

2015 SUMMER-SCHOOL



THE FREEDOM WRITERS' WAY

**A practical way to deal with
at-risk children and young people**

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SYDDANMARK
HØJSKOLEN ØSTERSØEN

The Freedom Writers's way – a practical motivation for learning

In the mid-1990s the American teacher Erin Gruwell showed by example that we can manage to unite split class-rooms (split due to skin color and gang affiliations) and make high school students so interested in the school's educational programs, all her 150 students graduated – against the expected 20%! The story is portrayed in the book *The Freedom Writers Diary* and in the movie *Freedom Writers* (with double Oscar Award-winner Hilary Swank starring as Erin).

The practice Erin uses goes through three steps and a fundamental principle:

Engage: Engage students by meeting them where they are and show them that the school's curriculum also includes options for them, regardless of their current situation.

Enlight: Provide information and help students learning by engaged in the life and learning of each of them, and by using educational

tools, that engage and develops each students' knowledge and social skills.

Empower: Creating projects with students, showing them the usefulness and usability of the knowledge and skills they have acquired individually and as a group.

'Everyone has a story' is the principle that drives the method forward. Students are engaged in writing their own stories, and while they acquire general skills they also redeem their own feelings and are released as persons – they become Freedom Writers!

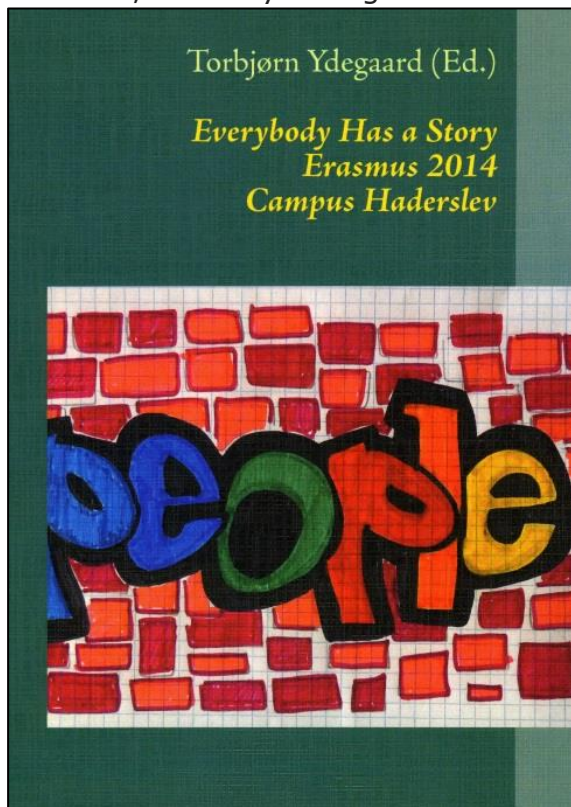
At the same time it is also an educational philosophy based on some very American values. Individuals are ultimately responsible for their own lives and decide for themselves the pursuit of happiness that for all men is an unalienable right. But at the same time the American mindset is always also altruistic: there is a moral responsibility on the individual to help others to achieve independence and authority in their own lives.

Also in Europe there is a need to develop methods that can help young people themselves to break the cycle of social disadvantage. We know from studies that factors such as being a young mother, having had trouble with the law, to have had a social cause or that one's parents have low education reduces the chances of young people to get an education.

The Freedom Writer method has proven its worth in the fight against social heritage.

Learning by doing!

The summer-school will teach the Freedom Writers methodology by doing it. We will establish subjective valuable counter-experiences to the everyday-culture that surrounds the human being of today. Through a set of unusual learning processes we offer those experiences that give rise to thoughtfulness and social learning – putting one's own life into perspec-



tive. By the end of the course the participants will have written a Freedom Writer-inspired book – and will themselves become Freedom Writers!

As part of the curriculum we will also read diaries and personal narratives of other like Anne Frank and Zlata Filipovic. And we will watch movies telling stories about lived lives.

Target group

Undergraduate students studying to become teachers, social workers or undertaking similar studies focusing on upbringing of children and young people, often at-risk.

Others with an interest in social work and the Freedom Writers methodology.

Objectives

The goal of the Freedom Writer summer-school is for the participants to get acquainted with the pedagogical methods of the Freedom Writers to a degree where they themselves can practice the methods.

The aim of the Freedom Writer

summer-school is to write, edit and publish an anthology written by the participants telling stories of how it is to live in to-days Europe.

ECTS

The course includes a student workload on 48 hours, equivalent of 2 ECTS.

Freedom Writer Teachers

- Jörg Knüfken, Dorsten, Germany (*Das Wunder bleibt aus*)
- Torbjørn Ydegaard, Aabenraa, Denmark (*Alle har en Historie og Everybody Has a Story*)
- Aimable Mpayimana, Kigali, Rwanda
- XX, Freedom Writers Foundation, Long Beach, CA, USA

Itinerary

Sunday, August 9th, 2015

- Arrival during the afternoon, dinner

- Evening: The process begins

Monday, August 10th until Friday, August 14th, 2015

- Through three daily sessions – morning, afternoon and evening – we work our way from *Engage*, via *Enlight* to *Empower*
- The process includes:
 - Socializing exercises
 - Exercises from the *Freedom Writer*-methodology
 - Writing and editing sessions
 - Reading third person's diaries and poems
 - Watching relevant movies
 - Maybe a Skype-session with Erin Gruwell
 - ...

Saturday, August 15th, 2015

- Travelling home

Venue

Højskolen Østersøen, 6100 Aabenraa, Denmark (www.hojoster.dk).

Højskolen Østersøen offers a high-school stay with the unique mix of education-based interaction that



characterizes the long Danish folk-highschool tradition. The students live at the school, why participation in social afternoon and evening program is a natural part of the offer. Outside of class, there will be ample opportunity to continue the conversation given rise to in the teaching. Since everything is going on outside the framework of formal education and the folk high school have no examinations or tests, it constructs a competition-free environment, where other personal skills become visible – for both teachers and other students and for the student him- or herself.

The summer school is international. Thus it is possible for participants not only to build a wider network and make friends from many different places.

Price

Euro 975,-. This include all teaching and teaching materials, ECTS-documentation and food and lodging from arrival to departure according to the program.

Enrollment

Please follow the guide-lines you find at www.ucsyd.dk/international/ and fill in and forward the enrollment-form.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

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