



SPPA
Social Pedagogy
Professional Association

Kindling Change

Introducing Social Pedagogy Across the Life Course

Programme

Social Pedagogy Gathering & Conference September 2025

Hosted by the Social Pedagogy Professional Association (SPPA)

Overview

In this document, you'll find

- The abstracts for workshops, discussion forums and posters
- Short biographies of our speakers and presenters
- Please follow the link to [Padlet](#) to find any additional information about the programme and gathering

How to use this document

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Social Pedagogy for the Entire Life Course

Format: 90-minute workshop

Abstract

In my workshop, we explore social pedagogy beyond its use with children and young people. Having worked with people of all ages and during various stages in their lives, I am very aware of the transferability and application of a social pedagogical approach in various settings, and throughout the life course. We will focus on the values and core concepts that underpin social pedagogy. I believe that a value-based 'Haltung' (stance/attitude) is the necessary basis for acting responsibly in our roles, regardless of settings. Thus, we need to be aware of our core values, and how these influence our thinking, behaviour and decision making. In this hands-on workshop, we dive deeply into our values in a creative, interactive way, to then reflect on how these translate into everyday practice. The purpose of the workshop will be to highlight how social pedagogical values can be applied in all areas where people support other people for a part of their lives.

About the speaker – Christine Spurk



Christine Spurk studied Social Pedagogy (SP) in Germany in the 90s and has been working as a social pedagogue and registered social worker since. After practising for almost 10 years in Germany, she moved to the UK in 2009. Over the years, she has supported people in various settings and at different stages of life.

Besides her BA in SP, she holds an MScR in Social and Political Sciences, a PG Diploma in Leadership & Management, and is qualified as a Practice Educator and a Family Group Conferencing Coordinator. She has over 12 years of experience in delivering SP training and has been part of 2 SP pilots. After years of social work practice, she now works as the Practice Learning & Development Lead for Adult Services for a small Scottish local authority and continues to take every opportunity to use a social pedagogical approach in her work.



Box Sets, Netflix and Social Pedagogy

Format: 90-minute workshop

Abstract

Klaus Mollenhauer is a German pedagogue, philosopher and anthropologist who wrote 'Forgotten Connections' to support social pedagogues' thinking about their relationship with children, the purpose of their work and to highlight ways in which children are also engaging in this process. He does this by asking 5 questions:

1. Why do we want to have children? (Upbringing and Bildung)
2. What way of life do I present to children by living with them? (Presentation)
3. What way of life ought to be systematically represented to children? (Representation)
4. How can I help children/young people to become self-starters and support their growth? (Bildsamkeit; Self-Activity)
5. Who am I? Who do I want to be, and how do I help others with their identity problems? (Identity)

The examples Mollenhauer uses can be convoluted because they are drawn from a specific cultural heritage. What are other different cultural references? Can we use boxsets? In this workshop, we will be discussing Mollenhauer's five questions in relation to three different Boxsets: Stranger Things; Pose and Breaking Bad. Rather than being a dry conversation about a book written some 60 years ago, we will have a pyjama party, complete with popcorn, hot water bottles and onesies, watch clips from the box sets and explore Mollenhauer's questions.

About the speaker – Cecile Remy



Cecile Remy has worked for more than 20 years in Residential Child Care, as well as teaching children with additional learning needs, or supporting parents navigate the SEN system. Parallel to this work, she recently completed a PhD, exploring how residential care workers can work with the Early Years' Reggio Emilia concept of the 'image of the rich child'. Cecile has been involved with SPPA since its beginning, as a member, a trustee and since April 2025 as the Chair of the board of Trustees. Together with Yvalia, Jenny, Emma, Pat, Kelly, Judith and Leoni she wants to give SPPA the organisational structure and financial security it needs to be able to fulfil its mission: supporting social pedagogues and those interested in social pedagogy across the UK and Ireland to be confident, reflective and passionate professionals.



Is Social Pedagogy a Good Fit for Patient and Public Involvement in Healthcare Research?

Format: 45-minute discussion forum & poster

Abstract

Workshop

The workshop will explore the particular context of patient and public involvement in healthcare research and the challenges and opportunities which public involvement practitioners encounter when trying to work relationally with public contributors and researchers.

Healthcare research is a highly regulated environment, and whilst these boundaries are primarily for patient safety and ensuring the highest quality data gathering, the ecosystem which is created within this space presents some particular challenges around power dynamics, roles and responsibilities and how the patient voice is included or interpreted. There is a lot of guidance on the technical aspects of how PPIE should be done, but not very much information on 'why' and 'how' we work in the way that we do, in this area.

Last year I undertook a six-month research internship funded by ARC (Applied Research Collaboration) Wessex to explore whether Social Pedagogy might be a good fit for PPIE (patient and public involvement and engagement) in healthcare research. I wanted to see whether Social Pedagogy might provide a useful and flexible framework for how to conduct PPIE - not from a technical perspective, but from a relational one. In this workshop we will explore the background to PPIE and how it has changed over the last twenty years, the initial findings from my research internship and then have time to discuss the key themes in smaller groups.

Poster

'Where is Social Pedagogy?'

During a six-month research internship funded by ARC Wessex in 2024, I spent time exploring whether Social Pedagogy can be used to underpin and articulate the person-centred values-driven approach which myself and colleagues often seek to use in our public involvement work, but which may not always be valued by those outside this area of work.

Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) is a key part of the research design process within the NHS and it's a requirement for any funding programmes. We have ample guidance on 'what' needs doing for PPIE but very little on the 'why' and 'how' practitioners in this area work in the way that we do.

PPIE (also known as PPI) is more than just a set of administrative tasks: it involves relationship building, emotional intelligence, excellent communication and insight skills. The ripple effects from successful PPIE work can shape and nurture a

sustainable research relationship - conversely, if handled badly, it can reinforce barriers to research and damage trust between healthcare professionals and the wider community.

The poster explains why this is important and the questions my project aimed to address.

About the speaker – Sharon Court



Sharon Court is a qualified teacher and youth worker with over 30 years' experience of working with children and young people. She worked for ten years as a creative engagement freelancer, developing and managing community engagement programmes including projects funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Armed Forces Community Covenant. Prior to joining the NHS, Sharon worked with a number of local organisations including Portsmouth Cathedral where she devised and led their community engagement programme. This four-year partnership included work funded by Awards for All and Arts Council England. Sharon brings a wealth of community experience and networks to her role as the Patient and Public Involvement Facilitator at Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust, where she has worked for 6.5 years supporting a successful public involvement group for adults and students, and creating new opportunities to engage the public with healthcare research. Her research interest is around the potential use of Social Pedagogy as an underpinning methodology for patient and public involvement (PPI) in healthcare research, as there is not currently a universally agreed methodology for PPI in this space.



Social Pedagogy Framework

Format: 45-minute discussion forum

Abstract

The BA (Hons) Working with Children and Families degree at University of South Wales was successfully endorsed by the Social Pedagogy Professional Association (SPPA) in September 2023. One of the tasks the course team encountered was how to ensure the Social Pedagogy Standards and Charter were embedded in the students' learning and development throughout the degree.

The course team developed a visual framework that divides the Social Pedagogy Standards into five easily recognisable themes: Relationships; Animation; Rights, Safeguarding, Advocacy & Change; Leadership & Management; and Community. A logo was designed and embedded into all course materials and students are introduced to the logo and the framework in their first year, even though students are not required to complete placement hours until their second and third year of study.

The framework was developed to support students in recognising where they have adhered to and embedded a Social Pedagogy Standard or a value from the Charter, by critically reflecting for, on, and in practice using e.g. the Gibbs' model for critical reflection.

The discussion will focus on 'What is Working' and participants will hear how the framework was created and get an idea of how they themselves can create a framework for their learners. This can be achieved in a formal or in-formal learning environment, for instance to support staff development or continued professional development. Furthermore, participants will get the opportunity to link one of the Social Pedagogy Standards to their own practice using the handout provided. Finally, extracts from students' reflections will evidence their learning and understanding in addition to the application of the individual standards into their own practice.

About the speaker – Lise Jacobsen



Lise Jacobsen is originally from Denmark and settled in South Wales, where she joined the University of South Wales's Youth and Community Work team in 2018. Lise is course leader for BA (Hons) Working with Children and Families, which is endorsed by the SPPA. Lise is an experienced Employability Adviser where she has coached and mentored young people in employability. Lise was recently course leader for BA (Hons) Youth and Community Work until the course closed in 2025 and is experienced in widening participation, lifelong learning and community



regeneration, from her time working in community development on the Welsh Government's Communities First Scheme and as course leader for the FDA Community Development and Cross-sector Collaboration. Lise's interests are sustainable communities, engagement and participation, as well as social justice, which encouraged Lise to become a trustee of a local community association.



Planting Seeds of Change: Using Utopia as a Method to Nurture Social Pedagogical Practice

Format: 45-Minute Discussion Forum

Abstract

This workshop explores how Ruth Levitas' *Utopia as Method* was used to scaffold students in exercising their identity as social pedagogy practitioners and changemakers. Through guided use of Levitas' three modes: ontological (envisioning human flourishing), archaeological (uncovering current assumptions), and architectural (designing alternative futures), students became deeply aware of their *Haltung*, imagined possibilities beyond their existing practice contexts and translated these into practical solutions to challenges faced by children and families. This process culminated in the co-creation of a children and families festival, enabling students to bring their visions to life.

Participants will explore examples from the students' journey, engage with the utopian framework, and reflect on how imaginative, future-oriented approaches can inform their own contexts. The session offers practical tools to support practitioners in embedding utopian thinking into their social pedagogical practice to inspire hope and create meaningful change for the people and communities they work with.

About the speakers – Emma Laurence, Sue Baylis & Sarah Hutchins



Emma Laurence is a Director of the Social Pedagogy Professional Association and a lecturer in the Department for Children and Families at the University of Worcester, and Course Leader of the BA (Hons) Early Childhood. With a background in educational leadership, systems change, and social pedagogy, Emma works at the intersection of research, practice, and policy to improve outcomes for children, families, and communities. Emma has just recently completed her PhD in Educational Leadership, looking at collaboration between primary headteachers. Prior to this, she studied both the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood and the MA in Education before completing her PGCE with TeachFirst and then her PG Certificate in Learning and Teaching in HE. Emma's experience spans many EY settings, primary schools and now teaching in Higher Education. Her interests are in human development, both individually and communally, meaning her work spans education and care across all ages and well beyond the school environment.



Sue Baylis has worked with children and their families or carers in a range of statutory and private organisations in education and social care over the last 25 years. During this time, she joined Local Authority working parties, undertook tutor field work for the Pre-School Learning Alliance and attended national early years forums. Sue worked for 6 years at a nursery assessment unit, specialising in working with children who had a diagnosis of ASD. During this time, she completed her MA in Special and Inclusive Education and researched ways of supporting communication and reflection with nonverbal children. Part of this role, within a special school, included providing staff training across the school and being employed as a part-time tutor for Autism West Midlands.

Sue joined the team at the University of Worcester in 2006 and became a Fellow of The Higher Teaching Academy in 2013. She continues her work with children and their families within her role as a governor at a school for children with special educational needs and is welfare officer for Worcestershire and Herefordshire Ladies County Golf.

Sue's values and beliefs are grounded in giving children positive experiences, a sense of self-worth and valuing their contribution as agents in their own right.



Sarah Hutchins joined the University of Worcester in January 2024, and she is a lecturer in the Department for Children and Families within the School of Education. Sarah currently lectures on the BA (Hons) Early Childhood in Society degree course. Sarah has over twenty years of UK and International teaching, educational and classroom experience gained from working in partnership with children, carers and their families within the State, Independent and PVI sectors.

Sarah is a qualified teacher, and she is experienced in supporting the well-being, learning and social inclusion of children and their families across the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 age ranges and beyond. Sarah also brings a wealth of comparative international teaching and learning experiences from working within the bi-cultural pedagogy of Te Whāriki and interpretations of its play-based curriculum in New Zealand.



Friendships Matter: Nurturing the Friendships of Care-Experienced Children and Young People

Format: 90-minute workshop

Abstract

Social pedagogy at its core is about relationships and often professionals focus on the importance of family relationships for care-experienced children. Legal duties often dictate this focus. However, care-experienced children say that friends are just as important. There is limited research around the importance of friendship but what this shows is that friendships are linked to positive safeguarding and transitions from the care system as well as positive well-being. This workshop will highlight the findings from a small-scale research project undertaken within the social pedagogy network to surface the positive practice that is happening to support friendships. It will explore the five key action points we feel practitioners need to embed into their day-to-day work as well as the steps organisations need to take too to help develop this important area of practice. It will take an experiential approach with participation from the people attending expected including creative activities to help explore the topic of friendships.

About the speaker – Lowis Charfe

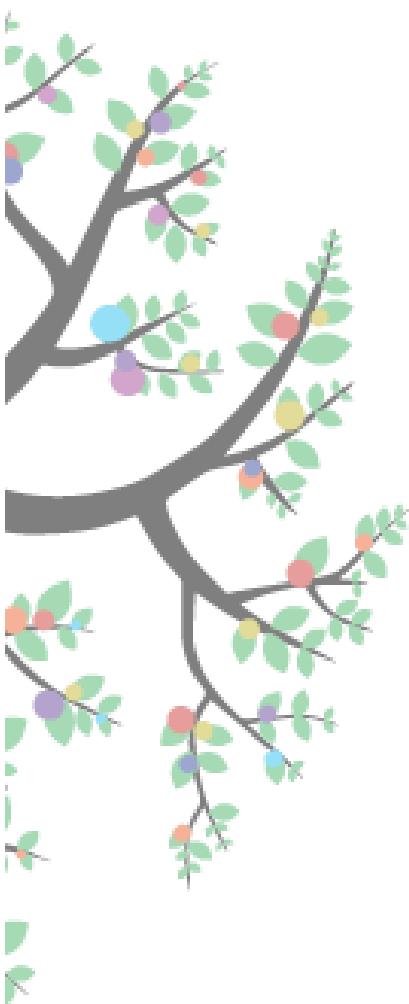


Lowis Charfe currently works with ThemPra Social Pedagogy as an Independent Trainer and runs the Making Co-Production Meaningful course, which has social pedagogy as its foundation. Before this, she spent the last twelve and a half years at the University of Central Lancashire (now known as the University of Lancashire) as a Senior Lecturer. It's there that she met her ThemPra colleagues and became totally enthralled with everything social pedagogical.

Not only has she been running social pedagogy courses, modules and training events, she has also written quite a bit about social pedagogy. This includes the book *Social Pedagogy and Social Work* and the article 'Does My Haltung Look Big In This?', published in the *International Journal of Social Pedagogy*.

She is the lead for the UK partner team in the Erasmus funded Massive Open On-Line Course (MOOC) project, *Social Pedagogy In Europe*. Headed by ThemPra, the project developed a short on-line course looking at the role of social

pedagogy across Europe. She is also a long-standing member of the Social Pedagogy Professional Association. Previously, she worked as a social worker in a Leaving Care Team, supporting young care leavers to live independently. Her first role after qualifying was as a Youth Offending Team Officer for the Manchester YOT service. Because of her previous social work experience, she understands the link between social pedagogy and social work and feels excited about the developments within the UK to embed social pedagogy into direct practice.



Everyday Theatre: Exploring and Reflecting our Daily Experiences through the Theatre of the Oppressed Method

Format: 90-minute workshop

Abstract

Workshop will be based on games and exercises from the Theatre of the oppressed method and will provide a space where participants can relax and explore everyday themes in a fun, creative way. The aim is to reconnect with our senses, impressions and reflections of our everyday life, critically think about different themes while also learn about the basic principles of the method. Participants will be introduced to Games, Image theatre and perhaps also part of Newspaper theatre/Forum theatre (depending on the interests of participants) which they can later use in their own work. Following the practical part there will be time to learn the theory of the methodology and have a discussion.

Theatre of the oppressed was developed by Augusto Boal in Brazil. Boal was influenced by the work of the educator and theorist Paulo Freire (Pedagogy of the oppressed) who is one of the key authors in social pedagogy study. Educators around the world have often successfully used Theatre of the oppressed methodology with their work with different groups in society. It is a well-known method of interactive theatre that focuses on oppressions of different groups, explores complexities of situations and possible solutions. The theatre is based on the principles of dialogue, interaction, and critical thinking, with the audience becoming active participants in the performance.

About the speaker – Kristina Šmitran



Kristina Šmitran has been a social pedagogue at the Hackney Virtual School since 2018. She completed her degree in social pedagogy in 2011, and soon after, led a project at the University of Ljubljana where social pedagogy students explored Theatre of the Oppressed methodology, culminating in a final performance. The project helped equip students with practical tools they could use in their future work. Before her current role, Kristina worked as an educator, supporting children and young people with diverse and complex special needs. She has also worked as a trainer and project manager through the ERASMUS+ programme, connecting schools across Europe and creating opportunities



for children with and without disabilities. She has a strong interest in art and community-based approaches.



Leadership to Thrive

Format: 90-minute workshop

Abstract

As a leader, it's important to get ahead of challenges by starting to think about how you might use evidence-based practices to first enhance resilience and mental toughness and then leverage these qualities to buffer and bolster themselves and others and then build from their strengths and growing self- and other-awareness. During the workshop, participants will go through an experiential model of learning by doing and this will not only provide them with the tools they need to be successful as team leaders, but also the confidence they need to develop high quality connections and help their stakeholders thrive.

My workshop focuses on human-centred design and coaching relationships, which is all about using deep empathy to really understand ourselves and the people we work with, so that we can design solutions that support the development of agency and a collaborative spirit. The choices we make will then not only lead to our own well-being but also the well-being of others.

About the speaker – Zoe Matthews



Zoe Matthews is a leadership and career development coach and the founder of Art Resilience Consulting, a social impact consulting firm. She works with both leaders and their staff on their ability to thrive and persist, even in times of volatility. She has 20 years of experience in learning and development in a variety of workplace cultures, 10 years of which she has worked in both middle management and senior management positions in the field of education. She is certified and endorsed by the Board for Professional and Executive Education at the University of Cambridge, U.K., and a member of the Association for Coaching.

Balancing Support Throughout Life's Journey: A Social Pedagogy Perspective on Relational Practice and Systems of Support for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities.

Format: 45-minute discussion forum

Abstract

This discussion forum aims to explore the complex dynamics of providing support to adults with intellectual disabilities and how social-pedagogical principles can help navigate the delicate balance between over-support and under-support. In Ireland, services with a learning-focused approach, emphasizing personal growth, relationships, and lived experience, can grapple with meeting the requirements of an outcome-focused system driven by measurable targets and efficiency. This dichotomy can significantly shape how support is delivered. Societal and professional systems of support may be informed by stereotypes and a cultural understanding of disability, potentially leading to dis-empowerment and dependency through over-support, or to neglect and isolation through under-support.

Social pedagogy offers a framework that prioritises relational practice and recognises the importance of meaningful connections and social inclusion to well-being. In focusing on agency, co-constructed support and life-long learning, a social pedagogical perspective encourages practitioners to critically reflect on their roles and the systems within which they operate. We invite discussion on how relational, learning-focused models can better inform support strategies and ensure that individuals are neither left behind nor held back.

Windmill is a Day and Independent Living Supports service that has always had a relational practice approach. Having recently adopted social pedagogy, we believe that, whilst the practice context for our discussion is adults with intellectual disabilities, this theme may be of relevance to other sectors, and we welcome perspectives from professionals supporting other groups of people.

Our aim is to create a vision of what an ideal support environment would look like using real-life examples and open discussion. Participants will consider how to create a responsive, respectful and empowering support system for adults with intellectual disabilities - one that evolves with them throughout their lives, values both outcomes and the learning journey, and is neither overly protective nor neglectful, but instead empowering and inclusive.

About the speakers – Liz O'Connor Keogh & Joan MacDonald



Elizabeth (Liz) O'Connor Keogh's professional journey began with studies in pre-nursing and childcare, reflecting an early passion for supporting others. She went on to complete courses in Equality Studies and Training Development, which broadened her understanding of inclusion, empowerment, and professional practice. In 2006, she joined Windmill Therapeutic Training Unit, where she has worked in a wide range of roles across the service. These experiences have given her a strong foundation in person-centred care and team development, leading to her current position as Lead Manager. She is proud to support both the staff team and those who access their service, drawing on years of hands-on experience and a commitment to compassionate leadership. In 2025, she was introduced to social pedagogy and then went on to complete the Relational Leadership training with THEMPRA. This has deepened her belief in reflective, relationship-based practice and strengthened her approach to values-led leadership.



Joan MacDonald, Head of Windmill. Windmill supports adults with intellectual disability to achieve a place of belonging in their families and communities.

Therapeutic relationship has always been at the core of Joan's practice. In 2023, Windmill's success was acknowledged, they were asked "how do we do it". It became clear that there was an intangible element to their practice that was felt by stakeholders but was difficult to define.

Finding and having completed studies in Social Pedagogy, it was clear that Social Pedagogy aligned with Joan's personal and professional values. It gave her the theoretical framework to articulate how and why Windmill does what they do.

It caused Joan to understand the importance of bringing Social Pedagogy to Windmill. She arranged training for the staff team and Board of Directors and is working to ensure that Social Pedagogy is embedded in and informs our culture, work and practice



Canine Conversations: Children and the Pedagogy of Puppies

Format: 45-minute discussion forum

Abstract

Our work will address the questions of “Where is Social Pedagogy” and “What Is Working”. For us, social pedagogy happens in neighborhood schools where students teach dogs to read, run obstacle courses, or roll over. And the reason is perfectly clear - dogs engender joy, trust, empathy and compassion. They facilitate deeply reciprocal relationships and help children express their emotions in healthy, positive ways. Dogs nourish our own souls, and we love sharing their magic with children who long for ways to connect with one another.

What is working? When we ask our students, they invariably say that Dr. Shay's visits are their favorite part of the week. Dr. Shay is a nine-year-old Labrador x Golden Retriever who listens patiently as children confide in her. She licks their hands as they reach to pet her, and the giggles rise to the roof. That's what's working - a measure of joy. Empathy abounds and trust bridges the species. We'd like to share a few stories and hear your stories about dogs and children and why they belong in school together, and what we can do to bring them together.

About the speakers – Terri Hlava & Montreux



Terri Hlava holds a PhD in Education Psychology and is the personal human to Copper D., Shay B., and Montreux G. Hlava. They teach Disability Studies, Justice Studies and Ethnic Studies courses at Arizona State University and research children's implicit theories of academic ability for self, others and other species. In 2007, Terri and her teammates co-founded H.A.B.I.T.A.T. (Human Animal Bond In Teaching And Therapies). Terri's happy place is always in the company of dogs and most anywhere outdoors.

Exploring the LEYF Social Pedagogy as a Blueprint for the Early Years

Format: 45-minute discussion forum

Abstract

This research explores how the London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) model of Early Years Education and Care, shaped by social pedagogy and aligned with the three pillars of sustainability—economic, social and environmental—can serve as a blueprint for the wider Early Years sector, particularly in nurseries which rely more on government-funding in disadvantaged communities. Despite its demonstrable success the LEYF approach remains undervalued at a national policy level, although more recently, there have been calls to overhaul and reimagine the education system in England and maybe the time has come to examine models like LEYF rooted in a social pedagogical ethos, prioritising democratic participation through social leadership, amplifying the voice of the child, strengthening harmonious relationships and operating through compassionate practice, with an emphasis on community cohesion.

The question explores why this holistic and values-led pedagogical model, shown to improve outcomes for children and families (is not more widely adopted, especially in settings most in need of transformative approaches. Using a review of LEYF's internal evaluations and external research we identify key enablers and barriers to the national adoption of a socially pedagogical framework. The analysis focuses on the replication of the 7 strands of the LEYF Pedagogy framed within social leadership the role of social leadership.

Findings suggest that a stronger national discourse is required to amplify models like LEYF that integrate sustainable practice with social justice, child-centred learning, and community resilience. The study proposes strategic recommendations for sector-wide awareness-building to elevate social pedagogy as a core principle in Early Years Education. It invites members of SPPA to contribute to a discussion of reimagining of early childhood pedagogy not just as preparation for school, but as a foundation for sustainable, compassionate citizenship. The power for change does not rest with children but with us. We must decide how?

About the speakers – Mandy Cuttler & Ricky Bullen



Mandy Cuttler is the Head of Pedagogy, Learning, and Development at the London Early Years Foundation. She leads on ensuring LEYF's social pedagogy is embedded across all LEYF settings, advocating for evidence-informed practice, sustainability-informed approaches to education, pedagogical leadership, and driving professional growth. Mandy champions inclusive, high-quality early education, working with her team to ensure each of LEYF's nurseries is a catalyst for social justice.



Ricky Bullen is a Pedagogy Coach at London Early Years Foundation, dedicated to working with nursery teams to support their professional growth through coaching, empowering them to provide high-quality experiences for all LEYF children and families. With a passion for reflective practice and continuous improvement, Ricky supports Teachers in embedding our child-centred social pedagogy and fostering inclusive environments through delivering professional development across LEYF's diverse nursery settings.



The Educator's Compass: Navigating the Crisis of Democracy through a Social Pedagogical Haltung

Format: 90-minute workshop

Abstract

In an era of increasing political polarisation and a perceived crisis in democratic dialogue, what is the role of the educator? This 90-minute experiential workshop moves beyond purely theoretical discussions to explore how we, as practitioners across the lifecourse, can actively cultivate democratic spaces in our daily work. We will argue that the challenges within our wider society are mirrored in our professional settings, demanding more than just instruction; they demand a new professional orientation.

Drawing on the principles outlined in the SPPA Charter for Social Pedagogy, this session introduces Haltung—a deep-seated ethical and relational orientation—as a practical "compass" for navigating complex situations. Through a hands-on, reflective activity centred on the Haltung diagram, participants will work in small groups to analyse a real-world scenario. They will map the tensions between professional duties (Profession), the needs of the Individual, their own inner resources ("me" the professional), and societal pressures (Context).

This process will illuminate the crucial role of the educator as a mediator and co-participant in learning, fostering a 'dialogue tone' and building the authentic and reliable relationships that underpin all social pedagogical practice. Participants will leave not with easy answers, but with a deeper understanding of their own Haltung, a shared language for reflection, and practical insights into how to foster spaces of empathy, integrity, and authenticity in their own work. This session directly addresses the conference theme by exploring the core professional disposition foundational to practising social pedagogy across the life course.

About the speaker – Seongjong Lee



Seongjong Lee is a social pedagogue and PhD candidate at UCL, where his research focuses on democratic dispositions and Haltung in Korean alternative education. For over eight years, he has been a dedicated practitioner in the field, most notably at the Neulpureun Nature School. There, he served as a curriculum coordinator and teacher, leading initiatives that connected the school with its local and global communities. He has actively participated in international democratic education conferences (IDEC/APDEC) and has extensive experience as a community organiser, revitalising a village and leading a youth policy committee. Grounded in his Master's research on Dewey, Seongjong's doctoral work critically



examines how educators' inner ethical compass helps them create authentic, democratic learning environments. He is particularly interested in how student voices are heard and valued in contexts of immense systemic pressure.



La Partiteca - Socio-educational group intervention project with young people through board games

Format: Poster

Abstract

La Partiteca is a socio-educational intervention project that proposes an innovative approach to working with children and young people within the BSS context: using board games in a group setting. It is a practical project that focuses on the development of emotional and social competencies in young people, addressing both their shortcomings and potential, through board games. It is led by two social educators.

La Partiteca arises from the need to introduce new techniques, practices, and resources that facilitate the creation of trust-based spaces with children and young people (and families) involved in socio-educational intervention, as it is in these spaces that interventions are most effective.

A participatory, motivating, playful, and group-based methodology is proposed. The project uses board games specifically chosen for their content and the opportunities they offer to work on social and emotional competencies.

Play is chosen as a methodology because it facilitates communication in general and helps establish the bond and trust between professionals and young people, which is essential for any intervention. Play allows for the exploration of complex topics that are difficult to address through direct techniques like interviews, such as emotions in certain situations, by approaching these themes indirectly, in a more relaxed and playful way. It also provides a more natural, less invasive, and less directive approach, laying the groundwork for future interventions.

La Partiteca proposes a group intervention because this type of intervention allows participants to share their needs and work collaboratively to meet them; facilitates processes of identification among participants, helping them become aware of their own reactions and the causes behind them; promotes internal and behavioral changes; allows for the exchange of experiences; etc.

As of today, 4 editions of La Partiteca have been conducted with 4 different groups of 6 to 8 young people each, all of them linked to social services. The result has been the creation of a trust-based space and a strong bond between participants and group facilitators.

Through the dynamics promoted by the games and the conversations held around the experiences, attitudes and emotions of the youth, assertiveness plus expressive and receptive communication have been practised, and bonds have been formed between participants, creating a sense of belonging to the group.

Our poster addresses the gathering themes “where is social pedagogy?” and “what is working?”, as it shows that SP can be found in the BSS and also presents an innovative methodology of social intervention.

About the speakers – Esther Ferre & Judith Felix



Esther Ferre is a Social Educator with extensive experience in working with children, adolescents, and public social services. She currently works in the Social Services Department of Vilanova i la Geltrú City Council. She holds a diploma in Social Education and a postgraduate degree in Conflict Resolution and Community Mediation, along with specialised training in children and family care and personal support.

Her core strengths include teamwork and networking, effective communication, emotional management, and the use of innovative tools in socio-educational practice.

She is a co-author of *Una Partida Més!* and *La Partiteca*, methodologies for group-based intervention through board games with children and young people. She presented *La Partiteca* at the XXI World Congress of Social Educators in Copenhagen, where she also facilitated a practical workshop showcasing the methodology.



Judith Felix is a fully qualified and licensed Social Pedagogue with 15 years of experience working with children, young people, families, and people with disabilities and mental health disorders in various settings.

In 2018, she moved to London and spent 2 years working at Hackney's Virtual School as a Social Pedagogue. Due to Covid, she moved back to her hometown and works as a Social Pedagogue in the public Social Care Services, where she has worked in a team of Social Pedagogues and Social Workers to provide social care and social pedagogic interventions.

She has co-created two projects (*Una Partida Més!* and *La Partiteca*) that aim to further develop social pedagogy within the Social Care System, based on the introduction of board games to aid social exploration and intervention. She has presented *La Partiteca* at the XXI World Congress of Social Educators in Copenhagen along with her co-author.



