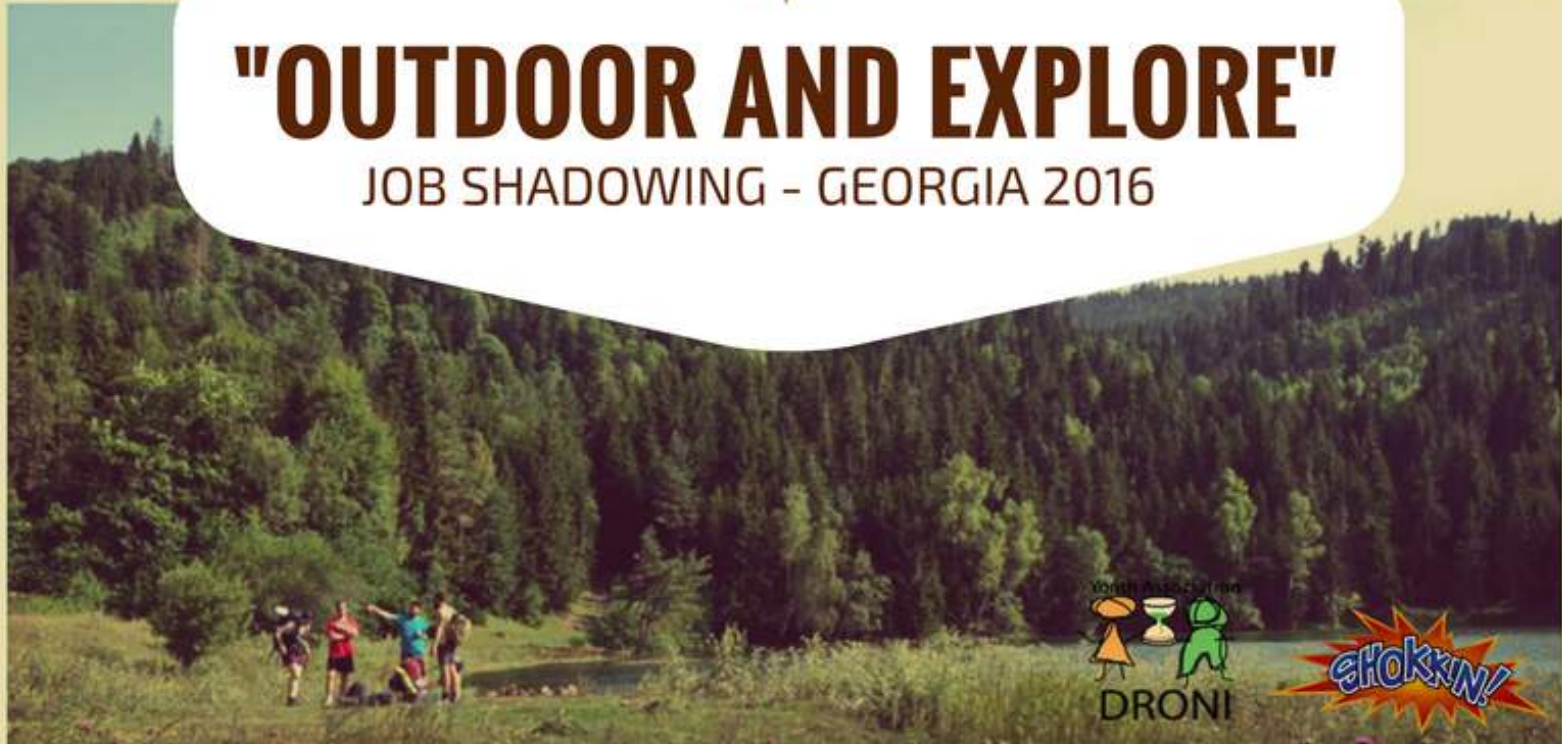




# "OUTDOOR AND EXPLORE"

JOB SHADOWING - GEORGIA 2016




# ABOUT THE PROJECT

The job shadowing "Outdoor & Explore" was a project organized by Shokkin Group Estonia in cooperation with the Georgian Youth Association DRONI that was held in Tbilisi and national parks of Georgia during the period of 14.08-27.08.2016.

The program of the job shadowing involved a representative of Shokkin Group to work with an outdoor enthusiast from Youth Association DRONI in order to become more competent in organizing outdoor projects & activities for young people through learning from the experts of the field in Georgia. The aim of the job shadowing was to strengthen international cooperation and raise the quality level of outdoor projects created and implemented in the organizations, through practice & active involvement in the outdoor preparation and planning process.



The job shadowing was designed to use a mixture of experiential and non-formal methods set in the outdoor environment alongside with discussions, exchange of practices and study visits.

A scenic outdoor setting with a hammock strung between trees, a person at a table, and a lake in the background. The scene is captured in a natural, slightly overcast light. A green semi-transparent box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text.

*"The best classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky."*

*— Margaret McMillan.*

# ABOUT THE PARTNERS



DRONI is a non-governmental organization with the mission to promote the establishment of a modern, healthy, inclusive and educated society. In order to meet this task the association has been implementing the educational and youth development programs.

The organisation aims to support the young people's physical, spiritual and educational development and to create educational initiatives developing young peoples competences in the field of civil society, conflict resolution, human rights and peace-building and to promote intercultural relations in Georgian society.

Youth Association Droni was established on the basis of the international organisation Academy for Educational Development in 2003 by the young people with 4-5 years working experience in NGO sector. DRONI is working mainly in education field on local and international level with different target groups (children, youth, students, teachers, refugees).

DRONI is mostly focusing its activities to the Caucasian region and cooperates with different NGOs in Europe.



Shokkin Group is a not-for-profit organization composed of young people 20-26 years of age, which means that we can easily relate to problems of youth. As we like to think, we still are a part of it.

Our activities are aimed mainly at young people of Estonia, but that does not constrain us from projects aimed at broader target groups. Our motto is imagine, inspire, act! And it describes the whole idea of our organization in the best possible way.

We hope that modern youth will imagine, inspire and act! Only then we can change something towards a better future.

NPO Shokkin Group was officially registered on October 17th, 2011 in Tallinn, Estonia. Our mission is to foster active citizenship in young people of Estonia through creative events and projects, which involve arts & enterprise. We not only want to be "the change" but involve others in joining us on the road of developing a generation, that will act for a better and peaceful world.

# WHY OUTDOOR?

## (I)

Outdoor Education has been around for quite a while as an alternative approach to learning. In many countries it's quite integrated with the formal educational system in one way or another. It had been used for numerous different purposes in different contexts, from taking 1st grade pupils for a small forrest trip to explore nature, to an alternative approach in the penitentiary system as a supportive measure for prisoners' rehabilitation process.

Yet, as every other approach, outdoor education (from now on, OE) has its advantages and disadvantages. It definitely creates powerful learning opportunities for personal developement.

To narrow it down to concrete areas, OE has a big possibility to support building soft skills and competences, such as self awareness, crisis management, team work, decision making, leadership, conflict resolution, communication...

However, it should be also mentioned that it is not an approach working for everyone, since it takes certain attitude and level of "inner readiness" for a learner to take OE as a strong learning opportunity, not just as a leisure time activity or recreational event. What's more, fields of study where OE is efficiently applicable are restricted, and learning some "traditional" subjects requires rather classroom settings, though it's always nice to combine it somehow with "field trips" in the nature to refresh the minds and bodies of learners and provide a different atmosphere.

# WHY OUTDOOR?

## (II)

We have listed below several reasons why to chose Outdoor Education as an approach towards learning:

Outdoor Education creates a context, which is so important for learning. It brings strong and specific settings for the learners. It is a holistic approach, meaning that it requires involvement of learners' whole BEING (physical, emotional, intelectual and spiritual).

Namely, OE involves:

- CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT : it creates authentic processes, when it is easier to remove "social masks" and deal with real issues.
- LEVELING OF ROLES : Outdoor context places learners on a common ground in case of proper facilitation of the processes.
- ENJOYMENT AND FUN : Which creates more engagement and increases the motivation of learners.
- TRUST : High degree of interdependace among the group of learners (which is not usual in traditional "classroom environment").

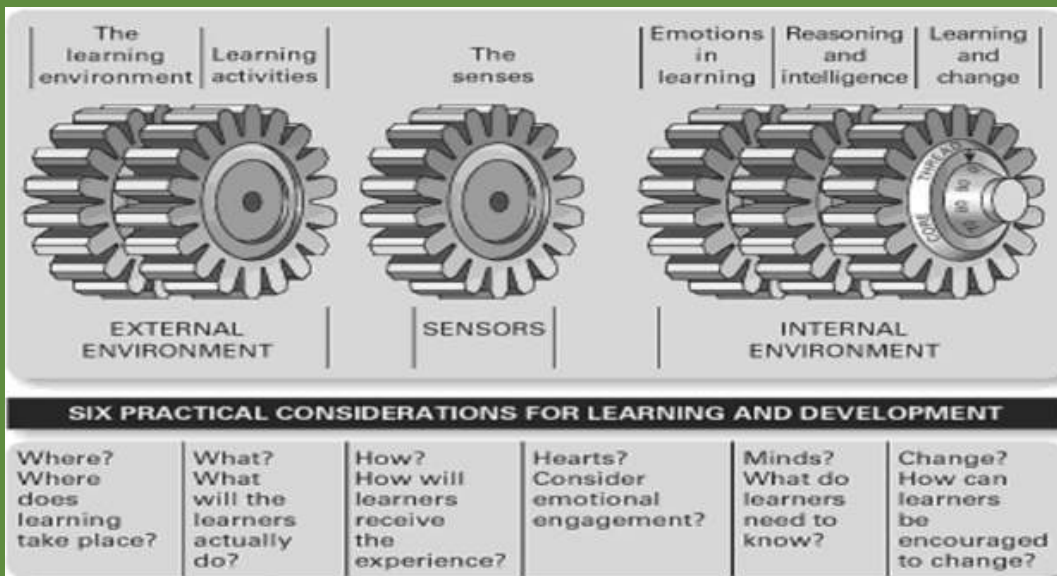
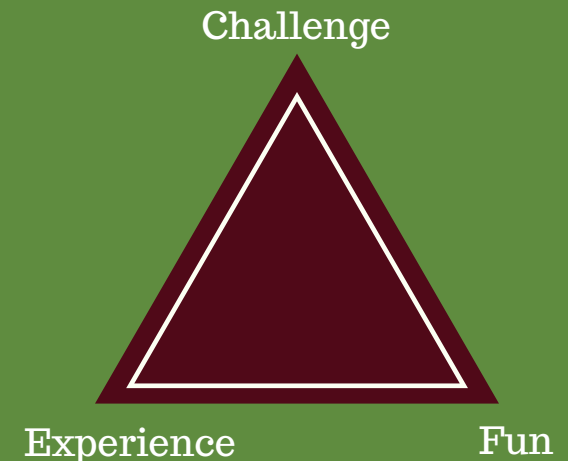
# WHY OUTDOOR?

## (III)

So what is Outdoor Education in other words?

- Relationship with **YOURSELF** through meeting the challenge.
- Relationship with **OTHERS** through rroup experiences and shared decision making.
- Relationship with **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT** through direct experience.

OE involves in itself **Challenge, Fun & Experience**, which are the key elements that young people need in their learning process.



The model of the Learning Combination Lock, by Colin Beard and John P. Wilson explains how external stimuli are transferred into internal processing through senses. Therefore, the more senses are used during the learning process, the bigger the possibility of learning will be deep.

This is why we believe Outdoor Education is an efficient tool for learning, since it involves multiple senses in its process.

# BEING AN OUTDOOR LEADER-TRAINER-FACILITATOR

As John Graham suggests in his book "Outdoor Leadership: Technique, Common Sense, and Self Confidence" (1997), there are 3 foundations of effective outdoor leadership:

## Technical skills

Such as trip planning, first aid protocols, knowledge of legal issues, crisis response, risk management, navigation, specific skills for activity, etc.

## Interpersonal skills

Such as communication, team work, leadership style, decision making, facilitation, mediation, empathy, understanding of group dynamics, self awareness, sense of humor, etc.

## Judgement skills

Such as awareness of environment, awareness of the group, capacity to work with incomplete information, understanding of different decision making processes, ability to envision desired outcome.



# BEING AN OUTDOOR LEADER-TRAINER-FACILITATOR

He draws above mentioned skills as a model of a 3 legged stool. It is very important that the stool keeps its balance, meaning that ideally, outdoor leaders should have technical, interpersonal and judgement skills balanced and harmonized, so that none of its legs is dominant and overtaking others, but they harmonically fill in each other.



In the same book, John Graham proposes 4 Fundamental Responsibilities of Outdoor Leaders who work with groups in outdoor settings:

- Minimize Risk (both physical damage, and psychological harm).
- Minimize Impact (leave no trace).
- Maximize Learning.
- Maximize Enjoyment.

# MATERIAL LIST

We created a basic list of materials that are needed for a stationary camp or a hiking trip with a group of around 25 people. Quantity is variable to your opinion, however experience shows that this is enough.

## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Bowl 1 per pax  
Spoon (or Spork) 1 per pax  
Metal cup 1 per pax  
Headlight 1 per pax  
Toilet paper rolls 1 per pax  
Personal waste bag 1/pax  
Sleeping bag 1 per pax  
Sleeping pad 1 per pax

## KITCHEN EQUIPMENT

Big pot 1 (12l approx.)  
Pan 2  
Large Salad Bowl 4  
Kitchen knife 4  
Cutting boards 3  
Cooking gloves (pair) 6  
Cooking spoon 1  
Ladle 1  
Gas ballons (240g) 3  
Bin bags (40-60L) 20-30  
Tea pot 1

## CAMP EQUIPMENT

Tents to fit 4 per tent  
Tent lights 1 per tent  
Axe 2 + Saw 2  
Construction gloves (pair) 5  
Anti-mosquito spray 1/tent  
Anti-mosquito candle 1/tent  
Silver tape 1  
First aid box 2  
Fire matches/lighters 4  
Ropes (for constructing) 100m  
Map & Compass 1  
Large tent (for activities) 1  
Slackline (for activities) 1



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# PLANNING AN OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE



# 1# Plan the route thoroughly

Make sure that you know the distance, the terrain, the difficulty of the route, possible places for breaks, places for camping, possible route variations and to have thought about an emergency plan in case of need.

Do the hike yourself with a small group of people, so that you will know the duration, get acquainted with the environment and be more confident with the large group. Make sure you notify the authorities (rangers/national park office/forestry department) that you are a large group of people coming and share your route with them. Start checking the weather a few days before departing.

Check the potential water supplies in the area where you are camping. Also, while planning timing be aware that for larger groups of people it takes longer time to walk and reach the destination. Make sure you leave some buffer time in your schedule for possible unexpected situations and delays.

## 2# Safety questions are essential

Especially when it comes to taking a group of young people with you. Remember that the risk of the damage is always higher while doing activities in the outdoor setting than indoor. Thus, make sure to minimize the risk of any kind of physical or psychological injury and strictly follow the safety rules.

Before moving outdoors give basic safety instructions to the whole group, make sure they know who has the first aid kit and who is the trained person in the team. When starting to hike, have one team member being in the front and one in the back of the group, who are responsible for the participants not to get lost and the group not to spread out too much.

### **Inform in advance**

Send the full information about the routes, activities, requirements and possible challenges to your participants in advance, make sure everyone understands them and consciously makes the decision.

In case of having minors on your outdoor activity, do communicate with parents/legal representatives and explain the context. Make sure you have all the needed permissions from them before starting your activity.

### **Make an agreement**

It is recommended at the beginning of your project/activity to make an agreement with your participants, stating their rights and the rights/responsibilities of the team/organization. Clarify that participants are aware of possible risks and that participation is on their own risk.

### **Be prepared**

Consider the worst scenario. It's not possible to plan every situation, sometimes we are powerless against the nature and force-majeure situations, but do spend time to assess the potential risks that might occur during your outdoor activities/trip and make sure you have a plan for emergency situations.

### **Be precautions**

Have at least one person who has doctoring/nursing practice or at least has completed a first aid course on your team. Remember that minor physical injuries is the most common thread during the outdoor activities. Always have first aid kit with you (at least 2 of them.) The content of the first aid kit suggested by us on [this link](#).

### 3# Preparation of participants

Preparing participants before they arrive to the project country is also a very important aspect of an outdoor training course. The infopack should have an explicit list of equipment that participants should bring with themselves, an idea of the hiking difficulty, so participants can be morally prepared, and information on the weather highs and lows.

Experience shows that sometimes participants come without full preparation, so it's also a good idea to communicate to the sending organization that they should draw participants' attention to the preparation for the outdoor project. You can also have some spare sleeping pads and bags, just in case.





## 4# Stick to the topic of the project

It is harder in the outdoor environment, as people tend to concentrate on personal emotions and group feeling. Thus, plan a balanced program between working sessions on the topic, personal development exercises and a good portion dedicated to organizing the camp. Don't forget relaxation and free time, as working with an outdoor camp takes a lot of energy from the participants and the organizers.

Outdoor is the most natural environment for personal development, true group dynamics and much deeper reflection processes. Make sure you plan enough space for personal and small group reflections with a variety of methods. Establish a reflection culture in the mornings or evenings and finish reflection with plenary discussions. Try to stick to the system of reflecting on yesterday's happenings, key group and personal moments of yesterday and draw conclusions for the next day.



## 5# Balance out the activities

If you are planning an outdoor project, plan various activities from big group challenges (canoeing, rafting, climbing) to personal exercises (meditating, yoga, solo exercises). Nowadays, personal exercises can be even more challenging than extreme practices. For many participants it is a rare chance to stay alone without technology and the buzz of the world outside, so use this opportunity.

Also, make sure you are more flexible with timing and planning. Very often, hiking takes more time than expected, and so does cooking outdoors. Thus, try to plan a 60 minute session, while putting in the plan a time slot for 90 minutes. Plan to use as few materials as possible: instead of flipcharts use A4 papers or participant's logbooks, prepare needed flipcharts in advance and try to put as much information as possible in them. Have an appointed person to record the discussions, presentations and plenary meetings. The information recorded will give you a chance to draw conclusions later in the project activity, follow-up discussions during later sessions or while writing the report.



# TOPICS CONNECTED TO OUTDOOR METHODOLOGY

Based on previous experiences and sharing of project examples, we brainstormed some topics that we think are well-connected to the outdoor environment and could be easily executed using the natural setting:



- Personal Development & Self-Awareness
- Training of Trainers & Competence Building
- Sustainability & Upcycling
- Intercultural Learning & Minority Rights
- Soft Skill Development & Employability
- Healthy Lifestyle & Survival Skills
- Video & Photography in the Nature
- Human Rights & Migration Issues
- Technical Outdoor Skills
- Small/Simple Living
- Promotion of Volunteering



**EXAMPLES OF OUTDOOR  
PROJECTS CARRIED OUT  
WITHIN ERASMUS+**



## "Natural Experience - Experiential Nature"

Outdoor youth exchange which gathered 38 young participants from Estonia, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Poland and Denmark during the period of 22-30 August 2014. The participants, who were young people with interest towards outdoor activities and leading outdoor camps, acquired skills that can be applied in their future youth leadership. The project aimed to promote healthy lifestyle and engagement in activities based in the nature with elements of environmental education and promotion of the eco-friendly lifestyle.

The activity was implemented in the picturesque region of Korvemaa (Estonia) with its well-preserved forests, swamps, lakes and trekking trails. The participants had the chance to learn by doing the outdoor life and join local citizens for an extraordinary experience. We believe that experiential learning on such topic was a very bright and strong point in the lives of the participants and by various spreading of this information we will involve more and more young people.

The project resulted in the creation of new events and methods of promoting healthy and eco-friendly lifestyle for young people in different regions of Europe through facilitating outdoor activities. These methods were disseminated around the web for youth organizations to use.



# "EntreRURAL" (I)

Erasmus+ chain project implemented by four organizations, including meetings in Denmark, Armenia, Georgia and Estonia. Three youth exchanges and one training course addressed the topic of entrepreneurship in rural areas and urbanization.

The overall aim of the project was to promote entrepreneurial mindset through raising the awareness of rural areas as a potential field for career development of young people. The main difference between common known business and the idea of EntreRural is that it is more oriented towards the community's development and needs rather than the income.

Besides, it tried to find the balance between the environmental sustainability of business, potential of the local community and income generating activities.

The project showed a great example on how to live together in a community not only as young entrepreneurs from different European countries, but also on how cooperation with locals from rural communities can achieve great results.



## "EntreRURAL" (II)

The project had the following structure: Problem -> Appliance -> Appliance -> Dissemination. Meaning that we on the 1st YE discovered the rural/natural environments of our regions and on the successful example of sustainable ecological farm in Hellevad (Denmark), found potential ideas that could be applied in the communities by young people.

During the 2nd YE in Udabno (Georgia), the participants organized a very successful Rural Festival together with the locals. "Udabno Rural Fest" was entirely planned and implemented with our own effort and resources, as an example of an event that young people in the rural areas can carry out.

During the 3rd YE in Armenia, we moved to the mountains to explore the wild nature and experience living and working in a small natural area that offers accommodation, local food and very authentic environment to its visitors. Working there included physical construction work together with creating promotional audiovisual materials, branding and promoting the place.

The final activity of the project took part in a very beautiful natural area in Estonia served for evaluating the project, conceptualizing the learnings and creating dissemination materials.

## "Lived Happily Ever After: A Journey With Strangers"



Outdoor training course that took place in Bakuriani (Georgia) in July 2015. Just as the title of the project says, it was a great journey with great people from 8 different countries. After planning the whole hiking trip and all the little details by ourselves, we set off for a 4-day adventure in the nature. Hiking in the Georgian mountains was an amazing experience – physical challenges, assisting each other, breathtaking views, communal cooking, late nights around a campfire and a lot of new friends and shared experiences. These 4 days without electricity, running water, signal or internet changed all of us in a way, and we developed a great group spirit but at the same time had a lot of time for ourselves and our thoughts.

## "Soft Skills - Naturally"

Semi-outdoor training course held in Põlvamaa (Estonia) during the period of 5-13 July 2016. The training course involved 25 motivated youth workers/youth leaders from Estonia, Denmark, Germany, Turkey, Spain, Cyprus, United Kingdom & Poland. Supported by the team of experts, the participants met in a place called Taevaskoda to explore how to link outdoor educational activities to soft skill development in order to contribute to fighting unemployment.

Outdoor education can provide the environment of developing soft skills mentioned above. Outdoor activities have all the necessary characteristics to foster problem-solving, teamwork, communication, adaptability, critical thinking, time management and so on. The challenging environment gives the opportunity for creating strong educational sessions or activities followed up by strong reflection. If the sessions are designed and carried out with emphasis on soft skills and their development, then youngsters can benefit from them by increasing their employability and attractiveness to employers.

The project aimed to raise young people's employability with better developed soft skills through training youth workers/youth leaders in fostering soft skills development in the outdoor setting.




PARTICIPANTS' QUOTES

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ON OUTDOOR PROJECTS

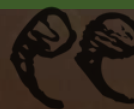




Outdoor project for me is like changing your lifestyle and habits for some time. You go out of your comfort zone and sometimes you feel disappointed, but after you take all challenges, you feel some kind of feeling of victory. And you feel proud that you managed to do something different with a group of nice people.

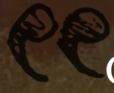



Elena, Armenia




Living in the wild with different people from different countries and having good time together taught me what it means to be part of something bigger than a person as an individual! I discovered that i am connected with the nature even though sometimes i forget and thanks to that experience i remembered how it is important to not to forget respecting and protecting the Nature!

Ambrogio, Italy



Outdoors are special because everything is serving a purpose; reaching the outcomes with a bottom-up process. For example, if you want to train soft skills, start by small activities and slowly build a product from those activities. I discovered that I haven't actually been outdoor before, there was always civilization around, I realized that there is more to the nature and it is the most suitable environment for being a social individual, after all, we all came from nature.



Kenan, Turkey

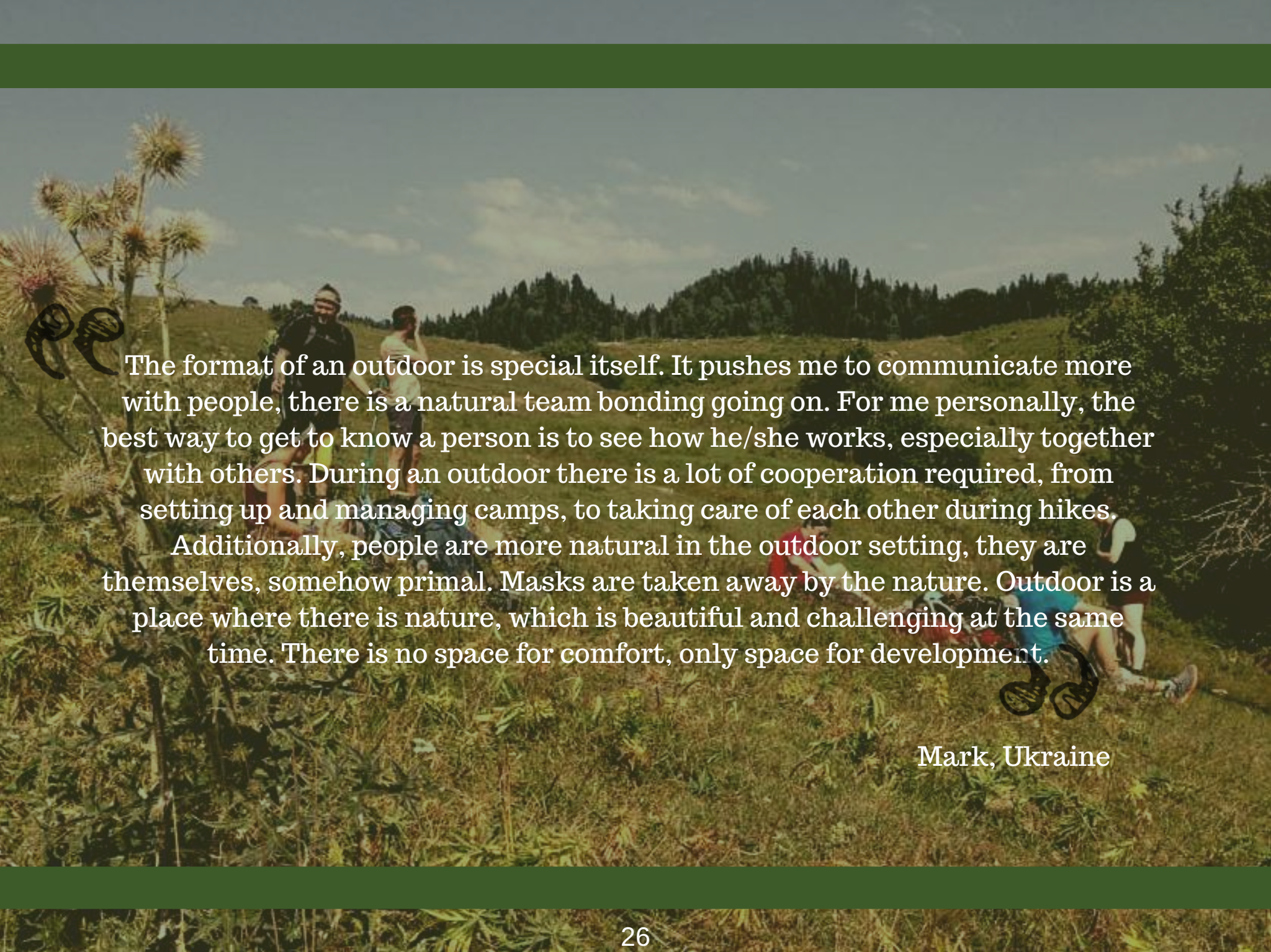


Outdoor is great because borders between people are erased much faster and more naturally, than on other projects. This happens because challenges and barriers people face in the outdoor setting are real and not simulated. Also all the participants are leveled out, everyone is sweaty, tired, in struggle with their bodies and so on. This makes people come closer together, when they feel that they are going through something together and feel the same way.



Personally, I took out that you don't need to rely only on oneself and be ashamed if you are lacking some skills or emotional capacity. On the contrary you should be open to receive help and be happy that around are people who are going to support you when both expected and unexpected. In our daily life it's hard to trust people and outdoor projects teach us how to give extra support and also how to receive the support and trust into people around you.



A group of people are hiking in a grassy field. In the background, there is a forested hill under a cloudy sky. The foreground is filled with tall grass and some small plants. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font.

The format of an outdoor is special itself. It pushes me to communicate more with people, there is a natural team bonding going on. For me personally, the best way to get to know a person is to see how he/she works, especially together with others. During an outdoor there is a lot of cooperation required, from setting up and managing camps, to taking care of each other during hikes. Additionally, people are more natural in the outdoor setting, they are themselves, somehow primal. Masks are taken away by the nature. Outdoor is a place where there is nature, which is beautiful and challenging at the same time. There is no space for comfort, only space for development.

Mark, Ukraine

# THE PROJECT IN PICTURES



14th-27th August, 2016

"Outdoor and explore" was a Job Shadowing funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission.

GEORGIA