

(RE)CONNECT WITH NATURE

A manual for working in and with nature, with and for youth.



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FOREWORD

Hidden away "behind nine mountains, behind seven waters," as the Slovene fairytales start, 21 youth workers from around the EU have set up camp on a hilltop, next to the river Sava. At an old farmstead, remodeled for camping and group/youth activities, embraced by bustling woods, we have come together with the purpose of creating a common pool of resources for nature related activities and work with youth, which we can all personally draw on to build on our current understanding, models, and practices.

During the course of 7 days, we have shared in each other's methods as participants, explored formalities and (f)actualities of education and learning, and discussed the questions why (in) nature, what are the possibilities, and how to approach it. Based on experiential learning, the activities presented were very varied; from theatrical, teambuilding, introspective, sensual, to linguistic, environmental, social ... Coming from different professional (teachers, non-formal, scouts ...) and cultural (8 different nationalities) backgrounds, we have complemented each other well; directly and indirectly addressing many of the key topics in relation with nature, learning, and youth.

As a reflection of our work during this seminar, and a resource we personally, and others can use in the future; we have gathered, compiled, and made sense (structure) of the reasons why work in and with nature is important, general guidelines to consider, methods/activities presented, and some external resources to dive deeper into the subjects at hand. We present these in this manual, which we wish you will find a useful tool in your endeavors to bring the best to (and out of) the human race.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
WHY (IN) NATURE?	5
GUIDELINES	7
METHODS	8
INTRODUCTION	8
4MAT LEARNING STYLES MODEL	9
(i) SENSUAL	11
GIFTING NATURE	11
FINDING NATURE AND LETTING NATURE FIND YOU	12
(ii) INTROSPECTIVE	13
SHORT MEDICINE WALK IN NATURE	13
LAND-ART: BUILDING A MINDFUL LABYRINTH	15
(iii) ENERGIZER	18
THE BULGARIAN ENERGIZER	18
(iv) EXPRESSIVE	19
FROM EVERYONE TO EVERYONE	19
WRITING WITH NATURE	21
(v) TEAMBUILDING	22
THE SCOUT METHOD, SIMPLIFIED	22
ARMED MARKET	25
ABOUT (RE)CONNECT WITH NATURE AND COORDINATING ASSOCIATION LOJTRA	26
Project (Re)connect with nature	27
Association Lojtra	27

WHY (IN) NATURE?

Addressing the topic of utilizing nature in educational and youth activities, the question WHY? might be the most fundamental one. With increased urbanization and digitalization of our age, as humans are moving out of our primal environment for reasons of safety, efficiency, destruction (of primal habitats) ...; we need to earnestly consider, and weigh, the reasons why returning to nature might be important for us, and what kind of human processes does it support and facilitate when we engage in/with it.

In order to present a strong argument to benefits of utilizing nature in educational, youth, and group activities, we have delved through the research on the effects of nature on human well-being and activities. The conclusions are unanimous on one keynote: all show clear benefit to some aspect of human life, even by simply being present in, and with, nature. The intention here is to present a clear and simple overview of these benefits, not of every single research; therefore, the research we base these benefits on can be found in the endnotes, for in-depth analysis.

The benefits can be roughly divided into four categories; physical, mental, emotional, and social. Before going into what these are, we need to understand that the benefits of nature are measured in contrast - in contrast to the effects that the urban environment has on us, which seems to be generally taken as a baseline of our life experience. Therefore the 'benefits' we are talking about here have been the baseline (or 'normal') for humans in the past, and still are for some.

In this way, we can look at our urban environment to be detrimental to our well-being (instead of normal), which was also pointed out by some researchers¹. They claimed that viewing the scenery in urban areas increased tension-anxiety, fatigue, confusion, and adversely affected a vigorous mood of the participants of their experimental group.

On the other hand, this same research states clear physical benefits when the participants were viewing the scenery in forested areas. These being: significantly lower diastolic blood pressure, lower heart rate every minute of viewing, and significantly higher refreshment. Other research points out positive influence on awareness of body and movement², and the therapeutic effect of

¹ Tsunetsugu, Y., Lee, J., Park, B.-J., Tyrväinen, L., Kagawa, T., Miyazaki, Y. (2013) Physiological and psychological effects of viewing urban forest landscapes assessed by multiple measurements, *Landscape and Urban Planning* 113, p. 90-93.
<https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S0169204613000212?token=D046D3278E6B90F3C6884596FCBA28C1A0C36A8149E734A4BFC7A27D294B7603C2F13F9A3A278F0DF16EC318082FDFDA&originRegion=eu-west-1&originCreation=20210716150249>

² Gatzemann, T., Schweizer, K. and Hummel, A.: Effectiveness of sports activities with an orientation on experiential education, adventure-based learning and

nature called 'Ecotherapy'³ - which supports recovery from both physical, and mental illness.

Among other benefits to mental well-being, the researchers talk about experiences with nature increasing students': ability to concentrate, interest in the material, and self-discipline⁴. It is interesting to note that research done with autistic children in nature⁵ showed sensory-motor, emotional, and social benefits.

As some of the emotional benefits in the aforementioned research, emerged a positive influence on self-worth and self-esteem, as well as forest landscapes being evaluated as more comfortable, soothing and natural (as compared to urban areas). The social benefits discussed are mostly the positive influence of outdoor activities on interpersonal conduct, and social behavior.

All-around, nature appears to be teeming with benefits to the human experience of life; from recreational, to educational, and healing/therapeutic. While these reasons might compel us to jump straight into activities, let us first look into some general guidelines when it comes to organizing, and carrying out group activities in nature, especially with youth.

outdoor-education. [Kinesiology, Vol. 40 No. 2., 2008.](#)

<https://hrcak.srce.hr/30814>

³ J. K. Summers, D. N. Vivian; Ecotherapy – A Forgotten Ecosystem Service: A Review. *Front Psychol.*, Vol. 9, No. 1389, 2018.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6085576/>

⁴ Ming, K., Michael, B. and Catherine, J.: Do Experiences With Nature Promote Learning? Converging Evidence of a Cause-and-Effect Relationship. *Front Psychol.*, Vol 10 No. 305., 2019.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6401598/>

⁵ Li, D., Larsen, L., Yang, Y., Wang, L., Zhai, Y., Sullivan, W. C. (2019) Exposure to nature for children with autism spectrum disorder: Benefits, caveats, and barriers, *Health and Place* 55, p. 71–79.

<https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S1353829218305756?token=913C69AE2B90AEFEFC2A0BCF4BFCA442BB9323BD42C90A4A69F779078A01DBF44CC29AAD1425CDF5E849DE05F3AD51CE&originRegion=eu-west-1&originCreation=20210718201738>

GUIDELINES

Basic guidelines we believe it's important to take into account when organizing learning activities in nature. Please do consider these guidelines as a bear minimum when organizing activities in nature. The intention at this chapter is just to point out some aspects and NOT to write down the entire check list of things the organizer needs to be careful about when working in nature.

Equipment:

- Clear indication what kind of equipment participants need (clothes, sleeping bags, tents...)
- Clear indication who will provide the other equipment (working materials, sleeping mats...)
- Do not forget on: mosquito repellent and sun cream, pills or shots to deal with allergies, first aid kit.

Make sure that the logistic arrangements to carry out the project are properly adapted to the forest environment, weather, number of participants etc. We would suggest to have one person more for logistical purposes as we would have in urban areas.

Taking in consideration other safety measures as the nature can be unpredictable (e.g., heavy rain, lightening, injuries, people get lost, sickness...)

It is highly recommended that participants have insurance in case of any injury. It is also recommendable that organization arranges suitable insurance for itself. For that we would suggest to check the demands from the programs which are co-financing the certain activities and adapt the insurance to the activities you are planning to do.

Extremely important is to gather the information about medical conditions (i.e., allergies, dietary habits) of the participants.

Regularly check with participants (on a group and individual level) how do they feel and if they need anything. Being in nature can be also scary for some people and they might need additional support in form of conversations or something more.

Provide local authorities with the details of your trip. It may prove helpful in case of an emergency.

Check the current COVID-19 regulations.

Make an effort to study the cultural differences between participating countries.

Collect the arrival times from all the participants. In case of minors, collect the travelling plans.

METHODS

INTRODUCTION

Now that we have dealt with the questions why (in) nature, and what to prepare for; let us go into how to engage youth (and adults) in, and with nature. On the following pages we are sharing the methods and practices presented and experienced by the participants of the seminar.

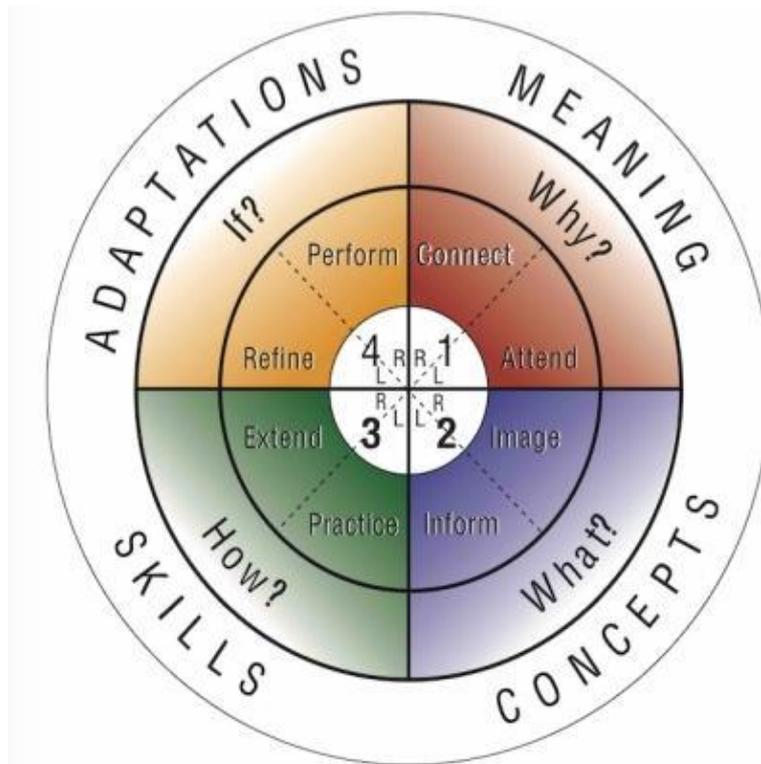
The methods are introduced by a theoretical learning styles model, which should prove useful for presenting and engaging any group of participants into any kind of activity. Following the theoretical model, the activities presented are roughly divided into five groups, based on their general type. They are, as follows: (I) sensual, (ii) introspective, (iii) energizer, (iv) expressive, (v) teambuilding.

As such, they address our basic knowledge and interaction with the environment (senses), our relationship with - and understanding of - ourselves (introspective), lighter - playful (energizer), the way we make sense of life and communicate - relate with other(s) (expression), and the way we function in a group and society (teambuilding).

4MAT LEARNING STYLES MODEL

The 4MAT Learning Styles Model was developed and published in 1980 by Bernice McCarthy, a kindergarten teacher. Among other concepts, it is based on Kolb's model of learning styles, and presents a flexible framework for structuring and facilitating any kind of learning process, presentation, sharing of information ...

The 4MAT model conceptualizes the whole learning process each individual goes through; presents the information in four quadrants (or phases), and eight steps of the learning process; while at the same time addressing different types of learners. It is designed as a framework for presenting, engaging an individual, or a group with a certain topic, issue; and for teaching/learning processes. Its eight steps, divided into four phases, provide a structure, by which to format any such activity. Generally, any activity should start with step 1 - connect ("WHY?" phase) and follow the circle clockwise, but creativity with the process is encouraged.⁶



By adopting (and adapting) the 4MAT framework to our educational activities, we can achieve higher levels of youth involvement and understanding, through a broader array of questions we are addressing, and viewpoints we're approaching the activity, subject from.

⁶ <https://aboutlearning.com/about-us/4mat-overview/>

Here, a brief overview of the quadrants and main questions is presented, while further reading⁷ is available⁸ in the Resources⁹ section.

WHY?

Starting out by giving meaning to the activity, subject, in this phase of the process we will be addressing the capital question "WHY?" This phase is about finding and recognizing value in the activity, connecting it with personal experience, and seeing how the two fit together. One of the possible methods to achieve this is to facilitate a discussion; although there is no universal recipe.

WHAT?

The second phase is about conceptualization, fact-finding, gathering information - in a systematic and organized form. Here we are building on conceptual, theoretical, abstract understanding of the activity, subject. Depending on the activity, or subject, the length of this phase can vary greatly. Concerning methods, presentation and reflection are two of the keywords to consider.

HOW?

Moving on, the goal becomes practical application of the ideas, theories, and concepts into the real world. This phase supports the hands-on approach. It is all about experimenting, doing, testing/developing practical skills ... It is suggested to structure the activity in this phase gradually, starting with a controlled practice, on which you expand.

IF...?

The last phase focuses on processing, reinforcing and integrating the results of the learning process - as well as personally applying them. The results of the action(s) need to be assessed and adjusted. "If ... I do this, what will be the new result?" What should be looked for is; the participants refining the learned - personally and together, and performing - or integrating the learned into their actions, daily lives...

⁷ 4MAT Learning Styles Model; online article

<https://www.toolshero.com/personal-development/4mat-learning-cycle-model/>

⁸ Ultimate Guide to 4MAT Learning Cycle Model; online article

<https://lapaas.com/ultimate-guide-to-4mat-learning-cycle-model/>

⁹ 4MAT; online article on different types of learners

<https://thepeakperformancecenter.com/educational-learning/learning/preferences/learning-styles/4mat/>

(i) *SENSUAL*

GIFTING NATURE

Time needed:

20 minutes

Materials:

Everything can be found in nature.

Learning objectives:

Gratitude to nature, learning to let go of things one got attached to, identifying the needs of others.

Process:

Participants meet in a circle-like form and discuss the first task. Everyone goes for a short walk-in nature, and finds something that the nature doesn't need anymore (e.g., pinecone, leaf, apple, branch, stone etc.).

After 5 minutes everyone meets again in the same form. It would be desirable to find another location, in order to reset the attention and set a different mood.

In silence, with meditative music everyone decides with what feeling or life quality he/she wants to fill the found object. It should be something that they don't necessary need anymore and someone else in the circle could need (e.g., freedom, patience, positive energy, joy etc.). One by one the participants stand up and gift their object saying for example: "I am giving you this seed (full)filled with happiness."

After everyone has received a gift, we give them time to exchange their thoughts and feelings among each other. The activity ends with a group reflection.

FINDING NATURE AND LETTING NATURE FIND YOU

Time needed:

20 minutes.

Materials:

Printed color wheels.

Learning objectives:

Learning to work in groups, learning how to keep focus on the task, learning the “quality over quantity” value, learning to respect the way nature works.

Process:

Groups of 4 to 5 participants need to be formed. Every group gets one print of a color wheel. The task is to find something in the nature for each of the colors. We let them know that they don't need to find something for every color, because it is important to respect the way nature works and that we can take only what nature gives us.

After 10 - 15 minutes, everyone should return back with their results. The results can be compared between the groups.

We end with a reflection round. We ask the participants the following questions: Were you finding the objects, or was the nature finding you? Did you accept the first thing the nature gave you in that color, or were you searching for options you thought are better? What color was the easiest to find, and which the hardest? How did the group behave when you couldn't find what you were looking for? And similar.

The activity can be expanded for another 20 minutes. Every participant chooses one color and walks through the nature following only that color.

(ii) INTROSPECTIVE

SHORT MEDICINE WALK IN NATURE

Time needed:

150 minutes.

Learning objectives:

To connect with nature around us, with the support of a carefully designed question/intention, to learn to use all our senses and notice the symbols, associations, messages we receive from the walk.

To learn to calm down and release our thoughts, to be guided by what is calling to us in the nature.

Process:

Overall description of the purpose and process of the short Medicine Walk:

Whatever is inside us is mirrored in our surroundings. For eons, people were communicating and seeking support in nature. Going on a medicine walk is a space for creating time with nature, a time of contemplation and seeking answers to life's questions. The first step of the medicine walk is preparation, where we set the intention for the walk. Second phase is going on a walk and the last phase is sharing the learnings and visions.

30' Preparation - Setting up the intention/question:

The first phase of the short medicine walk is to set the intention or question we would like to explore on the walk.

After a few days of intense work, time is given to participants to think about what questions may have arisen, what they are thinking about, or what they are confused about. They are invited to take some time alone to write the question they would like to receive some insights on. Soft, meditative music is played in the background.

90' The Medicine Walk:

When participants set their intention/question, they are invited to go for a solo walk. When walking, they should choose a passage/threshold that marks the beginning of the medicine walk. A threshold can be an entrance to the forest, or a fallen tree, which you step over. It can also be self-created, with rocks and other natural materials. Threshold marks the beginning, and also the ending of the Medicine Walk. Before entering the threshold, participant repeats their intention/questions and asks for guidance. It is an entrance to a sacred space, where we now let go of our thoughts, and do not think about the intention and

wander, letting all that happens have meaning. Participants should pay attention to what calls to them, where they are drawn to. Finishing the walk, they step over the threshold where they began the journey. They give thanks to the messages received, and return back to the group.

30' Sharing circle:

After all participants return, they gather in a circle, and we invite them to share what happened. They are invited to share the symbols, feelings, messages, various elements of the walk. We introduce the talking object, which travels around, and whoever feels like sharing, shares, or just passes the talking object to the next person. We pass the object around for a few rounds. And after we are done, thank the participants for sharing.

Sharing is an important part of the Medicine Walk, participants reflect on what happened, and listen to other participants' stories. They connect and learn from each other's experiences.

LAND-ART: BUILDING A MINDFUL LABYRINTH

Time needed:

This method can be done utterly as a group activity, or in case of less time availability, some segments can be done only by an educator.

- 1 - 2h for picking up the natural materials during the walk: sticks, pinecones, firs, different leaves, stones, bark, etc.
- 1h to design and assemble the labyrinth with a 5m diameter (depending on the size of the labyrinth, it can take more or less).
- 15 - 30 minutes of introduction and meditation.
- 30min - 1h for walk through the labyrinth (depending on the number of participants)
- 15min discussion
-

Altogether, this activity can be done in an hour with a group of participants, if they are included only in the last three segments. However, it can also be a half-day activity.

Materials:

Anything that can be picked up in the nature, from sticks, pinecones, firs, different leaves, stones, to bark, etc.

Learning objectives:

This method can be divided into two parts with different learning objectives. First part is Land-Art, where learning objectives are:

- To observe a variety of different textures, colors, and materials found in nature,
- To realize how one's mind and body interact with these materials, how does walking on fir make one feel, compared to walking on bark,
- What are the thoughts and feelings invoked during the process of creating and using the land-art/labyrinth?
- To get an insight into one's mind, observe one's behavior and thought patterns.

Second part is to purpose the labyrinth as a medium that can help with training mindfulness, meditating, finding answers to something that can bother one, or to help with inner-child healing etc. In this part the learning objectives are:

- To feel the bothering thoughts,
- To let the thoughts flow, unrestricting them,
- To accept the feelings from the past/present, let them be and let them go, as the sounds and different textures in the labyrinth pass,
- To be more concentrated on each step one takes,

- To open the emotional and mental receptors that were previously blocked.
-

Process:

This activity starts by going for a walk in the nature and observing what nature has to offer, what materials are there, characteristics of each material, their texture, structure, smell, temperature, softness/hardness, color, etc. The purpose of this segment is to see what segments are there and what attracts one to them.

Second phase is to design a labyrinth and to assemble it together. It's beneficial that the labyrinth is in the shape of a circle, however it is not mandatory, as well as the pattern of the labyrinth, with the number and shape of its corridors can be random. It's also beneficial if textures and materials are randomly assembled, as well, throughout the whole labyrinth.

The purpose of the third phase is to bring focus inward, into a person. Each participant is invited to be barefoot, and sit or lay on the ground (in the nature). Then the educator proceeds with an introduction, where rules of using the labyrinth are explained, and guides the meditation. Rules are the following:

- No talking inside the labyrinth.
- The pace one goes through the labyrinth is a choice of each participant, one can stop whenever they wish to.
- Participants exit the labyrinth the same way they enter.
- Participant can ask the labyrinth for an answer to something that bothers them, to find peace/harmony inside, or to simply set any other intention for the activity.
- Observe the thoughts, feelings and any other stimulus invoked during the walk inside the labyrinth.
- Let the thoughts and feelings be as they are, let them leave the same way they came.
- When facing difficulties on emotional, physical or mental level let nature absorb the excess energy – nature will always find a way to equilibrium. After finishing, wait for other participants to finish by simply staying close by, in silence.
- Remember to drink plenty of fluids, water is best.
- During the discussion, open space for yourself and other participants to speak freely about the process each went through.

Guided meditation before entering the labyrinth done by the educator can be a simple 5-minute one, just for relaxation, or a more complex one including inner-child healing by going into a distressing experience of the past or present.

Fourth phase includes the walk in the labyrinth by following the rules previously noted. After finishing the walk inside the labyrinth, everyone is invited into a sitting circle on the floor to share the thoughts and feelings, which occurred during the labyrinth walk. It is important for the educator to help

participants close the opened wound, by listening to them, advising them and optionally doing breathing exercises.

(iii) ENERGIZER

THE BULGARIAN ENERGIZER

Time needed:

1 minute to explain the rules, and get the participants going. The rest is up to your preference.

Objective:

To provide a relief activity, getting the energy going around the group by voice and movement.

Process:

The participants must be in a circle. There are 3 movements and one imaginary energy ball that circulates around in left or right direction. Everyone is waiting for their turn to choose from three options:

1 - "Weee" sound, and handwaving like Video 1¹⁰. The energy continues in the current direction.

2 - Saying "Hondza" and closing your hands like Video 2¹¹. The energy changes the current direction (the directions are only "right" and "left").

3 - Saying "Brazil" and all circle starts moving to the center of the circle like video 3¹², with a "pa-pa-para-para-pa-pa-para" song (like in the circus). The person to the right of the participant that says "Brazil" moves next.

¹⁰ <https://youtu.be/-Ff2UGaSyu4>

¹¹ <https://youtu.be/33lV1sxFIUg>

¹² <https://youtu.be/0lYCBEefFHU>

(iii) EXPRESSIVE

FROM EVERYONE TO EVERYONE

Time needed:

1 hour 30 minutes.

Materials:

Post-its (sticky notes) and pens/pencils/felt pens.

Learning objectives:

Taking into account the importance of nature, getting to know each other, to realize how easily we stereotype, knowing a new way of learning using active dynamics.

Process:

* Note that after each exercise 5 - 10 min should be given to share how the dynamic was.

1) »We all are animals« (5 - 10 min.)

We start walking in an area, and someone mentions an animal. Immediately, everybody starts behaving as the animal said. Some seconds later, a new animal will be named.

2) »Information comes from the stars« (10 - 15 min.)

Each participant receives one post-it, on which he/she has to draw a 5-corner star. After that he/she writes in each corner one word related to his/her personal information, for instance: Haru (my cat's name), 13 (the day I was born), blue (favorite color) ...

Once each participant has completed his/her own star, they are put in pairs. Then, the partner must ask questions in order to guess what information the other's words relate to.

Questions must be made so that the answers are »yes« or »no«.

3) »An opened or closed group? « (5 - 10min.)

One of the participants is taken out of the group, while his/her mates form a circle, holding hands.

The person who is taken out of the group gets the following instruction: "You have to enter in the circle."

The group gets the following instruction:

"A person will come, trying to enter inside the circle."

4) »Where do my stereotypes come from? « (15 - 20 min.)

Five volunteers are taken out of the group, and receive the next instruction:

"You are five friends, who haven't seen each other for 30 years. Now you have gathered again, and you must tell the others how your life has been through these years."

The group, for its part, will receive the next instruction:

"Five old friends will have a conversation, talking about how their lives have elapsed. Your work is to guess which of them are: Arabic, Chinese, Gypsy, Hispanic, and African."

5) »How would the world be, if...? « (35 - 40 min.)

The group has to be divided into 4 different groups, and each of them gets one of the four elements: water, fire, earth, and air. They will have 10 - 15 min. to prepare a play which represents the importance of the respective element in our lives.

Once the plays are done, the spectators (the rest of the group) must guess what their mates have represented. A little discussion about the importance of nature in our lives follows.

WRITING WITH NATURE

Time needed:

45 minutes for each task.

Materials:

Paper, pens, calligraphy equipment, optional: prints of introduced characters.

Learning objectives:

This teaching method consists of a number of mnemonic techniques helping participants associate Chinese characters with real objects. Taking advantage of the playful and engaging learning process the method is used to raise awareness of the most important issues such as ecology, connection to nature and peaceful coexistence.

The process:

The characters introduced during are as follows: 月 (moon), 日 (day), 木 (tree), 森 (forest), 山 (mountain), 川 (river), 空 (sky), 天 (heaven), 田 (rice paddy), 花 (flower), 草 (grass), 虫 (insect), 犬 (dog), 土 (soil), 水 (water), 火 (fire), 風 (wind), 石 (stone), 竹 (bamboo), 貝 (shellfish), 雨 (rain), 雪 (snow). The characters are presented along with their meaning in English and phonetic reading in both Chinese and Japanese. The reason for that is to emphasize the characters are used in both languages and to engage the students who would rather manifest an interest in Japanese than Chinese. As part of the first task students are asked to try and assign a character to its meaning in English. The students who get the most right is rewarded.

For the second task students are asked to find an object related to nature in an open-space environment, draw it and then simplify it to a few strokes, as to create a “Chinese character” of their own. Upon completion, students present their work amongst themselves.

The method is concluded with a short lecture on calligraphy. Educator emphasizes the importance of strokes order and presents students with basic rules of the art using specialized brushes and ink. Finally, participants are given sheets with Chinese characters and try to recreate them using techniques they have just learned.

(iv) TEAMBUILDING

THE SCOUT METHOD, SIMPLIFIED

Time needed:

Normally, the scout method is used for working with youth for an undefined length of time, and the simplified version can also be used in this way. However, it is best if used on activities between two days and two weeks in length. To establish a symbolic framework of a group, you should use your own discretion as to how much time is needed, with a minimum being 45 minutes to 1 hour.

For cases in which long-term participation of members occurs, the full version of the scout method is best¹³.

Materials:

Materials required for implementation of the simplified scout method vary depending on what learning objectives individual group leaders/trainers implement (see Learning objectives).

Learning objectives:

The learning objectives of the simplified scout method are varied, but it works best when used to teach practical skills that have an obvious application when working in nature (such as navigation, knots, building a fire, first aid, etc.). However, a learning objective that remains constant when using this method is teamwork.

Process:

The first step in implementing this variant of the scout method is creating a symbolic framework.

The symbolic framework is a sum of symbols, themes and stories that will be used in activities in order to make them more engaging. These may consist of distinctive accessories, specific themes that the activities are following, or an underlying story in which the participants are included and through which they progress as the activity goes on.

The next step will be forming teams of 5-9 people among the participants. If less than nine participants are present, a single team may be formed. The participants will be asked to design an identity for the team, consisting of a name and whatever other elements the trainers may see fit, such as a chant, a flag/banner, a mascot etc. Those teams will stay the same for the whole duration of the event/activity, with changes only happening in exceptional circumstances. The teams' individual identities are also a part of the symbolic framework.

¹³ <https://www.scout.org/method>

The activities will follow a "learning by doing" model, with every activity consisting of a short practical explanation done by the educator, and a section in which the participants get to practice the skill that is being taught to them. The explanations and the practicing will be both done on a team level.

ACTIONBOUND

Time needed:

Depends on the activities you prepare.

Materials:

The only thing the participant has to have been an application on their mobile phone.

Learning objectives:

Teamwork, developing creativity, out of the box thinking, creating the atmosphere of joy and learning through experience.

Process:

Actionbound is an application, which helps to prepare an outdoor game dedicated to teaching different abilities, and to check the knowledge with a huge amount of fun and excitement.

In order to prepare the game, you need to create an account on the website www.actionbound.com You can read the instructions and watch the tutorials. The game allows you to carry out challenges and tasks in many ways, for example: quizzes, missions, stages, recording the task in video and audio ways.

It is vital that you may use this game indoors and outdoors. The creator can easily encourage participants to explore the nature and use it as a part of the game (using natural elements, and finding the right directions). This game involves the members to cooperate. It is a perfect way to have a non-formal lesson in any kinds of project-based learning.

All the tasks done during the game may be shown at the end to the whole audience.

ARMED MARKET

Time needed:

Could be from 1 to 5 hours.

Materials:

- Products - fruits, vegetables, nuts, dairy, meat, etc. The choice depends on what kind of meal/s and drink/s will be prepared. The simpler the preparation (less or non-baking, boiling, steaming) the better.
- Multiple used containers, bags, jars, bottles, etc.
- Money (real or fake).
- Recipes.
- Marketplace (real or fake).
- Kitchen with all necessary (for the meals/drinks) tools.
- Paper or notebook and pen for participants and facilitators to take notes.
- Flip chart.

Learning objectives:

The aim of this event is to put the participants into a real experience of finding a way to define and provide the necessary goods that they need. To realize that they can do things differently. To realize that they can use a lot less resources (as single use items for example). To learn through experience.

To consider their lifestyle. To make them question how much is enough, and what they really need. To realize their way of consumption. To see that they can pay less and to reduce the unnecessary things in life. To be more conscious with their choices. To cooperate and to straighten relationships between the participants while having fun.

Process:

Participants are split into groups of 4 or 5.

For that, each participant has to pick one piece of paper with written word on it. Then, without talking or showing the word, all have to find their team members silently. People with the same word gather as one team.

This is something like small energizer as well.

The task is presented:

Each team is given with list of products, a recipe, money and a few multiple used containers, bags, jars, etc., followed by instructions:

Each team has to prepare a meal/drink following its recipe.

For that they need to provide for the needed products themselves from a market place or a shop, for example, or a supermarket.

The groups are given a few minutes to choose a strategy. Then they must find a marketplace (help from the facilitators is acceptable). While shopping with as little as possible single use packaging, the groups will also compare the price difference -> shopping bulk, and shopping packaged. How? By checking how much similar (but packaged) products costs, and write down all the prices.

Then it's time for cooking. After cooking each team is presenting its dish, with an interesting story of the making.

Ranking the results, based on:

- + Taste of the meal.
- + Appearance of the meal.
- + Presentation.
- + How many single uses item are used during the shopping -> less is better.

After everything is done, it's time to enjoy the meals, and share the experience. How was it? What was easy and not easy to do? Will they change something in their life after this? What has surprised the participants? Expectations vs. reality, etc.

Ideas:

✓ Make the money provided to the teams to be just enough (or less) for the certain list of products. This will encourage the participants to come up with other solutions.

✓ If there is a fake market - make it with not enough common product, so the teams must cooperate between each other to succeed.

ABOUT (RE)CONNECT WITH NATURE AND COORDINATING ASSOCIATION LOJTRA

Project (Re)connect with nature

Aim of the project was to raise awareness about positive aspects of implementing non-formal learning experiences in nature. We have reached this by addressing the following objectives:

1. Building a space for sharing ideas, views, and opinions, about outdoor education.
2. Testing and evaluating different experiential approaches of working with young people in nature. Each project partner interactively presented one of the approaches they implement in their locality.
3. Creating guidelines for making quality outdoor learning experiences, collecting methods presented and compiling a list of science-based proofs, which are claiming a positive effect of nature on general feelings, learning and connectedness.
4. Creating at least 2 ideas for future projects, from which at least one is a strategic partnership

Association Lojtra

Established in 2014, Društvo Lojtra is a young organization, active in the field of youth work. The main motivation for our actions comes from our belief that meaningful experiences change lives. They definitely changed ours. Youth work just offers the perfect setting to design, implement and evaluate these kinds of experiences. And working with young people is so fun! We believe in non-formal educational approaches such as experiential learning and participatory learning. Regular reflections and evaluations assure that the learning processes actually happen. We find it extremely important that all the included stakeholders get an equal benefit from different activities that we are organizing. We are constantly learning, making friends around the globe, we are included in matters, which affect our values and we are nurturing respectful and responsible behavior towards others, the community, nature and ourselves. We are somewhat crazy and we are enjoying it. We believe the future is bright!