



ERASMUS+ SPACE INSIDE

Training Course

Booklet of tips for
Youth-workers



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Agency for International
Programs for Youth
Republic of Latvia

ABOUT TRAINING COURSE

#EU VALUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

#INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

#EUROPEAN IDENTITY



THE SPACE INSIDE was a 7-day training course organized by 'ZAPTES RŪKI' that aimed to discover how aspects of embodied emotional intelligence can improve one's ability to respond resiliently. We all shared tools and experiences to explore ourselves through somatic and purely experiential approaches. We were a group of 30 people from the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Italy, France, Poland, Spain, Latvia, Greece, and Germany who met in a beautiful venue Pļavna in Latvia on 26.08.2023.

We explored how dancing, being playful, using improvisational theatre, contact improvisation, empathic communication methods, body awareness exercises, etc., can connect one with understanding what is needed in any life situation and support one in living the challenges of youthwork or personal life.

The following is the collection of the tools we used sorted under topics we addressed.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND TEAM BUILDING

TALES OF THE BODIES

The group starts walking while gazing at their feet. While continuing walking slowly step by step move the attention outwards: to differences and similarities of other feet, to the knees, to the legs, to the pelvis, to the abdomen, to the chest, to the shape of the head, to the face, slowly connect also through the eyes. The process is guided by imaginary invitations to see what the body parts are telling about themselves.



DYNAMIC HANDSHAKES

The walking group meets each other using handshakes and saying their names in different ways like formally, romantically, with caution, with second thoughts behind (who likes their boss anyway), etc. Creatively making different rules to build the required mood.



GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND TEAM BUILDING

PHILOSOPHERS' WALK

The group forms a circle of spread-out couples that are walking along the direction of the circle line asking some questions to each other. Questions can be directed or encouraged by the facilitator and the form of the required answer also can be specified or limited for example with length. After a while, one partner has to move forward to the next person in a circle. And so the circle of pairs continues rotation. The examples of restrictions: after each switch answer has to be shorter. Starting with free conversation then reducing to 5 words, then to one word.

Optional evolution of the conversation - respond in one word while standing in front of each other. In the end, just having the question and keeping an eye connection instead of an answer lets the question resonate within.

SOCIOMETRY

The facilitator defines two extreme points in the space and while asking random questions applies the meaning for positioning oneself according to those extreme points. So the participants are giving their answers by positioning themselves in the space of spectrum between those two extremes. When the common landscape is defined facilitator gives space for people to express their curiosity for differently positioned participants to hear different points of view.



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GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND TEAM BUILDING

DRAGON KNIGHT PRINCESS

Using the principle of the game of rock-paper-scissors but changed symbols with dragon-knight-princess where the group split into two teams would agree on which role they would demonstrate and then both teams formed two lines, one in front of the other. After a signal all at the same time reveal their roles and the winner has to chase the opponents by tagging them. The tagged members then change the team.

SNAKE OF SUPPORT

Using the principle of the game of rock-paper-scissors participants randomly meet each other. The winner gains the opponent as a supportive tail following him towards the next person available for competition. In the end, two final snakes have to meet in their majestic fight.

NAME SPEED GAME

All participants form the circle. One person standing in the middle - the facilitator. When the facilitator points at someone that person has to duck and both persons standing next to him compete who will call the other's name first. The last one has to run around the circle.



BODY SCAN, YOGA & MENTAL HYGIENE

“My name is Joe” The game used as a tool to scan the body and the 7 layers of existence (body, breath, mind, intellect, memory, ego, and space inside) In a group standing in a circle together repeat the story line by line:

“My name is Joe

I have a wife and two kids

I work in a button factory

One day the boss came to me

He said, Joe! I said, what?

Are You busy? I said, no.

So push the button with ...(right finger, left finger, right leg, right leg, head, tongue)”

After the last line adding the repetitive movement imitating as if pushing a button with the announced part of the body.

While repeating the movements start the story from the beginning. Adding all of them on top of each other makes participants move, look, and sound silly.

After the tongue movement has been introduced “I said No” is replaced with: “I said Yes”. That is the end.

After this as a group, briefly share the experience of each of those 7 layers during this activity.



BODY SCAN, YOGA & MENTAL HYGIENE

BREATHING TECHNIQUES

(To be taught by a prepared trainer.)

Ujjayi breath

(throat or victorious breath)

practice to calm down the mind and increase oxygen and energy intake.

More science about: <https://shorturl.at/gnwO5>

Three-stage pranayamas practice to calm down the nervous system, balance body functions, focus the mind, and activate the cleansing effect of the breath.

Bhastrika pranayama breathing technique aimed to wake up the body, balance the blood pressure, increase focus, and bring energy boost to the whole body–mind system.

More science about: <https://shorturl.at/psCG3>

Different rhythms of breathing connect the physical body to different emotions.

Sudarshan Kriya is a breathing technique that involves an intentional change of rhythm of the breath. The technique boosts up the energy and immune system, and releases stored stress and unnecessary emotional attachments.

More science about: <https://www.artofliving.org/sudarshan-kriya>



THE ART OF PRESENCE

PLAY FIGHT

This is a method to express your playfulness and strength in a safe, fun, and embodied way. All emotions are welcome in playfight, it's a place to be authentic.

WARM-UP

It is important to warm up the body - to be ready for the more physically active playfights and to decrease the possibility of getting trauma. Any exercises will do as long as you take care of all 3 areas of the body. If participants break a sweat or complain that it's really hard - that is a good sign!

- Warming up hands and wrists
- Warming up legs
- Warming up the back and front of the body

NEXT STEP - EXERCISES IN PAIRS

to get to know each other physically and get comfortable with touch. Some examples of exercises that you can do in pairs:

- making others lose their balance while standing in front of each other without moving their feet
- pushing each other's hands
- touching shoulders and avoiding your shoulders being touched
- touching ankles and avoiding your ankles from being touched

THE ART OF PRESENCE

PLAY FIGHT PRACTICE



Ideal group size - 8 - 12 people.

HARD RULES:

No punching, kicking, choking, or throwing the other person on the ground. The idea of a playfight is not to hurt anyone.

Everything else is optional. You are welcome to explore anywhere on the spectrum of playfulness and power/ fight.



THE ART OF PRESENCE

PLAY FIGHT PRACTICE

PRACTICALITIES:

A circle sitting and when someone wants to go for a playfight, they can go in the middle and invite someone else. If that someone agrees - a playfight happens. Any additional rules/ intentions/ invitations above hard rules are discussed. Also, any physical pain/ restraints are expressed to the other. After doing a breathing exercise together - the playfight begins. It lasts for 4 minutes. Can be anything - very playful, dance-like, childish, joyful to fighting, power dynamics, having a goal, etc. After the playfight the two, who playfought express their gratitude and feelings to each other. Afterward, the circle can express how they felt/ what arose in them while watching the playfight.

And the space is open for another playfight.

At the beginning and at the end it is highly recommended to do a sharing circle with everyone present. To make sure that participants feel safe at the beginning and to give space for people at the end to share if something has come during the playfight.



THEATRE AND MOVEMENT FOR SENSITIVITY

ONE TWO THREE

The group forms a circle. Each participant remembers who stands before them in the circle and in this way through the exercise the order is kept unchanged and activity is played out by respecting this order even if the shape of the circle becomes distorted. The first person performs some theatrical movement that is repeated by the second person and then by the third. Then the next person in the circle is the new first person who has to create a new specific movement that is also being repeated three times. It may happen that in the following circles, the leader roles and trios may change but the overall order of people stays the same. After a few rounds can add the invitation to change the shape of the circle and even lose the visible order still keeping the same sequence of who follows whom. After a few rounds speed up by not waiting for the previous person to finish his movement when get into the repeating as soon as possible. Optional to leave the second and third person just repeating the sounds and not physically following and copying the movement. This gives a different echo effect. In the end possible to add specific themes like Titanic and Little Red Riding Hood..



THEATRE AND MOVEMENT FOR SENSITIVITY

HUMAN TRANSLATOR

In pairs, one of the partners paints with their hands on the other partner's back a time-wise short painting. After that, the canvas person embodies that painting in a set of movements. Instructions are given as we go further into the activity.

- Just movement is allowed.
- Only specific parts of the body can move (e.g. left foot, right hand, etc).
- Introduction of the possibility to use sounds.

The exercise ends with a group performance in front of the group: two pairs come inside the circle following the same instructions: one of the 'painters' creates some work on the back, and the partner performs it by moving, sounds and words are allowed. Then the other pair responds by using the same painter's canvas pattern. The aim is to create a short performance of a few rounds where both pairs complement each other's scene.



DANCE YOUR STORY, CREATIVE STORYTELLING

NEGATIVE SPACES

"Speaking" in pairs. Form the couples and one by one each partner takes a turn after another ends his turn. In his turn, a person makes a clear movement with start and end. When the first person stops, the other makes another movement. Partners do not touch each other and while moving they pay attention and utilize the space that was generated by the movement and the end shape of the other partner. When the pattern of taking turns goes smoothly then add the music. Optionally can ask participants to close their eyes.

"Singing" in pairs. Lose the turn-by-turn structure and continue the same with constant simultaneous movement.

PINOCCHIO AND GEPPETTO

Pinocchio always keeps his eyes open and Geppetto his eyes closed

1. Blind Geppetto explores and shapes Pinocchio's body by touch. Pinocchio complies with invitations of Geppetto and stays where Geppetto leaves him.
2. Resistant Pinocchio. This time Pinocchio resists Geppetto's movement and does his best to avoid moving.
3. Lazy Pinocchio. This time Pinocchio is very lazy, he does not resist the movements but still he doesn't help Geppetto to reach his goal.
4. Both with closed eyes. Geppetto and Pinocchio are not fixed roles. Both the partners can switch from one role to the other and change attitudes (trying to always have one Pinocchio and one Geppetto)

DANCE YOUR STORY, CREATIVE STORYTELLING

DANCE WITH POLARITY

The group is been split into trios. Each trio decides who is going to be in which role - the first person would be a protagonist with eyes closed, the other two split the roles of representation of "YES" and "NO". During 9 minutes the protagonist will move by listening to his body's needs with closed eyes. This is a reminder for participants that this is not a performance. Each protagonist can use a personal interpretation of what YES or NO means for them. Each protagonist gets 9 minutes of experience, there will be 3 songs playing with some silence in between the songs. YES and NO interact with the protagonist according to their understanding of their roles. There is no verbal agreement of common understanding of the meaning of each role. Importantly, the two people will keep the protagonist safe (no bumping into the obstacles of the environment or the other trios). After 9 minutes each group switches roles in silence and the new protagonist can choose their starting point.



DANCE YOUR STORY, CREATIVE STORYTELLING

WHAT DO WE NEED TO BE TOGETHER?

Very simple choreography alone in line - moving forwards in lines one after another while individual movement path is like a spiral consisting of identical circles just moving forward after each concluded circle. Each person moves directly behind the previous making the whole line as synchronized as possible. In-line couples - repeating the previous but two people are drawing the same circle having a half-circle delay. When the first person is in the middle of the circle, the second joins in the same path. The next couple follows in the same pattern. The goal is to keep the line synchronized.

Next level two coupled lines moving in opposite directions. In the middle of a space meeting and intertwining avoiding collisions and keeping each separate line as synchronized as possible.

Optimistic music cheers up the experience.

ANGELS

The group is been split into trios. Each trio decides which one of them will be the human and both others will become angels. After the full round, the roles change so that after three rounds everybody has received care of angels. The Angels trying to give care to the middle person, by giving some contact, some pressure points, and maybe some massages to this person.

By doing so, the two people need to synchronize by making eye contact, and by being in the same rhythm with the music in the background.



EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE

YOUR INNER LANDSCAPE

Participants while sitting in the circle one by one are being asked to describe their inner feelings and compare them to some kind of natural landscape. After sharing in the circle participants make couples and with hands take turns to make a drawing of the partner's landscape on his/her back. Then while having the sense of the landscape on the back still fresh participants walk randomly around the space.

While walking participants share their landscapes:

- Leaning: Meet back to back with another person and share these landscapes.
- Bubbling: To reach out with arms to roll on each other's backs until meet the other arm. We started slow and we increased the pace to meet as many back as possible. Try to steal each other's partners' back.

INQUIRY OF DESIRES

Activity in pairs.

For 3 minutes one person is asking the same question and dropping all answers. Another one is answering that question every time giving a different answer.

- What is stopping you from asking for what you want?
- What is encouraging you to ask what you want?

Followed by a discussion about methods to find out what we really want and being able to ask for it.



EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

THE CHOICE TO AGREE OR NOT

Activity in pairs. Looking into each other's eyes both participants in turn say one of the words YES\NO noticing how the other person's response affects one's own choice. Participants are invited to explore freedom from whatever the other person is saying.

THE CHOICE TO SEE OR NOT

Activity In pairs. Keeping eye contact as much as possible in random moments each of the partners can choose to say HELLO or GOODBYE, opening one's eyes in the case of saying YES and closing them in the case of NO. Participants are invited to explore freedom from whatever the other person is saying.

CHANCE TO ASK

Activity In pairs. Participants are invited to ask what they want from other partners using the questions shaped by MAY I \ WILL YOU and practicing the courage to ask what one wants and embracing the possibility of refusal.



CONTACT IMPROVISATION, EMPATHY

SOFT LANDING

Activity in pairs. One person places his hands on the other person's head and then slides them down the back like a waterfall, supporting the body and head upon landing on the ground.

The other person follows the sensations and melts to the ground slowly, lying on the floor, while the other is accompanying the way. Lastly, one that supports has to bring the person back to the standing position.

Optionally repeat this exercise with different approaches such as:

- walking around, meeting other people
- avoiding the people who are trying to put hands on your head(game mode)



3 PRINCIPLES OF CONTACT IMPROVISATION

Leaning principle in contact improvisation. By pouring weight from one foot to the other the participants start to explore this concept of learning for themselves. Slowly the exploration progresses by using their hands and other body parts to lean against the walls and the floor. Finally, the participants can add the possibility to use each other to lean on, while moving through the space.

Pushing principle in contact improvisation. The participants walk around the space first using their feet to push themselves away from the floor and later adding hands to push with and walls to push against. Continue slowly evolving towards also pushing themselves away from people around them.

Reaching principle in contact improvisation. Can be used some metaphors like reaching for apples, rooting into the floor like the trees from "Lord of the Rings" or expanding the body like a balloon in every direction possible. Bringing to awareness the two-directional nature of reaching movement. Also here participants start by exploring the concept by themselves before getting into contact with others.



**CONTACT IMPROVISATION,
EMPATHY**

BEST PRACTICE EXCHANGE

FLOATING WITH EMOTIONS

This workshop consisted of five activities. The first one was preparing us for moving and acting - The floor is... - participants had to pretend that the floor was really hot, cold, or slippery and move across it appropriately. After that we played broken telephone in two groups but instead of whispering we used movement. In the end, participants tried to identify the emotion of the movement and compare the results between the groups.

Next was movie improvisation, split into two groups - one was given a movie to play in one minute, and the other was the audience guessing it.

However, there was a catch; the improvisators had to do it again but in thirty seconds, five seconds, and finally in one second. Then we were invited to dance to songs embodying different emotions. Lastly, we drew our feelings on a big sheet of paper.



BEST PRACTICE EXCHANGE

INSIDE OUT

This workshop included 4 activities.

The first activity got us moving our bodies. We divided into pairs. Each person within the pair moved a part of the body that the other person did not.

The second activity prepared us for sound expression. We stood in a circle and then the first person expressed sound and movement in low intensity. The intensity increased with each person. We then walked around the room and expressed ourselves freely in sound. The other people were free to pop up the sound or express themselves with another sound.

In the third activity we stood around the lake and expressed our emotions on a scale of 1-5. We then walked around the room and interacted with the other participants and their emotions. We observed how our emotions changed.

The last activity was the theatre activity. We set up a mock stage. Any of the participants could join the play at any time. When a person comes on stage, they perform any movement and sound, and then freeze. Whenever he/she wants, he/she can leave the stage.



BEST PRACTICE EXCHANGE

WHO ARE YOU

The Who Are You workshop was centered around self-perception. Firstly participants were invited to meditate, one by one they opened their eyes and looked into a “mysterious box” and upon looking into it said one word about how the object inside made them feel. The object was a mirror. The next activity was split into two groups, they created two circles - people in the inner circle were drawing a self-portrait and the people in the outer circle drew the person in front of them, but they had only thirty seconds. Therefore they were encouraged to draw only one feature, after thirty seconds they moved on to drawing a different person in the inner circle. After that participants took part in an exercise called magic gift - three people sat down in the middle of the circle with closed eyes and the others came to hug them or whisper something nice, give a massage, etc. The workshop concluded with a group drawing in answer to the question of how their self-perception changed through the workshop.

LIVE PHOTOS

At the Live Photo workshop, participants combined sounds recorded on a recorder with photos taken with a professional camera. The participants were given a chance to find their place in the surrounding space, feel their body part of the environment, and explore the world around them using only two senses – sound and vision transferred to digital space.



BEST PRACTICE EXCHANGE

STORYTELLING

At the start of the workshop, we were instructed to be in silence for the entire workshop. We closed our eyes and listened to a story that led us through all 5 senses: hearing (drums), smell (grass, lighter), taste (raisin, almond), touch (grass, hand), and sight. We were practicing mindfulness.

We then had 20 minutes to get in touch with nature on our own. Then we divided into pairs and through movement (mirroring or guiding another person without a touch), we tried to present our story about nature that we experienced. We ended the activity with a joint orchestra. Everyone expressed a sound that reminded them of the nature story.

SHAKE IT OFF

At the "Shake it off" workshop participants should release stress out of their bodies. At the start explain what and why they'll be doing. Animals normally release stress by shaking and humans by evolution forgot how to do it. The first part of this workshop was meditation focused on breathing. In the second part, participants were lying on their backs with their butts up. After a while their bodies started to shake. After 5 minutes they could put their butt down and feel the shaking. The last part was reflection by drawing. Pairs of participants were sitting back to back to each other. One of them was explaining how he/she felt and the other was drawing those feelings.

