

Terra incognita

GUIDE TO EXPERIENTIAL
EDUCATION IN RURAL AREA



With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

TYPES OF EDUCATION

Formal education delivered to learners by authority of the trained pedagogue in a systematic and intentional manner. It usually takes place within an institution like school, university and etc.

Non-formal education takes places outside the established formal system. It is organized from activities with planned learning aims though is based on voluntarism, self-directed motivation by learners, it benefits from peer-learning.

Informal learning is a life-long process that happens naturally from daily experiences in surrounding environment.

What is Experiential Education then?

Though it resembles the non-formal education in general and utilizes its tools in the same time **Experiential education** is much about the direct, practical experience in which learners and educators engage purposefully to gain skills and be able to reflect on the process and outcomes.

RURAL CONTEXT

Rural context is extremely **abundant with experiential education resources**. Ethno-cultural heritage, countryside household activity, natural conditions can all become the sources for various learning effects and instruments for educators to design practical programs.

Given the often **outdoor format** of activity, experiential education in rural area can be wholesome for the mental and physical condition of the learner.

TERRA  INCOGNITA

Terra Incognita project utilizes the resources of the countryside to achieve experiential learning effects on participants while at the same moment popularizing rural as a source of vast layer of cultural and practical knowledge.

DEVELOPING POTENTIAL

A person wearing a grey t-shirt and a blue apron is working with wood in a workshop. They are holding a wooden handle, possibly a chisel or a similar tool, and are focused on their work. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and workshop equipment.

Experiential education can be a driving force for the rural **community development**. Different experiential programs can be designed through uncovering and utilizing local potential (e.g. history, folklore, crafts, customs, food) that leads to stimulation of entrepreneurship, especially of non-agricultural format.

Experiential education can give a boost to **incoming rural tourism**. Besides different workshops, outdoor tours, cultural exchange, etc. local population can offer to participants of experiential programs food and lodging.

Such economic activity has a considerable **social effect** as pushes people to collaborate and lets them create added value from resources they would not otherwise have opportunity to use. People start to see prospects rather than limits in own rural environment.

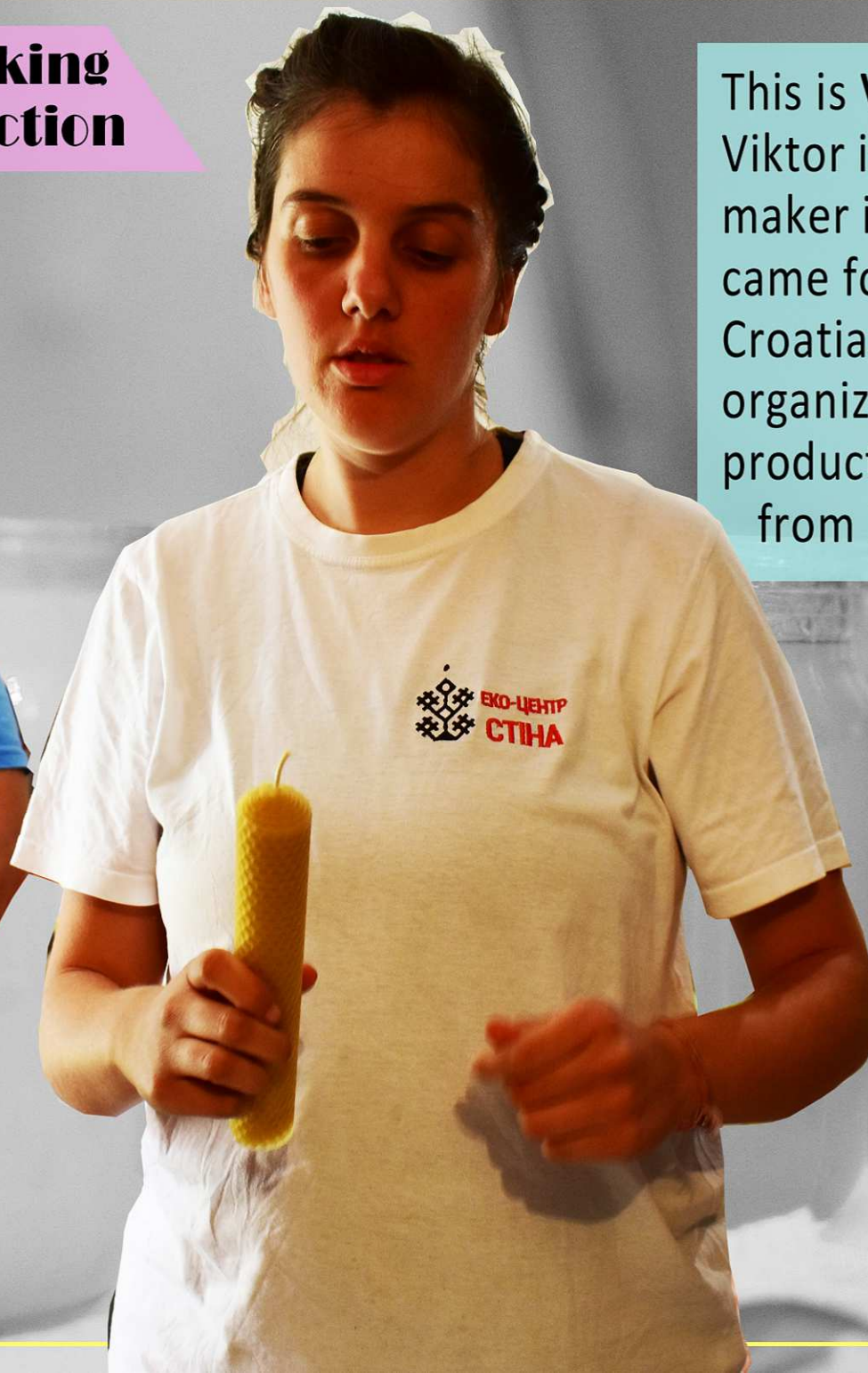


Workshop on loaf and cake baking

This is **Svitlana**. She's a teacher in the local school in Stina village.

On the Terra Incognita project she tried on her new role - a workshop leader on baking of traditional cakes and fresh bread.

Workshop on honey-making and wax candles production



This is Viktor and Sanja. Viktor is a local honey maker in Stina and Sanja came for the project from Croatia. Both they organized a workshop on production of items from honey wax.

Carpentry workshops

A man with a beard and a plaid shirt is focused on working with wood in a workshop. He is using a hand tool to shape a piece of wood on a workbench. In the background, another person is visible, and the workshop is filled with various wooden items and tools.

This is **Anatoliy**. He runs a carpentry manufacture in the neighbouring village with an attached exposition of wooden goods and tools.

During the Terra Incognita project Anatoliy hosted practical workshops so everyone could leave his place with a self-made wooden spoon or a plate.

Local youngsters creating the learning process

The experiential programs were largely elaborated and run during the Terra Incognita project by local youngsters who were happy to present own village to guests.

In return youngsters improved own leadership and management skills.

Nastia

Svitlana & Oleh

Misha



PREREQUISITES FOR EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

There are **several factors** that better be present in the rural community for the development of the experiential education programmes:

Active individuals interested in development of incoming rural tourism moved by local patriotic feelings and entrepreneurial spirit. Involved and empowered youth;

Institutional capacity in form of civic associations, cultural establishments (e.g. a house of culture) and educational institutions (e.g. a school);

Cross-sectorial cooperation especially between villagers and local authorities, engagement of local entrepreneurs. Collaborative behaviour among individuals.

Presence of **individuals wielding historic memory and cultural knowledge, skills** of traditional crafts, etc. Readiness and interest of these people in sharing this.

Illustrative civic initiative: Eco-Center in Stina



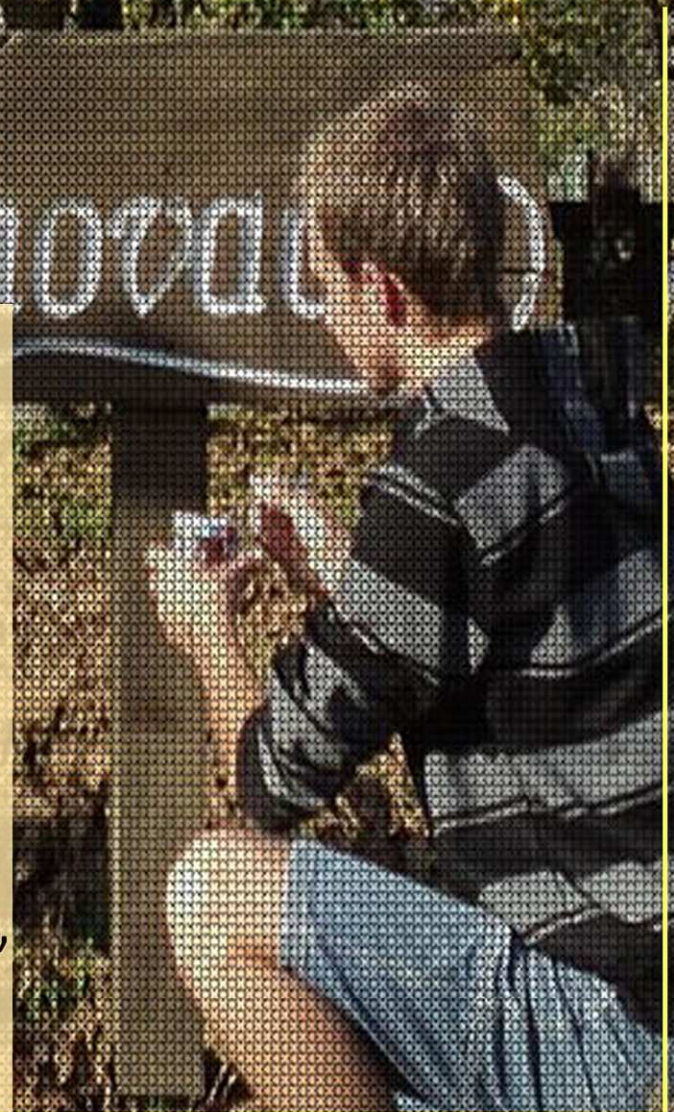
Launched as a center for non-formal and experiential education in the topic of environment and sustainable construction in 2016 today Eco-Center in Stina runs numerous initiatives in the youth work field, heritage preservation, art and intercultural dialogue. One of the fundamental principles of the Eco-Center is to **stimulate partnership with the local community** and cross-learn from one another mixing urban and rural approaches. On the Terra Incognita project Eco-Center uncovered and promoted local traditional knowledge utilizing experiential education.

Illustrative civic initiative: Eco Centar Latinovac



Established in 1995, Eco Centre Latinovac has hosted many educational programs, cooperative projects, and volunteer initiatives in the areas of mediation and conflict resolution, environmental awareness, and the preservation and promotion of cultural traditions and heritage.

Eko Centar team is specifically dedicated to learning from nature's rhythms and systems as the main base or model for work. Eko Centar promotes **organic agriculture, builds awareness for biodegradable materials and waste management**, as well as practices to utilize our natural surroundings while understanding and preserving delicate balance with nature.





Illustrative civic initiative: Innovator's Valley

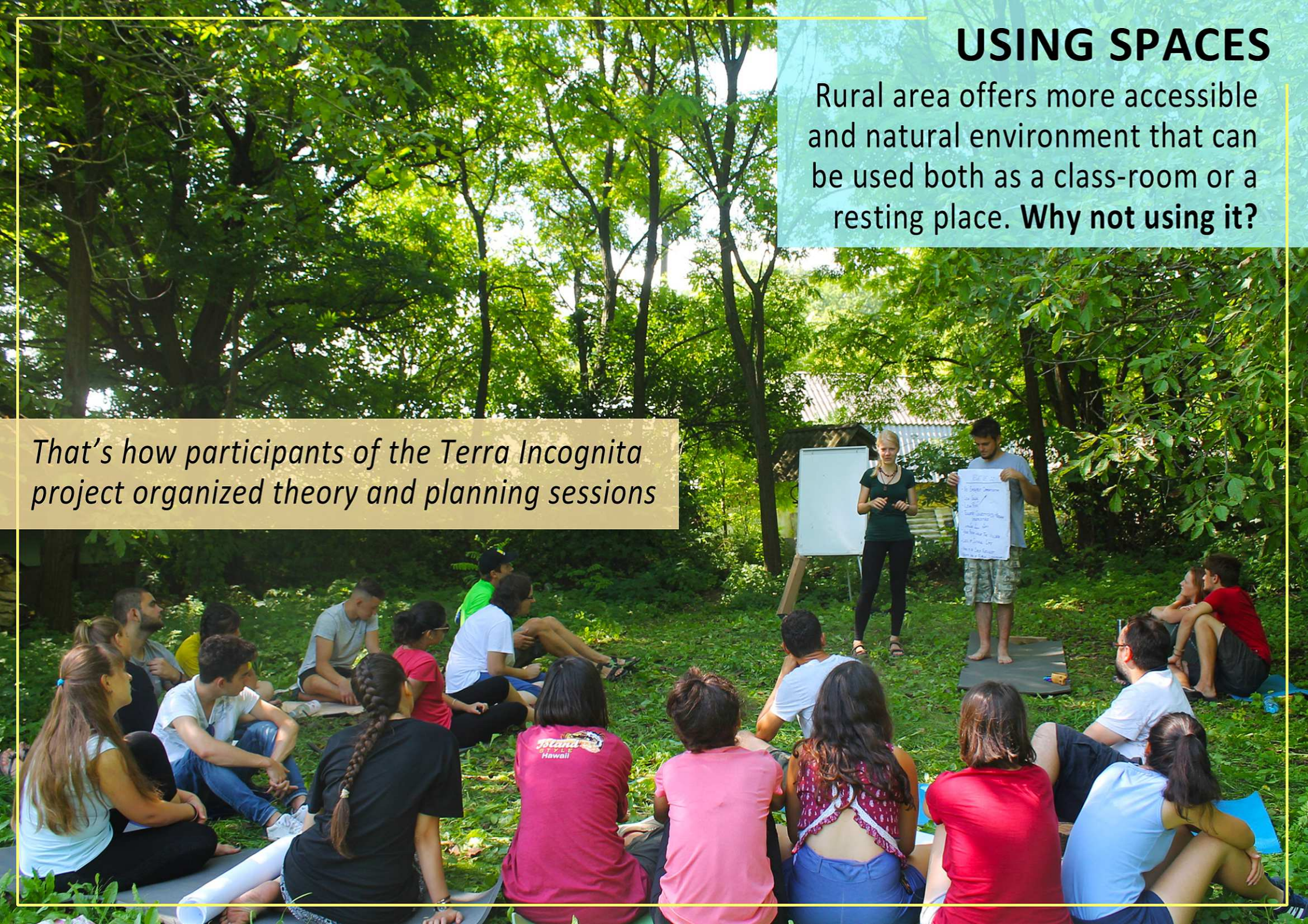
Innovator's Valley is the first collaboration space created in nature which is historically and culturally interesting as well. The shabby buildings have been renovated to increase their usage for the educational and residential purposes.

The economic activity is very low in the local community aggravated with social problems. Thus, active, innovative and determined people with lots of ideas are necessary in terms of uncovering and exploiting local potential. The focus directions for the Innovator's Valley are **social entrepreneurship, non-formal education and apprenticeships** of socially vulnerable youth.

USING SPACES

Rural area offers more accessible and natural environment that can be used both as a class-room or a resting place. **Why not using it?**

That's how participants of the Terra Incognita project organized theory and planning sessions



INVOLVING COMMUNITY

The local community often possesses a huge potential that when engaged can offer manual assistance, ideas, resources to realization of outreach experiential programs. As a result social cohesion in the community improves. **Why not uniting people together?**



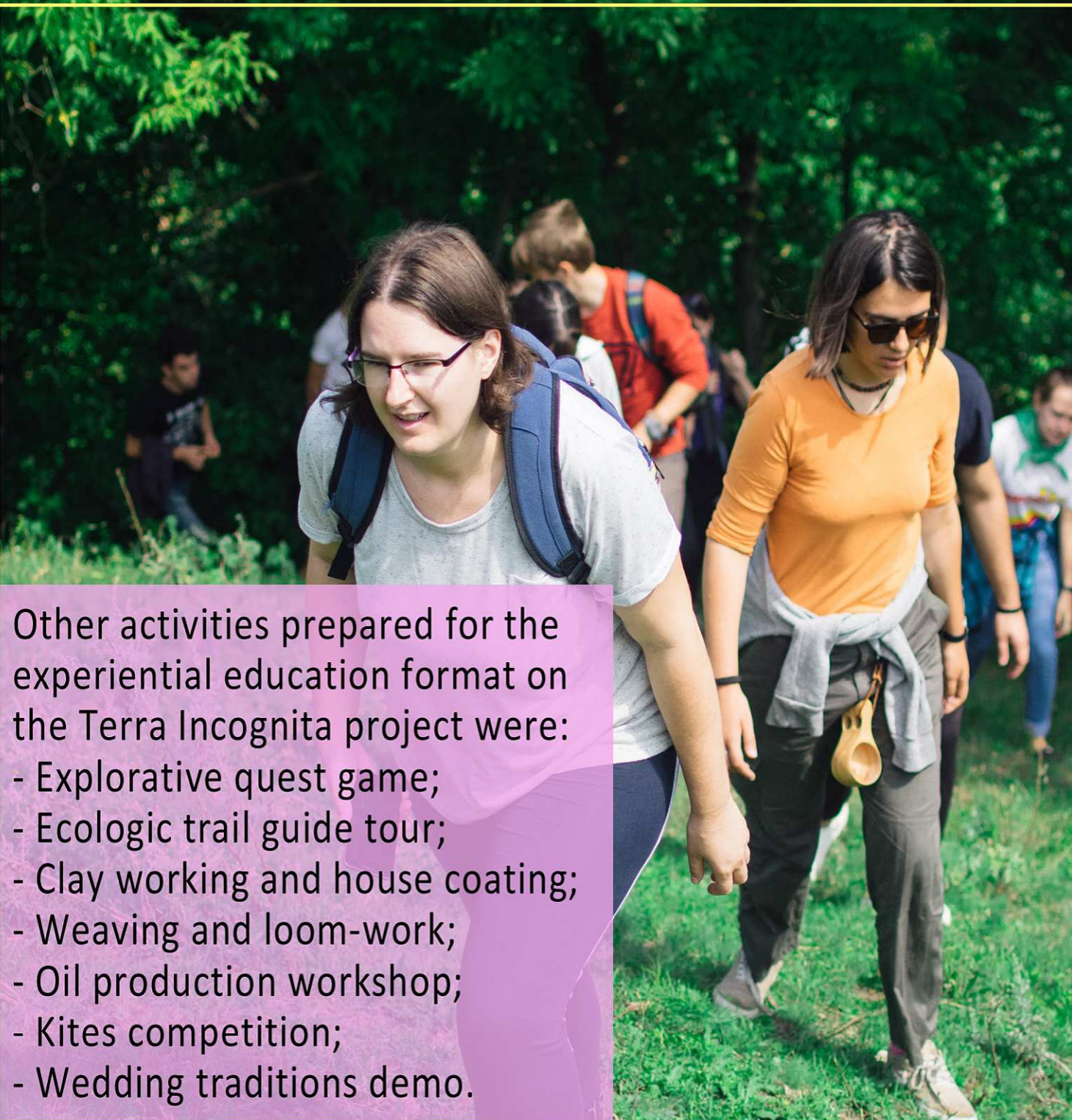
The alley of pine-trees dedicated to the first festival of traditional culture in Stina was planted together with tourists and local people

UNLEASH CREATIVITY

Explore community and use what it has to offer. **It's fun after all!**


Other activities prepared for the experiential education format on the Terra Incognita project were:

- Explorative quest game;
- Ecologic trail guide tour;
- Clay working and house coating;
- Weaving and loom-work;
- Oil production workshop;
- Kites competition;
- Wedding traditions demo.




CHALLENGE IS A GROWTH

By accommodating participants in a common space with simple rural conditions, when they need to share practical responsibilities you stimulate their personal experiential growth. This ranges from acquiring cooking skills to building leadership and self-confidence. **Agree, plan and grow together!**

A man wearing a bright blue raincoat and light-colored shorts is bent over, using a large axe to chop a piece of wood on a wooden stump. He is in an outdoor camp setting with various supplies like a bucket, a pile of wood, and a tarp visible in the background. The scene is surrounded by lush green trees and foliage. The entire image is framed by a thin yellow border.

On the Terra Incognita youth exchange participants ran an outdoor camp and cooked fresh food from village for themselves

An elderly woman with white hair, wearing a purple headscarf and a purple top, is focused on weaving on a wooden loom. She is holding a spool of blue thread. In the background, a woman in a green top is holding a camera, capturing the scene. The loom is filled with threads, and a piece of woven fabric is visible. The scene is set in a workshop or studio.

Workshop on weaving with the loom. Technique which is dying

TELL A STORY

Don't forget to share your experience with the others. When we disseminate the knowledge and our impressions from learning traditional crafts, folklore or other heritage we automatically help to preserve it. **Let us pay respect to our roots and culture.**

MAKE PEOPLE MEET

Create space for exchange between people from different environments. In a rural context it's always an impactful thing especially when local people demonstrate own hospitality and culture. **It's about people.**

We reinforced our work on development of experiential programs in Stina by organizing a festival of traditional culture



From the very beginning I enjoyed the whole experience. The days were fulfilled with different activities and tasks. Having an opportunity to learn from elderly people was such a precious thing, like Svetlana who baked bread and made delicious “machanka”, or carpenter who showed us his wooden masterpieces, or Nina with her skills of making colorful rugs.



Sanja, Croatia

The Eco-Centre in Stina offered a great opportunity to delve into the Ukrainian way of living and thinking. Its setting in a remote rural area made us think about our own lifestyle. We participated in the maintenance of the camp, so we not only discussed abstract ecological matters, but also experienced them ourselves.



Chris, Bulgaria

Baking traditional bread, woodwork, wedding custom and guide walks around the picturesque hills and ravines - this is a real rest. I'm grateful to all those who created this atmosphere!



Vita, Ukraine



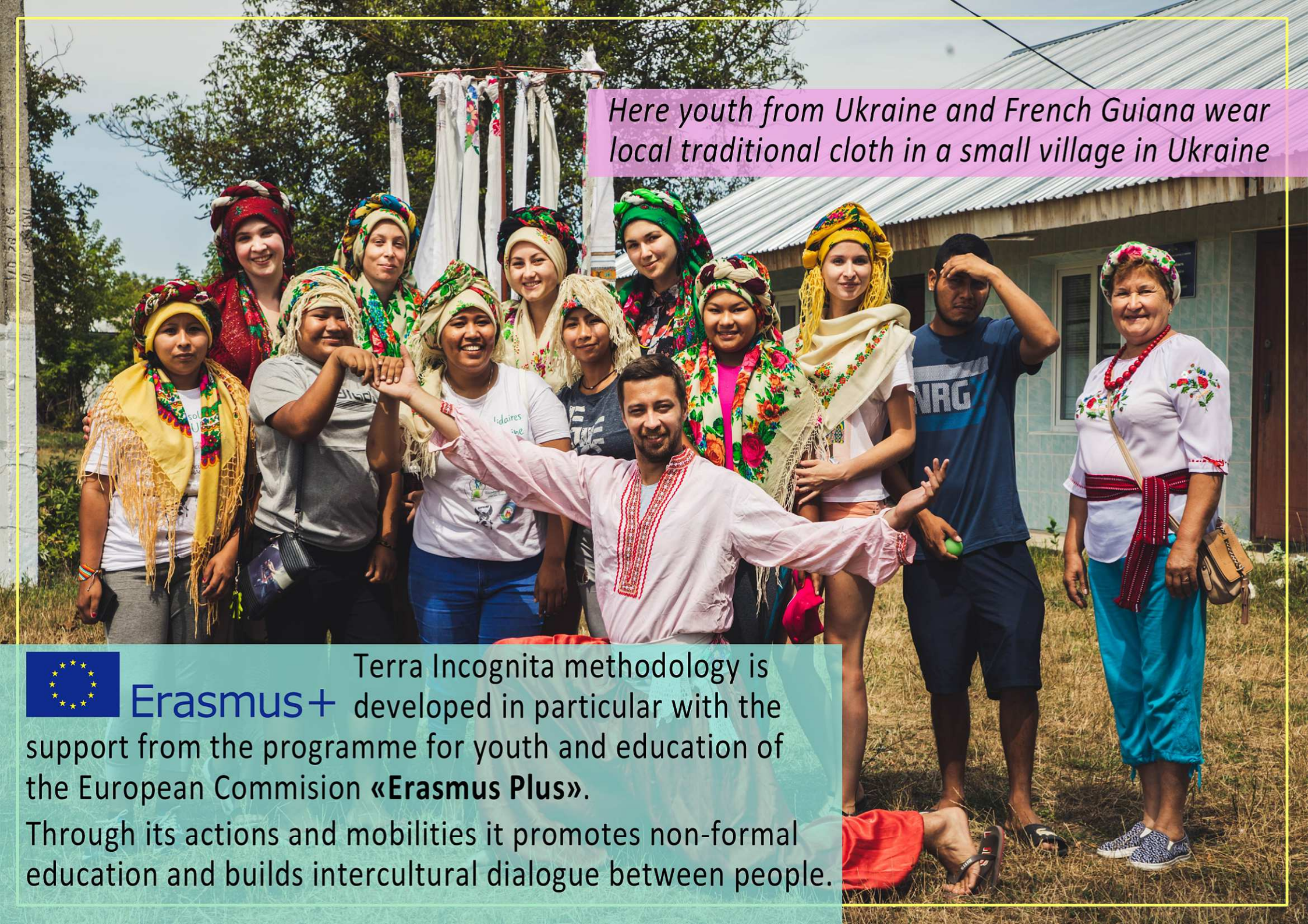
Here youth participate in the workshop on production of the traditional Guianese bread called «Maniok»



Terra Incognita uniting continents

Terra Incognita project is a working concept that utilizes experiential education with an aim to explore and preserve the vast cultural and practical heritage in the countryside.

In 2019 this methodology is implemented as well in inter-continental scale on the exchange between the French Guianese and Ukrainian youth.

A group of approximately 15 young people, mostly women, are posing for a photo outdoors in a village. They are wearing traditional Ukrainian folk clothing, including colorful embroidered blouses, headscarves, and shawls. Some are wearing modern t-shirts and shorts. In the background, there is a simple building with a corrugated metal roof and some laundry hanging on a line. The scene is set in a rural, grassy area with trees in the distance.

Here youth from Ukraine and French Guiana wear local traditional cloth in a small village in Ukraine



Erasmus+ Terra Incognita methodology is developed in particular with the support from the programme for youth and education of the European Commission «**Erasmus Plus**».

Through its actions and mobilities it promotes non-formal education and builds intercultural dialogue between people.



PANGEYA ULTIMA
development center

Terra Incognita project is developed
by the DC Pangeya Ultima (Ukraine)
www.terra-incognita-project.blogspot.com
www.pangeya.com.ua



We invite you to promote experiential
education in rural area together with us!
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