

**A Process Evaluation of Lifebook for You(th)**

Charlotte G.A. Katanaev

5645255

Youth, Education and Society, University of Utrecht

Master thesis

Dr. Eva van de Weijer- Bergsma

June 19, 2020



**Universiteit Utrecht**



### **Samenvatting**

De organisatie Lifebook for You(th) richt zich op jongeren die te maken met misbruik, verwaarlozing, oorlog of andere vormen van trauma. Tijdens de Lifebook bijeenkomsten reflecteren de jongeren op hun ervaringen uit het verleden en kijken ze naar de positieve aspecten van deze herinneringen. Het doel van dit onderzoek is om actieve factoren en obstakels te definiëren, treatment integrity en culturele verschillen/aanpassingen van Lifebook for You(th) in een internationale context te evalueren door middel van een procesevaluatie. Er is gekozen voor een kwalitatieve studieopzet waar twaalf semigestructureerde interviews werden afgenomen met Lifebook-coaches uit verschillende landen om hun ervaringen met het begeleiden van Lifebook-bijeenkomsten te verzamelen. Uit de interviews is gebleken dat het werken en delen in een groep met anderen en het hebben van een gemeenschappelijke deler een belangrijke actieve factor in de interventie is. Een andere mogelijke actieve factor is de structuur van het coachhandboek en van het Lifebook. Het belangrijkste obstakel was het analfabetisme van sommige kinderen in een groep. De coaches hebben de bijeenkomsten op kleine schaal aangepast vanwege hun culturele overtuigingen, voornamelijk door het toevoegen of het uitsluiten van bepaalde activiteiten.

*Kernwoorden:* Lifebook for You(th), proces evaluatie, cultuur, treatment integrity.

### **Abstract**

Lifebook for You(th) targets youth who have little continuity in their life. These children often had to deal with abuse, neglect, war or other kinds of trauma. During the Lifebook meetings the children reflect on their past experiences and look at the positive aspects of these memories. The purpose of this research is to define active factors and obstacles, to evaluate treatment integrity and cultural differences/adaptations of Lifebook for You(th) in an international context by means of a process evaluation. A qualitative study design was chosen. Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted with Lifebook coaches from various countries to acquire their experience with supervising Lifebook meetings. Working and sharing in a group with others whom a child can relate to is an important active factor of the intervention. Other possible active factor is the overall structure of the coaches manual and the Lifebook. The main obstacle was the illiteracy of some children in a group. The coaches modified the meetings due to their cultural beliefs in small ways, mainly by adding or excluding certain activities.

*Keywords:* Lifebook for You(th), process evaluation, culture, Treatment integrity.

### **Introduction**

Between 2006 and 2010 'Resilience Camps' were created in Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia for children from foster homes to give these children a holiday. It was found that sharing personal stories strengthened the connection between the children as they had similar experiences. From this moment, Lifebook for You(th) (from now on noted as Lifebook) came into existence. During five meetings the children work on their own personal Lifebook. In the group they discuss questions from the book, play games and do activities. The activities are done to clarify the topics, help the children form a bond and to give them other ways to express themselves (such as drawing, dancing, role play). Lifebook targets youth who have had to deal with abuse, neglect, war or other kinds of trauma. Shame, guilt, low self-esteem, and a poor self-image are common among children with complex trauma and stressful histories (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2018). Throughout the meetings the children develop more insight into their future and past, whereby their self-esteem is strengthened and their self-image is positively expanded. The goal is that the children develop resilience in the face of adversity and their strengths are enhanced. Since the founding of Lifebook, it has been implemented in the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, Kenya, South Africa and Lebanon. As Lifebook is implemented in different countries, cultural sensitivity is likely to be relevant.

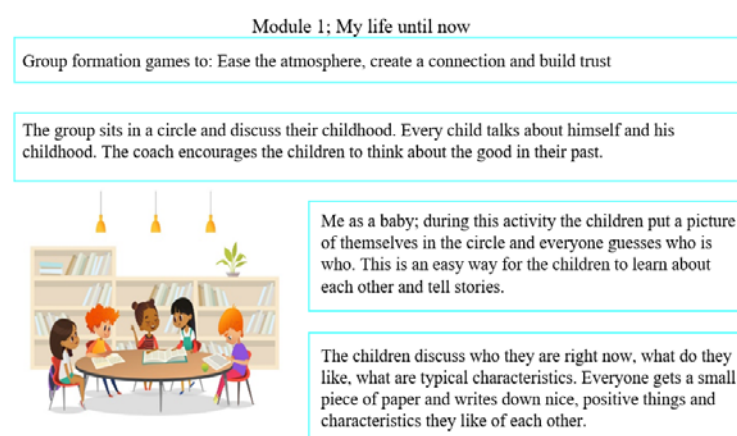
Lifebook encompasses a strengths perspective to look at psychological trauma and developmental issues experienced by children instead of a deficit perspective. Griffin et al, (2009) concluded that the more strengths children with multiple traumatic experiences have developed, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviours. This is done by using expressive writing, the self-determination theory and the social learning theory with a focus on positive psychology: increasing psychological well-being, competence, resilience (Rutter, 1987; Al-Krenawi, Elbedour & Parsons, 2011). Expressive writing can have a significant healing effect for people who have faced an extremely stressful or traumatic event (Baikie & Wilhelm, 2005; Pennebaker, 1997; Park & Blumberg, 2002; Klein & Boals, 2001). These effects were found on longer-term physical health outcomes as on emotional health outcomes in students (Baikie & Wilhelm, 2005; Pennebaker, 1997). Ullrich & Lutgendorf (2002) concluded that when people focus their writing on cognitions and emotions, they develop a greater awareness of the positive benefits of the stressful event. Pennebaker (1997) stated that health gains appear to require translating experiences into language and that it matters how and what you write, as the more that individuals used words with positive emotion, the better

their subsequent health was. Regular therapeutic writing can help the writer to find meaning in their experiences, to view things from a new perspective, and to see the silver linings in their most stressful or negative experiences (Murray, 2002). Writing can provide a neutral way to solve problems, capture feelings, exercise power, and know one's own voice (Atwell, 1987).

### **Lifebook**

The Lifebook intervention consists of five meetings during which different modules are discussed. The five modules discuss the themes; My life until now and my best friends, My school and my creative side, Animals, family and networks, My deep thoughts and my treasures and lastly My house, future and residences (Appendix 1 shows a more detailed overview of the themes). Figure 1 shows an example of what the first meeting could look like.

*Figure 1* The first meeting



The meetings are supervised by a (Lifebook) coach, who leads the activities, discussions and answers the children's questions. All coaches receive a coaches manual which describes each module the meetings are based on and addresses how the meeting should be structured. This is done by addressing the topics : what materials the coach needs during this module, what the goals are for the module, the activities of the module are explained and examples of questions the coach can ask the children are given. The protocol for the meetings is not very structured, which means that the coaches can adapt the questions and the conversations, during the modules and exercises, to the needs of the children.

### **Theoretical framework**

**Commented [WEvd(1):** Het is nog niet helemaal duidelijk waar de thesis precies over gaat

The following section discusses theories found in literature which are the basis of Lifebook from which active factors and obstacles can be derived: active factors are elements that are effective for interventions, in the context of the interventions objectives, quality and the intended target group (NJI). In general, an obstacle is something that hinders the progress of development. The theories which will be discussed are resilience reinforcement, self-determination theory and the social learning theory in autobiographical work.

### **Resilience Reinforcement**

Children who have experienced significant amounts of stress and trauma in their life differ in how they are affected by these factors. Some children can have trouble to control and express their emotions, which could lead to them reacting violently or inappropriately to situations, while others seem to have better control over their emotions. The children who seem capable of achieving a normal development no matter what their circumstances, are thought to have resilience (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004). Counterbalancing the effects of risk factors are commonly termed “protective” or resilience factors, which enhance an individual’s capacity for resilience, being able to deal with a situation in a favourable way for the person. From a strengths based perspective and positive psychology, Lifebook builds on the children’s strengths and specifically sees the children as resourceful and resilient when they had to deal with adversity. Lifebook focusses on the protective factor noted by Fröhlich-Gildhoff, & Rönnau-Böse (2019); positive self-concept, conviction of self-efficacy, empathy, communication skills, optimistic outlook on life and creativity are factors which are responsible for a healthy and positive development. By showing and encouraging the children to use their own resources and strengths, Lifebook emphasises positive events and reinforces these elements in the child’s history.

Variation in resilience by marginalised youth can be accounted for by Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1977), by considering personal factors in the context of broader social and cultural influences (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004). Ungar et al (2013) stated that the more a child is exposed to adversity (e.g. exposure to violence, poverty, disability) the more the child’s resilience depends on the quality of the environment (rather than individual qualities) and the resources that are available and accessible to nurture and sustain well-being. The support prosocial peers and family give the children can increase their well-being. Lifebook acknowledges this by discussing prosocial peers and family in the modules. Also in the group with whom the children participate in Lifebook can become prosocial peers and support each other in difficult times.

### **Self-determination theory**

Commented [WEvd(2)]: Ik mis hier en daar wat refs

Commented [WEvd(3)]: Refs?

A child that has been exposed to trauma or stressful situations can undermine both their sense of security and safety, including within relationships, and their ability to autonomously self-regulate emotions (Levers, 2012). The self-determination theory of Ryan and Deci (2000) addresses these issues and one's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to this theory, people have innate psychological needs: competence, relatedness and autonomy. Competence is the need to control the outcome and experience mastery over a task. Autonomy is reached when there is acknowledgment of feelings, and opportunities for self-direction. And lastly the need for relatedness is described as the need to feel belongingness and connectedness with others. Lifebook has been designed to be suitable to increase the innate psychological needs in the children. Lifebook is very structured which makes it clear what is expected from the children during the activities and discussions. This increases the competence in the children as they know what to expect from Lifebook and the meetings. Another way the need for competence is met is through the combination of creating and sharing. Wenz & McWhirter (1990) found that writing improved the self-actualizing behaviours and self-acceptance of the participants. Lifebook is an autobiographical work, which means the participant itself decides whether the Lifebook is done, finished and wrapped up, this increases the children's need for autonomy. To increase this need, the coach and the other participants are not allowed to judge or influence the child when they share their stories and write in their Lifebook. The children are in control of their own book and the way of creating it. Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci (2006) noted that autonomy does not mean that the person in question has to be independent of others. Lifebook takes this into account by doing the meetings in groups. The need for relatedness is fulfilled as the children have a common denominator. The children may all be refugees from the same country, have similar traumas, have the same context in which they live, etc. The children can thus identify with the other as they experienced the same events which can help them form a bond, support each other and open up in the group. Ryan and Deci (2000) described people have a universal desire to interact, be connected and to experience caring for others. These three needs can be undermined by the trauma or stressful situations of one's past, but if they are met then people will function and grow optimally (Levers, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

### **Social learning theory in autobiographical work**

Since Lifebook encompasses autobiographical writing in a group, knowledge acquisition takes place within a social context, which fits Bandura's social (cognitive) learning theory (Bandura, 1977; 1997). Prince-Embury (2013) found that resilience arises from the interaction of environmental, behavioural and personal factors. Children's

Commented [WEvd(4)]: Zin loopt niet helemaal correct

Commented [WEvd(5)]: support

Commented [WEvd(6)]: tyfoutjes

Commented [WEvd(7)]: more structuring words could have helped here. First, second, third

expectations, beliefs and cognitive competencies are developed through interaction with social and structural factors in their environment. Children specifically model the behaviours of others, through instruction, or through social persuasion brought about via peer pressure (Bandura, 1997).

Commented [WEvd(8)]: how is this related?

For reflection within one to occur, oral and written forms of language must pass back and forth between persons who both speak and listen (Belenky et al., 1986). Listening, sharing aloud and writing, allows individuals to expand, share and reflect on each other's experiences. This is why Lifebook encompasses writing in a group atmosphere. Chandler (2002) concluded in an evaluation of the Amherst Writers & Artists (AWA) method that writing in a group with a specific approach produced two major findings in students; 1) participants were enabled to connect to a part of the self in which feelings, reflections, and behaviour could be changed; and 2) reading and receiving feedback in a group facilitated connection to others through learning and empathy. The participants noted that connecting to others by learning about different lives and empathizing with the experience of their situation occurred through reading, listening, and providing feedback. Vygotsky (1962) explained that exterior dialogues are a necessary precursor to inner speech and an awareness of one's own thought processes. Connecting to self through relationships with others has been documented by relational theorists as essential to self-development (Jordan, 1991; Surrey, 1991). A tenet of relational theory is that self-development depends on having an interest in and paying attention to another person (Surrey, 1991).

Lifebook is based on the above mentioned literature. It is not yet clear what the specific active factors and obstacles are, because it hasn't been researched in practice thus far.

Commented [WEvd(9)]: Not entirely clear how theories fit in with the research

### Implementation

Research shows that the implementation of an intervention in practice does not always proceed as intended. The effectiveness of an intervention can be jeopardized if it is not applied correctly (Carroll et al., 2007). To prevent incorrect conclusions, it is useful to first perform a process evaluation, this examines what the intervention's active factors and obstacles are and it provides insight into whether the program is being implemented as described in the original intervention description (Kok et al., 2005; Movisie, 2014). As Lifebook is implemented in various countries by numerous coaches, it is necessary to evaluate treatment integrity and the cultural modifications made in the meetings.

**Treatment integrity.** Treatment integrity refers to the extent to which the intervention was implemented as intended. Having information on treatment integrity allows the organisation to monitor how closely the implemented intervention approximates the

Commented [WEvd(10)]: It is not clear how active factors and obstacles are related to treatment integrity

intended intervention given in the manual (Perepletchikova & Kazdin, 2005). It is necessary to evaluate to what extent the Lifebook coaches adhere or differ from the coaches manual to investigate whether the intervention is carried out as intended. For this purpose the coaches manual of Lifebook is used.

**Cultural sensitivity.** Coaches and children from different countries and cultures may differ from each other and can have different norms, values, meanings of words and world views (LeBaron, 2003). These worldviews and values encompass what we consider most important, and the ways we see our relationships, the world, and ourselves. For example, countries and societies can be placed on a dimension that ranges from individualistic to collectivistic. Individualistic societies have a high preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only, while in collectivistic societies there is a focus on close, long-term commitment to a larger 'group' (Hofstede, 2014). Countries such as The Netherlands and South Africa are categorised as individualistic societies, whereas Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Kenya and Lebanon are categorised as collectivistic societies (Hofstede, 2014). These differences should be taken into account by the coach, when they design the meetings. People from individualistic societies may struggle with opening up in a group as they are used to taking care of themselves. Many researchers seem to opt for an integrated model of cultural adaptation that takes both treatment integrity and fit into account (Castro, Barrera, & Martinez, 2004). It is not yet known how the Lifebook coaches in the various countries approach the meetings and if they adapt the meetings according to their own culture.

Treatments can be modified to better fit into ones culture by taking cultural sensitivity into account. According to Bernal & Saez-Santiago (2006) treatments can be adapted to ones culture by actualizing eight elements: goals, language, persons, content, context, methods, metaphors and concepts of the intervention (Bernal & Saez-Santiago, 2006). Bernal & Saez-Santiago (2006) explained that the goals of treatment should reflect a cultural knowledge, as the goals must take the specific values, customs, and tradition of the client's culture into account. Language, is often a carrier of culture; thus, treatments delivered in the native language of the target population assume an integration of culture. This explains why the Lifebook's languages differ from one another. Persons, brings into focus the consideration of ethnic and race matching in the client-therapist dyad, as it may be important to acknowledge ethnic, racial, or cultural similarities and differences. The persons participating in the meetings have different backgrounds amongst the countries. In Lebanon for example, the



children are overall Syrian refugees while in other countries the groups consist of children who are in contact with the youth care system. Content refers to cultural knowledge about values, customs, and traditions shared by ethnic and minority groups. In some rural areas in Africa it is respectful not to look at an adult when they are talking to you, this changes the way the coach and the children interact. Context refers to the consideration of the client's broader social, economic, and political contexts. The children who participate in Lifebook differ in social economic status and context in which they live. Methods refers to the procedures to follow for the achievement of the treatment goals. An important methodological tool is communication methods. Some cultures sing and dance to communicate and explain topics. Metaphors refers to the symbols and concepts that are shared by a particular cultural group. Horoscopes are well known in Western society, but these are not useable in for example Syria as all the children have the same birthdate. Lastly, concepts refer to the constructs of the theoretical model to be used in treatment.

It is essential to evaluate to what extent the Lifebook coaches adhere or differ from the coaches manual to investigate whether the intervention is carried out as intended. Also the active factors and obstacles need to be specifically defined. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the implementation of Lifebook in an international context through a process evaluation. When assessing treatment integrity, cultural sensitivity will be taken into account by researching how the coaches in several countries conduct meetings, whether the coaches deviate or adhere to the manual for coaches and to what extent the meetings have been culturally adapted.

### **Research questions**

The current study will first investigate what the possible active factors and obstacles in the implementation of the Lifebook are. Secondly the study will assess to what extent the Lifebook coaches adhere to the coaches manual during the meetings (treatment integrity). Lastly it will be researched to what extent a countries culture influences the coaches approach to the meetings.

### **Method**

#### **Design**

A qualitative study was chosen to answer the research question as it makes it possible to demonstrate a variety of perspectives and discuss the social meanings related to it taking the different backgrounds of the coaches into account (Perepletchikova, 2011; Flick, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were analysed using a qualitative content analysis to discover

how the coaches approach the meetings using the coaches manual and to discover if there are cultural adaptations made.

### Respondents and procedure

With the help of 'purposive sampling', coaches who have supervised more than two groups were selected because they play a role in the particular context and therefore understand phenomena of this context (Bryman, 2012). In total twelve coaches participated in this study. From Serbia, none of the 51 coaches took part in this research, 0/31 from Bulgaria, 1/43 from Croatia, 2/59 from South-Africa, 1/35 from Kenya, 4/42 from Lebanon and 3/4 from The Netherlands participated. The respondents have varying years of experience working with Lifebook ( $M = 3$ ;  $SD = 1,83$ ). Table 1 shows an overview of the interviewed coaches.

Table 1 *Information about the respondents*

Pseudonym*	Gender	Country	Profession	Years active as a Lifebook coach
<b>Kaya</b>	Female	South Africa	Social service practitioner	4
<b>Arno</b>	Male	South Africa	Professional child and youth care worker	4
<b>Fadhili</b>	Male	Kenya	Community worker	1
<b>Ekrem</b>	Male	Bosnia and Hercegovina	Social pedagogue	6
<b>Sanne</b>	Female	The Netherlands	Own company where she trains people in various skills	4
<b>Veerle</b>	Female	The Netherlands	Supporting coordinator at a school for children with learning disabilities	3
<b>Nienke</b>	Female	The Netherlands	Own company as a transformative therapist	5
<b>Zoona</b>	Female	Lebanon	Social worker	1

A PROCESS EVALUATION OF LIFEBOOK FOR YOU(TH)				11
<b>Sehrish</b>	Female	Lebanon	Psychotherapist and Psychologist	1
<b>Majedah</b>	Female	Lebanon	Social worker	1
<b>Iraj</b>	Female	Lebanon	Psychologist	1
<b>Jaka</b>	Female	Croatia	Psychologist	5

\* The names of the respondents have been changed to ensure their anonymity

Lifebook coaches received an invitation via email to participate. After agreeing to participate, a date was set to conduct the interview via Skype or Zoom. Participants were asked for informed consent to record the audio of the interview. Afterwards, the recordings were automatically shared with the interviewee.

#### **Measuring instruments**

A semi-structured interview was conducted with a topic list based on the theoretical frameworks to improve the reliability of the study, but also leaves room for new topics introduced by the interviewee. The topics related to Lifebook's effective and restrictive elements were: Active factors and obstacles. An example of such a question is: *What do you think is most successful about the meetings? And why?* Topics that discussed treatment integrity were: the use of and deviation of the methodology given in the coaches manual. An example of such a question is: *In what way do you use the coaches manual?* The topics used to assess how the meetings are culturally adapted are: language, persons, metaphors, content, concepts, goals, methods and context of the intervention or services (Bernals & Saez-Santiago, 2006). To illustrate a question in such a topic is: *Do you approach the meetings in a different manner to fit you countries culture? In which way do you do this? Could you give examples?* See Appendix 2 for a detailed overview of the topic list.

#### **Data analyses**

After the interviews were audio recorded, the interviews were transcribed. Then, interview content was coded with the qualitative analyses programme NVivo, establishing relationships between the raw data and theoretical concepts (Jansen, 2005). The Constant Comparative Method (CCM), which describes the meaning of the obtained material, was used to analyse the interviews (Boeije, 2002). This is done by classifying the material into categories of a coding framework that gives an overview of all the existing codes; a code tree (Schreier, 2012). The analysis has a deductive component where codes are drawn up in

advance based on the resilience reinforcement theory, self-determination theory and the social learning theory (Appendix 3) (Cho & Lee, 2014). The coding took place by placing quotes from the coaches into the specific categories of the code tree. To illustrate: if a coach stated that a successful part of the meetings is that the children work in groups and learn from each other, then this would be coded in the category: Active factors—Social learning theory.

To assess what possible active factors were, the coaches were asked to describe what they find works during the meetings and in the intervention. The same was done for the obstacles. The coaches' answers were then compared to the above-mentioned literature as Lifebook is based on the theories described above. Active factors and Obstacles could be categorised into content of the meeting, working method or the theories discussed in the theoretical framework. To analyse treatment integrity the code; Methodology was analysed. Methodology was divided into valuable and non-useable aspects of the coaches' manual. This gave an insight into what parts of the manual the coaches use and exclude during the meetings. Cultural sensitivity was assessed by categorizing the cultural adaptations the coaches made during the meetings into eight elements; goals, language, persons, content, context, methods, metaphors and concepts of the intervention (Bernal & Saez-Santiago, 2006). To illustrate; if a coach noted that they use dancing as a way to explain a subject, this would be coded as Culture - Cultural specific working method.

### Results

In the results section, the results for each research question are shown. First, Active factors and obstacles will be discussed, then treatment integrity and lastly cultural modifications will be discussed.

#### Active factors and Obstacles

**Active Factors.** All twelve coaches indicated that communication in the group and discussing the subjects with each other made a great difference in the way children opened up during the meetings. These aspects are connected to the Social learning theory. Arno stated:

*“There are a lot of young people who do not communicate. With Lifebook you create that platform where the children can communicate with others.”*

Another coach, Majedah, gave an example of how she could see the difference in the children during individual sessions and in group work with Lifebook:

*“I have two children that during individual sessions, they didn't talk and participate. But in the meetings they are very happy and they participate very well.”*

Several statements regarding active factors could also be coded under the different concepts from Self-determination theory. First, relatedness could be coded in 13 statements by 7 coaches. A pattern can be seen when the coaches explain how relatedness plays a key part in the meetings. When the children noticed that others had the same negative experiences, they felt more comfortable with the group and they shared their fears and sources of anxiety with each other. The coaches also noticed that the children found comfort in one another and that by sharing their experiences the children became closer and understood each other better. This led to a bond between the children which indirectly gave them more contact with prosocial peers. Second, competency could be coded in two statements by two coaches. The coaches stated that throughout the meetings the children developed their own voice. The children noticed that others are interested in their stories and experiences what makes them feel heard. Lastly autonomy was mentioned 5 times by three coaches. The statements the coaches made about autonomy resembled each other closely. They indicated that you always have to give the children freedom to express whatever they feel like expressing. Also when the children write in the Lifebook you should be aware not to influence the child's perception. It is important to realize that the Lifebook is from them and it has to be filled with what they find important.

Six coaches noted that the children developed more resilience because the children had feelings of relatedness, competence and autonomy during the meetings. The coaches mentioned that they noticed an increase in empathy in the children. This was namely noticed because the children asked questions to form a deeper understanding of one's experience and they were affected by the stories others told. Four coaches also noticed that from the stories and questions the children shared a more optimistic outlook on life was gained. As they opened up the children realised a lot of stuff which was actually good in their life. Kaya from South-Africa explained that:

*“The meetings open up a lot of stuff which shows the children what is actually very good and positive in their life. This helps them realise that there is hope for them and they can have a brighter future.”*

Kaya, Veerle, Zoon and Arno noted that the theme Family and Friends was very important and valuable. This theme increased the relatedness the children felt with each other and with their families. Arno explained :

*“There is an activity where you focus on who you want to be in your friend circle and your family circle. You need to create a picture for them so that they understand that your network is widely spread. They need to learn that every person they meet, even if it’s on the street, all have different characteristics and that they can learn from each other and that also other people can learn from you as well. They should learn to spread their circle of friends and family and not to stay in isolation as people also need you and can learn from you.”*

**Obstacles.** In addition to active factors, there are a number of obstacles the coaches mentioned during the interviews. Five coaches stated that their biggest obstacle was that the children in their groups were illiterate. Three coaches noticed that because the children were illiterate, the children felt less competent in the group while two coaches noted that the children felt less autonomous. They found that if the children were able to write they would have more freedom as it would be easier for them to express themselves in their own words. Coaches also mentioned how they solved such obstacles. Because the meetings are supervised by two coaches one led the discussions while the other helped the children read and write.

A second obstacle noted by two coaches was the parents feelings towards Lifebook, as some parents thought it was a waste of time. This was solved by having the meetings take place after school and close to the children’s home. Making the children not miss important school work and the parents didn’t have a lot of travel time to bring the children to the meetings.

The last obstacle that five coaches ran into was the severity of traumas some children had. The coaches mentioned that if a child with a severe trauma tells the group about this specific trauma, the other children might get scared or the child itself could get more damaged. A solution for this obstacle would be that a primary assessment should be conducted before the children start with Lifebook. Raja from Lebanon stated that this would be a tool to see if a particular group fits with a child or not. This would also be beneficial to see how to handle the group, especially when they are talking about fears and anxiety.

#### **Treatment integrity**

**Valuable aspects of the Methodology.** All the coaches found the structure from the coaches manual valuable. They indicated that they follow the manual as it was given and only deviate from it in certain instances. The twelve coaches explained that the Manual for coaches structured the meetings, gave them examples and instructions for activities and set down how to build trust and set the rules of the meetings with the groups. Jaka and Nienke

both stated that the structure of the methodology was very important as it safeguards rules with which the children must comply during the meetings and thus helping to reach the goals of the meetings. Zoon explained that the information in the manual was applicable during the meetings:

*“Sometimes I really felt that I needed further information to see how to properly handle the meetings. I thought the manual gave me good information on how to approach the children. Especially because it worked through specific situations which were applicable in the meetings.”*

Another valuable aspect that nine out of the twelve coaches mentioned was that the activities were playful and creative. The activities in the manual made it possible that the children learned and communicated while playing and doing the activities.

*“Through all the games that are done during the meetings, you notice that because children are more open that other children also become more open. The result is that the children share their story easier and participate better in the group.”*

All twelve coaches agreed that positivity played a key role in the manual for coaches and thus also in the meetings. The Lifebook focuses on remembering and seeing the positive things in your life. By doing activities and sharing stories the coaches noticed that the children became more positive, gave each other positive feedback and realise that despite the negative experiences they also had positive experiences which they can use to build their strengths.

**Deviation from the methodology.** The coaches only deviated from the manual by adjusting the energizers. Five coaches adjusted the energizers for their specific group as they noted that younger children reacted better to games where a lot of movement was involved than the older youth.

#### **Cultural modifications**

**Goals.** All twelve coaches indicated that Lifebook focuses on positivity. Being able to express ones feeling and sharing your stories with other was indicated as a goal by four coaches. They indicated that by doing this the children become more aware of their positive qualities, strengths and talents. The eight other coaches explained that Lifebook’s main focus is that despite the negative experiences you have enough resilience and strengths to rise above them. The children focus on positive aspects of their past and draw strength from them. Veerle stated that:

*“No matter how many bad experiences you have had in your life, you have enough resilience to rise above them. You also learn that something positive can come out of negative experiences and you can use this to increase your own strength.”*

**Language.** The languages in which the meetings are held differ from one another. The coaches all stated that it is important for the children to have the meetings in their own language. This is because the children will understand and be able to express themselves better. Table 2 shows the languages in which the meetings are conducted. The four coaches from Lebanon explained that even though the meetings were in Arabic, the children, whose native tongue is Syrian, understood the activities and could explain themselves well:

*“Sometimes there were specific sayings for their culture. It’s like American and British. There are some words I didn’t know, so the children taught me how to say the specific cultural words.”*

**Persons.** The children participating in the meetings all have had negative experiences which led them to come into contact with youth care workers. Table 2 shows what kind of persons the groups of children are built up of.

Table 2 *Languages in which the meetings are held, native tongue of the group and which persons the group is made up of*

Country	Language meetings	Native tongue children	Persons in groups
South Africa	English and Afrikaans	Yes	Children from different communities in South Africa who had contact with youth care
Bosnia and Hercegovina	Bosnian	Yes	Children in youth care
Kenya	English	Yes	Children from different communities in contact with social workers
Lebanon	Arabic	Yes, with a Syrian dialect	Syrian refugees
Croatia	Croatian	Yes	Children in the SOS child villages from all over Croatia
The Netherlands	Dutch and English	Yes and No	Groups in schools and unaccompanied minors



**Cultural content modifications.** Six coaches explained that they added or excluded activities, games or questions due to cultural sensitivity. Kaya from South-Africa explained that besides making a Lifebook, they also made a memory box with the children. The memory box helped the children keep their Lifebook safe once they took it home with them. Madejah who works with Syrian refugees in Lebanon encountered various cultural sensitivities. One of these activities was the horoscope/Zodiac signs. Because of the lack of relatedness the children felt with this subject this activity was left out of the meetings. She explained that:

*“I leave the horoscope out because for Syrian refugees the date of birth is the same for everyone: 1 – 1 – year. This makes that all the children have the same horoscope and they do not relate to this. I feel that the children are more interested to learn about the world around them, so I include this instead of the horoscopes.”*

Zoona and Sehrish explained that they exclude certain games from the meetings because their groups of children are from Syria and special backgrounds. For example, they didn't want to touch each other because this is not accepted in their culture. So they replaced games where touching is involved with other culturally appropriate games like Hajla.

**Cultural Context.** All twelve coaches indicated that you need to keep the child's circumstances in mind when supervising a meeting. For example: in Lebanon the four coaches agreed that the meetings are most successful when the location is nearby the houses of the children. This is because the children are refugees and don't have the facilities or opportunities to travel to the meetings on their own. By taking these issues into account, the coaches lowered the threshold to attend the meetings. Also in South Africa, the two coaches noted that the meetings take place in various settings due to the circumstances in which the children live:

*“There were times when a community would place slides, so that the coaches could cross the riverbank and reach the children for the meetings. Some of the meetings we held in classrooms at school . We were also working in what we called a safe box which is a safe place that we created where the children could be with professionals. The use of these safe places even elevated the meetings. It could be outside, inside in containers, schools, even at someone's home. Just anywhere where a safe place could be created.”*

Not only does the setting of the Lifebook differ between the countries, also the context in which the children live is different. Seven coaches indicated that as a Lifebook coach you

have to take into account how the context in which the children live effect the content of the meeting. In Lebanon this was an issue because the children live with multiple families in one big tent. The children don't have a space for themselves or any safe space. This is important to keep in mind when doing the Dream house exercise, where children describe and draw their dream house. As a coach you have to be sensitive to these situations. Kaya from South-Africa explained that the activity where the children draw their dreamhouse is especially difficult for the children in South-Africa.

*“If you do that in the rural area, you have to realize that they live in very compact houses with 5-6 others. And now you're asking a child to draw their dream house. [...] You don't want to shatter a child's dreams, what your perception is of a house. This is one of the sensitive and particular topics. The other one was of the family. Like bring a baby picture: some of them are in foster care or are taken care of by neighbours. This, sometimes brings up sensitive issues. Always be careful.”*

This example shows that the children should not be influenced. Being sensitive to a child's cultural background, can lead to an active factor arising namely an increase in a child's autonomy and thus their motivation. It is important not to influence the children and to let them draw, write and tell what they feel should be drawn, written or told.

**Cultural specific working methods.** As cultures differ from one another, some working methods also vary. All the coaches agreed that it is very important to be aware of the community's culture and ways of acting with each other there. Arno gave an example of how in South-Africa there are also many differences and you should always be aware of these:

*“We had staff working in the province where they grew up because they knew the language, they knew how to act and what was going on. This was especially important in the context of the community. For example in the Natusah community, there are certain things that you ask in a certain way out of respect. One of the things is when an adult asks a child a question, the child does not look at them in the face or in the eyes, they would look down as a sign of respect.”*

Five coaches noted that the working method of Lifebook is universal, but that you sometimes have to be creative in the ways that you explain certain tasks and activities. Ekrem for example helps the children to open up about deeper issues by first asking ordinary questions about thing that the child is interested in. Arno and Fadhili noted that they use singing and dancing as a method to interact with one another, communicate emotions, celebrate and relay

historic events. Fadhili stated that they sing before they start the meetings to bring everyone together and to help the children focus on the Lifebook. Lastly Majedah gave an example of how she makes the meetings more understandable for the children by doing role play activities.

There were no cultural modifications mentioned on the subjects metaphors and concepts.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate what Lifebook's active factors and obstacles are; To what extent do the Lifebook coaches adhere to the coaches manual during the meetings (treatment integrity)?; To what extent does a countries culture influence the coaches approach to the meetings? By means of semi-structured interviews it was investigated what, according to the Lifebook coaches in various countries, are the possible active factors and obstacles of the intervention.

Overall the coaches were very satisfied with the implementation of Lifebook and the results show several active factors that are identified by the coaches. All of the coaches noted that working in groups makes the meetings successful. By working in groups the children can feel a sense of relatedness with each other, they open up more and they develop more resilience. This is confirmed by the literature, which describes that the combination of creating and sharing stories improves the self-actualizing behaviours and self-acceptance of the participants (Wenz & McWhirter, 1990). All coaches noted that for Lifebook to work, a safe environment has to be created where the children feel safe and heard. Aspects from the self-determination theory play an important role in Lifebook. The children in a group should be able to relate to one another on several aspects. This relatedness makes the children feel like they are not alone and they can overcome hardships they have encountered. Autonomy is present in the meetings as the coaches are aware they mustn't influence the child and they should be precautious with cultural sensitivity. The fact that autonomy is apparent in all the meetings can be explained because across diverse cultures, the issue of autonomy can be similarly understood and is associated with well-being (Chirkov et al., 2003, p. 108). Competency is developed in the meetings by showing the children they have a voice and they are heard. These aspects help fulfil the need for a safe place for the children to explore their past experiences and to gradually integrate it into a coherent sense of self (Levers, 2012).

In addition to active and valuable factors, there are also a number of obstacles which emerged from the results. The biggest obstacle mentioned was that some children taking part

in the meetings are illiterate. This created a challenge for the coaches to reach the goals and make the material understandable for the children. The coaches solved this by integrating more role play into the meetings and by having an extra coach to supervise and aid the children. Lifebook's biggest strength is that there is a combination between writing and expressing oneself in a group. When children can't read or write this takes away a part of their autonomy in the meetings, as they can't write down what they feel or think. To fully understand the consequences of illiteracy during a meeting, more research on this topic is needed. The research should assess how the coaches can help the children in the best way making sure the children achieve the goals of the meeting.

Another obstacle some coaches faced was the differences in cognitive functioning and traumas the children had. A coach pleaded for a primary assessment for the children to take place ahead of starting a meeting with a group. The assessment evaluates what kinds of traumas the children have and if these traumas are too severe to discuss in a group with other children. This may be necessary in certain countries where the groups of children have severe trauma's. It should be noted that the organisation that performs Lifebook should choose to do a primary assessment if they deem it necessary for the group.

Lifebook is conducted in a uniform manner by the coaches, they use the manuals as a guide in their work. They follow the manual and adapt it to the culture where necessary. The coaches mentioned that the coaches manual was overall very helpful and structured. The coaches all found that the structure given by the manual helped them organise the meetings and assured that the goals of the meeting would be reached. Research indicates that structure increases children's feeling of competence because the children know better what is expected from them (Elliot & Dweck, 2013; Sokol, Grouzet & Müller, 2013). Another aspect of the manual that was perceived as positive is the activities. The activities ensured that the children learned in a playful manner as they became more aware of their qualities and talents. According to Whitton (2014), playful approaches can provide spaces for learners to be curious, actively participate, enjoy learning activities and be driven by intrinsic motivation, rather than extrinsic, instrumental gains.

Cultural modifications coaches made due to their cultural background were mentioned by the coaches. These modifications were assessed in different elements; goals, languages, persons, content, context, working methods, metaphors and concepts. The goals the coaches aim to achieve with Lifebook strongly overlap with one another. There is no distinct difference between the goals the coaches in different countries aim to achieve. The main focus is on the child being able to express themselves and their feeling to become more aware

of their positive qualities, strengths and talents. This implies that the goals reflect a cultural knowledge, taking specific values, customs and traditions of the different cultures into consideration (Bernal & Saez-Santiago, 2006).

A big difference in the countries is the language the meetings are held in. The coaches shared the notion of the importance of conducting the meetings in the native tongue of the children. In some cases this was not possible, as the children were refugees who had a different mother tongue than the coaches. But the coaches creatively thought of ways to get the message from Lifebook across to the children. They did not change the contents of the Lifebook or of the coaches manual to do so. This ensured the treatment integrity was attained.

A number of coaches did add or exclude contents from the Lifebook due to cultural sensitivity. The content additions were of activities and energizers. This did not impact the meetings as they only added energizers which were more in line with the groups culture. A coach only excluded a part of the content about the horoscopes/zodiac signs in a group as this was not relatable for the children. The coach stated that this did not affect the goal of the meeting. Further research should be conducted to inform possible further modifications by using in-depth interviews with the coaches and children. These findings may lead to more information regarding how Lifebook could be modified to fit the culture better (Barrera et al., 2013).

All coaches acknowledged that as a coach you should be aware of the context in which the children live. These contexts differ between the countries, making some subjects more difficult to discuss in certain countries than in others. But even though there are contextual differences, the coaches noted that they follow the manual as given and don't skip a subject. Even if it is more difficult for the children, addressing difficult subjects makes them feel safer, strengthens the bond, and teaches them about the world (NSPCC, s.d.).

The coaches stated that Lifebook is universally applicable, but that you should always be aware of who you have in your group. This makes that the coaches should be creative in the way the explain and discuss subjects. The working methods to do so differentiate in the countries from adding more singing and dancing to excluding horoscope activities.

From this study it can be concluded that the coaches are satisfied with the implementation of Lifebook. Working and sharing in a group with others whom a child can relate to is an important active factor of the intervention. Other possible active factors are the coaches manual and the overall structure of the Lifebook. The main obstacle was the illiteracy of some children in a group. The coaches modified the meetings due to their cultural beliefs in small ways. Mainly by adding activities or excluding certain energizers. The

coaches overall noted that creativity is necessary to explain subjects as children might not understand a topic or question and it is the coaches task to make this clear. Finally this study showed that the implementation of Lifebook is to a large extent being conducted according to the coaches manual. It was expected that there would be strong differences in the countries with an individualistic society and those with a collectivistic society. This research showed no such differences, which shows that Lifebook can be universally used. Differences might be found when the meetings are observed as the respondents in this study might have been more inclined to give a social desirable answer, creating a social desirability bias (Grimm, 2010). To substantiate the claim that Lifebook is universally applicable it is necessary to do further research into treatment adherence and treatment competence. This should be done by means of a direct assessment of the coaches skills of the meetings delivery, in order to get an objective view of the meetings (Perepletchikova et al., 2009). Treatment adherence should be supplemented with a questionnaire, indirect assessment as this indirect measures of integrity, can be compared to observational data and can be used to clarify implementation issues (Perepletchikova et al., 2009). Such a research can substantiate this study's findings about treatment integrity by adding an objective perspective of the meetings in the different countries.

The findings of this study should be seen in the light of a number of strong points and some limitations. A strength of this study is the fact that this study gives an insight into the way Lifebook meetings are being conducted in different countries with different cultures. This is due to the coaches have different professional backgrounds, are from various countries and have different cultures. Another strength of the study was that the researcher used a semi-structured interview. This created an opportunity for the researcher to investigate a deeper understanding, request clarification & allow the interviewee to guide the direction of the interview. This increased the validity of the interview (McLeod, 2014). The use of a semi-structured interview also has a limitation to it. A topic list was used to conduct the interviews. This part of the interview is easy to replicate as it is a fixed set of closed questions (McLeod, 2014). But because the interview was semi-structured, other questions depending on the interview were asked, these cannot be replicated and thus lowers the reliability of the research. A major limitation of this study is the nonresponse bias. Some subjects who were asked to take part in the study refused to participate. It was also hard to reach the respondents due to the Corona crisis, as in some countries the respondents don't have internet at home. Some countries had less than the anticipated amount of respondents, while others had more. This can lead to biased results, as the coaches who were not interviewed might have had a

different opinion on the subjects asked leading to missing insights and experiences from other coaches. The conclusion of this research cannot be generalised as the sample of respondents is not representative.

This research is the first step in measuring the process of Lifebook for Youth. A recommendation for follow-up research is to carry out an effect evaluation of the effect that Lifebook meetings have on children. It is important to be aware of cultural differences between the countries where Lifebook is active, when conducting further research. This will guarantee that the meetings have a positive impact on children in all countries.

### References

- Al-Krenawi, A., Elbedour, S., & Parsons, J. E. (2011). Trauma and war: Positive psychology/strengths approach. *The Arab Journal of Psychiatry, 44*(2313), 1-20.
- Atwell, N. (1987). *In the middle: Writing, reading, and learning with adolescents*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Baikie, K., & Wilhelm, K. (2005). Emotional and physical health benefits of expressive writing. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment, 11*(5), 338-346. doi:10.1192/apt.11.5.338
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.
- Barrera, M. , Castro, F. G. , Strycker, L. A. & Toobert, D. J. (2013). Cultural Adaptations of Behavioral Health Interventions. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 81*(2), 196–205. doi: 10.1037/a0027085.
- Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice and mind*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bernal, G., & Sáez-Santiago, E. (2006). Culturally centered psychosocial interventions. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*(2), 121-132.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist, 32*, 513– 531.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. New York: Oxford university press
- Boeije, H. R. (2002). A purposeful approach to the Constant Comparative Method in the analysis of qualitative interviews. *Quality and Quantity, 36*, 391-409.
- Castro, F. G., Barrera, M., & Martinez, C. R. (2004). The cultural adaptation of prevention interventions: Resolving tensions between fidelity and fit. *Prevention Science, 5*(1), 41-45.
- Chandler, G. E. (2002). An evaluation of college and low-income youth writing together: Self-discovery and cultural connection. *Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing, 25*(4), 255-269.
- Chirkov, V., Ryan, R. M., Kim, Y., & Kaplan, U. (2003). Differentiating autonomy from individualism and independence: A self-determination theory perspective on internalization of cultural orientations and well-being. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 84*(1), 97.
- Cho, J. Y., & Lee, E. H. (2014). Reducing confusion about grounded theory and qualitative



- content analysis: Similarities and differences. *The qualitative report*, 19(32), 1-20
- Elliot, A. J., & Dweck, C. S. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of competence and motivation*. Guilford Publications.
- Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research*. Sage Publications Limited.
- Fröhlich-Gildhoff, K., & Rönnau-Böse, M. (2019). *Resilienz*. UTB GmbH.
- Harvey, J., & Delfabbro, P. H. (2004). Psychological resilience in disadvantaged youth: A critical overview. *Australian Psychologist*, 39(1), 3-13.
- Hofstede, G. (2014). Culture compass. *The Hofstede Centre*. URL <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/> (visited on 31/03/2020).
- Jansen, H. (2016). De kwalitatieve survey. *Tijdschrift Kwalon*, 10(3).
- Jordan, J. V. (1991). The meaning of mutuality. In J. V. Jordan, A. G. Kaplan, J. B. Miller, I. P. Stiver, & J. L. Surrey (Eds.), *Women's growth in connection*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Klein, K., & Boals, A. (2001). Expressive writing can increase working memory capacity. *Journal of experimental psychology: General*, 130(3), 520.
- Kok, H., Molleman, G., Saan, H., Ploeg, M. (2005). *Handboek Preffi 2.0: richtlijn voor effectieve gezondheidsbevordering en preventie*. Woerden: NIGZ
- LeBaron, M. (2003). *Bridging cultural conflicts*.
- Levers, L. L. (2012). *Trauma counseling: Theories and interventions*. Springer Publishing Company.
- McLeod, S. A. (2014, February 05). *The interview research method*. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/interviews.html>
- Movisie. (2014). *Factsheet op weg naar effectieve sociale interventies: procesevaluatie bij de beoordeling van interventies*. Retrieved from: [https://www.movisie.nl/sites/default/files/alfresco\\_files/Databank/Factsheet%20proces evaluatie.pdf](https://www.movisie.nl/sites/default/files/alfresco_files/Databank/Factsheet%20proces%20evaluatie.pdf)
- Murray, B. (2002). *Writing to heal*. Monitor. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun02/writing.aspx>
- NJI. (z.d.). *Wat is werkzaam? - Effectieve jeugdhulp | NJi*. Retrieved from <https://www.nji.nl/nl/Kennis/Dossier/Effectieve-jeugdhulp/Effectieve-professionals/Wat-is-werkzaam>
- NSPCC. (z.d.). *Talking about difficult topics*. Retrieved from <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/talking-about-difficult-topics/>

- Park, C. L., & Blumberg, C. J. (2002). Disclosing trauma through writing: Testing the meaning-making hypothesis. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 26(5), 597-616.
- Pennebaker, J.W. (1997). Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process. *Psychological Science*, 8(3) 162- 166. Pennebaker, J.W., Mayne, T.J., & Francis, M.E. (in press). Linguistic predictors of adaptive bereavement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- Perepletchikova, F., Hilt, L. M., Chereji, E., & Kazdin, A. E. (2009). Barriers to implementing treatment integrity procedures: survey of treatment outcome researchers. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, 77(2), 212.
- Perepletchikova, F. (2011). On the topic of treatment integrity. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 18(2), 148-153.
- Prince-Embury, S. (2013). Resiliency scales for children and adolescents: Theory, research, and clinical application. In *Resilience in children, adolescents, and adults* (pp. 19-44). Springer, New York, NY.
- Rutter, M. (1987). Psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 57, 316-331
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American psychologist*, 55(1), 68.
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. Sage publications.
- Sokol, B. W., Grouzet, F. M., & Müller, U. (Eds.). (2013). *Self-Regulation and Autonomy* (No. 40). Cambridge University Press.
- Surrey, J. L. (1991). The "self-in-relation": A theory of women's development. In J. V. Jordan, A. G. Kaplan, J. B. Miller, I. P. Stiver, & J. L. Surrey (Eds.), *Women's growth in connection*. New York: Guilford Press.
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2018, 11 juni). *Effects*. Retrieved on 17 maart 2020, from <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/complex-trauma/effects>
- Ullrich, P.M., Lutgendorf, S.K. (2002). Journaling about stressful events: Effects of cognitive processing and emotional expression. *ann. behav. med.* 24, 244–250 (2002).  
[https://doi.org/10.1207/S15324796ABM2403\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15324796ABM2403_10)
- Ungar, M., Ghazinour, M., & Richter, J. (2013). Annual research review: What is resilience within the social ecology of human development?. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry*, 54(4), 348-366.
- Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal contents in

self-determination theory: Another look at the quality of academic motivation. *Educational psychologist*, 41(1), 19-31.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1962) *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wenz, K., & McWhirter, J. J. (1990). Enhancing the group experience: Creative writing exercises. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 15, 37-42.

Whitton, N. (2014) *Digital Games and Learning: Research and Theory*, Routledge, New York.

**Appendix 1: The Lifebook modules**

The first module focusses on the themes: My life until now and my best friends. At the beginning of this module there is a communal start to create a safe and open atmosphere in the group. The children should trust each other and know that whatever they say remains in the room. In this module, every child receives the opportunity to talk about himself and his childhood on the basis of a baby or toddler picture of themselves.

The second module focuses on the themes: 'My school and my creative side'. Not all children have a positive memory of their time at school. With this module the Lifebook tries to help the children develop a broader view of their school period. With 'My creative side' the children can use various ways to express their feelings.

Module three focuses on 'Animals, family and networks'. This theme views family from a broad perspective. The children learn that even people that were not close to them at the time can still have a family role. By talking about their family, the children will gain insight into their resemblance to people in their family. This can be in small things like eye colour but also in traits such as being extravert.

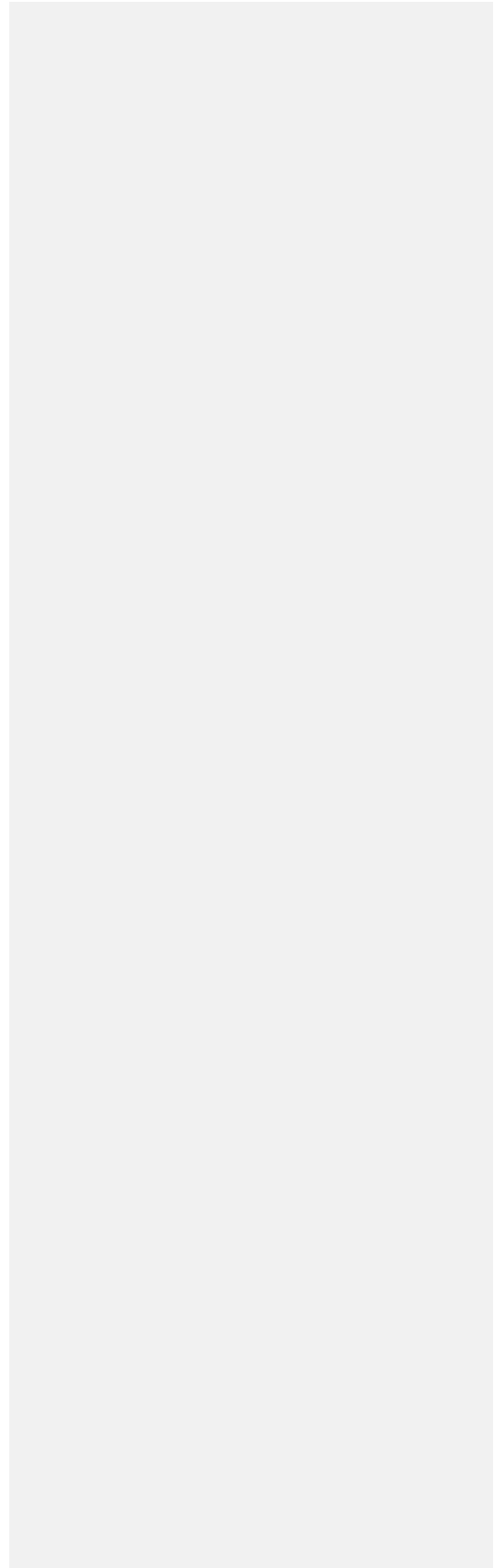
In module four the themes: 'My deep thoughts and my treasures' are discussed. The children gain insight into the skills and qualities they possess. By doing several exercises, the children can develop a broader view of themselves and they can start to see positive aspects in themselves and the other group members.

The last module focuses on: 'My house, future and residences'. Within this module the children find meaning to the places and houses they have lived in. They see that their past has formed them into who they are today. In the end the children think about their future: what are their wishes, what do they want to become, where/how do they want to live? But also: what can I already do today and now? What is the first step in this direction that I can take right now?

Children work on their story during five 2.5 to 3 hour meetings (one module per meeting) that take place after hours in a private setting (a youth center, an empty classroom or office, etc). With Lifebook the starting point is the child's perspective on its past and future. By working on these aspects the child will be increasingly resilient in the face of adversity.

After the Lifebook meetings are finished, the children can think of a joint activity "Into the world" that they want to do together. The group members can plan an activity that brings positivity in the world. The aim of this activity is to reach out to others in a positive

way and to give something back to the community.



**Appendix 2: Interview Lifebook coach topic list**

---

**Introduction**

- Introduce myself (name, study)
- Goal of the research
- Length of the interview
- The answers remain anonymous/ the interview can be stopped when the participant indicates this
- The interview will be recorded from this point

---

**Preliminary questions**

- What is your age?
- What is your country of residence?
- What is your educational background?
- What is your profession?
- How many years have you been active as a Lifebook coach?

---

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Reference questions</b>
<b>Goal</b>	What is the core message Lifebook brings to the children? Do you feel the positivity stays with the children/min focus?
<b>Active factors</b>	What do you think is most successful about the meetings? And why? What works in the meetings? And Why? Do you notice changes in the participants? What kind?
<b>Obstacles</b>	What do you feel does not work/ what could be better? What do you think are limiting factors for the meetings? And why? What could be possible obstacles for the target group to participate in Lifebook for You(th)?
<b>Methodology</b>	Which aspects of the methodology of Lifebook for You(th) do you find most valuable? Why do you think this is the case? In what way is the methodology manual of Lifebook for You(th) used? Which techniques/interventions do you or do you not use? Do you ever deviate from the methodology manual, if so, what is the reason?
<b>Culture</b>	In which language are the meetings conducted? Is this the native tongue of the participants?

---

Are the participants locals?

Are there differences in social or economic status of the participants?

Are there certain cultural sayings which you use during the meetings?

Do you approach the meetings in a different manner to fit you countries culture? In which way do you do this? Could you give examples?

Are there aspects that you would like to add or leave out of the manual to make it more relatable to the participants in your country?

Do you incorporate culture-based goals and objectives?

---

### **Appendix 3: Code tree**

#### **Active factors**

- Content of the meeting
- Working Method
- Self- determination theory
  - Autonomy
  - Relatedness
  - Competency
- Resilience reinforcement
- Bronfenbrenner's microsystem
  - Prosocial Peers
  - Family
- Social learning theory
- Coaches attitude

#### **Obstacles**

- Content of the meeting
- During the meeting
- Self- determination theory
  - Autonomy
  - Relatedness
  - Competency
- Resilience reinforcement
- Bronfenbrenner's microsystem
  - Prosocial Peers
  - Family
- Social learning theory

#### **Methodology**

- Valuable aspects of the manual
  - Structure
  - Energizer
  - Activity



- Other
- Aspects from the manual which are not useable during meetings
  - Structure
  - Energizer
  - Activity
  - Other

### **Culture**

- Goals & core values
- Language
- Persons
- Content
  - Cultural specific content addition to manual
  - Cultural specific content exclusion from the manual
- Cultural context
- Cultural specific working method
- Cultural specific metaphor
- Concept
  - Cultural specific concept addition to manual
  - Cultural specific concept exclusion from the manual