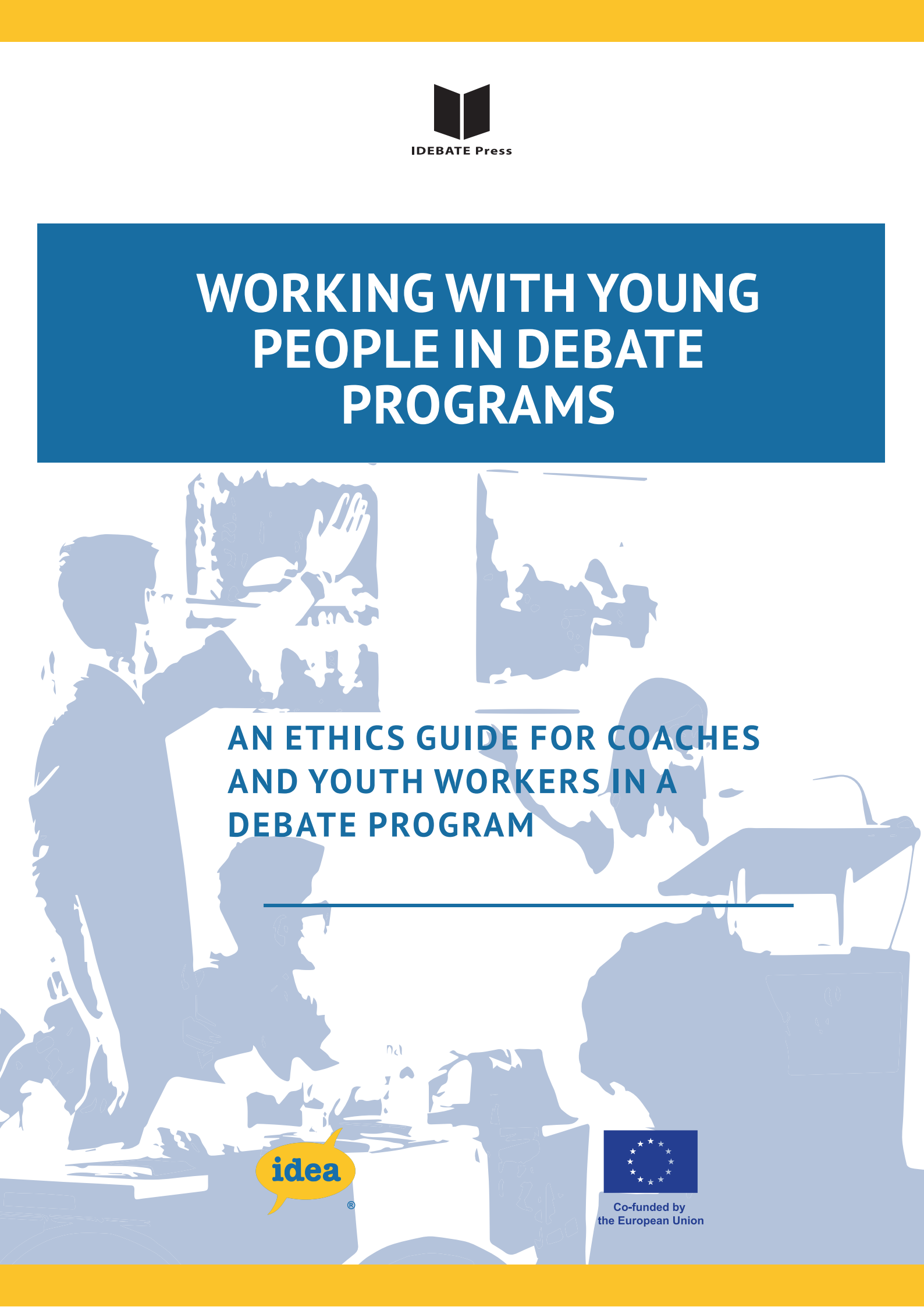




IDEBATE Press

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN DEBATE PROGRAMS



AN ETHICS GUIDE FOR COACHES
AND YOUTH WORKERS IN A
DEBATE PROGRAM

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AN ETHICS GUIDE FOR COACHES AND YOUTH WORKERS IN A
DEBATE PROGRAM

Authors: Merima Čolić, Eta Krpanec, Bojan Marjanović, Gabrijela Martić and
Anastazija Stupar

To all the members of the debate community, thank you
for your commitment to nurturing the next generation of
critical thinkers and active citizens.

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Youth work, young people, and debate clubs

Those of us involved in debate programmes tend to think of ourselves as debaters, debate coaches, judges, or possibly trainers. Beyond the debate bubble, the work of volunteers¹ or staff involved in non-formal education is considered as part of the youth work sector.

This handbook aims to elevate the quality of ethical standards from the realm of youth work to those committed to empowering young people through debate. Whether you are a seasoned coach or new to working with youth, this guide provides essential insights and practical advice to navigate the ethical and professional challenges you may encounter in your role. Our goal is to equip you with the knowledge and tools necessary to create a positive and impactful learning environment for all participants. We also hope to empower some of the readers to implement organization-wide changes in their debate communities.

We emphasize the importance of ethical and professional principles of trust or maintaining confidentiality while ensuring the safety and well-being of young people. Practical guidelines are offered on handling conflicts, managing psychosocial issues, and establishing appropriate mentor-mentee relationships.

For coaches, adhering to high ethical standards fosters trust and respect from their students, creating a more effective and harmonious learning environment. It helps coaches navigate complex situations with confidence and integrity, ensuring their actions always support the best interests of the young people they mentor. For debaters, knowing that their coaches adhere to these ethical principles provides a sense of security and fairness. It ensures that they are treated with respect and their voices are valued, which enhances their confidence and engagement in the program.

Working with young people is both a privilege and a responsibility. By understanding and adhering to ethical principles, you can foster a safe, respectful, and supportive atmosphere that encourages young people to thrive. This publication draws on the expertise of experienced authors and editors, including contributions from well-established ethical guides.

To begin with, it is important to clarify what these terms stand for. Understanding the broader frameworks in which we work can be useful in a number of ways - from helping us make the best of our experience as debaters or develop as coaches, to providing us with the terminology that can help us contextualize debate in our national and international educational landscapes, potentially opening up fundraising opportunities.

The term youth work is a phrase denoting a specter of activities for young people and a specific

¹ The term volunteer in the context of DEBATE PROGRAM encompasses any person working with young people, including but not limited to debate adjudicators, coaches, trainers, youth club coaches, and activity convenors.

methodological framework. Working with young people in a narrower sense includes an organized support for individual and social development of a young person that takes place in cooperation with that young person, and as a part of an educational programme delivered by an association or institution. Working with young people in a broader sense includes any kind of interaction between a young person and a person working with young people (e.g. through education, social care centers, orphanages, etc.).

The definition of young people, on the other hand, varies across programmes, countries, and continents. Some definitions include only children and/or adolescents. Others, such as the one in use across the institutions of the European Union, refer to anyone aged between 13 and 30 (!). Notice that, the more flexible the definition a young person is, the more likely it is for someone to qualify as both a youth worker and a young person. This is commonplace in our specific context, where older debaters often mentor younger teams, and university students often run university or high school debate clubs.

So, in addition to our age, we need to consider our specific role(s). As youth workers, we assume a mentorship role – in other words, a position of certain authority. This also necessitates us to acknowledge some ground rules. A person who works with young people is a youth worker who should respect the ethical and professional principles of youth work defined by the organisation coordinating the work, national and international guidelines, and, where applicable, professional laws, regulations and guidelines.

A common source of issues in non-formal education, especially in countries where youth work is not formally regulated or in organisations without formal regulations or guidelines for non-formal educators and learners, is that program participants are unaware of these frameworks and end up missing on the support and knowledge they can provide.

In the specific context of debate organisations and programmes, we often end up moving on from being a debater (learner) in the programme, to being a debate coach (educator) quickly and without comprehensive training. Some of us even assume both roles at the same time, and many of us become mentors to persons who are of a similar age to us. This handbook is here to help you better understand and shape your role in the debate-based educational process and the principles you are bound to while navigating the world of debate programmes.

Before moving forward, please consider another important distinction. The range of age groups making up the base of debate programme participants often includes minors. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child², a child is any person under 18 years of age. Youth work with minors in particular has to consider and be conducted in line with existing national and international legislation and strategies, such as the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child³.

In general, work with young people in the context of debate programs should be viewed through the following reference frameworks:

2 UNCRC: <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>

3 The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/ds0821040enn_002.pdf

- **NON-FORMAL EDUCATION⁴:** refers to all educational workshops or activities that use non-formal education methods. These are trainings and workshops that use participatory methodology. It is important to point out that non-formal education is flexible in terms of the methodology used and the way the activities and learner engagement are set up. It is possible to use non-formal methodology in a formal educational setting (for an example, recall the instances in which your teachers or professors have tried to set up debates in class) and in a more conventional youth organization environment.
- **OPEN (PARTICIPATORY) WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE:** refers to the way of designing activities in which young people are given the freedom to design and influence the implementation of activities in which they participate.
- **PEER EDUCATION:** refers to activities involving people of the same or similar age with certain competencies and pass them on to less experienced members (for example, debaters helping with preparing newcomers for tournaments).
- **SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE:** refers to the inclusion of young people in activities not provided through formal education (primary schools, secondary schools, colleges). In the context of debate clubs, this refers to competitions, workshops, participation in public debates, round tables, and the like⁵.

This approach to young people is characterized by recognizing the needs of young people and developing programmes aimed at realizing their potential to become active citizens. The impact on youth development can be tracked through three aspects:

1. **Structured work on strengthening the capacity and skills of young people** involves the planned process of developing skills, abilities and knowledge, or increasing intellectual, physical, social and emotional capacity of young people, taking into consideration young people's individual and social need. In this process, young people are active participants who express their needs and plan their fulfillment, with support from youth workers.
2. **Continuous increase of access to opportunities for development** implies creating a social, economic and cultural environment in accordance with the needs and rights of young people, as well as increasing the quality, accessibility and efficiency of youth services.
3. **The creation of a safe and supportive environment** where young people are encouraged to express their opinions and ideas, and are invited to actively participate in their own development. Young people are encouraged to learn through experience and reflective practice, where mistakes are not failures, and are instead opportunities for learning and development.

As mentioned above, youth work activities can be characterized as a “mix” of activities based on leisure, non-formal education, and reflections on socio-political responsibility⁶.

4 For more information on non-formal education, see, for example: <https://yeu-international.org/non-formal-education/>

5 An EU Strategy for Youth - Investing and Empowering, 2009.

6 IARD;” Study on the State of Young People and Youth Policy in Europe”, 2001



Our responsibilities in working with young people

It is important to note that youth workers have certain responsibilities towards the young people they work with, as well as towards the institution or programme these activities are organised under. These relationships imply that any action a youth worker takes in the context of their youth work - in our case, working with debaters - can ultimately have significant impact on the young people involved, the debate organisation or programme in question, and on associated volunteers and staff. Professional and ethical principles of youth work must always be respected in all activities, and even have implications on the way youth workers conduct themselves outside of those activities. We will explore different scenarios that can derive from these relationships, and how to navigate them, throughout this handbook.

Debate organisations and programmes, on the other hand, have responsibilities to their volunteers and staff. One way to define the relationship between the volunteer and the association is through non-formal agreements or, as a positive practice example, through bilateral (volunteer - debate organisation) or trilateral (volunteer – school/youth center - debate organisation) volunteer contract. Such agreements are mandatory in some countries, or are a positive practice in others. Such contracts usually offer a definition of volunteering in the related context, specify where the volunteering takes place, as well as the purpose, scope and responsibilities of all parties involved. Such documents should also clearly stipulate the organisation's responsibilities towards the volunteer in terms of education and support provided, the minimum requirements the volunteer needs for their work, and the like⁷.

As part of their activities, debate programmes should strive to enhance and standardize the quality of the work of its volunteers through training for judges, coaches and coaches. In addition to debate-related training, topics covering other aspects of our work, such as the ethical and professional standards in place, should be covered.

Our programmes and participants do not benefit from us shying away from the fact that the work that we do is complex, and that its non-formal nature provides for both wonderful advantages and ponderous dilemmas. Providing volunteers with additional reference documents or guidelines aimed at clearly outlining their responsibilities and the mediatory, or even disciplinary measures planned in case of issues, can be helpful. Documents such as an organisation-wide Code of Ethics, or a Code of Conduct, are examples of such documents.

⁷ Please consult „Volunteering in debate based youth work“ manual available at idac.hdd.hr or resourcebase.idebate.net for further reading on this subject



Ethics and professionalism in working with young people

In working with young people, all of us are bound to encounter series of ethical and professional dilemmas, and will sometimes be at a loss on what course of action to take. For example, we are sure every single debate coach has had their debaters complain about debate judges, and had to navigate between their responsibilities towards the debaters and those towards their colleagues and fellow volunteers. Many of us have had a minor or a young person of age confide in us about, for example, their struggles with mental health – something that many of us are not competent to assist with. As these examples clearly illustrate, our everyday work as youth workers raises questions such as:

- Should I raise a complaint or be collegial?
- Should I maintain a debater's confidence or pass on the information on the problems they are facing to their school, or their parents?
- Should I admit to my superiors that I am at a loss to proceed with the situation I am in, or should I try to find a solution on my own?
- Do I even have superiors? Who do I ask?

In resolving these dilemmas, it is impossible to offer a single recipe or rule because the decision depends on the specific circumstances of the situation, such as the type of action the judge or coach allegedly took, the nature of the mental health crisis the child or young person faces, or the structure of the organisation or programme you are involved with. Regardless, this handbook aims to offer some guidance in charting the courses you can take, and making sure you take into account the relevant ethical and professional principles.

Despite the fact that there is no single protocol for resolving all dilemmas, volunteers were provided with guidelines for resolving them in the form of the CODE OF ETHICS OF THE DEBATE PROGRAM (ANNEX 1) and the Volunteer Agreement, which each volunteer signs before volunteering. The purpose of these documents is to raise awareness of all the ethical principles involved in resolving dilemmas and what professional standards a volunteer should meet in their work. Although they do not give the volunteer precise instructions on how to act in specific situations, they give him a guide on what values he should not violate by the decision he makes.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Ethical principles refer to the core principles and ethical standards ideally encompassed and enshrined by your debate programme's or organisation's Code of Ethics. However, given the (sometimes too) non-formal nature of many debate programmes, not all programmes or organisations have adapted this type of a document. What such documents most often contain includes the core responsibilities of volunteers, such as:

ENSURING THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE:

- we should take responsibility for the risk assessment and safety of the young people in each activity, including physical and psychological safety
- we should, within the scope of activities we conduct for young people, assess whether it is more appropriate to allow young people to learn by facing challenges or whether this would constitute an unnecessary. As educators we have to make sure to find a proper balance between challenging students and giving them tasks that will overwhelm them.
- we must act if the safety and well-being of the child or young person is endangered, regardless of whether it is a child or young person with whom we work with directly or not
- we should assess whether they can act alone or whether other competent persons or institutions need to be involved

RESPECT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES:

- we must respect the racial, national, religious, sexual, gender, worldview, cultural and all other differences of programme participants
- we must avoid any form of discrimination based on the above differences
- we should not impose their own worldview, political, religious, or other beliefs on the programme participants

RESPECT FOR AND THE PROMOTION OF INDEPENDENT CHOICE:

- we should be aware that decision-making is an opportunity for young people to learn through experience
- we must not impose their own solutions and answers on the young people, and should instead

empower them to make their own decisions through opening up discussions on different possibilities and outcomes of individual decisions, except in cases where doing so would jeopardise the safety and well-being of young people

- we should maintain the confidentiality of the information provided by a young person, except in cases where doing so would jeopardise the safety and well-being of young people

PROMOTION OF POSITIVE VALUES:

- we should never ignore and should instead respond to social injustices, such as instances of discrimination, and work actively to promote positive values and correct injustices
- we should encourage young people to participate in the work of youth organizations, public structures and society in order to actively promote positive values

PROFESSIONAL PRINCIPLES IN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

In addition to adhering to the above ethical principles, we are obligated to conduct ourselves in accordance with professional principles and have the obligation to:

SEE AND UNDERSTAND THE BOUNDARIES OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE, INCLUDING:

- taking care to develop a caring and supportive relationship with young people, while maintaining the professional limits in that relationship
- not developing personal relationships with young people, especially intimate and/or sexual relationships
 - understanding the difference between maintaining a friendly relationship with young people and pursuing a friendship
 - understanding the difference between maintaining a close relationship with young people and pursuing an intimate relationship (physical or not)
- not using our position in order to develop inappropriate relationships with young people
- not participating in activities related to personal gain or to accept gifts and services of users of the association's services that could compromise professional integrity
- ensuring that our behavior outside the association's activities does not violate professional integrity or relationship with young people and other programme participants

BE RESPONSIBLE TO YOUNG PEOPLE, THEIR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS, COLLEAGUES, AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY:

- we should understand that our responsibilities towards different stakeholders can lead to conflicts of interest, and should seek advice in such situations (for example, you have to report something to the school even though young people do not want it)
- we should be open and honest in working with young people, give them access to relevant information, support them in making decisions about in programme activities
- we must work in accordance with relevant laws and rules implemented by the programme/ organisation

DEVELOP OUR SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES TO:

- take only those jobs and responsibilities for which we have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities, and the necessary support in case of issues
- seek feedback from colleagues and young people on the quality of work done and be willing to improve and change our approach to youth work where needed
- be open to and seek out opportunities for training and education for youth workers and other educators

ENCOURAGE AND ENGAGE IN DEBATES ON ETHICS IN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE:

- develop the awareness of the way our personal values impact our youth work and the ethical principles we adhere to in working with young people
- question ethical principles and standards, participate in discussions with colleagues in order to further develop the ethical and professional standards in place and positively contribute to the organisation/ programme and the experience of its participants
- develop the awareness of potential conflicts of personal and professional values, as well as the interests and rights of different individuals and the ethical principles of youth work
- recognize the importance of continuous reflection on ethical principles and accept this handbook as a developing set of guidelines that should also be considered critically

CONSIDER AND RE-CONSIDER THESE PRINCIPLES IN OUR ORGANISATIONAL OR INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS:

- we should ensure that staff, volunteers and programme participants are familiar with ethical and professional principles in place
- we should be willing to correctly interpret, discuss, and clarify ethical principles
- we should be willing to object to the views and practices of other colleagues and/or institutions that oppose relevant ethical standards



The confidentiality principle in relation to young people's safety and wellbeing

The ethical principles of youth work point to the confidentiality of the information provided to youth workers by young people, while on the other hand acknowledging that in some situations it is necessary to set aside this principle in order to preserve the safety and well-being of the young people in question. Let us look into the types of situations in which this might be necessary.

To begin with, it is important to clarify the difference between secrecy and confidentiality. SECRECY refers to keeping a secret, that is, a promise to a person that we will not share what they have told us with anyone else. CONFIDENTIALITY, on the other hand, means that we will treat the information entrusted to us in the best interests of the person in question. It is based on the idea that the person who confided in us trusts our judgment in regards to what is best. Sometimes this involves sharing the information with others to protect the person who confided in us, or get advice from a more competent person on how to proceed. Confidentiality means that we will not share this information with others out of fun, curiosity, to gossip, or to benefit ourselves.

It is our responsibility as youth workers to inform young people that our relationship is based on confidentiality, not secrecy, and to explain the difference between these concepts. Young people need to understand that there is a possibility for the youth worker, depending on their assessment, to pass on the information confided in them. In conclusion, the information we have received from the young people can be shared with others without their permission, but not without their knowledge of it.

It is necessary to understand what kinds of situations necessitate that we share information said in confidence. A YOUTH WORKER IS OBLIGED TO PRIORITISE THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE THEY WORK WITH AND TO ACT IN THEIR BEST INTEREST WHENEVER THEY BELIEVE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFETY AND WELL-BEING ARE JEOPARDISED. Therefore, in all situations when we suspected that the life or health of the child or young person is in any way in danger, it is justified to act in a way that is not in accordance with the independent choice of the child or young person. For example, if we know or suspect that the child or young person is being abused and does not want to share this information with the relevant institutions or persons, as youth workers we must do so, even without their consent. We should still inform the child or young person about our planned course of action and try to empower them to do it themselves. We can do this by providing them with support, understanding, and information about who to turn to for help.

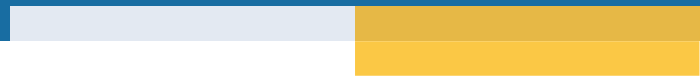
In the case that a youth worker finds themselves in a situation that requires them to include other adults and/or institutions, it is necessary to also inform the appropriate persons or bodies within the organisation coordinating the programme. We need to understand that, as individuals, we are at risk of engaging in an excessive invasion of privacy or “taking over” the process of seeking help by the young person I question. Even when operating under the best of intentions, such situations should be avoided through regular consultations with more experienced people and authorities.

Debate clubs are often in some way attached to schools or youth centers. Assuming the existence of such an environment, it is best that the child or young person and / or the youth worker contact the school's or the center's professional services. If this is not possible or does not lead to the necessary measures being taken, parents or competent institutions such as social services or the police should be contacted directly, while keeping the relevant debate organisation in the loop.



Examples from practice - questions and answers

In order to provide you with practical guidelines on navigating the role of a coach or a judge in a debate programme, we have highlighted some situations that you may encounter in working with young people that have little to do with building arguments and devising strategies. These examples (hopefully) clearly demonstrate, despite the often complex and messy nature of the situations discussed, how to implement the ethical and professional principles we outlined previously.



MY VOLUNTEERING

THE YOUNG PEOPLE THAT I WORK WITH ARE CONSTANTLY QUESTIONING MY AUTHORITY AND MY COMPETENCIES AS THEIR MENTOR. HOW SHOULD I APPROACH THIS ISSUE?

Debate coaches are youth workers and should, as such, strive to set up a supportive environment for debaters in which the youth worker should not impose their authority, and instead ensure that the young people involved in their activities consider them an authority because they respect the youth worker's behaviour and their responsible coordination of club activities. This is an important distinction between formal education, where authority is imposed, and non-formal education, where authority arises from our approach to working and collaborating with students.

The authority of a debate coach as an educator in non-formal learning environments primarily depends on the following characteristics: commitment and responsibility in carrying out the work, and the development of their own competencies. Gaining authority is an important part of the coachship role in the club, and is achieved through responsible planning of meetings, coordination of activities of young people with the school and/or the relevant debate organisation or programme, and continuous improvement of one's skills as an educator. It is important to point out that the youth worker's authority is likely not going to be secured through confronting the young people who question or deny said authority, and will instead develop through effort and demonstrating that you, as a youth worker, are dedicated to learning and improving your skills further.

An effective way to establish authority, therefore, is to conduct yourself in a way that shows young people that you are reliable and responsible in organizing meetings, which can include timely notices on when and where debate meetings are held, arriving on time, providing absence notes when needed on time, but also conducting meetings, by making sure you plan goals and outcomes of debate meetings, working materials, gather the information on topics or motion you want to discuss with debaters in advance, while retaining the possibility of improvisation and adaptation depending on their needs during the meeting. Debaters understand coaches and judges are there to support them in the process of learning and acquiring skills – this should be the base of your authority.

In your role as coach, you will need to learn and adapt. Due to the non-formal nature of debating and the often-limited resources available to debate organisations, many debate coaches do not have continuous access to suitable training the way an educator in formal education would. Being youth workers, therefore, puts us in a position where we are responsible for seeking out educational opportunities and materials. If you are involved in a programme such as the one run by the Croatian Debate Society, you can explore the materials, such as lesson plans, published on the CDS website. More materials you might find useful, including lesson plans, methodological manuals, and e-learning courses for educators and/or debaters, can be found through IDEA's website and Learningbase.

Earlier, when we were outlining the professional principles of working with young people, we mentioned the necessity of seeking feedback and advice from colleagues and young people themselves. This also applies to feedback and advice in regards to the quality of our work in terms of its structure, content, and impact in order to improve our knowledge and skills, but also identify when new knowledge and skills are needed and how to acquire them.

MY CO-COACH AND I HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT GOALS AND METHODS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Running a debate club is a complex process that requires planning different activities, monitoring the work and progress of young people in the club, and continuous improvement and adaptation to new situations. In addition to preparing for each debate meeting that you run, it is important that every coach involved with the club has well-defined goals and methods they would like to apply throughout the year. This requires a lot of reflection and detailed preparation. Before you decide to coach debaters, think about the kind of coach you want to be and the kind of learning environment you want to create.

Personal motivation is crucial, especially in non-formal education where many of us volunteer our time. If you have co-coaches, it is important that you agree on your motivation, vision and the specific methods you intend to use to achieve agreed-upon goals within different time periods (for the upcoming competition or activity, school semester, school year). Persistent issues with teamwork between co-coaches can, of course, negatively affect their motivation. Co-coaches must therefore maintain regular communication and clearly verbalize their needs and expectations, while keeping in mind the needs and expectations of the young people. The key to successfully running a club together is to be open to reach compromises and be willing to include approaches different from the ones you would like to pursue. If communication is repeatedly difficult or unfeasible, or you feel that there is too much difference between your approaches to running a club, there is always the possibility of one co-coach leaving the club. In case you estimate that the gravity of the situation is so great that no solution other than leaving is possible, it is important that the termination of a coach's engagement be timed to coincide with the end of the school year or semester, rather than a coach leaving abruptly in the middle of tournament preparations. If a disagreement leads to a conflict between you and your co-coach, try to resolve the conflict appropriately, through honest and open conversation, and remain in a cordial relationship. You can turn to other colleagues from your association for help and mediation in resolving the conflict.

I FEEL LIKE THE OLDER VOLUNTEERS ARE UNDERMINING MY AUTHORITY IN FRONT OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE ARE WORKING WITH. WHAT CAN I DO?

As stated in the answers to the previous questions, judges and coaches should be collegial to one another. Although we like to believe that only debaters are competitive, that is not the case. A misplaced kind of competitiveness can manifest as the need to undermine one's colleagues. We consider it important to point out that older and more experienced judges and coaches should feel compelled to help younger volunteers and should, if they see room for development, share their own experiences and useful advice with younger colleagues.

New volunteers should, ideally, undergo the necessary training and, in the process, acquire the necessary competencies to work with young people. If you find yourself in a situation such as the one described above, you should react and outright ask the older volunteer not to “undermine” your authority (gained through training and continuous improvement of your skills), and make it clear that you are open to constructive advice instead. Even though a senior judge or coach has more experience, that does not mean that theirs is the better approach. However, it is up to you to approach the senior volunteer calmly and politely and explain why you are dissatisfied.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IN CASE I THINK I DO NOT HAVE THE COMPETENCE TO WORK WITH A CERTAIN SOCIAL GROUP?

If you feel that you do not have the competence to work with a particular social group (primary school students, members of national or religious minorities, etc.), it is best to consult with older colleagues or suitable bodies in your organisation. Through the consultation, determine if this is a competency you can work on. For example, if you feel that you do not know enough about the debate format in use by students from a specific age group, you could seek out education opportunities within your organisation. On the other hand, if it is a competence that you cannot acquire through education in the organisation, it is best to turn to the school's professional service or the parents of students belonging to this group, and in some cases the young people themselves. Explain the problem to them and use the insight they can offer to determine whether you really need a specific competence to work with this social group, and how you can acquire it. In addition, it should be noted that improving your own competencies is the key to becoming a better volunteer - we recommend that you explore the available materials on youth work, non-formal education or debate online, including through IDEA.

THE PARENTS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE I WORK WITH DON'T THINK I'M RESPONSIBLE ENOUGH AND DOUBT MY PROFESSIONALISM, WHICH AFFECTS THE DEBATE CLUB. WHAT CAN I DO?

Consider whether any of your previous actions could have led to a loss of parental trust. Be honest and realistic about yourself and your actions. Where applicable, contact your co-coach(es) and/or the member of the school staff acting as your contact point with the school. Organize a parent-coach meeting to discuss club leadership. Let the school employee serving as a liaison with the school take part in it – their support will demonstrate your position with the school. It is also advisable to make a contact list of coaches and parents at the beginning of each school year, such as e-mail addresses where you can send basic information about the activities of the club and association, making it easier for parents to follow your work. If you are not working in cooperation with a school or a youth center, contact your organisation and ask for support.

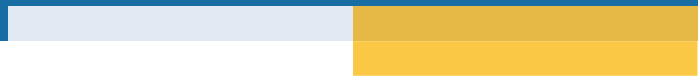
I RECEIVED LOW SCORES OR NEGATIVE COMMENTS THROUGH AN ACTIVITY EVALUATION. WHAT CAN I DO?

One of our obligations as debate coaches and judges is to seek feedback from colleagues and young people on the quality of our work so we can improve our knowledge and skills, and identify when new knowledge and skills are needed. Negative comments and scores should, in most cases, not be understood as a personal insult – rather, they should serve as an incentive to honestly reflect on one's actions, quality of work, and current skill level. Consult with your co-coach (if you have one) and other colleagues from your organisation on how to improve your work. Pay attention to the specific categories in which you received low scores, especially the comments in which young people described what bothered them the most. Further procedures depend on the type of comment. For example, if you received negative comments on the way you delivered a verdict when judging, you can practice delivering oral adjudication in front of a colleague, or, if applicable, analyze a recording of your verdict yourself or with colleagues. You could seek out other oral adjudication recordings to see how other judges approach this part of their responsibilities.

You should bear in mind that young people can sometimes be dissatisfied with the work of coaches or judges for trivial reasons, and non-specific or even insulting comments should not bother you. However, a pattern of low scores and negative feedback needs to be taken seriously.

PROFESSORS OR PARENTS ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT THE TOPICS AND MOTIONS WE DISCUSS IN DEBATE MEETINGS OR COMPETITIONS BECAUSE THEY DON'T LIKE THEM OR FIND THEM CONTROVERSIAL. WHAT CAN I DO?

One of the main goals of debate programmes is the development of critical thinking and a better understanding of social problems and issues, so the topics and motions discussed in debate clubs can sometimes seem controversial. When choosing topics and motions to discuss, you must take into account the age of the young people you are working with and their ability to approach certain issues given their age and level of education (think about, for example, at what age would it be appropriate to discuss the legalization of prostitution). If you have chosen a controversial motion on your own, think again about whether it is really appropriate given the context you are working in. You can turn to your co-coach(es) and other colleagues from your organisation for advice, or, if possible, persons with experience in setting appropriate tournament motions. If the debate motion in question was set by your organisation or a specific person or persons, you can ask them for an official explanation as to why they consider the motion appropriate and important. If necessary, organize a parents' meeting where you will discuss the motion, with a school or organisation representative in attendance if possible.



YOUTH WORK AND MOTIVATION

MY DEBATERS ARE DISSAPOINTEED WITH THEIR TOURNAMENT RESULTS. SHOULD I DO SOMETHING IF THEY DON'T COMPLAIN OPENLY?

Regardless of the young people's reactions, a coach should always think about the motivation of the members of their debate club and evaluate their work and preparations for competitions. This is not to say that winning debate tournaments should be the priority for every debate club, and instead underlines the importance of maintaining a healthy level of interest in debate and the motivation to explore difficult topics regardless of competitive success. Through reflection on previous preparation, coaches might find that they can introduce changes that can make participation in future tournaments easier for the debaters they coach. Some of the areas where we can improve as coaches in this context include our assesment of the time required for tournament preparation, the distribution of tasks among coach(es, debaters, and/or teams, our assessment of the debaters' understanding of the motion, or our estimation of the debaters' motivation, willingness or ability to invest time and effort in preparation, or their ability to work in teams. Talking to debaters about their impressions after tournaments and discussing the experience they have gained, regardless of their results, and giving them a few words of support can go a long way. After each significant activity, such as a tournament, a seminar, or a longer training session, it can be a good idea to dedicate some time to discussing impressions and the preparation process in relation to the results. Finally, as coaches, we always need to reflect on the expectations our words and behaviour are setting. Regardless of our ambitions, some debaters might not be very competitive. However, they may still gain a lot from being in a debate club and participating in tournaments, especially in terms of skills and knowledge that are difficult to come by otherwise. We need to be careful not to alienate them, and actively support them in defining their own goals and expectations – not do it for them.

SOME OF MY DEBATERS HAVE ACHIEVED SOME GREAT TOURNAMENT RESULTS AND ARE NOW BEHAVING ARROGANTLY TOWARDS OTHERS AND REFUSE TO WORK. WHAT CAN I DO?

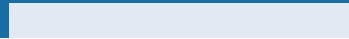
When working with a mixed group with debaters ranging from less experienced and/or successful to those extremely competitive, it is important to think about overall group dynamics. In addition to establishing your position as a coach who treats all debaters, regardless of their results, equally and values everyone's contribution to the club, remember that young people who become arrogant or refuse to work on themselves most often respond positively to suggestions or encouragement to work when given a specific new task or a new responsibility. Since these are often more experienced young people, it is possible to start preparing them for further engagement in the organisation or club through preparations for working with younger debaters or for taking judge certification exams (possibly for graduates). Through this process, you should take steps to help them understand that their developing mentorship role, in addition to debate skills, implies broader responsibilities, such as the ones we cover in this handbook. Essentially, you need to support them in changing their role from the one of a peer, who might resent their fellow debaters because of perceived failures in competitive environments, to that of a young person in a mentorship role, where their task is to support others in developing their skills.

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A VERY INTENSE ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEBATE. HOW CAN I CALM THEM DOWN WITHOUT DEMOTIVATING THEM?

Although as coaches we hope to attract motivated young people committed to debating, it is possible to encounter some for whom debate and socializing with other debaters is the main source of self-affirmation, not only as a debater, but as an individual, a friend, or academically. This can become a problem if young people devote themselves entirely to debating and neglect other activities or social life outside of their debate circuit. As a debate coach – in other words, a mentor working with young people in a non-formal role, you have a significant influence on debaters. Reflect on the ways in which you might be, even in inadvertently, encouraging a hyperfocus on debate in your own debate club. You can, on the other hand, try to encourage your debaters to attend additional activities besides debate to expand their field of interest. You can also support them in socializing with young people of other clubs to prevent debaters from building exclusive and closed circles of friends. You can lead by example through maintaining at least a collegial, and when possible friendly attitude towards other coaches and judges, and by conducting activities in meetings where the purpose is not solely to encourage competitiveness in debate and preparation for competitions.

A YOUNG PERSON WANTS TO LEAVE THE DEBATE CLUB. SHOULD I RESPECT THEIR CHOICE OR ENCOURAGE THEM TO STAY?

Debate club coaches should be supportive of the young people they work with and respect their decisions. Talk honestly with the child or young person in question about their reasons for leaving. If this is a reason you can influence (for example, issues related to the relationships between the young people in your club, or dissatisfaction with their progress as debaters) assess whether the child or young person wants to stay if you work together to solve the problem. To underline your commitment, you can work with the young person in question to plan specific steps to be taken to support their participation in the future. If the problem is of a different nature, or the child or young person does not want to solve it, respect the decision to leave. Emphasize to the child or young person that they can always return to the club or participate in other activities organized by your debate organization.



CONFLICTS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

SOME DEBATERS IN MY CLUB ACHIEVE MUCH BETTER/ WORSE RESULTS THAN OTHERS, WHICH IS STARTING TO CAUSE CONFLICTS HOW TO RESOLVE THIS?

Debate tournaments competitive, but working and participating in a debate club should not be. This means that the debate programme and the work of the club should not be focused only on competitions, although a part of debate activities is competitive. In working with young people, it is important to establish a relationship in which a coach provides support to all and treats debaters equally regardless of their successes and failures. This can be achieved through additional preparation and work with young people who feel they need improvement while making sure they are not singled out from other club members. As a club coach, it is advisable to monitor the development of your young people and through debate meetings ensure that all students have near equal levels of knowledge and understanding. This can often mean that you repeat some exercises or stay dedicated more time to content that's causing issues. In addition, make sure you bear in mind that not all debate club members share the same level of motivation, or even the same goals, which can often result in differences in the results achieved at tournaments. Try to expand your (and debaters') debate, as a type of work with young people, is based on the voluntary participation of young people and the voluntary amount of work, which should also be emphasized..

THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN MY DEBATE CLUB ARE MAKING FUN OF AND/OR ISOLATING A MEMBER ON THEIR IDENTITY (NATIONAL, RELIGIOUS, RACE, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, POLITICAL VIEWS, ETC.). WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Debate coaches play a crucial role in honing debate-related skills and fostering an environment of inclusivity and respect within the club. Coaches can enhance students' understanding of the world and their social responsibilities by incorporating discussions on economics, law, and human rights into the club's activities. However, discussing such issues can open the floor to mockery or stereotyping that some students might find insulting.

Coaches should always respond to mockery or isolation, first by intervening during and then by talking separately to the young people who isolated or mocked others in more detail, pointing out their behaviour's inappropriateness, and trying to a conclusion. This can be done by trying to put ourselves in the position of a victim of ridicule and discussing that position. Try to underscore the negative ramifications of discriminatory behaviour and highlight the importance of empathy. It is important to note that acting swiftly does not mean exacting a strict punishment. The goal of your intervention is to stop insulting behaviour and not frighten or punish a student. In addition, talking to and supporting the mocked young person is essential; they must know you reacted and acted. In such situations, it is necessary to distinguish whether it is just teasing or if the problem repeats and grows into bullying.

As stated when we discussed the ethical principles of youth work, a coach must respect the racial, national, religious, sexual, gender, worldview, cultural and all other differences of participants in the activities of debate organisations and must avoid any form of discrimination based on the above differences. As a coach, you must ensure that all students feel safe participating in a debate club. A culture of safety doesn't mean there can never be disagreement, but all mockery based on identity should not be condoned and, should it happen, must be addressed. These types of situations can be mitigated, or even prevented, by meetings or joint conversations where you agree on the rules of conduct and principles of the debate club with students (for example, respecting all club members, reporting absences on time, solidarity, helping in preparations for competitions, and the like).

Should the situation persist or escalate, seeking involvement from external stakeholders, such as school counsellors, educators, or parents, may provide additional support and resources to address the matter comprehensively.

THERE IS OPEN CONFLICT BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE FROM TWO OR MORE CLUBS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

The young people are the beneficiaries of the program of the Debate program and through the work of clubs and the activities of the association they regularly see the young people of other clubs. Precisely because the activities of the association involve a large number of users, coaches and judges must set an example of behavior towards colleagues and other members / volunteers, but also ensure that young people have collegial or at least correct relationships. Given that debate is also a competitive activity, it is easily possible that there will be antagonisms between the young people, even entire clubs. As is well known, it is possible that different clubs have different approaches to debate and their own specifics in expression, style, and even behavior, so it is possible that differences between clubs lead to conflicts or antagonisms. Coaches have a key role in conflict prevention and conflict resolution in relation to:

- former young people
- to current young people

Young people often imitate the behavior of the leader, and if they recognize or see that the leader has negative attitudes towards other coaches or clubs, they often (collectively) take them. The facilitator, therefore, must be careful because young people can interpret or even adopt his views. In case this has already happened, as a leader you need to talk to the young people about their (negative) behavior with a change in their own behavior and stop expressing personal views about other coaches / clubs. If this was not the case and the young people independently

developed conflicts and antagonisms towards other clubs, it is first necessary for the coaches of the disputed clubs to discuss the situation in order to find a possible solution, and talk to the young people from their club. Debate is a competitive activity, but precisely because its activities are competitive, it should teach young people to respect fellow young people inside and outside the club, and encourage “fair” treatment of the competition and competitors. It is important to discuss with young people that despite differences and possible rivalries, debate is an activity that should encourage cooperation and healthy competitiveness, while respecting differences of opinion.

I FOUND THAT YOUNG PEOPLE CONSUME ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES DURING ACTIVITIES. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

One of the main principles on which working with young people is based is the protection of their well-being and security, so you must act in accordance with this principle. In addition, as a volunteer of the Debate program, you are obliged to act in accordance with the law and the rules of schools and other institutions where the activities of the association are carried out. Young people should be familiar with the rules of conduct during the activities of the association, as well as the consequences of violating these rules. If you notice that the young people are consuming illegal funds, you should confiscate them and inform the organizer of the activity and their leader, or the person under whose responsibility they are during the activity. The responsible person should inform the parents of the young people, and the young people should be excluded from the rest of the activity and be monitored while under the influence of illegal substances.

THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON TOLD ME HE HAD DONE SOMETHING ILLEGAL. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

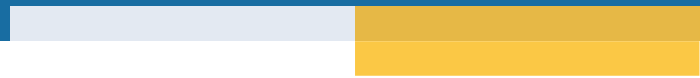
One of the main principles on which working with young people is based is the protection of their well-being and security, so you must act in accordance with this principle. As a volunteer of the Debate program, you are obliged to act in accordance with the law and the rules of schools and other institutions in which the activities of the association are carried out. Debateants should be familiar with the rules of conduct during the activities of the association, as well as the consequences of violating these rules. The relationship with the child or young person does not imply secrecy, but confidentiality, which means that you can share information about the illegal act in order to preserve the welfare and security of the child or young person, as well as other members of society. If the illegal act was committed in the debtor’s free time, you should inform the parent and the competent institution. If the illegal act was committed during the activities of the association, you should inform the organizer of the activity. Before you decide to report the case yourself, it would be a good idea to try to empower the child or young person to do it himself by offering him support, understanding and knowledge of who to turn to. If the child or

young person does not want to do it alone, you must inform him that you will inform the relevant services and persons. It is possible that this situation will undermine the relationship of trust between the child or young person and the presenter, but in this situation it is less damaging than the impaired well-being and security of the child or young person and society.

THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON BURST INTO TEARS DURING THE VERDICT / DEBATE. DO I NEED TO DO SOMETHING?

If the child or young person cries during the verdict, it is important that it does not go unnoticed by the judge. If the judgment is still pending, it would be a good idea to shorten its duration as much as possible (for example, to offer teams individual feedback later). You have to let the crying child or young person know that you have noticed that he is not well and that you will talk to him about it. For example, you can say, “I see that you are not well, do you want to go out alone or with a friend, or stay in the classroom? We are done with the verdict in a minute.” After the verdict is over, you need to wait for the other team’s young people and spectators to leave the classroom or go out with the child or young person crying. While talking to the child or young person, it is advisable to have the rest of his team with him to support him and reduce discomfort. Of course, this should be avoided if you have reason to believe that the reason for the child or young person’s cry is precisely his team. You need to show understanding and empathy when talking to the child or young person. You can do this by actively listening to the child or young person about what hit him or her instead of “solving” questions and advising him or her. This includes questions like, “What made you cry?” or “How do you cry?” and then listening carefully to the child or young person’s response. If the child or young person takes a long pause in his speech in which he expects your answer, it is best to paraphrase and reflect on his feelings. So make sure you understand well the feelings he expressed and the statements he made. For example, you can do it like this: “I feel sad because you think you didn’t give a good speech” or “You worry that your team will be angry with you because you forgot to make an argument.” In this way, you let the child or young person know that what he is saying is important to you and that you are trying to understand him. At the end of the interview you should motivate the child or young person to further debate. It would be best to do this by telling him that he believes he will be better in the next debate, that he is learning from unpleasant experiences and the like. After the interview, it would be good to inform the leader about the situation so that the leader can work on empowering and motivating the child or young person in the club. It is especially important to inform the leader if the cause of crying is an uncomfortable team climate or some more serious problem.

If the child or young person does not want to talk to you after the verdict, you should respect his decision and inform his leader about the situation. It is possible that the child or young person will want to talk to the presenter and not the judge, because he has more confidence in the presenter.



PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES

THROUGH WORKING WITH A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON I LEARNED THAT HE HAS A PROBLEM OR DISORDER OF A MENTAL NATURE (E.G. EATING DISORDER, DEPRESSION, IS A VICTIM OF ABUSE AND THE LIKE). WHAT SHOULD I DO

One of the main principles on which working with young people is based is the protection of their well-being and safety, which is why it is mandatory to act and protect the child or young person if you find out that someone or something is endangering their well-being. It is important that you are aware that these problems exceed your capabilities and competencies to help directly, or that you must contact the competent institutions or experts. In the context of school work, it is best to contact the professor in charge of the debate club or the school's professional service (pedagogue or psychologist) who should then, depending on the situation, inform parents, police, social services or other authorities and institutions. . If the school does not take seriously the problems you have raised, then you need to alert the competent persons and institutions. In that case, you can contact the Councils or the Board of Directors of the Debate program for support.

THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON APPROACHED ME WITH SOME OF HIS PROBLEMS (E.G. THAT THEY WERE ABUSED OR SUFFERING FROM A MENTAL DISORDER), BUT HE BEGS ME NOT TO PASS THEM ON TO ANYONE. SHOULD I TURN TO OTHERS FOR HELP?

As explained in the ethical principles of the Association, there is a difference between secrecy and confidentiality of relations. The relationship with the young people does not imply secrecy, that is, not telling anyone the information you received from the young people, but confidentiality, that you tell others the information the child or young person told you only if you consider it in the interest of his well-being and safety. or other reasons. Therefore, as the above problems indicate that the well-being and security of the child or young person is at stake, you must pass this information on to the competent persons and institutions. Of course, before you decide to turn to others for help, it would be good to try to empower the child or young person to do it himself by offering him support, understanding and knowledge of who to turn to. If the child or young person does not want to do it alone, you must inform him that you will inform the relevant services and persons. It is important to explain to the child or young person what the role of the facilitator is and what the difference between secrecy and confidentiality is. It is possible that this situation will undermine the relationship of trust between the child or young person and the presenter, but in this situation it is less damaging than the impaired well-being and security of the child or young person.



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTORS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

CAN I SHARE PERSONAL ISSUES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE? HOW CLOSE / INTIMATE OF A RELATIONSHIP DO WE NEED TO BUILD?

You need to have a professional relationship with young people with a friendly approach - they are not your friends and are not part of your private life. Don't share your personal problems with them. An exception may be a conversation in which you want to use your own experience to encourage the development of the child or young person, gain his trust or strengthen your relationship, but even then this conversation should not look like a conversation between friends in which you ask the child or young person for advice or emotional support. Also, if you are visibly upset during the meeting and the young people ask you if something is bothering you, it is advisable that you do not lie to them but openly say what worries you. For example, "I broke up, I'm afraid I'll drop out of college a year" and the like aren't inappropriate answers. Of course, you don't need to go into further details.

It is especially important to avoid establishing and maintaining close emotional or intimate relationships with minors in the context of working with young people. Based on their work, people who work with minors find themselves in a position of authority, which introduces inequality into every close emotional and even friendly relationship with a minor. This inequality can cause emotional stress in students who, in the case of establishing such relationships, no longer have a way to participate in the activities of the Association without it being intertwined with a personal relationship with the volunteer. For example, decisions such as quitting a debate, appearing in a tournament, or working in a club become personal relationships with the mentor instead of self-interest, and criticism of work becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish from personal quarrels.

These risks in working with young people are great, and due to the structure of the Debate program, where most youth workers are young people themselves, they are even greater since the age limit between volunteers and beneficiaries is small. In the context of working in a debate club, trials and the like, a volunteer is a person in a position of authority, but with a friendly and informal approach to work. It is natural for people, including young people, to seek emotionally close and / or intimate relationships with people in positions of authority if their behavior allows or encourages them, and everyone is impressed by the attention of someone we consider interesting, adult and generally an authority. That is why it is important to be aware of our position in working with young people and to be actively careful not to use our volunteer work to create personal benefits in the water of close relationships with users.

Given that volunteer work involves large groups of young people, it is especially incorrect to develop close relationships only with some because your users may justifiably ask questions such as "What is wrong with me that the leader / coach / judge wants to hang out with some of my colleagues? and not with me?".

It is normal that during your work there will be a situation when you talk to students in their problems with informal topics and there are several ways to avoid the problem of over-attaching students to you. Conduct such conversations openly, that is, that your colleagues are aware that you are conducting them, ensure that all students know that they can talk to you and that you conduct them in an environment that does not encourage students to feel that they are making friends. This means that such conversations take place in classrooms at school or in a context where it is clear how everyone could approach you, not at gatherings organized specifically with one student, private coffees, etc.

The point of working with young people is never to bring young people into situations where they may feel less valuable, threatened or exploited, and entering into close relationships with users, even if they are completely platonic, necessarily leads to such situations.

IS IT EVER OKAY TO HUG A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON?

Since a hug can express many emotions, from happiness through support to comfort, this form of interaction often occurs in working with young people. But it should be borne in mind that not all people react equally to physical contact. You may accept a hug when the child or young person initiates it. If you want to initiate a hug, check if the child or young person is comfortable with the question “May I hug you?”. If not, alternative ways of contact are handshake, “give 5” or a simple smile.

Remember, you too can and should refuse a hug if that form of contact with the child or young person is not pleasant for you. When hugging, keep your hands in the shoulder blade area and your lower body separate from the child or young person’s. Be careful not to favor only certain young people through physical contact. It is a positive practice that this form of interaction does not take place in places that are closed, that is, when you are alone in a room with a child or young person.

IS IT OKAY TO FALL IN LOVE WITH A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON? WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THIS HAPPENS TO ME, AND WHAT IF IT HAPPENS TO MY COLLEAGUE?

While it is impossible to control who you fall in love with, it is necessary to control your actions if you fall in love with the child or young person. In this case, you choose between two options: a) consciously not to take steps that may lead to an intimate relationship with the child or young person or b) consciously take steps that may lead to an intimate relationship with the child or young person. Entering into an intimate relationship with the young people is strictly forbidden (regardless of the age difference or the age of the child or young person). In addition to violating

the Code of Ethics due to the possibility of manipulation and influencing the development of the child or young person, depending on the age difference, entering into an intimate relationship with the child or young person may be illegal and lead to criminal liability. Even when it is not illegal, entering into intimate relationships with young people cannot be ethical due to the inability to maintain a professional relationship. Even when you are not directly responsible for the child or young person at trainings, competitions or camps, you are still in the role of a volunteer, and he is a user of the service provided by the Debate program. In addition, allowing such relationships sends a message to other volunteers and beneficiaries that such intimate relationships are acceptable. You can distance yourself from the child or young person by exchanging with a colleague, ceasing to volunteer or in the event that the child or young person ceases to be a user of the Association's services.

Also, behavior that can be considered grooming or encouraging young people to fall in love with volunteers is prohibited. Recruiting a minor is establishing and maintaining an emotional relationship with the minor, sometimes his friends and family members, with the aim of establishing romantic and / or sexual contact. The recruitment of a minor is a manipulation that makes him susceptible to exploitation and is unacceptable regardless of whether the goal of recruitment was achieved after reaching the age of majority or the cessation of formal work with a young person. Recruitment affects the perception of minors, which is why recruitment targets often feel like participants in their own exploitation or do not recognize that they are victims of exploitation.

If your colleague has an intimate relationship with the child or young person, you must report him to the Board of Directors of the association. The well-being of the young person must come before collegiality.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON FALLS IN LOVE WITH ME?

Just as you can't do it, neither can young people choose who to fall in love with. In case the child or young person falls in love with you, you must consciously avoid steps that could lead to an intimate relationship with the child or young person. Entering into intimate relationships with young people is strictly forbidden (regardless of age difference). In addition to violating the Code of Ethics due to the possibility of manipulation and influencing the development of the child or young person, depending on the age difference, entering into an intimate relationship with the child or young person may be illegal and lead to criminal liability. Even when it is not illegal, entering into intimate relationships with young people cannot be ethical due to the inability to maintain a professional relationship. You can distance yourself from the child or young person by exchanging with a colleague, ceasing to volunteer or in the event that the child or young person ceases to be a user of the Association's services.

In the event that one of the beneficiaries falls in love with a volunteer, this should be discussed with the volunteering supervisor if you have one, members of the Methodology Council or the Board of Directors. In such situations, transparency is the best way to avoid problems. This process can be started by the volunteer or his colleagues.

MAY I ACCEPT DEBATING REQUESTS FOR FRIENDSHIP ON SOCIAL MEDIA? HOW SHOULD I BEHAVE IN INTERACTION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

As youth workers and association volunteers, of course, you are allowed to accept requests for friendship. However, there are two conditions you are required to observe.

If you post content on social media that is unsuitable for sharing with students who are users of the association, given your role as a volunteer, you should not accept such requests. It is important to keep in mind that in your interactions with the users of the association you represent the association, as well as that as volunteers you have a responsibility towards the users, their parents and even the schools. You can use this guideline as a prism to determine which content you share on social media is appropriate if you want to add users to those same social networks. If you share texts, photos, or videos on your profile that could cause inconvenience to the user's parents or schools, you should either stop sharing such content, or reject user requests for friendship. Alternatively, depending on social media options and privacy settings or categories of people you are connected to, you can create a special category for students to ensure that they are unable to access your content even though you are connected to them through networks.

In addition to the content you share yourself, in the contact with the users of the association on social networks, the content they share is also important. Volunteers of the association on social networks must not interact with content about the users of the association that is inappropriate given the position of volunteers as youth workers. One of the specifics of social networks is that they allow the sharing of content that could be considered private, but due to the act of sharing on social networks it becomes completely or partially public. Nevertheless, your responsibility towards the users of the association remains the same and in the case of interaction with users on social networks, it reflects the guidelines previously stated in the category of relations with users of the association. Therefore, although users of the association share such content on their own initiative, you must keep in mind that as volunteers of the association you are young workers who are older than users, in a position of authority and as such must not like, comment or otherwise interact with inappropriate content. Quite simply, if students publish content related to debate, schooling, your work or the work of the DEBATE PROGRAM or your club, the interaction is probably welcome and appropriate. If they publish content about their lives outside the debate, it is very unlikely that interaction with you as a leader / judge / coach is necessary and appropriate.

WHY WOULD A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A YOUNG VOLUNTEER AND A YOUNG PARTICIPANT BE A PROBLEM?

There are several reasons why volunteers should not engage in romantic relationships with participants in debate club activity. First of all, we should be clear that being a volunteer in a debate program means you are either coaching or adjudicating. This means that a volunteer, no matter their age and maturity is in a position of authority, placed in them by the organization who named them to their position. No matter the willingness, mutual consent, age difference or social context, this means that a relationship between a young person and a volunteer is a relationship between person who is in position of authority, and a person who is not.

Such relationships are unethical and can be a form of abuse of power and exploitation of trust. Volunteers have a professional responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries with the young people they are working with, and engaging in a romantic relationship with a student undermines this trust. Debate coaches and adjudicators hold a position of authority and trust over the student, no matter the age difference between them and the debaters. In this dynamic, a participant who engages in a romantic relationship with a volunteer is likely to feel a sense of obligation or deference to them, making it difficult for the young person to give true and full consent to the relationship. Even with the best intentions, the volunteer's influence can create a sense of coercion, explicit or implicit, where a young person may feel pressure to engage in the relationship out of fear of negative consequences if they do not, or out of a sense of achievement if they manage to get attention from somebody authority.

This can lead to an unbalanced power dynamic and can be emotionally damaging for the student. All of these consequences can happen on a level we are not aware of; they don't need to be a result of direct malicious intent; they are here because of heavily skewed power and authority dynamics present during the initiation of a relationship.

These relationships can harm the participants' emotional and psychological well-being. Young people in debate clubs are at a vulnerable age. They may not have the emotional maturity to handle a romantic relationship, even if they are willing to participate in it. Young people taking part in debate activities are at a vulnerable age. They may not have the emotional maturity to handle the complexities of a romantic relationship in complex power dynamics. They may become emotionally dependent on the volunteer, which can lead to feelings of confusion and insecurity.

Too close relationships between volunteers and young people in a debate club can interfere with the volunteer's ability to provide fair and unbiased treatment to all participants. A romantic relationship This can lead to jealousy and resentment, harming the student's social relationships and sense of self-worth. And finally, if the relationship ends, the student may experience feelings of rejection and betrayal, which can cause emotional distress and undermine their trust in others, interfere with their attendance of debate activities which, in the ends, interferes with their skills development.

We can imagine a world where none of this is happening, and everybody is ok with everything, but this does not alleviate the risk that the young person is exposed to and the possibility that such risk may come to be. A person in the position of debate coach or an adjudicator is there to provide maximal benefits and safety for the participants; engaging in a romantic relationship is contrary to that rule. On a very simple level - the question persists, would the young person ever even interact with the volunteer if they were not brought into contact through a debate program? The question highlights the fact that the volunteer in this situation would be exploiting the trust put in them by everybody involved in running the debate program and using this trust to further their own social and romantic life.



VOLUNTEERING AND COLLEGIALITY IN THE ASSOCIATION

I AM IN A PRIVATE CONFLICT / I DO NOT AGREE WITH A VOLUNTEER WITH WHOM I HAVE TO WORK ON A PROJECT. WHAT CAN I DO?

Distinguishing private from professional life is very important in working with young people. If you are in conflict with one of your colleagues, try to resolve that conflict with an open and honest conversation. If necessary, you can turn for help and mediation to other colleagues from the association. Even if you cannot completely solve the problem, agree with a colleague to put the conflict aside so that your joint participation in the activities of the association is professional. If working together is really impossible due to the conflict, contact the organizers of the activity so that you and / or colleagues can find replacements. It is crucial to organize all the activities of the association in a professional way and at the same time that all participants feel safe.

SHOULD VOLUNTEERS ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE ISSUES IN FRONT OF YOUNG PEOPLE?

As coaches and judges, you must not resolve private or professional conflicts in front of young people and other users of the association's services. This way of resolving conflicts is most detrimental to your authority as a leader and can lead to divisions among the young people at the club. You need to resolve all your conflicts appropriately, through honest and open conversation. You can contact other colleagues from the association for help and mediation in resolving the conflict. If the conflict interferes with the implementation of the association's activities, contact the organizers of the activities so that you and / or colleagues can find replacements.

HOW SHOULD I REACT TO MY COLLEAGUE'S UNETHICAL PRACTICES? DO I HAVE TO REPORT IT TO THE AUTHORITIES (COMPETENT PROFESSOR, SCHOOL PEDAGOGUE, BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ASSOCIATION, POLICE) OR DO I NOT HAVE TO REACT DUE TO COLLEGIALLY?

One of the main principles on which working with young people is based is the protection of their well-being and security, so you must act in accordance with this principle. In addition, as a volunteer of the Debate program, you are obliged to act in accordance with the law and the rules of schools and other institutions where the activities of the association are carried out. If the actions of a volunteer are not in accordance with the Volunteer Agreement and the Code of Ethics of the association, it must be pointed out and prevented from repeating such actions. Before informing the Board of Directors of the association, talk openly and honestly with your colleague about his actions and explain to him why you are obliged to report him. Depending on the nature of the problem, either you or the association's representatives should also inform the relevant institutions (school, police, etc.). The welfare of young people is protected by respecting the laws and rules of schools and other institutions in which the activities of the association are carried out, and it must be ahead of collegiality.

A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON FROM ANOTHER CLUB COMPLAINED TO ME ABOUT HIS HOST OR I FOUND OUT ABOUT IT THROUGH HIS YOUNG PEOPLE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Your reaction as a leader should be in line with previous answers - thoughtful and collegial, but in a way that protects the interests of (your own and other people's) young people. It is advisable to talk to the young people and find out the whole side of their story, but regardless of your assessment of the seriousness of the situation, you should contact the facilitator in question. Your communication with the other leader must be polite and in good faith, given that it is in your best interest for the other leader to heed the criticisms you pass on to him and consider how he can best change his behavior. That leader should, just like you, talk honestly and openly about possible dissatisfaction with the young people and work on their behavior. If criticism of the facilitator persists, it is necessary to inform the Council for the implementation and development of the primary / secondary school program or, if your assessment of the seriousness of the situation is higher, the Board of Directors.

YOUNG PEOPLE COMMENT ON HOW A JUDGE / LEADER IS DOING A BAD JOB AND ASK ME FOR MY OPINION. HOW SHOULD I REACT?

After each competition and activity, the facilitators should conduct an evaluation of the debates' experiences at the meeting. This includes talking about their expectations before the competition, satisfaction with their and the team's engagement and results, but also impressions about the teams they debated against and the judges who judged them. This is important to do so that we can improve the debate program and gather suggestions for improving our work as coaches, but also other volunteers. Impressions and experiences of young people should be heard, as well as possible rumors they have heard from other young people. Only after listening to students can you assess the accuracy of the information, but it is important that you do not share your personal views with the young people. It is necessary to contact the disputed volunteer, talk to him about the impressions of the young people and point him to a potential problem that has arisen. This should be done collegially and for the purpose of improving the work of our volunteers, and not aggressively and aggressively. In that spirit, you should not share your personal opinions about fellow volunteers with the young people, but you should listen to them and evaluate their criticisms and tell them that you will talk about their problems with the disputed volunteer. It should be borne in mind that young people are often dissatisfied with the work of a judge for trivial reasons such as judging against them, insufficient engagement in the judgment for their individual comments or "giving too low individual points". That is why it is important to assess the seriousness of criticism and complaints against judges and react accordingly.

YOUNG PEOPLE COMPLAIN ABOUT THE TRIAL OR CONDUCT OF A JUDGE. ACCORDING TO WHAT THEY SAY, THE JUDGE MADE AN ILLOGICAL VERDICT OR BEHAVED INCORRECTLY. WHAT SHOULD I DO IN THIS SITUATION?

Although from what the young people say it seems that the verdict is illogical or the judge's behavior inappropriate, the presenter should not automatically draw conclusions about it for two reasons. First, there is always the possibility that there have been noises in the communication between the judge and the young people so that their interpretation of the situation is not the only one possible. Secondly, even if a judge has judged badly or behaved incorrectly, you have no right to portray him as an incompetent or bad judge because it is possible that this is an isolated case or that the judge could improve his behavior with some education or just conversation. For these reasons, the young people should be listened to and reassured that as a leader you will find out what happened and, depending on that, make a decision with the young people about further action.

For starters, as a facilitator you need to talk to the judge and try to determine if it is a noise in the communication between the judge and the young people or a real problem in the trial. If you judge that this is just a noise in communication, the young people should once again be given an explanation of the verdict or ask the judge to do it again. If, after talking to the judge, you also get the impression that the verdict is illogical or that the judge is behaving inappropriately, you need to decide on further steps in cooperation with the young people. If there is a problem with a judgment or conduct that is incorrect, you need to empower the young people to write their own evaluation of the judge explaining the problem they have faced. If it is a serious offense such as completely inappropriate behavior during a debate or judgment, you should write a complaint to the Council for the implementation and development of primary / secondary school programs or, if the situation is extremely serious, to the Board.

COACHES WHO ARE NOT VOLUNTEERS DO NOT ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSOCIATION'S ACTIVITIES. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Although they have not signed a Volunteer Agreement with the Debate program, all adult participants in activities organized by the association who are not young people or users of the association's activities should adhere to ethical and professional principles during the activities. These principles are designed to preserve the well-being and security of young people. Inform the organizer of the activity about inappropriate behavior, who will talk in an honest and open conversation with the coaches about the importance of adhering to the stated principles.

YOUNG PEOPLE USE INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE DURING ACTIVITIES. WHAT CAN I DO?

Since the debate program is not part of formal education, you do not have to insist on a formal language during training or club work, for example using standard Croatian instead of localisms and the like. However, it is important that you maintain a certain level of formality in communication that primarily relates to the fact that the language used does not offend other trainees. It is impossible to give a simple answer to the question of where that boundary is. For example, it can be assumed that the majority in the group of young people would not be offended by some swearing or a similar form of inappropriate communication, but the prevalence of such speech still causes discomfort in most participants.

It is therefore important that the volunteer recognizes the boundary between informal communication and communication that causes discomfort in the participants and reacts by warning the young people when they cross that boundary. There are also very tight boundaries that should never be crossed. A volunteer should never allow language that is offensive to certain groups in society, hate speech or incitement to violence against certain groups. In these situations, you must react immediately and warn the child or young person of his behavior and the impact of that behavior on others. If the behavior continues, further steps should be considered, such as talking to the competent person at the school or excluding from some or all activities organized by the Debate program.

Another important note for coaches is that social learning is very important in the debate. This means that young people learn by observing their coaches and repeating their behaviors with a more or less understanding of the meaning of that behavior. Precisely because the leader is a model, the young people need to pay a lot of attention to the example he gives them, so if he wants the young people to be tolerant in communication and use appropriate language, he should do it himself.

This instruction changes if it is a matter of debates in tournaments where, in accordance with the rules, one must insist on the least possible use of English words and it is necessary to sanction any swearing.

THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON DOES NOT ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VALUES PROMOTED BY THE DEBATE PROGRAM. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

As stated in the ethical principles, volunteers have no right to impose their views and beliefs on young people. Therefore, young people have the right to their opinions, beliefs and actions, which are sometimes not in line with what the Debate program stands for. However, as a facilitator, you need to balance between the right of young people to their own opinion and those situations

in which such opinions of young people undermine the well-being and security of other young people. In the event that the child or young person harms others with his behavior that is not in accordance with the values of the association, for example because of racial, religious or other intolerance insults other participants in the activities of the association, you are obliged to act. This means that you need to point out to the child or young person his behavior, feelings, and the consequences that that particular behavior causes in others. If the child or young person continues with unacceptable behavior even after several warnings, you should include others who can help, such as the teacher in charge of the debate at the school. This, of course, still does not mean that you have the right to interfere in any behavior of the child or young person that is not in line with the values of the association, but only what you see during the child or young person's participation in the activities of the association or which has consequences for participants. So, if the child or young person in his spare time participates in an activity that is not in line with the values of the association, it is not your right as a leader to comment on it or prevent it in any way.

SHOULD VOLUNTEERS PROMOTE HEALTHY LIFE VALUES (E.G. NON-SMOKING) THROUGH THEIR BEHAVIOR?

Volunteers should use their behavior to promote the values of healthy living in front of the users of the association's services because they represent it during the activities. You should not lie and say, for example, that you do not smoke in your private life, but emphasize to them that you are aware that this habit is not healthy and that you do not want to encourage them to do so. If young people ask you about something that interferes with your private life and disrupts the professional relationship between you, explain to them why you will not answer such a question.

DO I HAVE TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY THE DEBATE PROGRAM?

The answer is (expected) - no. Your engagement is voluntary and is based on voluntary engagement in the activities of the association. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that by passing the judge's exam you have passed the necessary training which has invested resources in you in order to ensure the development of primary / secondary school debate programs. Judicial engagement does not imply continuous work, as is the case with the head of the debate club. You as a judge can judge in those competitions where you are willing to judge depending on the need for judges. On the other hand, as a leader you have more responsibility arising from your obligations to the young people of your club, but also to the school in which you operate. Accordingly, as a facilitator, you are required to hold regular meetings and report to the school and parents on your work. If you are unable to attend the competition in which your young people are competing, it is imperative to find a replacement and provide judges for all your teams. If you estimate that you do not have enough time to carry out the planned activities, it is crucial to ensure that you have a replacement or co-leader with whom you will share your responsibility.

Although your participation is voluntary, the Debate program is based on the solidarity of volunteers with the needs of young people, so that members of the Council for the implementation and development of primary / secondary school programs will contact you repeatedly to invest their free time in activities. It is okay to say “no” since it is your free time, but we urge you to remember that in cases where more judges are needed, former volunteers set aside their free time so that you can debate and participate in the activities of the association.

WHAT INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK OF THE ASSOCIATION SHOULD I NOT SHARE WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE? MAY I DISCLOSE TO YOUNG PEOPLE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK OF THE ASSOCIATION (APPEALS TO JUDGES, SELECTION OF JUDGES FOR COMPETITIONS, ELECTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM, ETC.)?

Transparency is one of the basic principles of the Debate program, publicity is prescribed by the Statute of the Association, and is ensured by the media, regular reports to members and the publicity of the Assembly and other bodies of the association.

Participants can and should provide the public with information about the work of the association, for example in which projects the association can participate, what are the criteria for selecting young people for the national team, how to appeal to a judge, what is the process of becoming a coach and the like. What you should not share with young people are rumors that may arise about other volunteers and young people and your personal opinion about the work of the association. We consider it important to emphasize the importance of respecting anonymity in complaints about the work of volunteers in order to preserve the well-being and safety of young people. The idea that there is data confidentiality applies not only to the relationship of volunteers with young people, but also of volunteers to each other. For this reason, if another trusted volunteer has given you information about a child or young person, work in your club, the work of a Council or association as a whole, keep this information to yourself unless it is of direct importance to the well-being and safety of young people.



How to handle any issues?

If you encounter problems working with young people, there are several documents and persons / institutions you can contact. If you have doubts about the correctness of a certain procedure, you can consult the instructions from the Code of Ethics of the Association or this document.

Organisations should clearly publish protocols concerning are individuals responsible for implementation of debate youth clubs work. If you participate in a mentoring or supervision program by more experienced members of the Association, you can also turn to them for help. You can also request an interview with the members of the Board of Directors of the Association or with the President of the Association and contact them by e-mail directly or at

It is important to understand that most problems can be completely avoided with timely response, honest conversation and transparency, and that most cases where problems arise are rooted in situations where they did not discuss and agree on how to solve problematic situations.

Code of Ethics

Introduction

The Debate organisation is a non-governmental and non-profit association providing debate-based education in order to encourage public debate and active citizenship. Due to the importance of the educational role of the Association's activities, it is important to define the basic principles that members of the Association promote through their work with children and youth.

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to raise awareness of members of the Association on the observance of ethical principles and strengthen ethical behavior in practice. All members of the Association and other participants in the activities of the Association are obliged to act in accordance with the principles and standards of the Code of Ethics.

Key guidelines

1. Respect for equality and diversity of opinion

Members of the Association respect racial, national, religious, sexual, gender, political, worldview, cultural and other differences of all participants in the activities of the Association. The association promotes free exchange of ideas, tolerance, and critical thinking.

2. Participation in social processes

The Association encourages young people to actively and responsibly participate in the life of the community and civil society through objective and impartial analysis of social issues and constructive search and evaluation of solutions to these issues.

3. Development of personal potentials

The Association promotes non-formal and lifelong education of children, youth and adults.

4. Solidarity and mutual cooperation

The Association encourages the expression of solidarity towards all members of the Association. Also, the Association teaches young people to work in groups, which develops collegiality and empathy and enhances communication.

5. Intercultural learning and exchange

The activities of the Association provide an opportunity to learn from others and exchange experiences between regions, countries and different cultures. Working with people of different backgrounds contributes to reducing prejudices and stereotypes.

6. Voluntary participation

Participation in the activities of the Association is a voluntary investment of personal time, effort, knowledge and skills, and is free from all forms of pressure, except responsibility to other participants.

7. Transparency

The work of the Association is public. The publicity of the Association's work is ensured through the media, its own website and social networks, the publicity of the work of the Assembly and other bodies of the Association, and regular reports to all members of the Association.

8. Protection of the reputation of the Association

Members of the Association are obliged to preserve and improve the reputation of the Association.

Ethical standards

Members of the Association should be an example to others by their behavior and therefore should adhere to the following ethical standards towards all users and providers of associations:

1. Respect for diversity of personalities, attitudes, values and living conditions of all participants;
2. Respect for the confidentiality of personal and private data;
3. Presenting information without distorting it and without imposing one's political, religious and other personal beliefs;
4. Use of appropriate language;
5. Respectful attitude towards the space in which the activities of the Association take place: prevention of material damage, maintenance of cleanliness of space, rational use of consumables;
6. Participation of minors in the activities of the Association must be approved by parents / guardians;
7. Respect and understanding of the status of oneself as an educator and the authority arising from it and adherence with all standards relating to the prevention of abuse of authority;
8. Respect for all positive laws, directives, guidelines and regulations, especially pertaining to working with minors and mentees ;
9. Respect for the pedagogical boundaries between learners and education providers
10. Providing a positive educational example to all program participants;
11. Respect for every program participant's physical and psychological integrity and awareness and respect for acceptable forms and content of communication;
12. Equal conduct towards all participants in Association activities without preferential treatment.

Disciplinary measures

Behavior of a member of the Association that is not in accordance with the principles and rules prescribed by the Code of Ethics of the Association should be reported to the Board of Directors of the Association.

If the Board of Directors estimates that the complaint should be acted upon, a body will be formed which must issue a proposal for disciplinary measures or reject the application within 30 days.

The composition of the decision-making body will not be defined in advance, except by instructions that it must include representatives of both sexes, persons of appropriate qualifications to decide on the application, at least two debate club coaches, and one member of the Board of Directors. The work of the body is confidential.

On the basis of the recommendation and in accordance with the gravity of the misdemeanor, the Board of Directors will impose a disciplinary measure on the member. The Board of Directors may impose the following disciplinary measures on the members of the Association:

1. written warning;
2. temporary denial of assistance and services of the Association;
3. temporary or permanent ban on access to certain activities of the Association;
4. temporary or permanent exclusion from the Association.

Final provisions

The Code of Ethics of the Association is written in accordance with the Statute of the Association, and all complaints about its application can be sent to the Supervisory Board of the Association.

The current version of the Code of Ethics was adopted by the relevant body of the Debate organisation in April 2021.

On behalf of the Debate organisation.

Innovate Debate

applied curriculum for debate based youth work



Erasmus+

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For more resources developed under this project please visit:

learningbase.idebate.net

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idac.hdd.hr

Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders: Navigating Ethics in Debate

In today's complex world, the role of debate programs in shaping critical thinkers and active citizens has never been more crucial. An Ethics Guide for Coaches and Youth Workers in a Debate Program is an essential resource for anyone involved in guiding young minds through the world of debate. Whether you are an experienced coach or a newcomer to youth work, this comprehensive guide provides the insights and tools needed to foster ethical and professional standards within debate programs.

Inside, you'll discover:

Ethical Foundations: Understand the core principles that underpin ethical youth work, including respect for diversity, maintaining confidentiality, and prioritizing the safety and well-being of young participants.

Professional Guidance: Gain practical advice on navigating the challenges of youth work, from handling conflicts and managing psychosocial issues to building appropriate mentor-mentee relationships.

Real-World Scenarios: Learn from real-life examples and expert insights that illustrate how to address common dilemmas and uphold ethical standards in your daily interactions with young people.

Impactful Strategies: Discover strategies to create a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages young debaters to express themselves, learn from experience, and grow into informed, active citizens.



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