

Inside Out 2.0: Outdoor Education as a Tool for Integration and Skill Development

Manual for Youth Workers

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Introduction



This manual was developed as part of the Inside Out 2.0 project, an Erasmus+ training course that equips youth workers, educators, social workers, community psychologists, and NGO practitioners with practical tools to better engage and support NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), marginalized, and disengaged youth.

It represents a tangible outcome of the training course, gathering the activities created by participants, step-by-step guides, and practical implementation tips. Its purpose is twofold: to serve as a resource for participants and partner organizations in their local follow-up activities, and to ensure the wider dissemination and sustainability of the project's results, making them available to a broader community of youth professionals.

The need for this project arises from the pressing challenges faced by NEET youth across Europe and particularly in Iceland, where studies show that unemployment, educational inequality, and social exclusion contribute to cycles of marginalization and poor mental health outcomes.



Building on the results of the first edition, Inside Out (2023-1-IS01-KA210-You-000160096), this second edition responds directly to the recommendations and insights gained: the effectiveness of outdoor education and experiential learning in fostering resilience, social inclusion, and ecological empathy, and the importance of professional exchanges to co-create innovative strategies in youth work practice.

Inside Out 2.0 integrates outdoor education, experiential learning, and nature-based solutions (NBS) to provide youth workers with alternative, non-formal methods that address both social and mental well-being challenges among marginalized youth. Through activities such as **A-MAZE-ING** or **The Saga of Nerijus' Hoard**, participants explore how nature can be used as a transformative educational space, building resilience, interpersonal skills, and a sense of belonging.

The project's objectives include:

- Enhancing youth work through outdoor and experiential learning models.
- Providing youth workers with practical facilitation skills and adaptable non-formal education tools.
- Highlighting the role of the environment in learning, resilience, and inclusion.
- Addressing mental well-being through nature-based approaches.
- Training youth workers to identify and respond to risk and protective factors affecting marginalized youth.



- Fostering international networking and professional exchange.
- Supporting local follow-up activities that apply the methods directly with young people.
- Disseminating learning materials to ensure impact beyond the project itself.

This manual reflects those objectives by translating the training course into a practical, accessible resource. It is intended not only as documentation of what was developed and tested during the mobility, but also as a guide to inspire and support youth workers in their daily practice. Each activity included here has been designed with real-world applicability in mind, offering youth workers tools they can directly adapt to their own contexts and communities.

By compiling and sharing these methods openly, the project ensures that its results remain accessible and beneficial long after the training course has ended.

Ultimately, this manual is about continuity and impact: providing youth workers with the means to integrate innovative, nature-based, and experiential approaches into their practice, while ensuring that NEET and marginalized young people continue to benefit from engaging, inclusive, and transformative learning opportunities



Chapter 1:

Activities

&

Step-by- Step Guides

1.1. A-MAZE-ING

BY SARA TOBIAS, MARTÍ BARÓN, MARIANA FONSECA & LOTTE SIEFERT

THEME

resilience, teamwork, learning about inclusion and intersectionality, switching perspectives

DESCRIPTION

A-MAZE-ING is an outdoor role-playing activity designed for children, teenagers, and adults. The game stimulates imagination and cooperation while raising awareness of social dynamics, intersectionality and inclusion.

In the first part, participants explore defense strategies. Afterwards, some of them are assigned various visible and invisible disabilities or limitations, for example, blindness, menstrual pain, vertigo, or fear of physical contact.

In the second part, the “battle” takes place along the path: participants take on the roles of humans and trolls competing against each other. Some players are restricted in their movement and must be guided through the playing field by others. Along the way, thought-provoking questions invite reflection on ableism, intersectionality, and the impact of invisible barriers on how we move, fight, and care for one another

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Foster teamwork and collaboration through cooperative outdoor challenges and group problem-solving.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Foster teamwork and cooperation through an outdoor experiential challenge.
- Encourage empathy and understanding of diverse abilities and disabilities (visible and invisible).
- Promote reflection on ableism, inclusion, and accessibility in group dynamics.
- Strengthen creative problem-solving and communication under changing conditions.
- Increase awareness of intersectionality and its relevance in youth work and everyday behavior.

LEVEL(S) OF INTERVENTION

- Individual
- Interpersonal

TARGET GROUP(S)

Since the main focus is on increasing participants' sensitivity about the main topic, this activity could be adapted to various target groups.

TIME FRAME

Ideally, the activity would last 90-120 minutes to involve the participants in the pathbuilding and have extra time for reflection.

LOCATION

Outside. It could be a sandy or snowy place, or even in a forest. It could also be done inside if we had a big open space.

METHODOLOGY

Group work, storytelling, simulation

ROLES

4 people would suffice in a two group setting.

Step 1: Storyteller

Step 2: 3 trainers for participant surveillance and 1 to prepare materials for rounds.

Step 3&4:

- 1 trainer to follow “troll group”
- 1 trainer to follow “human group” and ask 1st question
- 1 trainer to stand at checkpoint and ask 2nd question
- 1 trainer at end of path to ask 3rd question

Step 5: Collaborative reflection

MATERIALS

- Snow or soft outdoor material for structure-building
- Scarves or blindfolds (for vision impairment simulation)
- Headphones or earplugs (for hearing impairment simulation)
- A set of simple quiz cards or questions on inclusion, cooperation, and empathy
- Optional: Colored ribbons or markers to define boundaries and paths
- Warm-up music or sound cues
- Buckets or shovels

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

PREPARATION

The 2 paths (one for humans and one for trolls) need to be chosen by the facilitators and prepared for the participants.

IMPLEMENTATION

Step 1: Storytelling & Group Formation (15 min)

Gather participants in a circle outdoors and introduce the story: “Once upon a time, a group of humans tried to cross the snowy land of the trolls. But the trolls, protective of their icy home, wanted to test the humans’ courage, empathy, and cooperation. The only way to succeed was to work together — despite their differences.”





Divide participants into two teams: Trolls and Humans.

Each team receives two secret instructions:

- One participant will simulate a visible disability (e.g., blindfolded).
- Another will simulate an invisible disability (e.g., cannot hear with headphones).

The facilitator explains that the purpose is to experience how group collaboration changes when individuals have different abilities — and how empathy, patience, and inclusion matter.

Step 2: Building the Path & Strategy (20 min)

- The Humans design and build a path through the snow, which they will later attempt to cross while answering quiz questions placed along the route.
- The Trolls build their defense area, preparing soft snowballs or obstacles (all safe and symbolic — no hard snow).

- Both groups are encouraged to develop a strategy based on cooperation, respecting safety and inclusivity.

Step 3: Round 1 – The Snowfield Challenge (20 min)

The Humans attempt to cross the Trolls’ territory, guided by their teammates who help those with simulated disabilities.

At checkpoints, the Humans must stop and answer questions about empathy, diversity, or problem-solving (e.g., “How can we make public spaces more accessible?”).

The Trolls “attack” symbolically with snowballs, testing coordination, communication, and group protection.

The round ends when the Humans reach the end of the path or after a set time.

Step 4: Role Switch & Round 2 (20 min)

Teams switch roles — the Trolls become Humans, and vice versa.

New disabilities are assigned to different participants so more people experience inclusion challenges from different perspectives.

The second round often unfolds with greater understanding, creativity, and empathy.

Step 5: Reflection & Debriefing (20–25 min)

Gather participants in a circle (indoors or outdoors) and guide a reflective conversation.

Suggested questions:

- How did it feel to take part in this challenge?
- What was it like to experience or witness a disability during teamwork?
- How did communication and cooperation change between the first and second rounds.

- What emotions came up — frustration, empathy, care?
- In what ways did this activity mirror real-life experiences of inclusion or exclusion?
- How can outdoor education create safer and more inclusive spaces for everyone?
- What can we, as youth workers, do to reduce ableism in our daily practice?

Encourage participants to identify small, concrete changes they can make in their youth work to ensure inclusivity.

FOLLOW-UP

It is essential to include a debriefing at the end of the activity to assess whether the learning objectives were achieved. This moment also provides space to reflect on past behaviors and identify meaningful changes we wish to implement in our personal and professional lives.



1.2. The snowperson project

BY JEZER RAE RODRIGUEZ, KACPER BARWIAK, AHMED HUSSEIN & VALERIA MANZI

THEME

Teamwork, practical skills, communication, competition

DESCRIPTION

The activity is about encouraging creativity, promoting the spirit of sportsmanship, communicating in the group and interacting with the environment and the outdoors. The main goal is to solve clues that will lead two groups to materials that they need to use to build the snowperson.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen teamwork and problem-solving skills by collaboratively completing the snowperson-building challenge.
- Encourage effective communication and cooperation while solving clues to earn the necessary materials.
- Foster creativity and adaptability through hands-on construction using limited and progressively acquired resources.

LEVEL(S) OF INTERVENTION

Interpersonal (small groups and peer-to-peer).

TARGET GROUP(S)

General youth, local community. The ideal age group is 15-25.

TIME FRAME

60 minutes.

LOCATION

Surrounding environment, outdoor, more or less flat area with snow (or sand).

METHODOLOGY

Group work, storytelling, sensory experience, communication, and artistic approach.

ROLES

3 people. They take the role of organizers / facilitators. 1 person follows the first group, 2nd person follows the 2nd group and the third person is good for backup and motivating everyone.

MATERIALS

Natural resources - snow/sand

Materials for decoration, whatever is available at hand.

2 boxes to hide the materials.

A few pieces of paper for clues and instructions

PREPARATION

People need to be in warm clothes.

Materials must be in place, clues must be ready.

The boxes must be hidden with clues inside and materials to use to decorate the snowperson.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

IMPLEMENTATION

Step 1: Story & Team Formation

Begin with a short story to set the context and introduce the storytelling element. Follow with an energizer to activate the group.

Participants are then divided into two teams. Each team creates a quick, funny group cheer (a sound, word, or short chant) and chooses a team name.

Next, teams line up at the starting point. The challenge is to move together from start to finish by walking backwards, like penguins, while holding hands. The key rule: the team must cross the finish line together — no one can be left behind.

The team that reaches the finish line first gains an advantage: they receive the first clue. The second team faces a 3-minute penalty before receiving theirs.

Step 2: The Treasure Hunt

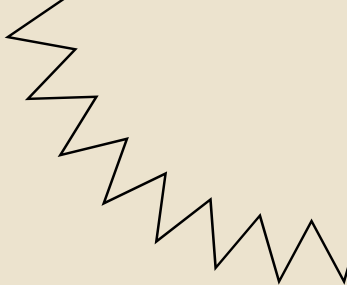
Each team now begins a riddle-based treasure hunt. By solving the clues, they must locate a hidden box containing materials needed for the next stage. Inside the box, they will find the next instructions, guiding them to meet the third facilitator at the snowperson-building area.

Step 3: Building the Snowperson

Upon arrival, teams receive new instructions and a time limit to complete the challenge:

they must build a snowperson that resembles someone from their group.

This phase emphasizes creativity, cooperation, and collective decision-making, as teams work together to design and construct their snowperson using the materials collected earlier.



Step 4: Presentation & Storytelling

After the time is up, facilitators invite each team to present their snowperson and share the story behind their creation — explaining who from the group it represents and why. Facilitators can playfully tease or ask questions to encourage humor, creativity, and personal reflection.

Closing & Reflection

Wrap up with a short debriefing circle. Ask participants to share:

- How did they feel during the activity?
- What challenges did they face as a team?
- What strategies helped them succeed?
- How did creativity and cooperation play a role?
- What could be improved next time?

Encourage reflection on teamwork, communication, and problem-solving — linking the experience to broader learning about collaboration and inclusion.

FOLLOW-UP

The impact of the activity can be evaluated by observing the teamwork, communication, and collaboration demonstrated throughout the different stages — solving riddles, completing challenges, and building the snowperson. Facilitators can reflect with participants on how they approached problem-solving, supported one another, and managed time and roles within the team.

The primary goal of this activity is to strengthen group cohesion and teamwork, so the follow-up should focus on how participants experienced cooperation and what they learned about working together. These insights can then be used to plan future team-based outdoor activities or to deepen discussions on collaboration, inclusion, and group dynamics.



RISK MANAGEMENT

1 - We have to make sure the locations where we hide the boxes with materials are not too slippery, that the snow is not wet and mulchy (because that can cause people to slip). We also have to make sure that it is obviously a box that is used for the challenge. (for example, by marking it with a post-it note saying “box for group one” or something similar)



2 - When we do the energizer, we have to make sure there are no rocks or other objects that can impact the movement or obstruct people in any way, make sure there is nothing under the snow, and use shovels to make the terrain more flat.

3 - For people not to get too cold, we could have hot beverages on hand, like tea or coffee / hot chocolate, and water/snacks.

4 - Mental check at the beginning of the activity, during the middle, and at the end. Just asking people how they feel, how the energy is, and if there's something we should know before we start the activity is enough.

5 - Make sure the facilitators know what their tasks are (watching the time, that people follow the steps, everyone has a role, motivating people that are not taking an active part, and making sure one facilitator is not louder than the others).

1.3. Connecting the Elements

BY BENITA VENCKUVIENE, CLARA PIRES,
NERIJUS VENCKUS, CAMILA SOLARI

THEME

1. Energizer Game. Theme: Teamwork, Communication, Motivation
2. Human Dog Sled Race. Theme: Resilience, Cooperation, Physical Activity, Strategy
3. Team Snow Sculpture. Theme: Creativity, Teamwork, Practical Skills, Connection with Nature

DESCRIPTION

1. Energizer Game

A short, dynamic game to wake up participants, create a positive mood, divide the group and prepare everyone for teamwork. The energizer connects participants with the elements: fire, water, earth and wind, through music and free movements, deep listening, and human sculptures. As a result, four groups are formed representing the four elements.

2. Human Dog Sled Race

Teams compete in a fun snow race where one group pulls the “sled” while others try to make the challenge harder, for example by throwing snowballs or adding obstacles.

3. Team Snow Sculpture

Teams build a sculpture from snow and natural materials that represents their team and connects to nature. The sculpture should be painted or decorated creatively.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. Energizer Game

- Break the ice and build group connection
- Increase focus and enthusiasm
- Prepare participants for teamwork and active engagement
- Form the groups

2. Human Dog Sled Race

- Strengthen teamwork and communication under pressure
- Encourage creative problem-solving and coordination
- Promote physical activity and resilience

3. Team Snow Sculpture

- Foster collaboration and shared creativity
- Encourage connection with nature and artistic expression
- Develop practical building and design skills

LEVEL(S) OF INTERVENTION

1. Energizer Game

Level: Interpersonal — strengthens communication, trust, and cooperation within small groups.

2. Human Dog Sled Race

Level: Interpersonal & Community — promotes teamwork and shared effort while fostering a sense of belonging and group spirit.

3. Team Snow Sculpture

Level: Interpersonal & Community — encourages group creativity, collaboration, and community engagement through shared artistic expression.

TARGET GROUP(S)

1. Energizer Game

Target Group: General youth and mixed participants — suitable for all ages to build energy and connection.

2. Human Dog Sled Race

Target Group: Youth groups, especially those in NEET situations or team-based learning environments — helps develop cooperation, motivation, and resilience.

3. Team Snow Sculpture

Target Group: Local community members and youth (including NEETs) — promotes teamwork, creativity, and inclusion through shared creative activity.

TIME FRAME

90 minutes.

LOCATION

Outdoors.

METHODOLOGY

Group work, artistic approach, sensory experience.

ROLES

Energizer: Two facilitators: One is responsible for the music and the other for facilitating the activity.

Human Dog Sled Race: Two facilitators: One explains the activities and helps the groups. The other is at the end of the race, making sure the groups reach the final point safely.

Team Snow Sculpture: Two facilitators: One explains the activity and provides the tools to the groups. The other goes to each group to check their progress and potential needs.

MATERIALS

Energizer: Speaker, thematic music (connected to fire, water, earth and wind).

Human Dog Sled Race: Slides, ropes.

Team Snow Sculpture: Speaker, ambient music, watercolors, treads, brushes, hot water, buckets, natural resources.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

PREPARATION

Materials needed, facilitators' roles, time framework for each part, marked terrain for the snow sculptures.

IMPLEMENTATION

Step 1: Energizer

In a circle, the facilitator explains the task to the group.

Task: Explain we will explore the four elements. To do so, we will start with some music and we need to listen to the feelings this song wakes up in our body. We need to represent this with our movements. When the music stops, we will give a task that you have to perform as fast as you can.

There are four rounds:

Round 1: Fire

Music connected to fire. Task: Make groups of three people and represent a volcano.

Round 2: Water

Music connected to water. Task: Make groups of four people and represent a giant wave.

Round 3: Earth

Music connected to earth. Task: Make groups of two people and represent a plant growing from a seed.

Round 4: Wind

Music connected to wind. Task: All together, let's blow as hard as we can.

After the four rounds we ask participants to choose the element they felt more connected to. If the groups are uneven, we can kindly ask participants to change groups saying that in nature we need to have balance.



Step 2: Human Dog Sled Race:

Two groups compete with each other in a sled race while the other two groups are throwing snowballs. All participants should sit on the sled.



Step 3: Team Snow Sculpture

Each group has a marked space to prepare their sculpture. They should reflect about their teams and how to connect the sculpture with their element (fire, water, earth, wind). They have 20 min, and when all the teams finish, they present to the other groups. Performance presentations are encouraged.

Closing: Short debriefing after all groups present their sculptures.



1.4. The Saga of Nerijus' hoard

BY MICHAL GORECKI, MARIANA MATOSO & MATEUSZ GORECKI

THEME

Teamwork, physical and cognitive skills, and leadership.

DESCRIPTION

This activity is an outdoor treasure hunt, with 5 stations. In each station, there is a task to be performed and a clue to collect. By performing all tasks and collecting all clues, the groups should be able to locate the treasure and, therefore, win the game.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Identify and take on different roles within a team (leader, communicator, problem-solver, encourager)
- defining teambuilding.
- Practice active listening and clear communication under time pressure.
- Build trust and mutual respect through shared challenges and problem-solving.
- Reflect on how group dynamics affect success and morale.
- Communicate directions and ideas clearly within a team
- Identify Viking symbols (runes, shields, longships) and their meanings.

LEVEL(S) OF INTERVENTION

Individual and interpersonal intervention.

TARGET GROUP(S)

The activity can be adapted to any target or age group.

TIME FRAME

Ideally, it should take 1h30.

LOCATION

It should take place outdoors, ideally in a wide area with multiple different spots.

METHODOLOGY

Group Work, teambuilding, storytelling, competition, gamified approach.

ROLES

At least 3 (better if 4); 1 per station that needs a facilitator; 1 extra person could walk the whole ground during the game, making sure all groups are supported.

MATERIALS

Maps of the terrain with the stations marked; compasses (1 per group); printed tasks and clues.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

PREPARATION

Print the maps of the terrain with the stations marked; print the tasks and clues; put the tasks and clues in the location of the stations; adapt the tasks to the group with whom you are working.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Possible Risk (PR): weather condition.

How to avoid (HA): check the weather forecast in advance, give proper information to participants, and explain what to wear- proper clothing layers (raincoats, etc).

Possible Risk (PR): the risk of a group split.

How to avoid (HA): Clear role division before the activity.

Possible Risk (PR): Facilitators' lack of communication between various checkpoints.

How to avoid (HA): Set up a communication channel according to conditions (e.g., use a walkie-talkie).

Possible Risk (PR): participants getting lost.

How to avoid (HA): explain in detail the designated activity area, pinpoint the starting position on the phone.

Possible Risk (PR): lack of navigation skills.

How to avoid (HA): pre-workshop about gaining navigation competences, the use of a map and a compass.

IMPLEMENTATION

Step 1: All participants initiate their journey together at the house. An energizer: “Dragon, vikings, princesses”. Participants are divided into two groups- facing each other (two groups standing in front of each other). They are dividing which role (all together as a group they would like to take- a dragon, a princess, a viking to “defeat” another team). Rules: a dragon defeats a viking, a viking defeats a princess, a princess defeats a dragon. (a couple of rounds for warming up).

Participants are divided into groups according to the runes (prepare some cards with a sign of a certain rune: to divide participants into groups of 3-4 in each). The background story is told and each group is given a clue and coordinates. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Runes>).

Then read a story for all participants:

Long before roads stitched the valleys and campers pitched tents by Úlfljótsvatn, Viking Nerijus wintered here with a small crew. He was no king—just stubborn, clever, and too lucky to die. When a storm shattered his mast and enemies shadowed the lake, he hid his spoils among these fields and pines. He bound the hoard with five tests so only a band as bold as his could claim it.

“Solve what the ravens whisper. Stand as a shield-wall. Swear true at the stone. Bargain like a traveler. Honor the water.”

Pass all five, and the 5 rune-clues will give You a hint where his treasure sleeps.

Sum up on the flipchart (optional).




Step 2: Using the clues and coordinates, participants direct themselves to the first place where they will find the map of the terrain and the sequence of stations that they need to follow.

Step 3: Participants go from one station to another, completing the tasks (ex. decipher a code; overcome a physical challenge; answer a question; build the biggest snowman; take a group picture) and in each completed task they get a clue (a word in Icelandic - local foreign language) regarding where the treasure may be.

Step 4: After completing all 5 tasks and gathering all 5 clues, participants should be able to find the location of the treasure and go for the win.





Closing: Participants are gathered all together and the ranking is acknowledged. Next, facilitators conduct the debriefing of the experience with guiding questions such as:

- How was the experience for you?
- What went well in your group?
- What have you learned while playing in your group?
- What do you think was the aim of the game?
- What do you think were the learning objectives?
- Would you like to do it again?
- If you could do it again, what would you change in your behaviour?



FOLLOW-UP

Through debriefing, it is possible to evaluate the mood of participants. By asking for direct feedback using the AID model (action, impact, desired alternative), it is possible to evaluate how the activity could be improved.

To continue, participants can be asked to lead the next edition and to change the challenges, adapting to a specific topic or level of challenge that they would like to do.

1.5. Tales of Iceland

BY BURAK KARABINA, PAULINA KIDA & ROMINA CINGONALI

THEME

Awareness & Mindfulness, place-based learning, resilience, teamwork, practical outdoor skills, cultural literacy.

DESCRIPTION

A mindful storytelling circle by Úlfljótsvatn (or similar landscape, but it must be local, story also better to be related to the local area) that blends Icelandic (or local) lore (Ingólfur, Huldufólk, the “troll gaze” tale) with a sensory grounding walk and a simple ritual (melted-snow pine tea). Participants attune to the landscape using the 5-4-3-2-1 method, create a temporary rune in snow, and practice “soft seeing” (non-grasping attention).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Build present-moment awareness using the 5-4-3-2-1 sensory method.
- Strengthen emotional regulation via breath, soft gaze, and brief silence.
- Foster cultural connection through short, place-linked stories (Ingólfur, Huldufólk, trolls inside rocks/mountains).
- Encourage respectful nature contact (touch, smell, taste) with Leave No Trace.
- Boost group cohesion through a shared ritual (naming + rune + Skál).

LEVEL(S) OF INTERVENTION

- Individual: mindfulness, self-regulation, sensory awareness.
- Interpersonal: small-group circle, peer listening, shared ritual.
- Community: local storytelling practice, respect for self land/heritage and environment.
- Policy/World (optional): brief mention of Icelandic Naming Committee as language stewardship example.

TARGET GROUP(S)

Youth (13–30): general youth (including vulnerable youth or youth with fewer opportunities), mixed-ability groups, NEET youth, and outdoor/ESC/TC cohorts. Adaptable for families or the local community.

TIME FRAME

Ideal field version: 60–75 minutes (adds slower tea ritual).

LOCATION

Lakeshore/forest edge near Úlfljótsvatn (or a safe fire ring/open area, campfire area with place to seat). Wind-sheltered, water access or clean snow nearby.

METHODOLOGY

Storytelling, sensory mindfulness (5-4-3-2-1), microritual, artistic mark-making in snow (runes), brief nature interpretation, circle sharing.

ROLES

- Lead facilitator/storyteller (guides narrative & mindfulness).
- Supportive Storyteller/ facilitator (group flow, translations, photos/notes).
- Safety & fire lead (stove/fire, first aid, consent/comfort).

Small groups can combine roles; large groups benefit from all three.

MATERIALS

- Heat source (camp stove or legal fire), pot, ladle, cups.
- Pine/spruce/fir needles (pre-verified) or backup tea; clean snow or water.
- Matches/lighter, fire gloves, waste bag, wipes.
- Blankets/sitting pads, headlamps if dusk, whistle.
- Quick reference cards: 5-4-3-2-1 prompts; rune examples (optional).
- First aid kit; emergency plan; consent note for hot liquids.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

PREPARATION

- Site check (wind, safe ground, legal fire/stove use).
- Weather check + contingency (no-fire version with thermos).
- Identify conifers; avoid yew; bring potable water backup.
- Risk assessment (hot liquids, slips, cold exposure).
- Brief the team on cultural sensitivity & Leave No Trace.

IMPLEMENTATION

Preparation: Prepare the environment; make sure the fire is ready. Due to conditions, it may take a long time.

Step 1 – Arrival & Circle (5 min)

- Form a circle. One slow breath cue.
- “Listen to the fire/wind” (10–15 s quiet).

Step 2 – Ingólfur intro + Names & Runes (8 min)

- Very short Ingólfur intro (874, pillars, Reykjavík).
- Name round: adopt a playful patronymic/matronymic.
- Rune-in-snow: draw a simple rune or personal symbol (sense of touch).



Step 3 – Smell of Beginnings (2 min)

- Invite everyone to smell smoke/air/earth (sense of smell).
- One sentence: “This is the scent of how stories begin.”

Step 4 – Short Local Lore (5 min)

- Brief Huldufólk paragraph (respect for stones/hills; listening to land).

Step 5 – The Eye Story (troll gaze) (3 min)

- Tell the short version ending with:
- “Let your seeing be like the lake: take everything in, hold nothing. Blink. Breathe.”

Step 6 – 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding (8–10 min)

- 5 see: shapes/light/motion (no labels).
- 4 touch: snow/bark/stone/cloth.
- 3 hear: near/mid/far.
- 2 smell: smoke/earth or wood/air.
- 1 taste: pine-needle tea or clean winter air.



Step 7 – Tea Ritual & One-Word Share (8–10 min)

- Safely pour melted-snow pine tea (or warm water/thermos).
- One-word check-out: “what shifted?”.

Skál: “To Iceland, and to all who carry its spirit.”

Closing:

- One-line blessing: “May our eyes stay soft, and our steps be kind to the land.”.
- 10 seconds of silence. Extinguish safely. Erase rune marks if needed (LNT).

FOLLOW-UP

- Rapid check: 3 stickies or quick show-of-hands: calmer / connected / curious.
- Micro-journal: 3 lines—“I noticed / I felt / I’ll keep.”
- Peer photos of ‘soft gaze spot’ (no faces) + one caption; compile a digital “Tiles of Iceland” mosaic.
- Next step: invite participants to script a 90-second place-story from their hometown using the same 5-4-3-2-1 scaffold.



1.6. Ball Factory

DESCRIBED BY VERA GORIUNOVA

THEME

Teamwork, Communication, Strategic Planning, Group Decision-Making, Role Distribution, Efficiency & Coordination.

DESCRIPTION

Participants simulate a production line in an outdoor “factory.” Their task is to develop and implement a strategy for ‘producing’ as many balls as possible from a starting box to a target box without breaking the rules. Each participant must touch every ball once, in sequence, creating a human production line. The activity focuses on teamwork, communication, and optimizing collective performance under constraints.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Maximize group efficiency in planning and executing a shared strategy.
- Identify individual and collective roles within a team.
- Recognize factors that support or hinder team effectiveness.
- Strengthen teamwork spirit and mutual support.
- Enhance communication and decision-making under time pressure.
- Develop adaptability by improving the process throughout multiple production cycles.

LEVEL(S) OF INTERVENTION

- Interpersonal (teamwork, communication, shared strategy).
- Individual (awareness of personal role and contribution).
- Community (group problem-solving dynamic; collective efficiency).

TARGET GROUP(S)

General youth groups, educational groups, youth in NEET situations, mixed community groups, or any team needing to strengthen collaboration skills.

TIME FRAME

Approx. 40 minutes for the activity + 20 minutes for debriefing.

LOCATION

Outdoors in an open, safe area free from stones, branches, glass, or obstacles.

METHODOLOGY

Experiential group challenge, Strategy planning, Learning-by-doing, Reflection after the experience

ROLES

- 1 trainer/facilitator to set up the field, explain the rules, supervise safety, manage timing, and lead the debrief. Optionally, 1 more facilitator to count the balls during the production.

- Participants (group size 10+ people, the size of the field can be adjusted accordingly).

MATERIALS

- A large rope to mark a square playing field aka production line.
- A variety of different balls/objects that are easy to throw or pass.
- Two boxes: one larger (starting point) and one smaller (production target).
- Rules written on a flipchart or large paper.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

PREPARATION

- Mark a large square field with a rope.
- Place the large box at the start of the production line and the small box at the end.
- Spread the rules clearly on a flipchart.
- Prepare enough balls so the group can run several production cycles.
- Check the field for hazards (stones, branches, glass, holes).

IMPLEMENTATION

Step 1: Introduction (3 minutes)

Present the activity and set the mood: participants are now factory workers and their aim is to ‘produce’ as many balls as possible in the given time by passing them from the starting box to the end box following strict production rules.

Step 2: Rule Explanation (4 minutes):

The goal: produce as many balls as possible in the most efficient way.

- Participants must stand around the production line.
- Everyone takes part (touch the ball)
- Each person can touch the ball only once.
- No one can cross the production line.
- Participants cannot throw the ball to their neighbours (to the person on their right or left).
- No changing positions during a production cycle.
- When the box is full, production pauses while someone empties it and returns to their place.

Price:

A ball successfully placed in the final box earns 10 dollars (fictional).

A non-ball successfully placed in the final box earns 20 dollars.

A dropped ball costs 5 dollars and must remain where it fell.

Step 3: Strategy Planning (5 minutes)

The group discusses and decides how to organize themselves, distribute roles, and optimize the production line. Participants should agree on a clear process before starting.

Step 4: Production Cycle (6 minutes)

The team executes the strategy. The facilitator keeps time and observes communication, participation, and efficiency as well as counts the balls and non-balls carefully and monitors that the rules are followed.

Step 5: Results/ Evaluation (2 minutes)

Ask participants if they're satisfied with their performance. Announce the amount of money they earned and ask if they think they can be more efficient as a team.

Step 6: Second strategy planning (5 minutes)

Participants refine roles and processes based on what did or didn't work, discussing the previous experience.

Step 7: Second Production Round (6 minutes)

The group tests the improved strategy, the facilitator counts the balls, and observes the process.

Step 8: Results/ Evaluation (2 minutes)

Ask participants if they're satisfied with their performance now and if they feel they have improved. Announce the amount of money they earned and move to debriefing. (if participants are really into the process, you can make an additional 3d round).

WHAT TO OBSERVE

- Who is more or less active in strategy development?
- What types of communication do participants use to reach decisions?
- Do they only discuss the strategy itself, or also how to choose and present ideas?
- How do they distribute roles, leadership, and responsibilities?
- How do they react to mistakes (dropped balls, time pressure, conflict)?
- How do they support/encourage each other?

DEBRIEFING

- Participants share in one word how would they describe their personal feeling after this experience. Then facilitator asks to elaborate.
- How well do you think your strategy worked? Why did you choose this approach?
- What was, in your opinion, the main reason for improvement of your performance?
- If you could change one element of your strategy, what would it be and why?
- How did communication function within the group?
- What supported or hindered your teamwork?
- Can you share a moment when you felt proud of the team's communication or coordination?
- What do you think could support this team in the future in their efficiency?

VARIATIONS

- One person is blindfolded during the second round.
- One participant can use only one hand.
- Introduce time penalties for dropped balls or communication restrictions (e.g., silent round).
- Change the size of the field or number of balls to increase difficulty.

FOLLOW UP

- Evaluate how the observed teamwork skills transfer to everyday collaboration.
- Invite participants to write or share short reflections on what efficiency means in real group work.
- Use insights from the exercise to inform future team roles or group agreements.
- Integrate the experience into ongoing teamwork or leadership training activities.
- In the training environment, this activity could be a good base to establish a group contract.



1.7. Blind Train

DESCRIBED BY VERA GORIUNOVA

THEME

Teamwork, Non-Verbal Communication, Leadership, Trust, Awareness, Adaptability

DESCRIPTION

Participants work in small groups as “blind trains,” moving together through a natural environment while guided only by the last sighted member of the group. Their mission is to locate and touch all preset “stations” (bright objects placed around the area) without verbal communication. The activity practices trust, non-verbal communication, leadership, and teamwork in a dynamic outdoor setting.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Highlight the diverse communication styles within the group.
- Provide participants with an opportunity to experience both guiding and being guided.
- Improve nonverbal communication skills.
- Develop adaptability in a changing or unfamiliar environment.
- Build mutual trust among group members.
- Strengthen group coordination and cooperation under constraints.
- Foster embodied awareness and attentive listening to others’ signals.

LEVEL(S) OF INTERVENTION

- Interpersonal: teamwork, trust-building, shared non-verbal language.
- Individual: self-awareness, leadership experience, emotional regulation, vulnerability
- Community: group problem-solving, mutual support

TARGET GROUP(S)

Suitable for a wide range of youth groups, including young people from vulnerable or marginalized backgrounds, as it strongly focuses on trust-building and collaborative communication.

TIME FRAME

20–30 minutes for the activity + 15 minutes for debriefing.

LOCATION

Outdoors, ideally in a forest or natural setting with mild obstacles (trees, uneven surfaces, branches, natural objects). The terrain should be safe yet varied enough to challenge orientation and communication.

METHODOLOGY

Experiential group challenge, Non-verbal communication task, Competitive element between teams, Collaboration within small groups, Learning-by-doing, Reflective debriefing.

ROLES

- 1 facilitator to set up the environment, explain instructions, manage timing, and lead the debrief.
- 1 additional facilitator (optional but recommended) for safety and supervision.
- Participants (minimum 10; can scale to any larger number by creating multiple small groups of 5–6).

MATERIALS

- Blindfolds for all participants except the guides
- 5–7 bright objects (e.g., ropes, fabric strips, printed markers) to serve as “stations”
- Natural space with safe, varied terrain

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

PREPARATION

- Select a safe but slightly challenging natural area (trees, roots, uneven ground).
- Spread 5–7 bright objects across the area, ideally at different distances (minimum 8–10 meters apart) and at different heights (on branches, at ground level, tied to trunks)
- Divide the participants into teams of 5–6.
- Brief participants on the structure: they will form a “blind train,” standing one behind another and holding shoulders.
- Ensure participants know they may opt out of being blindfolded if uncomfortable — these individuals can take the role of guides.

IMPLEMENTATION

Step 1: Introduction (2–3 minutes):

Split the group into smaller groups of 5-6 people randomly (e.g. by counting). Explain that teams will navigate the area as blind trains, and their aim is to ‘visit’ all stations by touching each object in the area.

Step 2: Assign Roles & Form Trains (1–2 minutes)

Explain to participants the frame of the activity:

- All participants except the last one in each train are blindfolded.
- The last person is the guide, the only member of the team who can see.
- Once the activity starts no one will be able to talk (sounds are allowed).

Step 3: Strategy Discussion (5 minutes)

Participants develop the strategy on how they communicate. They have 5 minutes to discuss the strategy. After this phase, **no talking is allowed**.

Step 4: Guide Briefing (1 minute)

Facilitator invites all the people with blindfolds put the blindfolds on. After that, facilitators show the guides the exact locations of all objects by pointing to them.

Step 5: Activity Start (10–20 minutes)

- On the facilitator's signal, trains begin moving.
- Guides lead their group using only agreed non-verbal cues.
- Participants must remain connected and collaborate physically and silently.
- Facilitators observe safety, especially around branches, uneven ground, or natural obstacles as well as makes sure no words are being used.
- The first team to visit all stations returns to the meeting circle. Others follow until all trains finish.

Step 6: Wrap-Up & Return (2 minutes)

Bring all groups together and prepare for debrief.

WHAT TO OBSERVE

- How teams create and adjust their non-verbal communication systems.
- Group members' emotional reactions to being blindfolded or guiding.
- How leadership is enacted and supported.
- Signs of trust, hesitation, or overcontrol.
- How groups handle obstacles and unexpected challenges.
- Differences between strategies created and strategies used in practice.

DEBRIEFING

- How were you feeling during the activity?
- What was it like to be guided? What was it like to be the guide?
- What communication strategy did you plan? Did you stick to it or adapt? How and why?
- What were the main challenges in non-verbal communication?
- What did you learn about trusting others? What helps you trust someone?
- How did the team handle obstacles or moments of confusion?
- What forms of non-verbal communication worked best for you?
- How can you apply this experience to real life, teamwork, or leadership situations?

VARIATIONS

- Rotate roles so different participants experience guiding and being guided.
- Introduce additional stations or more difficult placements.
- Make communication even more restricted (e.g., guide can only use gentle taps).
- Add cooperation between trains (e.g., shared objects).
- Run it at dusk for increased reliance on trust and senses (only if safety allows).

FOLLOW UP

- Invite teams to map or draw the route they took and compare their perception with reality.
- Offer a reflection on leadership styles and communication strengths discovered during the activity.
- Link learning to real-world teamwork scenarios (school projects, community initiatives).
- Use insights to inform future group roles or agreements about communication.



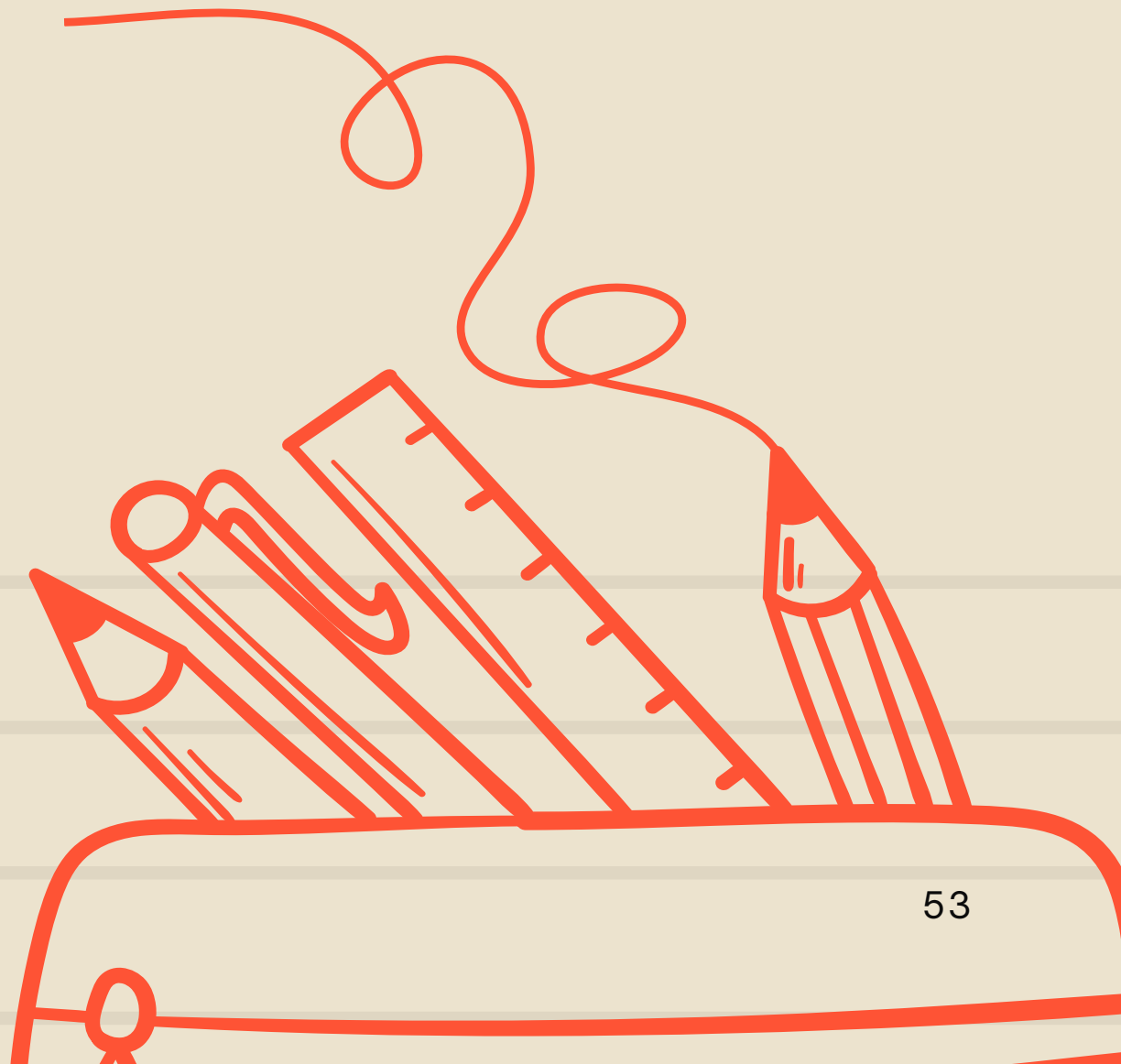


Chapter 2:

**Implementation
Tips**

Implementing outdoor education with vulnerable or NEET young people requires careful planning, sensitivity, and adaptability. While nature provides unique opportunities for inclusion, resilience-building, and well-being, facilitators must take into account the specific needs, barriers, and realities of marginalized youth.

The following tips offer practical guidance for youth workers to create safe, engaging, and meaningful outdoor learning experiences that support both personal growth and social integration.



TIP #1

Start with safety and trust

Always prioritize clear safety briefings, risk assessments, and establish trust with and within the group. Vulnerable youth are more likely to engage when they feel secure and supported. Additionally, the physical condition of participants is crucial, so consider planning enough food for after an outdoor activity.

TIP #2

Adapt to diverse needs

Ensure activities are accessible for all: consider physical abilities, mental health challenges, and cultural backgrounds. Offer flexible roles within activities so everyone can participate meaningfully. Don't expect people to have expensive clothes and equipment.

TIP #3

Use experiential learning

Design activities that emphasize “learning by doing”. Practical, hands-on tasks help young people build confidence and internalize skills in ways that traditional learning often cannot.

TIP #4

Integrate reflection moments

After each activity, include space for group reflection. Use creative tools (journaling, drawing, storytelling, or talking circles) to help participants process experiences and link them to real-life challenges.

TIP #5

Focus on small wins

Break activities into achievable steps. Celebrating small successes helps build self-esteem and motivates participants to stay engaged.

TIP #6

Balance structure with flexibility

Plan sessions carefully but remain adaptable. Vulnerable youth may need changes in pace, breaks, or alternative approaches depending on group energy and emotional states.

TIP #7

Promote inclusion through group dynamics

Use team-based tasks that encourage cooperation, peer support, and shared responsibility. This fosters belonging and reduces feelings of isolation among marginalized participants.

TIP #8

Connect to everyday life

Relate outdoor activities back to participants' personal lives and communities. Highlight transferable skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork, and stress management, that can support them in education, work, and daily challenges.



Chapter 3:

**Training
Course**

INSIDE OUT: COLD WINDS, HOT TUBS, ON THE HUNT FOR THE BEST OUTDOOR APPROACHES



We started our journey and arrived in Reykjavík at the same time as the first snowfall of the year. We were hosted by The Opportunity Iceland, an NGO that supports people with migration backgrounds or in difficult life situations in finding their way into the Icelandic labor market and finding their place.

Already on the first day, we had the opportunity to learn a lot about Icelandic culture at a place of particular importance for Icelanders: the pool in Reykjavík. Together with Björk Vilhelmsdóttir, the founder of The Opportunity Iceland, we tried out all the different temperatures of the hot tubs, from painfully hot to icy cold. We learned that the pools and hot tubs are a central part of Icelandic culture. They not only connect people with their Viking roots, but also shape social life, encounters, conversations, exchange, and even the dating scene.



On the second day, we had the chance to get to know each other better. First in a short input session near our hostel in Reykjavík, and later on out in the wide nature.



With the support of Inga Ævarsdóttir, our local outdoor trainer, we hiked together through the **Reykjadalur Valley**, an impressive trail that leads to a natural hot spring. After the strenuous climb through the snow we took a hot bath under the



open sky in a natural hot spring at sub-zero temperatures. What a fascinating natural spectacle. In the presence of the fresh and white snow, the warm spring felt even more impressive.

From there, we continued to Úlfljótsvatn, a scout camp by the lake, where we would spend the next few days.



There, we reflected on our experiences and worked more closely with the topic of wellbeing. We learned that the main pillars for this are:

- connect with others
- be physically active
- give to others
- pay attention to the present moment
- learning new skills

The hike left us impressed by our group dynamic and by how much we already supported each other, even though we barely knew each other. It was a beautiful shared moment of gratitude that connected us further and strengthened our trust in each other.





On the following day, Vera Goriunova (the trainer) told us more about outdoor education, well-being, and NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) young people. Afterwards, we split into groups (Wellbeing, Equipment, Food, and Navigation) and planned another hike together. Each group took responsibility for its focus area, and we gave and received trust in equal measure. We hiked (sometimes cross-country) over a nearby mountain, practiced using the compass, were lovingly provided with food, and left our path in the snow behind us.



For some, the hike was physically challenging; for others, mentally, but we made it together.

In the evening, we reflected very honestly about what went well and what could have gone better, where difficulties appeared and where our expectations were challenged.



In the following sessions, we learned more about the learning environments (which is right outside of our comfort zone but not yet in the panic zone), outdoor pedagogy, understanding models of vulnerability and resilience when thinking about NEET young people, identifying protective and risk factors of specific case studies through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model, and how outdoor approaches can help young people and adults in vulnerable life situations to strengthen resilience, self-confidence, and skills. We learned that outdoors means: being outside, learning about the environment, learning through the environment, and finally learning for something (whether soft skills or hard skills).





Then it became practical: we were invited to design our very own outdoor activities. In five groups, based on our interests, we developed programs that would be implemented the next day. The educational aim was at the center, along with everything we had learned about well-being, outdoor approaches, and the needs of vulnerable groups.



After preparing for the activities, we visited the Golden Circle, where we learned that the impressive waterfall Gullfoss only still exists because a brave activist (Sigríður Tómasdóttir) opposed the construction of a hydroelectric power plant there. On her own, she stood her ground against industrialization and capitalization. What an inspiring woman! We saw the erupting geysers, the separating tectonic plates, and even the beautiful northern lights.



The next day, we carried out our activities.

Our group developed A-MAZE-ING, a labyrinth game in which participants took on the roles of trolls (attackers) and humans (defenders). One person in each group moved through the maze blind, and another received an invisible limitation, such as menstrual pain, vertigo, or a fear of touch. The others needed to help and support them on their way through the maze, and the “trolls” soon developed creative strategies to include their members with limitations in the best possible way, making their attack more powerful. Along the way, we asked the participants questions about inclusivity, intersectionality, and visible vs. invisible disabilities.



The goal was not only team-building but also engaging with Icelandic mythology and ableism, intersectionality, disadvantages with

disabilities and furthermore with invisible disabilities. Despite the serious topics, everyone had a lot of fun and learned something.



It was surprising that many had not encountered the terms "ableism" and "intersectionality" before.

Afterwards, the other great activities followed:

- Connecting the Elements—Sensitizing the senses, team spirit, and a sledge run, ending in an artistic snow performance competition.



- The Saga of Nerijus' Hoard – A scavenger hunt with a compass, Icelandic language, and exploring the surroundings.
- The Snowperson Project — A playful exploration culminating in the creation of a snow figure.
- Tales of Iceland – Stories and mythology by the campfire.



Between the activities, we reflected again and again. The exchange with the other participants was extremely important and helped us give the activities a final touch.

The next day, we assessed potential risks and how to manage them. We delved into our activities' descriptions, and we co-authored a manual for other youth workers to implement the activities we had created. In national groups, we prepared our follow-up and local actions, and we thought about which dissemination efforts we would take.





On the last day, we cleaned the accommodation altogether and returned to Reykjavík, where we reflected very emotionally on our experiences and expressed our gratitude for each other as well as for the project.

We were all exhausted, yet so fulfilled and sad that it was already over.

The overall feeling is one of incredible gratitude to have participated in this project and to have met all these wonderful people. We have learned a lot about community, nature, trust, outdoor education, different models, methods, and approaches, well-being, and about myself. It would be wonderful to go on a new outdoor adventure with this incredible group again at any time. For now, we're busy planning a hike, where we can teach about what we have learned.



Conclusion

The Inside Out project has demonstrated the profound impact of outdoor education as an inclusive tool for integrating young migrants in NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) situations. Through collaborative work across Iceland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Poland, and Germany, the project revealed that outdoor education provides a unique and versatile space for personal growth, social integration, and emotional well-being, addressing challenges often faced by young migrants or your people in NEET situations who are learning how to navigate new environments.

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Inside Out 2.0: Outdoor Education as a Tool for Integration and Skill Development

Manual for Youth Workers

Project number: 2025-1-IS01-KA153-YOU-000298184

Coordinator:



Partners:



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November, 2025