

Exploring the Legacy of Polish-German Relationshipship – An intercultural project about Polish- German Relationship



The idea to work on the Polish-German relationship based on Processwork by Arnlid Mindell was initiated by Robert Palusinski (Krakow), Achim Goeres and Tanja Hetzer (Berlin) in June 2011.

The first meeting took place in Berlin 9 – 11 September 2011 with 11 participants from Berlin (with family background in former Eastern and Western Germany, Russia and Ukraine) and 12 participants from Poland (Warsaw, Krakow, Poznan and Wroclaw). From September 2011 till end of 2012 the group met three times (Berlin – Warsaw – Berlin) and had regional meetings in the time between to work on German and Polish Identity. The method that was chosen is a interactive groupwork so-called Worldwork¹. As Polish facilitator Magda Skoczewska and Robert Palusinski (Warsaw) supported the group as facilitators. From the German side Dr. Achim Goeres and Dr. Tanja Hetzer where part of the facilitator team.

Since end of 2012 ProTiDe e.V. is hosting this project.

Within the 1 ½ years we met three times with the entire group. Here are the main topics we worked on:

- multigenerational work on stereotypes and prejudices including historical context
- victim and perpetrator roles
- moral dimension of good and evil inside everyone
- debate and „edge work“ on the possible causes of the war and Holocaust from a psychological and social point of view (Is it allowed to ask: “What went wrong about Germany during 2nd and 3rd decade of 20th Century“ or: “Could this happen again?”)
- historical dimension of our relationship and the question of trust after the genocide

¹ Worldwork provides universal categories for working with large group processes ready, the events are analyzed for their signal structure and levels of perception. About the differentiated perception of roles which bring individual experiences, thoughts and attitudes of the group members as representatives, the intra-and inter-personal as well as the diversity of our society can be experienced. Hereby conflictual or rigid positions get into motion and development potential is brought to the surface. (see also: Schupbach, M.: Worldwork - a multidimensional model of change management organizational development, Handelsblatt publishing house, No. 04/2007 Available at: http://www.maxffx.net/my_publications/files/change-management%20schupbach.pdf)

- exploring the pain that comes along with the memories
- Warsaw uprising(s): diversity of roles, motives and feelings of this resistance and the pain of the destruction at the end
- shame and dignity on the side of victims / shame and dignity of the perpetrator
- limits of processing in trauma situation
- vision work of the project and different ideas of the project
- Grenzen der Prozessarbeit in traumatischen Situationen
- Visionen zum Projekt und verschiedene Ideen über das und zum Projekt

In addition to discussion and reflection on all these topics, participants learnt with the methods of the Processwork to explore the emotional resonance. Doing so sometimes difficult feelings come up and the participants share it. The careful and well-maintained emotions have not only strengthened the relationship, but enriched the learning experience - to be in relationship with both cultures – and embedded in a sustainable way.

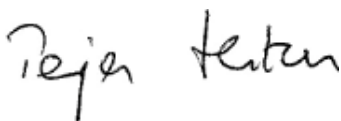
One of the biggest realizations of our project is that the work on collective trauma has a very strong and often very painful influence on a very deep emotional level, not only during the event but also for several months after our meetings. The experience of this work is intense and creates a strong effect on many participants. We have realized the importance of continuity of such an effort in longer period of time as well as the importance of building deeper relationships among participants.

After intensive 1 ½-year collaboration, which culminated in Berlin with the meeting in 2012, we made a lot of profound experiences and establish new relationships. The association ProTiDe secured to host the another series of seminars and asked the new facilitator team (Dr. Achim Goeres, Dr. Tanja Hetzer, Marzena Karcacka Kiewisz) to submit a plan for the project for 2013 and 2014.

The **8 to 10th November 2013** will be the first seminar of the second cycle in Warsaw with its title:

Between Past and Present - Exploring Polish-German relationships

We are pleased that this work continues and wish all participants exciting experiences and encounters.



Dr. Tanja Hetzer
Board ProTiDe e.V.