

invite you to attend

The 13th International Group Relations Conference in Lithuania

Exploring leadership, authority and identity in times of shifting boundaries and spaces

23rd – 27th August 2024

A face to face working conference based on the Tavistock
experiential learning methodology

Introduction to the theme

Exploring leadership, authority and identity in times of shifting boundaries and spaces

For Lithuania, located on the external borders of Europe, with a history of foreign powers occupying the country, boundaries and the space they create are vital. But boundaries we took for granted for a long time are not so self-evident anymore. Boundaries of the planet are challenged by growth of world population, production and consumption. Boundaries of countries are challenged by armed, violent conflicts. Boundaries of organisations are shifting to complex changes in their environment influenced by wars, economic stagnation, or even recession, and developments in AI.

At the same time people tend to maintain more solid, even rigid boundaries in social relations. We live in social bubbles (silos), often echoing each other and not engaging with others from other bubbles. This isolation leads to reproduction of the same or similar ideas, views and perspectives. There is a lack of spaces for meeting the other, and a lack of intermediate spaces for dialogue and learning about the other perspective.

In a situation of danger and insecurity, we yearn for an authority that protects and cares for us. Even in countries with a long tradition of democracy we observe the longing for a strong leader with a clear position who can make decisions that we imagine will save the country and its people. These powerful Us and Them dynamics and the serious recreation of past traumas are anxiety provoking.

Identity represents a tension (contradiction) between the individual and the collective. There is a wish to be independent and create ourselves. But at the same time it is not possible to develop identity without belonging to a group.

The need to belong becomes a very strong influence on individual identity: Who are we without belonging to a family, peer group, profession, community, nation? At the same time different identities might be projected onto us as individuals and tensions between group identities appear to be increasing, resulting in wars and other differences that develop into polarizations.

This conference offers a transitional space to feel, explore, try new things, make mistakes, and think in the context of "being under fire". We invite you to join us in this deepening exploration of (your) leadership, authority and identity, and to explore your and our own boundaries of understanding, in order to find new spaces and ways to shape ourselves in the here and now of the world today.

Who is this Programme for?

The programme draws participants from diverse work settings and roles: leaders, managers, consultants, educators, therapists, researchers, administrators and professional and technical workers.

What will you gain from this Programme?

You will have opportunities to learn how to:

- **manage yourself in the multiple roles** necessary to successfully perform in contemporary organisations where greater inter-personal and inter-organisational dialogue and cooperation is called for.
- **find and take up authority**. Taking up authority involves risk, and putting one's authority into action involves recognizing not only one's **responsibility**, but also one's **accountability** to an-other, or a group of others.
- support a new generation of skillful leaders and managers who will **develop vision and foster creativity** in changing organisational and social worlds.
- take up formal and informal **leadership and followership roles** as you explore group, institutional, communal and national dynamics as they happen.

Exploring leadership, authority and identity in times of shifting boundaries and spaces

The aims of the programme, therefore, are to help you:

- bring together understanding of both the **conscious and the unconscious, hidden** motivations and resistances of work and social groups as they engage collaboratively and competitively with one another;
- become more effective in working with the **underlying dynamics** within and between organisations, communities and the wider society;
- **apply the roles** discovered and taken up within the programme to your own organisations, communities and networks.

With these aims in mind, THE PRIMARY TASK of the conference is to ...

explore the conscious and unconscious nature of leadership, followership and identity and the exercise of authority in roles as they develop through the interpersonal, intergroup and organisational relations within the conference, as a temporary institution in times of shifting boundaries and spaces.

The method

This conference is based on the theoretical perspectives and methods of group relations as developed in the Tavistock 'Leicester' working conferences on Leadership, Authority, Role and the Organization.

The conference is designed to provide opportunities for learning for leadership. By **examining, interpreting, reflecting and making sense of** experiences in the programme events, participants will develop clearer understandings of their own organisations and their **roles** within them.

The programme offers the participants opportunities to use **their imagination to explore how they are taking up leadership roles and reacting to the leadership of others**.

The programme focuses on **culture, structure** and **task**, and the need for understanding the roles of participants as they relate collaboratively and competitively with each other. Such understanding involves disciplined attention to one's own **experience**, openness to the experience of others, tolerance of **uncertainty**, readiness to **interpret** what is happening, and courage **to test one's interpretations** through communication and action. This includes being alert to both **conscious** and **unconscious** aspects of behaviour and the ways in which behaviour is shaped by the broader social, political and economic **contexts** in which we work and live.

The method of learning is **experiential** – as participants you will be invited to study your own and others collaborative and competitive behaviour as it happens in the different events. **Consultancy** is always available in the programme events.

The focus of learning is based on examining the **'here and now'** of group and institutional behaviour. You will be invited and challenged to take up your own **authority** to accept what proves to be useful **learning** and reject what is not. Through this process you will be able to reconsider the way that you gain or lose **power** and exercise **authority** in your organisations.

Consultancy Learning Group

The conference design includes a Consultancy Learning Group (CLG). Participants of the CLG will have an opportunity to strengthen their ability to exercise their authority and build up their consulting expertise by taking up different roles within the conference. Members of the CLG will be invited to learn from these experiences and make links with their external roles outside the Conference. The CLG is not intended primarily as a training to take up consulting roles in group relations conferences, but as an opportunity to deepen learning about consultancy through the group relations model which can be applied beyond the conference membership role.

The CLG is open to those who have been members of at least two group relations conferences and are interested in developing this type of learning, exploring roles requiring a consultative stance and applying it to their professional lives. The consultancy learning group has its own separate timetable, which combines experience with time for reflection. **The number of places in the CLG is limited.**

Conference Staff

Participants will be working with a staff group that is invited by the Conference Director on behalf of the sponsoring organisations of the Conference.

The Conference Director, Associate Director and Director of Consultancy Learning Group, in addition to their consultancy roles, together with the Conference Administrators, constitute the **Conference Directorate**:

Director:

Jolita Buzaitytė-Kašalynienė, PhD, Associate professor of Sociology and Social Work Institute, Vilnius University. Co-founder and President, Lithuanian Group Relations Society. Associate of oezpa GmbH - Akademie & Consulting (Germany) and professional partner of Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. Member of Lithuanian Sociologists Society and Lithuanian Scouting Association. Representative, Vydūnas Youth Foundation (Chicago). Based in Lithuania.

Associate Director:

Martijn van der Spek, MA. General Social Sciences, BSc. Health Psychology; assistant professor, senior organisational consultant, program leader executive programmes Inside Dynamics in Organisations. Theory and Practice of Working with Hidden Processes in Organisations at Utrecht University School of Governance, Netherlands; international Group Relations practitioner; professional partnership with Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, UK; associate consultant Tavistock Consulting; UK; member International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations (ISPSO). Based in the Netherlands.

Director of Consultancy Learning Group:

Olya Khaleelee, M.A., Corporate Psychologist, Pintab Associates Ltd offering senior executive assessment and coaching; Professional Partner, The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations; Organisational Consultant; Chairwoman of OPUS: an Organisation for Promoting Understanding in Society. Has published extensively on group relations and societal dynamics. Has co-authored with Halina Brunning *Danse Macabre and Other stories* (2021), and *The Covid Trail* (2023). A third co-edited book, *Sitting on a Suitcase*, will be published later in 2024. Based in United Kingdom.

Administrator:

Agnė Mažvilaitė, MBA, Executive Master in Management, Vilnius University and ISM University of Management and Economics. Executive Management experience in the fields of Business, NGO and Public sectors. Organizational consultant in training, Vilnius university and Lithuanian Group Analytic Society. Member of Lithuanian Group Relations Society. Based in Lithuania.

Associate Administrator:

Ona Stravinskaitė, MA, Humanitarian studies (History) at Vilnius University. Extensive experience in the Public sector, Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Experienced in analytical work on implementing laws and decisions. Volunteering and working with non-governmental sector groups. Member of Lithuanian Group Relations Society. Based in Lithuania.

Consultant Staff will be drawn from the following:

- **Silke van Beekum**, MSc, Social Psychology at the University of Amsterdam (NL) / Australian National University (AUS). Trained in systemic and psychodynamic coaching and consulting at Utrecht University/Tavistock Institute, Dipl. Coaching, Counselling and Consulting; Senior Partner at Reflect Academy; An experienced trainer and consultant in higher education. Her expertise lies on the crossroad of education, professional development and leadership. In addition, Silke works as an independent psychodynamic-systemic coach. Based in the Netherlands.
- **Pauline Holland**, MPhil, MA in Advanced Organisation Consultancy. Founder of Limen Associates, a leadership and organisation development consultancy, helping leaders and their teams navigate the anxieties, stresses and joys of transitions and transformations. Pauline provides leadership coaching and executive team coaching, as well as reflective spaces for sensemaking with teams and groups in the midst of ongoing action and change. Based in United Kingdom.
- **Kasparas Laureckis**, MA, Social Work at Vilnius university. Social worker and Head of the programs at NGO Vilnius social club. Group psychotherapist in



training, Vilnius university and Lithuanian Group Analytic Society. Board Member of Lithuanian Group Relations Society. Based in Lithuania.

- **Laura Miķelsone**, MA Politics and International Relations; Pedagogy; Certified supervisor, Association of National Organisations for Supervision in Europe ANSE; Organisation development consultant and team coach. Lecturer on Organisation and Team supervision at Riga Stradins University; Member of A.K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems; Co-founder Group Relations International. Based in Latvia.

- **Francesco Noseda**, MA, Clinical Psychologist and Supervisor, Psychoanalyst, Group Analyst, Organizational Consultant. Member, International Federation of Psychoanalytic Societies (IFPS); Teaches group psychotherapy and psychoanalytic psychodrama in post graduated program. Has worked in different roles in Group Relations Conference in Italy and internationally. Member, OPUS (London). Member, Il Nodo Group, and SIPRe Italy. Based in Italy.

- **Mark Stein**, PhD is Professor Emeritus of Leadership and Management at the University of Leicester, an Executive Coach and Organisational Consultant, and a Career Consultant at Careers in Depth. He is also on the core faculty of the Tavistock Clinic/University of Essex Professional Doctorate and Certificate in Consultation and the Organisation, and has been an Adjunct Professor and Visiting Scholar at INSEAD, Fontainebleau. Based in United Kingdom.

- **Mike Teplitz**, PhD., Educational Psychologist and Supervisor; Staff Psychologist in Mazor Mental Health Centre; Lecturer on Bion in the Certificate Program for Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, Tel Hai College; Psychotherapy and Supervision in private practice; Past Director of Israeli Assn for Group Psychotherapy and of the Upper Gallilee Psychological Services; Member of OFEK. Based in Israel.

The Role of Staff

1

Staff have specific roles in the conference:
They **act collectively as management**. Collective management takes responsibility and authority to provide the boundary conditions – task, territory and time – in such a way that all participants in the Conference, members and staff, can engage with the primary task of the Conference.

2

They work in their consultancy roles to the various events, informed by their own experiences of the events and the primary task of the event and the Conference overall. The staff will **offer working hypotheses** based on their understanding of what is happening.

3

Staff members are not only observers of the process but are actively involved in it. It is important, therefore, for staff to be as **explicit as possible about their task and roles** throughout the Conference. The way they take up these roles is always open to examination.

Working Language:

The working language of the conference is **English**. However, where all members of a group are Lithuanian or of some other nationality, their native tongue may be the language of usage in that group.

When is the Conference? Where? How much?

Time:

The conference will begin at 09.00 on Friday, 23rd and end at 17.00 on Tuesday 27th August 2024.

Place:

The conference will be held at Vilnius University, Faculty of Philosophy, Universiteto str. 9/1, Vilnius.

Fees:

The conference fee is **850 EUR**. Additional fee for participation in the Consultancy Learning Group is **110 EUR**.

Discounts:

(i) There is a reduced fee of **610 EUR for public and NGO sector workers in Lithuania**.

(ii) In addition, there is an **early bird discount of 80 EUR** for all applications received before **15th June, 2024**.

(iii) A limited number of partial bursaries will be available. To apply for a bursary, please complete the Registration Form and send a request with a short description of the relevant background before **15th June, 2024**.

Early booking is advised as the number of places is limited and not guaranteed. **Closing Date for Applications:** 25th July 2024 or earlier if the Conference is full.

Payment can be made by bank transfer. Other administrative details will be given upon completion of the registration process.

Cancellation Policy:

Cancellation occurring on or before 25th July, 2024: 75 % of payment will be returned. Cancellation occurring after 25th July, 2024: 25 % of payment will be returned.

How do I apply and reserve my place?

To register for the conference, please follow this link and fill in the online form:

[REGISTRATION FORM](#)

We will get in contact with you.

Registration will take effect once payment has been made.

Participation in the Consultancy Learning Group will be confirmed by the CLG Director on the basis of the experience and motivation of the applicant.

For further details or if you have any questions, please contact the Conference Administrator, Agnė Mažvilaitė, by email grupiusantykiai@gmail.com

Other Administrative Details

Meals:

Coffee and snacks will be provided in the morning and afternoon. Meals will not be provided by the conference.

Attendance:

As the programme of the conference constitutes an integrated whole and its events are all inter-related, participation in all the sessions of the programme is highly recommended. If you know in advance that you will be unable to attend all the events in the conference, we suggest you defer your application to next year.

It is important to note that while experiential learning such as that available in this conference can be enriching, it can also be stressful at times. Therefore, individuals who are ill or experiencing a period of significant personal difficulty may wish to postpone attendance at this time.

The conference is not residential and participants from other cities or countries should reserve their accommodation at hotels in the vicinity.

Certificate:

Participants will be issued with a certificate of attendance of professional development by Vilnius University.

Sponsoring organisations

Lithuanian Group Relations Society

The **Lithuanian Group Relations Society**, established in 2017, is an association whose mission is to develop experiential learning in groups, organizations and communities. The Society works with a group relations "learning from experience" methodology and from a psychodynamic systemic perspective. The Society strives to encourage a culture of open and reflective dialogue and fruitful collaboration between representatives of private, public, and non-governmental sectors for the purpose of enhancing leadership and empowering meaningful action.

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

The **Tavistock Institute of Human Relations**, first registered as a charity in London in 1947, is a non-profit consultancy, research, and professional development organization dedicated to the application of social science to contemporary issues and problems. The Institute is engaged in evaluation and action research, organizational and change consultation, and executive coaching and professional development. All these activities are designed to support sustainable change and ongoing learning. The work of the Tavistock Institute, developed in many countries, is noted for its innovation and for working across boundaries in difficult situations. The Tavistock Institute combines research and analytical skills with practical help in devising solutions and following through to implementation. It is particularly known for its capacity to work with issues that are otherwise hidden, and sometimes unconscious. The Tavistock Institute

has been a sponsoring organization of Vilnius Group Relations Conferences and Lithuanian Group Relations Society since their inception. www.tavinstitute.org

Vilnius University, Department of Social Work and Social Welfare

Vilnius University houses one of the first schools of social work in Lithuania. The Department of Social Work began operating in 1992. It initiated the process of institutionalizing the profession of the social work which hadn't existed during the Soviet regime. In 2018 the Department of Social Work and Social Welfare was established to further define the mission and scope of the profession. The Department offers master and bachelor study programmes in social work and delivers in-service training.

Faculty take active roles in the discourse of social work as an academic discipline. These roles include researching the profession's field, practice, identity, and status. The Department organizes scientific events around social work leadership, social innovations, the ecology of social work, and other national and global issues. Faculty publish in the scientific journal STEPP. Faculty participate in the formation of social policies, consult as experts and evaluators of policy measures, and testify to the legal basis for social work. <https://www.fsf.vu.lt/sociologijos-ir-socialinio-darbo-institutas/struktura/socialinio-darbo-ir-socialines-geroves-katedra>