

The background image shows a team-building exercise on a grassy field. Two people are standing on wooden planks laid out on the ground. The person on the left is wearing dark pants and brown shoes. The person on the right is wearing dark pants and yellow shoes. They are both standing on a series of wooden planks that are connected by colorful straps (yellow, blue, and rainbow). The straps are looped around the planks and the people's feet, suggesting a challenge where they must move together without stepping off the planks. The text "10 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO CHALLENGE YOUR STUDENTS." is overlaid on the image in a white box with a dark border.

10 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO CHALLENGE YOUR STUDENTS.



**OUTWARD BOUND
CROATIA™**

OUTWARD BOUND CROATIA

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OUTWARD BOUND
CROATIA

INTRODUCTION

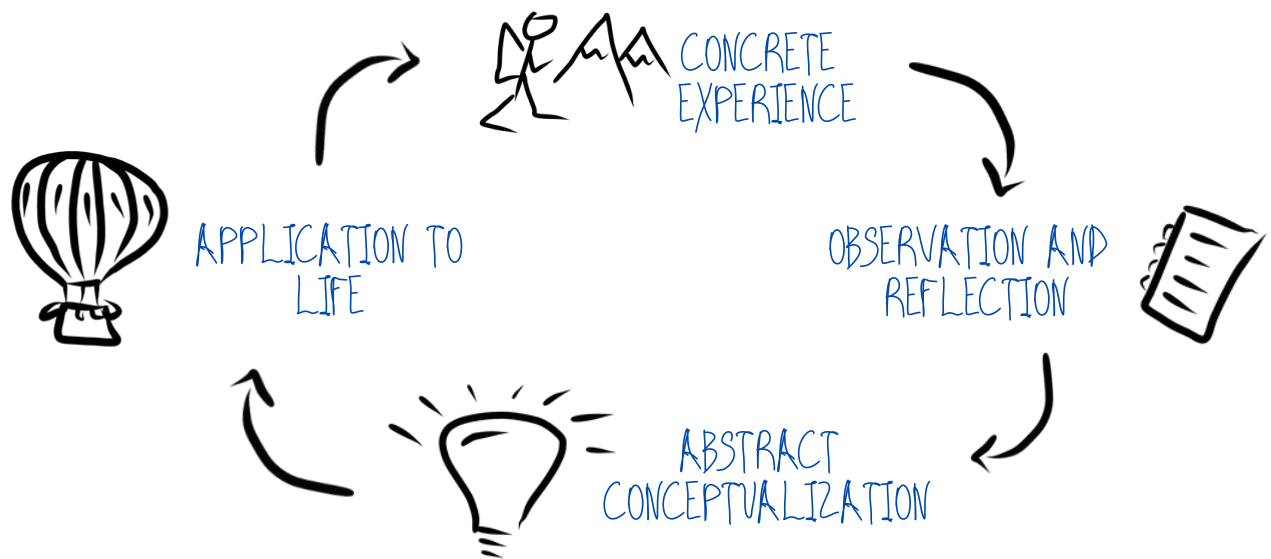


The activities presented in this handbook aspire to serve as a guide for anyone interested in the implementation of **outdoor experiential learning** in youthwork or **group dynamization** with youngsters.

In next pages you will be able to find a theoretical introduction to outdoor experiential learning as a frame to **ten complete activities** composed of introduction, detailed description, reflection and equipment as well as any other additional consideration and possible variations, that will serve as an introduction to this diverse way of learning through experience.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

"IS A HANDS-ON FORM OF **LEARNING** THAT BEGINS WITH A **CONCRETE EXPERIENCE**. AFTER **SOLVING A PROBLEM**, LEARNERS **REFLECT** ON THE PROCESS AND ARE ABLE TO APPLY LESSONS MORE BROADLY TO **THEIR LIVES**" (AEE).



The **Kolb Cycle** explains the experiential **learning process** that we have to follow to help our youngsters to develop **valuable learning** through our activities.

Facilitating **reflection** and **conceptualization** after the activities is the basis to develop valuable learning and **implement** it in real life.



OUTDOOR EDUCATION



Experiential learning is based on the belief that change occurs when people are placed **outside a position of comfort** and into a state of dissonance. (Priest & Gass, 1997)

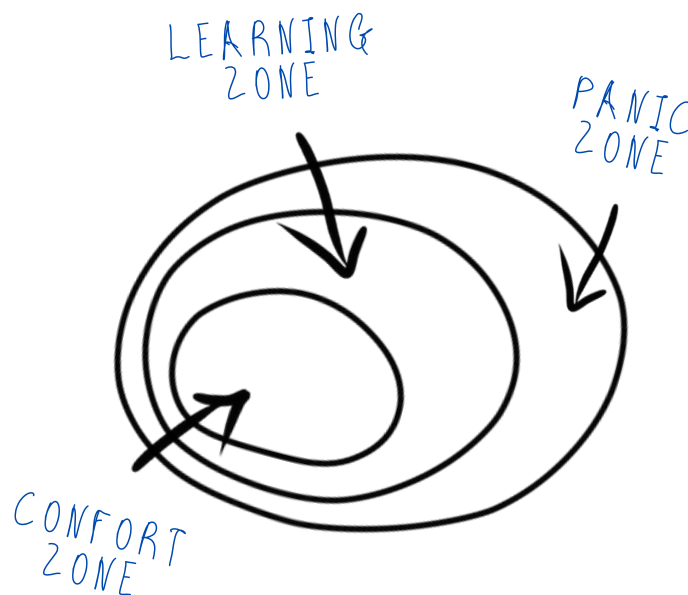
Outdoors activities are the perfect tool to generate **learning and developing situations**. These are some of the particularly characteristics (Caballero, 2009):

- Extensive, unknown, changing and stimulation-rich **environment**
- Social and nature **interaction**
- Uncertainty and always present **risk**
- Intense **feelings** and **emotions**.

REACH THE ZONE!

We will create experiences that will help people move **out of their comfort zone**, where they will be posed with challenges and must **use their competences** to regain a state of equilibrium. This will help students' move into the "**Learning Zone**".

Leaders and peers have to **support** the students' through this process, **avoiding** them reach the panic zone, where stress and fear can **stop the learning** process.



REACH OUTDOOR!

The activities proposed in this ebook aim to be an **introduction to outdoor education** with easy and accessible activities for all. Having said that, it is important to highlight the importance of **safety during implementation**. Although the activities proposed are of relative easy practice, it is very important to take into account practicalities such as **mental and physical safety** of students', prior **planning, weather checks** and **equipment management**.

For this purpose, Outward Bound allows all students' the right to choose their own level of involvement or challenge (**challenge by choice**).

- **No** student is forced to do anything they **do not want to do**.
- The student should be **encouraged** to try everything to the best of their ability.

This way students' will have the **opportunity** to experience the outdoors more positively; they will continue to **value and care** about this resource on experiential learning, throughout their lives.



THE BIG CIRCLE



1H



10 M. ROPE



COMMUNICATION
TEAM WORK

Just started working with a **new group**? This activity is a great start to **get know each other** and **co-operate** as a team.

HOW?

Make a **circle** with a rope (10 meters) on the floor and stand on it,. Ask them to put the rope on their back, on their hips, and **lie down** on the rope. Comfortable right? Now the fun starts:

- Try to **squat** all together at the same time.
- Step on the rope with the heels and try to put the rope on the **shoulders** without touching the rope with the hands. Do it **as fast as** possible!
- Now throw the rope in the air; try to **clap your hands** all at the same time and don't let the rope drop on the floor. Do two claps, and three!
- And finally, would someone be able to **walk** on the rope around the circle?

REFLECTION

- Did you think it was **possible** to do it?
- What **changed** in your way of thinking?
- Could you make it **better**? How?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- Let your imagination flow and **create** new activities and dynamics using the rope.
- Take advantage of the circle and use it to **play presentations, games, rules** of the program, etc.



NIGHT WALKIE TALKIE



40'



HEADLAMP
WHISTLE



COMMUNICATION
SELF AWARENES

Sometimes, the **communication** students have with their peers is **limited** or **nonexistent**. This activity is an opportunity for students' to get closer to each other allowing them to know a bit more about themselves.

HOW?

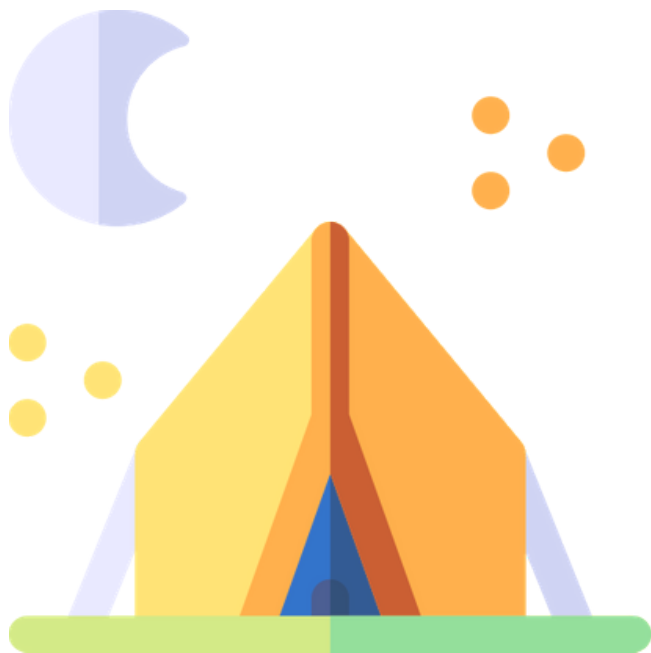
- Ask your group to make a pair with someone that they have **not** talked to.
- The pairs will then go for a walk at night. The pairs will talk and answer **different questions** to each other that you will provide them before the walk. (Choose questions depending on the **goals** of your course. Funny questions are always great ice breakers, and interesting ones always open new minds!)
- To make it even more engaging, at the end of the walk, **meet in a circle** and share the most relevant information about your partner. This will be a great way to get know each other and the group.

REFLECTION

- What did you **learned** about your partner? Were you **surprised**? Did you have any answers in **common**?
- Were you **scared** of walking in the dark? Could you **relate** this experience with some events in your life?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- Choose an **easy** walk.
- Be aware about **temperature**, in the night the temperature usually drops, so dress accordingly.
- Use this opportunity to enjoy **nature's nightlife**, be in silent, watch the stars and listen to the sounds of nature.



BIG FOOT



40'



4 WOODEN SKIS
WITH FEET
HOLDERS



LEADERSHIP
TEAM WORK

Every group has different **types of leaders** and develop different **ways of co-operation** and **team work**. In this activity your group will try to be a **cohesive team** all working toward a common goal.

HOW?

Divide your group in **different teams** and give them the following instructions:

- "**All together** you have to move while tied to the skis by your feet, getting to the finish line **as fast as possible**".

Would you like make it **harder**?

- In case someone touches the ground, everyone gets **blindfolded**.
- Put a **time limit** on the activity.
- It's a warm summer day? Have the group wear old clothes as they may get very dirty, and prepare a nice **sloppy "muddy"** lava pit for the team to travel through. If people start falling off they may never finish the activity but they will surely have fun.

REFLECTION

- Was there someone that took the **leadership role** in the activity?
- Was the **communication** effective in terms of cooperation and team work?
- How do you think that you could **improve** your performance?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND VARIATIONS:

- Students tend to **wobble** and **fall** off the skis a fair amount before they get the hang of it, so be sure the area you are using is **free from stumps, rocks and other debris**.



SPIDER'S WEB



45'



STRING
LARGE POLES/TREES



SELF CONFIDENCE
TEAM WORK

Everyone is **different** in their own unique way, do you think there is a place for everybody? This activity is a great chance to build up **self confidence** and trust within the group as well as letting creativity run loose, understanding that everyone is important and can make it!

HOW?

- Create a **web** with the **string** between two poles or trees, intertwining the thin ropes.
- Place the ropes **randomly** creating holes with **different measures**, take care of the space, people have to go through them!
- The goal will be to **pass through the net** to the other side, one by one and only one participant per hole.
- Touching the net is **off the table**, and the whole group has to make it to the other side.

REFLECTION

- How did you **feel** being lifted up?
- Did you make any **plans** or **strategies** before hand? if yes, what were they?
- Who **decided** on which person gets through the bigger/smaller holes?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- This activity requires **lifting** and must be taken seriously. You can add a time **restriction** if you like.
- Rope Variations: You can use this element by **threading a rope through all of the holes** without it ever touching the web. This variation is difficult in it's own right, but is perfect for groups that you **do not want** to do lifting for any reason.



RESCUE IN THE FOG



45'



BLINDFOLDS



COMMUNICATION
STRATEGY

Planning and **Organisation** are essential when working towards a difficult task. In this activity students will get a hands-on experience in understanding the **importance** of this process.

HOW?

You can frame the game with this story or similar:

"One of the members of our team is **badly injured** in the mountain. We have to **find him and take it back** to safety. However, there is a problem, it is really foggy and for the rescue team, the **visibility is null**. Luckily our injured friend is on the top of the mountain where **he can guide and help us** in reaching him".

The team will have to create a **strategy** to, being **blindfolded**, get to the injured friend and taking him/her back to a safety zone. (**Important:** The team will have to be **together** during all the operation.)

REFLECTION

- Was there someone that took the **leadership** role in the activity?
- Was the **communication** effective in terms of co-operation and team work?
- Did someone **feel unsafe** during the rescue?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- Make **noise** if you want to make it harder.
- Select and clean the zone **avoiding** rocks, holes and other debris.



TEASURE RESCUE



1H



CARABINERS, TWO 10M
ROPES, HELMET
HARNESS, WATER POT



CREATIVITY
RESILIENCE

This activity will show the **creativity** and **abstract-thinking** of students. They will be required to think **out of the box** and communicate between each other to find a solution to the problem.

HOW?

A treasure is placed floating inside a pot filled with water in the **middle of a circle** made with ropes of around 3 meters radius. The participants must **pick up** the treasure **without touching** the ground inside the rope circle.

The context and the information are given on paper to **only one** participant that has **5 minutes to read** it and **tell** the group about it, after which the participant will be **mute** for the rest of the activity. Some of the rules are: **not touching** the ground **inside** the circle and **not touching the treasure** with their hands. In case of **dropping** the water the group will have to **mute** one selected person per drop.

REFLECTION

- How was the **plan** decided?
- Did everyone take part and was **listening**?
- How did the different participants **feel** during the activity?



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- This activity might require some **guidance** if the group is not able to co-operate, due to the need of extra **safety**, if setting low ropes.

OBSTACLE COURSE



1H



ROPES, SLACKLINES, LOGS,
NATURE MATERIAL,
OBSTACLES



RESILIENCE
TEAM WORK

Planning and **organization** are essential when working towards a difficult task. In this activity students will get a hands-on experience in understanding the importance of this process.

HOW?

Basic obstacle course with **slow ropes, slacklines and different challenging stations** participants must **go through**. They all must get to the end and if someone falls, they must **start over**. They can only help each other **once they are on the course**, only when they are already on the way.

The difficulty of the course depends on the **physical abilities** of the group, as well as the number of participants. It's also encouraged to show the entire course **before starting** in case any questions or doubts might arise. This activity aims to strengthen **cooperation, self-confidence building and communication**. It is an incredible tool for group building and coordination between participants.

REFLECTION

- How did you feel when **someone fell** and all of you had to start again?
- How was the **decision-making** addressed?
- Did you think about **other ways** of passing through the obstacles?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- Be **creative** and build a challenging and interactive course. Use everything that you have available.
- Select and clean the zone **avoiding** rocks, holes and other debris.



CROSS THE WALL



45'



2 SLACKLINES/
ROPES

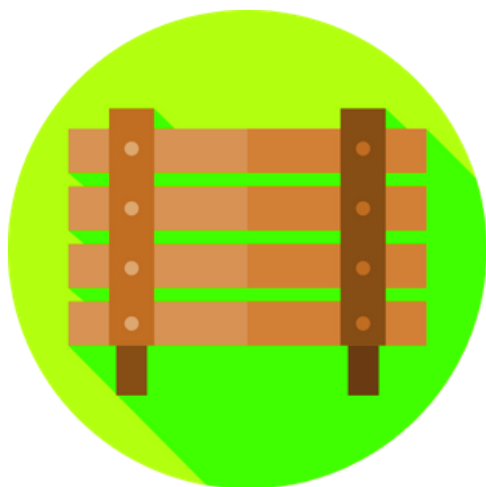


SELF-CONFIDENCE
COOPERATION

Everyone depends on others at least once in their life, have you ever **experienced** not being able to do something just by yourself? what about others asking for your help? This activity aims to show participants the importance of **co-operation** and **communication**, as well as learning to care actively for each other.

HOW?

- Set the two **slack lines/ropes** between two trees. One of them at **knee level** and the other at **around two meters high** (Select the height depending on the participants).
- Ask the participants to **hold** their hands.
- The goal will be to pass through the highest slack line/rope **without** letting the hands go. All the group has to pass through **it at least once**.



REFLECTION

- Did you initially think you all **would make it**?
- Did you **feel supported** by your colleagues? How?
- Could you **relate** how you felt to any circumstance in **your life**?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- It's recommended that one of the instructors serves as **support** taking care of any possible falls by **standing** close.
- If the participants untie their hands **they must start over**.

MAGIC CARPET



35'



2 SLACKLINES/
ROPES



COMMUNICATION
COOPERATION

Sometimes in life we face challenging situations that can be **stressful** and **scary**. This game provides the perfect challenge for groups to work in a stressful situation. They will be given a **time limit**, giving them the chance to co-operate and reassure each other, improving their team working skills and **stress management**.

HOW?

Ask the group to stand on a “magic carpet” (tarp). The entire group must **be on the tarp completely**.

- Once everyone is settled, advise the group that they are going on a magic carpet ride. Tell them that they have already **risen 100 feet in the air** and are ready to go.
- Unfortunately, the instructions on **how to steer and land** the carpet are on the **other side** of the carpet.
- They must **flip the carpet over** while **standing on it**. No one is allowed to step off the carpet at any time. If a group losses a member due to a mid-air disaster/fall they **must start over again**.

REFLECTION

- What **helped** the team accomplish their goal?
- What could have been done to help the group **reach their goal**?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- Give them a **second chance** after reflecting, was it easier/harder the second time around?
- Set a **time cap**.



ORIENTEERING



2H



MAP, CHECKPOINT-
EXPLANATION
MARKERS



DECISION MAKING
LEADERSHIP

This one is among the best activities when working outdoors. **Orienteering**, it is an ideal tool in bringing students **out of their comfort zone**. It does not matter what age or experiences students have, you can **adapt** to this activity in terms of your **goal**.

HOW?

This activity involves **finding** different markers that have been placed around a chosen area; students will find the markers **using a map**. You can use an official map or you can create it by yourself. Allot the **number** of markers and the **distance** between each of the markers **depending on the goals** of your activity. Students can participate in groups or find the markers individually, depending on how the group manages with the given time.

Give them a **time cap** if you want to make it more challenging.

REFLECTION

- Maps with markers pointed out.
- Compass (Optional).
- Checkpoints markers.
- Whistles.



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- Use the markers to **introduce a specific topic** (geography, history, etc.) relating information on them. Once they are matched participants can talk about the topic and introduce their **questions and doubts**.
- Be sure that the **map matches with the reality** and **check all the area** before the activity.
- Provide an **emergency kit** to the students: phone device, whistle, water and some warm clothes.
- Set a **time cap** to come back to the base.

TO KNOW MORE

Here you will find bits and peaces that were essential for the **making** of this ebook . We **encourage** you to **dip in and embrace** outdoor education learning!

- Dušan Bartůněk, A. M. (2007). Games in nature. zech Republic: IYNF.
- Lee, A. (s.f.). Propless Games. Singapur: AF Learning Publication.
- Simon Priest, Michael A. Gass (1997). Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming. USA: Human Kinetics
- [Outward Bound Croatia Blog page.](#)

We are here to **support you** with any doubt that you can have during the reading of this book. Don't hesitate to write to us in our **social media platforms**. We will be more than **happy** to help you!



Also, we invite you to check out our [course offer](#) and **encourage** you to be future participation.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Outward Bound Croatia as a member of **Outward bound International**, whose experiential educational programs are recognised in over 30 countries around the world as a valuable **enrichment** of the **classic school system**, was the responsibility for the training and organisation of the project where this ebook come from.



**OUTWARD BOUND
CROATIA™**

This e-book is the result of the **Erasmus + Training Course Co-Founded by the European Commission, "Reach OUTdoor"**, that took place from February, 19th-25th, 2020 in **Veliki Žitnik, Croatia**. During which, **20 young workers** form **Croatia, Italy, Spain, The Republic of North Macedonia and Latvia** learned how to **implement outdoor educational activities** in their work spaces and communities.

This ebook has been designed, written and edited by the **long term volunteers of Outward Bound Croatia** under the **European Solidarity Corps program**.



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