

2010

Youth

Ideas to pump
up your
YiA projects

TRAINING COURSE
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CREATIVITY IN ACTION



PORTUGAL



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INTRODUCTION

In 2010 the Portuguese National Agency hosted an international training course on Creativity and Innovation in Youth in Action Programme (YiA). For 5 days a group of 26 participants gather to enhance their creativity skills, discover their limitations and explore their creative potential. Together, they reflected about different dimensions in a youth project and looked for new ways to approach them. Here are some of their results.

We hope you enjoy, and if you decide to implement some of these ideas, please send us the pictures!



INNOVATIVE WAYS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION

SUPER HERO PARTY

During an international project such as a youth Exchange, each participant chooses one super hero / character to perform during one moment of the project (evening party,...). The participants make up, dress up and try to act according to this super hero, showing their talents and character. This activity can help to get to know each other in an easy way because they are expressing themselves through a different character.

CHALLENGE IN THE MOUNTAIN (silence version and mother tongue version)

During an international project the group is given a challenge (divided in small groups): each group is given a map to do a walk in nature with some checkpoints (for example with activities) and there is a group challenge – they are not allowed to use words during the hiking (or they just can use their mother tongue, no English). On the first version, we are exploring the silence, the attention to the nature, the non verbal communication and personal fears. In the second version the objective is to raise the awareness of the different languages, non verbal communication differences and through that explore the cultural differences in the group.

DISCOVERY THROUGH SENSES

During an international project such as a youth Exchange, young people are divided in pairs and one of the person is blindfolded and the other one is guiding through the environment, in contact with other people (and guessing who is him/her?), listening to different sounds, exploring different smells and touch different textures. Then the other person gets blindfolded and repeats the activity. At the end each person reflects about own opinions, feelings when he/she was on both situations. With this activity we aim at involving them in the project with all their senses enlarging their learning opportunities and being aware that not everyone can explore through all senses but working together it is possible to take part anyway.

SOCIAL MARKETING

As an idea to promote a change in the behavior of young people, we can use products that they easily and daily consume such as chips, snacks, fizzy drinks. During an activity the youngsters can make drawings with messages (or pictures) that then can be used in these products to raise the awareness among young people (several topics can be discussed and showed in these products). In this way, young people are sending messages to other young people, therefore we can expect more impact. This idea can also be used for the DEOR strategy, informing other youngsters about their opportunities.

TALENT FESTIVAL

During an international project we think it is important to promote the idea that everyone is special and has special gifts and talents. Under this idea, a talent show can be an activity for one evening, where each participant (alone or with a small group) performs 1 talent for the group: from presenting the show, filming it, taking pictures, doing some snacks for the group, preparing some cocktails, singing, dancing, playing an instrument,... Even if participants don't have the same opportunities back home, here everyone has a talent and is unique. Be aware, as a youth worker, that everyone is involved and challenging themselves (as possible).

DREAM CITY

During an international project participants can be asked to describe some characteristics of what would be a perfect city for them: people, nature, buildings, services, animals, rights, rules,.... This activity can have words but also drawings and images that can be painted in a big wall on the street and it can stay hanged some time after the activity. With this activity they reflect about their wishes and share opinions of themselves and the society, creating a greater impact on your community and maybe politicians (can be also part of DEOR).

BLIND DINNER

During an international project, we can have a dinner using no lights in the restaurant/place. This exercise can be a simulation about blindness, reflecting about having fewer opportunities (others like deaf, wheel chaired some kind of disability). The activity is meant to raise the awareness about these difficulties and challenge youngsters to help themselves, understand their feelings and to overcome frustration.

INCLUSIVE COFFEE

During a workshop with youngsters with fewer opportunities (mobility problems, for example), participants can do art design (graffiti, handicraft) in the table top of a local coffee table. This way this young people can express and reach other people with their feelings, expressions and opinions about different things and creating impact on their community. This can also be used as a DEOR strategy and share the results of a youth project.

INNOVATIVE WAYS TO MOTIVATE YOUNG PEOPLE

ORGANIZE A 'FORBIDDEN' ACTIVITY

It is always attractive for youngsters to do things which are forbidden to do. For example swimming in a pool after closing time. You can arrange it earlier with the manager of the place so you won't have any problems with the law without telling the youngsters about it before hand. Obviously, you should afterwards explain that you had the authorization to do so and debrief the activity.

ORGANIZE A 'NIGHT PROJECT'

Young people like to do something totally different and one of those kinds of things could be moving a part of a project or whole project from day activities to night.

BORN TO BE WILD

Most youngsters have no permission to ride a motorbike. To make a project more attractive you can arrange local transport by motorcycles.

KIDS RULE

Because young people always have rules and are being told what to do you can give them the opportunity to make their own game. They can arrange by themselves all the equipment needed and make up all the rules.

I BELIEVE I CAN FLY!

Young people are excited by extreme sports like skydiving. During the project you can arrange for the young people to design and make a parachute using different fabrics, materials and paints to make a design around a specific theme. Of course, you could not use this parachute to skydive. It is only for demonstration purposes!

INDIVIDUAL LESSONS

Organize individual lessons for participants to give them individual attention. They can work on a chosen subject or skill to make them feel the centre of attention.

STREET ART

To motivate young people you can allow them to use street marking crayons to create a sign, logo, advertisement for your project, on the pavement in your local community.

CANDY FILLED BALLOONS

You have a word (linked to the theme of the project) wrapped around a candy. The candy is placed inside a balloon. Blow up the balloon. Do this with several words to make up a sentence. The young people burst the balloons to find the words and then work together to make a sensible sentence (or maybe a silly one!) You can arrange for the balloons to fall from the roof or throw them into the room.

YUM YUM YUM

To motivate others, the youngsters can work in a local restaurant to cook a meal for other youngsters, their friends and families etc. The chefs in the restaurant can help them (health & safety).

PILLOWS FIGHT FLASH MOB

A flash mob is a big gathering of people, at a certain time and certain place, all these people have a pre-programmed task, for instance a dance or a pillow fight. Normally it takes place in a crowded and public space, and only lasts for some minutes. In our work with youngsters we can use this idea in different ways:

- Promote an event – organize a pillow fight flash mob to promote an activity like a sleep-out in a youth club, to motivate and mobilize young people to participate.
- Show the project to the local community – with such an activity we can disseminate project results and give awareness to local people about some idea, topic or activity.

SLEEP-OUT

This activity can be done in several ways: we can organize a sleep-out with the youngsters in the nature, where they would do an orientation activity or we can organize a sleep-out in a youth club, or a school, and connect it with a LAN party, so that the youngsters can be together and play computer games. This is benefic to the group dynamics and also to optimize the relationship between young people and youth workers.

BRACELETE FLYER

In order to promote an event, an activity or disseminate project results you organize workshops to develop flyers. These flyers are special, because they are folded so that they can be used like bracelets. Then young people can go around in their community to distribute these special flyers and talk to the people about the project.

BENEFIT FROM YOUNGSTER'S IDOLS

To motivate the youngsters an idol of them can be invited (a national idol, popstar, musician, football player). Even if the idol can't come he/she can record a message from him and show it as a video or you can make a videoconference or he/she can send a message in another way. It can both happen in the end of an activity (exchange etc.) as a final show or it can be showed as a start-off of a project so that the youngsters will be motivated to participate.

AQUARIUM

During the Project the youngsters have to build an aquarium. They have to take care of the animals themselves. This will encourage them to take responsibility and it will raise the empathy. If you want to add an intercultural aspect you can give the youngsters the responsibility to choose fishes of different countries in Europe.

RESTAURANT

With the whole team (youngsters, leaders,...) we go to a restaurant. Instead of the staff, the youngsters can get the responsibility to make the menu, to cook and to serve the dishes to the staff. This will raise their skills, self confidence and the cooperation between the youngsters.

EXTREME SPORTS EVENT

Instead of the staff, the youngsters have the possibility to organize an activity for themselves or for a group of disabled youngsters. This will challenge their organizing skills, responsibility, cooperation between the youngsters who organize the event and also between the organizers and the disabled youngsters. This will encourage empathy and social inclusion.

NATIONAL \ INTERNATIONAL TALENT SHOW

At the beginning of the project the youngsters will organize a talent show for the youngsters (organizing skills, cooperation) of the community included themselves. The price will be that the ones who participate can join the tour through village s \ cities \ other countries. This price can motivate the participants of the project, but also the participation of the local community (social inclusion, intercultural learning, and local impact). The participation to the talent show will give them more self confidence and they will feel satisfied.

WEB – TV

We set up a kind of web-tv to introduce our project, to attract participants and the attention of the local community. It can also be a way to found co-funding. Except for promotion we can use the web-tv to expose films, multimedia,... made during the different projects. This will encourage young people to develop their skills of making movies, because they know that the product will be spread around the world. This will motivate them to be involved in the whole project, they will get new ideas and build out a network between the different countries.

COMPETITION

A competitive moment will motivate youngsters to do their best, because they want to win. This will raise self confidence and the cooperation inside the group, make youngsters bring out their best qualities.

INNOVATIVE WAYS TO DO THE PREPARATION

MAKE A COMPANY WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE YOU WANT TO INVOLVE IN THE PROJECT

Use role-play as a way of involving the young people in the project from start to finish. The young people assume the role of management in a company. The decisions made about the project are made in the same way they would be made in a large company - with board room meetings, votes and different roles/tasks.

The young people would be informed that they have a product to sell - the project - how much money they have, what needs to be done. We believe that this approach would teach responsibility and a deeper understanding for youth projects.

TOTAL INVOLVMENT OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PROJECT FROM START TO FINISH

By involving the young people in every aspect of the project - planning, implementation and evaluation we believe that the young person would feel a stronger sense of ownership with the project. Who says that it has to be the youth worker that identifies the needs for the project? Why not just take your group of young people to the woods and let them decide the topic for their project.

FIND YOUR PARTNER WITH AN ENIGMA

Get to know your future partners better. Asking your potential partners to solve an enigma before you start talking about a project gives your organization a deeper insight into your future partners. Do they try to solve the problem, do they just give up or do they not want to be a part of any partnership with you just because you have a different approach to partner finding.

INNOVATIVE WAYS FOR DISSEMINATION

THE SMS CAMPAIGN

To motivate young people to think about safe-sex you can organize a SMS campaign. You can use preparation sessions to run a research about the topic with youngsters. You can make a contest for the best slogan or you can send questions and give a prize to the one who gives the most accurate answers. You can also give a prize to the ones who gets the more SMS back. You can also send SMS's to disseminate your project.

FORTUNE COOKIES

Use a baking preparation session to make cookies with your youngsters. Some of them can prepare little papers with your dissemination method (the name of your project or the website etc.) and put the papers in the cookies so you will have fortune cookies now 😊 Then you can sell your cookies or just give them away in your community.

INNOVATIVE WAYS TO DO AN EVALUATION

Generally at the end of projects, exchanges, trainings, etc. Participants are asked to fill out a final report or an evaluation form. However these final reports are not taken under serious consideration and sometimes they are not even read afterwards. So what is the goal then? Evaluations are very important and useful parts of a project so we came up with some creative and initiative ideas!

SINGING EVALUATION

Participants are asked to make a song, rap, or a poem, about a project activity or the complete project. You can do it in (multinational) groups and then there is a performance to all the participants. The compilation can be put on a CD, or Video and can be used to assist with the dissemination and exploitation of the results of the project.

TASTY EVALUATION or “SWEET & SOUR!”

You need two plates for every participant, everyone has the same ingredients. They are asked to do a dish that represents their feelings about a project activity or the whole project. Idea: the sweeter it is, the more enjoyable the experience was. If you have the resources (kitchen, time, ...) it's possible to cook a meal or even a menu! When everyone has finished the participants taste each other's dishes. They then have to share the reasons for choosing the ingredients and how it is related to the activity.

BIPOLAR EVALUATION

Participants can show their opinion about a project by relating to statements you give them. Everyone stands in the centre of the room, the neutral position. On one pole you have “approval” on the other one “disapproval”. You state something about the project and participants place themselves in the space they find suitable from one of the poles. You can ask one or more participants to explain why they have chosen their position and you can invite others to respond! You can collect your statements and make photos as evidence.

BIPOLAR EVALUATION - VARIATION

Same activity but in a swimming pool! ☺

GLASS & BOTTLE EVALUATION

Participants get a bottle of water and a glass. To express their opinion about a project activity they have to fill the glasses. A full glass means that it was good, an empty one shows that they didn't like it at all. Everything in the middle is possible!

SANDWICH BOARDS

Participants work together in pairs, small groups or as one group to evaluate a project (or a project activity). Everyone puts on a “sandwich board” (participants can make it themselves or not) - two cardboards or strong papers, connected with strings, that make two sides to write on (chest and back). Then participants write on each other's sandwich boards their feedback and comments on what they have experienced.

MANIFEST I + II

Every participant writes his feedback about the project in the form of a Manifest.
Participants write a Manifest about the project together - everyone writes one sentence.

LOG BOOK

The evaluation can be a personal Log Book which gives the possibility for the participants to express themselves by using creative tools, painting, writing, writing a poem or manifest composing songs, sending postcards, or even making a short video. Of course this Log Book may appear in an online form as well, like a blog.

LOVE BENCH/ CHAISE LONGUE

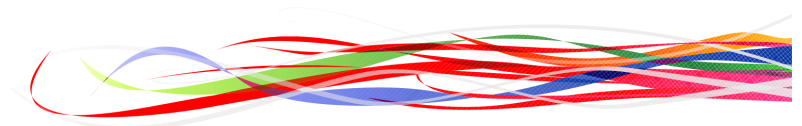
Sometimes when you have a discussion with someone else on a certain topic your ideas may flow in a more intense way, you may be more extroverted and maybe more confident. In this case a love bench or a chaise longue can create a similar situation which gives place for an intimate atmosphere. As an example we can imagine preparing a short play where the two participants play the role of a psychoanalyst and a patient where they have a deep intimate discussion about the project and results.

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