



**OUTWARD BOUND
CROATIA™**



CoFlow presents:

**ERASMUS+ training course
HANDBOOK**

authors and trainers:

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Co Flow presents:

ACRO YOGA & THEATER IMPROV HANDBOOK

PART 1:

ACRO YOGA

with instructions for basic poses

*and sprinkled with a few PARTNER YOGA challenges

&

PART 2:

THEATER IMPROV HANDBOOK

with sessions and activities

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ACRO YOGA HANDBOOK

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The History of AcroYoga

The seeds of partner yoga and acrobatics were planted globally in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 1999, Jessie Goldberg and Eugene Poku in Montreal coined the term “acroyoga” to describe their performance fusion of dance, acrobatics, and yoga. Later, in 2003, Jenny Sauer-Klein and Jason Nemer formalized “AcroYoga International” in California, creating the structured curriculum practiced globally today.

By merging the dynamic power of acrobatics with yogic consciousness and the loving-kindness (Metta) of therapeutic arts, the practice centers around being completely present and in perfect, co-created balance with another person.

The Three Roles

Every AcroYoga practice relies on a unified triad to ensure success and safety:

The Base: The person maintaining solid contact with the ground (usually via their back, hips, and feet), providing the stable, unwavering foundation required to support the flyer.

The Flyer: The person elevated off the ground, utilizing core tightness and body tension to move through various static or dynamic poses.

The Spotter: The most critical role for safety. The spotter is an active guardian who maintains a protective stance around the duo. They use physical framing to catch a falling flyer, verbal cues to guide alignment, and an objective eye to see when the structure is drifting off-center.

The Mechanics of Flight: Bone Stacking vs. Muscle

Because you place your weight entirely into someone else’s hands, AcroYoga is a powerful catalyst for overcoming fear and building interpersonal trust.

New practitioners often assume acro requires superhero muscle strength, but successful flight relies entirely on bone stacking—the physics concept of aligning joints vertically so that the skeletal system bears the weight. When the base’s hips, knees, and ankles are stacked perfectly perpendicular to the ground, the flyer’s weight is transferred directly into the floor, requiring minimal muscular effort.

Success is a delicate dance of momentum, weight transfer, and timing. Because even a tiny micro-movement or a joint drifting an inch off-center can cause the structure to shake or collapse, the practice demands total proprioception—an acute, second-by-second awareness of where your body is in space.

The Two Sides of the Practice: Solar and Lunar

The Solar Practice (Dynamic & Acrobatic): This is the empowering, high-energy side focused on strength, acrobatics, flips, and “flows” (seamless transitions between poses).

The Lunar Practice (Therapeutic & Gentle): This is the restorative side where the flyer relaxes completely. Using inverted gravity, the base uses their feet to massage, stretch, and elongate the flyer’s spine, often culminating in traditional Thai massage techniques on the ground.

Benefits of AcroYoga

1. Physical Benefits: An Intense Full-Body Workout

Deep Core & Stabilizer Activation: Unlike traditional gym exercises that isolate large muscles, acro forces both partners to engage tiny stabilizer muscles and the deep core to maintain equilibrium in mid-air.

Enhanced Mobility: Dynamic partner-assisted stretching allows practitioners to safely access deeper ranges of motion and joint flexibility than they could achieve alone.

Spinal Decompression: During therapeutic flying, the flyer hangs completely relaxed upside-down on the base's feet. This creates a gentle, natural traction that stretches the lower back, spaces out the vertebrae, and instantly relieves spinal compression.

2. Mental & Emotional Benefits

Enforced Mindfulness: AcroYoga is an absolute anchor for the mind. Because a wandering thought about work or daily stress results in an immediate loss of balance, the practice demands 100% presence, serving as a powerful active meditation against anxiety.

Confronting the Fear of Control: Being lifted off the ground forces the flyer to practice the psychological art of surrendering control, while teaching the base the responsibility of holding space for another human being.

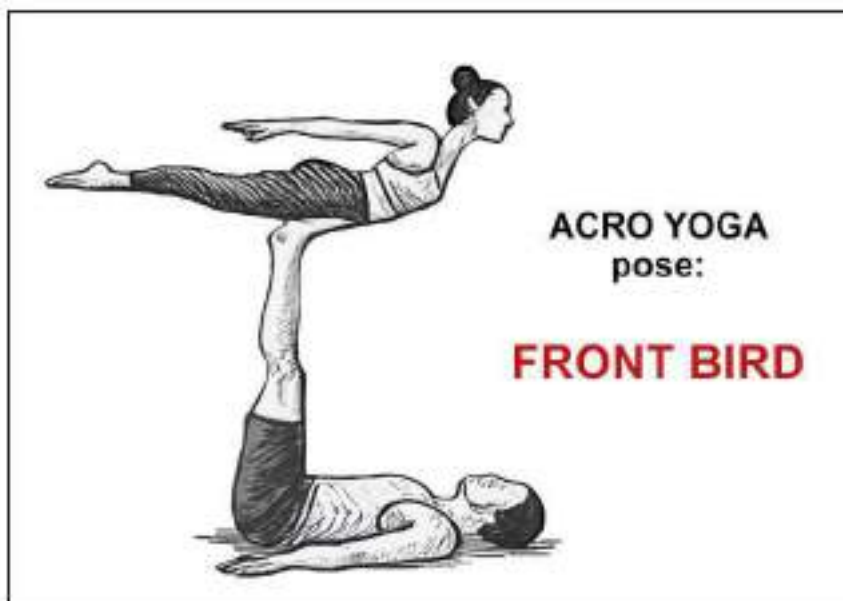
3. Social & Interpersonal Benefits

Radical Communication & Boundaries: In acro, ambiguous communication fails. Partners learn to use direct, non-blaming verbal cues ("I need your feet lower," "Shift your weight forward") and clear consent. This builds highly functional boundary-setting skills that translate directly into real-world relationships.

Inclusivity & Community: Traditional yoga is isolated on a single mat. AcroYoga breaks the ice by requiring playful interaction, laughter, and rapid partner rotation during workshops, shattering social barriers and forging fast communities.

Ultimately, AcroYoga is far more than a physical fitness trend. It is a physical metaphor for life: it teaches you how to be an unshakeable support system for someone else, while giving you the grace to let go and allow yourself to be carried.





Video tutorial:
[HOW TO DO THE BIRD POSE](#)

PRO TIP:
Flyer needs to keep firm and parallel to the ground



Video tutorial:
[FOLDED LEAF | QUICK & EASY ACROYOGA TUTORIAL](#)

PRO TIP:
It is easier for the base if the flyer is completely relaxed and does NOT reach for the ground



Video tutorial:
[HOW TO DO THE THRONE POSE](#)

PRO TIP:
Make sure to keep straight lines and 90 degrees angles

ACRO YOGA
pose:

STRADDLE THRONE



Video tutorial:

[STRADDLE THRONE | QUICK & EASY ACROYOGA TUTORIAL](#)

PRO TIP:

The easiest way to enter is by establishing a shared tempo.

ACRO YOGA
pose:

FOOT TO SHIN



Video tutorial:

[HOW TO DO THE FOOT TO SHIN POSE](#)

PRO TIP:

Easy does it - slow movements, and no jumping!

ACRO YOGA
pose:

BACKBEND



Video tutorial:

[ACROYOGA BEGINNER TUTORIAL 3: BACKBEND AND INVERTED BOW](#)

PRO TIP:

The base needs to hold the flyers elbows or shoulders until the flyer reaches stability



Video tutorial:

[ACROYOGA STANDING COUNTERBALANCE POSE](#)

PRO TIP:

This is a counterbalance pose - both the base and the flayer need to lean in the opposite directions

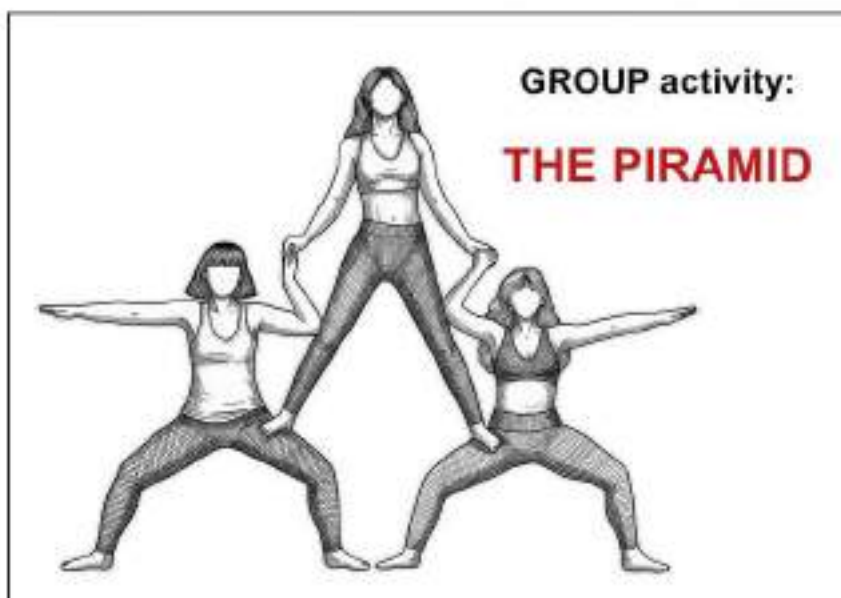


Video tutorial:

[3 MINUTE YOGA POSE - DOWN-DOG PYRAMID](#)

PRO TIP:

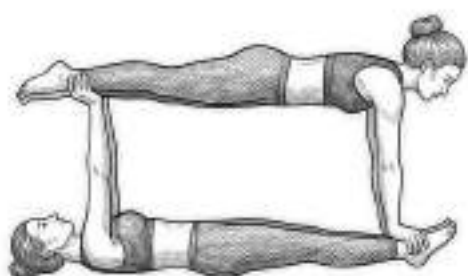
The flayer needs to be careful with the exit - the pose is not done until everyone is safe on the ground



GROUP CHALLENGE!

The possibilities are endless. Try to explore and play with different variations, number of people and body shapes.

PARTNER YOGA CHALLENGES



Co Flow presents:

THEATER IMPROV HANDBOOK

with sessions and activities

INTRO: About Theater Improv And Main Principles

Theater improvisation is a form of performance where scenes are created in the moment, without a script. In education and youth work, it is a powerful tool because it develops confidence, creativity, communication, collaboration, and the ability to act in uncertain situations. It creates a learning space where participants can explore ideas, take action, and learn through experience rather than preparation.



A helpful way to understand improvisation is through the “way of improvisation,” as presented in the TED Talk The Way of Improvisation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUO-pWJ0riQ>). It highlights some simple but powerful ideas that guide both stage work and everyday interaction: play—approaching situations with curiosity and openness; letting yourself fail—accepting mistakes as part of learning; listening with the willingness to change—being ready to adjust based on others; saying yes—accepting offers instead of blocking them; “yes, and”—building on ideas rather than stopping them; playing the game—engaging fully in the shared reality that is being created; and relaxing and having fun—trusting the process instead of forcing control.

At the core of improv are key principles that make this process work. Spontaneity is essential: participants learn to think quickly, respond creatively, and move forward without overthinking or being blocked by mistakes. Taking initiative is equally important—everyone is encouraged to step in, make choices, and actively contribute to the direction of the scene instead of waiting passively. Taking risk goes hand in hand with this, as improvisers practice saying “yes” to uncertainty, trying new ideas, and embracing the possibility of failure as part of the creative process.

Partnership is another foundation, built on trust, support, and co-creation rather than competition. Generosity means offering ideas freely and helping others succeed on stage. Flexibility and adaptability allow participants to respond to change in real time and follow where the group is going. Listening—both verbal and non-verbal—is fundamental, as it ensures each response is grounded in what is actually happening in the moment. Acceptance ties everything together: saying “yes” to ideas, roles, and situations so the scene can continue to evolve.

In practice, all of these principles operate at the same time, creating a dynamic process where participants stay present, connected, and responsive. This is why improv is so effective in youth work: it strengthens initiative, encourages healthy risk-taking, and builds the confidence to step outside comfort zones in a supportive environment.

SESSION 1: Intro to Improv

Swish Boing Pow

10-15 minutes

Aim: This exercise enhances attention and quick reactions, spontaneous decision-making, and group cohesion through playful interaction.

All players stand in a circle. One player starts by sending an impulse, passing it on to another player, who in turn passes it on, and so on. The goal is to pass the impulse as quickly as possible, and there are several creative ways to do so. For example, the impulse can be passed by swishing it over to a neighbor with a gesture and the word “swish,” or by blocking it with arms raised and saying “boing” before returning it to the original sender. It can also be passed by saying “pow” and extending arms forward to a non-neighbor or by throwing it into the center of the circle and having someone quickly grab it with the words “I’m taking it out.”

The impulse can also be passed by making eye contact with another player, nodding, and then swapping places as if riding a horse, or by raising arms in a “ramp” gesture for a neighbor to duck under. Alternatively, the impulse can be passed by digging a tunnel gesture and having the neighbor jump through it. Additional events include “Samba,” where everyone dances samba to the center and back, “Freak out,” where everyone screams and runs around wildly, or “Baby Pig,” where players stand with legs apart and grunt as an imaginary pig runs through their legs. Players are encouraged to invent new actions as well.

Yes Circle

10 minutes

Participants stay in a circle and take turns going into the center of the circle and proposing actions or situations (e.g. “Let’s all become astronauts!”), and everyone immediately joins and embodies them. The purpose of this exercise is to introduce acceptance, reduce self-censorship, practice saying “yes” physically, and practice taking initiative.

Action in numbers

10-15 minutes

Aim: To energize and foster creativity, quick thinking, and connection by encouraging spontaneous collaboration through a series of playful and interactive activities.

In this game, players walk around the space and meet partner number 1. The pair should create their own greeting. They practice and continue walking to find another partner for pair number 2. Within this pair, they create their own dance, they practice and then start walking to find their partner number 3. Within this pair, a common song should be created. And pair number 4 has the task to create a gif together.

The facilitator says random numbers from 1 to 4, and players have to quickly find the respective partner and execute the respective action together.



Energizer

*and a game to learn the names

Name volleyball

20 mins

Aim: To strengthen name recall, promote team collaboration, and encourage physical engagement through an imaginative and dynamic activity.

The name volleyball has similar rules to the volleyball game but is played with an imaginary ball. Teams should be of equal or very similar size, and the facilitator will act as the referee. Whenever someone wants to pass the ball to a player of the team or a player of the opposing team, they should say their name, and if you hear your name, that means the ball is now with you. The ball can be passed within the same team no more than 3 times, and if a player takes too long to pass the ball or says a name that is incorrect, the respective team loses a point. Embodying playing volleyball is also recommended.

SESSION 2: Listen – Accept – Be Generous

Practice No and Yes

10 minutes

Aim: To explore the impact of acceptance versus rejection on creativity and energy, and spontaneity.

Players work in pairs. First round, partner A will say random statements and the other person will say “No” to every statement. Here is an example:

Partner A: You love ice-cream!

Partner B: No.

Partner A: This room is full of elephants.

Partner B: No.

After exploring it for some minutes, we will ask them to switch roles. Then we will do it again, but the partner replying to the statements will say “Yes” to everything. After they do both roles, we will reflect on how hearing yes or no impacts their creativity and their energy. Most of the time, the second round is a lot easier and more fun.

Debrief:

How did each round feel? Which one created more possibilities?

What comes next?

15-20 minutes

Aim: To practice collaborative storytelling and embodiment. To encourage active listening, acceptance, and creativity.

Players work in pairs - telling and embodying a story together. Partners in each pair contribute one sentence to the story, and each partner can respond to a statement by a) “What comes next” if they agree with the statement from the other partner, b) “No”, if they don’t agree, immediately followed by “What comes next?” coming from the partner who wants to provide space for the partner who didn’t agree to create the next statement, or c) “What comes next?” to provide the space for the other partner to take the initiative and propose a statement. For example:

Partner A: Let’s go to the beach!

Partner B: Cool! What comes next? (both walking to the beach)

Partner A: Then we go straight to the ocean!

Partner B: What comes next? (both embody swimming)

Partner A: We start swimming to the deep!

Partner B: No!

Partner A: We stay in the shallow!

Partner B: What comes next? (both staying in the shallow)

Partner A: What comes next?

Partner B: We pick up seashells to make art!

Partner A: What comes next? (both picking up shells)

Debrief:

What happened when you stopped trying to control the story?



Speak as One

10-15 minutes

Aim: To develop synchronization, quick thinking, and teamwork by collaboratively creating a single voice and personality in a shared improvisational scenario.

In pairs, two people must speak as if one person speaks - the situation is that that person is on an interview, so there's an interviewer asking questions and the two people answer as if they were one candidate - experiment with changing who's leading and following, after some time try to increase the speed.

Sample questions:

- What is your perfect day?
- What superpower would you like?
- What have you learned recently?

Debrief:

When did you feel connected?

When did you try to lead?

The dolphin trainer

30-40 minutes

Aim: To enhance collaboration, patience, and non-verbal communication skills while exploring the principles of reinforcement and directional guidance.

One person from the group is the dolphin and leaves the room, the others are dolphin trainers. With the dolphin absent, the dolphin trainers decide the action that the dolphin should be trained to do. The trainers have to guide the dolphin to whatever action they choose, using reinforcement: reward movement toward the behavior they seek and discourage movement away from it.

Whether they want a jumping jack, seated lotus position, or picking up an object, whenever the dolphin moves in the desired direction, the group offers a simple, emotion-free "ding."

Version 1: Positive Reinforcement Only

The closer the dolphin gets to the task, the more "dings" it will hear. When the dolphin goes away from the chosen task, the trainers remain silent.

Version 2: Positive and Negative Reinforcement

The closer the dolphin gets to the task, the more "dings" it will hear. When the dolphin goes away from the chosen task, the trainers make a simple, emotion-free "buzz" (or another agreed sound). The sounds should remain neutral and consistent, without expressing approval or disapproval.

Debrief:

What was it like to be the dolphin?

How did the feedback influence your decisions and actions?

Which version felt easier to navigate? Why?

How did the presence of the "buzz" affect your willingness to experiment?

Did you notice differences in your confidence or motivation between the two versions?

What was it like to be a trainer?

How did the group coordinate its feedback?

What does this exercise tell us about learning, teamwork, and communication?

When do we use positive and negative reinforcement in everyday life?

Which type of feedback is more likely to encourage initiative, creativity, and risk-taking?

What can facilitators, leaders, and team members learn from this exercise about giving feedback?

SESSION 3: Spontaneity – Partnership

Shared Pulse

15 mins

Aim: To develop non-verbal communication, partnership, presence, and the ability to co-create through attentive listening and mutual responsiveness.

Participants work in pairs. Music is played, and partners begin moving freely in the space. Their task is to gradually find a shared rhythm and sense of connection without speaking.

Participants are encouraged not to copy each other's movements, and not to establish a leader or a follower. Instead, they should focus on noticing and responding to one another, allowing the movement to emerge naturally between them.

As the exercise progresses, participants can experiment with different speeds, energy levels, directions, and heights while maintaining their connection. The goal is not to perform identical movements, but to discover a common pulse that both partners contribute to and influence.

After a few minutes, participants may switch partners and repeat the exercise.



Debrief:

- What helped you feel connected to your partner?
- At what moments did you feel most “in sync”?
- Did leadership or following emerge despite the instructions?
- What was the difference between copying and connecting?
- How did you adapt when your partner changed speed, energy, or direction?
- What does this exercise reveal about partnership and collaboration?
- How can we create a shared direction without one person leading?

1,2,3 counting game

20 mins

Aim: To enhance spontaneity, creativity, active listening, and collaboration.

Players will get in pairs. First round they will count together from 1 to 3, non-stop. For example:
Partner A: One | Partner B: Two | Partner A: Three | Partner B: One...

Second round they will substitute the number 1 for a movement. For example:
Partner A: (shakes hands up) | Partner B: Two | Partner A: Three | Partner B (shakes hands up) |
Partner A: Two ...

Third round they will also substitute the number 2 for a sound. Partner A: (shakes hands up) |
Partner B: (bird sound) | Partner A: Three | Partner B (shakes hands up) | Partner A: (bird sound)
...

Fourth round they will also substitute the number 3 for a word. Partner A: (shakes hands up) |
Partner B: (bird sound) | Partner A: Apple | Partner B (shakes hands up) | Partner A: (bird sound) ...

Fifth round they will have to do the same as fourth round, but now every time they will have to make up a different movement, sound and word.

Debrief:

What happened when thinking became impossible?

Coke or Pepsi

10 minutes

Aim: To develop spontaneity, enhance observation skills, and strengthen connection between partners through synchronized decision-making and active listening.

Players work in pairs. The facilitator gives “one or another” prompt, and then the pair counts to three, keeping eye contact, and everyone should randomly say one of the two things, at the same time. This could go with all sorts of words, like “coke or pepsi”, “Toyota or Honda”, “blue or green”. It’s recommended to debrief about how answers change and if they become more aligned with practicing observing the partner.

This game could be continued without prompts from the facilitator, when the players can say any word, after “1, 2, 3”, at the same time. They continue until they both say the same word at the same time.

Debrief:

Did you notice your thinking becoming more connected?

SESSION 4: Taking initiative – Taking Risk – Adaptability

Find another way

20 mins

Aim: To foster creative problem-solving, adaptability, and resilience. To learn to accept failure.

As a preparation, players are split into pairs. Person A creates imaginary obstacles in the way of person B, and person B needs to find a way to get through the obstacle. After a few minutes, roles are exchanged.

Players are tasked to intentionally fail at a task given by their partner. The task should be a simple one, for example, “open the door” or “put the pencil on the table” However, instead of giving up, they must find an alternative way to fail while the partner gently encourages them to “Find another way”. The goal is to explore different approaches and embrace failure as an opportunity for innovation.

Debrief:

- How did it feel to be asked to fail instead of succeed?
- What helped you keep generating new ideas when the obvious ones were exhausted?
- Did your relationship with failure change during the exercise? How?
- How did your partner’s encouragement to “find another way” influence your willingness to continue?
- What does this exercise teach us about creativity, adaptability, and resilience?
- Where in your life or work could you benefit from approaching obstacles with a “find another way” mindset?



The worst performance

40-90 minutes

Aim: To encourage creativity, adaptability, embrace failure, and explore vulnerability through the humor of a deliberately bad performance.

Players are split into groups of 3-5 people and each group has to create the worst improvised performance ever. The challenge is to stay committed to the performance while embracing the humor of failure. After the performances, a debriefing session is necessary to reflect on the experience, as it delves deeper into the vulnerability, acceptance, and other topics.

Debrief:

- How did it feel to intentionally create something “bad” and perform it in front of others?
- What happened to your fear of making mistakes during the exercise?
- What can this experience teach us about taking risks, creativity, and embracing imperfection?

SESSION 5: Co-creation

Workshop: Make Our Own Song

Aim: To foster creativity, collaboration, musical expression and group cohesion by co-creating an original song using voice, improvisation and simple lyric-building techniques.

Description:

This workshop guides participants through the process of creating an original song in small groups. Starting with vocal warm-ups to loosen the voice and build confidence, participants are then introduced to a simple melody base. Using structured word-generation games and improvisation, they collaboratively develop lyrics, shape verses, and perform their final song in front of the group. The focus is on creativity, spontaneity, teamwork, and enjoying the process rather than achieving musical perfection.

Melody reference used in the workshop:

https://youtu.be/GWyEe3pqZiQ?is=ItT-qmM_6MkPxbJ2

Steps of the workshop:

1. Vocal warm-up (10–15 min)

Participants prepare their voice and body through playful vocal exercises:

- Sirens (gliding from low to high pitch and back)
- Lip trills (“brrrrr” up and down scales)
- Tongue movement: “sol–do” descending patterns
- Humming: “eee–mmm” going up and down (3 times)
- “Who” sound sliding downward
- Rhythmic chanting: “na na na na” up and down in pitch
- A person offers a sound and the others repeat it

2. Introduction of melody (5–10 min)

- Facilitator introduces a simple repeating melody using the provided reference track
- Each group listens experiments together as they see fit- e.g. with humming or simple vocal sounds over the melody

3. Lyric creation in groups (30–45 min)

- Participants split into groups of 3–5 people
- Each group receives a set of randomly generated words from the 1–2–3 game (a.k.a. Coke or Pepsi)
- Using these words as a starting point, they:
 - Build associations and ideas
 - Add connecting words and phrases
 - Create verses and structure (e.g., verse, chorus, repetition)
- Encourage simplicity, rhythm, and group agreement rather than perfection

4. Rehearsal & Performance (20–30 min)

- Groups rehearse their song with the melody
- Focus on timing, group unity, and expression
- Each group performs their song in front of the others
- Optional: add simple body percussion, clapping, or movement

Debrief:

- How did it feel to create a song from scratch as a group?
- What helped your group turn random words into meaningful lyrics?
- What challenges did you face when aligning melody, rhythm, and words?
- How did your group make decisions when you had different ideas?
- What did you discover about creativity or yourself during this process?
- How does improvisation in music relate to other areas of teamwork or life?

Authors and trainers:



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Bistra is an educator, youth worker, and embodiment practitioner with over 15 years of experience designing and facilitating experiential learning processes. She integrates theater improvisation, movement, and storytelling to empower people through innovative, human-centered approaches.



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Vanja is an architect, acrobat, and artist at heart. She has been practicing acro yoga for over ten years and is a certified beginner-level acro yoga instructor. She also has experience leading Erasmus+ projects focused on physical movement and acro yoga.



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Sanja is prof. of social pedagogy, shiatsu practitioner and above all an artistic soul. Passionate acroyoga practitioner for five years. She has experience in working in Erasmus+ projects focused on physical movement and acro yoga, and empowering people with mental disabilities.



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