The 4th International Group Relations Conference in Lithuania with a *Progression Sub-conference*

21st – 25th AUGUST 2013

MOTIVATION, RESISTANCE & CHANGE IN ORGANIZATIONS & COMMUNITIES

A working conference based on Tavistock experiential learning methodology

Director's Report

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SUMMARY

The fourth 5-day non-residential experiential inductive learning group relations conference in Lithuania was jointly sponsored by the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Vilnius, Lithuania, and by the Group Relations Programme of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London. The conference, titled *Motivation, Resistance & Change in Organizations & Communities* was held between 21st – 25th August, 2013. The conference included a Progression Sub-conference. The Director and Associate Director of the conference were Mannie Sher and Jolita Buzaityte-Kasalyniene respectively. Additionally, the conference was staffed by an international team of 4 group relations consultants and two Lithuanian administrators. (See Appendix II). 27 people attended the conference including 7 people from abroad.

The experiential group work and application part of the conference involved the study of group behaviour and how individuals take up their roles in groups in different contexts and with different tasks. Historical, social and political dynamics pertaining to the Lithuanian context emerged in the conference events to reveal the unique challenges facing leadership in all types of organisations and communities in Lithuania today. These dynamics were shown to be influenced by the nation's demographics, the Holocaust, World War II, Soviet oppression in the decades following the War and Lithuania's recent struggle for independence and its integration into Western European commercial and market conditions. Individual and group assumptions were challenged leading to new insights into how people manage themselves in their leadership roles in their communities and in their organisations.

The benefit of the conference for participants lies in increasing their sense of emotional literacy, improving their capacities for managing themselves better in their multiple roles necessary for contemporary leadership, understanding and working with resistance to change in themselves and others in the conference and in their own organisations and networks.

The exposition of the group relations methodology is intended to legitimise this work in an academic culture of the university and to confirm Professor Jolita Buzaityte-Kasalyniene's leadership in this work.

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Background

1.   Over 5 years, between 2005 and 2010, The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations and Jolita Buzaityte-Kasalyniene, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Vilnius, worked together towards creating a Lithuanian group relations institution based at the University, utilising the well-known research and organisational and leadership development methods and approaches of the Tavistock Institute. Professor Buzaityte-Kasalyniene herself had attended several Tavistock-Leicester Group Relations conferences in the UK over that period and she believed that 'Tavistock approaches' could contribute to the general development of leaders in Lithuania. Continued support for the conference was obtained from Vilnius University. The Tavistock Institute appointed Mannie Sher, Director of the Group Relations Programme, to direct the fourth conference in August 2013, and the following is his report.

The Conference: *Motivation, Resistance & Change in Organizations & Communities*

2.   The group relations conference is a temporary learning organisation which develops its own dynamics and ways of working. The structure of the conference consisted of a number of events based on the experiential method of learning.

3.   The ethos of the conference can be summed up as:

- The process of learning in itself is an act of authority. Participants are invited into an experience of learning where letting oneself be in a position of a 'learner' is understood as the process of taking up a member role

- Learning is a social process where individuals and groups are inter-related and their development depends on their capacity to collaborate. Learning can be subverted both by structural and unconscious processes

- Participants worked in a range of groups with different learning tasks within the semi-permeable boundaries of the conference as a temporary organisation

- This conference was designed to enable participants to discover and use their understanding in exercising leadership within the conference itself, generating new ideas, testing them and then working at implementing them later in the organisations from which they come.

4.   Participants worked with a staff group that was invited by the Director of the conference on behalf of two sponsoring organisations of the conference – Vilnius University and the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. (See Appendix II)

5.   The conference drew participants from different countries, diverse work settings and roles: academics, students, managers, researchers, administrators, professional and technical specialists.

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6. **The conference was designed to be as flexible as possible to provide maximum opportunities to learn about:**

   - group, organisational and social dynamics

   - motivation and resistance and taking up authority for oneself and on behalf of others

   - the interplay between tradition, innovation and change

   - the place of feelings, impressions, expectations, thoughts, fears, likes and dislikes that reverberated in the conference and provided the raw material for understanding relationships and relatedness between individuals, groups, organisations and systems

   - taking up the challenge of learning about what is known and what is not known in organisations; where knowledge is based and how it is disseminated through the different systems

   - The relationship of organisations to their social, political and economic environments.

7. **The focus in the conference was on the relatedness of the individual to role, group, organisation and environment.**

8. **Participants developed their capacities to:**

   - manage themselves in the multiple roles necessary for contemporary leadership
   - use their emotional literacy to inform their actions
   - understand and manage resistance to change in themselves and others
   - Take up formal and informal leadership and followership roles.

9. **The aims, in this conference, therefore, were to:**
   - Bring together understanding of the conscious and hidden, sometimes unconscious, processes of work groups in human systems
   - Become more effective in working with the underlying dynamics within and between groups, organisations and communities and between these and the wider national and global society
   - Apply roles taken up within the conference to participants' own organisations and networks.

> With these aims in mind, THE PRIMARY TASK of the conference was to …
>
> … Study motivation and resistance to change in the exercise of authority in the taking up of roles through the inter-personal, inter-group and organisational relations that develop within the programme as an organization in its context.

Learning by Experience: the methodology of the conference

10. The conference was designed to provide opportunities for learning. By examining, interpreting, reflecting and making sense of experiences in this conference and its events, participants developed deeper understanding of motivation, resistance and change in their organisations and communities and their roles within them.

11. The conference allowed the participants to explore the changes and developments in organisational culture as a succession of beginnings and endings through a series of group work events in separate systems and then in the conference as a whole.

12. The conference was concerned with issues of structure and task and also with the need for individuals to use an understanding of themselves in relation to others. Such understanding involved disciplined attention to participants' own experience, openness to the experience of others, tolerance of uncertainty and the readiness to interpret what was happening.

13. Participants were invited to test their interpretations through communication and action. This included being alert to both conscious and unconscious aspects of behaviour and ways in which behaviour is shaped by the broader historical, social, cultural, political and economic contexts in which we work and live.

14. The method of learning was experiential – participants were invited to study their own and others behaviour as it happened in the different events. Consultancy by staff was available in each event. The focus was on learning, based on examining what was going on in the 'here and now' of group life. Participants were invited and challenged to take up their own authority to accept what proved useful learning and reject what was not. Through this process, participants were able to reconsider the way that motivation, resistance and change was achieved or failed, how power was gained or lost and how their authority was exercised or undermined in various systems in the conference.

Pre-conference Administration

15. Professor Jolita Buzaityte-Kasalyniene led the recruitment and administration team prior to the conference. Marketing resulted in conference membership of 27 (See table below).

Membership Statistics

16.   Age and Gender

Age	Male	Female	Total
20 - 30	0	8	8
31 - 40	1	4	5
41 - 50	3	5	8
> 51	4	1	5
Age not given	1	0	1
Total	9	18	27

17.   Professional profile

Academia	3
Management/Leadership	13
Student	1
Education	1
Counsellor/psychotherapist/psychologist	6
Researcher	1
Trainer	1
Medical	1
Total	27

EMERGING CONFERENCE THEMES

18.   **General:** Group Relations conferences occur in a context of changing social, cultural, economic and political circumstances. These formed the material for discussions and understanding of the unfolding group dynamics of the conference. In the Lithuanian context, the following background themes emerged and were related to in-conference experiences:

- The move from foreign domination to national independence.
- Consequences of Lithuanian geography of being located next to and often invaded by powerful neighbours – Poland, Russia and Germany.
- With independence, new people had to be mobilised for new leadership roles
- A tradition of concealing capabilities and waiting for others to call them forth
- Women traditionally deferring to men
- Low rates of population reproduction
- Young people emigrating leaving an ageing population and anxiety about their future care
- Loss of heavy industry and an emphasis on services that employ fewer people
- Turning to markets in Western Europe and competing in difficult economic times
- Parts of the population becoming poorer and socially excluded

19.   *The context of this group relations conference*

The historical context of this group relations conference remains one of continuing domination of the former Soviet occupation system that did not 'support' personal responsibility for one's own life. Most things were 'taken care of' - political views, job, social care, housing, etc. Much of contemporary Lithuanian society still hopes to be cared for by government or social care institutions, rather than taking initiative or developing long-perspective thinking for themselves. It was suggested that Lithuanians lack personal authority on how their lives should be developed when that aspect was neglected and diminished for so long. How can people learn to lead when personal survival depended upon an ability to adapt to the demands of the oppressive authority of the State over many years? The demand to be 'equal' as a norm of behavior forced people into trying to 'be the same' as everyone else. 'Difference' was siphoned out of the social system on a grand scale.

Lithuanians have mixed feelings towards those who have left the country and have managed to create new lives abroad. Emigrants are regarded with a mix of envy, rivalry, rejection and anger for being unpatriotic, and of anxiety over whether they could ever be tempted back to Lithuania.

The issue of 'shifting competence' in relation to the labour market dominates work relations. This is characterized by the phenomenon of 'structural unemployment', meaning that there are not fewer jobs; they now simply require new competences, skills, attitude shifts, and a willingness to adapt to the new conditions of the labour market – which many people do not have or are unwilling to acquire. The shift from construction, manufacture and agriculture to services was a significant change resulting from independence. Many factories closed or went bankrupt and that caused huge unemployment as smaller cities that were dependent on production and many people were employed there. "Collective farming" (the kolhoz) system

collapsed and many people working in agriculture could not find other work. "Structural unemployment" is the current economic context of Lithuanian society.

These dynamic processes and their influence on behaviour were evident in the conference. Staff consultants addressed the issues of authority between seniors and subordinates and male-female relationships, while being mindful about not imposing western liberal values where there was ambivalence about them.

20. This report also explores the way a group relations conference may itself be an intervention at a societal level, including recruiting participants from the Lithuanian diaspora, in the recovery of Lithuanian leadership after the trauma of its recent history. The sequence of conferences may be considered for their potential impact within the university and the social work department, and externally, in relation to what is emergent in Lithuanian society. The development of a group relations cadre in Lithuania may be seen in this context. This conference staff appreciated the opportunity to eat in different places in the city and enjoyed the experience of diversity – an informal café bar in the Jewish quarter, a Soviet style large restaurant on the main street… The diversity in the membership was also significant, with the opportunities to explore different kinds of relatedness to the conference - the Latvian member, the German married to a Lithuanian, the Americans with Lithuanian antecedents, the UK member who works with outsiders in society. There was a diversity wrapped up in what is called 'Tavistock' - the Jewish Director from London, whose family came from Lithuania, a Tavistock colleague from Eastern Europe, as well as staff members from Denmark and the UK. As a theme, the conference was about developing and maintaining an identity while being inclusive and making connections and this made it a powerful experience.

21. **Specific:** it was decided that the conference theme in 2013 would be 'motivation, resistance and change'. In staff discussions, a view emerged that both governmental departments and NGOs are, despite an urgency to adapt and innovate, are still suffering from historical Lithuanian lethargy and stultifying management practices of the Soviet era that play a part in pushing young ambitious people leave the country. The dynamics associated with this theme were evident in the conference itself in discussions about 'administration' and who should be doing what to ensure the conference ran efficiently. The conference institution is held within the university institution and this led to tensions between the two administrations – on the one hand, the conference institution is welcomed because it makes a contribution to the academic standing of the department in which it takes place; on the other, the university administrators find it difficult to adapt to the unique administrative needs of the conference and resist the calls made on them. For example, in the matter of fees, the administration was reluctant to approach participants who had not yet paid their fees, as if asking for money was shameful. "Selling" group relations raises awkward feelings in the administration because the nature of experiential learning feels unlike traditional academic learning and arouses strong negative feelings. The message seems to be: change is good, but for others, not for us. The current model of management remains centralized and change in the form of improved collaboration disturbs traditional forms of authority and accountability; interdependence as a concept is not understood and is often evaded. 'Monetary issues' highlighted a cultural norm of 'leaving things unspoken'. When an agreement is broken, not speaking about it is often the way people hope the situation will be resolved.

Obeying the rules is linked to survival in the job, which in turn creates a culture of suppressed individuality and risk-avoidance. Volunteering, so often applauded, when institutionalized, turns into controlling people through the excessive use of power. NGO institutions are needed to protect vulnerable social communities, yet they soon enough transform into disabling institutions for both the workers in them and the people they serve.

22. In the conference, the participants had first to wrestle with giving up a degree of their individuality in order to work on group tasks; in other words, they had to work on group motivation and learn about the complexities of collaboration. How group members collaborate and how groups collaborate with each other, and the extent of their resistance to that, was a prominent part of their learning.

23. The conference had a Progression Group which consisted of people who had attended group relations conferences before. The presence of the Progression Group raised questions about the role of the Progression Group – was it simply a club of more experienced people or did it have the responsibility of fulfilling a specific role in the conference? And if so, what would that role be and how would the Progression Group and other groups negotiate that role? It sometimes felt as though just being in the Progression Group was enough in supporting the special status of the people in it, something that appeared to parallel a national preoccupation with independence. Is it sufficient just to be independent or are there responsibilities that come with independence and what are they? These issues pointed to the tension between status and responsibility that the Progression Group had difficulty addressing. Status was enhanced by having had previous conference experience that became a target of feelings of envy and hostility by other groups – the relationships between more experienced and less experienced members could not easily be explored in relation to the overall learning task of the conference.

24. For **motivation to be developed and for resistance to be overcome in order for change to occur**, there had to be a 'working through' of feelings about the style of conducting the conference, e.g. the use of prompt time-keeping in the different group events, the mode of staff comments on emerging group dynamics, the presence of foreign staff that made Lithuanians have to speak English. These were examples of the national historical experience being mirrored in the conference – viz. a sense of being 'invaded' and feeling forced to re-distribute authority. This gave rise to powerful expressions of resistance and non-compliant behaviour.

25. These dynamics were reflected in the **participants' relationships with the Lithuanian members of the staff group,** who because of their relationships outside the conference, were experienced as a greater threat than relationships with the foreign staff, who did not need to be listened to and could be 'blocked' without running the risk of future consequences.

The Progression Group became established as holding the tension between depression and despair, on the one hand, and hope and happiness, on the other. The Progression Group was faced with generational issues, and feeling stuck with them and feeling that opportunities for change were limited. There were no Lithuanian men in the Progression Group, which meant that Lithuanian women were left to "work with the foreigners". The women said they had a "waiting to be called" feeling, as if women do not feel they can take the initiative. This has implications for the kind of leadership women created in the conference and by extension the kind of leadership they can create in their organisations.

The presence of foreigners was said to put a spotlight on Lithuanian 'failures', feeling 'naked' and constrained in front of 'successful' Britons, Germans, etc. Lithuanians said they felt a need to protect their self-image. We "must speak rationally, without emotions, pushing down anything connected with our intolerance. We must put aside our history; we are a new generation living in the global world."

26. **First time participants** in group relations conference work found the experience challenging, especially their experience of the roles of the consultants and their particular style of relating. They said that they feel that the consultants do not get involved, ignore individual group members and make comments about group behaviour that feel manipulative and instruction-giving that provokes a sense of 'doing it wrong'. Ambiguity and insecurity about the consultants' behaviour steered the groups towards finding alternative leaders, which in turn produced more challenging and noisy behaviour.

27. The fact of there having been three previous group relations conferences in Vilnius was influential and helpful; more people were more informed, having a greater sense of what they were doing, having more tolerant reactions to the experiences of fragmentation; they were less fazed by the difficulties of trying to get things right and more tolerant of creating their own peculiar world. By returning to the conference for second and third times, participants had the opportunity of building on previous experience, unlike for the first-timers, who struggled with dependency and counter-dependency fluctuations and the search for roles, who challenged the consultants blindly, free from the responsibility of finding and taking up roles, behaving more like children in a classroom wanting to be in a teaching-taught mode than having to think. The result of adopting this position is the creation of rigid structures in which one could hide and observe and avoid engagement, as someone put it: "we are a group of smart people doing nonsense" and "we are being experimented with, like rats in a box." Linking the experience of uncertainty and finding inspiration to motivate themselves and others was new for many people. For others, a more feminine approach, doing things for others, was a strong motivator. The combination of more experienced and less experienced participants helped to form the conference system that was experienced as both helpful and risky – "how do I/we work to make the world a better place, as opposed to just where I want to get to in the world." Discovering the roles required for this and experimenting with alternative ways of doing things, meant that people had to hold on to the idea that they are part of a system in which feelings about the other parts influence behaviour, for example, the Progression Group was profoundly envied because of its past.

28. By the third and fourth days of the conference, participants were more open with their **struggle to get in touch with feelings and imagery in contrast to talking about 'things'**. They described how they felt held back by images of 'school' and 'kindergarten' and the need to preserve the illusion that 'good behaviour' would lead to rewards by a benevolent authority. Participants were both challenging and empathizing and supporting others. Talking about feelings was experienced as taking a risk, but having taken a risk, people said that they had learned from it - that making a contribution to the group proved satisfying as they saw their ideas grow, move around the group and being built on by others.

29. Ideas about 'motivation, resistance and change' were linked to **group phenomena** like the ideas of sacrificing for the sake of the group ("the sacrificial lamb") , the formation of sub-groups that oppose the main group; and "refusing to trust your group." "Management wants to collect fees so that it can eat, while the participants starve". Ideas of starvation, of

staff withholding teaching, were accompanied by images of cannibalism – "we are like people on an island with nothing to eat"; "I would trust people to help me if I was lost." "Not if you are amongst cannibals", another participant retorted. Food imagery and sacrifice at one stage dominated – "eating is a worry that is dealt with through sustaining hope of eventually having plenty." "The fear is you might eat others or be eaten. Lithuanians are like that – they cannot be themselves in front of other Lithuanians because they know Lithuanians will judge them." "We are not authentic. I don't want my people to see me the way I am. Being nice to others is part of my projected image." "Preserving the position of elites against the peasants, tossing them a few morsels from the conspicuous consumption society, seems to be the way we Lithuanians are evolving."

30. A participant was absent because of stomach problems connected with food. The **meaning of absence** from the group was not talked about, as if the possibility of not being remembered by your group is unbearable. The effects of leaving, absence and loss are like losing parts of oneself. Fantasies develop, e.g. that the absent participant had been expelled, and raises fears of "will I be the next one to be expelled?" These thoughts about individual and group behaviour originate from anxieties about the perverseness of group life that are suffused with sexuality and violence as well as the search for happy endings which are commonly associated with getting promotion, as if one could be "promoted out" of the hatred, murder and anarchy of the common group; as if the underlying belief is that group life does not produce happy endings or achievable goals. These fears point to difficulties of group membership with its characteristic suppression of differences and failure to work across differences - all in the hope, felt unconsciously, of creating an undifferentiated sameness; differences in culture, religion and profession made it significantly difficult to work with foreigners in the conference events. The fantasy of 'being expelled from the group' highlighted the role of the individual – is group membership something one can actively strive for? Or, is all power of decision-making given to the group? In the latter, it seems the individual feels they can do nothing more than simply hold on to their fears about acceptance and/or rejection.

31. A member says she feels "wrapped up" and is prevented from speaking. She wonders whether she is wasting her time and she feels exploited by others, who she maintains use her for their own learning as if she and they are locked into a hierarchy, each searching for questions and answers. The question: can she be a leader in the conference? Can she be made into a leader for learning if she feels that others are ahead of her in the learning process? Others talk about their excitement at being more participative and lively and trying out different leadership roles and sometimes being happy to allow others to step ahead. An insight is acquired that one can gain through the contribution of others if one can overcome fears about being in the presence of one's seniors. But for some, the presence of seniors makes challenge difficult, especially if seniors take up a lot of space or are provocative. Provocative leadership puts some people in touch with Lithuanian history – "this is exactly how we were treated in Soviet times. I feel frightened". A senior members says she does not understand why her leadership is not accepted until it is pointed out that she is behaving like a Soviet official – dogmatically uni-dimensional. Equally, German dogmatism is projected into the German participant.

32. The issue of the **relationship between small nations and their neighbours** featured – how can independence be maintained and still engage with powerful countries? This was expressed often in the events by the self-centred domination by senior people who confidently spelled out the 'nature of reality' that they believed everyone else should

subscribe to, rudely rebutting other people's comments, and proceeding without concern for hurting other people's feelings. This type of "tyrannical absolute defining of other people's realities" was once checked with an account by a participant of how her father refused to allow his family to receive gifts from foreign relatives to avoid feeling humiliated. Two voices - the voice of reason and the voice of emotion – emerge vying for group leadership. The image of 'gifts from America' underlined the difficulties of taking the responsibility for oneself; being adult rather than child-like.

33. Later, a vivid atmosphere develops with people dressed colourfully, as if "showing their colours, their emotions, and even eroticism, like before a dance, with hopes and fears." But there is also an avoidance of affection and eroticism, participants looking, but not talking about it – representing a struggle between "rational" language and the "Russian" language that involves giving up individuality in order to keep jobs. Some people accept this; others are frustrated. "Can colourful affection be expressed in groups?"

34. This conference brought together individual, social, historical, cultural and political threads that made for a very rich learning experience around the fear of difference between peoples, even in those encounters between small nations, communities and organisations. To acknowledge difference raises powerful anxieties of annihilation and disintegration, leading to difference being repressed in order to preserve unity. If difference does not exist, or is not tolerated or acknowledged, fertility too becomes impossible, metaphorically or literally. For this reason, non-sexual reproduction sometimes emerged as a theme in the small study groups and the large study groups. The groups developed an almost a trans-like melancholy which was linked to the experience of togetherness and 'oneness' – the result of an inability to mourn the lost difference. In these situations, difference was denied or experienced as a threat.

35. Towards the end of the conference, it was easier to talk about **sadness and loss**. People were speaking to each other in the language of relationship and it was noted how some organisations do not allow their people to express their individuality in case that should produces strong feelings against the organisation. Teaching institutions were noted as doing this in order to support one learning model over another, e.g. the difference between experiential here-and-now learning and didactic learning by rules and structures. There was a struggle for dominance with university officials being in competition with the conference consultants who use experiential learning.

36. Supported by evidence of the imagery of cannibalism, the refusal of family gifts and rising family feuds, a participant telling a friend to shut up, the following **Working Hypothesis** was offered: THAT the "gifts" brought by the foreign "Tavistock" cannot be fully utilized in case it generates internal Lithuanian divisions and competition; THAT alliances and anti-alliances in the conference go underground for fear that the 'favourites' of the Tavistock will become the new elites who will rule over the rest, like in history, when Lithuania was invaded and forced to adopt monotheistic ideologies and communist ideologies, internal rifts appeared even to the extent of committing murder within families. The result was withdrawal of engagement with the world.

37. Some participants said they feel like adoptive adolescents who wonder if they can ever be loved by a stranger. At times there was hugging and intimate conversation in the groups contrasted with references to "Loreta" the girl killed by Soviets during the struggle for independence, raising issues around the tension between intimacy and sacrifice to become

liberated and having the freedom to engage in the Lithuanian way of doing things, implying a question of whether a Lithuanian can ever direct group relations conferences without the Tavistock Institute?

38. The focus on Lithuania – its leadership, taking up leadership roles, facing or not facing changes in the generations, the postponement of retirement in order to block the younger generation from progressing – all impacted on participants's perceptions of themselves, their age and their gender and the extent of authority they could muster within their professional hierarchies.

39. **Women appeared more willing to take risks** in expressing themselves. Older woman seemed less afraid of taking up leadership roles, and encouraged younger members to take more risks, to be more motivated and less resistant and more ready to face issues, suggesting there could be a shared leadership with them. A member of the Progression Group heard that she was expected to take more responsibility because she had had previous group relations conference experience. She said she did not want that, she just wants to be! She was angrily challenged to stop talking in 'maybes', 'shoulds' and 'ifs' and get on and do something, but she replied that she knows she will get attacked if she does something. This is followed by images of babies used as weapons in Northern Ireland among Protestants and Catholics competing to increase their own populations, and now the international news that the civil war in Syria is using chemical weapons on children; the conflict between the generations expressed as taking elderly parents to die in the forest, followed by a story of the grandson saying that one day he will be taking his father to the forest to die; the father is moved by his son's statement and changes his mind and brings the grandfather home. Hate towards babies and parents leads to a fantasy of creating a world with only one idle generation that will be free to do as it wants. This image is linked to the participants' hatred of the consultants because they prevent the group having its freedom to do as it wants. These ideas are linked to Lithuanian independence and the meaning of independence as being more than just doing what you want. Alternatively, the image is contrasted with the image of a mother who pushes her children prematurely towards independence and their relationship thereafter is permanently damaged. Fantasies of happy endings are an illusion at individual, institutional and national levels. The idea of I/we can do it all ourselves is illusory and is based on hatred of dependency and someone tells the story that heaven is heaven because of the long spoons - happy groups of people all feeding each other, and hell is hell because everyone is trying to feed themselves – a metaphor for Lithuanian cooperation!

40. As far as **the men** are concerned, it seemed a case of male competition with the male consultants. The male participants fade away as if a profound group-wide castration of the men had taken place. They absented themselves emotionally and the women had to look after the groups 'babies' (the learning) by themselves. Meanwhile, the women did not challenge the men to be men, to be mature and responsible.

Comments on Conference Design

The staff meeting immediately after the conference suggested the following changes in future conference design:

a. Plenaries: Plenaries are always difficult with the participants facing the rank of serious-faced staff. Criticism was made of the way the two directors read their script, the lack of structure, etc. This may not be suitable, but it was noted that organisations have not changed – they may appear friendlier, but dynamics and projections are still the same. People are tired of 'joyful' presentations.

Traditionally, information is given, sometimes accompanied by a short lecture, definitions are given, and the participants discuss their experiences of crossing the conference boundary. Is the plenary the right time to give information, given that so little is actually taken in? May it not be more beneficial to discuss anxiety; otherwise it feels similar to a Soviet type of leadership with an enormous flow of information from the management. Maybe staff could have more opportunities to speak. First impressions have a big impact. Finding out the names of the members is problematic. The Director should say he is interested in the participants' projects and articulate the participants' expectations, descriptions of their projects, why are you here? The opening plenary should be more of a welcome, rather than the formal stiffness of a lecture; it should be more active in listening to members, helping them to pull out their stories. Avoid the opening being like a performance. State that the conference has started now. It is good to hear the Director's voice. Make the opening shorter, perhaps 10-15 minutes, ask the consultants to give parts of the speech.

b. Another model would be to start the programme with a RAG (See Appendix V, Page 22, Item 5) and call it a Joining Group of about 45 minutes, and then have the Opening Plenary, so that all participants will know a few familiar faces. At the end of the day the RAGs will continue to meet. This is likely to be non-threatening.

c. Small Study Groups (Appendix V, Page 22, Item 2): Having two in a row on the first day is good to enable members to settle in, introduce themselves and start sharing. SSGs provide continuity. What people do not hear in the opening plenary is filled in the SSGs. Stating the task is recommended with the consultant marking the end too, perhaps by taking the last bit of sentence of a member and saying: "....on that note we have to end."

SSGs ending one day before the end is a good arrangement as it introduces the ending of the conference. It is part of our culture - endings, separations, not a life forever. Implying living forever with no ending is not a useful idea.

d. Organizational Event (Appendix V, Page 22, Item 4): was very short. Should have the OE II opening plenary on Thursday. There is one long day in the programmed. Perhaps there should be one additional session and have two long days in the programme. Having two OE events gives an introduction to forming groups; then the membership has another shot in forming groups. Gives a sense of hope if OEI doesn't go well. Perhaps name OEI and OEII differently to separate them.

e. Progression Group: A good idea to have one. It is a light touch, not a separate sub-conference. Past attendance gets recognised. The PG could have its own OEI? Look conceptually at what is their investment in Group Relations Conference work. Looking to take

part in future conferences could be addressed in a separate sub-conference. The mystery of 'progression' can be avoided by separating the function of the PG more. Otherwise, it leaves too many unanswered questions of how people progress. Building Group Relations in Lithuania is different from exploring the issues of progression in the conference. Coming as part of the group relations community would make a difference to their participation.

f.   As numbers of past attenders grows, there will be more opportunities to apply formally for a formal part of the conference. This should be part of the application form. Competition will never be avoided. Selection of PG members could be assisted by others and not be Jolita's responsibility alone. Milda could take leadership to encourage initiative from several people. Want to avoid dragging people in, but instead respond to a growing need. Other activities could evolve, e.g., creating a writing group, reading groups. If members' needs are not listened to, enthusiasm runs out.

g. Review and Application Groups: Mixed groups of experienced and not so experienced members is not always helpful. It can be intimidating. Lithuanians could be put together so that they can speak in Lithuanian. PG members could be co-consultants, if we think this is good idea. Membership of the PG should be formalized and members should apply for it. Drawing or speaking RAGs produced mixed reactions.

h.   Directors need time alone in Directorate meetings.

i. Staff liked having dinners in different restaurants, and having their evening meetings in the staff room, not at the restaurant.

APPENDIX I

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of organisations and individuals helped to make this conference a reality and to them I extend my grateful thanks:

1. The Council of Trustees and Dr Eliat Aram, CEO, the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, for their encouragement and support of this project in developing group relations work in Lithuania.

2. Professor Arunas Poviliunas Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Vilnius who provided the necessary authorisations for the conference to take place.

3. Associate Professor Jolita Buzaityte-Kasalyniene, Head of the Social Work Department, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University, without whose foresight, determination and leadership over many years, this conference would not have taken place.

4. Finally, to consultants, Milena Stateva, Tim Dartington, Bjorn Josefsson, Milda Autukaite and administrators, Urte Lina Orlova and Giedrius Mozeiko, for their dedicated application to a unique form of social science exploration and for their helpful contributions to the writing of this report.

APPENDIX II

CONFERENCE STAFF

Conference Director:
Mannie Sher, PhD, TQAP, FBAP, Director, Group Relations Programme, the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London. Fellow, British Association of Psychotherapists (BAP) and a practicing psychoanalytical psychotherapist. Member, International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations (ISPSO); Israel Association for the Study of Group and Organisational Processes (OFEK).

Conference Associate Director:
Jolita Buzaityte-Kasalyniene, **PhD**, Head, Social Work Department, Vilnius University Faculty of Philosophy. Advisor, Ministry of Education and Science and the Youth Department, Ministry of Social Security and Labour; Member, National Board of Social Work, Representative, Lithuanian Scouting Association, and Vydunas Youth Foundation.

Conference Administrators:

Urte Lina Orlova, PhD student, Department of Social Work, Vilnius University.

Giedrius Mozeiko, Graduate, Organizational Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University; Trainer, Soft Skills for Youth; Personal Growth Consultant; Trainer, European Federation of Psychology Students' Associations (EFPSA).

Consultant Staff:

Milda Autukaite, Masters, Organizational Psychology; Human Resource Management Consultant, HR Director, Svedbank, Lithuania.

Tim Dartington, PhD., writer, researcher and group and organisational consultant; past staff and now Associate of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations and visiting lecturer, Tavistock & Portman NHS Trust, London; Member, OPUS (Organisation for the Promotion of Understanding in Society) and ISPSO (International Society for Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations).

Björn Josefsson, MS., Chief Organisational Psychologist, NAV, Norway; Licensed Psychotherapist and Group Analyst, Private Consultation, Praksis; Teacher, IGA, Norway; Member, OPUS; Foundation Council Member, AGSLO, Sweden.

Milena Stateva, PhD., Senior Researcher & Consultant, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations; Academic Teacher, leading UK and Bulgarian universities; Member, British Psychological Society, British Sociological Association, MENON (European Innovation Network); British Association for the Study & Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect; European Network for Research in Conflict, Gender & Violence.

The Role of Staff

Staff had specific roles in the conference. The Conference Directorate, comprising the Conference Director and Associate Director, together with the consultant staff, acted collectively as management. Collective management took responsibility and authority to provide the boundary conditions – task, territory and time – in such a way that everyone in the conference, the staff themselves and the members, could engage with the primary task of the conference.

The conference staff, working in their consultancy roles in the various "here and now" events, informed by their own experiences of the events and working to the primary task of the event and the conference overall, at regular intervals, offered working hypotheses based on their understanding of what was happening.

Conference staff are not observers of the process, but are actively involved in it. It was important, therefore, to be as explicit as possible about their task and roles throughout the conference. The way staff took up their roles was always open to examination.

Working Language: The working language of the conference was English. However, where all the members of a group were Lithuanian, Lithuanian was the language of usage in that group.

APPENDIX III

SPONSORING ORGANISATIONS

1.   The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations is a not-for-profit organisational consultancy, research and professional development organisation which applies social science to contemporary issues and problems. The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was formally founded as a not-for-profit company and registered charity in September 1947 although its work had started a decade previously as part of the Tavistock Clinic. The Tavistock Institute and Clinic, which consisted of a multi-disciplinary group of psychiatrists and social scientists (social psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists) introduced and developed significant and innovative practices to deal with post-war problems including the setting up of transitional communities designed to help re-adaptation to civilian life and the invention of the therapeutic community for psychiatric patients in a military hospital.

Currently
The Institute's work today, under the direction of Dr Eliat Aram, is consistent with its original aims.   Action research is still a central approach and management of change a universal theme.   Its approach to organisational consultancy and development reflects its social science tradition. This takes the professional staff of the Institute into a wide range of issues and organisations, nationally and internationally, e.g. policy-related research for government departments and local authorities; development in industry of new forms of work organisation consistent with new technologies; re-alignment of strategy, structure and culture in institutions for higher education, health and social care services and voluntary bodies; support for partnerships; organisational start-ups; development evaluation of experimental programmes and many others.

The Institute's work with organisations feeds and is fed by the Institute's professional development programmes which taken together form integrated learning pathways for leaders, managers, social scientists and organisational consultants.

The Tavistock Institute and its Associates
The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations is one of a number of institutions which themselves run programmes based on the Tavistock 'Leicester' model. Others with which the Tavistock Institute's Group Relations Programme has collaborative links include:

- AGSLO (Sweden)
- A.K. Rice Institute (USA)
- Bion Institute (India)
- CESMA, Milan (Italy); IL NODO Group, Turin, (Italy)
- Grubb Institute (UK)
- GRA (Australia)
- Group Relations Nederland (The Netherlands)
- ISLA (South Africa)
- Metanoia (Finland)
- OFEK (Israel)

2. University of Vilnius, Department of Social Work

Vilnius University was the first institution in Lithuania (1992) to develop social work study programs. In 1996, the Department of Social Work was established in the Faculty of Philosophy, as this faculty already had related study programs in the social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, and education.

At present, VU Social Work Department offers four study programs: a bachelor programme of social work and social policy; Master's programmes of social work and social policy and 13 programs for continued professional development (CPD).

In 2006, the External Experts' Committee concluded that social work study programs of Vilnius University represent professional social work training at a good European level. The Department puts strong emphasis on the *scientific r*esearch knowledge and development of broad, transferable skills and it is oriented towards knowledge production. On the other hand, by placing a strong value on practice, the Department aims towards *practice research* by trying to improve the connection of knowledge in social work practice and the scientific 'tools' for innovative social research and developments.

The Department has intense and functional international relations with European universities in the form of international projects in the frame of Socrates Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci and other programmes. It has 15 bilateral agreements with institutions of higher education for exchange of students and teachers; it is a partner of two intensive programs, a partnership developing a European Social Work Masters Programme, and networks of research and doctoral studies. Recently, the Department started having exchanges with non-academic institutions in the frame of the ERASMUS programme. International cooperation creates and provides opportunities equally for teachers and students to broaden understandings, enrich learning experiences and develop personal and professional competencies.

APPENDIX IV

PROGRAMME
Motivation, Resistance and Change in Organisations & Communities
AUGUST 21st TO 25TH AUGUST 2013

	Wednesday 21st August	Thursday 22nd August	Friday 23th August	Saturday 24th August	Sunday 25th August
9.00 – 10.15	**Opening Plenary**	**Large Study Group**	**Large Study Group**	**Large Study Group**	**Large Study Group**
10.15 – 10.45	**Coffee**	**Coffee**	**Coffee**	**Coffee**	**Coffee**
10.45 – 12.00	**Small Study Groups**	**Small Study Groups**	**Small Study Groups**	**Small Study Groups**	**Application Groups**
12.00 – 1.30	**Lunch**	**Lunch**	**Lunch**	**Lunch**	**Lunch**
1.30 – 2.45	**Small Study Groups**	1.30-4.30 **Organisational Event 1 (Opens in Plenary)**	**Organisational Event 2 (opens in Plenary)**	**Organisational event 2**	**Closing Plenary**
2.45 – 3.00	**Short Break**		**Short Break**	**Short Break**	**Short Break**
3.00 – 4.15	**Large Study Group**		**Organisational Event 2**	**Organisational Event 2**	**Application Groups**
4.15 – 4.45	**Tea Break**	**4.30-4.45 Short break**	**Tea Break**	**Tea Break**	**4.15 – Buffet Social Event**
4.45 – 6.00	**Review Groups**	**Review groups**	**Organisational Event 2**	**Application Groups**	
6.00 – 6.15			**Short break**		
6.15 – 7.30			**Review Groups**		

APPENDIX V

Explanations of the Events

1.	Plenaries: **There will be several plenaries which will provide whole-system experiences for the membership. Plenaries at the beginning and end of the conference will provide the boundary functions for focusing on the experience of crossing a boundary into and out of an institution and of forming and ending relationships. Plenaries will also occur at the beginning of the Organisational Event.**
2.	Small Study Groups (SSG): **The SSGs will have up to a maximum of 10 people in each working with one consultant and they will meet for five sessions. SSGs provide opportunities for studying the dynamics of small groups in the here-and-now.**
3.	Large Study Group (LSG): **The Large Study Group comprises the entire conference membership, working with three consultants. The primary task in the LSG is to provide opportunities for studying the dynamics of large groups and the processes of cohesion and fragmentation, myth-making and reality-testing as they happen in the group.**
4.	The Organisational Event (OE): **The aim of this event is to shed light on some of the experiences of working in an organisation and exercising authority within it. The primary task is to study relationship and relatedness between groups as these develop within this temporary group relations organisation. This event has two parts:** **OE 1 focuses on relationships among member sub-groups. OE 1 provides opportunities to study relations between groups as these happen in particular the exercise of authority on behalf of others. Members have opportunities to form groups among themselves and consultants are available to groups formed and to any meetings between groups or representatives of groups that might occur. The OE 1 opens in plenary. Members of the progression sub-conference will have their own event during this time slot which will open in separate plenary.** **OE 2 involves all members and staff and concentrates on studying members/staff relationships and relatedness in the context of the conference institution as a whole. Staff members are present as management within this phase of the event and consultancy is available. The OE 2 opens in plenary.**
5.	Review and Application Groups (RAGs): **The RAGs are not a here-and-now event. Members will meet in small groups with one consultant for six sessions in total.** The review **sessions will provide opportunities for the members to review their experiences of the roles and risks they have taken as conference members.** The application **sessions will provide opportunities for the members to think about the application of their conference learning to their roles and responsibilities in the organisations from which they come.** **Where possible, the members of each RAG will be drawn from similar organisational, occupational or professional background.**