



# MY PATH FORWARD

A way of supporting  
individuals within Save the  
Children Sweden



**Rädda Barnen**

In cooperation with



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# THIS IS MY PATH FORWARD

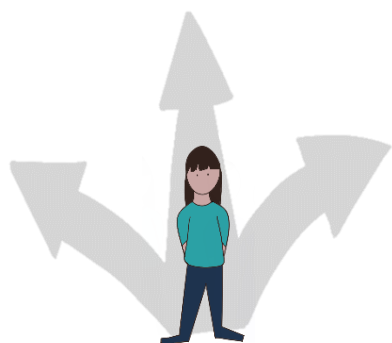


**SAVE THE CHILDREN SWEDEN WORKS** to support children, youth and parents in different ways, both in group activities and individually. Today, there exists a great deal of extra-curricular activities and support, but it is not always accessible and adjusted to the needs that children, youth and parents have. Especially not for those whom have newly arrived in Sweden.

Based on Save the Children Sweden's experiences from working with children, youth and parents in the migration process, we have noticed the need of a facilitating approach, a supporting environment that can accompany the individual and fill voids where the public sectors offerings do not match the needs of the individual. Someone that can act as a support. Guide and give information in order to understand the new society and everything that happens on the journey of understanding a new country and a new situation.

Based on these experiences Save the Children Sweden formed the methodology called My path forward and the role Process leader.

In this material we use the term individual for children, youth and parents. We always have a family perspective throughout the work.



*Depending on an individual's situation and experiences, it can be difficult to understand how a host society works as well as to find the path forward. There are many actors that support in different ways on multiple matters, but no one has the responsibility of explaining to individuals how integral parts of the society are inter-related and to assist them in navigating the necessary steps to maintain livelihood and a well-functioning everyday life.*

# My path forward

## DURING THE YEARS THAT SAVE THE CHILDREN SWEDEN

has offered support for individuals, we have learned that an approach of continuous support over a longer period of time has been invaluable to the individuals we meet. We have observed that through individual support and by using a facilitating approach, positive effects on the individual's life and opportunities for personal development are salient outcomes.

To have someone by your side, who supports and believes in you as well as encourage you to take the next step, is an imperative for personal development and independency.



## The individual should be able to move on by himself/herself

**MY PATH FORWARD APPROACH IS BASED** on structured meetings carried out between the individual and the Process leader, through which, together they identify the individual's needs and what steps need to be taken to resolve them. The result of structured meetings between the Process leader and the individual can manifest in various ways. The meetings may include supportive and coaching conversations or that the Process leader accompanies the individual in meetings with authorities, medical appointments or the first visit at a new sport activity. The Process leader plays a vital role in tracking the individual's progressions and offering support continuously. A major part of this support is contingent on the Process leader's ability to maintain an on-going dialogue and work to strengthen communication channels. The Process leader may spend time reaffirming and informing what is important in order to achieve the goals and to monitor and support the individual in those processes. Common processes may include- but are not limited to- relevant information regarding how to register their children for school, or how to register for health insurance and help with writing a CV.

It can be difficult to take the next step if the individual does not have access to culturally appropriate and relevant information or if he/she has not fully understood the information that's been given. The timeframe that the individual will require support from the Process leader differs depending on the needs and goals of the individual.

- The Process leader support the individual, provide and explain important information and works to ensure that the individual feels well equipped.
- The objective is to provide facilitation and support to the extent that an individual may be able to move forward independently by the end of the established timeframe. Through engagement and accountability, the aim is to empower individuals to realize and internalize a sense of agency and capability of making his/her own decisions and proceed on his/her path independently.

**We have learned that we should not attempt to help with everything and that the support should occur during a limited time. Otherwise, there can be a risk that the individual can create a dependency on the support.**



# SAVE THE CHILDREN SWEDEN'S INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

**SAVE THE CHILDREN SWEDEN WORKS** with support for individuals through several different professions and operational parts within the organization, including both volunteers and employees. By working this way, we can meet different types of needs and challenges the individuals are facing, varying from basic needs to treatments that are more specialized. Save the Children Sweden also cooperates with other organizations and associations. Identify the needs of the individual and explore if other organizations can contribute to meet the needs of the individual. In some cases there may be an opportunity for the individual to join club activities, volunteer or even gain specialized support to meet a specific need.

## Save the Children Sweden's Support steps



*Specialized care, e.g. treatment from professional psychologists.  
Therapists and Psychologists.*

*Non-specialized care, e.g. access to medical centers and counselors  
Process leader and Case manager*

*Society and family support e.g. education, extracurricular activities and healthy  
relationships. Process Leader and Case manager*

*General safety and security and basic needs e.g. housing, food  
Process leader and Case manager*



# The Process leader's function

**THE FOCUS FOR THE PROCESS LEADER** is to support, with focus on empowering the individual, and to coach him/her to take the further steps. Often, those given the process-leading support are youth and parents. Occasionally, we give children process-leading support but then special considerations should be given to other factors than those outlined in this document.

The overall process aims to lead to knowledge and understanding of the society and that the individual builds confidence, feels empowered and takes control to maneuver in the society independently. The Process leader's support can focus on different areas of life depending on the needs of the individual and/or the goals of the project.

The Process leader do **not** offer advise and is **no** expert. The individual is instead strenghtened to find the information they need directly from the source that enables them to reach their own goals and to become independent.

The Process leader also cooperates with other organizations to support the individual where other specific services may be offered by other organizations. Through cooperation, it becomes possible to reach out to a greater number of people and make greater changes. By coordinating the range of support services provided by authorities, municipalities and civil society organizations, through facilitation, services are more accessible for the individual.

The Process leader also seeks to use the experience of the individual's process to create greater change on a societal level. This is being done by using the collective experience and knowledge gained through working with the individuals and using that information to create change through advocacy.

**The individual's process is the main focus and the Process leader should support and give the assistance needed, as well as ensure that the individual's rights are met, in order for the individual to take control over his/her life.**

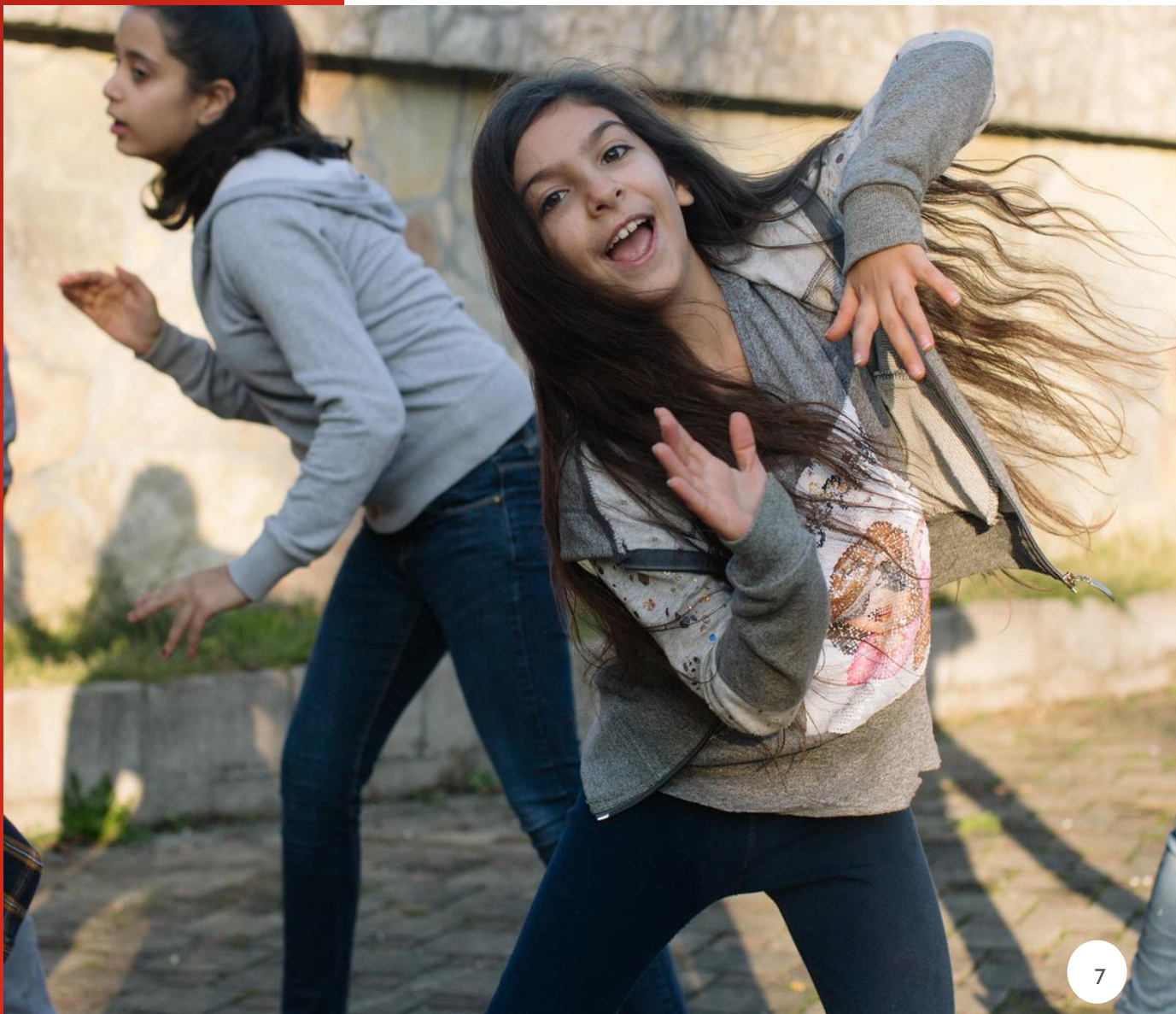


## Working in a team

### **IT IS RECOMMENDED FOR THE PROCESS LEADER**

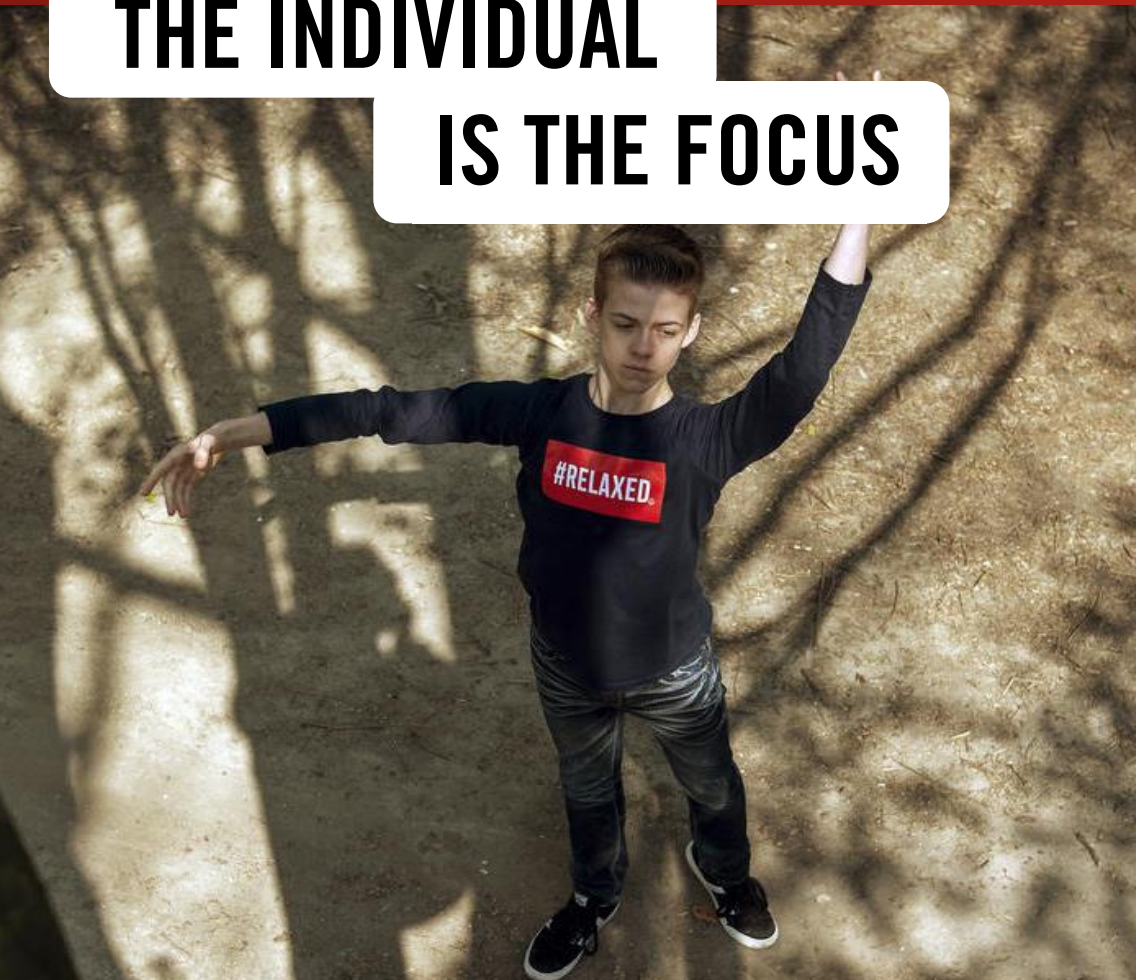
to work in a team. Sometimes questions, concerns and uncertainty can arise, and it is beneficial to be able to receive input from others regarding questions, concerns and uncertainty about the individuals the Process leader work with. If a team exists, it can be beneficial to have regular structured meetings that gives everyone an opportunity to discuss their clients and support processes.

When starting My path forward, it is recommended to do a risk assessment together with colleagues from different parts of the organization in order to make the project as thorough as possible. It is also a good way to better understand each other's roles and it can create better cooperation among colleagues in the future. Involving other professions in the individual support, enhances the quality of the support given to the individuals.





# THE INDIVIDUAL IS THE FOCUS



**We are working to create change and development based on hopes and expectations rather than formulating the problems of the situation.**

**THE PROCESS LEADER'S APPROACH** to the individual is key throughout the entire process. The Process leader must be attentive to how the individual feels, validate and reassure the individual and his/her needs, and maintain an interest in the person. An important part of the process is to get to know the person and work to establish and build trust during the process.

One of the most important parts of My path forward is to work solution-based. Regardless of what challenges the individuals might face in his/her life, there is always something that can be improved. Showing empathy and actively working to explore the individual and his/her perspective, helps to understand his/her goals and situation. Has something happened that is influencing the individual's focus and ability today? Is the individual stable and calm so that he/she is susceptible and willing to move forward?

The Process leader continuously needs to remind him/herself to be as open as possible, to be able to meet the individual without prejudice and preconceptions in order to be able to see the individual's strengths, competences and experiences. In some cases, the individual may even require support from the Process leader to see these hidden traits in themselves. By coaching and being solution-focused, the process will remain focused on what is most important- improved health and satisfaction, rather than the causes of dissatisfaction and illness.

When using a coaching approach with individuals, trust in the ability of the individual to reach his/her potential is essential. By asking open questions and by actively listening, the Process leader leads a process where the individual him/herself comes up with the solutions. The Process leader gives support and advice while attempting to create awareness, feelings of responsibility and self-confidence during the process. Creating and maintaining a good relationship between the Process leader and the individual is essential. The goal is to develop a relationship based on trust so that the individual feels comfortable sharing thoughts and dares to challenge him/herself. This is especially important for individuals who have lost faith in society's institutions. In these cases, we need to repair the distrust by showing a genuine interest in the individual, which requires both time and flexibility.



# Individual challenges and conditions

**THE INDIVIDUALS WE WORK** with have different backgrounds, experiences and abilities. They also have varying degrees of self-esteem. This creates a situation where his/her paths forward will differ greatly as will the goals. It is important to keep this in mind during the whole process when we meet with the individuals, and to stay flexible. Things will change during the process and we must remain understanding of that. We must be prepared and able to handle the fact that almost anything could come up in the meetings and that it is the individual that sets the agenda. This will strengthen our ability to meet the individual where he/she is mentally that day.

Find a balance between the process and the goals. The different needs of the individual often affect one another; it could be on a positive or a negative note. If the individual succeeds in one area, it usually effects other. If something is out of balance, it could be more difficult to achieve goals and it can feel overwhelming for the individual. Keep in mind that the individual may have many and complex needs, rendering some needs beyond the scope of the individual support services, as Save the Children Sweden can neither influence nor help with. This may be, for example, about the individual's migration status in the country. However, we can support, clarify information and explain why things are the way they are. We can support the individual in trying to focus on his/her immediate circumstances and the adjustments that can be made to contribute to a positive outlook.

Although we can't change some situations, we can provide ways of thinking and tools for how the individual can handle his/her thoughts and emotions. It is, however, important not to take the role of a Psychologist. That is not the role of the Process leader. If you believe that the individual may need treatment by a Psychologist, a good approach could be to support and encourage the individual to take this step, by explaining the positive impact it may have.



Save the Children Sweden works with children, youth and parents with the belief that the individual is the agent in his/her own life. In our work, we strive to strengthen individuals' wellbeing, increase awareness of their rights, increase independence and provide tools for empowerment.

## TIPS

### *Safe Place – an app from Save the Children Sweden*

Download Save the Children Sweden's app Safe Place which can support you in the present moment as well as in the long run, to feel better if you have reactions after difficult events or stress. Maybe you have difficulty sleeping, a lot of thoughts or worries? The exercises in the app can help you.



# TIPS

## Build the process together

It is important to establish and inform about the purpose of the process and subsequent meetings at the beginning of the individual support. Clarify that the Process leader's role is to support and strengthen the individual in his/her own work for personal development aiming to achieve goals. Clarify that the individual should feel ownership over the conversations and the process. The individual is the central figure and the Process leader's role is to support. Usually you will work with several areas towards several goals simultaneously, as they often are intertwined. Try to stick to the goals that you agreed on and remain focused while keeping in mind that life can take unexpected turns so a certain degree of flexibility is required. Be clear about how long you are able to offer your support, how often you will have contact and how you will communicate e.g. texts, booked meetings, etc. Emphasize that participation is voluntary.

- Make a plan together that includes how often you will meet and what you want to focus on in the beginning. You will find more information regarding the main focus of the first meetings on further down.
- Give the individual an information sheet with all the important information about the process; the Process leader's role, and what the Process leader can and cannot do as well as how long the individual can receive support.
- Go through the information again after you have met a couple of times to make sure that the individual has understood the information.
- Explain that you work in confidentiality regarding personal information that is brought up during your meetings. All information stays between the Process leader and the individual.



## Let the individuals will and ability lead the process

You may find it difficult to begin early in the process. We have created several tools that will assist in identifying which goals to start in your early conversations with the individual. Suggestions about how to get started are included in the tool-box further down.



# THIS IS INCLUDED IN MY PATH FORWARD

## Psychosocial support

Psychosocial support is an approach of working, aiming to support people's physical and social ability to tackle life and its challenges, in order to have a meaningful and normal life situation. We often meet people that are facing or have faced challenging events and situations in their lives. By giving psychosocial support we can promote recovery and normality in life.

THE INDIVIDUAL SHALL KNOW THAT THE PROCESS LEADER STANDS BESIDE HIM/HER AS A SAFE PERSON TO REACH OUT TO

## Process

Process means development, which leads to change. An individual process refers to what the individual goes through to meet his/her needs - for example, employment, social activities, hobbies or contact with authorities. The process aims towards something, although it might be that the individual might not reach there. The Process leader should create conditions that enable the individual to develop in the direction he/she wants. The goal might change during time; therefore, it is important to have a dynamic approach towards the individual during the whole process.

THE PROCESS CAN BE AS IMPORTANT AS THE GOAL, WHICH MEANS THAT WE NEED TO BE OPEN FOR CHANGES.

## Autonomy

Autonomy imply that the individual is in a stable mental and physical condition, believing in oneself to be able to trust his/her own ability. The Process leader works to encourage that sense of oneself, by supporting the individual in identifying what is important in his/her life and make him/her understand what they can and cannot influence. Autonomy can also develop in groups, liberating and strengthening the power of action through a collective dialogue and critical thinking. Signs of increased autonomy is increased motivation and courage as well as increased understanding of the decisions taken around oneself.

AUTONOMY IS TO FEEL THAT YOU ARE THE AGENT OF YOUR LIFE AND THAT YOU HAVE CONTROL OVER YOUR OWN LIFE.

## Empowerment

The Process leader is working to empower the individual, its self-confidence and self-esteem. It includes constantly lifting and acknowledging the individual, supporting to take actions and steps into the direction he/she wants. The individual might feel courageous enough to dare to contact an authority after the Process leader has done it together with the individual the first times.

**YOU WORK WITH THE INDIVIDUAL NOT FOR THEM.**

## Personal but not private

Early in the process it is important to be clear with the purpose of the process, its content and goals. It is important to show empathy and build trust so that the individual feels confident and safe. The Process leader needs to show interest for the individual and value its wellbeing, and show willingness to support the individual on its way forward. Meanwhile it is important to have a professional approach, and make sure feelings does not pass on to the Process leader. It will not help the individual to have a private relation with the Process leader, it could mislead the purpose of the support which does not benefit the individuals process in the end. Hence, the Process leader needs to clearly communicate its role in an early stage to avoid a potential dependence between the process leader and the individual. The Process leader needs to be personal but not private, it is important to remain professional.

**A PRIVATE RELATIONSHIP DOES NOT BENEFIT THE INDIVIDUAL'S PROCESS**

## Knowing yourself

An essential purpose with My path forward is that the individual feels confident in knowing his/her qualities, strengths and abilities. What is important for me and what engages me? Sometimes the Process leader needs to support the individual in exploring and identifying this and in other cases the Process leader needs to actively give space and support the individual to be able to place oneself, his/her qualities and strengths and skills in a new context. To support in that, the Process leader can for example inform about values about equality, accessibility, equal treatment, etcetera, which could support the individual to contextualize oneself in those areas.

**BEING ABLE TO PLACE YOURSELF, YOUR QUALITIES AND STRENGTHS IN THE NEW CONTEXT IS OF IMPORTANCE.**

**“If I cannot describe myself, what interests I have and my competencies, I cannot establish goals for myself. I need support to be able to identify what I want in life. Because I know that I want to accomplish a lot!” (Quote from participants)**



# STRUCTURE OF THE MEETINGS

**DURING THE FIRST MEETINGS**, it is important to create a safe space where trust and confidence can be built. Maybe there is a space close to the individual's home or school, maybe a café or the local library? Make sure to inform about what your common work will obtain and aims to achieve, what support the Process leader can offer and what is out of your control. Try to be as clear as possible, repeat important information and write or draw it on a paper as a reminder. It is important to create reasonable expectations during the process and what the Process leader can and cannot offer. Create an understanding of the individual's situation by letting the individual explain about his/her situation and wellbeing in order to know what kind of support is needed. Ask questions about his/her every day life, what the individual is pleased with in life and what needs to improve.

When you have gotten an overall picture, describe your understanding and make sure you have understood it correctly. It is crucial that your understanding is in line with how the individual perceive oneself. It will also serve as a baseline, which makes it easier to refer to throughout the process. To acknowledge developments and to follow up on.



**Validate every achievement and learn from the times it does not go as intended. Keep the spirit up and encourage that it is always possible to start over. Things does not always go as planned.**

## Learning by doing

**A PART OF THE PROCESS** is to give information about the themes concerning the individual's needs. If the individual is looking for a job, it is important that he/she is familiar with the process of finding a job. Save the Children Sweden has a lot of material about health, rights, job-seeking process, to mention a few.

Continue to discuss what the individual wants to focus on today. Should you continue where you ended or has the conditions or needs changed? Try to be perceptive and sensitive to what you hear. Sometimes it might be enough to have a supportive dialogue. Adapt the meeting to the individual.

Often, a meeting could entail accompanying the individual to the Swedish Public Employment Service, a medical appointment or the Social Insurance Agency. The ambition is that the individual will be able to attend to these types of appointments without the Process leader after the sessions are completed. It could also include making calls together or explaining information from authorities. Other times you might come along as a support and clarify that both parts understood each other correctly. We know for a fact that problems would not occur if all involved insured that the information was perceived correctly. Confusion can cause consequences for the individual. The Process leader will carry the role of explaining, repeating and ensuring that individual rights are respected.





# TOOLS

In the following chapter tools are listed that can be used as support throughout the process.

## How are you?

**THIS IS A TOOL** that can assist in starting a conversation about the individual's situation and what he/she would like to focus on. It does not mean that there is no other areas to explore, keep an open mind and pay attention to how the individual expresses him/herself and use concepts that is essential for the individual.

Identify what is most crucial for the individual right now. Ask questions (you will find example of questions in How are you?) to gain more information about the current state of the individual. It also works as a support for the individual themselves to be able to put words on their needs, challenges and goals. Contribute with your knowledge within those fields, such as the Swedish society, but let the individual lead based on his/her needs. Remind yourself that the individual carries their own process and you are a support in that process!

## Repeat!

Keep in mind that the same information needs to be repeated at different occasions. There is plenty of information in the beginning and therefore it is important to repeat.

### Areas to explore

- Me in the society
- Home
- Language and studies
- Work
- Health



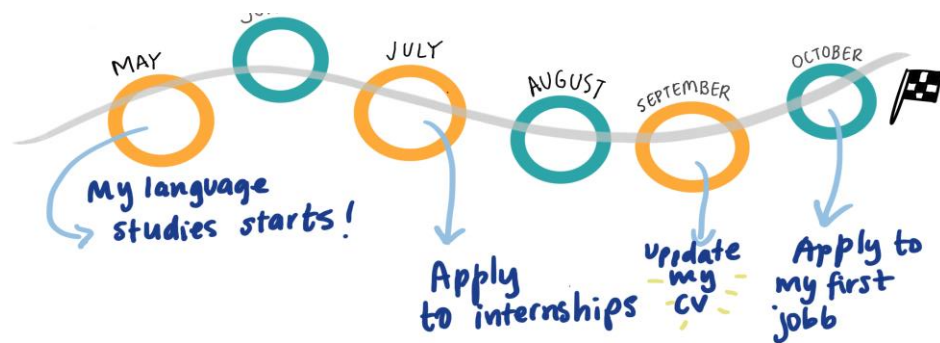
For each area there are suggestions for questions. The picture shows examples concerning the field of language and studies.

# Timeline

**USING A TIMELINE** is a good way to visualize your future, your goals and what is needed to get there. It makes it easier to concretize and to break down the steps needed to actualize your main goals. It also can serve a purpose if there is a language barrier between the Process leader and the individual.

The individual sets the goals and sub-goals, in reflective conversations with the Process leader and together they determine what is reasonable in time. Explore what the individual is thinking and what he/she presume must happen to get there. It is beneficial to set dates for the sub-goals to make them real.

Emphasize on when the individual wants to be there and how he/she wants to feel when the goal is achieved. Also asks questions as what is your role in the change? What has helped you before when you have handled similar situations?



## GROOW

**GROOW\* IS A TOOL** for identifying goals, challenges and possibilities.

Groow is a tool for identifying goals, challenges and possibilities on the way there.

- G** Goal: What is the goal? For this meeting and for a longer period of time?
- R** Reality: How is the current situation? Are there any obstacles? How can you tackle them?
- O** Options: What are the alternatives?
- O** Opportunities: What opportunities are there in order to reach the goal?
- W** Wrap-up: Collect and reflect. Decide on the next step and when it should be completed. Identify the path forward.

*\*John Whitmore*

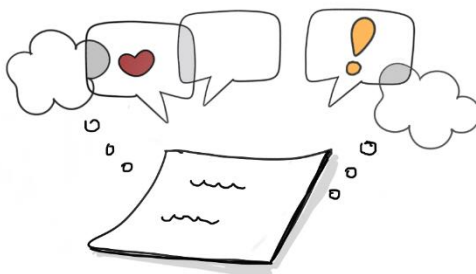


## Dream conversation

**USING THE METHOD OF A DREAM** conversation helps to visualize dreams. The starting point of the conversation is to create a future scenario by the individual writing and drawing on a paper answering questions asked by the Process leader. One purpose of having a dream conversation is to prevent being stuck in the conditions of the current situation.

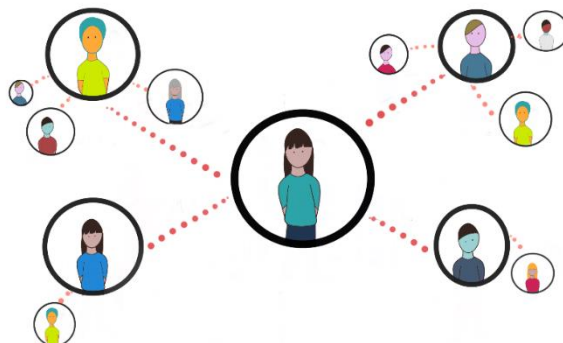
The questions can be broad, but they can also be limited to a specific part of life, for example:

**Think wide and broad, where nothing is impossible. What is your dream job or education? Where do you see yourself in five years?**



## Network map

**THE INDIVIDUAL'S OWN NETWORK** of contacts is important. Draw a map to identify the network of people that the individual has. Pointing it out, often the network turns out to be bigger than what the individual might have thought. We know from experience that it is an advantage to make use of and involve one's network on the path towards the goals. The map can complement other tools to identify how the network can support. Encourage the individual to invite, keep and involve other adults in the process. This might increase the potential for the individual to continue on its own when the support from the Process leader has come to an end.



Make a map over family, classmates, teachers and other adults. Who in your network knows about your dreams, your thoughts or troubles? To whom do you turn to for support? Is there anyone that you could include in the process?

# DOCUMENTATION & EVALUATION

**DOCUMENTATION IS ESSENTIAL** in order to follow up, develop and evaluate the work that is being done. We document so that we can follow up on our meetings and develop our work with the individuals, as well as to collect knowledge so that we can do a better job in the future. Both the Process leader and the individual have access to the documentation.

## **Document every meeting**

Document every meeting. It helps in order to follow up on what was said during the last meeting, as well as sub-goals and main achievements. It also serves a purpose to be able to evaluate the process, the need for development and to identify the accomplishments. After a meeting it is good to conclude the meeting together to make sure the individual and the Process leader have the same perception of what has been said and what steps has been set out to be taken before the next meeting.

## **Evaluation midway through the process**

About halfway through the process a follow-up should be done as a way to examine if the meetings are providing the individual with what he/she desires or if something needs to be adjusted. The focus of the evaluation could preferably be on the support from the Process leader, if something needs to be adjusted or if you should continue as before. It could also focus on whether the individual feels satisfied with the process or if he/she wants to do any changes. This can be done verbally, or, for example, through a google-survey if the individual feels more comfortable to do it alone.

## **Concluding conversation and final evaluation**

When the process is ended, a final evaluation will be conducted together where the Process leader, in dialogue with the individual will summarize the process from start to end and celebrate the accomplishments that the individual has made. Start with the assessment that was conducted at the start and complement with the tools and information that has been used.





## **TEMPLATES, CHECKLISTS AND MATERIALS**

## My path forward

- *Inform the individual about the purpose of the process (provide an information sheet).*
- *Make a plan and structure for the meetings.*
- *Use the tool “How are you?” as a starting point.*
- *Create a time line with sub-goals and final goals.*
- *Document each meeting. Make a summary of what was said and decided on, go through it the next meeting,*
- *Do a mid-way evaluation with in depth questions.*
- *Pursue a final conversation and evaluation.*
- *Diploma Point out what the individual has achieved during the process as well as his/her qualities and strengths.*

## Template for documentation of every meeting

Code of participant, name of Process leader, date, city

- *Summary of today's meeting*
- *What the individual should do until the next meeting*
- *What the individual should do until the next meeting*
- *Date for the next meeting*



## **Checklist for mid-way evaluation and final conversations**

- *Have the conversations at a nice and safe place.*
- *Ask and explain the questions. Do not show them to the individual.*
- *Ask follow-up questions if the individual gives a short answer.*
- *Document the answers during the conversation.*
- *Make summary and an analysis of the conversation and add it to the documentation for the*

## **Template for final conversation and evaluation**

Code of participant, name of Process leader, date, city

- *Can you describe anything that has changed in your life, after we started to meet?*
- *Do you feel that the possibility to affect your future has increased? (lift a specific area if needed)*
- *How have you felt after the meetings?*
- *What have you learnt about yourself? Give examples on what you can do, what you want and what you are thinking.*
- *Have I (the Process leader) been a support for you? If yes, how? If no, why not?*
- *What have you liked with our meetings?*
- *What have you not liked with our meetings?*

## Template for mid-way evaluation

Code of participant, name of Process leader, date, city

- ✓ *What feeling do you usually have after our meetings?*
- ✓ *What do you like with our meetings?*
- ✓ *Is there anything that you think could be changed?*
- ✓ *How do you think we should proceed forward?*

## MY PATH FORWARD



**Rädda Barnen**



**REGIN**

