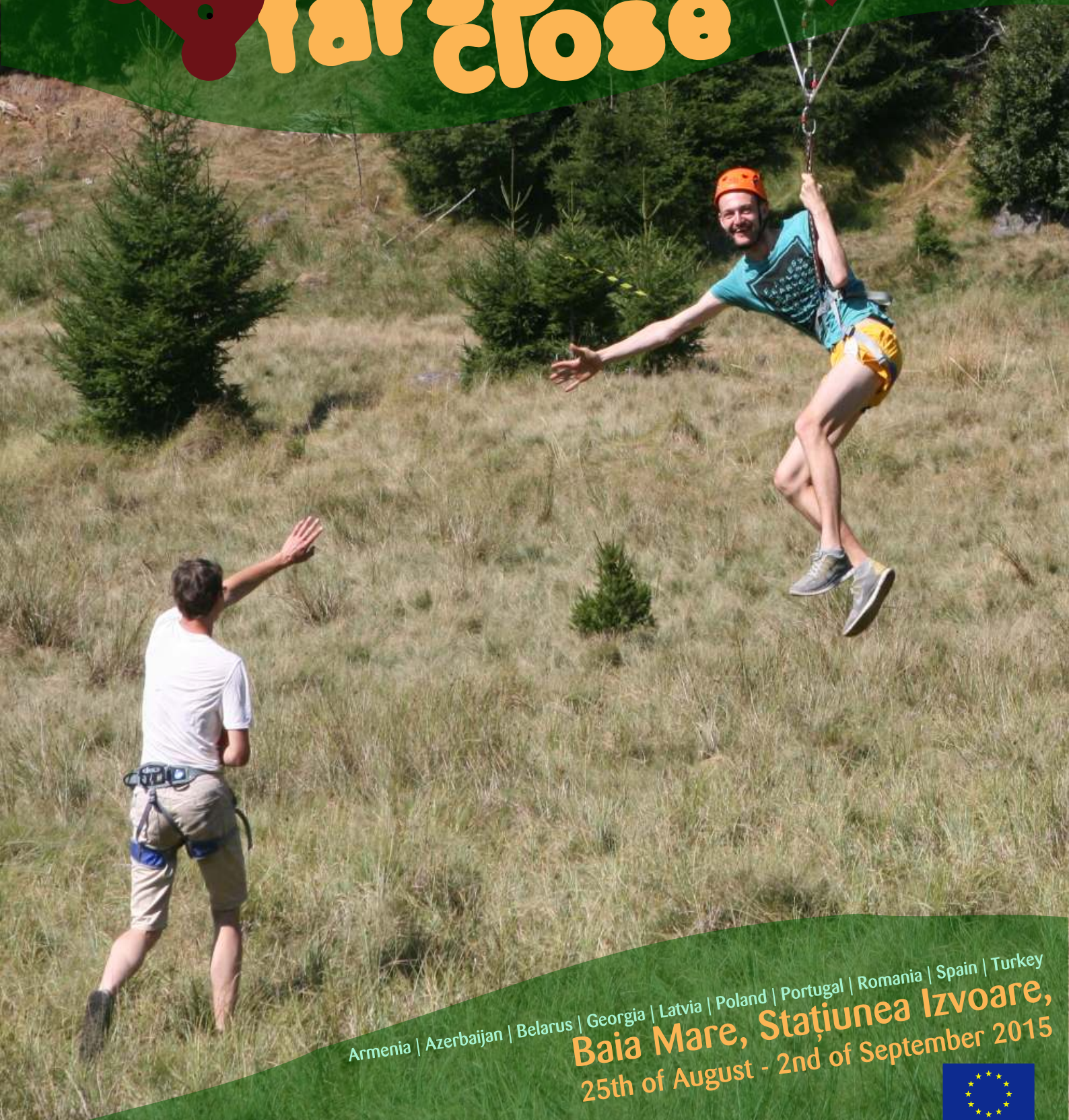




so so far so close



Armenia | Azerbaijan | Belarus | Georgia | Latvia | Poland | Portugal | Romania | Spain | Turkey
Baia Mare, Stațiunea Izvoare,
25th of August - 2nd of September 2015





Dear reader, this activity memo was created for you, to show you some of the methods used during this training course, in the hope that you will find it useful in the youthwork you do, in empowering young people every day, all over the world.

"So Far, So Close" was a training course which reunited 24 young leaders from 10 countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Turkey in northern Romania, near Baia Mare, in Sta?iunea Izvoare, between 26th of August 2015 and 1st of September 2015.

Participants had the opportunity to experience various non-formal and outdoor methods as a tool for intercultural learning .

The main objectives of the project were:

- promoting and exploring the "outdoor", "healthy lifestyle" and "intercultural learning" concepts in relation with youth work;
- raising the intercultural and outdoor competences of the participants;
- promoting respect for cultural and European diversity;
- sharing methods, experiences and tools among youth workers as best practices for encouraging the use of outdoor activities in an intercultural and international context;
- promoting non-formal education methods and introducing Erasmus+ Programme as an opportunity for European youth mobilities.

The working methods used during the training course were non-formal, with a strong intercultural and outdoor approach: role plays, energisers, icebreakers, movie watching, world-cafe, open space, learning to play and playing to learn, debriefs, teamwork, rope techniques, hiking and many more.



INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

What is culture?

In plenary or working groups: brainstorming about what culture is. Write all the words that come up on a piece of flipchart paper. Ask participants to reflect on those random words and see if they can make a definition of culture out of them. After they form their definition/s, the facilitator can show them well known definitions from different studies.

The Iceberg Model of Culture

In plenary, present participants the Iceberg Model of Cultures, by showing an image of it with examples. Back in the working groups, give each participant a piece of paper with an empty iceberg. Ask them to form couples and to present to each other their own iceberg, based on their own culture and personal background. They should fill in their own iceberg with their personal information (above the water line those things which are visible, and put things underneath the water-line things which are not visible). Back in plenary, participants do not have to present in front of everyone their own iceberg, only if they want to and if they feel comfortable doing so. Give time for debrief.

Introduction to Intercultural Learning/ ICL

Model of collision of icebergs

Ask participants to reflect on the question: What happens when 2 icebergs collide?

Their answers should lead to the key concepts:

comfort zone, cultural shock, risk of stereotyping. Open discussions in plenary.



Note: The visible parts of culture are just expressions of its invisible parts!

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 2

Story of ABIGALE

In plenary, tell participants the story of Abigale.

It is easier if you have it drawn on a flipchart paper, for a better visibility.

“Abigale loves Tom who lives on the other side of the river. A flood has destroyed all bridges across the river, and has left only one boat afloat. Abigale asks Sinbad, the owner of the boat, to bring her to the other side. Sinbad agrees, but insists that Abigale has to sleep with him in return. Abigale does not know what to do and runs to her mother and asks her what she should do. Her mother tells Abigale that she does not want to interfere with Abigale’s own business. In her desperation Abigale sleeps with Sinbad who, afterwards, brings her across the river. Abigale runs to Tom to happily embrace him and tell him everything that has happened. Tom pushes her away strongly and Abigale runs away. Not far from Tom’s house, Abigale meets John, Tom’s best friend. She tells everything that has happened to him as well. John hits Tom for what he has done to Abigale and walks away with her.”



Task:

Ask participants to rank the characters from the story (no. 1 for who behaved the worst, no. 5 for who behaved the best). First, ask participants to do the ranking individually. After, divide them in mixed groups (different sex and different countries) and ask them to do the rating as a group, by reaching a common decision. When they finish, ask each group to present in plenary their ranking with arguments for their decision.

Debrief:

How was it to do the ranking? How did you reach a decision in your group?
Do you agree with your group’s decision? Was it easy/difficult to rank the characters of the story? etc.

Source: <https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-1891/Abigale.pdf>



INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 3

THE ISLAND OF MONOMULTI (3 cultures)
Exercise in which three different cultures meet and have to co-operate.

Aims

- to raise awareness of diversity and consequences
- to start the discussion about how to deal with differences
- to experience a multi-cultural situation

Time: 1,5 - 2 hours (incl. evaluation), Group size: 20 – 30

Materials: cartoon, scissors, glue, pencils, role cards

Instructions

The group is divided in 3 groups. Each group gets their role card and they have 25 minutes to prepare their culture as described on the role card. On all role cards is said that they should practice it very profound. After this preparation the whole group comes together.

Then, the trainer/facilitator will instruct them (5 min.):

An enormous storm in this area has caused that your ship went down to the bottom of the ocean. You managed to reach this desert island. It seems also other ships wrecked because you have already noticed that groups from other ships managed to get here. The island is very mountainous and there seems to be only one spot where it's possible to live. Which means that you have to live together with the other groups that reached the island. Because of the location of the island it's not expected that help will arrive before the end of next month. So you have to survive for at least five weeks. Food doesn't seem to be a problem. There are lot's of fruits growing and all kind of animals to hunt. The first concern is to built a shelter where all people can sleep and hide in case of heavy rain and storm and which can protect you against wild animals. It's important to do this as fast as possible because this area is known for sudden changing weather conditions. You'll have to do it together with the other groups because there's not enough space and material to built more then one shelter. The material for building the shelter: cardboard, scissors, glue, rulers and pencils. The shelter must be stable and should at least be 100 cm high and 150 cm wide. It should have a roof and of course a door. You have 25 minutes to build the shelter.



INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Evaluation

Culture groups – 15-30 minutes

- How did you feel during the simulation?
- What do you think about the construction-process?
- Were there moments where you felt insecure or not respected?
- What do you think are the characteristics of the other cultures?
- 3-4 minutes feedback from observers

Plenary – 25-30 minutes

- Can you see a link between this simulation and reality?
- What can we learn from this simulation?
- optional: focus on facts, feelings, interpretations



COLDONIA

In your culture 'intelligence' and 'hard working' are the central issues. Other cultures consider you as 'cold'. But you see yourself as a very successful and wealthy country, mainly because of your very effective way of working.

You don't discuss feelings, you like intellectual debates on logical arguments. Showing your feelings is considered childish. Self-control is seen as an important quality.

Religion totally disappeared in your country and is considered as 'stupid' and 'a waste of time'.

You greet other people by looking in their eyes. Freedom of space is very important in Coldonia. That's why you never touch people while greeting or communicating and you don't like to be touched. Touching other people is only used as an invitation for sexual intercourse, which in Coldonia has little moral implications and is mostly done as a relaxing and physical exercise.

Your body language reflects your culture. You only use small gestures, your back is straight and you stay always calm.

It's very normal in Coldonia to interrupt another person whenever you feel the need to do that.

An important characteristic of Coldonians is that they are very willing and see it as their task to teach and train other cultures in order to help them to become as efficient and as successful as you are. Whenever you have the opportunity to teach other cultures you do it.

Coldonia is famous for building big oil-platforms and huge bridges.

Because your behavior is natural to you, you cannot explain it to strangers.

Now you have 15 minutes to prepare yourself in your own group. Practice the behavior! Also make sure that there is one thing that shows in your appearance that you are from the same country. (e.g. the way you dress, the way you do your hair etc.) It's very important to practice well because you will need it in the follow-up

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES



TURTELINA

In Turtelina 'friendship' and 'taking care of each other' are important values. Turtelinians show their feelings all the time and personal feelings are always the central issue in communication. Your face and your gestures show how you feel. You always touch each other. When you talk to someone you hold his or her ear. You stand close to the other. A distance more than 30 cm is considered as rude. When you greet somebody you put his or her hand on your heart. Any reference to sex is taboo and considered offending.

Time is very important in Turtelina. You are never in a hurry. You like to take your time. When you work together you first want to be sure that the atmosphere is good. So you ask the others all the time how they feel and you inform them about your feelings.

Interrupting people when they are speaking is considered impolite. You wait till they have finished their story. When people interrupt you, you feel rejected and you react very emotionally.

Turtelina is well known for their round shaped colorful buildings. Houses are always built in round shapes because this reflects friendship and harmony.

Because your behavior is natural to you, you cannot explain it to strangers.

Now you have 15 minutes to prepare yourself in your own group. Practice the behavior! Also make sure that there is one thing that shows in your appearance that you are from the same country. (e.g. the way you dress,

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

SMILIA

In Smilia 'politeness' and 'friendship and harmony' are the most important values. You don't like conflicts; you consider arguments as impolite behavior. That's why you don't know the word 'no'. Even when you don't agree you say 'yes'. You always smile at people, also when you don't like their attitude.

When you are working together and somebody asks you to do something you don't want to do, you say 'yes' but you always find a way not to do it.

Smilia is a very religious country. In daily life this means that you pray often. Every five minutes you stop whatever you do to come together to worship your gods. You do that by sitting together and whistling.

The Smilians greet each other by rubbing each other's legs. While speaking to each other your feet or legs are always in touch with the other ones feet or legs. You don't touch each other up from the waist; it's for example not allowed to touch shoulders, heads, hands or arms.

You have very strict rules towards tools and materials. Cardboard and scissors are male and cannot be used by women. Rulers and pencils are female and cannot be used by men. Glue can be used by both sexes. Smilia is famous for its paintings and interior decorations.

Because your behavior is natural to you, you cannot explain it to strangers.

Now you have 15 minutes to prepare yourself in your own group. Practice the behavior! Also make sure there is one thing that shows in your appearance that you are from the same country. (e.g. the way you dress, the



INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 4

FACTS AND THOUGHTS

Time: 15 min observation , 30 min sharing and discussion

Materials: flip-chart paper, notebooks and pens

Objective: this activity focuses on looking beyond judgement. It is composed of a part of observation and one of sharing what we saw, working with what is there and thus getting a better grasp of reality.

Procedure:

-The facilitator/trainer tells the participants that the next assignment will be done in silence.

Individually, they will go outside and write down what they notice around them, what happens.

After 15 minutes they come back in the room and start sharing.

-The facilitator/trainer will write down on the flipchart paper what they say, putting the factual phrases/words separate from the thoughts. Then he asks the participants why they think he made the separation

-The way to distinguish between facts and thoughts is by asking yourself: Is it? Could it be different?

Give time for debrief.





INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 5

Rope connection

Number of participants: max 30 (depends on the age and maturity of the group)

Materials: rope, small pieces of papers, pens

Learning objectives: How to function in a team

Description:

- Ask the participants to close their eyes and imagine 2-3 things they would do if they were given 15 minutes of free time. Ask them to open their eyes, write their wishes on a piece of note and put it in their pockets
- The participants are standing in a semi-circle
- Tight the rope on the first participant's leg and then continue making circles around the right leg of every participant. Tight the rope on the last one as well.
- Tell participants: Now you have 15 minutes free, to achieve as many wishes written on your notes.
- Remind them on the time
- Give time for debrief

Helpful questions for debriefing:

How many things did you accomplish? How did you start? Was there a strategy/leader/conflict?

How did you feel? Why do you think we did this activity?





INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 6

Intercultural Train

- role play for a better impact of ICL
- arrange room and seats as in a train (wagons and seats for each wagon)
- number the seats and the wagons
- add one extra chair (with no number) in each wagon
- give participants train tickets before they enter the train (with wagon and seat number)
- Invite participants in the train

Story - make a story for introducing the participants into the setting

(example created by us: Welcome aboard of the Intercultural Train. Get ready for an unforgettable 48 hours journey, which will take you from colorful hot Bombay to exquisite Paris. The train is old and rusty but the landscape is beautiful, somehow intriguing, different from what you've seen before...

It will be a very long exhausting journey but the people you will meet on the way will keep you company, etc etc. BE CREATIVE!

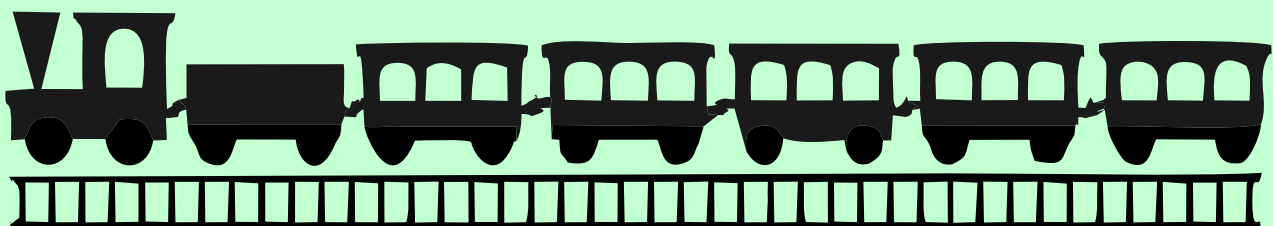
During this journey, the train will stop only 1 time! You are not allowed to get off the train, until your final destination!

1st Stop: As you sit and admire the landscape, the train stops, and welcomes aboard new passengers...

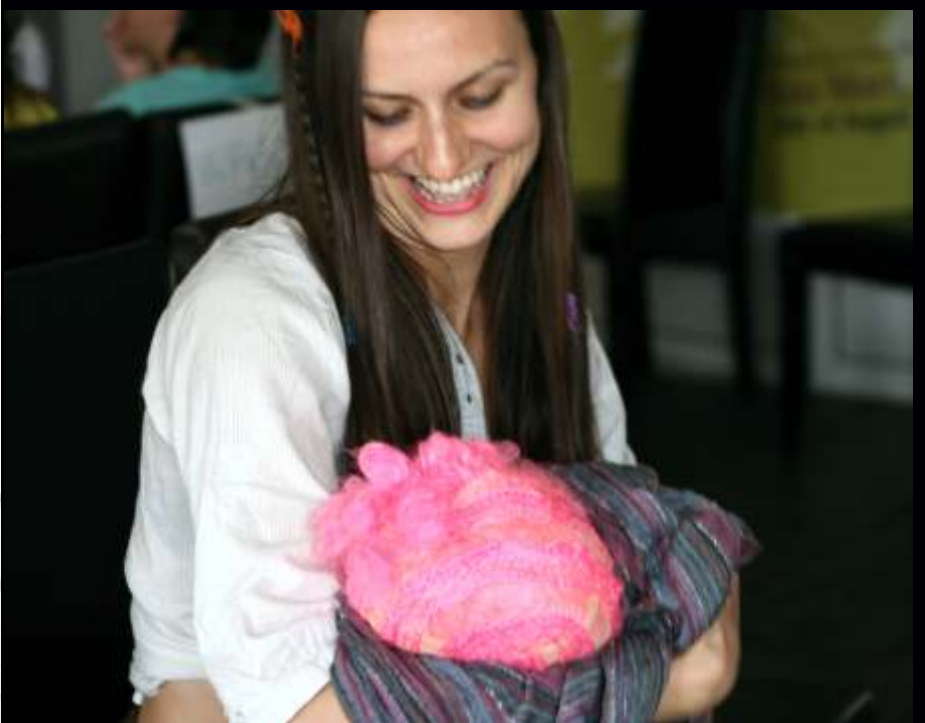
The passengers are persons playing a role (ex: drug addict, alcoholic, prostitute, gipsy, old lady, homeless, etc). They will walk in the train for a while, without interacting with the passengers, until they make their decision. After they are invited in the wagons they can start to interact with the others. All this time they should act accordingly to their role.

- Ask each participant to write on a piece of paper with whom they would like to travel
- Ask each group (wagon) to choose together with whom they would like to travel !

At the end, when the journey ends, give enough time for debrief.







INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 7

Movie watching

It is a good method for helping participants reflect more on the topic of ICL.

For this activity we chose the movie "Crash" (2004). You can also choose other movies on ICL subject (ex: Babel)

Being an outdoor project, we chose an outdoor setting for watching the movie.

Participants were given blankets and sleeping bags, as well as popcorn, to create a comfortable atmosphere.

The city of Los Angeles is shown as a place where people think and move fast. The cast of characters seem to speed through their lives without always considering the connections and consequences of their actions. This film shows how a very diverse group of individuals "crash" into one another and leave painful marks behind. Watch and see just how much of what one feels, says and does can impact so many others around them.

Interesting discussions on Intercultural Learning can take place after the viewing the movie.

Helpful questions:

Did you like the movie? Why or why not? Name the different stereotypes you heard in this movie?

Are they ones you have heard before? What are the reasons people use stereotypes?

How did language barriers create problems in this film? How can we help to prevent such misunderstandings?

Which character did you like most or least? Why? Which character was the most unethical/ethical? Why? etc



INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Intercultural evening

Participants had to present their countries, with no help of videos or other electronic presentations. only by songs, dances, games, foods and drinks or anything else, according to their creativity. It was organised outside, in nature. The theme of the evening was: Eurovision!







OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

What is outdoor?

This should be an open discussions session on theory of outdoor education. Participants are being presented with various outdoor activities examples.

Nature and survival skills

In this session, the trainers will present participants a list of outdoor rules everyone should follow for their safety. Also, a first-aid workshop is introduced to participants with practical examples.

Rope techniques

This is a workshop about ropes, how to use ropes on various situations and most important, how to make different knots, according to the equipment we want to use (ex: knots for tying a hammock, knots for building a ladder, etc)

IMPORTANT!

Please use the presented activities responsibly and be aware of your knowledge and skills considering the context of outdoor education. The authors of this handbook are not responsible in case of incorrect use.

Before engaging in such an activity, make sure you have the necessary equipment and the assistance of an outdoor trainer or person with a lot of outdoor experience.

SAFETY ALWAYS COMES FIRST!



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Low ropes

The Log in the Square

In teams, participants need to find a strategy for putting a big wooden log in a square (marked in the ground). The wooden log is attached to 4 ropes tied to the trees. By using a lot communication, participants need to pull the ropes in order for the log to land on the ground, in the marked square.





OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The bridge

With the information gained in the rope techniques workshop, in teams, participants need to build a bridge (by using ropes and wood) in order to pass over an imaginary “dangerous river”.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

LOW V

It is a powerful teambuilding, trust and cooperation process.

Cables are installed between 3 trees in a narrow "V" about 12" (inches) from the ground.

The objective is for two people, each on a separate cable, starting at the narrow end of the "V", to stand facing each other. They must support each other as they walk towards the wide end of the "V" without falling.

Give time for debrief after.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Spider's web

The Spider's Web is a popular ropes course element that is constructed between trees. The objective is to cross from one side of the spider's web to the other without touching the web. The group must create a plan that takes participant physical ability and size to lift, pass, and spot participants in order to get them through. Give time for debrief after.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

High ropes

Rock climbing Learning Outcomes:

-team work, communication, encouragement and support, listening skills, carrying out instructions, risk awareness, environmental awareness, increased self esteem and confidence, sense of achievement.





OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Zip line

During this activity, participants had to cross a small forest on the other side, on a zip line.

Learning Outcomes:

- personal development
- confidence, self esteem, risk awareness, sense of achievement, overcoming fears, willingness to try
- social development: supporting others, trust, mutual respect, shared experience.







OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Painters

Divide the participants in 2 equal groups (equal by number, sex and strength).

Each team will represent a painter (ex: one team can be Van Gogh, the other can be Picasso).

The trainer will tell participants a story: "there is a magic brush, up on the rope, tied between two trees, with which, the winning painters can colour the sky"

The two teams need to face each other and select a person who needs to reach to the magic brush.

That person will be placed in harness and connected on same rope.

Each team member need to pull the rope as strong and fast as possible in order to lift up the person in harness from their own team, as high as possible, in order for him/her to reach the magic brush.

The 2 teams have 10 minutes to make their strategy before the race begins

The team who reaches the brush faster wins.

Give time for debrief after.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Hiking

It is a tool, a method which provides a learning environment. It includes responsibilities, physical, mental and social dimensions of challenges and possibilities for a group and individual to discover their capacities. It also provides a possibility to enjoy nature and to discover our own individual place in it. It provides a dialogue between humans and nature.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Nights by the fire

Evening activities were organized by the fire.

Each evening, a different team was in charge of making the fire, gathering the woods for the fire, putting the fire out and cleaning the fire area. In this way, participants became more responsible and learned more about team-work.





TESTIMONIALS

We took baby steps at first, testing each other's trust and we found out that we can rely on one another. I loved that each game was not only making us know more about the people in our team but it was also making us reflect on our own choices and abilities, as each game involved a lot of fun and team work and I feel like I made a bond with some of the participants.

From my point of view, this outdoor training was a sort of an open portal to a universe where all cultures are mixed and appreciated with the same intensity, and each person has the right to express their feelings freely, without fear of oppression.

Roberta, 19 years - Romania



I joined the training course because I really wondered how much effective outdoor activities to learn the differences and similarities between cultures.

Geography and Nature are one of the factors that shape culture. And I saw that mother Nature not only create the cultures but also got the cultures closer together. I also learned human limit beyond intercultural learning during our activities in nature.

Of course not only nature provide this processes: there was a great team to create all activities and admirable hospitality.

Selim, 25 years - Turkey

I had participated in a similar project, but project "So far so close" gave me the opportunity to gain even more experience in communicating with the people of other nationalities. I got to know other cultures, as well as their behaviour, I got very good friends for the future. Most knowledge gave Romanian friends who made it possible to overcome the fear of communicating with others, and obtain the dose of adrenaline in the mountains. Definitely I would like again to participate in this kind of project.

It was the best week in my summer of 2015!

Laura, 22 years - Latvia



TESTIMONIALS



Truly, the best feeling was to push our own limits and to be very satisfied by our own achievements[...].

When you spend an ordinary day with a certain person there are not that many reasons to get a lot in touch with him/her.

But here, in a completely new environment and new social unit created by our own we were getting close very rapidly, managing to create friendships among conflicting countries, small romances, or game opponents.

In the end everybody got a feeling of saying goodbye to an old friend that they have known for years. I'm sure that many of the guys were trying to figure out some opportunities to meet again in the future. And this opportunities for sure will come true.

We are So Far now, but sooner or later we will get So Close again.

Mesrop, 23 years - Armenia

So Far so Close was a really good training course. It was very well organized, the program being nicely structured. In the first days, the activities took place inside and all the participants got to learn more about the Erasmus + program and all kinds of interesting things. These days were more relaxed and gave us enough space and opportunities to get to know each other to accommodate.

Then there were the outdoor activities which were something we were all looking forward to do. It was really fun and challenging at the same time. The organizers made everyone feel very safe and I think that everyone trusted them very much.

But at the same time, the activities we did, were almost extreme for most of the participants and I saw that everyone pushed their limits and got out of their comfort zone. It was a really nice thing to see.

I feel like we learned how to communicate better with people from other cultures.

Iulia, 18 years - Romania



TESTIMONIALS



This training not only helped us develop our social skills but also encouraged us to make friends through cooperation. It was really enjoyable not only because of the really engaging games but also thanks to the really beautiful surroundings. My personal favourite activity was the hiking because it was a chance for us to see more. It was a really active and satisfying day for me and it definitely was one of the highlights of the whole week. Also, the intercultural evening was really creative and fun with all the dances and the songs and a great chance to taste foreign candies. But I think the most important thing, the one that made everything so special and awesome were the people that were involved: the participants, the organizers and the hosts that took care of everything.

Anda, 18 years - Romania

During the 7-days a group of people joined all together in an outdoor project that has established a precedent in this kind of projects. The first days all was planned and structured, but then, many surprises were included in the program. We did not know and it was really wonderful to participate in a program that has helped us to overcome our difficulties, our fears and our minds. Some of us were a bit worried because of our lack of skills under the frame of sportive activities, but we found out that all can be possible with help, cooperation, team work and, above all, friendship. In conclusion, this project has been really useful to share our experience, to overcome our fears and to learn from others. This project broke my stereotypes of trainings of such kind.

Cris, 27 years - Spain



TESTIMONIALS

During this training course we had intercultural evening where I had opportunity to show my country's culture, dance and cuisine. Also I understood a lot of new, very interesting facts about other countries also. I want to say that this TC was organized very well. The trainers were very experienced and did a great job to make these days unforgettable. They have prepared for us such interesting outdoor activities which are: climbing, hiking, zipline and etc. I have gained a lot of experience, had opportunity to try such kind of outdoor activities I haven't done before, made friends and had unforgettable memories.

This TC was more than my expectation.

Mariam, 20 years - Georgia



I can affirm with all my conviction that this was my biggest experience so far. Everything we did and learned was unique. The hosting place-the accommodation, was cozy and nice. It was our home for 7 days. I hope to participate again in another Erasmus+ project. I thank my sending organization for giving me this opportunity. Everything I learned during this training makes me a richer person.

Andreia, 28 years - Portugal









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Baia Mare, Stațiunea Izvoare,
25th of August - 2nd of September 2015

