

A group of youth are gathered in a forest, participating in an outdoor activity. They are standing around a large tree trunk, and some are holding ropes. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent green rectangle containing white text. The text reads "TOUCH (THE) NATURE" in a large, bold, sans-serif font, and "OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH" in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font below it. The background shows a dense forest with tall trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves.

TOUCH (THE) NATURE

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH

Touch (the) Nature was an Erasmus+ training course for youth workers focused on education in nature.

In this brochure you can find various activities and games realized during the training and created by its participants.

You can use it as inspiration for your own youthwork to motivate young people to touch nature as well.



A man wearing a red baseball cap, a blue jacket, and dark pants is walking across a stone bridge over a stream in a forest. He is carrying a large, worn, brown suitcase. The background is a dense forest of tall trees.

DROP THE SCARF

Length: 5 minutes - 1 hour

Description:

- The participants are standing in a circle. One participant is walking/running with a scarf in his/her hand.
- He/she drops the scarf behind one person and flees away.
- The one who receives the scarf starts to run after the previous guy.
- If the previous guy manages to run around the circle and sit on the “receiver’s” place, the receiver becomes the one who walks around the circle for the next game.



THREE FEET

Length: 5 minutes - 2 hours

Description:

- Soft ropes connect the feet of two (or more) people.
- The couples should run a race with the feed connected.
- See which team arrived smoothly.
- Exchange the teams and play again.



MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE

Length: 18 minutes

Description:

- An activity for small groups. You need 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape and one yard of string for each group.
- The goal is to build the tallest structure with the marshmallow on the top.
- (Generally, the kindergarten kids are the most successful because they do not overthink and build. On the other hand, business school graduates tend to perform worse than other teams :)



EXPEDITION

Length: 1 night

Description:

- Let children plan an expedition in nature, divide the competencies and tasks. They are supposed to survive without technologies and services (shops, hotels etc.). They should walk at least 6 km/day and also have an intention/aim of the expedition and reflect and present it publicly at the end.
- It can be prolonged to a lifelong project.

MAGIC TRIANGLE

Length: 1 - 2 hours

Description:

- There is a big triangle on the grass/sand (created from rope/slackline/blankets etc.). On the three corners, put something bigger (jar/box/cone).
- The task for the groups is to enter the triangle following the rules:
 - One person enters at a time.
 - Everyone needs to enter differently (various ways of walking).
 - To open the triangle, you need to touch each corner (while walking in a special way) and only then you can enter.
 - The bottom of your feet cannot touch the ground.
 - Once you are in, you cannot step out.



MASTERCHEF

Goal: use of natural sources, cooperation, overcoming own limits, work with natural elements, improvisation

Length: 2+ hours

Description:

- Motivation: video from MasterChef competition + introduction of a jury which will rate the food.
- Participants get a list of ingredients and shall prepare a menu. They shall use as many natural sources as possible.
- Participants get instructions on how to get the ingredients – they can be in a tree, hidden in a forest etc. There is a limited amount of the ingredients, the participants should not get everything they planned to use.
- Participants are introduced to their kitchen – fireplace. They have limited time to prepare the food. If they have little experience with cooking on the fire, there can be a “corner of inspiration” with books and pictures or an instructor to help them.
- Participants introduce their food to the jury; they taste and rate it in a funny way. They can announce the winner or reward everyone for something. The final tasting should be more like recess than competition. There should be space to share the recipes and methods among the participants and the jury.



LAND ART

Goal: relaxing time, time to process emotions and experience, art therapy

Length: 3 - 4 hours

Motivation: Short sketch - the famous land art artist and performers come to celebrate the international day of land art. We have used these artists - František Skála, Christo Jvacleef, Olga Karlíková, Andy Goltsworhis.

Description:

- We explain what is land art.
- The participants can choose if they will make their art in groups or individually. They can use given equipment and any natural materials.





PRO-NATURE STATEMENTS

Goal: time spent in the nature, cooperation and communication in the team, defining of team roles, physical activity, memory practice

Length: 75 - 90 minutes

Description:

- The facilitator sets the borders of this area with crepe paper. Then he/she attaches the cards with pro-nature statements with a cord in the activity area.
- The cards should contain different lengths of statements. According to the length of the statement is given the point score.
- Participants work in teams. Each participant is given a clothes pug, representing their life. Each team has a home base, from which they are running in the activity field and where they have pen and papers. The goal is to find as many statements as possible, memorize them and then run back to the home base to write them down.
- In the field runners operate, which are supposed to make the statements hunt more difficult, funnier and give the activity a bit more action. When a runner catches a participant, he/she has to hand in the life (clothes pug) and run back to the home base for a new one. The participant can be in the activity field only with a life!
- The facilitator of this activity takes now and then the clothes pugs from runners and distributes them to the home bases, so the participants can load new lives.
- The team with the highest score wins.

ALIGATOR RIVER

Goal: teamwork, cooperation, physical activity

Length: 30 minutes

Description:

- The participants must cross a river full of alligators - an area about 10 meters long (a meadow/football ground etc.). All team members must get from one side to the other without touching the ground.
- The participants can use only two boards (cca 2 m long) and 5 bricks which can be placed on the ground.
- If someone touches the ground by any body part, he/she is blindfolded.



MEET THE KING

Goal: support of self.confidence, self-overcoming, overcoming natural challenges

Length: 3 - 12 hours

Description:

- The participants are divided into groups of 5-8 members and motivated by a story about a ritual that will happen tonight and enable them to meet “the king”. They should get ready for the whole day-long journey.
- The groups go from one spot to another according to the map. They don't know in advance how long the journey will be and what will happen in the end.
- There is a physically demanding task on each spot (e.g. climbing, boating etc.). After completing the task the participants get information about the next spot and possibly some food /lunch/snack/water/ or equipment (matches/light/cooker).
- The journey should be adequately physically demanding to make the participants tired. But it must be safe, and the participants must have enough water, food and cloth to meet their basic needs.
- At the end of the journey, the participants gather on one spot. They have some time to relax and get ready for the ritual.
- The ritual starts after dark. It can begin with a fire show/drum play or another performance. After that the participants are asked if they were ready to meet the king. Whoever is ready approaches the king's tent to meet him/her. Everyone is alone in the tent. There is just a mirror with the “you are the king/queen” sign. The participants can spend in the tent how much time they need.
- It is necessary to inform the participants that the game has finished after they leaving the tent. There should be time for reflection during the next day.





THE NET

Goal: teamwork, cooperation

Length: 30 minutes

Description:

- We prepare a net from rope among trees. The net must have at least as many holes as is the number of participants in the group. The holes must be big enough. The participants should play the game on a straight terrain without branches on the ground.
- The group of participants must get through the net from one side to the other in a limited time. No one can touch the rope. If the rope is touched, two participants, who have already crossed the net, should go back and go through the net again.

BINGO

Goal: icebreaker, teamwork, focus on nature, use of natural sources

Length: 15 minutes

Description:

- We introduce to the participants the game-sheet – a big paper with a framework. There is written one thing which can be found in nature around in each frame. The description can be very concrete (“a dandelion”) or less specific (“something blue”). There should be at least as many frames as is the number of participants in the group.
- The participants have limited time to bring everything from the framework and put it on the paper. The time limit should motivate them to be fast and divide the tasks.



FOREST BATHING

The participants have enough time to experience various forest bathing activities. They can visit them alone or in small groups. We should prepare a system to mark activities occupied by someone (e.g. turning cards with the name of the activity before visiting it).

Possible activities:

- hugging trees
- writing stories of trees
- meditation in forest
- recognizing herbs by smell
- running in one direction
- recognizing natural things by touch
- walking barefoot
- making statues from mud
- tracing trees (find the tree which you were touching blindfolded before)
- recording natural sounds
- creating dendrophone and other musical instruments
- making talisman
- creating prayer flags
- rolling barrels
- placing stones on the back (guess how many stones are there)
- finding fractals and taking pictures of them
- watching animals and drawing their path
- swinging in hammock





ECO TASKS

Goal: ecological education, learning new skills,

Length: 3 - 4 hrs

Equipment: tools such as hammer, saw, axe, combination pliers, wire cutters, power drill etc., nails, screws, wooden boards, wire mesh, hay, small flower pots, bamboo sticks, cords, big garbage bags, PC, tips on how to make an insect hotel, tips on video making apps/programs.

Description:

- Facilitator shows to participants videos focused on ecology and explains to them, they will do something similar to motivate others to behave more ecologically to help the planet/nature/animals.
- Participants work in teams (at least 5-6 people).
- Each team has three tasks - constructing an insect hotel, picking up garbage in the surrounding area, and making a short motivational video about what they did. Feel free to come up with other eco tasks in your program:)
- In the end, teams present their video and their insect hotel to others.

SAVE THE HERONS

Goal: discussion about environmental protection, perception of different points of view, argumentation practice

Length: 2-3 hours

Description:

- The participants are divided into four groups - major (1-2 people), ecologists (3-5 people), wood logging company (5-8 people) and heron (5-10 people). Each group gets a description of their task and rules. The participants do not know what the goal of the other group is.
- There is a game plan with a village and some trees (green papers) in two zones - near ponds and further from the ponds. On the reverse side of each tree is written its value (200-500 CZK). The major gets some money for the beginning and papers to sell permits to cut trees.
- There are two spots where the wood loggers and herons can get workers/insects (small beads/beans/pasta etc.). After finishing a small task (bringing water from a river), they can get it or get them. On a third spot, the ecologist can earn some money for work (hammering a nail, wood cutting etc.). The amount of money they get should be small enough to motivate the ecologist to look for other sources of cash. The participants don't know where exactly the spots are and what will happen there. They know how to get there (they are drawn in a map/they will follow ribbons).
- During the game time, all the groups are trying to meet their goals. The game leader sells trees, draws heron's nests on them, cuts trees and gives money to the wood logging company. If there are no more trees on the game plan, the herons cannot build any nests. The game leader can also influence the game by donating extra money if needed.
- After the time for the game ends, reflection is needed. It is good to reflect what arguments the groups used while dealing with each other and how the situation would look in real life. There is no way to measure who won - each group has a different goal.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GROUPS

THE MAJOR AND HIS/HER ASSISTANT

You are the political leaders of the village.

Your goal is to have a prosperous village with friendly relations among its inhabitants.

Right now, you face two significant challenges: you need to collect money for a new expensive sewerage system, and you want to solve a conflict between a local ecological NGO and a local company. You don't understand what the problem is.

Your task is to sell permissions to the wood mining company to cut trees near the village. You can set up the price as you see fit. You know that the wood mining company earns from 200 to 500- for one tree.

You have a basic budget of 5000,- which you can use anyhow or save for the sewerage system.

Moreover, you can do any other activities to benefit the village.

HERON

You are a rare species of heron.

Your goal is to reproduce as much as possible and occupy all the trees on the game plan.

You eat frogs, and you make your nests on trees. You prefer the trees near the water.

How you can occupy a tree on a game plan:

- You need to get three various insects to feed a frog. Blue ribbons will show you the way to the insects. One person can carry one piece of insect – bring it to the game plan, and you can go for another one.
- You need to get two frogs to feed one heron. Red ribbons will show you the way to the pond with frogs.
- If you have two frogs, you can come to the game plan, exchange them for one heron and occupy a tree.
- The heron needs one tree near the pond or two other trees to make a nest and survive.

WOOD LOGGING COMPANY

You are a big wood mining company based on the game plan in the village.

Your goal is to earn as much money as possible.

You hire local people to cut trees around the village and sell the wood.

You need to have permission to cut every single tree. You must buy consent from the mayor of the village. In the beginning, you have the permission to cut the first five trees.

How to cut the tree:

- You need to collect three workers to make a working group – a driver, a lumberjack and a technician. Blue ribbons will show you the way to the labor office. One person can carry one worker – bring it to the game plan, and you can go for another one.
- If you have the workers, you must buy them a vehicle. Red ribbons will show you the way to the motor shop.
- If you have the vehicle, you can come to the game plan and cut one tree.
- You will realize how much you earned for the tree on its reverse side.

ECOLOGISTS

You are a group of members of a local ecological NGO.

Your goal is to save a rare heron species (in the picture below) that lives near your village.

The herons need trees to build their nests and reproduce. But the trees near your village are cut by a wood mining company.

You can plant new trees on the game plan, but it costs money. For 100,- you can plant one tree – if you have the money, you can come to the game plan, buy the tree and plant it.

There is a factory where you can earn some money. Yellow ribbons will show you the way there. You can also try to fundraise the money somewhere else.



**PROGRAM
FOR THE
WHOLE DAY**

9:00 – 10:00 Name games

- Stand in a circle, then everybody one by one will introduce themselves and also will make one move which describes them. For example, the first participant will say his name Fred, and then he will wave with his hand. The second participant must repeat what happened before (he will point to Fred, tell Fred, and make a wave with his hand). Third guy has to repeat Fred and also previous guy's names and moves and adds his own. So if there are twenty participants, the last one will have to say twenty names and do twenty moves.) and then he will tell his name and does his move. Then it goes one by one introducing and repeating.

10:00 – 12:00 Icebreakers

- Icebergs: participants have to stay on a small area created by sheets of paper. If they can hold there, the organizer takes away or bends on those papers. By doing it repeatedly the organizer forces participants to cooperate and get closer to each other. (remember the STOP rule. Not everybody is a hugger :D)
- Kiss killer: Every participant gets a piece of paper with another participant's name and lipstick on his lips. The participant's goal is to kiss the one whose name he has on the paper piece. If he manages to do it, the kissed one participant is out, and the kissing one takes his piece of paper with another name and goes to try and kiss him. (Also can be difficult for somebody. Do not force participants to do it. There are lots of solutions for this situation, for example making a dot on the forehead of the victim).
- Dots: participants close their eyes and organizer paints on their foreheads coloured dots (there should be three colors, for example red, blue and black – one half gets red, the second blue, and then there will be only one chosen one who gets black dot). The goal of participants is to divide themselves into groups according to colors.
- Gordic knot: participants makes a circle, then close their eyes. The first step is to reach the right arm into the center and to grab the first free hand there to find. The second step is the same but with the left arm. After this is done, there will be chaos, and the task for participants is to untie themselves. (sometimes, it is possible, and one circle will appear, sometimes two circles.. Sometimes it is not possible to finish this activity.

14:00 – 18:00 Big activity

This activity aims to teach participants how to effectively and safely start, maintain, and then clean up the fire. Because it is about to teach them as effectively as possible, in this activity each participant prepares his fire pit, fire, starts fire, cooks small dish or tea (depends on the level of the participants). Then everybody cleans the fire up, as good as if anybody looks at the direction of the fire, he shouldn't be able to see anything which would seem like there was a fire before. If we have participants who are handy with fire, we can try to show them different types of fire which can also be used—for example, underground fire pit or Finnish candle.



A group of people in a dark environment, illuminated by a flashlight, looking at a device. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being a bright flashlight held by one of the individuals. The people are wearing jackets, suggesting an outdoor or field setting. The overall mood is focused and collaborative.

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