

The GARDEN of NOMADA



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The Garden of Nomada

An outdoor approach to foster inclusion
and participation



The Garden of Nomada

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Authors:

MOE TEAM

Carlos Sanz, Michela Corti, Sergio Bolea

Revision: Ana Moralo

KERIC TEAM

Mirka Petříková, Šimon Mareček

Revision: Ivana Hrušková

Illustrations and graphic design: Vladimíra Čabanová

The Garden of Nomada is a place where each step invites you to discover yourself and others. It's a safe space where nature comforts without overpowering, and learning happens naturally, without fear - like a garden full of growth and understanding.

The name came from those who took part in this journey, imagining a garden blooming with knowledge. Here, the question isn't "What did you learn?" but "What did you experience?" And through that experience, learning begins to grow.

In Nomada's garden, you're never alone. Your companions of adventure, the gentle guides, and nature are all there with you. Each part of this place holds a lesson, and each glance brings a new perspective.

In the garden of Nomada, learning never stops.

It is an open door to an endless journey, but most of all...

you never stop dreaming.



QR Code Nomada Documentary

Introduction

The manual Garden of Nomada serves as a guide for educators, youth workers, facilitators, youngsters and all kinds of persons interested in seeking to enhance their outdoor education programs. It provides comprehensive knowledge on understanding the potential of this methodology to foster community participation and promote social inclusion. It encompasses a variety of topics including technical outdoor skills, how to use this methodology with a participatory approach, the inclusive potential of outdoor education, how to implement outdoor education activities and some practical examples of activities and games that addresses all these topics and are used in outdoor settings.

This manual is the result of a collaborative effort stemming from a long scale cooperation partnership under Erasmus+ coordinated by Madrid Outdoor Education (Spain) in collaboration with KERIC (Slovakia), Association des Populations de les montagnes du Monde (Morocco) and Regional Volunteer Center (Poland). Through joint research, workshops, and discussions, the manual integrates diverse perspectives on how to address outdoor education when working with vulnerable groups. The collaboration underscores the importance of unity and knowledge-sharing in achieving a deep and common understanding on how to use outdoor education methodology across different countries and cultures.

Furthermore, this manual serves as the theoretical basis for the online course that we have developed with the whole consortium. During our interactive online course, participants will explore essential outdoor skills and useful tips on how to use this methodology to foster inclusion and participation. Whether you're an educator, youth worker, or outdoor enthusiast, this course offers valuable insights and practical tools for understanding the participatory and inclusive potential of outdoor education.

We hope the Garden of Nomada will serve as an inspiring resource for our readers, guiding them on their journey and sparking new ideas along the way. If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to reach out to us.

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EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY AND
THE OUTDOOR EDUCATION APPROACH



Experiential learning, particularly within the context of nature, offers a powerful approach to education by emphasising direct experience as the foundation for knowledge. This manual promotes experiential learning as a means to foster participation and promote inclusion, particularly through outdoor education. Rooted in the work of educational theorist David Kolb, this model views learning as a cyclical process involving concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. By engaging learners through real-world interactions and reflective practices, this method encourages deeper understanding and skills that can be transferred to various life contexts.

Outdoor education, a key aspect of experiential learning, takes place outside traditional classroom settings and immerses participants in dynamic natural environments. This exposure not only enhances cognitive and emotional growth but also nurtures social skills, collaboration, and a sense of responsibility towards the environment. Ultimately, experiential learning in nature is about empowering individuals to take an active role in their learning journey, promoting holistic development through engagement with the world around them.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Exploring the concept of experience

Before diving into the concept of experiential learning, it's important to clarify what distinguishes this model from others: the notion of EXPERIENCE. To explore this concept, let's engage in a step-by-step exercise that will help us grasp its various dimensions.

Brainstorming Session

Take a sheet of paper and write the word experience in the centre.

Surround it with words or short phrases that come to mind when you think of experience.

Invite those around you to contribute by asking, **“What comes to your mind when I say the word experience?”**

Reflecting on Your Thoughts

Look at your paper. You'll likely notice a variety of meanings associated with the word experience.

Consider these reflective questions (feel free to add your own):

- What is experience?
- What distinguishes doing an activity from having an experience?
- Are experiences the same for everyone?
- How do experiences influence your worldview?
- What are positive experiences versus negative experiences?
- Do we always learn from our experiences?

Exploring Definitions

Research definitions of experience online and consult various dictionaries.

Compare these definitions with your own ideas:

- Do they align with your understanding?
- Are there common themes among the definitions?
- Are there aspects you hadn't previously considered?

Broadening Our Understanding

As you explore the term experience, you will find that it encompasses a wide range of meanings. Some definitions include:

- The fact or state of having been affected by or having acquired knowledge through direct observation or participation.
- Practical knowledge, skill, or practice gained from direct involvement in events or activities.
- Direct observation or participation in events as the foundation of knowledge.
- Something personally encountered, undergone, or experienced.
- Events that shape your thoughts and behaviors.



Key Aspects of Experience

From these definitions, we can identify several essential characteristics of experience:

- **Temporal Nature:** Experience unfolds over time through a series of events.
- **Process-Oriented:** Experience is inherently a process, involving ongoing engagement.
- **Change:** Each experience implies some form of change or transformation.
- **Interconnectedness:** A new experience influences both past and future experiences.
- **Uniqueness:** Each experience is distinct and specific to the individual who is experiencing it.
- **Reflective Element:** Experience necessitates reflection on what has been encountered.

Having analysed the meaning of experience, we are now ready to explore how learning occurs through experience. By understanding the nuances of experience, we can better appreciate the profound impact it has on our learning journeys.

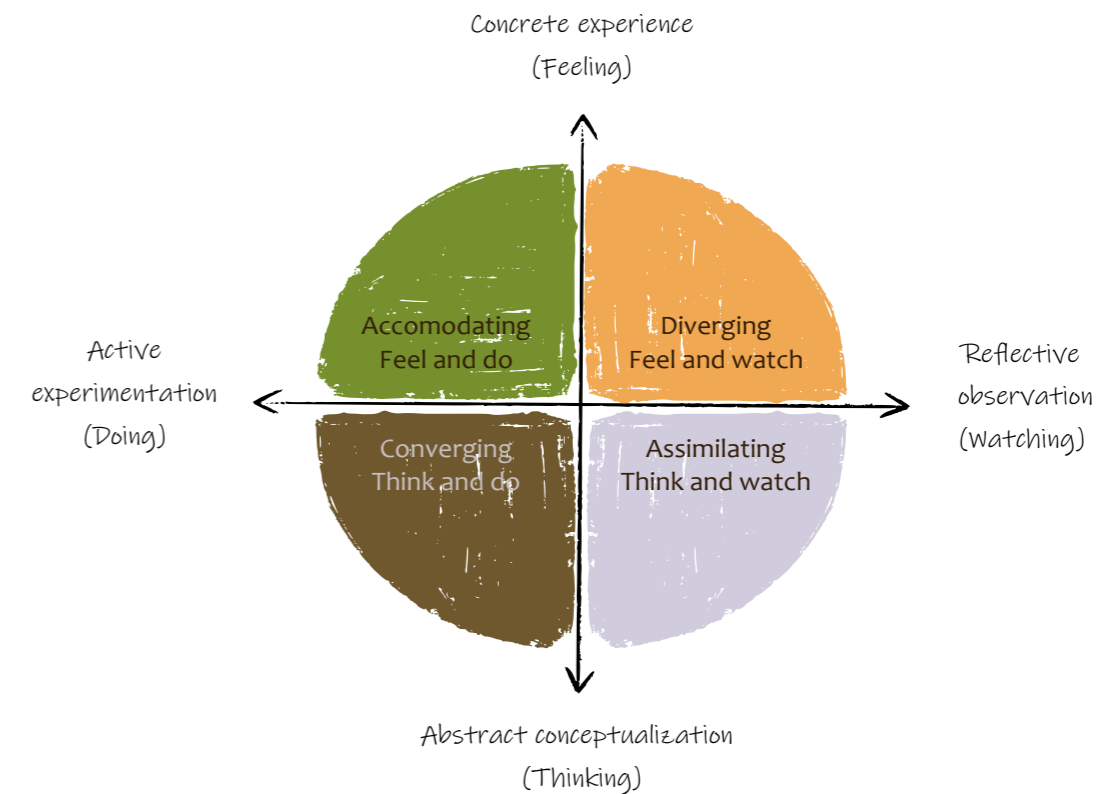
Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning

When discussing experiential learning, we reference Kolb's theory, which synthesises earlier concepts to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding this approach. David Kolb, a pioneering author in the field, offers valuable insights in his book *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (2015). He introduces a dual meaning of experience, which can be categorised as follows:

- **Subjective and Personal:** This encompasses an individual's feelings, impressions, desires, and expectations, all of which are shaped by past experiences.
- **Objective and Environmental:** This refers to the actual experiencing of events—what occurs in the external world.

Personal experience involves reflection, which is influenced by how we process our past encounters. As Huxley (1932) eloquently stated, "Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him." Therefore, a person's experience is fundamentally linked to their reflections on it.

The learning circle



Kolb defines experiential learning as "the process by which knowledge is formed through the transformation of experience." He conceptualises this process as a cycle composed of four phases:

- **Concrete Experience:** This phase involves a person actively engaging in or discussing an event, influenced by their unique perceptions and reactions.
- **Reflective Observation:** Here, the individual observes and reflects on their behaviors and feelings, analysing the situation from multiple perspectives to gain awareness of the experience. Through this reflection, they add value to what they have experienced.
- **Abstract Conceptualization:** In this phase, the individual synthesises their observations and develops ideas or theories about the experience.
- **Active Experimentation:** Finally, the person tests these theories by putting them into practice, deciding whether to confirm or modify their initial ideas.



Orienteering Race

➤ **Concrete Experience:** A group of young people is divided into teams, and each team receives a map and compass. They must navigate a wooded area to reach various points marked on the map within a set time.

➤ **Reflective Observation:** After the activity, the participants reflect together on what worked well and what didn't. They realise that some struggled with map reading, while others felt left out of decision-making processes.

This reflection is crucial because it allows participants to recognize underlying issues such as miscommunication or lack of inclusion, which may not be obvious during the activity. Facilitating a reflective space enables them to understand how individual actions impact team dynamics and encourages more inclusive practices.

➤ **Abstract Conceptualization:** The team then discusses the key factors in effective teamwork and role distribution, realising the importance of assigning tasks based on individual strengths and maintaining clear communication.

Dedicating time to this step is essential because it allows participants to generalise their experience into actionable teamwork principles. This step helps them move beyond the specific activity, learning concepts that improve team coordination and inclusion in future tasks.

➤ **Active Experimentation:** In a second orienteering race, the team applies the insights from their discussion, such as clearly defined roles and better communication, noticing improved coordination and efficiency in reaching their goals.



Participants from the first mobility choosing their path during an orienteering race.

Meaning of Learning through Experience

Learning through experience means that an individual engages with a situation, drawing on their personal history and past experiences. This engagement prompts reactions based on existing ideas. Through reflection on what has transpired, the individual may confirm or adjust these ideas. Such learning occurs in the context of everyday life, often in social settings and specific environments.

When individuals learn meaningfully through experience, they engage physically, emotionally, and intellectually; they are not passive observers. Those who remain static only encounter the facts without deriving learning; conversely, those who learn to navigate the world establish an interactive relationship with it. They act on situations rather than passively endure them (Reggio, 2010, in Quitadamo, 2016).

To develop competence, individuals must reflect on their actions in response to contextual stimuli. Each new experience presents an effective opportunity for learning (Matalucci, 2010).

The Educational Potential of Experience

Experience can be educational for several reasons:

- It involves individual action that produces tangible effects on reality.
- It requires the activation of critical thinking through reflection.
- It is situated in real contexts, presenting actual events rather than contrived scenarios.
- It encompasses complexity and holistic perspectives, integrating social realities and collaboration with others.

Kolb's theory aims to create experiential learning situations that empower individuals to transform everyday events into valuable learning experiences (Reggio, 2010, in Quitadamo, 2016).



Characteristics of Experiential Learning

Experiential learning embodies several key characteristics:

- **Active Engagement:** The learner plays an active role in the learning process.
- **Deep Understanding:** It fosters a profound comprehension of reality.
- **Problem-Solving Focus:** Instead of merely reproducing knowledge, it encourages learners to tackle real-world challenges.
- **Contextualized Learning:** Learning is not isolated but contextual, utilising available resources and adapting to novel situations, making new insights transferable across various contexts (Baldacci, 2010).

Learning from experience is not merely about acquiring abstract knowledge; it is about achieving profound understandings that integrate theories, practical skills, and attitudes, ultimately developing competencies (Reggio, 2014).

Dimensions of Experience in Daily Life

Experience encompasses multiple dimensions:

- **Social:** Built through interactions with others.
- **Psychological:** Relating to one's inner self and psyche.
- **Emotional:** Tied to feelings and emotional responses.
- **Cognitive:** Involving thought processes and mental engagement.
- **Environmental:** Connected to the surroundings and context.

This action-oriented approach, accompanied by observation, reflection, and elaboration, enables individuals to “appropriate” aspects of the world, integrating them into their lives (Di Nubila, Fedeli, 2010). However, without reflection, authentic learning from experience remains elusive.

The Role of Reflection in Learning

Reflection is the key to transforming experience into meaningful learning opportunities. Unfortunately, it is often undervalued and rushed. The quality of the reflection process is crucial for developing awareness and attributing meaning to experiences. It prompts individuals to scrutinise their actions and thought processes, shaping their overall learning journey and relationship with the world.

As previously mentioned, reflection serves as a bridge between action and conceptualization, essential for achieving significant learning outcomes. An experience devoid of reflection cannot be deemed formative; the higher the quality of reflection, the greater the potential for formative growth linked to the experience. This is facilitated by the intentionality behind the educational experience, both from the learner and the facilitator.

The Facilitator's Role in Meaningful Learning

The facilitator plays a crucial role by guiding individuals through meaningful experiences that foster lasting learning. By accompanying learners, facilitators help them enhance their experiences, integrate insights, and achieve positive outcomes (Freire, Bimbi, 1974).

Believing that learning is rooted in experiences does not imply that all experiences are inherently educational. While experience and education are related, they are not synonymous—some experiences may lack educational value. Furthermore, each experience yields two types of effects: the immediate (pleasant or unpleasant) and the long-term influence on future experiences (Dewey). This introduces an element of unpredictability that cannot be anticipated.

Consequently, the facilitator’s fundamental task is to select experiences that not only provide immediate enjoyment but also promote positive long-term effects in future encounters (Dewey, Codignola, 1967). This is why facilitators are not referred to as teachers; they do not merely transmit packaged knowledge. Instead, their role is to create positive developmental experiences and support individuals in reflecting on what they have encountered.



OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Growing through nature and community

Outdoor education (OE) is a particular approach to experiential education. We take this approach as a reference because of its symbolic value, far removed from traditional education.

Practising 'outdoor education' means moving the educational process 'outdoors', breaking out of the framework of the ordinary contexts of formal education and training, be it the classroom or the corporate office.

OE encompasses various educational proposals united by the fact that learning takes place through dialogue with the territory and active experience outside the classroom, whether in a natural environment or in an artificial environment (cities, neighborhoods, artistic and cultural places) (Reggio 2014).

The experiences related to these places are specific and situated (Dahlgren & Szczepanski, 1998, p. 27 in Valentini et al. 2019) and allow, with their complexity, to develop those attitudes necessary to mobilise one's knowledge and skills in dealing with different situations in life, as envisaged by an educational orientation that is directed towards the development of competences.

It is argued that outdoor learning can lead - directly or indirectly - to changes in thinking, feeling and behavior. What distinguishes it from learning that takes place at school or at home is precisely the nature of the experience and its quality. Reading about how to do something is certainly a different experience from actually doing it (National Foundation for Education Research, 2005).

The natural environment does not offer 'pre-packaged' knowledge, but is open to experimentation with the possible. Nature is dynamic, complex, unpredictable and the wild aspects of nature give it dynamism, complexity, unpredictability - driving the individual to exploration and discovery, offering experiences capable of generating strong emotions (Agostini, Agostini & Farnè 2014). Understood in this way, learning 'outdoors' does not simply mean doing education in the environment, but also with the environment and for the environment 'education in, about and for the nature' (Donaldson and Donaldson, 1958, p. 17, in National Foundation for Education Research, 2005): nature, in addition to being the place, becomes the means and the end of the educational process.

Nature as context, subject and teacher

Simply being in the natural environment influences the subject's psycho-emotional sphere by contributing to increased perceived energy and alertness while decreasing feelings of fatigue and reducing states of anxiety, sadness, and anger (Bowler et al., 2010). This richer activity repertoire creates opportunities for individuals to be more physically active. The open space fosters engagement in various activities, enhances contact between group members, and cultivates a strong sense of belonging and cooperation. Furthermore, direct contact with nature allows for an intimate connection with oneself, which correlates with individuals' levels of cognitive functioning (Wells, 2000). Nature encourages individuals to step out of their comfort zones and reach for new perspectives. Experiencing the natural consequences of one's choices and actions firsthand promotes greater awareness and responsibility toward oneself, others, and one's surroundings (Hattie et al., 1997). Unspoiled natural spaces stimulate a sensitivity toward more conscious and environmentally friendly lifestyle choices. Rediscovering the natural world in its true essence thus contributes to environmental education, shaping citizens' present and future needs (Wells & Kristi, 2006).

Being outdoors in a natural setting allows individuals to engage in active listening and connect with everything present in the environment: elements and phenomena that occur in different seasons, "getting hands dirty" (Dirty Teaching), observing and perceiving with all the senses. This immersion in nature evokes emotions and provides the opportunity to experiment within space, coming into contact with everything that lies outside one's individual dimension (concepts of identity, otherness, diversity). In our hyper-connected, technology-driven society, where human relationships and "real" contacts are becoming increasingly fragile, it is essential to nurture feelings of biophilia and ecophilia in young people and adults. This involves offering alternative perspectives on the world and developing an approach to life that promotes harmony and balance among all living beings. In this view, the external environment and nature become significant opportunities, integral to the daily lives of everyone, including young people and adults.

For this reason, Outdoor Education also serves as a practice of environmental education, civic education, and education for coexistence, encouraging mutual respect and cooperation. Nature thus serves as a true teacher for several reasons. First of all, it provides a rich and varied learning context, where every element—from plants to animals, from geological formations to atmospheric phenomena—becomes a source of teaching. Adults and young people can directly observe natural cycles, understand ecological interactions, and experience physical laws in a real environment. This practical approach makes learning more engaging and meaningful, stimulating curiosity and discovery.



Secondly, nature is not only a teacher but also a subject of learning and exploration. For this reason, outdoor education allows—directly and/or indirectly—addressing urgent themes of today’s world. Through practical experiences, young people and adults can deepen their understanding of ecology, biodiversity, and sustainability. By learning to know and appreciate the natural environment, they also develop critical awareness regarding environmental issues, becoming responsible and active citizens in the protection of the planet.

Finally, interacting with nature fosters the development of socio-emotional skills such as cooperation, empathy, and respect for diversity, not only among humans but also toward other forms of life. This deep connection with the environment stimulates an ecological mindset, encouraging sustainable behaviors and a caring attitude toward the earth. In this sense, nature is not just a context for learning but becomes a crucial ally in the educational process, teaching values that last a lifetime.



Participants during the second mobility exploring the wilderness surroundings of Beni Gorfett

Embracing Nature: Beyond Wilderness to Urban Awareness

When we talk about outdoor education, we often conjure images of vast wilderness and untouched landscapes. However, it's essential to recognize that outdoor education encompasses much more than just remote natural settings. It includes the parks, gardens, and green hills within our cities—reminders that nature is all around us, even in urban environments. By shifting our perspective, we can learn to appreciate and respect the natural world in our immediate surroundings, fostering sustainable habits that extend beyond the wild.

Stepping outside our doors means engaging with our local environment, which doesn't always have to occur in a traditional natural setting. This broader understanding opens up a world of possibilities for participants, encouraging them to become active members of their communities. Interacting with neighbours, volunteering, and practising solidarity are all vital components of this journey. By promoting the idea that everyone has the power to effect positive change, we inspire individuals to take action not only for themselves but for those around them and the environment in which they live.

Ultimately, recognizing the interconnectedness of nature and urban life empowers us to cultivate a more harmonious relationship with our surroundings. Whether in a city park or a wild forest, outdoor education invites us to be aware, engaged, and proactive, shaping our communities into places of connection and sustainability.

The power of the group

In today's interconnected world, the significance of group learning in experiential education cannot be overstated. As we navigate various experiences, a cohesive group can provide diverse perspectives on the same event, enriching our understanding of reality. This idea is highlighted by Quitadamo (2016), who emphasises how sharing unique experiences within a group amplifies our insights and encourages a deeper comprehension of the complexities we encounter.

A well-structured group fosters an environment where individuals feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and emotions. According to Kimball and Bacon (1993), this sense of safety is crucial for personal growth. Within such a nurturing atmosphere, individuals are encouraged to explore their autonomy, make decisions, and reflect on their learning journeys. This collaborative process not only enhances individual skills but also nurtures a collective wisdom that benefits everyone involved (Walsh & Golins, 1976).

For facilitators, creating dynamics that promote group cohesion and a positive climate is essential. In experiential learning, particularly among adults, the responsibility for outcomes lies with all members of the group. Each participant plays a vital role in achieving shared goals and developing meaningful learning experiences. This co-construction of knowledge ensures that everyone is actively engaged, contributing to a richer and more nuanced understanding of the subject matter.

Moreover, this approach to learning is invaluable beyond the classroom. As social beings, humans thrive on collaboration and connection. The skills and insights gained through group experiences are directly applicable to everyday life, where cooperation



and teamwork are often required. By participating in group learning, individuals become more aware of their actions and the learning process itself, cultivating a sense of accountability and commitment to personal and communal growth.

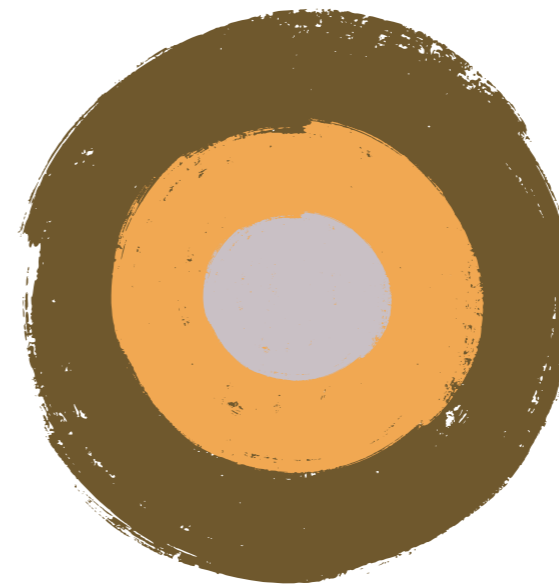
Ultimately, while the facilitator's role in guiding the process and addressing technical or safety concerns is crucial, the true power of experiential learning lies in the contributions of each individual. Together, they create a tapestry of knowledge, perspectives, and experiences that enrich their lives and prepare them for the complexities of a collaborative society.

As we delve deeper into this manual, we will explore how outdoor education enhances group dynamics by fostering a stronger sense of belonging and collaboration among members. Engaging in shared adventures in natural settings allows participants to connect on a deeper level, as they face challenges together and experience the beauty of the environment. This unique setting encourages individuals to step outside their comfort zones, build trust, and develop lasting bonds with one another. The shared experiences in nature not only promote teamwork but also cultivate a collective identity within the group, reinforcing the idea that each member contributes to a greater whole. By immersing ourselves in the outdoors, we create a rich tapestry of memories that strengthen relationships and enhance the collaborative spirit essential for effective learning.

Outdoor facilitators

In the context of experiential learning, the facilitator plays a vital role as a member of the group, guiding individuals through the process of constructing meaningful knowledge. They are responsible for creating dynamics that foster reflection and facilitate the learning experience for everyone involved. A key aspect of this process is the focus of reflection; the facilitator must skillfully direct discussions toward specific topics that can stimulate various skills due to the inherent complexity of these experiences. By honing in on particular aspects of participants' lives, facilitators help them navigate their personal growth journeys.

In addition to guiding reflections, facilitators are crucial in cultivating positive group dynamics and encouraging the participation of all members. This is especially important in outdoor education, where nature presents unique challenges that can evoke strong emotions and behaviours. These seemingly risky situations encourage individuals to step out of their comfort zones and enter a space of growth and self-discovery. The facilitator's role is to design these experiences thoughtfully, ensuring that they are both challenging and safe. By maintaining a focus on safety, facilitators help participants embrace their capabilities while navigating the exhilarating uncertainties of the outdoors.



- Comfort zone**
You feel safe and relaxed, doing things you know well. It's easy, but you're not growing here.
- Learning zone**
You are outside your comfort zone, where you're challenged but not overwhelmed. This zone has a positive stress that pushes you to be focused. Real growth and learning are happening.
- Panic zone**
You are too far out from your comfort zone. You feel stressed in an unproductive way or scared. It's hard to learn here because it's overwhelming.

Ultimately, the collaboration between facilitators and participants enriches the learning experience, transforming challenges into opportunities for personal development and collective bonding. As the group works together in the natural world, they not only gain valuable skills but also build a deeper sense of trust and connection that enhances their overall learning journey.

Reflection: key to learning through experience

Reflection plays a crucial role in the experiential learning cycle, transforming mere activities into meaningful educational experiences. It is the cornerstone that distinguishes learning from simply having fun. When individuals engage in group reflections, they not only process their own experiences but also gain insights from the perspectives of their peers. This collective dialogue enriches their understanding and broadens their view of reality.

Moreover, group reflections serve to consolidate learning, reinforcing key concepts and helping participants internalise their experiences. They also provide valuable feedback for facilitators, helping them gauge how participants are feeling and assess the effectiveness of the activities. In essence, reflection is fundamental to the learning process, allowing individuals to collaboratively reframe their experiences. Through this, they can extract valuable lessons that are applicable in their own lives, fostering growth and development.



Education, Not Therapy

Experiences in nature can often push individuals beyond their comfort zones, evoking deep emotions. It's essential to maintain a clear distinction between education and therapy. While nature-based programs address various aspects of personal development, they are not intended to serve as therapeutic interventions.

The aim is to provide experiences and tools that foster skills to help individuals cope with the stresses of everyday life, rather than to conduct therapy. The focus is on prevention and promoting overall wellness, not on treatment. It's crucial to avoid delving into sensitive issues that participants may not be ready to confront or that cannot be effectively managed within the educational setting.

If a participant is in a vulnerable state and expresses a need for psychological support, it's important to refer them to appropriate services and qualified professionals in the field.

CONCLUSION

In summary, experiential learning in nature provides a rich and dynamic framework for personal and collective growth. By centering the learning process around direct experience, reflection, and interaction with the environment, this approach cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a deeper connection to the natural world. Outdoor education, in particular, helps individuals step outside of their comfort zones, promoting inclusion and participation through meaningful experiences. The role of the facilitator is crucial in guiding participants toward reflective and transformative learning, ensuring that these experiences contribute to personal development and positive social engagement.



KEY IDEAS OF THE CHAPTER:

- ➔ **EXPERIENCE AS THE CORE OF LEARNING:** Direct experience is the foundation of knowledge, providing the opportunity for personal growth and skill development.
- ➔ **THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTION:** Reflection transforms experiences into meaningful learning, helping individuals understand and apply their experiences to broader contexts.
- ➔ **THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR:** Facilitators guide and support learners by creating challenging yet safe environments, promoting reflection, and fostering group dynamics.
- ➔ **OUTDOOR EDUCATION ENHANCES LEARNING:** Learning in nature stimulates cognitive, emotional, and social development, encouraging a sense of responsibility toward oneself, others, and the environment.
- ➔ **LEARNING THROUGH ACTION:** Experiential learning is active, engaging participants in problem-solving and real-world interaction, making the learning process more impactful and transferable.



**OUTDOOR'S TOOLBOX:
ESSENTIAL SKILLS TO IMPLEMENT SAFE
ACTIVITIES**



In this chapter, we delve into the technical skills required to engage in outdoor activities in a way that is both inclusive and accessible. By exploring essential techniques such as orienteering, navigation, and the proper use of tools and resources, we aim to promote experiential learning in nature. These skills not only enhance participants' ability to safely and confidently explore natural environments, but also foster a deeper connection to the outdoors. By ensuring that outdoor activities can be accessible to everyone, regardless of ability, this chapter aligns with our broader goal of promoting inclusion and active participation through nature-based experiences.

ORIENTEERING: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Orienteering, the practice of locating oneself in space and time, is much more than a technical skill; it offers a rich platform for developing spatial and temporal awareness, problem-solving, and a deeper connection to the natural world. The word "orientation" itself stems from "orient," meaning "east," symbolising how humans have historically aligned themselves with natural cycles, such as the rising of the sun. Exploring orienteering allows us to draw on these ancient techniques, blending history, geography, and environmental science into outdoor education.

Mesopotamian Skywatchers: Astronomy and Human Perception

7000 years ago, mesopotamians were among the first to meticulously observe celestial bodies, noticing how stars, planets, the Sun, and Moon shifted in the sky. Along with the Sun and Moon, the so-called "wandering stars," which for the ancients were the divine abode, moved along a narrow band of sky known as the Zodiac. Today we know that these wandering stars are not stars but planets (planet means "wandering" in Greek). Their belief that cosmic events mirrored earthly happenings laid the foundation for astronomy.

Egyptians: Aligning Structures with the Cosmos

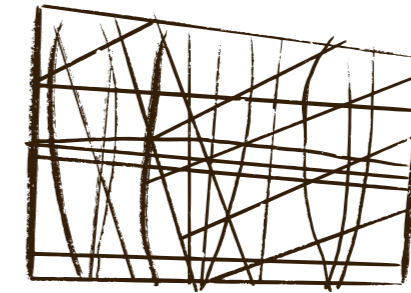
Circa 5000 years ago Egyptians built pyramids and temples carefully aligned with significant constellations, revealing their advanced understanding of celestial navigation.

Phoenicians and Greeks: Navigating by the Stars

Early Mediterranean sailors, including Phoenicians and Greeks, relied on the stars to navigate beyond sight of land, making star navigation a crucial skill for survival. Some of the constellations used in today's astronomy such as Casiopea or Ursa Major had their origin in these ancient cultures.

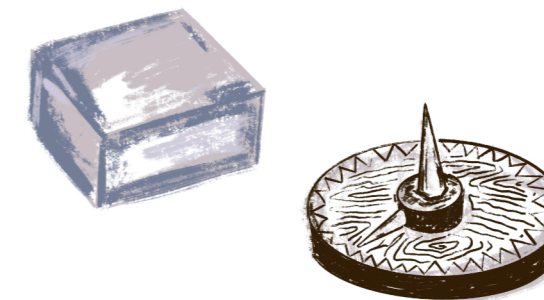
Polynesians: Reading Nature for Navigation

Polynesians were master navigators, using the position of stars, the flight paths of birds, and the direction of ocean swells to orient themselves. They even read clouds to discern nearby land. Marshallese create the Stick charts to navigate the Pacific Ocean by canoe off the coast of the Marshall Islands. The charts represented major ocean swell patterns and the ways the islands disrupted those patterns, typically determined by sensing disruptions in ocean swells by islanders during sea navigation.



Vikings: Innovative Daytime Navigation

Vikings utilised innovative tools like the "magic sunstone" and sun compass to navigate during the day, even in foggy conditions. These tools helped them locate the sun and find true north.



Romans: The Birth of Cardinal Points

Roman cities were structured using cardinal directions, with the Decumanus Maximus running east to west and the Cardus Maximus north to south. This system gave rise to the cardinal points we use today.

Scandinavians: Orienteering as a modern sport

At the end of the 19th century the first official orienteering races started to take place in Scandinavian countries. Nowadays, orienteering is a recognized sport with national leagues and championships.



NATURE-BASED ORIENTEERING TECHNIQUES

Orienteering through nature offers a wealth of opportunities for experiential learning and can be used as a powerful pedagogical tool for teaching navigation, observation, and critical thinking. By incorporating nature's own methods of orientation, facilitators can engage participants in meaningful, hands-on experiences that foster a deeper connection to the environment, while developing practical skills.

Learning from Animal Navigation

Animals possess remarkable navigation abilities using visual, olfactory, and magnetic cues. Facilitators can facilitate discussions about how animals like birds, ants, and turtles orient themselves using these natural elements. This exploration offers an opportunity for learners to reflect on how humans have historically relied on nature for navigation, and how modern tools have evolved from these ancient methods.

Teaching Distance Estimation Using Nature's "Pedometer"

Certain animals, such as ants, use a form of "pedometer" by counting steps to measure distance. This concept can be applied in outdoor learning activities where participants track their steps or use pacing to estimate distances. This builds both mathematical and spatial reasoning skills in a natural setting.

Using Visual and Natural Landmarks for Navigation

Animals often follow memorised paths or rely on landmarks to navigate, whether they be visual, chemical, or acoustic. Facilitators can integrate orienteering exercises where participants use natural features, such as trees, rocks, or changes in terrain, to guide their way. This builds keen observation and memory skills, essential for both navigation and broader environmental awareness.

Teaching Navigation by Compass and Sun

Many animals, such as birds and turtles, use celestial bodies like the sun and stars, or even the Earth's magnetic field, to orient themselves. These natural tools can be adapted into lessons where participants learn to use compasses and the sun for navigation. This approach links traditional navigation skills with the natural world, reinforcing understanding of time, space, and natural cycles.

Integrating the Concept of True Navigation

Some animals can perform "true navigation," finding their way without prior experience of the route. This skill, which involves creating cognitive maps and using environmental clues, can inspire activities where learners must use problem-solving and inference to navigate unfamiliar terrain. This challenges participants to think critically and adapt to new environments, key skills in both education and life.

Exploring the Use of Magnetism

Animals like pigeons and bees can sense the Earth's magnetic field, guiding their orientation. Facilitators can introduce the concept of magnetism and navigation through experiments or compass-based activities, helping participants understand the science behind these natural forces.

Using Natural Features for Orientation

Nature provides many orientation clues, from tree growth patterns to moss and snow distribution. Trees, for example, often grow thicker on the side facing the sun, and moss tends to accumulate on the north side in the Northern Hemisphere. Facilitators can turn these features into educational tools, teaching participants to read the landscape and orient themselves without modern technology.

MAPS: A GATEWAY TO UNDERSTANDING SPACE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Maps are symbolic representations of real-world spaces and can be used to discover spatial relationships, geography, and environmental awareness. The famous quote by Alfred Korzybski, "A map is not the territory", underscores that maps are representations, not exact replicas of reality. This concept helps learners develop an understanding of abstraction and symbolic thinking—skills critical for interpreting information in various contexts.

"A MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY"

Alfred Korzybski



Types of Maps: Encouraging Exploration of Different Perspectives

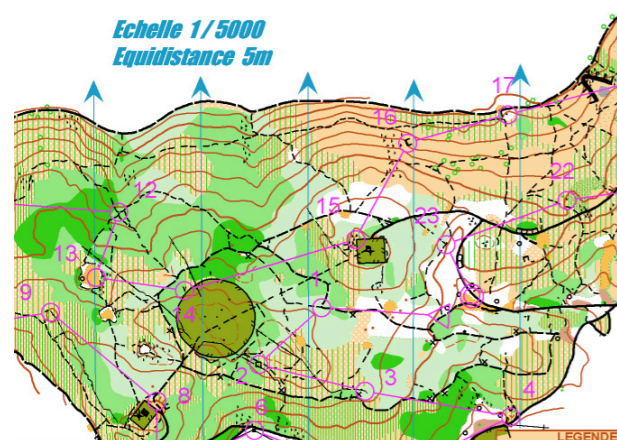
Maps vary widely in style, purpose, and accuracy. By exploring different types of maps, facilitators can expose participants to the variety of ways we can represent and understand space. For example, panoramic maps provide a bird's-eye view, while topographic maps offer precise details about elevation and terrain. Each map type has unique applications, making them excellent tools for discussing the strengths and limitations of different representations. The more information you will have from a territory the more prepared you will be to navigate and orient yourself.



Ridgeline map



Panoramic map

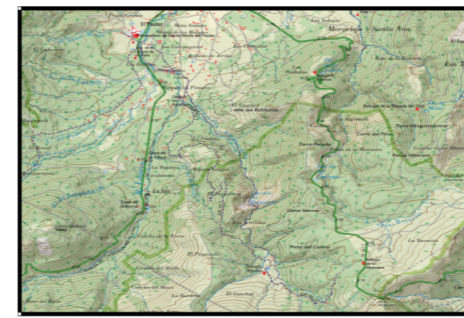


Orienteering race map

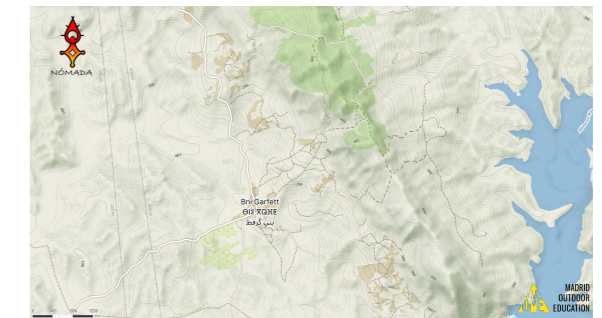


3D map

(great tool to include people with visual disabilities)



Topographic maps



Topographic map

As we said, all the maps are interesting and can provide us with useful information, but among all of them Topographic maps are the most reliable ones in terms of accuracy and information. Topographic maps, which represent the physical landscape in detail through contour lines and symbols, are invaluable learning how to interpret elevation and landforms. These maps can help to understand concepts such as slope, elevation changes, and terrain features—all essential for successful navigation in outdoor activities.

In a topographic map you can find many different colours that may change from one editor to another but usually they follow this patterns:

- Blue colour: everything related to water
- Green colour: represents different types of vegetation such as forest.
- Black colour: everything related to human beings: roads, tracks, paths, train tracks...
- Red colour: buildings or similar.
- Yellow colour: in some maps they used yellow to represent big roads.
- Brown colour/grey colour: contour lines and changes of vegetation to more rocky areas.

Contour lines, which show areas of equal elevation, provide an excellent opportunity to learn about altitude and terrain. Facilitators can help learners visualize three-dimensional landscapes through two-dimensional representations, fostering spatial reasoning skills.



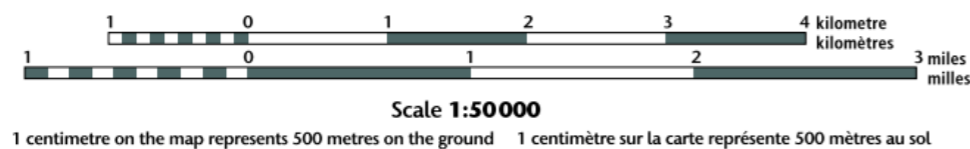
Map legend

The legend of the map also contains important information and all of the thematic symbols of the map. Symbols that need no explanations, or do not coincide with the theme of the map, are normally omitted from the map legend. Thematic symbols directly represent the map's theme and should stand out.

	Divided Highway		Visitor Information, Restroom
	Primary Highway		Campground, Group Campground
	Secondary Highway		Marked Campsite, Drinking Water
	Select Paved Road		Picnic Area, Trailhead / Parking Area
	Improved Road		Horse Camp, Scenic Viewpoint
	Administrative Road		RV Dump Station, Shower
	High-Clearance Road		Lodging, Dining
	Four Wheel Drive Road		Ranger Station, Boat Ramp
	Hike Trail		Laundry Facility, Shuttle Bus Stop
	Hike, Horse Trail		Fee Station, Backcountry Cabin
	Hike, Bike Trail		Supplies, Telephone
	Hike, Horse, Bike Trail		Amphitheater, Universal Access
	Motorized Trail		Point of Interest, Shelter
	Horse Only Trail		Suggested XC Ski Use, ATV Use
	Paved Bicycle Trail		Gate, Other Point of Interest
	Cross Country Ski Trail		Approximate Trail / Road Mileage
	National Park & National Monument		U.S. Highway, Utah State Highway
	National Forest		National Scenic Byway
	Wilderness Area		National Recreation Trail
	National Wildlife Refuge		BLM Road
	State Wildlife Area		Forest Service: Road, Trail
	Bureau of Land Management		Wooded Cover
	State Land		Spring (Unreliable Water Source)
	Private Land		Backcountry Permits
	Road Milemarkers		Suggested Hikes

Map scale

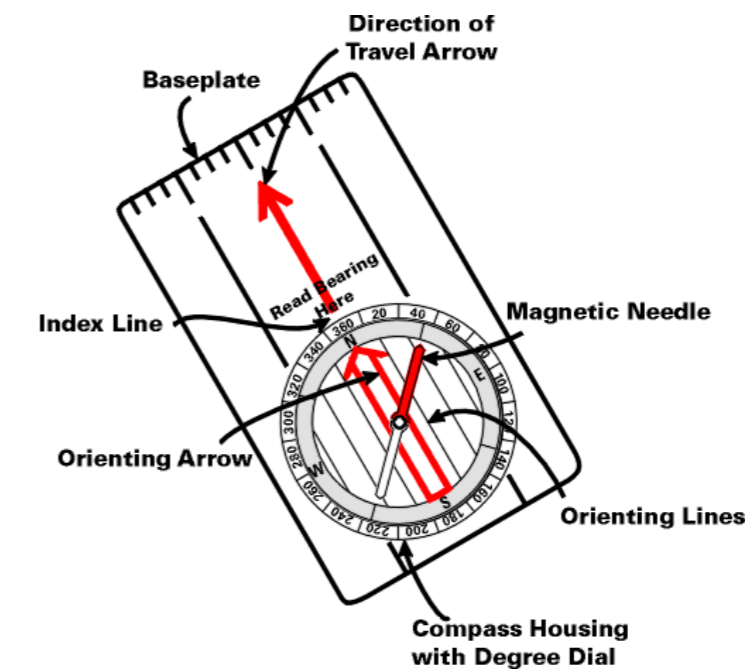
The scale of a map is the ratio of a distance on the map to the corresponding distance on the ground, and this concept offers a valuable opportunity to teach measurement, ratios, and proportional reasoning. Usually is expressed in Centimeters. Eg: 1:15000 meaning 1 cm in the map corresponds to 15000 cm or 150 m in reality ; 1:25000 meaning 1 cm in the map corresponds to 25000 cm or 250 m in reality.



COMPASS: DEVELOPING DIRECTIONAL AWARENESS

A compass is a device that shows the cardinal directions used for navigation and geographic orientation. It commonly consists of a magnetized needle or other element, such as a compass card or compass rose, which can pivot to align itself with magnetic north. Other methods may be used, including gyroscopes, magnetometers, and GPS receivers. Learning how to use a compass effectively helps to develop a sense of direction and understand geographic orientation, essential skills for both outdoor navigation and spatial reasoning.

While many modern devices, such as smartphones, have built-in GPS and compasses, it is important to remember that these technologies are not infallible. Battery life, signal issues, and technical malfunctions can all hinder digital tools, making traditional navigation skills with maps and physical compasses indispensable.



BASIC NAVIGATION TECHNIQUES WITH MAP AND COMPASS

Here you have two basic ways of using the compass and the map to start enriching your navigation techniques. Be aware that the compass in your phone can be easily wrong and could lead you to difficult and unpleasant situations.

Orient the map: To orient the map, place the compass on top of the map and place both as horizontal as possible. Rotate the map (with the compass on top) until the compass needle and the map grid lines coincide and both the map and the magnetic needle point in the same direction.



Choose the right direction: When navigating you will find paths that cross or divide. Whenever you have to take a decision you can always check the direction of the paths and where you are heading to on the map and check that direction with the compass.

PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIAL OF OUTDOOR MATERIALS

When facilitating outdoor activities, facilitators play a critical role in guiding participants to make thoughtful decisions about the materials they use, from clothing layers to essential gear. Understanding the practical and pedagogical benefits of these materials helps facilitators not only to equip learners with the right tools but also to foster self-reliance, problem-solving, and environmental awareness.

The Three-Layer Principle: A Learning Tool for Adaptation and Comfort

The Three-Layer Principle provides a systematic approach to dressing for outdoor activities, teaching participants to manage their body temperature and stay dry in changing weather conditions. This principle is not only about physical comfort but also about decision-making and adapting to the environment, making it an ideal teaching tool for outdoor education.

- **First layer:** This layer has to be comfortable and suitable for your skin, as it will be the one closest to your body. Its main function is to keep your skin dry by evaporating the sweat your body generates to outer layers as quickly as possible. In cold climates it can also have a thermal function. Facilitators can explain how different materials (e.g., synthetic fabrics or merino wool) work and encourage participants to reflect on how they feel when wearing different types of fabrics. This promotes understanding of how to stay comfortable and healthy in cold or warm environments.
- **Second layer:** The most important mission of the middle layer is to maintain and provide warmth to our body. Experience will give you the keys to the correct use of this layer, putting it on and taking it off at the right times to correctly regulate your body temperature. Facilitators can use this layer to teach learners about the body's heat regulation and how to balance activity with warmth. A good learning activity might be to have learners experiment with adding or removing layers during a hike to see how their body responds, fostering self-awareness of their physical needs.

- **Third layer:** The last layer will be the most important when it starts raining, snowing or the wind picks up. Our third layer will be responsible for keeping these elements out of the second layer and our body. A quality third layer will have a good balance between breathability and waterproofing. This is an excellent opportunity to discuss the balance between waterproofing and breathability—helping learners to think critically about material properties and how they affect comfort and safety.



Blog entry from Madrid outdoor education explaining the three-layer principle.

Backpack

When going outdoors, having a proper backpack is an essential decision. There are several types and sizes according to different body shapes and which is most important according to the activities you will do. Be mindful that as a facilitator usually you should carry more than you need just to support your group in case of any emergency, so having a bigger backpack could be an interesting choice.

When packing your backpack try to put heavier things on the bottom and closer to your back. Moreover, it's important to balance the weight of it in all its sides to favour a pleasant journey. Finally, pack the things you need more often like raincoat, first aid kit, headlamp or water in handy places like pockets.

Developing a “how to properly pack your backpack” workshop is always a nice way to be sure that all participants have the materials needed and check if they are carrying dangerous or forbidden materials such as big knives or alcoholic drinks.

As facilitators it's always interesting to provide a material checklist for participants. Moreover, reflecting on how to efficiently pack and organise a backpack is an opportunity to introduce key concepts like balance, accessibility, and preparedness.



Versatile materials

An interesting ally when facilitating outdoor activities with groups are the versatile materials. These are materials that can be used for many different purposes favouring our backpack to stay light and full of resources. This are some of the most interesting versatile materials that you can carry when doing outdoor activities:

- **Hiking sticks:** The sticks are a great ally to walk, especially when carrying big loads. They can help us for stability, balance, protecting us from vegetation or wild animal attacks. Moreover, they can provide perfect support for those people less experienced or with less confidence walking in difficult terrain. Furthermore, they can be used to create an immobilisation of a leg or an arm in an emergency or to build a stretch with a backpack or tarp.
- **Tarps (insulation fabric):** This is an amazing material full of potential. Basically it can be used to build shelters to protect ourselves in case of rain, snow or strong sun. It can be used also as ground in uncomfortable soils especially when our group is not used to being in nature. On one hand, it can be a nice material to develop some fun activities and on the other hand they can help us in emergency situations to create a stretch with the poles to carry backpacks or an injured person.
- **Rope:** Like the previous materials a rope can be amazing as an educational material as well as a great support in complex situations such as difficult terrain, becoming a ladder or a “handrail”, or in emergencies in which we can create a stretch out of it.
- **Duct tape and bridles:** Both of them can help us to test our rocket science skills. With them we can repair boots, backpacks, hiking poles or we can even create a bowl to collect water. Moreover, it is interesting how to carry these materials in the most efficient way, for example, we can put duct tape around our hiking poles so we will always have it in a handy place and we will avoid carrying the whole tape.

Finally, one the most interesting aspects of these materials is how they can be combined between them creating an unlimited source of possibilities. Your creativity is the limit.



Participants from the second mobility after building up a shelter with a tarp.

First-Aid Kit

One of the most important materials when going outdoors is a First-Aid Kit that will help us to solve minor emergencies and will help us to prevent further problems. Is essential to be clear that we must have the knowledge to use all materials that will be in our First-Aid Kit.

A basic First-Aid Kit should have:

- Gloves
- Tweezers
- Antiseptic ointment
- Blister treatment
- Bandages and gauzes
- Athletic Tape
- Elastic Wrap
- Thermal Blankets

A First-Aid Kit can be completed with medicines, but be aware of your country's laws as not every country allows to provide medicines to other people, **specially under 18 years old**, except to accredited health professionals. In case you decide to bring medicines with you have a clear knowledge on how to use them and when they expire.



RISK MANAGEMENT IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Risk is an inherent part of life, especially in experiential learning and outdoor adventure. While risk itself is neither good nor bad, it provides a valuable opportunity for learning. However, managing risk effectively is essential to ensure a safe and inclusive environment where all participants can engage, grow, and learn.

Understanding Risk and Danger

In the context of outdoor experiential learning, danger refers to any source of potential harm. There are two types of dangers:

- Objective dangers – These come from external factors like terrain or weather conditions.
- Subjective dangers – These are related to individual factors such as physical, psychological, or technical preparation.

Risk is the likelihood of harm occurring and the potential consequences that may result. The level of risk increases with greater exposure to danger, increasing both the probability of accidents and the severity of their consequences.

Safety and Risk Management

Safety involves reducing risk by identifying dangers and controlling exposure to them. Risk management is the process of assessing these dangers and implementing measures to minimize risk to an acceptable level. Through thoughtful planning and preparation, facilitators can create experiences that challenge participants while keeping risks within manageable limits.

Promoting a Safe Learning Environment

Incorporating risk management into outdoor learning is crucial for promoting inclusion and participation. Facilitators play a key role in designing activities that are both engaging and safe. By carefully balancing challenge with security, they empower participants to step outside their comfort zones, encouraging personal growth while safeguarding their well-being.

By prioritizing safety, we not only prevent accidents but also create a supportive environment where participants can confidently explore, discover, and learn from their experiences in nature.

How to act in an emergency?



Discover an emergency response protocol

BEST PRACTICES FOR SAFE AND RESPECTFUL OUTDOOR LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Plan and Prepare

- As a facilitator, involve participants in researching the trail and weather conditions. This builds responsibility and enhances their understanding of the natural environment.
- Teach the importance of sharing hiking routes and safety plans with others, reinforcing accountability and group safety.
- Ensure the trail matches the abilities of all participants, promoting inclusivity by allowing everyone to engage in the experience.

Respect Nature and Wildlife

- Use encounters with wildlife as a teachable moment to discuss ecosystems, the role of each species, and the impact of human interaction.
- Encourage learners to observe animals respectfully and never feed them, using this as a discussion point about wildlife health and conservation ethics.
- Promote “leave no trace” principles by encouraging participants to reflect on how their actions impact nature, creating a connection between learning and real-world environmental stewardship.

Stay Hydrated and Energized

- Model the importance of regular hydration and nutrition by organizing group water breaks and discussing the effects of dehydration on the body.
- Use snack breaks as an opportunity to talk about energy levels, nutrition, and how outdoor activities can support physical health.



Minimize Environmental Impact

- Facilitate discussions on how to reduce environmental footprints by using existing trails and campsites. Have participants reflect on how their choices affect the natural world.
- Encourage learners to consider how their outdoor actions—such as sticking to trails—help protect fragile ecosystems.
- Make it a participatory activity by having learners identify durable surfaces and evaluate the impact of human traffic in different areas.

Dispose of Waste Responsibly

- Engage participants in proper waste management techniques, such as packing out trash and using designated restroom facilities. This hands-on approach instills environmental responsibility.
- Teach the importance of cleanliness and hygiene outdoors, demonstrating how to dig catholes or use biodegradable soap. This practical knowledge empowers learners to care for nature.

Be Aware of Your Surroundings

- Guide participants through the use of maps, compasses, and GPS, turning navigation into a collaborative learning activity. This fosters problem-solving and leadership skills.
- Use pacing and rest breaks to discuss the importance of managing energy, reinforcing the idea of balance between challenge and safety in experiential learning.
- Encourage learners to regularly check in with themselves and each other, promoting self-awareness and group cohesion.

Dress Appropriately and Protect Yourself

- Use dressing for outdoor activities as an opportunity to teach participants about climate and terrain, emphasizing the need for proper preparation in outdoor learning.
- Discuss how clothing choices can protect against the elements and promote comfort, linking these lessons to larger discussions on human adaptation to environments.
- Encourage self-expression while reinforcing the need for functionality and safety in clothing, fostering respect for both individual needs and the environment.

Practice Safe Campfire

- Involve learners in building and managing small fires (where permitted), using this hands-on activity to teach fire safety, environmental responsibility, and teamwork.
- Reinforce the impact of campfires on ecosystems by discussing how fire scars the land, and encourage reflection on how we can minimize long-term environmental damage.

Respect Other Visitors

- Model respectful behavior toward other trail users, facilitating discussions on empathy and shared spaces. Encourage participants to reflect on how their actions affect others' outdoor experiences.
- Foster a sense of community and respect by teaching trail etiquette, such as yielding and keeping noise levels low. This promotes a culture of mutual respect both in and out of the wilderness.



Know Your Limits and Prioritize Safety

- Use the physical challenges of outdoor activities to teach about goal-setting, limits, and self-care. Encourage participants to reflect on their personal boundaries and respect those of others.
- Lead discussions on the importance of group safety and cooperation, teaching how to monitor one's own health and the well-being of fellow participants.
- Equip participants with basic first-aid knowledge through interactive, hands-on learning, fostering a sense of empowerment and preparedness.
- By embedding experiential learning into each aspect of outdoor activities, facilitators can encourage deeper connections between participants and nature. Facilitation should aim to foster inclusivity, reflection, and personal growth, making these activities not only safe and respectful but also enriching for everyone involved.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, mastering the technical skills necessary for outdoor activities is fundamental to ensuring that everyone can participate safely and meaningfully in nature-based experiences. By making these activities more accessible and inclusive, we empower individuals to connect with the natural world, fostering a sense of belonging and confidence. As we have explored throughout this chapter, these skills are not just about navigation and survival, but about creating opportunities for all individuals to engage with the environment in a way that is respectful, enriching, and sustainable.

KEY IDEAS OF THE CHAPTER:

- **Orienteering and Navigation:** Understanding the principles of spatial and temporal orientation is essential for outdoor activities. From the historical use of stars and natural elements to modern-day maps and compasses, mastering these techniques enables individuals to navigate safely and with confidence. This knowledge empowers participants to explore natural spaces independently and contributes to an inclusive outdoor experience.
- **Inclusivity in Outdoor Skills:** The chapter highlights the importance of ensuring that technical skills, such as orienteering and map-reading, are accessible to people of all abilities. By adapting these skills and tools, we create an environment where everyone can participate fully, breaking down barriers and promoting equal access to the benefits of outdoor activities.
- **Environmental Awareness and Risk Management:** Being prepared for outdoor environments goes beyond technical skills. It involves understanding natural signs like weather patterns, terrain, and wildlife behavior. Furthermore, effective risk management, such as proper planning and emergency protocols, is critical to ensuring the safety of all participants, allowing them to enjoy nature responsibly.
- **Sustainable Practices and Respect for Nature:** Technical skills in the outdoors are also linked to sustainable practices. Through principles like our "Best Practices for Safe and Respectful Outdoor Learning Activities" we emphasize the importance of preserving natural spaces for future generations. Understanding how to minimize environmental impact and respect wildlife contributes to an ethical approach to outdoor education.
- **First Aid and Emergency Preparedness:** The chapter also covers essential first aid techniques and the importance of being equipped for potential emergencies. Having a well-prepared first aid kit and knowledge of basic medical interventions ensures that outdoor activities can be conducted safely, with proper care and consideration for all participants.

By integrating these key skills and ideas, we can create a more inclusive and engaging outdoor experience for all.



ENGAGING TOGETHER:

**GROUP AND PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR
EDUCATION ACTIVITIES**



This chapter delves into the significance of group dynamics and active participation in outdoor experiential learning as tools to foster inclusion and engagement. Building on the foundational ideas of experiential learning explored in previous chapters, this section emphasises the critical role of the group in shaping individual and collective learning experiences. Drawing from Kurt Lewin's group theory, the chapter explores how groups function as dynamic entities, defined by interdependence rather than mere similarity among members. Through group-based learning, participants experience realistic, co-constructed knowledge that amplifies diverse perspectives, values individual differences, and promotes coexistence and social harmony.

Furthermore, outdoor education creates unique opportunities for collaboration and shared experiences, helping participants develop interpersonal skills, a strong sense of belonging, and mutual support. Participation is at the core of experiential learning, where learners take active ownership of their learning process. The facilitator plays a crucial role, not as a provider of pre-determined knowledge but as a guide who fosters balanced freedom and support, ensuring that each participant takes responsibility for their choices and contributes meaningfully to the group's goals.

By offering practical examples of roles and activities within group settings, this chapter highlights how structured group roles and autonomy in activities can stimulate creativity, leadership, and problem-solving. Active participation empowers individuals to engage deeply with the learning process, fostering personal growth, collaboration, and a sense of responsibility toward themselves, others, and their environment.

THE GROUP

A theory that bases the learning process on experience cannot neglect the interpersonal dimension and group dynamics that characterise human reality. As seen in the first module, the role of the group is crucial when it comes to experiential learning and outdoor education.

Kurt Lewin's group theory emphasizes that a group is not simply the sum of its individuals but an interconnected whole where each member's contributions are vital. This idea is essential for facilitating outdoor experiential learning, as it shows how group settings can mirror real-life social dynamics. For learners, experiencing this interdependence fosters skills such as collaboration, communication, and empathy.



Benefits of learning that takes place in groups

Group learning presents a wide range of advantages by reflecting the collaborative nature of real-world social interactions. In this setting, individuals contribute diverse perspectives, enriching the collective understanding and co-constructing new knowledge. This diversity promotes innovation, as different viewpoints challenge and expand thinking, allowing the group to reach insights that individuals might not achieve alone. The exchange of ideas is not only intellectually stimulating but also deeply collaborative, fostering a learning environment where participants support one another's growth.

This process highlights the importance of personal differences, as each member's unique contributions shape the group's dynamics. The mutual adaptation required in these interactions nurtures an inclusive space where individual strengths are recognized and integrated into the group's progress. As members work interdependently, they develop essential social skills such as cooperation, empathy, and the ability to coexist within a community that values everyone's input. The group's success relies on this balance, with individuals learning to adjust their actions to support both personal and collective goals.

Outdoor education further strengthens the benefits of group learning by immersing participants in a natural, open environment that encourages deeper connection and engagement. Nature itself becomes a powerful facilitator, promoting interaction and shared experiences that enhance the sense of belonging. Being outdoors fosters collaboration and allows for more organic, informal exchanges that help build trust and solidarity within the group. This context also encourages active participation and inclusion, as the natural setting invites members to engage not only with one another but with the environment around them.

Lieberman and Hoody (1998) highlight that outdoor learning experiences amplify these dynamics, as they cultivate a strong sense of community, mutual support, and enhanced interpersonal skills. In such settings, participants often experience a greater sense of unity and a deeper connection to both their peers and the natural world, which further enriches the learning process.



To sum up these are some of the highlights of learning that takes place in groups.

- It is realistic, because it reflects everyday social reality.
- It is co-constructed through living with others and the contribution of each individual member is important for the final result
- It is amplified: each individual can bring different points of view on the same situation and the group, as a whole, can come to further and new knowledge
- It values personal differences: dynamic interdependent relationships are created within the group based on the characteristics of the different members
- It trains in coexistence: interdependence between members causes the actions of individuals, and of the group, to adapt to the needs of others and of the group in order to maintain balance.

In conclusion, group learning, especially when combined with outdoor education, offers an enriching and inclusive experience. It enhances not only intellectual development but also community participation and environmental awareness, fostering a holistic approach to learning and personal growth.



Group picture during the second mobility while introducing a treasure hunt.

Groups setting from a pedagogical perspective

Beyond the benefits that group learning naturally offers, facilitators play a key role in designing activities and structuring the group to maximize its educational potential. This approach is based on observing both individuals and the group's unique dynamics.

By setting up activities that encourage shared learning, facilitators help participants appreciate different perspectives and understand the value of each person's contribution. For instance, during reflection sessions, facilitators can adjust the group size to ensure everyone, including quieter members, feels comfortable sharing their viewpoints.

Problem-solving exercises, for example, can be designed to showcase the importance of diverse skills and viewpoints, helping each member feel their input is essential to the group's success. In an outdoor expedition, participants select their own roles, allowing each person to choose a role where they feel confident or, if they wish, to challenge themselves by trying something outside their comfort zone.

Group Dynamics as a Reflective Tool

After group activities, it's essential to provide space for reflection. Facilitators can facilitate debrief sessions where participants discuss the group process, how they contributed, and what they learned about working together. This promotes metacognition, helping learners to internalise the value of interdependence and collaboration.



ACTIVE PARTICIPATION: EMPOWERING LEARNERS TO LEAD THEIR LEARNING

In all this, the active role of each individual member and of the group as a whole is clear. Participation is a foundation on which experiential learning is based, which sees the individual as the master of his or her own learning.

For group members to actively participate in knowledge formation, **a balance between support and freedom is required.** The facilitator's task is not to offer knowledge made and closed reflections. His or her objective must be to facilitate the creation of spaces and dynamics that help the development of certain learning and, in turn, continue learning ;)

During experiential learning activities we try to create spaces in which participants have the freedom to self-manage as they see fit, both with regard to organisational matters (such as the management of the living space) and the creation of certain activities. Leaving freedom to the participants makes them responsible for their own choices and the final outcome of the activity.

By experiencing at first hand the natural consequences of their choices and actions, the individual is encouraged to develop greater awareness and responsibility towards themselves, others and their surroundings (Hattie et al. 1997).

Active participation is the cornerstone of experiential learning. In this context, learners take an active role in shaping their experiences, making decisions, and reflecting on the outcomes. For facilitators, fostering an environment where participants feel empowered to engage, make choices, and take responsibility is key to developing autonomy and leadership skills.



Communitary participation activity to improve the wall of the school in Lahra by painting it all together during the second mobility.

Freedom with Support

The balance between autonomy and guidance is crucial. While participants should be free to explore and make decisions, the facilitator's role is to create a structured environment where learning outcomes are clear, and support is available when needed. Facilitators should aim to step back, allowing learners to take ownership, while remaining observant and ready to intervene if necessary.

DESIGNING FOR DIVERSITY: ENHANCING GROUP PARTICIPATION

It is essential to consider the characteristics of the group when designing activities, especially to promote participation and inclusion. Each member brings unique abilities, preferences, and levels of motivation, all of which influence group dynamics. By tailoring activities to the specific needs of the group, leaders can ensure that everyone feels valued and included, regardless of their background or personality. This focus on inclusivity not only fosters a sense of belonging but also encourages even the more reserved members to participate actively, creating a more cohesive and supportive learning environment for all.

The group must be large enough to embrace diversity and allow for constructive conflict, yet small enough to avoid fragmentation into subgroups where problems are solved in isolation. A well-sized group creates an environment of reciprocity and cooperation, where each member's strengths are emphasized, fostering a culture of mutual support and care. Monitoring individual participation is crucial; if certain members frequently remain on the sidelines during activities or discussions, forming smaller subgroups can help more introverted individuals engage more openly.

Cohesion within the group encourages moments of genuine sharing and emotional expression, creating a comfortable environment that promotes personal growth (Kimball & Bacon, 1993). This atmosphere fosters autonomy, decision-making, skill acquisition, and self-reflection (Walsh & Golins, 1976). Mutual trust and care among group members have been shown to significantly impact the success of the program. Introducing group experiences that promote collaboration and a sense of belonging strengthens these bonds. Initial team-building exercises are particularly helpful in breaking the ice, and team activities allow each member to find a role suited to their abilities and interests.

The characteristics of the participants are essential in shaping the group experience. Flexibility in planning is key, as activities must adapt to the group's unique needs and traits. For example, Hattie et al. (1997) found that the age of participants influenced outcomes, with adults benefiting more than adolescents, potentially due to differences



in willingness to engage. Given that outdoor education is often rooted in a philosophy of "challenge by choice," willingness to participate becomes a critical factor. Building motivation and designing activities in collaboration with participants, tailored to their interests, ensures the experience is both engaging and effective.

The Role of the Facilitator: Balancing Leadership and Neutrality

Creating inclusive and participatory learning spaces is one of the key roles of a facilitator. The facilitator plays a crucial role in designing environments where all members can contribute, engage, and develop valuable learning experiences. Their task is not only to guide the group but to ensure that everyone, regardless of their abilities or perspectives, feels included and valued. To achieve this, facilitators must be flexible, attentive to group dynamics, and committed to fostering a sense of belonging and cohesion within the group.

Nacho Garcia (n.d) identifies four essential functions that a facilitator should fulfill:

- **Leadership:** The facilitator must be committed to promoting a positive group climate and cohesion. This means creating an atmosphere where participants feel safe, respected, and encouraged to contribute.
- **Production:** Facilitators help the group achieve its goals by selecting and planning appropriate activities. They observe the group closely, taking its characteristics into account, and adjust the process to ensure effective progress.
- **Regulation:** Mediating and managing exchanges between members is key to maintaining a productive and balanced environment. Facilitators intervene when needed to resolve conflicts, ensuring that communication remains respectful and that every voice is heard.
- **Facilitation:** In complex or challenging situations, the facilitator's role is to manage difficulties and propose solutions to help the group move forward. This requires being aware of what is happening in the group and responding in a way that promotes progress.

According to Rossana Von Sacken (Garcia, N et al n.d), effective facilitation involves actively engaging with participants, adapting activities to meet their needs, and focusing on the process rather than dictating content or outcomes. The facilitator remains neutral in terms of the content of discussions but plays an active role in guiding the group toward its objectives.

In this role, the facilitator ensures that every participant has the opportunity to contribute and learn from shared experiences. This approach highlights the importance of considering the group's characteristics and dynamics to foster inclusivity. By being mindful of these elements, facilitators can create environments where meaningful learning can emerge organically from the group, rather than being imposed from the outside. As facilitators, their role is to support and guide the process, ensuring that everyone can participate fully and that the group works together effectively to reach its goals.

Leadership in Group Climate

The facilitator's primary task is to cultivate a positive group atmosphere where members feel safe, supported, and valued. This involves being attuned to the group's dynamics, mediating conflicts, and guiding the group toward collaboration and shared objectives. In outdoor settings, this role is particularly important, as the physical environment often demands heightened cooperation and mutual support.

Facilitation Tip

Start with team-building activities that break the ice and establish trust among participants. Gradually introduce more complex tasks that require deeper collaboration, ensuring that the group feels comfortable enough to express ideas, solve problems, and work through conflicts.

Challenges and the Role of the facilitator

Facilitating group learning can present challenges, particularly when some participants struggle with complete freedom or feel overwhelmed by responsibility. As an facilitator, it's crucial to be observant and ready to offer support when needed. Not all learners thrive in unstructured environments, and some may require more guidance to navigate group dynamics.

- **Intervention with Purpose:** When stepping in to support the group, facilitators should do so with the intention of guiding the learning process, not directing it. This might mean offering suggestions, posing reflective questions, or helping the group clarify its goals. The key is to remain focused on fostering independence, even while offering temporary structure.
- **Inclusivity:** Always keep an eye on group dynamics to ensure that all voices are heard. Sometimes, breaking the group into smaller subgroups can help more introverted or hesitant participants feel comfortable contributing.



GROUP ROLES: FOSTERING LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

Group roles are a practical tool for encouraging active participation and helping learners understand the importance of leadership, responsibility, and community. By assigning specific roles—such as the guide, caretaker, or motivator—facilitators can ensure that each participant contributes to the group’s success while developing their own leadership skills.

- **Rotating Roles:** To maximize learning, encourage participants to switch roles throughout the course of the activity. This allows each member to experience different responsibilities, fostering flexibility, adaptability, and empathy for the challenges others face in their roles.
- **Pedagogical Benefits:** Structured roles help participants learn to lead, manage resources, and think strategically about group needs. Additionally, roles such as the "environmental steward" instill a sense of responsibility toward nature, enhancing environmental awareness and promoting sustainable behaviors.

We have talked about the role of the facilitator, but how many roles can we have within a group?

In groups, different roles develop among participants. Some of these are created spontaneously through the personal characteristics of each person and of the group, others are chosen ‘officially’ through an agreement between the participants and serve to clarify everyone’s tasks. The fact is that all participants perform a function and actively participate in the experience. The richness of the group lies precisely in the interpersonal differences that create interdependence by having everyone play a different role, as in a small community.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR FACILITATING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Active participation extends beyond merely assigning roles or tasks. It’s about creating opportunities for learners to engage deeply with their environment, with each other, and with the learning process itself. Here are some strategies for fostering active participation:

- **Co-Creation of Activities:** Involve participants in planning and leading activities. This not only empowers them but also ensures that the activities are tailored to their interests and motivations, increasing engagement. Good examples of activities that foster active participation could be the development of local actions or the opportunity to manage a whole expedition, from logistics to the choice of route or the activities to energise it.
- **Group Decision-Making:** Encourage group discussions and democratic decision-making processes during the activity. This teaches participants negotiation skills, compromise, and the value of diverse perspectives.
- **Reflection and Feedback:** Create regular opportunities for reflection, allowing participants to share their insights and provide feedback on both the process and the outcomes. Reflection fosters personal and group learning, as well as continuous improvement in how individuals interact and contribute.

A practical example

Regarding ‘formal’ roles, in our activities we try to facilitate common roles and actions that allow participants to develop leadership and active participation.

As a way to step out of the comfort zone we encourage participants to choose a role that they are not so familiar with. It is interesting to encourage participants to change or take on new roles in order to increase active participation and foster a sense of belonging to the group. Moreover, we recommend fostering communication between different roles and remembering that everyone is responsible and accountable for the outcome of the process.

In conclusion, active participation allows everyone to be the master of their own learning, as well as stimulating creativity, problem-solving, coping skills and decision-making processes. Having freedom and being able to decide also means having more responsibility for what happens, without always being able to place the success or failure of an event outside oneself.

As long as the causes and solutions of everything that happens are placed outside, it will be difficult to find motivation to act.

Our aim is to empower the participant and increase the sense of effectiveness, showing that everyone in their own small way can leave a trace.



For example, these are some of the roles we propose during our group nature expeditions:



Guide - takes care of the technical part of navigation to get from one place to another. Moreover, it focus on favouring a pace that suits everyone, proposing stops and breaks in the best ideal moments and places or to offer a whole perspective of the route and weather forecast at the beginning of the route.

Caretaker - takes care of the group, paying attention to their needs and characteristics. This role is essential and requires a lot of communication between the other roles to be able to analyse the atmosphere and mood of the group and to act accordingly.



Motivator - acts as a motivator for the group. This role is essential to start the adventure and specially in difficult situations such as challenging weather conditions or high demanding parts of the trails. Moreover, it can be a great support for the caretakers.



Equipment - takes care of the material used during the activity, its care and distribution among the participants. This role is responsible to check if every person in the group needs any particular extra material, to have a clear track of who has what and it can help to show the use of some of the materials such as hiking poles or tarps.

Leaving no trace - is in charge of facilitating and supervising the running of the activities, paying attention to the care of the environment. It's important to highlight that this role is not a walking trash bag but it's the responsibility to be sure that as a group we can minimise the impact on the environment and maybe even create a positive impact.



Time keeper - has the task of encouraging the group to respect the previously established timetables. This role can be implemented in several ways but is important to remind to promote a good atmosphere in the group. It may bring proposals or ideas that helps everyone to be on time.

Shepherd - checks that no one is left behind in the path. This role could be of significant importance especially when there are different paces in the group as it can help the guides and caretakers to favour a smooth walking pace adapting to the different rhythms and facilitating the flow of the hike.



CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 underscores the vital role of group dynamics and active participation in experiential learning within outdoor settings. The group serves as a dynamic, interdependent entity, where individuals learn not only through personal reflection but also through the shared experiences and contributions of others. This collaborative atmosphere nurtures a sense of belonging, mutual respect, and shared responsibility, which are essential to fostering inclusion.

The facilitator's role is pivotal in creating a balance between freedom and guidance, allowing participants to take ownership of their learning journey while ensuring the group remains cohesive and purposeful. Structured activities, along with flexible roles, enhance engagement and collaboration, while encouraging autonomy. By empowering participants to actively contribute, outdoor experiential learning promotes self-awareness, responsibility, and the ability to face real-world challenges.

Ultimately, active participation and a well-facilitated group dynamic create opportunities for personal growth and collective success, fostering inclusion, resilience, and collaboration in both learning and life.

KEY IDEAS OF THE CHAPTER:

- ➔ **Group Dynamics as a Learning Tool:** Group learning in outdoor settings goes beyond individual experiences. Interdependence within the group allows for co-constructed knowledge, diverse perspectives, and personal growth, all while reflecting real-life social dynamics.
- ➔ **Active Participation in Learning:** Participation is foundational in experiential learning. By taking ownership of their actions and decisions, participants learn responsibility, develop problem-solving skills, and engage more meaningfully with the group and the environment.
- ➔ **The Facilitator's Role:** The facilitator is key to balancing freedom and structure within the group. They ensure that activities are meaningful and adapted to the group's needs, while encouraging individual responsibility and engagement.
- ➔ **Structured and Flexible Roles in the Group:** Assigning formal and informal roles within a group helps distribute responsibility and fosters leadership, collaboration, and active involvement. These roles allow participants to engage in various aspects of the learning process, promoting group cohesion and individual accountability.
- ➔ **Empowerment through Outdoor Education:** Outdoor experiential learning empowers participants by allowing them to manage tasks, make decisions, and take responsibility for outcomes, fostering independence, self-confidence, and a sense of belonging within the group.



PATHWAYS TO INCLUSION



Inclusion in experiential outdoor learning is about ensuring that every individual, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or background, can fully participate and thrive in nature-based activities. This chapter explores the concept of inclusion, distinguishing it from integration, segregation, and exclusion, while emphasizing the importance of creating accessible outdoor environments. By fostering inclusive outdoor educational experiences, we provide equal opportunities for personal growth, connection to nature, and community engagement.

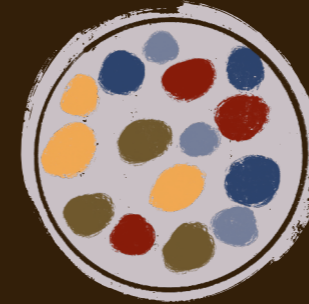
Outdoor learning offers transformative experiences, promoting academic performance, personal development, and environmental awareness. However, ensuring inclusivity requires intentional efforts to overcome barriers related to accessibility, cultural diversity, and disability. This chapter will address how to create inclusive outdoor programs through adaptations and intercultural understanding, ultimately fostering a sense of belonging and respect for all participants.

Inclusion

Inclusion is seen as a universal human right. The aim of inclusion is to embrace all people regardless of their ethnic group, gender, disability, medical or other need. It is about giving equal access and opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and intolerance. It affects all aspects of public life.

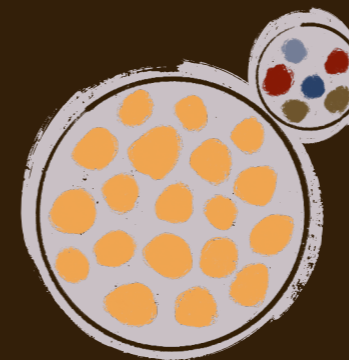
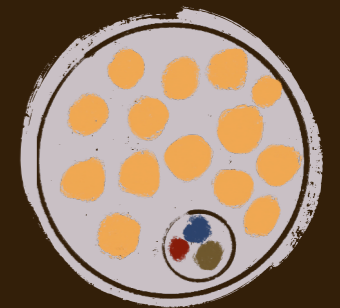


Inclusion, Integration, Segregation, and Exclusion: understanding the key differences



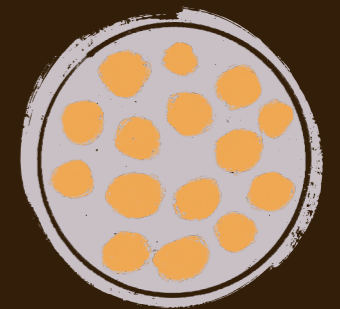
Inclusion involves the creation of environments where differences are embraced, and equity among people is promoted. In an inclusive society, it is the context that adapts to the needs of individuals, ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities, regardless of their ethnic group, religion, ethnicity, or abilities. Rather than expecting individuals to conform to a 'normalised' standard, inclusion focuses on their unique strengths and capacities. It is based on the principles of fairness and cooperation, valuing each person as they are without trying to fit them into a predefined model of being, thinking, or acting.

According to the concept of **integration**, the prevailing idea of 'normality' is maintained, and individuals are expected to adapt to the established societal norms. Those who succeed in conforming to these norms are considered part of the society. In contrast to inclusion, where the context adapts to the needs and characteristics of individuals, integration emphasizes the individual's responsibility to fit into the pre-existing framework. The more aligned they are with these standards, the more integrated they are deemed to be.



Segregation occurs when marginalised individuals are placed in separate environments specifically designed to address their particular differences isolating them from the broader society. This separation reinforces their exclusion from mainstream opportunities and interactions, rather than fostering an inclusive environment where diversity is embraced.

Exclusion begins with the notion that there are "normal" people and others who do not fit this category. As a result, individuals with functional, cultural, or ethnic differences are often marginalised and not seen as part of this "normality". Terms and labels that imply inferiority—whether related to disability, origin, or cultural practices—reinforce these divides, stripping people of basic rights and hindering their full participation in society.



EXPLORING INCLUSION IN OUTDOOR EDUCATION

We have seen how outdoor education is an approach that can promote the inclusion and participation of young people in community life, but not only.

Inclusive outdoor learning is an educational approach that ensures everyone, regardless of their abilities, background, or differences, has the opportunity to engage with the natural world. Outdoor education offers a unique way to learn that goes beyond traditional classroom settings, making it accessible for individuals who may struggle with conventional learning methods, such as sitting still and reading from a book.

By including natural environments, outdoor education opens doors to diverse pathways for understanding concepts, accommodating various learning styles. This inclusivity fosters personal development and promotes environmental responsibility.

Through the intentional design of engaging outdoor educational experiences, program organisers and facilitators can provide participants with transformational opportunities for personal and academic growth. Furthermore, by identifying and overcoming barriers related to access and equity, it is possible to ensure that every young person has the opportunity to engage in the outdoors and strengthen their connection to the natural world.

It is evident that we do not all learn in the same way; what may be perceived as a 'problem' student in a traditional classroom can often emerge as a true leader in outdoor activities.

Several studies show that Outdoor Education (OE) brings significant benefits to individuals with special needs or emotional, behavioral, and psychological difficulties. Outdoor activities, when personalised, can have a positive impact on these groups (Cason and Gillis 1994). The characteristics of natural environments, such as opportunities for relaxation and inner connection, are particularly beneficial for enhancing overall well-being.

In general, outdoor experiences are more effective than other activities in enhancing concentration and mental well-being, regardless of age, gender, diagnosis, or socioeconomic conditions (Kuo & Taylor 2004). OE also fosters the development of interpersonal skills and a sense of belonging, improving communication and group adaptation. This is evident in both at-risk students and those without specific difficulties, boosting motivation, self-control, and self-confidence (Lieberman & Hoody 1998).

Our associations are continuously working to develop tools and knowledge that make our activities increasingly inclusive, especially by engaging people with fewer opportunities, such as individuals with disabilities or those from challenging socio-economic situations and diverse cultural backgrounds.

We will now explore some topics that are important to us when making the effort to be inclusive.

Interculturality

When talking about the inclusion of people from different socio-cultural backgrounds we must think on this concept: interculturality.

Interculturality is the interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect. It is the ability to experience the culture of another person and to be open minded, interested, and curious about that person and culture.

Reflecting on experiences in which learners interact with others of different cultures helps them to analyse and learn from each experience. Intercultural experiences provide the most meaningful opportunities for developing capacity in a language.

Intercultural learning is crucial for social transformation, allowing people from different backgrounds to establish positive relations based on human rights values and an understanding of cultural differences.

Interculturality vs Multiculturalism: understanding the key differences

- **Multiculturalism:** Refers to a society with multiple cultural or ethnic groups living alongside each other, often without engaging interactions.
- **Interculturality:** Describes communities with a deep understanding and respect for all cultures, focusing on mutual exchange and the development of relationships.



Interculturality is more likely to occur in local contexts for several reasons:

- Proximity: Local environments often bring together diverse groups of people, whether through migration, tourism, or community events; creating opportunities for direct interaction and exchange.
- Everyday Interactions: Local settings, such as markets, schools, and neighborhoods, foster everyday encounters that allow individuals from different cultural backgrounds to engage, share experiences, and build relationships.
- Shared Spaces: Public spaces, like parks and community centers, facilitate gatherings and social activities where cultural expressions can blend, allowing for a more organic integration of diverse traditions and practices.
- Cultural Adaptation: In local contexts, individuals are often more adaptable and open to learning from one another, leading to a blending of cultural practices and norms that enrich the community.
- Collective Identity: Local communities often develop a shared identity that incorporates elements from various cultures, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect among residents.
- Grassroots Initiatives: Local organizations and initiatives often promote intercultural dialogue and cooperation, encouraging residents to celebrate diversity and engage in cultural exchanges.
- Economic Interdependence: Local economies often rely on the contributions of diverse cultural groups, creating a practical incentive for collaboration and intercultural understanding.

These factors make local contexts fertile ground for intercultural interactions, leading to richer and more dynamic community experiences.

Intercultural learning

Intercultural learning is crucial for social transformation, allowing people from different backgrounds to establish positive relations based on human rights values and understanding of cultural differences. It requires considering various aspects like power relations, resource distribution, human rights, and daily interactions.

In order to introduce interculturality on the project, it can be quite useful to use training and workshops as a tool from which we can gain some interculturality aspects.

- Diversity and Inclusion Training: Offer training on intercultural competence covering cultural awareness, communication, and managing cultural differences.
- Team Building: Encourage participants from diverse backgrounds to share cultural perspectives and values, promoting mutual understanding and trust.
- Cultural Exchange and Diversity: Organise events for participants to share cultural traditions and engage in cross-cultural interactions.
- Conflict Resolution and Mediation: Develop mechanisms to address and resolve intercultural conflicts, providing training in conflict resolution and mediation techniques.

The importance of curiosity toward other cultures is central to promoting cultural inclusion, and it is rooted in the idea of mutual growth and understanding. For individuals living in a country different from their own, there is often a necessity to learn a new language, adapt to unfamiliar traditions, and navigate new ways of life to integrate into the society around them. This daily challenge requires significant effort in learning and adaptation.

However, inclusion is not a one-way process. It's not just about teaching newcomers how to adjust to the culture of their new country; it's equally about being eager to learn from them. Demonstrating curiosity about their traditions, stories, and worldviews enriches the experience for everyone involved and acknowledges the significance of their backgrounds. When we express genuine interest in what others bring with them—such as their customs, languages, and perspectives—we not only make them feel valued and welcomed, but we also create fertile ground for mutual growth.

In this way, diverse cultures do not merely coexist; they interact and influence each other, making the community richer and more complete. Showing curiosity about other cultures helps to highlight their reality as an integral part of society, affirming that their presence and traditions not only matter but are fundamentally important to collective life.

This approach fosters a sense of belonging and appreciation, allowing everyone to contribute to and benefit from a shared cultural perspective.





PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

According to the World Health Organization, disability is part of being human. Almost everyone will temporarily or permanently experience disability at some point in their life. An estimated 1.3 billion people – about 16% of the global population – currently experience significant disability.

Disability results from the interaction between individuals with a health condition with personal and environmental factors including negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social support.

Disability is characterised as the outcome or the result of a complex relationship between an individual's health condition and personal factors and of the external factors that represent the circumstances in which the individual lives.

Often, people with disabilities are seen as a single group, but in reality, there are many differences among them. It's not just about "disabled" individuals, but about unique people with different experiences and needs. Each person has their own story and challenges, so it's important to recognize this diversity and treat each individual as such, rather than using a generic label.

Disability can be represented as a culture, though the range of differences among the disabled is enormous. The disabled community is the most diverse there is. (Brown, S. 2002)

Nicole Bianquin and Daniela Bulgarelli (2017) describe the following major disability categories:

- Mental or intellectual disability: the intellectual disability, the global developmental delay, and the unspecified intellectual disability.
- Hearing impairments (partially hearing impaired – deaf): Hearing loss that prevents a person from totally receiving sounds through the ear
- Visual impairments (partially sighted – blind): It is a functional limitation of the vision system, which cannot be recovered by usual means (glasses, for instance).
- Communication disorders (language disorders): It includes deficits in language, speech, and communication.
- Physical impairments (mild, moderate, severe): Includes deficits in motor and movement skills such as coordination or balance.



- Autism spectrum disorder
- Multiple disabilities: Multiple disabilities show combination of concomitant impairments at physical, motor, intellectual, sensory, or communicative level.

Some tools for accessible activities

Adapted physical activities have been developed and used by physical activity professionals to help make basic physical sport accessible to people with disabilities. When designing adapted physical activities the following guidelines can provide a starting point for deciding how to assess what needs to be changed to create a successful physical activity.

This includes:

- Task Adaptation
- Equipment Adaptation
- Environment Adaptation
- Instruction and Rule Adaptation

Some examples of this adaptation, especially the equipment adaptation, we saw it during the first Nomada Blended Mobility in Madrid when we had the opportunity to talk with “Bukaneros Solidarios”, a spanish association that organizes hiking expeditions focusing on people with visual impairments. They showed us some materials that they use to be able to guide safely those participants with visual impairments:



Group Picture with Bukaneros Solidarios (an association composed of blind people that go to the mountains)



Guiding Bar: These bars are used to guide a person with visual impairment along the path. There are 3 people holding the bar: one guide at the front who must be able to see and hear. Then, in the middle, the person with the visual impairment, and at the back there should be another guide or a person with visual impairment.



Blind-NW: Related to “nordic walking”, Blind-NW is a tool that consists of two belts joined by two elastic rods that are sufficiently rigid to allow the person with the visually impairment to follow the movements of their guide.



Furthermore, during that mobility, we had the chance to explore a tool called **JOËLETTE chair**. This is a wheelchair with a single wheel, which allows people with a motor disability to go hiking with the help of at least two guides.

It is important to emphasise that before using these tools with people with disabilities, one must be trained to use them and run professional courses so as not to put people in risky situations.

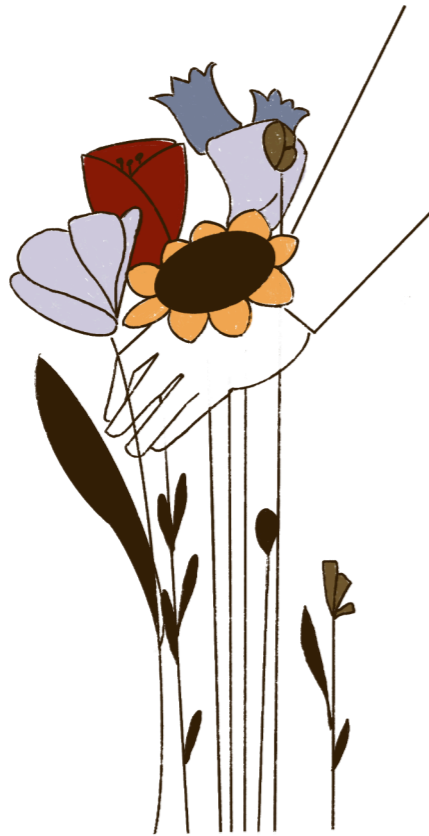


Humanity is fragility

In his book "Nascere Fragili," Vittorino Andreoli emphasizes that fragility is a common condition for all of us. The inclusion of individuals with labels, such as disabilities or learning difficulties, is not only an act of social justice but also enriches the entire community. The tools and approaches used to address special needs can be extremely beneficial for those without such labels, as they offer alternative methodologies that cater to different learning styles.

These inclusive environments stimulate creativity and critical thinking, allowing everyone to learn more effectively. Furthermore, they promote the development of essential social skills such as empathy and solidarity, thus preparing individuals to thrive in a pluralistic society.

In summary, valuing diversity and adopting inclusive approaches not only supports those in need but also enriches the experience of everyone, creating opportunities for collective growth.



GOOD PRACTICES FOR INCLUSION

When aiming to make an experience inclusive, it's essential to consider various factors to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, or circumstances, feel valued, respected, and able to fully participate. Some tips we can consider:

- **Participants:** It is very difficult to create an activity that is accessible to everyone. Always inform yourself about your participants and their special needs (even when they do not carry a special needs label).
- **Diversity:** Diversity represents an added value to the group and should be regarded as something that enriches learning.
- **Accessibility and Equity:** Always provide different tools, modalities and materials to enable everyone to actively participate and be included regardless of their abilities, economic resources and knowledge. It is important for everyone to participate in their own way.
- **Language and Communication:** There are many ways to communicate, do not see language as a barrier but as a learning opportunity. Self-expression can be explored in different ways. You can 'talk' about deep things through simplicity.
- **Inclusive Design:** Incorporate principles of universal design to create learning spaces, tools, and resources that are usable and accessible to people with diverse abilities and needs from the outset, rather than retrofitting them later.
- **Sensitivity and Respect:** One must always be aware of different life experiences and cultural backgrounds. Do not be fooled by your interpretative framework and be open to diversity.
- **Feedback and Reflection:** Always be open to growth. The best way to promote inclusion is by building activities 'WITH' people and not 'for' people. It is important to often ask for feedback from participants and reflect on it constructively.



CONCLUSION

Inclusion in experiential outdoor learning goes beyond mere physical participation; it fosters a deeper sense of belonging, respect, and mutual understanding among participants of all abilities and backgrounds. By removing barriers and creating accessible and equitable outdoor environments, we not only enhance the learning experience but also promote social cohesion, empathy, and personal development. The chapter has explored how inclusive outdoor education can empower individuals, regardless of their abilities or circumstances, to connect with nature, develop essential life skills, and experience transformative growth.

KEY IDEAS OF THE CHAPTER:

- ➔ **Inclusion vs. Integration and Segregation:** Inclusion is distinct from integration and segregation, as it seeks to create an environment where all individuals are valued for their unique capabilities, not just their ability to conform to societal norms. It focuses on fairness, cooperation, and acceptance of differences.
- ➔ **Inclusive Outdoor Learning:** Outdoor education provides opportunities for all individuals to engage with nature. When designed inclusively, these experiences enhance performance, promote personal growth, and foster environmental responsibility, all while reducing isolation and loneliness.
- ➔ **Interculturality in Outdoor Learning:** Embracing interculturality is essential for creating inclusive outdoor programs. By promoting mutual respect, understanding, and open dialogue between diverse cultural groups, outdoor learning can serve as a powerful tool for social transformation and cooperation.
- ➔ **Adapting Outdoor Activities for People with Disabilities:** Making outdoor experiences accessible to people with disabilities requires thoughtful adaptations in tasks, equipment, and environments. Examples like the use of guiding bars, Blind-NW tools, and JOËLETTE chairs illustrate how inclusion can be practically achieved, ensuring that everyone can safely and fully participate.
- ➔ **The Broader Benefits of Inclusive Outdoor Education:** Beyond individual growth, inclusive outdoor education fosters a sense of community, encourages interpersonal skills, and supports the development of self-confidence, motivation, and self-control in participants, regardless of their background or challenges.



HOW TO DO OUTDOOR EDUCATION ACTIVITIES



The final chapter of this manual offers practical steps for designing and implementing outdoor education learning activities. This chapter provides a straightforward guide for facilitators, covering essential preparation, managing activities on-site, and reflecting afterward to create a meaningful experience for all participants.

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY: SETTING THE FOUNDATION

Thorough preparation is the key to a successful outdoor education experience. This phase includes gathering necessary participant information, planning logistics, building a cohesive team, and ensuring safety measures are in place.

Participants

Before the activity begins, collect relevant information about participants. This includes:

- **Info-pack:** Prepare an information packet detailing the activity schedule, safety protocols, and any additional guidelines that participants need to follow.
- **Forms:** Collect forms regarding participants' health, allergies, special needs, and emergency contacts.
- **Minimum Conditions:** Set minimum participation requirements to ensure the activity can proceed safely, such as fitness levels or essential equipment.

Preparation by the Team

The team responsible for organising the activity must work together to create a strong and clear structure for the event. Key steps include:

- **Build a Team and Spirit:** Develop teamwork through trust-building activities, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment.
- **Collaborative Program Creation:** Co-create the program with input from all team members to reflect their strengths and participants' needs.
- **Task Allocation:** Assign specific roles and responsibilities, ensuring each team member knows their duties.
- **Objectives:** Clearly define the learning objectives for the activity, such as developing leadership skills, improving environmental awareness, or fostering resilience.

- **Detailed Program:** Create a detailed plan with activities, timelines, and resources. Don't forget a Plan B to address unexpected changes like weather conditions or health issues.
- **Training:** Provide necessary training for all facilitators, including First Aid Training, navigation skills, and handling equipment.

Logistics

Logistics ensure smooth and efficient operations throughout the program:

- **Board and Lodging:** Arrange appropriate accommodation and meals for the duration of the activity.
- **Prospect the area:** Explore carefully the area in which you will implement your activities. This will help you to foresee possible inconveniences and provide you ideas to adapt your activities. By implementing activity in nature close to your community you can promote a sense of belonging and engagement in the protection of the environment. It's important to be aware and respect the laws, especially in protected areas.
- **Travel Details and Maps:** Provide accurate travel plans, distribute maps, and offer guidance for reaching the location.
- **Survival Apps & Materials:** Equip the team with survival tools like map apps and power banks. Gather essential materials for games, shelter, and personal survival (e.g., first aid kits). Apps like Mapy.cz to create safe routes or Meteoblue to check weather forecasts could be essential allies for your team.
- **Finances:** Ensure the availability of necessary funds or emergency money (bank card) for unforeseen expenses.



DURING THE ACTIVITY: BRINGING THE PLAN TO LIFE

Once on-site, effective management, safety, and flexibility are vital to ensuring participants have a positive and impactful experience.

Participants

Maintain a focus on participant well-being throughout the activity:

- **Luggage & Clothing:** Ensure participants are equipped with the appropriate gear (e.g., weatherproof clothing, hiking boots).
- **Food:** Offer balanced, nutritious meals that account for dietary restrictions.
- **Well-being & Safety:** Regularly check in with participants, monitor for signs of fatigue or discomfort, and keep security protocols in place.

Execution of the Program

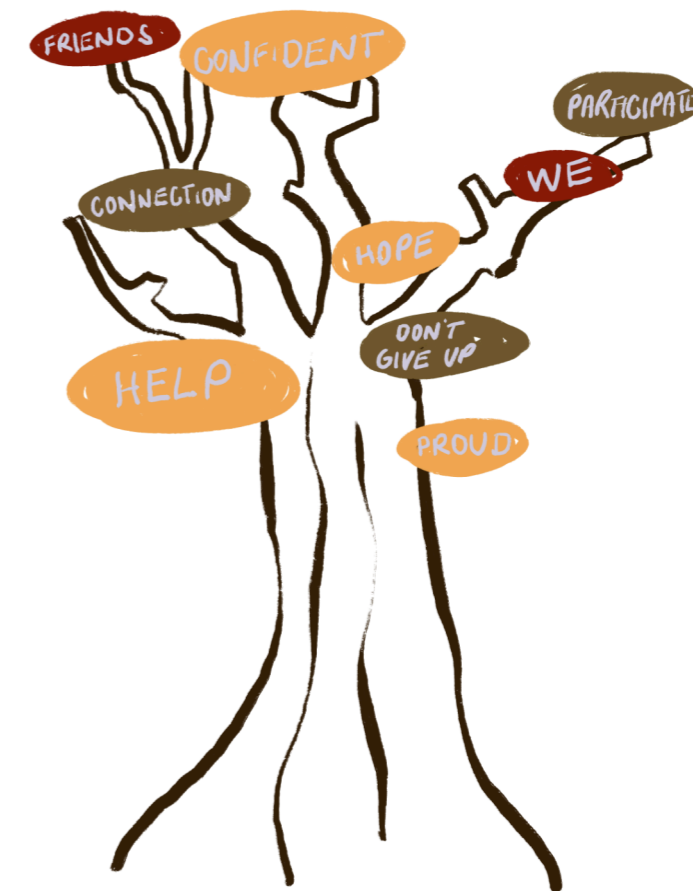
To deliver a well-structured activity:

- **Detailed Responsibilities:** Make sure team members know their specific responsibilities, such as leading activities or supervising groups.
- **Flexibility & Adaptability:** Be ready to adapt the schedule or rules to accommodate unforeseen circumstances, like changes in weather or group dynamics.
- **Communication:** Establish clear lines of communication between team leaders and participants, particularly during activities such as hiking, where leaders at the front and back of the group coordinate for safety.
- **Plan B in Action:** Stay ready to implement contingency plans, such as alternative routes or activities in case of emergencies or injuries.

Evaluation During the Activity

Evaluate the participants' experiences regularly:

- **Check-in Points:** During breaks, gather feedback and ensure everyone is coping well with the physical and mental demands of the activity.
- **Reflection Methods:** Use creative tools like DIXIT cards, Emotion Cards, or evaluation trees to facilitate participant reflections on their experiences. These tools encourage open expression and deeper reflection, helping participants articulate their feelings and insights.



AFTER THE ACTIVITY: REFLECTION AND LEARNING

The learning doesn't end once the activity concludes. The post-activity phase is crucial for processing the experience and integrating the lessons learned into participants' personal and professional lives.

Group Reflection and Debrief

Reflection is a powerful tool for learning, and it should be an integral part of the post-activity process:

- **Group Reflection Session:** Encourage participants to share their experiences, insights, and feelings about the activity. This fosters a sense of community and allows them to learn from each other.
- **Debriefing:** A structured debriefing allows facilitators to lead discussions on the challenges and successes of the activity. It is also an opportunity to relate the experience to the application of the learning in everyday life.
- **Celebratory Meal or Snack:** Sharing a meal as a group creates a relaxed environment for participants to bond and reflect informally on the day's activities.

Here we introduce you to the processing model developed by Terry Borton and that could be quite helpful to lead a reflection:

What?

This question focuses on the past and the description of what happened. Some questions that may help to spark reflections are:

What happened?; what did you notice?; what worked well and what didn't? Who was involved? What did you do?

So what?

This question helps us to focus on the present, analysing thoughts, emotions and feelings. These questions may help to go deeper:

How did you feel when...? What could have motivated your response? Why could other people have reacted as they did? What caused this event? What other insights can you get from the experience?

Now what?

The last question focuses on the future and what are the possible next steps according to the new knowledge generated. Here are some questions that might help to develop this concept:

What lessons do you take from this experience?; How can you apply them in similar contexts or situations?; What would you do differently in a similar situation?; What can help you to be more prepared to face a similar experience?

Recognizing Achievements

Celebrate the group's accomplishments:

- **Awards or Recognition:** Recognize individual contributions and group achievements, whether through certificates or symbolic awards.
- **Rest and Relaxation:** Allow time for participants to relax after the activity, ensuring they leave with a positive, refreshed mindset.

Closing the Experience

End the experience on a reflective and meaningful note:




- **Feedback Collection:** Gather participant feedback to assess the activity's success and identify areas for improvement. This feedback will be invaluable for planning future activities.
- **Closure Ritual:** Organize a symbolic closure ritual—such as a circle or moment of silence—to give participants a sense of closure and help them transition back to everyday life.



CONCLUSION

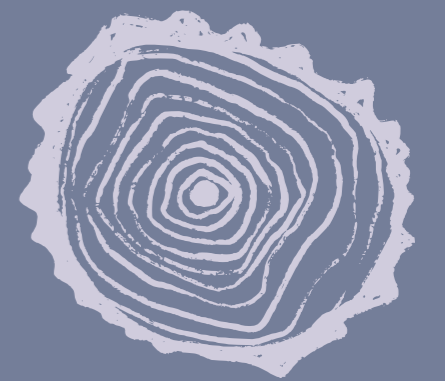
This chapter underscores the importance of meticulous planning, attentive implementation, and reflective learning in outdoor experiential education. By fostering an inclusive environment and focusing on participant safety and engagement, facilitators can create impactful learning experiences that resonate beyond the activity itself. Through structured reflection, participants are encouraged to internalise their experiences, building skills and perspectives that enhance both their personal and professional lives.

KEY IDEAS OF THE CHAPTER:

-  **Setting the Stage for Success:** Careful planning and preparation lay the groundwork, including gathering participant information, defining roles, and organising logistics to ensure a smooth and safe experience.
-  **Guiding a Flexible Experience:** During the activity, focus on participant safety, adaptability, and open communication to keep the experience positive and responsive to needs and conditions.
-  **Reflecting for Lasting Impact:** Facilitate structured reflections to help participants process and apply their insights, celebrate achievements, and gather feedback to improve future activities.



ANNEX - EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITY



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: BUILDING A BIVOUAC

AGE: Suitable for individuals aged from 8 years old

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Open to all present individuals. Ideal to be divided in groups of maximum 5 participants.

LOCATION: Outdoors, garden located within the property

TIME: 30 - 45 min

OBJECTIVES:

- Foster enjoyment and cooperation within the entire group.
- Facilitate mutual acquaintance among group members.
- Engage in various forms of knowledge, experiences, and exercises.
- Get familiar with the camping material.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

Divide participants into teams, each consisting of 3 to 5 members.

Each team will be able to create their own shelter using the materials provided. They will have to decide where the best place is in the designated area to build their shelter. Before starting, participants will spend a few minutes observing and interacting with the natural surroundings, noticing how natural elements (trees, rocks, etc.) could aid in the construction.

In order to complete the task participants will have 15 minutes.

Each group is encouraged to incorporate natural materials they find, such as fallen branches, leaves, or stones, into their shelter design, while being mindful of not disturbing the environment.

Once the time has finished, each group will present their own shelter and explain its different features.

VARIATIONS:

The difficulty of the game can be regulated through the introduction of several handicaps, such as no talking allowed. Moreover, handicaps can be assigned to each participant of the group (half of the group will be blindfolded and able to interact with the materials, the other half will be able to see but not interact with the materials).

To increase the challenge and connection to nature, you can also add the requirement to use only naturally found materials in combination with the provided tarp and rope.

MATERIALS:

- Tarp (1 per group)
- Yute rope (at least 6 different size pieces per group)

EXTRA MATERIAL:

Walking sticks, tent pegs and any naturally collected materials such as fallen branches, stones, or leaves.

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: ORIENTEERING RACE

AGE: Suitable for individuals aged from 6 years old

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Open to all present individuals. Ideal to be divided in groups of maximum 5 participants.

LOCATION: Outdoors, garden located within the property

TIME: 1h 30 - 2h

OBJECTIVES:

- Discover and explore a specific area.
- Introduce meaningful topics.
- Foster the cohesion in the group and promote a good atmosphere.
- Provide spaces to connect with the territory.
- Deepen participants' connection with nature by encouraging them to engage with their surroundings mindfully.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

For this activity we need maps according to the capabilities of the participants. We will need to prepare several checkpoints with a beacon so participants can recognize the checkpoints. Each checkpoint should appear in the map with a reference number. We can add activities/challenges in every checkpoint to enrich the activity and open a space to work on different topics such as nature-related activities to work environmental awareness.



Each group will have a different order of checkpoints to enjoy a unique experience.

Divide participants into teams, each consisting of 3 to 5 members.

Each team will receive maps and compasses and will have to complete a route of the orienteering race. In each checkpoint they will find a different challenge such as:

Identifying three types of plants or trees in the area.

Picking up litter they find along the route (if applicable) to raise awareness about environmental responsibility.

Reflecting on how the landscape they are exploring has changed or evolved over time.

In order to complete the task participants will have a time limit to come back to the meeting point.

VARIATIONS:

To add difficulty, teams could be limited to using only visual markers in nature (instead of compasses), encouraging them to rely more on their surroundings. Additionally, a silent segment of the route could help participants fully immerse themselves in the sounds and sights of nature, promoting mindfulness.

MATERIALS:

- Map (2 per group at least)
- Compass (2 per group at least)

EXTRA MATERIAL:

Whistles, first aid kits, walkie talkies.

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: CREATE YOUR OWN EXPEDITION

AGE: Suitable for individuals aged from 14 years old

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Open to all present individuals. Ideal to be divided in groups of maximum 8-12 participants.

LOCATION: Outdoors, garden located within the property

TIME: few hours - 3 days

OBJECTIVES:

- Foster enjoyment and cooperation within the entire group.
- Offer a safe space for participation.
- Put into practice the skills required to develop an educational expedition.
- Provide spaces to connect with the territory.
- Cultivate a deeper connection with nature by incorporating environmental awareness and respect for natural surroundings throughout the expedition.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

The main goal of the activity is to facilitate a space in which participants can create their own adventure journey. This activity can be adapted depending on the different possibilities and it can take from a few hours to some days.

Preparation:

In order to develop and prepare the expedition there will be set a main destination according to the possibilities of the activity. This can be a shelter, a bivouac space in which the group will sleep or in case of smaller activities we can use several checkpoints. The destination or checkpoints will be chosen to highlight areas of significance, encouraging participants to explore and connect with the environment along the way

Main instructions:

The group will receive a letter with all the instructions and information needed to create the expedition, such as where they will have to sleep/arrive or where they can find food. Is interesting if we dramatise this part to engage the participants.

Divide participants into teams, each consisting of 8 to 12 members.



Each team will be responsible for leading and preparing part of the expedition. Each team will receive maps and compasses and will have the responsibility to lead in an educational way their part of the expedition. Roles can be facilitated in order to support this step.

Each group will have some time to prepare their part of the expedition. During this moment it is quite important to support the route planning and supervise that task as leave no trace, connection with nature or the development of educational activities will be covered and well prepared. Moreover during this step it is important that facilitators set a way to support participants in case they need some particular materials.

After everything is prepared we can start with the adventure leaving the floor to each group of leaders.

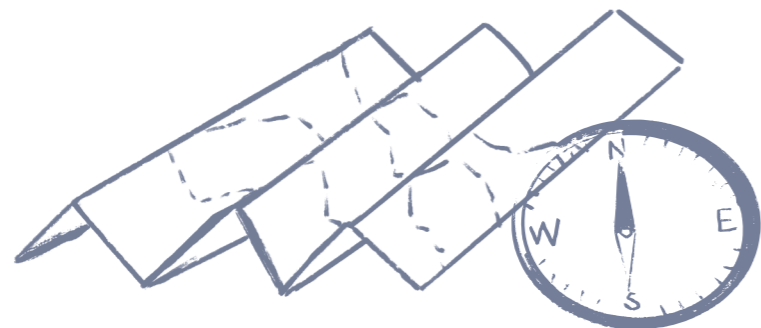
Depending on the flow of the activity the whole group can evaluate and reflect immediately after each group finishes or at the end of the day so every group of leaders can have some constructive feedback to improve.

MATERIALS:

- Map (2 per group at least)
- Compass (2 per group at least)

EXTRA MATERIAL:

Whistles, first aid kits, walkie talkies, tarps.



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: LUDO

AGE: Suitable for individuals aged from 6 years old

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Open to all present individuals

LOCATION: Outdoors, garden located within the property

TIME: 1h 30 - 2h

OBJECTIVES:

- Foster enjoyment and collaboration within the entire group.
- Facilitate mutual acquaintance and connection among group members.
- Engage in a variety of knowledge-sharing, experiences, and practical exercises.
- Maximize the potential of the outdoor space around the training area, offering participants opportunities to explore and connect with the surrounding nature.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

Divide participants into 4 or 6 teams, each consisting of 3 to 5 members.

Allow each team to select a distinct color for their designated play area.

At the beginning, you roll the dice. If you roll a 6, you can move a piece onto the board and roll again.

Moving: Roll the dice and move one of your pieces forward by the number you rolled. If you roll a 6, you can roll again or move another piece out of the base.

Knocking Out Opponents: If your piece lands on a space occupied by an opponent's piece, you knock their piece back to their base, and they have to start again from the beginning.

Ending the Game: The goal is to get all 4 of your pieces to the "home" area at the end of your track. The pieces must enter the home area with an exact roll.

Winning: The first player to get all their pieces to the home area wins.

Each number on the dice will have a series of pre-established activities. These activities can be a quiz, physical challenges or nature activities.



Variants: When a token of one colour can move to a cell with an opponent's token, that token can be eaten and that opponent's token restarts its journey.

Designate one leader as the game master.

Teams roll the dice one by one and perform corresponding tasks.

The game concludes either at the end of the time limit or when the first team emerges victorious.

MATERIALS:

- Game board
- Player pieces (Tokens) and dice
- Materials for tasks

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: OUTDOOR SCHOOL OF COOKING

AGE: Suitable for individuals aged from 15 years old

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: All those present

LOCATION: Outdoors, garden located within the property

TIME: 2h-4h

OBJECTIVES:

- Foster group cohesion and encourage collaboration among members.
- Facilitate group interaction so that members get to know one another.
- Prepare a meal together as a team-building activity.
- Utilize outdoor space for practical, real-life activities like cooking.
- Explore and identify local plants that can be used in cooking, fostering a connection with nature.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

This activity aims to create an active participatory and collaborative process to cook a real meal. During the activity the group will be divided in smaller groups up to 4 or 5 participants. The flow of the activity allows participants first to get to know what are they going to cook, then by doing different task and challenges they will be able to get points that later on will be able to exchange by food products of the meal recipe, finally they will be able to cook all together and enjoy a tasty outdoor meal.

Prepare the recipe to be used for cooking

The recipe is cut into small pieces and these are hung on the trees. Participants have 10 minutes to find all the parts, they have to remember each part and on a paper 100 m away they have to write the recipe parts and put the cooking procedure in the correct order

After having the recipe participants will face different task in which they will earn points (you can use tokens such as beans) to buy food. Each task will be judge by a facilitator that will evaluate it and according to that evaluation award each team with points.

What the food? (max 40 points)

Participants are asked multiple-choice questions about food. These questions can be about curiosities or can be used to work on ecological aspects in relation to food, working on aspects such as the distances that certain foods travel or the amount of resources needed to produce them. For a correct answer they get 2 points.

Sommelier exam (max 30 points)

With eyes closed, participants will taste and smell different delicacies. They will receive 2 points for the correct answer

Sweet Dreams (max 40 points)

During this task we will take the opportunity to cook dessert or a snack, the cooking process can be quite long so it can be interesting to take the opportunity to prepare something tasty for the break. The participants will prepare the food in small teams. This time the participants receive the ingredients, each participant will have a disadvantage such as being blindfolded or not being able to use their hands. The handicaps are changed after a few minutes, the last 5 minutes they prepare the final presentation together.

It is time to take a break before continuing. Here we can take the opportunity to enjoy the prepared sweet or snack.

Opening of the shop:

For 10 minutes the participants will be able to buy the ingredients needed to make the recipe with the points earned during the tests. The facilitators should set the prices beforehand so that the participants have to decide what to buy. It is interesting to offer the opportunity to bargain and negotiate. In addition, exchanging products between the different groups of participants can be encouraged.



The products offered in the shop will be mainly foodstuffs needed to cook the recipe. It is essential to take into account dietary needs and allergies when preparing this activity. In addition, special tools for cooking (especially if a particular cooking method such as an earth oven or a barbecue on the fire will be used) such as shovels, axes, tongs, gloves or charcoal can be offered in the shop.

Cooking Time

The cooking process should be supervised by facilitators who should intervene as little as possible. It is important to emphasize safety guidelines, especially when using fire. This part of the process can become more complex by developing an elaborate cooking method, such as creating a sand oven (a hole is dug in the ground where previously heated stones are placed, the food wrapped in aluminum foil is added, and it is covered for a couple of hours).

Finally, we can proceed to eat the prepared dinner together. This is a great opportunity to share and celebrate.

It's important to remember that the cooking might not turn out well, and this is part of the experiential learning process. As good facilitators, we should have a backup plan in case the cooking goes disastrously wrong.

MATERIALS:

- Printed recipe
- Ingredients for dinner
- Questions for the quizz
- Food for sommelier exam
- Ingredients for dessert or snack
- Tokens
- Equipped kitchen or fireplace
- Tools or instruments to set up the fireplace and cook.

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: THE DERDIANS

AGE: From 15 years old on

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Between 15 and 30

LOCATION: Outdoors, garden located within the property

TIME: 30-60 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

- Breaking stereotypes of different cultures
- Reflecting on differences in cultural behavior
- Develop intercultural and non communication skills,
- Reflect on the importance of observation and cultural assumptions

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

Break into 2 mixed gender groups. One group of 10 people act as a team of engineers to teach Derdians how to build a bridge. Each group receives instructions specific to their group: one for engineers one for Derdians.

Do not share instructions with other group. Each group prepares in a separate room/area. If you have more than 20 participants you can have observers, but they shouldn't know the instructions until after the simulation.

Observers should take notes on what they see and report on this at the end of the simulation.

Reflection after a game: The two groups (3 if you have an observer group) take a piece of flipchart and note their comments to the following three points:

Facts: Note only facts not perceptions.

Feelings: What emotions did you observe

Interpretation: Using what you saw describe the situation.

Instruction for Derdians:

The situation: You live in the country of Dardia.

Your town is separated from the next town by a deep valley. To reach the market you have to walk 3 days. If you had a bridge across valley you could get there in two hours. Your government has contracted with foreigners to come and teach you how to built a bridge.



The bridge will be made of paper, tape and string using scissors, rulers and pencils. You know the material but you don't know anything about construction.

Social behavior:

The Derdians are used to being very close to each other.

Communication doesn't work without being very close to the person you are conversing with. Not being very close while talking is considered very rude. If you join a group conversation you should huddle together.

It is also very important that you greet every one when you meet. Conversation must begin with an introduction: example "I am Jay of Dardia." If the person doesn't respond in kind it is considered rude. (See below)

Greetings: The Derdians greeting is to touch right elbows with the person they are greeting. Shaking hands is a great Faux Pas. Derdian are insulted by not being greeted (touching right elbows) or if a person stands too far away in a conversation.

When insulted Derdians shout loudly.

YES/NO Derdians don't use word "NO". They always say YES although if they mean "NO" they shake their head up and down emphatically while frowning and saying "YES".

Work behavior:

Tools are gender (or if single gender group divide by 1 and 2) specific: Scissors and Rulers can be touched only by men (1) Tape and string only by woman. (2) Pencils and Paper are neutral. (1&2)

Foreigners: Derdians like company. But they are very proud of their culture. They expect that foreigners will adapt to their culture. Their behavior is very natural for them that's why they cannot explain it to the others.

Instruction for Engineers:

You are group of engineers in international company. Your firm has just signed a very important contract with the government of Dardia to teach Derdians how to build a bridge.

You have to make this in a short time (you've got only 30 minutes to teach Derdians how to build a bridge) otherwise the contract will be cancelled and you will lose your job.

Dardia is very mountainous country and it takes many days for Derdians to go to the nearest town. With a bridge Derdians could make a trip in 2 hours. But remember you cannot build the bridge you have to TEACH Derdian how to build it.

Playing the simulation:

Read the instructions carefully and decide together about the way you are going to build the bridge.

Two members of your team will be allowed to go and make a contact for 3 minutes with the Derdians.

You have 10 minutes to analyze their report.

Then your group goes to Derdians to teach them how to build the bridge. The bridge construction: Bridge should link two chairs over a distance 80 cm/31.5 inches. It has to be stable. The pieces of the bridge must be cut out and assembled in Dardia so that the Derdians learn all stages of the construction. Each piece has to be drawn with pencil and ruler and cut out with scissors. Discussion of communication challenges. What did you learn about each culture? What assumptions did you make? What assumptions proved incorrect?

MATERIALS:

- Description for Derdians and Engineers
- 10 sheets of heavy weight 8x10 paper
- Tape
- Scissors
- String
- Pencils
- Ruler
- 2 chairs



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: A STEP FORWARD

AGE: From 16 years old on

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Between 15 and 30

LOCATION: Outdoors, garden located within the property

TIME: 30-45 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

- Breaking stereotypes of different cultures
- Reflecting on inequalities
- Fostering empathy and mutual understanding
- Reflecting on the right to a standard of living adequate for good health and well-being

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

Create a calm atmosphere with some soft background music.

Ask participants to take a role card out of the hat. Tell them to keep it to themselves and not to show it to anyone else.

Now ask them to begin to get into role.

Tell the participants that you are going to read out a list of situations or events. Every time that they can answer "yes" to the statement, they should take a step forward. Otherwise, they should stay where they are and not move.

Read out the situations one at a time.

At the end invite everyone to take note of their final positions. Then give them a couple of minutes to come out of role before debriefing in plenary.

Situations:

- You have never encountered any serious financial difficulty.
- You have decent housing with a telephone and television.
- You feel your language, religion and culture are respected in the society where you live.
- You feel that your opinion on social and political issues matters and your views are listened to.

- Other people consult you about different issues.
- You are not afraid of being stopped by the police.
- You know where to turn for advice and help if you need it.
- You have never felt discriminated against because of your origin.
- You have adequate social and medical protection for your needs.
- You can go away on holiday once a year.
- You can invite friends for dinner at home.
- You have an interesting life and you are positive about your future.
- You feel you can study and follow the profession of your choice.
- You are not afraid of being harassed or attacked in the streets, or in the media.
- You can vote in national and local elections.
- You can celebrate the most important religious festivals with your relatives and close friends.
- You can participate in an international seminar abroad.
- You can go to the cinema or the theatre at least once a week.
- You are not afraid for the future of your children.
- You can buy new clothes at least once every three months.
- You can fall in love with the person of your choice.
- You feel that your competence is appreciated and respected in the society where you live.
- You can use and benefit from the Internet.
- You are not afraid of the consequences of climate change.
- You are free to use any site on the Internet without fear of censorship.

Example of role cards:

- You are an unemployed single mother.
- You are the president of a party-political youth organisation.
- You are the daughter of the local bank manager.



- You study economics at university.
- You are the son of a Chinese immigrant who runs a successful fast food business.
- You are an Arab Muslim girl living with your parents who are devoutly religious people.
- You are the daughter of the American ambassador to the country where you are now living.
- You are a soldier in army, doing compulsory military service. You are the owner of a successful import-export company.
- You are a disabled young man who can only move in a wheelchair.
- You are a retired worker from a factory that makes shoes.
- You are a 17-year-old Roma (Gypsy) girl who never finished primary school.
- You are the girlfriend of a young artist who is addicted to heroin.
- You are an HIV positive, middle-aged prostitute.
- You are a 22-year-old lesbian.
- You are an unemployed university graduate waiting for the first opportunity to work.
- You are a fashion model of African origin.
- You are a 24-year-old refugee from Afghanistan.
- You are a homeless young man, 27 years old.
- You are an irregular immigrant from Mali.
- You are the 19-year-old son of a farmer in a remote village in the mountains.

MATERIALS:

- Prepare the roles in small papers and have an outdoor safe space to implement the activity.

DEBRIEFING:

It is a nice activity to reflect on inequalities and to dismantle the idea of meritocracy. Unfortunately not everyone starts on equal footing. Therefore, the paths to reach our goals depend a lot on the socioeconomic situation from which we come from as well as other conditioning factors such as ethnicity, identity, sexual orientation, etc.

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: CINEFÓRUM

AGE: From 3 years old

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: All those present

LOCATION: Outdoors, garden located within the property

TIME: 2-3 hours

OBJECTIVES:

- Enjoy the group as a whole.
- The members of the group get to know each other.
- Provide children and adolescents with basic tools for the comprehension and critical analysis of audiovisual content, promoting media literacy.
- Through the screening of the film, encourage critical reflection.
- Create Fun and Learning Spaces, where we can offer a playful and safe environment where children and adolescents can learn while having fun, strengthening their emotional and social well-being.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

An outdoor area in the garden of the venue is prepared with chairs, tarpaulins, and a screen on which the film will be played using a projector and a computer. A popcorn and beverage service will be provided for the audience. Before the movie begins, a brief presentation will introduce the activity, and the rules will be explained, emphasizing respect and comfort for all participants to ensure everyone enjoys the summer movie night experience.

In line with promoting respect for different cultures, the movie selected will be carefully chosen to reflect cultural diversity and avoid any offensive or vulgar content that may not align with the values of the community. This ensures that the movie is both enjoyable and appropriate for all, respecting local customs and traditions.

Particular attention will be given to avoiding scenes that could be considered taboo or disrespectful to the local culture. This approach aims to foster an inclusive and respectful environment where everyone feels comfortable and represented.



At the end of the movie, a space will be opened for participants to share their thoughts on the film and suggest ideas for future leisure and free-time activities for children and adolescents. This reflective moment will also serve as an opportunity to discuss the importance of cultural respect and the role media plays in shaping our understanding of different communities.

MATERIALS:

- Tarps
- Chairs
- Computer
- Projector
- Recycled paper to create popcorn cones and drinks

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: GYMKHANA: PHOENICIAN TREASURE HUNT

AGE: From 3 years old

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: All those present

LOCATION: Outdoors, gardens located within the property

TIME: 2-3 hours

OBJECTIVES:

- Enjoy the group as a whole.
- The members of the group get to know each other.
- Raise awareness about recycling and environmental conservation.
- Highlight the importance of properly disposing of waste and keeping the environment clean.
- Teach participants how to properly collect and classify waste for recycling.
- Foster teamwork, mutual respect, and responsibility towards the environment.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

The activity takes place outside the enclosure and starts with a theater made by the facilitators where through a scenic plot explains the Phoenician history and the importance that it had in the village, all this is done in English and supported by a live translation in Arabic. Once this first part is done, we move on to the implementation of the formation of groups of participants through a dynamic and the distribution of maps in which the different tests are described, all groups are explained the different game stations that are in the gymkhana and the reward that they will collect after each of these get the strategic map that will be provided after they go through each station and which contains where is the treasure.

Dime examples of game stations:

Challenging Slackline: activity that requires participants to work together in a cooperative, non-competitive way, testing their balance, focus, and coordination as they help one another walk across a narrow, tensioned line suspended between two points, fostering teamwork and mutual support to complete the task without falling.

Art and Expression Station for Learning English:

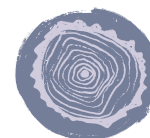
This activity teaches English through artistic expressions like miming, signing, and dictation drawing. Participants use non-verbal communication to build vocabulary and improve comprehension. Miming involves acting out words, while signs help reinforce vocabulary visually. In dictation drawing, participants illustrate verbal descriptions, enhancing listening skills. The activities promote creativity, teamwork, and a relaxed learning environment, fostering respect for diverse expressions.

Cooperative Relay Activity:

Participants form small teams to navigate a relay course with checkpoints. At each checkpoint, they complete tasks that require teamwork and communication. The activity emphasizes cooperation and concludes with a discussion on its importance, fostering trust and strengthening relationships among participants.

At all times the rules of each game are explained and the emphasis is on respect, understanding of other teammates, cooperation and the importance of enjoying each station rather than winning.

To maintain safety and control during the activities, each facilitator will have a walkie-talkie to manage the timing and report any incidents that may occur.



MATERIALS:

- Balls
- Tarps
- Speakers
- Microphones
- Strings
- Maps
- Foils
- Markers
- Cards
- Water balloons
- Basins
- Slack line
- Walkies talkies



TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: WASTE COLLECTION IN THE VILLAGE

AGE: From 3 to 65 years old

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: All those present

LOCATION: Outdoors, gardens and village

TIME: 2-3 hours

OBJECTIVES:

- Enjoy the group as a whole.
- The members of the group get to know each other.
- To promote awareness of the importance of cleanliness and recycling by organizing a community clean-up event, where participants will clean and restore a designated area, making it habitable while learning to properly dispose of waste and recycle materials.
- Develop listening and movement skills.
- Foster teamwork by creating tasks.
- Encourage exploration of the surrounding nature through focused activities.
- Solve the tasks created by the other team, dividing responsibilities and collaborating effectively.
- Develop cooperation among participants.

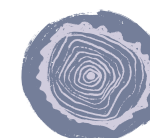
DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

The activity begins with a brief educational talk about the importance of recycling and the consequences of environmental pollution. Participants will learn about different types of waste and how to separate them for recycling.

Participants will be divided into groups and assigned different areas of the village to collect waste. It is important that everyone wears resistant gloves for protection. Participants will be reminded to be careful when handling any waste, as rural areas may contain hazardous materials or sharp objects.

Once the collection is complete, participants will be guided through the process of sorting the collected waste into different containers (plastic, glass, organic waste, etc.).

Finally a reflection session will take place, where participants can share what they've learned. Symbolic prizes will be awarded to groups that collected the most waste and correctly sorted it for recycling.



Safety Guidelines

Always wear gloves.

Avoid picking up dangerous objects without informing a supervisor.

Stay in groups to prevent accidents.

This activity is designed to be open to all, regardless of age, gender, or background. We aim to create a welcoming environment where every participant feels valued and respected. Mutual respect is central to this activity. We encourage participants to work together, help each other, and treat the environment and each other with care.

Given the diverse cultural backgrounds of participants, the activity will be conducted in multiple languages, ensuring that everyone can understand and participate fully. We celebrate the richness of diversity and encourage the sharing of ideas and perspectives from different cultures.

By engaging in this activity, participants will not only contribute to a cleaner environment but will also develop a deeper understanding of how collective responsibility and respect for nature can unite people from different backgrounds in a shared cause.

MATERIALS:

- Resistant gloves for all participants
- Color-coded bags for waste sorting
- Recycling bins
- Water and refreshments for participants

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: PHOTO BINGO

AGE: Suitable for individuals aged 6

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Open to all present individuals. Ideal to be divided in groups of maximum 5 participants.

LOCATION: Outdoors, with a predefined route

TIME: 1- 2 hours

OBJECTIVES:

- Discover and explore a specific area;
- Promote a leisure and relaxing moment;
- Stimulates cognitive functions such as memory, attention and concentration;
- Stimulating participants' creativity while they take photos of various locations and objects.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

Creating the Cards:

We will prepare several Bingo cards. Each card should contain 25 different items, each representing a location, object, or situation that can be photographed. Examples of items include:

- A tree
- A park bench
- A street art mural
- A pet
- A fountain
- A monument
- A flower, etc.

Each group will have a specific time (for example, 1 or 2 hours) to explore the surroundings and take photos of the items on their card.

Upon taking a photo of an item, they must mark the corresponding square on their card.



When a group completes a row (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) with taken photos, they must return to the meeting point and shout "Bingo!".

The first to complete a row and confirm their photos wins a prize.(optional)

Other participants can continue until more winners are found or until time runs out.

To enhance fun, we can include challenges or specific themes, such as "most creative photos," "group photos," or "photos with funny captions."

We can encourage the participants to share some of the photos on social media with a specific hashtag for the activity, promoting interaction and community support.

MATERIALS:

- Bingo Cards (the cards should have a 5x5 grid, with each square containing an image or description of a specific location or object)
- Camera or smartphone capable of taking photos
- Pen or marker (to mark the photos taken)
- Small prizes for the winners (optional)

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: FINDING THE FORM

AGE: Suitable for individuals aged 10

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Open to all present individuals

LOCATION: Outdoors, garden

TIME: 30 - 45 min

OBJECTIVES:

- Enhance tactile sensitivity
- Promote engagement with nature through hands-on interaction
- Create an inclusive environment for visually impaired individuals
- Stimulate curiosity and discovery

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

For this activity, we are going to blindfold every participant.

We will prepare several objects(such as leaves, stones, shells, etc.), and by touch alone they have to identify the objects.

Both visually impaired and blindfolded participants will explore the textures and shapes, engaging with nature to try to discover the object.

MATERIALS:

- Blindfolds for the participants
- Sticks
- Leaves
- Stones
- Shells
- More material found in the garden and winners (optional)

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: HIDDEN DRAW

AGE: Suitable for individuals aged 6

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 5 groups with 2 people each

LOCATION: Outdoors, park or a garden

TIME: 40-45 min

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop communication skills
- Stimulate creativity
- Strengthen social bonds

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

First we pair up the participants: Participants are divided into pairs and sit back-to-back.

Drawing phase: One participant starts drawing a simple picture on their paper. This could be something like a house, tree, animal, or any other simple object.



After finishing the drawing, the first participant describes their drawing in detail to their partner without showing it to them. For example: "I drew a circle, and inside the circle, there are two small dots." They can't say the object!

The second participant, who is listening to the description, tries to recreate the drawing on their own paper based solely on the verbal instructions, without seeing the original drawing.

After both participants finish, they show their drawings to each other and compare them. This often leads to some funny and creative differences between the original and the recreated version.

To promote a social environment after they finish the first round they will change their partners.

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Colored pencils
- Pencils

TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY: THE GARDEN CANVAS

AGE: Suitable for individuals aged 10

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Most be a small group, 12 participants max

LOCATION: Outdoors, garden

TIME:

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide a sensory and creative experience that integrates nature and art in an accessible environment for individuals with special needs.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY:

Part 1 - Sensory Exploration:

We will divide the participants into small groups and provide baskets for collecting natural elements (leaves, flowers, stones).

In this part we will encourage them to touch, smell, and observe the colors of the collected items.

For participants with hearing difficulties, we can provide visual explanatory materials.

Part 2- Creating Natural Art:

Using the collected elements, each group can create a "natural collage" on a background paper.

In this stage we can encourage them to use paints to add colors to the found materials.

For those with motor limitations, offer larger brushes or sponges to facilitate paint application.

Part 3 - Sharing and Exhibition

After the activity, we will organize a small exhibition where each group will showcase their collage and describe their feelings about it.

Optional , we can include an area where the creations can be displayed for everyone to appreciate.

To conclude, we will hold a discussion circle about what they learned, how they felt during the activity, and what their favorite parts were.

Optional,we can provide a healthy snack as a way to celebrate the completion of the activity.

MATERIALS:

- Non-toxic paints and brushes
- Papers with different textures (sandpaper, cellophane, paper towels, tissue paper)
- Natural materials (leaves, flowers, branches)
- Strollers or baskets for collecting items
- Sand or soil boxes for tactile exploration
- Speaker to put soft music to create a relaxing atmosphere



CONCLUSION (of the manual)

We hope this journey has been both helpful and inspiring. Our aim was to share an approach we truly believe in, making it easy to understand for both professionals and anyone interested. Often, when people think of outdoor education, they imagine big adventures in wild places: climbing mountains, surviving in forests, or rafting down rivers. While it can include those things, as you've seen, it's much more than that. It's a method full of possibilities that can create meaningful activities even with few resources. You don't need fancy equipment or closed spaces—the natural world around you already has everything you need.

One important thing to remember is that nature doesn't just mean faraway wilderness. Open spaces in our cities—like parks, squares, and neighborhoods—also have great educational potential. Reconnecting with these places and building a stronger relationship with our local environment can open new doors, spark curiosity, and create chances to connect with others.

Outdoor education is about opening up to the world, encouraging learning that is hands-on and participatory, and creating a "snowball effect." The more people we involve, the more we can promote inclusion and build active, responsible communities. This is how real change begins: by improving ourselves and the world around us.

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GLOBERS: Handbook for training global citizens

Global Citizenship Education And Social Emotional Learning Methodology

Health, what are you ashamed to ask

Plusko - HERNÍK. Zážitkové hry

Standing Together Against Racism: A Training Handbook

PARTNERS INFORMATION

MOE



MOE is a non-profit association established in 2018 dedicated to inspire people in our community to discover and develop their natural potential through challenging learning experiences in order to create a more resilient, empathetic and caring world.

MOE works to make experiential educational philosophy a more valued and practised teaching practice, driving towards social transformation and innovation in the educational processes of our community.

Contact email: hola@madridoutdoorededucation.com

Telephone: +34658333531

<http://madridoutdoorededucation.es/>

<https://www.instagram.com/madridoutdoorededucation/>

<https://www.facebook.com/madridoutdoorededucation>

APMM



Located in the heart of Morocco, the Association des Populations de les montagnes de Monde Bni Garffet (APMM) is a non-profit organization that is part of a global network of associations dedicated to strengthening mountain communities. Our mission is to empower local communities equitably and sustainably, promoting the development of their skills and resources.

Through a variety of recreational, educational, and community work activities, we foster an environment of growth and collaboration that enriches the lives of the inhabitants. We believe in an alternative and progressive approach that not only addresses immediate needs but also drives long-term development in rural areas.

Our headquarters is located in the welcoming Hafa Mdina Refuge (<https://www.instagram.com/hafa.mdina/>), in the commune of Lahra, Bni Garffet, Larache. This strategic space not only facilitates employment but also provides an ideal environment for community development. Together, we work to build a more prosperous and sustainable future for our communities, thereby contributing to their well-being and strengthening. Join us in this exciting journey toward change!

Tel.: +212 650-752495

E-mail: apmm.benigarfett@gmail.com

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/apmm_beni_gorfett/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009839890754>



KERIC

KERIC was founded in 2003. We are a non-profit non-governmental organisation working with children and youth aged 7-30 as well as adults in the region of north Slovakia - Kysuce. Our mission is to connect our region Kysuce with the whole world and to help people from our region become more open and tolerant towards other cultures or people different in any way (religion, sexual orientation, cultural or family background, etc.). This is done through non-formal educational activities with an international dimension, youth exchanges, trainings, workshops and hosting and sending volunteers from / to other countries.

Address: Slovakia, Nábřežná 1351, 02201 Čadca

Tel: +421908913995, +421908913994

E-mail: keric@keric.sk

Web-site: www.keric.sk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KERIC.Cadca>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/keric_cadca/

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNxHZQsmUAWdaUodmX_VECQ

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/keric/>

RCW



Regional Volunteer Center was established in 1997 as a program of the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy. The main aims of our organisation are to help people understand the idea of volunteering and educate youth about alternative ways of spending spare time and helping others. The Center's focus includes three pillars: Volunteering, Station:Youth and International Mobilities. RCW has an accreditation in YOUTH and in ESC.

Address: Poland, Kielce, Żeromskiego 36,25-370

Tel: +48 413621412

E-mail: kontakt@centrumwolontariatu.eu

Web-site: <https://centrumwolontariatu.eu/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RCWKielce/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/cw_kielce/

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgHmojZy2nIIS15MFT7itYg>

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