

UDC [316.644:159.923.2]:37.01
DOI: 10.61727/ssppj/1.2025.39

Development of existential subjectivity of youth: Testing of the logotherapeutic training “Ways to the Future”

Olena Ronzhes*

Postgraduate Student
V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University
61022, 4 Svobody Sq., Kharkiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3260-8996>

Nataliia Khmelyova

President
Ukrainian Association of Logotherapy and Existential Analysis
49051, 1 Zhurnalistiv Str., Dnipro, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3062-4806>

Abstract. The relevance of the research was determined by the necessity to develop in young people the ability to consciously and responsibly choose a life path based on personal values and meanings, maintain an active civic position, and remain internally oriented toward values, particularly under conditions of growing social polarisation, loss of meaning, and global challenges. The purpose of the study was to analyse the effectiveness of the programme “Ways to the Future: A Country for Happiness” as a tool for fostering personality development and civic maturity through engagement in meaningful reflection and purposeful action. To achieve this aim, an original youth training programme was implemented based on Viktor Frankl’s logotherapeutic approach. The methodology involved the application of group logotherapeutic methods, including self-transcendence exercises, value reflection, future visualisation, logodialogue, metaphorical projection, and the stimulation of personal responsibility. The effectiveness of the programme was evaluated using qualitative research methods, such as participant observation, content analysis of written reflections and creative outputs, and interpretation of the dynamics of changes in participants’ value and meaning orientations. The following results were established: the relevance of the logotherapeutic approach for use in educational and social interventions was substantiated; the effectiveness of logotherapeutic techniques as a means of fostering subjectivity, responsibility, and existential maturity was confirmed; key transformations in the participants’ worldview orientations were identified; and a practical model of educational and social training focused on meaning, values, and civic subjectivity was developed. This model integrated the logotherapeutic framework with elements of civic education. The practical value of the research lay in its applicability by professionals in the fields of education, youth development, and social work, who may employ the proposed model to strengthen civic engagement and existential resilience among young people

Keywords: meaning of life; self-transcendence; civic maturity; meaningful life education; happiness

INTRODUCTION

In the context of the crisis of meaning as a challenge for the younger generation, logotherapeutically oriented programmes are important for determining individual meanings and attitudes towards the present and future

Article’s History: Received: 20.02.2025 Revised: 11.05.2025 Accepted: 23.06.2025

Suggested Citation:

Ronzhes, O., & Khmelyova, N. (2025). Development of existential subjectivity of youth: Testing of the logotherapeutic training “Ways to the Future”. *Scientific Studios on Social and Political Psychology*, 31(1), 39-50. doi: 10.61727/ssppj/1.2025.39.



Copyright © The Author(s). This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

*Corresponding author

of citizens. They were found to contribute to the formation of subjectivity and responsibility, the understanding of happiness as an effect of meaning rather than an end in itself, provided prevention of psychological burnout and isolation, and supported integration into society through values. Such programmes were shown to help young people not merely adapt to a complex world, but also find their place in it, their meaning – and transform the world through themselves.

In the context of political polarisation, uncertainty, and military conflict, as well as the loss of trust in institutions and a crisis of meaning, approaches focused on the existential and value subjectivity of youth were considered of particular importance (Wong, 2020; Lahti & Seppälä, 2024). Modern youth lived under conditions of information overload, existential uncertainty, war, climate anxiety, and digital fragmentation (Karger *et al.*, 2025). This often led to a loss of internal orientation, increased anxiety, escapism, or apathy, which were recognised as signs of existential frustration or existential crisis (Gawda & Korniluk, 2024). According to O.A Slobodskyi & V.V. Balakhtar (2024), logotherapy provided an internal point of support through meaning – something that did not depend on external circumstances. The approaches and techniques of existential analysis, which focused on the superiority of spiritual dimensions over physical and emotional ones (Yalanska, 2023), were applied to educational programmes and trainings for young people. These aimed to spread a culture of conscious meanings, self-distancing, self-transcendence, and protection of values, the highest of which in the logotherapeutic dimension was unconditional love for oneself and the world around. Referring to J. Vos *et al.* (2022) the main components of logotherapy held significant importance in the context of modern society, crises, wars, and uncertainty, where existential challenges for the individual, especially adolescents and young people, had increased. The spread of existential vacuum was regarded as a consequence of social transformations, crises, and technological progress, which intensified the need for the search for meanings among young people (Sachko, 2022). The growing role of the will to meaning and the meaning of life, as well as human free will for an increasing number of individuals, were considered signs of the evolution of humanity (Faye, 2024; King & Hicks, 2021). Under modern conditions, the need was acknowledged to create societies based on principles close to logotherapeutic ones, in which a person would develop their uniqueness and will to meaning in harmonious interaction with others and with society (Lazer *et al.*, 2021). Thus, logotherapeutic principles acquired new significance not only as a tool for overcoming crisis and suffering but also as a paradigm that fostered a positive momentum of global purpose.

The novelty of the study was seen in the introduction of a logotherapeutic approach into a civic-oriented educational programme that regarded happiness not as

a goal, but as an effect of a meaningful life. The objectives of the study were: to conduct an analysis of significant youth programmes for the development of public and individual subjectivity; to describe the theoretical basis of the “Paths to the Future” programme from the perspective of logotherapy and the concept of eudemonic happiness; to present the methodological principles and structure of the programme; to conduct an empirical analysis of the case of the programme’s implementation in Germany; to determine the potential of the programme for further implementation in formal and non-formal education.

Unlike existing programmes that developed political or social activism, the “Paths to the Future” programme emphasised meaning as the basis of subjectivity, integrated logotherapy techniques into group training work, and offered a model for forming a “meaningful citizen” as a response to social crises. The study demonstrated the possibility of using logotherapy not only in individual psychological practice, but also in a socially oriented educational context. The purpose of the study was to analyse the description of the creation and testing of the author’s logotherapeutic educational programme for youth, “Paths to the Future”, aimed at the formation of a responsible, meaning-oriented personality capable of reflection, co-creation, and sustainable development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article discusses the “Ways to the Future” programme was implemented in Germany as a week-long training course during 2023-2024 ($n = 42$): ($n_1 = 14$, 20-24 years old, Cologne, October 2023; $n_2 = 10$, 14-19 years old, Cologne, May 2024; $n_3 = 9$, 14-19 years old, Düsseldorf, September 2024; $n_4 = 9$ 15-21 years old, Düsseldorf, October 2024). The participant groups varied in age, language proficiency, and socio-cultural background, allowing the programme to be tested in different contexts. The programme used methods of logotherapy, future planning, communication, and digital competence development. To assess the effect, the following were used: surveys, observations, thematic content analysis of the work, and interviews with participants. The analysis was conducted according to the following criteria: level of reflection of meanings, responsibility, sense of belonging to something greater, changes in attitude towards oneself and society.

The study employed a qualitative methodology to analyse the impact of the logotherapeutic educational programme “Ways to the Future: A Country for Happiness” on the existential subjectivity and civic maturity of young people. The methodological foundation was based on Viktor Frankl’s logotherapy and existential analysis, which focused on self-transcendence, the will to meaning, and value orientation. To develop the programme’s conceptual structure, a comparative analysis of seven youth initiatives in Ukraine and Europe was conducted. These included Ukraine national identity

through youth (n.d.) (UNITY), UActive (Spirit of America) (Empower Ukrainian..., n.d.), UPSHIFT (n.d.) (UNICEF), European youth parliament Ukraine (n.d.) (EYP Ukraine), Get Political (Get Political..., n.d.) ABCDemocracy (ABCDemocracy..., n.d.), and Shout Out UK (Countering disinformation..., n.d.). This programme was focused on youth, had a component of value development, and were recognised in the educational or public field (implemented by leading public organisations, international institutions or supported by the government, which ensured their relevance and influence). The selection criteria also included the focus on political literacy, development of subjectivity, value orientation, and civic engagement. The analysis revealed a gap in existing initiatives, namely, the lack of integration between civic education and value-based personal development through meaning-oriented practices.

On the basis of this analysis, the “Ways to the Future” programme was designed and implemented as a week-long training that combined educational, creative, and experiential methods. The programme incorporated logotherapeutic exercises (self-transcendence,

self-distancing, Socratic dialogue), tools for future design (mind maps, De Bono’s “Six Thinking Hats”, brainstorming), communication practices (nonviolent communication, metaphorical projection), and development of digital competencies. Participants engaged in role-play as “ministers” of a hypothetical country and took responsibility for creating and managing a society oriented towards happiness and meaning. Tasks included daily project work, reflective exercises, social simulations, value analysis, and the creation of a collective “Code of the Future”.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Programmes for the development of political literacy and subjectivity of youth

The selected programmes demonstrated various approaches to the development of political literacy and subjectivity, including educational courses, projects and participation in simulations of political processes. Table 1 provided a comparison of the features of the selected programmes, their emphases, including values and meanings.

Table 1. Comparison of youth programmes

Programme name	Country	Focus	Political literacy	Values and meanings
Unity (UNITY) / IREX	Ukraine	Civic skills, identity, community participation	✓	Ukrainian identity, cohesion, responsibility
UActive / Spirit of America	Ukraine	Leadership, communities, social initiatives	–	Activism, collaboration, self-realisation
UPSHIFT / UNICEF	Ukraine	Social innovation, entrepreneurship	–	Social responsibility, innovative thinking
EYP Ukraine	Ukraine	Debate, European Parliament, intercultural interaction	✓	Democracy, participation, European values
Get Political	EU	Political education, youth participation	✓	Active citizenship, democracy
ABCDemocracy / SALTO	EU	Interactive education about democracy	✓	Freedom, human rights, democracy
Shout Out UK	Great Britain	Political and media literacy	✓	Awareness, critical thinking, responsibility

Note: data provided is current as of June 2025

Source: compiled by the authors of this study

This approach provided an opportunity to analysed the correlation of programmes with a logotherapeutic approach to meaningful development. Programmes in Ukraine: IREX’s UNITY: A six-year programme that supports youth leadership, fosters Ukrainian identity, civic skills, and engages youth in community decision-making; Spirit of America’s UActive: A programme that develops leadership, entrepreneurial, and civic skills in high school students, especially in conflict-affected regions. Participants develop projects to improve their schools and communities. UNICEF’s UPSHIFT: A programme that supports adolescents and youth in developing social

innovation, entrepreneurship, and civic skills through workshops and mentoring.

European Youth Parliament – Ukraine (EYP Ukraine): the programme provides young people with a platform for debate, intercultural exchange and participation in simulations of the work of the European Parliament, contributing to the development of civic awareness. Programmes in Europe: “Get Political”: an international initiative aimed at increasing political literacy and active participation of young people in political processes through educational activities, trainings and interaction with political institutions; SALTO’s “ABCDemocracy” Toolkit: an educational resource that improves political

literacy of young people through interactive materials, including videos, podcasts and online games aimed at understanding democracy and active citizenship; “Shout Out UK”: a British social initiative that offers political and media literacy courses for young people, organises debates and campaigns to engage young people in the political process. Analysed of sources describing programmes showed that they develop activity, knowledge, skills, but do not work with the meaningful orientations of young people. Most programmes are focused either on personal development and the development of soft skills, or on civic activity, but do not combine these two dimensions systematically. These initiatives sometimes appeal to well-being or well-being, but superficially, teach “how to be active”, but do not answer the question “who am I, why, and where are my meanings?”, none of them addresses the phenomenon of happiness or psychological well-being and is not based on the logotherapeutic paradigm. Thus, the lack of a programme that would be a bridge between psychology, education and civic formation was revealed. The need to develop a youth training programme that puts the issue of meaning, value choice, inner freedom at the centre, helps young people find their meaning in society and realise their subjectivity not only as a voice in elections, but as a carrier of a unique contribution to the public good. Such a programme should be distinguished by its existential depth and focus on the meaning of life; combine civic and personal dimensions; rely on happiness as an indicator of meaning, not a goal; conceptually distinguish between hedonic happiness and eudemonistic happiness (as a side effect of a meaningful life), which corresponds to logotherapy; and consciously combine them not only at the level of lectures, but through experience, reflection, and exercises.

Training programme “Ways to the Future” for youth

According to the specified criteria, the programme “Ways to the Future: A Country for Happiness” was developed to form in young people the experience of building a society according to logotherapeutic principles (Ronzhes, 2025). “Ways to the Future” is an educational group project that aims to develop a culture of peace, critical thinking, and conscious, meaningful existence. It not only teaches professional skills and social realisation, but also forms ethical values and strategies for peaceful coexistence that can serve as a safeguard against the radicalisation of society and the growth of aggression and violence.

The basis is the development of self-awareness, the formation of life values and meaningful intentions, as well as social responsibility and empathy. The programme included the development of digital and AI competencies, namely, working with technology as a tool for self-realisation and creativity, which supports individual subjectivity and choice. Education and project activities with youth have a unique opportunity to

become a platform for the development of a culture of peace, critical thinking and meaningful existence. Programmes that teach not only professional skills, but also ethical principles, values and strategies for peaceful coexistence can serve as a safeguard against further radicalisation of society and the increase in aggression and violence. The “Ways to the Future” programme is an original educational group project, which uses a logotherapeutic approach to develop young people as active citizens capable of responsible and meaningful life in a society of change. It is aimed at supporting young people through the development of social awareness, critical thinking, understanding of personal values, professional opportunities and digital skills. The programme combined educational and entertainment elements (edutainment), which increases the involvement of participants, promotes empathy, trust and teamwork. The logotherapeutic functions of the programme consisted of identifying internal landmarks through the formation of one’s own vector; acts of kindness; expressing meaning in words and finding the connection between meaning and action; co-creating a valuable vision of the future. Discussion and reflection provided practice in self-distancing, forming a position and defending one’s choice.

The main goal of the programme is to visually and verbally form an image of the future according to the principles of a meaningful life, both individual and social. To achieve this goal, the project creates a safe environment where people realised their potential and build a prototype of a society based on dignity, responsibility and development. The task is to create a concept of a society where the happiness of its inhabitants is the main value. Special attention is paid to youth, since they are the basis of the future of society. Happiness plays an important role in this context. It does not have a single universal definition, and each person can interpret it differently. In the project, reliance was placed on the logotherapeutic understanding of happiness: it was not regarded as the ultimate goal or a self-sufficient value, but rather as a “by-product” of a meaningful life, unity with others, an understanding of one’s purpose, and the experience of self-realisation. Participants do not just gained knowledge, they learned to consciously shape their future, both personal and social. The programme combines modern educational methods, interactive activities and logotherapeutic approaches that help participants develop critical thinking, empathy and the ability to make thoughtful decisions even in difficult situations (Table 2). By integrating these principles and methods, the programme aimed to help young people overcome life’s challenges, encouraging them to find meaning in their experiences and thereby increasing their psychological resilience. The flexible structure of the programme allows it to adapt to different formats – from short seminars to long-term educational courses.

Table 2. Methods and techniques used in the “Ways to the Future” programme

Field	Methods and techniques used in the programme
Logotherapy	Self-transcendence (training days: 1, 2); Self-distancing (training days: 1, 2); Socratic dialogue (training days: 1); “Tree of values” (training days: 1); Author’s methodology “Choice” (training days: 1, 2); Reflection and dereflection (training days: 4, 6)
Designing the future	Mind maps (training days: 2, 4); Edward De Bono’s “Six Hats” (training days: 4); “Sets” – Venn diagrams (training days: 3); Brainstorming (training days: 3); “Codex” (training days: 5); Tips for monetising relevant skills (training days: 6)
Communication	Circle of acquaintances (training days: 1); “Nonviolent communication” by Marshal Rosenberg (training days: 1-6); Author’s method “Mailboxes” (training days: 1-6); Social adaptation through communication in society (training days: 1-6); Interaction in board games (training days: 1-6)
Digital competences	Application of digital methods to perform their tasks as ministers (voice recorder, photo and video shooting, video editor, music & video platforms, messengers, Canva, AI services etc.); Working with information (training days: 1-6); Communication (training days: 1-6); Content creation (training days: 1-6); Data security (training days: 1-6)

Note: a description of the methods and instructions were provided during the lectures, practical work was carried out by the participants independently after the lecture material, and the results were discussed on the same day

Source: compiled by the authors of this study

The programme involved a game simulation of creating a society as a self-organising system, which has certain elements and rules: “cabinet of ministers”; project leaders as representatives of hypothetical citizens of the country; installations for everyday life and communication; “postal station”. In “Cabinet of ministers” each participant was a minister in their field. Each participant took on the role of a minister, based on their strengths, skills or interests. For example: a child or young adult who is passionate about nature becomes the Minister of Ecology; a participant who loves art becomes the Minister of Culture and Arts; a participant passionate about technology becomes the Minister of Digital Development, etc. There can be from one to three ministers in one position, and one participant can hold from one to three positions. Ministers could invite other participants to perform certain tasks. Tasks and responsibilities on the project were distributed by the project leader between the ministers according to which “cabinet of ministers” has gathered for this particular project. Ministers was trusted by the group as individuals who can developed their sector and independently find solutions for the future of society. This helped participants strengthen their talents and abilities, and teaches them responsibility, service to others, and society that they can take on in real life. Such dereflection helped shift their focus from problems to external activities or interactions, which helps to achieve a healthy perspective and reduces worries that can increase anxiety or distress. By participating in these community-oriented

initiatives, people embodied the essence of logotherapy: they seek not what can give them life, but what they can give back to life. This self-transcendent approach is important for both personal fulfilment and increased community resilience, illustrating the profound impact of sensory-oriented interventions in today’s society.

The “facilitator (project leader)” acts not as a traditional teacher, but as a moderator and hypothetical representative of the citizens whose happiness in the logotherapeutic sense should be a priority for the leadership (i.e. the cabinet) of the hypothetical country of the project. This allows participants to practice decision-making and experience building a social structure. This format helps participants realise their value in social processes and learn to interact constructively with others.

In “everyday life and communication” participants independently organised their daily routine according to the schedule of each day: preparing breakfast and lunch (every day is different – serving in the studio; cooking in the studio; ordering delivery; visiting the institution; picnic), booking tickets, planning routes, organising leisure activities, managing the budget. This promotes independence, responsibility and adaptation to the real world. The first half of the day, educational and project-based, is conducted by a facilitator according to the topic of the day: lecture material, acquaintance and application of techniques, practical work; discussion.

“Postal station” is a special element of the programme is the “Secret Mail” system. A postal station (individual mailboxes) is opened throughout the day,

where participants leaved messages individually for everyone in the group every day. Thus, each person received several notes per day. The established rules for the mailbox are: write at least one individualised message to each participant; use complete sentences; be meaningful and respectful. Such mail was an alternative to digital communication, teaching participants to express their thoughts thoughtfully, deeply, personalised and without a digital footprint. At the end of the day, participants read their mail, which gave them a vision of themselves from others, which brought them closer to self-distancing.

The programme involved changing venues, which helps participants adapt to different environments. However, the daily schedule remained stable: the beginning of the day for educational and project activities took place in the project premises (e.g., a studio); lunch – according to the project plan; the end of the day for completing tasks and free communication or games – in other locations according to the plan (natural or cosy urban locations are recommended). This combination of a dynamic environment and a stable schedule helped participants develop adaptability, while maintaining a sense of security and organisation.

An important part of the programme was the development of digital skills and the use of modern technologies throughout the project. This formed an attitude towards technology as a convenient powerful tool or assistant for achieving one's own goals and self-realisation both in real and digital spaces. It contributed to the development of subjectivity and the realisation of one's own choice. Participants learned to structure their thoughts and ideas in digital format; create text and video reports; use artificial intelligence to correct grammar, translate text, create infographics, etc. All these actions were integrated into the workflow, improving creativity, data processing skills and adaptability to the digital world.

Structure of the “Ways to the Future” programme

The programme was implemented in the format of a weekly group project, which includes training and practical activities. Participants went through several stages of training and practice: lectures, interactive methods, games and projects. Logotherapeutic methods, future design methods and communication practices were used. Participants themselves organised their daily lives and interaction with society, which contributed to the development of subjectivity, responsibility and adaptation to real life. The first half of the day was devoted to educational classes led by a facilitator, where lecture material is worked out and methods are practiced. The metaphor of the “Cabinet of Ministers” of a hypothetical country of the future was introduced, where each participant is responsible for a certain vital area based on their talents and capabilities. This helped to realise their own influence and role in common life, forming an

existential sense of responsibility and self-transcendence. The final result of the group's work was the joint creation of a value vision of the future, expressed in the “Code of the Future”.

Day 1. The project was introduced with the theme of the day: “What is happiness?” and “How to choose your path?”. The lecture material addressed the idea that a choice was made at every moment. Life was imagined as a scheme in which the present – the here and now – served as the centre point, reached by each participant through a unique path. From this point, numerous future directions could be chosen or constructed, each leading to a different outcome. The choice of direction was guided by individual landmarks: values and meanings. Values functioned as a kind of neural map, determining the direction of movement from past to future. In the absence of clear values, goals lost their significance and development became disorganised. The realisation of personal identity and life path was considered more effective within a resonant space, so efforts were made to create a supportive environment and community. At the beginning of the project, the group was transformed into the Cabinet of Ministers of a hypothetical country of the future.

Tasks of the day (methods of the day are given in brackets): choose a name, image, introduce yourself (self-distancing, circle of acquaintances); determine how everyone understands happiness (Socratic dialogue); Individually determine your values (“Tree of Values”); understand your individual path (self-transcendence, schemes according to the author's “Choice” method); create a project playlist (three music tracks from each participant); form a cabinet of ministers and define tasks (conscious responsibility as a counterweight to freedom, discussion). Daily tasks for the cabinet of ministers: Ensuring compliance with the schedule, readiness of materials; ensuring well-being (including food and hygiene); visual recording of events (photos, videos); memorisation of experience (narrative recording of impressions); ensuring logistics; ensuring economic stability (budget); organising leisure (games, music, recreation); all other tasks additionally defined by a specific group.

Day 2. Social needs for creating conditions. Topic of the day: “How to create conditions in the country for the realisation of happiness and choice, individual and common?”. Topic of the lecture material: Happiness in the logotherapeutic sense is not an end in itself and not a complete synonym for well-being, but a feeling of meaningful fulfilment of one's life, consonance with one's values and meaningful interaction with others, for others and mutual assistance, the ability to receive and give. On each path there may be conditions that contribute to the effective achievement of goals, or hinder them. The determination of necessary, important, pleasant, or significant conditions, as well as the awareness of their features, was found to facilitate the creation or

search for the environment and surroundings that were being sought. It also facilitated understanding with others, the search for like-minded individuals, and the ability to consciously choose what corresponded to the chosen vector and specified conditions.

A mental “rising” above one’s own map of the path from the past to the future and full presence in the here and now led to an initial act of self-distancing. When rising above one’s path, like a bird or an aeroplane, it became possible to see one’s life task more clearly and to reduce emotional tension. In the case of awareness and acceptance of the perceived task, self-transcendence was achieved and the experience of one’s highest ideals was made possible. The tasks of the day focused on deepening the understanding of happiness in the context of logotherapy. Participants analysed their personal interpretations of happiness, formulated on the first day of training, and reflected on the alignment or divergence from the logotherapeutic perspective (Socratic dialogue). They examined their individual “Choice” method schemes for consistency with the logotherapeutic concept of happiness. Each participant developed a personal vision of the conditions that would promote happiness in the logotherapeutic sense for the country’s residents through self-realisation (mind map). The group also planned the next day’s cooking session in the studio, deciding what each person would prepare, composing a menu, and allocating the daily food budget among all participants (self-transcendence – think about others and the process). Additionally, two rounds of the “Life” game were played to encourage awareness and reflection on individual choices and their implications.

Day 3. Coincidences and discrepancies. Topic of the day: “How to determine priority metathemes in a community?”. Topic of the lecture material: Any society consists of individuals, each of whom has their own will to meaning, the meaning of life and freedom of will. In a community, they can differ significantly, so it is not always easy to create a generalised and acceptable concept for everyone. The combination of individual positions, as elements of a set, their (non)coincidence in content or the intersection of sets allows to structurally and consciously take into account all the topics raised and systematise them into a single concept.

The task of the day focused on collective analysis and synthesis of ideas related to the concept of a country for happiness. Participants wrote on sticky notes each of the important conditions identified in their individual maps from the previous day. New conditions were added if necessary. All notes were placed on the studio wall. The group then carefully analysed the collected notes and organised them into cloud sets based on similarity and proximity in content. Each cloud set was examined to determine the values it represented. Intersections, coincidences, and differences between the sets were outlined using chalk (analysis of the

brainstorming results according to Vance diagrams). Two rounds of the game “Life” were played to reflect on and better understand personal choices. Additionally, an establishment was selected for ordering food delivery for the following day. A list of orders was compiled for each participant, keeping the total budget in mind.

Day 4. Advantages and disadvantages, after the “equator” (middle of the training). Topic of the day: “Does what we have planned and the path we are currently taking correspond to the values and meanings that are important to us?”. Topic of the lecture material: during detailed operational planning and analysis (as working with sets of numerous conditions on the previous day), following a certain path, one’s strategic path according to one’s own meaning of life (see day one), or losing the preservation of one of the values may be lost. Developing the skill of self-distancing helps to see the strengths and weaknesses of a plan, phenomenon or idea, and make timely adjustments (if possible) or identify the necessary new knowledge, skills or other resources for optimisation.

Tasks of the day (the day’s methods are given in brackets): thoroughly analyse the value sets created on the previous day and create a common concept of the country for the happiness of its inhabitants (mind map), it is convenient to do this with chalk on the studio wall; critically analyse the created concept, distributing roles for different approaches to analysis (de Bono’s “Six Hats” methodology) (De Bono, 1985) if necessary, jointly make adjustments to the concept (discussion); report on the effectiveness of the fulfilment of the duties and tasks of the ministers, especially on the completeness of the archive of photos, videos and memories and impressions; the training was “equator”, that is, half the days-modules. Determine the compliance of the training course with your own expectations, note and discuss possible adjustments (discussion); determine which institution the group will go to for lunch tomorrow, calculate the order according to the budget for the day, find the best route and, if necessary, public transport.

Day 5. Code of the Future. Topic of the day: “How to formulate a certain common vision of the concept, conditions, values, meanings and aspirations in a single, understandable set of rules, regulations and explanations of the deep meanings of each of them?”. Topic of the lecture material: Each community is based on something common, recognised by all its participants. Such a code of honour, principles and values, which is relied on when creating new plans or setting their own goals. Special attention requires understanding how and in what cases important values will be protected. For countries, such a code is a constitution, for different communities it can be a charter, for an individual – their own internal spiritual and moral guidelines.

The task of the day involved several creative and reflective activities aimed at synthesising the experience gained during the project and preparing for its conclu-

sion. Participants were asked to create a “Code of the Future” or a “Country Code for Happiness” in accordance with the common concept and intelligence map agreed upon the previous day. This task required outlining the key principles of a desirable society, focusing on strategies for ensuring self-realisation, shared values and meanings that shape the purpose of such a society, civil rights and responsibilities, principles of social interaction, approaches to governance, and conflict resolution strategies. Participants were encouraged to make an audio recording using a dictaphone, transcribe it into text, and then edit and refine the content into a final document. An archive of photos, videos, memories, and impressions was to be created. Participants were expected to document their experiences by making notes about the day and conducting video or audio interviews with each participant to capture personal reflections and highlights. The task involved preparing a final video about the project, to be presented the following day. This video aimed to serve as a way of memorising and preserving the experience. It included audio recordings of each group’s “Code of Happiness” being read aloud. Finally, participants were asked to discuss and decide who would bring what to the picnic planned for the next day. The goal was to contribute items that would bring joy and comfort to others, fostering a spirit of generosity and care within the group.

Day 6. Self-realisation here and now. Topic of the day: “How to socialise what I know how to do, and the finale of the project”. Topic of the lecture material: a short final speech about the unique features of this particular group; analysis of the code; viewing the final video. Reminder of the main logotherapeutic principles: freedom of will, will to meaning, meaning of life. Transition from the social to the personal through the theme of synergy and the importance of balance between the external and internal, private and public, etc. A strong, good, wise society was understood to consist of strong, good, wise individuals, so the process began with the self. It was considered desirable to understand one’s own skills and to find ways to apply them immediately within society in order to achieve both self-realisation and the application of one’s talents and abilities, as well as gratitude for them from society. This contributed to a sense of one’s own unique value and the unique value of others.

The task of the day aimed to encourage reflection on personal strengths and their potential contribution to society. Participants identified at least three of their current skills or abilities by answering the questions “What am I good at?” or “What can I do for others?”. Each skill was written in the centre of a separate A4 sheet within a circle (reflection). These sheets were then circulated around the group, and each participant added at least one idea branching from the circle. The ideas focused on how the listed skills could be applied in a useful way, how they might be implemented in society

at present, and for what contributions people would be willing to express gratitude, including financially. This activity supported the emergence of hyper intention – an increased desire to do something useful to receive rewards – and dereflection – a reduction of excessive attention to personal struggles by focusing on positive aspects of life. As a result, each participant received a set of feedback ideas from others, helping them to understand how they might begin earning resources immediately by engaging in meaningful work that also benefits others (self-transcendence) (mind map). The day concluded with the finalisation of the project. Participants reviewed the digital products created during the course of the project, took part in a discussion circle to exchange conclusions and impressions, and provided feedback to the project organisers.

Testing of the “Ways to the Future” programme

The results showed that different groups created different concepts of the future that reflected the unique needs of the participants. However, all groups shared a common goal: to build a humane, strong, and compassionate society. It was determined that each group demonstrated a need for a society similar to a “healthy family” – a place with support for a unique personality and self-realisation (as in logotherapy is not a key task, just like happiness, but comes by itself if a person follows the meaning and does something out of self-transcendence), responsibility for personal actions and protection of basic rights. Each group also developed its own “Code of the Future Society”. Comparing these codes was particularly insightful, as they revealed both differences and universal values in all groups. It was interesting to compare them, because, despite the differences, they all had common principles: respect for human rights, responsibility for one’s actions, peaceful conflict resolution, opportunities for realising one’s uniqueness. In the future, these codes can be explored as qualitative data for understanding the vision of the future of modern adolescents and youth.

One of the most illustrative cases of the programme’s implementation was the project in Cologne, 28.05.-02.06.2024, carried out with the financial support of the NGO LIFE Cologne e.V. The group consisted of 10 participants aged 14-19, of whom 6 are in Germany in evacuation due to the war in Ukraine (from the western regions), but there were also participants born in Cologne in families of Ukrainian (1 participant), mixed Ukrainian-African (1 participant) and mixed Ukrainian-Russian origin (2 participants). This created some initial tension, as the context of the war was deeply felt. In total, the participants spoke nine different languages (native and learned). This initially complicated communication, but also contributed to the development of unique mechanisms of mutual understanding and support, the development of such spiritual abilities as self-distancing and self-transcendence. Cul-

tural differences initially created certain barriers, but thanks to nonviolent communication methods and joint work on the project, a trusting and pleasant atmosphere was successfully established.

During the programme, participants developed mental maps in which they outlined what they considered important for the future of society. This collective reflection allowed the group to identify a set of core values that, in their view, should underpin a desirable and sustainable social order. The key values highlighted included freedom of will, the ability to make independent and conscious choices and a meaningful life, characterised by diversity, richness, and alignment with personal interests. Love was understood as a vital emotional force experienced through relationships with loved ones, family, friends, and colleagues. Nature was recognised as a priority, with emphasis on ecological awareness and planetary protection. Freedom, both personal and political, was regarded as fundamental. Strength was valued not as a tool for aggression, but as a means of ensuring protection and stability. The group emphasised creativity as a condition for self-expression and highlighted sport as part of a healthy lifestyle. Animals were included as a focus of responsibility and care, reflecting a broader ethical stance. Kindness was named as a guiding principle in human interaction, based on ethics and mutual support. The participants also stressed the importance of free access to education and healthcare for all, as well as meaningful interaction for adults and the elderly, to ensure the social integration of all age groups. Finally, they underlined the importance of technological development, provided it served the well-being of society and individuals and adhered to a clear code of ethics, and safety in all dimensions physical, mental, and psychological as a condition for a stable and supportive environment. Discussions helped to develop empathy, self-awareness, social responsibility, altruism and directions for individual growth of participants.

Special attention was paid to discussing the need to be able to protect values from external or internal aggression and threats (against the traumatic experience of the horrors of war). It was established that one must constantly have and develop strength and the ability to be self-sufficient in order to minimise or stop the aspirations of those who intend to harm or destroy the country of happiness. One particularly important aspect is the role of strength. The war in Ukraine has demonstrated that peace and security are impossible without the ability to protect them. Strength is not the opposite of good – it is its guarantee of safety and protection. The participants emphasised in their reflections: love and kindness are important, but they must be supported by both internal and external stability and power. Some feedback from participants: “This is the first time I have openly talked about my values. I never thought about how important they are”; “I really liked the part

about showing uniqueness. I found that my skills can be useful right now”; “I was afraid that it would be difficult to communicate due to cultural differences. But this project helped me see that we are similar in what is really important”; “I liked that I was able to speak without fear and that everyone had the opportunity to be heard”. They noted that there is a risk of militarisation of the country in the event of too strict control of the inhabitants. They mentioned the example of the principle of multi-stage complex choice of leadership of the Venetian Republic, noted its success, but not full relevance to modern conditions. They emphasised that it is extremely necessary for the country’s leadership to be at a high existential level of consciousness, love in the logotherapeutic sense and good strength. They also noted the need to regularly analyse the compliance of the current state with a common code, which takes into account both individual and social values and meanings, for example, as was done during the training using the “Six Hats” methodology.

V. Frankl (1969) identified three main components at the heart of philosophy: the belief that every person has a healthy core, the importance of finding meaning even in suffering, and the idea that people can choose their attitude in any circumstance. Author articulates the basic tenets of logotherapy: free will (people have the ability to choose their responses to life’s challenges), the will to meaning (the driving force behind human action and the primary motivation in life), and the meaning of life (the unique responsibility of each person to their own life and to the world, which is realised through creative activity, love, relationships, and a dignified attitude toward suffering and crises) (Frankl, 2006). The concept of happiness in logotherapy is understood differently than in general perception: not as hedonistic pleasure and an end in itself, but in a eudaemonistic sense (Olianytska, 2017; Karhina, 2019) through the prism of perceived meaning and self-realisation (Costello, 2015). For effective work with broad groups of people, the assimilation of abstract logotherapeutic concepts should begin with an individual understanding of the feeling of happiness, as more familiar to different audiences despite the lack of a single accepted definition of the concept of happiness in society (Bentsak, 2023). According to T.T.W. Wan (2023) in some countries, the concept of happiness, or well-being in a synonymous sense, is used at the constitutional level (20 countries – “happiness”, 110 countries – “well-being”), mostly in the formulation of “the pursuit of happiness”.

In the vast majority of such examples, the concept of happiness is understood in a hedonistic approach, which distinguishes the current implementation of happiness in state policy from the meaningful and eudemonistic. Self-transcendence and self-distancing lead to finding one’s own, high and deep, meaning of life. As well as to the voluntary choice of serving others.

logotherapeutic approach, but the idea of using happiness as a key orientation of the country is not new. In the context of existential analysis, self-transcendence is understood as a person's ability to go beyond themselves, their interests, emotions, and pain, and to direct themselves towards something greater: towards meaning, values, another person, a cause, or God. This is a fundamental principle of logotherapy, which emphasises that a person is most authentic when they surrender to something outside themselves (Batthyány, 2016). Self-distancing is understood as a person's ability to look at themselves from a distance and not identify completely with their emotions, fears, body, or suffering, which allows a person to maintain inner freedom even in the most difficult circumstances.

CONCLUSIONS

The feasibility of integrating logotherapeutic principles into youth educational projects to strengthen existential subjectivity and social integration has been revealed. Programme "Ways to the Future" for the existential development of youth according to the principles of logotherapy and implemented in Germany has demonstrated effectiveness in forming a sensory-oriented way of thinking and a responsible attitude to the lives of participants. Happiness, as a side effect of meaningful implementation, can be considered as an indicator of the success of such programmes.

The results of the testing of the programme "Ways to the Future" indicate qualitative changes in the semantic representations of the participants. An increase in the frequency of use of the concepts "meaning", "responsibility", "value", "choice" in daily discussions and surveys was recorded. Participants noted the emergence of "inner support" and "awareness of why I live", as well as increased empathy for others. According to self-assessment, the feeling of satisfaction with life increased as a result of participation in the programme. This is in line with the logotherapeutic principle: happiness

does not arise as a goal, but as an effect of meaningful activity. Exercises related to self-transcendence were particularly effective: most participants recalled a new experience of seeing themselves as part of a broader context and noted the appropriateness of subjectivity for a meaningful life and achieving happiness. Participation in the programme also influenced attitudes towards social problems: the willingness to participate in volunteering and projects increased. Thus, the logotherapeutic approach proved effective both in developing personal reflection and in shaping civic maturity.

Person is not only an object of external influences, but a subject capable of consciously responding to challenges. A programme based on logotherapy helps young people feel like creators of their own lives, not victims of circumstances. This approach fosters inner responsibility, resilience, and the ability to make meaningful choices. The programme helps to find one's own values, to establish a connection with others through authentic communication and empathy. This is important in conditions of increased social anxiety, depression, as well as a decrease in "live" social contacts among young people. Prospects for further research include scaling up the programme, analysing its long-term effect, and developing visual and digital logotherapeutic tools for young people. A need was identified for developing a diagnostic method for a meaningful life in relation to self-esteem of happiness, which is also recommended for further research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

None.

FUNDING

The programme was tested with the financial support of the non-governmental organisations Kreativ Studio Köln, Woman in Europe e.V. and LIFE Cologne e.V.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

REFERENCES

- [1] ABCDemocracy toolkit – political literacy for vulnerable youth. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/tool/abcdemocracy-toolkit-political-literacy-for-vulnerable-youth.4344>.
- [2] Batthyány, A. (Ed.). (2016). *Logotherapy and existential analysis*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-29424-7.
- [3] Bentsak, H.I. (2023). *Self-assessment of happiness and its main components in the understanding of modern youth in Ukraine*. (Banchelor's thesis, Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv, Ukraine).
- [4] Costello, S. (2015). The spirit of logotherapy. *Religions*, 7(1), article number 3. doi: 10.3390/rel7010003.
- [5] Countering disinformation through political and media literacy. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.shoutoutuk.org>.
- [6] De Bono, E. (1985). *Six thinking hats*. New York: International Center for Creative Thinking.
- [7] Empower Ukrainian students to turn loss into leadership. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://spiritofamerica.org/project/uactive>.
- [8] European youth parliament Ukraine. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.eyp.org.ua>.
- [9] Faye, J. (2024). Understanding meaning through human evolution. *Danish Yearbook of Philosophy*, 57(1), 50-69. doi: 10.1163/24689300-bja10048.
- [10] Frankl, V.E. (1969). *The will to meaning: Foundations and applications of logotherapy*. Tulsa: World Pub. Co.
- [11] Frankl, V.E. (2006). *Man's search for meaning*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- [12] Gawda, B., & Korniluk, A. (2024). The protective role of curiosity behaviors in coping with existential vacuum. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(5), article number 391. doi: [10.3390/bs14050391](https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14050391).
- [13] Get political – igniting youth active participation in political and electoral processes through political literacy and knowledge. (2024). Retrieved from <https://cesie.org/en/project/get-political/>.
- [14] Karger, E., Rosenberg, J., Jacobs, Z., Hickman, M., & Tetlock, P.E. (2025). Subjective-probability forecasts of existential risk: Initial results from a hybrid persuasion-forecasting tournament. *International Journal of Forecasting*, 41(2), 499-516. doi: [10.1016/j.ijforecast.2024.11.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijforecast.2024.11.008).
- [15] Karhina, N.V. (2019). Hedonistic and eudemonistic understanding of psychological well-being: Benefits and weaknesses. *Theory and Practice of Modern Psychology*, 4(1), 27-31. doi: [10.32840/2663-6026.2019.4-1.5](https://doi.org/10.32840/2663-6026.2019.4-1.5).
- [16] King, L.A., & Hicks, J.A. (2021). The science of meaning in life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 72(1), 561-584. doi: [10.1146/annurev-psych-072420-122921](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-072420-122921).
- [17] Lahti, E.E., & Seppälä, E. (2024). *Why is Finland the happiest country in the world for the 7th time? Finland's secret is a low-stress, high trust, high innovation lifestyle*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessfinland.com/press-release/2024/why-is-finland-the-happiest-country-in-the-world-for-the-7th-time>.
- [18] Lazer, D., Hargittai, E., Freelon, D., Gonzalez-Bailon, S., Munger, K., Ognyanova, K., & Radford, J. (2021). Meaningful measures of human society in the twenty-first century. *Nature*, 595, 189-196. doi: [10.1038/s41586-021-03660-7](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03660-7).
- [19] Olianytska, Y. (2017). *Models of psychological well-being of the elderly*. *Bulletin of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Social Work*, 2(2), 13-16.
- [20] Ronzhes, O. (2025). Experience in projects for the programme “Ways to the Future”: The role of higher education in peacebuilding. A logotherapeutic approach to youth development. In *Aurora international peace conference: The role of higher education in peacebuilding*. Innsbruck: Austria. doi: [10.13140/RG.2.2.10623.73121](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.10623.73121).
- [21] Sachko, K. (2022). Present war in Ukraine existential crisis of youth. *Psychosomatic Medicine and General Practice*, 7(2). doi: [10.26766/pmgp.v7i2.393](https://doi.org/10.26766/pmgp.v7i2.393).
- [22] Slobodskyi, O.A., & Balakhtar, V.V. (2024). *Psychological adaptation to crisis conditions through formation of new meaningful life orientations in internally displaced persons during the war*. In *Psychological-pedagogical support of professional training and advanced training of specialists under martial law: Materials of the XIII international scientific and practical conference* (pp. 86-90). Kyiv: State Institution of Higher Education University of Educational Management.
- [23] Ukraine national identity through youth. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.irex.org/project/ukraine-national-identity-through-youth-unity>.
- [24] UPSHIFT. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/upshift-ukraine>.
- [25] Vos, J., Russo-Netzer, P., & Schulenberg, S.E. (2022). Meaning in a world in crisis: Perspectives of societal resilience and growth. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 36(2), 129-137. doi: [10.1080/10720537.2022.2068710](https://doi.org/10.1080/10720537.2022.2068710).
- [26] Wan, T.T.W. (2023). Constitutionalization of happiness: A global and comparative inquiry. *German Law Journal*, 24(7), 1209-1236. doi: [10.1017/glj.2023.84](https://doi.org/10.1017/glj.2023.84).
- [27] Wong, P.T.P. (2020). Existential positive psychology and integrative meaning therapy. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 32(7-8), 565-578. doi: [10.1080/09540261.2020.1814703](https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2020.1814703).
- [28] Yalanska, S. (2023). Ignificance of the meaning of personal life in crisis conditions: Possibilities of logotherapy. *European Science*, 2, 42-50. doi: [10.30890/2709-2313.2023-21-02-028](https://doi.org/10.30890/2709-2313.2023-21-02-028).

Розвиток екзистенційної суб'єктивності молоді: апробація логотерапевтичного тренінгу «Шляхи в майбутнє»

Олена Ронжес

Аспірант
Харківський національний університет імені В.Н. Каразіна
61022, пл. Свободи, 4, м. Харків, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3260-8996>

Наталія Хмельова

Президент
Українська асоціація логотерапії та екзистенційного аналізу
49051, вул. Журналістів, 1, м. Дніпро, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3062-4806>

Анотація. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена необхідністю розвитку у молоді здатності свідомо та відповідально обирати життєвий шлях на основі особистих цінностей і смислів, зберігати активну громадянську позицію, внутрішньо орієнтуватися на цінності, особливо в умовах зростаючої соціальної поляризації, втрати сенсу життя та глобальних викликів. Метою дослідження було проаналізувати ефективність програми «Шляхи в майбутнє: Країна щастя» як інструменту сприяння розвитку особистості та громадянської зрілості через залучення до осмисленої рефлексії та цілеспрямованої дії. Для досягнення цієї мети було реалізовано оригінальну програму молодіжного тренінгу, засновану на логотерапевтичному підході Віктора Франкла. Методологія передбачала застосування групових логотерапевтичних методів, зокрема вправ на самотрансценденцію, ціннісну рефлексію, візуалізацію майбутнього, логодіалог, метафоричну проекцію та стимулювання особистої відповідальності. Ефективність програми оцінювалася за допомогою якісних методів дослідження, таких як спостереження за учасниками, контент-аналіз письмових рефлексій і творчих робіт, а також інтерпретація динаміки змін у ціннісно-сміслових орієнтаціях учасників. За результатами дослідження обґрунтовано актуальність застосування логотерапевтичного підходу в освітніх та соціальних інтервенціях; підтверджено ефективність логотерапевтичних технік як засобу розвитку суб'єктності, відповідальності та екзистенційної зрілості; визначено ключові трансформації світоглядних орієнтацій учасників; розроблено практичну модель освітньо-соціального тренінгу, орієнтованого на смисложиттєві орієнтири, цінності та громадянську суб'єктність. Ця модель інтегрувала логотерапевтичні засади з елементами громадянської освіти. Практична цінність дослідження полягає в тому, що його результати можуть бути використані фахівцями у сфері освіти, молодіжного розвитку та соціальної роботи, які можуть застосовувати запропоновану модель для посилення громадянської активності та екзистенційної стійкості молодих людей

Ключові слова: сенс життя; самотрансценденція; громадянська зрілість; смисложиттєва освіта; щастя