



Personal Time Lines

Objectives

- To enable youth to see the past, present, and future as a continuum.
- To introduce the idea of alternative future
- To help youth start thinking about their life plan

Materials

A4 sheets of paper and a pencil for each young person.

Procedure

Step 1

- Working individually, participants draw a horizontal line that stops half-way across their sheet of paper. They are told that the point farthest to the left represents their birth, and that the point farthest to the right represents the present. Between these two points, they are to plot along the line the major events of their lives to date.
- If necessary, the facilitator may suggest what some of these might be – birthdays, moving to a new class in school, birth of siblings, world or national events, moving house, illnesses, starting a new hobby or interest, etc. A sample time line could be drawn on the blackboard (see diagram next page).

Step 2

- From the point representing the present, participants are then asked to draw two arms of branches (the time line will now look like the letter Y on its side). Each branch represents a different possible future.
- The upper branch indicates events that might happen in the participant's *ideal* future. The lower branch indicates events that participants think are likely to be part of their *probable* future.

Step 3

- Each participant joins another and explains his/her time line. They discuss their alternative futures, any differences between the ideal and the probable future, and why those differences exist.

Step 4

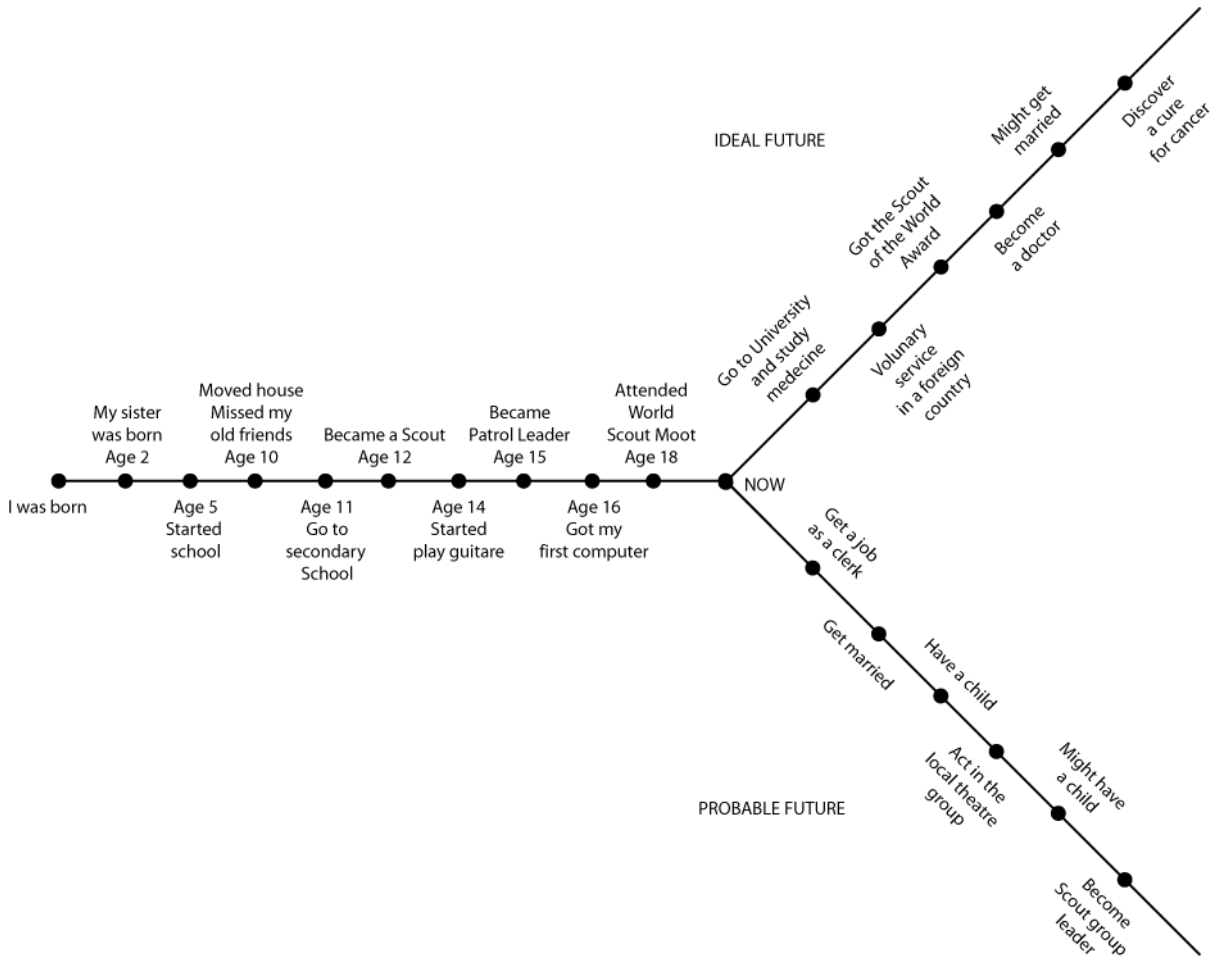
As a group, the participants discuss the following questions:

- *Did anyone include events (past, present, future) that were of a global or national nature, rather than only personal?*
- *Did anyone feel that their ideal future was likely to occur? Why or why not?*

- *What actions would need to be taken in the present in order for the ideal future to become a reality?*
- *Which of these actions could practically be taken?*

Follow-up

Participants consider the types of actions that might be taken in order to bring about their ideal or preferred future. They attempt to write a contract with themselves to do one of these things. The contracts can be posted on a bulletin board.



Example of personal time line