue with these ambitions. In early 2011 we first applied for EU Leonardo Mobility funding in order to undertake an innovative project that explored the meaning-making process of practitioners from the UK. As part of the project, two groups of residential care and fostering social workers undertook a 2-week mobility to Copenhagen in March and November 2012 and experienced social pedagogic practice first-hand during two placements: one in a children's home and another one in a day-care facility. Thanks to successful funding reapplications, we were able to continue the project – now extended to 17 days – in April 2013 with a further 16 participants from 4 sending organisations in the UK (Staffordshire, Lancashire, Walsall and Aberlour Sycamore Services) and again in May and November 2014 with 24 participants from 6 sending organisations (as previous, plus Care Visions and Kibble Care and Education). Whilst mobilities are fully funded, ThemPra have invested heavily in the preparation and the dissemination process as we believe that these first-hand experiences of working alongside social pedagogues in Denmark do not only provide unique learning opportunities for participants but also offer significant reflections on how we can improve care practice in the UK. To share some of the key learning experiences, we decided to publish an excerpt from one of the participant reports in the *International Journal of Social Pedagogy*, 3(1).

In addition, the independent research of *Head, Heart, Hands* as well as the dissemination of the programme's interim results have already helped and will continue to help achieve the intended benefits to the community, which are to demonstrate the importance of social pedagogy in developing high-quality foster care and the potential of social pedagogy to transform the lives of children in care.

### **3.4 ACTIVITY STRAND IV:**

Whilst social pedagogy is a full-time 3½ year BA degree in most European countries, many professional groups in the UK that we've been working with are significantly less highly qualified than their continental counterparts. Therefore, ThemPra has been keen on being involved in attempts to develop closer links with UK universities running a social pedagogy degree and to create a clearer structure of what a social pedagogy course should entail. For this purpose we have been part of the CUSP Development Group, which discusses ways of quality assuring social pedagogy qualifications in the UK and has led on the above-mentioned DfE funding bid, which we have supported. Gabriel has also supported the University of Central Lancashire in an informal advisory capacity to develop an introductory social pedagogy module for their BA students, which they are now building on further.

As we remain committed to providing vocationally based learning opportunities through our social pedagogy courses, we have continued our partnership with Kibble. So far, this has led to an accredited module based on our 6-day social pedagogy course. We have also begun to explore further accreditation possibilities as part of the Social Pedagogy Consortium in partnership with the Crossfields Institute, which we are hoping to take forward in 2015.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

In ThemPra's sixth business year we have consolidated our work on *Head, Heart, Hands*, which has moved into an exciting phase of creating sustainability within each organisation. Many of the most significant projects we have been involved in have demonstrated the potential of working collaboratively, and we have grown strong partnerships both nationally and internationally through programmes like *Head, Heart, Hands*, the Social Pedagogy Development Network, the EU Leonardo Mobility projects, the *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* as well as the international conferences we've been invited to. This spirit of partnership has further increased opportunities in which we can collectively and collaboratively develop social pedagogy and make a difference to looked-after children. We have been very pleased to be able to continue working with nearly all organisations that we've been engaged with previously, which demonstrates both the satisfaction with what we can contribute to other organisations' development and that these are more than sterile business relationships. Importantly, these relationships have developed in ways that demonstrate organisations' emerging resourcefulness around social pedagogy. This has enabled us to continue to see very positive outcomes of the social pedagogy processes we have helped initiate and develop over the last five years. The energy and enthusiasm that many of the people we've worked with have brought to these processes has been frequently palpable and reaffirmed us in our belief that social pedagogy has an important contribution to make in creating the best possible conditions for children in care to grow.

As in previous years, the SPDN, our EU Leonardo Mobilities and the *IJSP* have been key community interest activities that have made knowledge and expertise accessible and created new opportunities for learning. By opening up UK developments around social pedagogy to international experts and practitioners in social pedagogy elsewhere, we are also able to ensure that UK social pedagogy is recognisable and shares its principles with social pedagogical traditions in other countries. In this respect, ThemPra has continued to play an influential role in developing social pedagogy and has extended its profile as a leading organisation in the sector.

We feel very fortunate and are grateful to be on our journey together with an ever increasing circle of allies and friends – professionals who share our vision of social pedagogy and are dedicated to developing better conditions for children and young people. We are confident that the years ahead hold ever more exciting challenges and opportunities and will enable us to make further contributions.

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