

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

Activity memo of outdoor education

Training with Thought

Introduction

This handbook is gathered by 20 people who participated to Outward Bound Croatia's „Training with Thought“ course. It is more of a memory of the learned experiences during the course. The handbook is mainly for the participants of the course to remind of the activities and methods used and learned during the course, but also for people familiar with the context of outdoor education. The handbook contains activities from icebreakers, team building, trust games, self awareness and our experience from 2 day expedition used as a tool of learning.

Please use this memo responsibly and be aware of your knowledge and skills considering the context of outdoor education. The authors of this handbook are not responsible of incorrect use. We do not hold any credit for the activities and methods which are gathered here.

Enjoy it responsibly!

Contents

Introduction.....	2
Blanket game (Name shooting)	4
Blind mimics game	5
Draw a car.....	6
Expedition.....	7
Figure of 8 (the knot) – game	9
Human knot.....	10
Island	11
Longest line	12
Moonwalk.....	13
Puzzle.....	14
Slackline V rope	15
Slackline with fixed ropes.....	16
The sling game.....	17
Snake – low ropes.....	18
Solo	19
Snowball fight.....	20
Tarzan Game.....	21
Toxic garbage.....	22
Trust Fall	23
V-game - low rope	24
Conclusion	25

Blanket game (Name shooting)

Description

Divide or ask the participants to divide themselves into two teams. Place them far enough from each other so that you can make a „wall“ between them from a blanket and it's clear who's turn it is.

The aim is to guess the name of the one person behind the blanket as fast as possible. Once the blanket is lowered the one who tells the correct name of the opponent gets a new team member. The game ends when everyone is in the same side of the blanket though it's also possible to end it as a tie (recommended for very competitive or problemed groups).

The trainer should encourage everyone to go behind the blanket at least once.

Materials

blanket/sheet/tarp/curtan etc big enough to hide the groups
2 people holding the blanket

Purpose

Growing team spirit
Getting to know the names

Debrief and reflection

Usually not needed, but if the group is very competitive or has low self-esteem it's important to emphasize in the end of the game that in the end everyone is in the winning team or end it when it's a tie.

BLIND MIMICS GAME

Description:

Game is set with 3 people. The aim is to build teamwork and trust. Decide who is going to be blindfolded, who will be doing the mimics and who will be directing the blindfolded person without seeing the blindfolded person.

Hide an object from the blindfolded person, person who is directing the blindfolded person has his back toward blindfolded person at all times. He is directing by looking at the mimics of the mime, who is not allowed to speak. Goal is to direct the blindfolded person to the object.

Purpose:

Teamwork, trust, using different communication styles, getting out of the comfort zone

Reflection:

1. What role was the most difficult?
2. What would you do differently?
3. How can you apply it in the real life situations?

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

Draw a car

Description

Everyone from the group should draw one big car figure and each one must identify himself as one of the car elements (like radio, rim, horn).

The car represents all the elements of the group and their dynamics.

Materials

Paper

Pens

Tape

Purpose

To figure out your role in the group.

Debrief and reflection

Basic debriefing.

Why did you related with this kind of car element?

Does the car reflect all the group and their dynamics?

Do you think that was easy to find your place in the group?

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

Expedition

Description:

It is a tool, a method and learning environment. It contributes in experiential learning in practise, in real life context. It includes responsibilities, physical, mental and social dimensions of challenges and possibilities for a group and individual to discover their capacities. Also, the possibility for improvement.

On the other hand, expedition provides a possibility to enjoy nature and to discover our own individual place in it. It provides a dialog between a human and greatness of nature.



Purpose: getting experience in outdoors

Materials:

Sleeping equipment, personal gear for outdoors, camping equipment (tents, ropes, toilet stuff, kitchen equipment), navigation and transportation equipment.

Safety:

Expedition is happening outdoors so instructor has to be sure of different kind of safety regulations i.e. making fire, carrying first aid kit, informing 911/112 if necessary (in different countries different). Safety issues (including how to move in nature or on the sea in formation) can be included to group preparations or to expedition itself. So you can provide some first aid exercises so all members of the group are aware of necessary procedures. For example we practiced capsizing and rescuing after that on kayaks which included getting kayakers empty from water and getting into kayak again. Afterwards we were informed about basic regulations on the seas including different traffic hierarchy on the sea among different boats and ships. Also we learned basic signals which are used while kayaking on the sea.

If you are using open fire make sure that group knows how to use that and if it is allowed.

In general:

From here we rely on our case. We had 20 persons and 2 instructors from age 20-40. Those people were divided to three groups smaller groups by their responsibility areas: food, equipment and navigation group. Every person chose his/her group on her/his own by their base of discomfort zones.

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

Day One

Preparation:

Food group had 25 kunas (Croatia's money) per person to buy stuff for 3 meals. They went to the local supermarket and planned the meals and bought the stuff. After that they backed the stuff by the ordres of the equipment group. On the island they were responsible feeding the others 😊.

Navigation group: They learned how to use compas and how to read the map. Also they planned the route of our expedition and informed others of the details. On the sea they were responsible for navigating us safely to island and from there to homeharbour.

Equipment group: They had to learn how to make shelters from tarps and ropes. They had to organize personal and group's stuff to drybags. And eventually pack the stuff into the kayaks. They made shelters on the island and unpacked them. They also took care of trash management.

Individual level: People needed to back their personal gear, learn how to satisfy their personal needs (hygine) in the nature. Also to learn how to make some basic skills how to build shelter in the nature including knots.

Travelling (on kayaks)

What happened? – After outward bound we were kayaking according the way which was led by navigation team. Based on different skill levels from first timers to very experienced water sportsmen it was efecting how we were proceding during kayaking i.e. we spreaded out as a group, we lacked communication, which caused some frustation afterwards. We weren't expecting for strong current which caused also some difficulties we had to fight with that because as we were faster than predicted we changed the route which was originally planned. After we landed on island equipment team started to make shelters and food team started to prepare dinner. After everything was done we had our evening circle where every participant was talking about his/her feelings and experiences related to the day.

TIP: Eventhough rice has a lot of nutrions it takes a lot of time and gas to boil. Because of that we had to wait for or dinner bit longer.

Day Two

We started with little debreif about breakfast and food group started to work on that while others took down the shelters and packed up their personal gear. After breakfast we were presented with activty called Solo and then we did it (More about it under activities). During Solo we were asked to think about our personal needs to mak the day more efficient and after Solo we shared our thoughts and alos we were talking what the day will be looking like. After reflection we packed up everything and made sure that everyone had at least 1,5l water for the trip back to homeharbour. When we left from the shore we started to perform more sufficent than the previous day and also held together as a pack/group. Day was good and day was easier and it was visible that people were more experienced about kayaking. Emotions were cheerful and supportive even playful. Also we made a stop in one smaller island for a toilet break and swimming. Navigation team took care that we won't end up in the ship line so we crossed that quickly because there were bigger sailing boats.

When we ended the expedition we unpacked all of our gear and transported it to home. We washed dishes and wetsuites, also we took care of trash and our personal needs.

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

TIP: Equipment team should have knowledge how much things they handed out and in the end they should control if they have the same amount of stuff back with them.

FIGURE OF 8 (THE KNOT) – GAME

Description:

All the participants grab the rope with both hands. The assignment of the game is to make a figure of Eight somewhere in the middle of the rope without letting go of the rope. Participants are allowed to slide the rope between their hands. The assignment is done in silence.

Materials:

- Rope

Make sure it is long enough for your group size.

Purpose:

- Team building
- Communication

Reflection/Debriefing:

Questions to ask:

How was it? Hard/easy?

What was hard/easy about it?

What made it hard/easy?

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

Human knot

Theme:

group building activity

Objectives:

The goal of this activity is to learn how to work together, improve group communication and raise team spirit. It can also focus on the group's understanding of communication, leadership, problem solving, trust and persistence. Activity also helps to understand the roles people have in the group.

Time:

20-40 minutes

Group size:

7-20 people

Instructions:

The participants are asked to form a circle, shoulder to shoulder. The facilitator should ask them to stand closer, in order to prepare them for what is about to come. (If there are two or more groups they should have enough space, so that the groups do not feel distracted by the other groups, or a sense of competition.

Participants should each place a hand in the middle of the circle, and then are asked to grab another hand from opposite direction (only 2 hands per one connection).

Facilitator should explain the goal of the activity to the participants: they are asked to untangle themselves into a circle, without letting go any hand.

The facilitator can now stand back and watch (and possibly evaluate) the group, or individuals.

In the first minutes (up to 15) there might not be much progress, however as soon as the initial unfolding happens, the pace should become quicker. In case that no progress is made after the first 10-15 minutes, the facilitator could offer the group one de- and then re-clap, in order to make it a little easier. The group then has to discuss and decide together which hands to de-clap. In case the result are two or more interlocked circles, the facilitator should ask the group to unfold these too, in order to get the simplest structure.

Debriefing:

- How was the activity for you?
- How well did you think the group worked together?
- What kind of roles were there in the group? Who took the role of the leader?
- What could have been done differently?
- What do you think you've learned from this activity which can be applied in future activities?

Important notes for facilitators:

Be aware that the activity involves close physical proximity and touch potentially in sensitive places! It can be used as a first activity in an adventurous program with volunteers (e.g., the start of an Outward Bound program). However, if the program is less adventurous, or group members potentially will have significant problems with such proximity, e.g., due to culture, or social or psychological problems, then Human Knot could be introduced later in a program.

Island

Description

All the group elements should stay in the tarp (raft), and each one must have the feet inside the borders of the tarp for 5 seconds, because outside the borders is considered "water or a river full of dangerous animals".

All the group elements must have their feet inside the borders of the tarp in order for the task to be considered done, and after the group performs 5 seconds within the borders the difficulty level increases, and the tarp should be folded.

Materials

1 Tarp

Purpose

Trust building
Communication
Coordination
Problem solving (variation)

Debrief and reflection

Basic debriefing.

Did you discuss some kind of group strategy?

What worked for you to get the task done?

Do you feel communication was important to get the task done?

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

Longest line

Description

Two or more teams with the same starting point, have to make the longest line, they can use their bodies and the clothes they are wearing.

Materials

Not needed

Purpose

See how comfortable the group is with partial nudity.

Debrief and reflection

No need

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

Moonwalk

Description:

Low rope is attached between 2 trees. Moonwalker has four ropes tied to him and other participants have to hold his balance using those ropes. Every rope has one person who holds moonwalker balance. Moonwalker walks on the low rope and balance holders walk on the ground. Main goal is to walk from start of the low rope to the end without falling down. First round is done eyes opened, second round is done blindfolded.

Materials:

Low rope to walk on. Four ropes to hold the moonwalker in balance. Ropes device where those 4 ropes are attached.

Purpose:

This game purpose was to gain trust in your team who coordinates you. Also to develop team work between each other and take people out from their comfort zone.

Reflection:

Everyone gather into a circle to discuss what went wrong and what they could do to make it better.

Puzzle

Description:

After the instructions are given starts silence.

Puzzle pieces are mixed up beforehand and placed into a packages with everyone's names.

Everyone finds a package with their name on it. They open the packages.

Everyone gives those pieces to others that fit them (according the piece with name on it).

When everyone have all their puzzle pieces, they will solve it.

So far everything has been done in total silence.

Silence ends. Everyone glues their puzzles on the paper.

All participants have to write on the papers their expectations, contribution and fears. These papers are placed onto a puzzle.

All puzzles are glued onto a big paper where everyone can later see it.

Materials:

One different (colored) puzzle and a paper to glue the puzzle on for every participant.

Glue and one big paper to glue on all the puzzles.

Picture:



Purpose:

Get to know each other's expectations, fears and contribution.

Reflection:

Everyone gather into a circle to discuss and share their expectations, fears and contribution.

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

Slackline V rope

Critical:

There is a slackline between two trees. And a loose rope that passes through a carabiner located approximately half way from the two trees.

Two people at the same time stand on the slackline one on each end holding one side of the rope they have to move to the opposite side crossing each other and never touching the ground.

Materials:

A slackline placed between two trees low enough so that people can get easily on it

A long rope that reaches both sides and the middle point.

A carabiner to fix the rope.

Purpose:

Cooperation

Communication

Trust

Reflection:

How did you feel having to trust and rely on someone else?

Did you step out of your comfort zone?

What worked for you to get the task done?

SLACKLINE WITH FIXED ROPES

Description

Fix a slackline to two trees. Make sure that the slackline is well tensioned in a way that it can hold two persons. Put ropes on both trees so that they are approximately 2 m above the slackline. Make sure that the ropes touch each other in middle of the slackline in a way that there is about 0,5m extra after they touch each other.

Participants are suppose to to reach the opposite tree by using the ropes above as a support but without touching or falling to the ground.

Materials

- 1 Slackline
- 2 static ropes

Purpose

- Trust building
- Balance
- Coordination
- Problem solving (variation)

Debrief and reflection

Basic debriefing.

How did you feel having to trust and rely on someone else?

Did you go out of your comfort zone?

What worked for you to get the task done?

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

The sling game

Theme:

group building activity

Objectives:

- Help group to get know each other
- Learn to work together
- Explore the roles people have in group
- Develop creativity and sense of initiative

Materials:

- 2 slings

Time:

30-40 minutes

Group size:

15-30 people

Instructions:

Give one sling to a member of the group and ask him/her to put it across his/her shoulder (around body). Ask group to hold hands in cycle. Now the group needs to pass the sling around the cycle without breaking hand connection and they are not allowed to use fingers. After first round, it is possible to try it with 2 slings (slings going opposite direction). After each round give group opportunity to discuss the strategy and before the last time let them set aim, how fast they want to do it. After the activity continue with debriefing.

Debriefing questions:

- How was this activity for you?
- How did you come up with strategy? Was some strategy more effective than other?
- What kind of roles there were in the group? Did someone take the role of the leader?
- If you could do this activity again, would you do anything different?

Important notes for facilitators:

You have to be careful in using this activity in case the group is not very familiar with each other and make sure that everyone feels comfortable doing the activity. For example if you are working with teenagers who are not very confident in their body or some members of the group are overweight, this activity might not be suitable, as it can cause exclusion of the people, who don't manage the activity that well. Example: you have group of teenage boys and girls, and everyone manages the activity very well, expect one girl, whose body is more developed and sling gets caught to her breast all the time, which in turn causes the situation where other make fun of her and she doesn't feel part of the group. So be careful, with whom you use the activity ;).

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

Snake – low ropes

Description:

Put rope between trees in zig-zag formation. Use pullies to tighten the rope. Team has to complete the course without falling – if one person falls the whole team has to start again.

You can use time limit to create a more stressful situation. If so give some time to prepare.

Materials

Static rope
Carabines
Pullies
Stopper
Slings

Use slings, carabines and pullies to connect the rope between trees and make a pullie system to the end of the course to tighten the rope. Use stopper to keep the rope tight.

Purpose

Building teamwork, trust building, creative thinking, getting out of the comfort zone.

Reflection:

1. How was it? / What happened?
2. How did you work as a team?
3. What would you do differently?

Solo

Description:

Solo is usually performed before or after expedition. Solo lasts usually 20h and over night. Participants are divided each in their own spot not hearing or seeing anyone else. The spot is usually a calm, beautiful, relaxing and/or comfortable. Participants will build their own shelter on the given spot. Instructor should be near by for safety reasons but not seen. Participants will be given pen and a paper to write their thoughts. Give participants questions to think about.

Example from kayaking expedition:

1. How much are you contributing to the group on scale 1-10? And what can you do to get 10 out of 10?
2. What do you need to make your expedition better/ easier for you? Realistic needs.
3. Check how are you doing with your goals you set in the beginning of the expedition or your goals in life.
4. Write a letter to yourself:
Where are you now, where do you want to be in future, what do you want to say to yourself when you open the letter after a year?

NOTE:

Solo can be done in a shorter period of time. Recommended 1,5h minimum.

Materials:

- Tarp
- Sleeping bag and a sleeping mattress
- A whistle
- Water and food/snacks to survive

Purpose:

Self awareness

Reflection:

1. How was the expedition?
2. Ask each participant their realistic needs for the expedition/for the day that participants were thinking in their solo time.

NOTE:

Personal thoughts considering the solo are not insisted to share.

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

Snowball fight

Description

Each one takes a piece of paper and writes a name on it. Then makes a ball out of it, after everyone makes a snowball fight with the papers, then when the instructors say, everyone grabs a paper finds out which name is in it goes to the person he has on the paper and asks him a question, provided by the instructor, about him. This can be repeated as many times as we want and the questions can be also adapted to each group .

Materials

Pens
Papers

Purpose

Getting to know each other (ice breaker)

Debrief and reflection

As a way to close this game the instructor can ask to the participants to present the person next to them.

Tarzan Game

Critical

There is a rope hanging from a tree, the group of participants stands on a delimited area from which they can hold the extremity of the rope. Across from where they stand there is a another delimited area that they have to reach.

The two delimited areas must be at such a distance that they cannot be reached jumping or throwing. The objective is to get the entire group to the opposite side using as help only the rope and each other. If anyone falls in between the two areas, or steps on the boundaries, or cannot reach the rope anymore the whole game starts all over.

Materials

- A rope hanging
- Something to delimitate the two areas
- A group of participants (minimum 4)

Purpose

- To test team work and team building
- To see how people react in frustrating situations
- If and how the team supports each member

Reflection

- What was the most frustrating moment for you? Or the group?
- How did you participate in the activity?
- What role did you take? (leader?, follower?, supporter?....)
- How do you feel?
- Did the group support you? And how?
- What could you have done differently?
- What did you learn about yourself?

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

TOXIC GARBAGE

Description:

Assignment is to move a „toxic waste“ from one circle to another without touching the „toxic waste“ or entering the circle. You cannot drag the „waste“ you have to lift and move. The team needs to figure out how they will do the task and be creative.

Frame the task to a story (end of the world and so on...)

Possibility to variate the task: time limit (10min preparation 20min, task), choose a participant to sabotage the task without the other participants knowing.

Materials:

- Elastic – to put around the bucket.
- Small ropes - to manipulate the elastic.
- Carabiners – to connect the ropes to elastic.
- Bucket with water (toxic waste)
- 2 ropes to make circles where the waste is and where to put it.
- Extra materials for distraction.

Purpose:

Team building, leadership discovery, creative thinking, working in stressful situation.

Reflection:

1. How was it? / What happened?
2. What was your role in the task?
3. Would you do something differently?
4. Who was the leader? Did you agree with the leader?

Trust Fall

Critical

One person at the time stands on a higher platform, than the other participants turns his/her back to the group which is standing below.

The others are creating a corridor facing each other and locking arms in a couple standing very close side by side to create a safety net for the person on the platform.

When the person standing on the platform is ready he or she ask the group the following question (Are you ready?)

When the group replies (Yes) it means that they are ready to catch that person in their arms.

At this point the one on the platform throws him or her self backward in the arms of the others maintaining a straight posture.

Materials

- Same kind of platform
- Enough people to catch who falls (min 8 people)

Purpose

- To stimulate and test trusting abilities towards the group
- Encourage the proximity between the members of the group

Reflection

- How did you feel falling in the arms of people you don't really know?
- How can you apply it to ur life?
- What was difficult?
- What did you learn?

[6 – 16. Oct 2014.]

V-GAME - low rope

Description:

The task is to walk on a V-shaped rope with a partner holding hands by leaning on each other.

Techniques:

Adjust a rope between 3 trees, knee high, to form a shape of a letter V

Materials:

- rope
- carabiners
- sling/small ropes (to make anchors)
- helmets

Purpose:

trust game

Reflection:

-How was it?

No need for big reflection after the task

Conclusion

This handbook was made by a group of young international people who are organizing different outdoor activities. We made this book in Sv. Filip i Jakov in Croatia in October of 2014 during „Training with Thought“ training course for outdoor education instructors which was organized by Outward Bound Croatia. We based this book on activities we did during our training.

We thank Outward Bound Croatia, organizers, trainers and co-participants for 11 days full of interesting and educating activities and good times.



AGENCY FOR
MOBILITY AND
EU PROGRAMMES



Erasmus+