

Outdoor Learning for Integration through Nature and Cultural Encounters

LINC

A project conducted in 2013–2015, co-financed by the EU

Table of Contents

Background	2
Outdoor Learning.....	5
A Methodological Analysis of the LINC Actions	8
Europe’s Immigration Challenge and Outdoor Education	11
Get out! – Place Based Integration	19
Outdoor Learning as a Context for Adult Learning in Higher Education in England	23
Evaluation of the LINC Project	30
Guidelines and Didactical Material	33
Deep Interviews – Follow-up Questions	45
Final Reflections	47
Syllabus	49

Background

The ambition of giving newly arrived immigrants relevant information about the society they now live in has been dealt with in different ways in the European countries.

In the evaluation *Samhällsorientering på modersmål i Östergötland* (Civic Information in Native Languages in the Province of Östergötland) at Linköping University, in Sweden, it was clear that it is very difficult to reach newly arrived immigrants with social information. The evaluator emphasized that the teaching methods were mostly very traditional and poorly adapted to the target group.

www.squoosh.se/images/uploads/content/pdf/rapport_1_ver5.pdf

There are many indications that the lack of integration causes social problems and high costs for both the individual and society. We understand that it is a problem that is not unique to Sweden, but rather these experiences are shared by the majority of EU countries that receive immigrants. Based on this, the idea of finding new ways of teaching and integrating newcomers was raised. The first thing to do was to find out what Outdoor learning meant for the project partners and how integration works in our different countries. The uniqueness of this project lies in the use of outdoor learning and teaching methods to reach goals and objectives. The target group in the project has been communicators/ educators who give information about the new society, to newly arrived immigrants.

Linköping University has been the project manager and the project leader. Project partners have been VIA University College in Denmark, NOVA University of Applied Sciences in Finland and Bologna University in Italy. All partners in the consortium have competencies and experiences in Outdoor Learning and in further training of teachers. In the consortium, there are also experiences from the VET sector.

Presentation of the LINC project partners

Outdoor learning for Integration through Nature and Cultural Encounters, in short LINC, is a project developed by eight project members who work at four universities in Europe and the project is co-financed by Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of innovation 2013–2015.

Sweden

Katarina Johansson, lecturer at the National Centre for Outdoor Education, Linköping University and is the project leader for the LINC-project. Has a two year Master's degree in Outdoor Education/ didactics

Eva Kätting, lecturer at the National Centre for Outdoor Education, Linköping University

Denmark

Lis Reinholdt Kjeldsen, Master of Learning Processes, Senior Lecturer at VIA University College, pedagogical studies. Coordinator for Outdoor learning and academic staff in Program for Outdoor Perspectives in Education, Center for Didactics

Mette Ladegaard Laursen, Cand. Scient. Adjunct at VIA University College, pedagogical studies – Sports and Movement

Finland

James Simpson, lecturer at Novia University for Applied Sciences, Department of education

Janina Sjöstrand, research and development coordinator at Novia University for Applied Sciences

Italy

Alessandro Bortolotti, Assistant Professor in Special education and Outdoor education, researcher at Department for Life Quality Studies, University of Bologna

Francesca Agostini, Professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Bologna

Administration

Monica Wise, project administrator, Department of Culture and Communication, Linköping University, Sweden

Reached goals in the project:

- We have developed methods to increase opportunities for integration for newcomers through nature and cultural encounters. Some methods are given examples of in *Examples of exercises*.
- We have educated communicators/educators in Outdoor Education to broaden their skills and give them the opportunity to better reach the newly arrived immigrants. We have given the communicators knowledge and new methods in how to use collaboration, reflection and an investigative approach in their daily work with newly arrived immigrants. They have also learned how to take advantage of different environments and nature objects in their work with immigrants.
- Through an international collaboration, we have created a training plan with concrete methods on how newcomers best can be integrated into society – see the new syllabus.
- The syllabus produced is adaptable to different settings and is offered to relevant target groups in different countries and for different conditions.
- A short term impact is an increased competence of the communicators/educators that gives new perspectives and new feasible methods.
- By taking the course based on the new syllabus, the participants are expected to get skills enhancement, new perspectives, practical methods, theory about Outdoor learning and knowledge of research in the field.

The project work

The main part of the work with the communicators has been organizing national and international courses; so-called test-runs. The national test-runs have provided course participants with tools for working outdoors in the nature and cultural landscape to enhance the learning outcome for the newcomers. The national test-runs have been held as discussion forums, lectures and practical exercises, where the participants have tried out various hand-on activities. The purpose with the international test-runs was to find out the common needs and possibilities, in order to create a syllabus that can be used in any country.

Evaluations done by participants in both the national and the international test-runs have been very valuable for the development of the exercises and the project progress. The course package is based on activities and practical methods in the outdoors. The methodological framework consists of the outdoor exercises in natural and cultural environments for course participants. Discussions, reflections and the concept of learning by doing have also been incorporated. Unlike lectures indoors, outdoor learning allows multi-sensory, creative, experiential and place-based experiences of the subject. The participants have been given the opportunity to look, listen, smell, feel and pick natural objects in order to get to know the environment, put words on what they see, make places come alive and get knowledge about the new environments. They have learned *about* the places, by being *at* the places.

Dissemination

The dissemination and the exploitation plan have been integrated in the whole project process, by contacts, meetings, conferences, by lectures and workshops, postcards and roll-ups. The project website has had continuous and updated information about the project and there one can also find the new course: www.liu.se/linc.

Outline of the handbook

The manual gives an explanation of the methods and procedures used in the project to improve the efficiency of public information for newly arrived immigrants. The content is made clear by evaluations and articles related to the research on the benefits of outdoor learning and gives advice on practical methods. At the end of this handbook, the newly developed course is presented.

Enjoy reading about the project!

Best regards

Katarina Johansson

Project leader, LINC

Linköping University

Outdoor Learning

By Katarina Johansson

Definition of Outdoor Education

Outdoor learning is one of the concepts in Outdoor Education. At Linköping University in Sweden, the coordinators of the LINC project, Outdoor Education was introduced 1993 and it is used in courses and programs mostly for teachers and students who want to become teachers. The research group at the National Centre for Outdoor Education, Linköping University, has proposed the following definition in an attempt to describe the field of outdoor education:

Outdoor education is an approach that aims to provide learning in interplay between experience and reflection based on concrete experience in authentic situations. Outdoor learning is also an interdisciplinary research and education field, which involves, among other things:

- the learning space being moved out into life in society, the natural and cultural environment
- the interplay between sensory experience and book-learning being emphasized
- the importance of place being underlined

Translated from the Swedish original text by Norman Davis, Linköping University

Outdoor learning provides direct contact with the natural world and can be powerful, exciting, inspirational, developmental and rewarding in many ways. Szczepanski (2008) argues that reasons for Outdoor learning can be based on four aspects:

- the place for learning
- the object for learning
- the way of learning
- bodily learning

With these aspects in mind, learning processes can be seen in different perspectives in order to reach people with varied learning styles.

Perspectives of Outdoor Education/learning/teaching

Not everyone likes the traditional educational system, because of its failure to reach all people in a group. We take in experiences and learn in different ways. Gardner (1993) means that we have different learning styles, by the theory of multiple intelligences. He argues that we have seven intelligences, where one or more will often be more prominent:

- Linguistic
- Musical
- Visual/spatial
- Bodily/kinesthetic
- Social

- Intrapersonal
- Logical/mathematical

Experiential learning is often associated with informal education in order to be a life-long learning process. Experiential learning concerns first-hand experiences, learning by doing and has a focus on problem solving. Kolb (1984) explains the experiential way of learning: First the learner has an experience, then reflects on the experience, third learns from the experience and at last tries out what they have learned.

Beard and Wilson (2006) have developed a model for experiential learning. The authors argue that:

The learning combination lock in its elementary sense is based on the notion that the *person* interacts with the *external environment* through the *senses*.

Beard and Wilson (2006)

The authors present a visual metaphor of six tumblers to show the complexity of the many possible experiential choices by putting together:

- Learning environment
- Learning activities
- Communicating through senses
- Emotions in learning
- Stimulating intelligence
- Learning and change

Outdoor Adventure Education has a particularly close relationship with Experiential learning, and is based on the three main areas outdoor activities, environmental education and social and personal development (Higgins and Nicol 2002, p 11). Safety as well as professional teachers are important.

Summary of Outdoor Education

Outdoor Education seems to be a collected word for Outdoor learning, Outdoor teaching, Environmental Education, Outdoor activities, Authentic learning in landscapes, Education in Nature, Education out of doors and learning out of doors. Experiential and Adventure Education are also branches off from the main trunk of the tree that holds together all the words and concepts within Outdoor Education.

A holistic approach to education is prominent, where the practice of Outdoor Education stands in relation to people, places and activities.

Approaches to Outdoor learning/teaching in LINC project

In Italy, the concept of Outdoor Education is difficult because it is not part of Italian culture and cannot be found in any education forms. A better word for it is Outdoor perception, which is included in the activities of universities and municipalities.

In Finland, the term Outdoor Education is not used, but they are more familiar with Adventure Education. It is used in schools every year, for all ages. Environmental Education, Adventure and Experimental Education

are in focus. Nature is often more understood and used for a place for private reflection, rather than collective activities.

In Denmark, the most used term is *Udeskole*. Outdoor learning and place-based learning is chosen to be used at VIA University College. There is a long tradition in Denmark for Outdoor Life and being in nature with nursery schools and for social work.

In Sweden there is a long tradition of Outdoor Life, a tool for Outdoor Education. Outdoor Education in Sweden includes both teaching and learning and has focus on schools and is based on the curriculums of school subjects. *Where? Why? What? How? When?* and *for Whom?* are important questions for a conscious approach to teaching. Educational authors such as Dewey, Key and Comenius form the basis for the work with Outdoor Education. The work with Outdoor Education at Linköping University also involves research into learning processes, health and motoric skills etc. in order to get knowledge of how teaching/learning can be made more effective.

Definition of Outdoor learning in the LINC project

To find out what definition of Outdoor learning we could use in the project, we discussed words such as place-based learning, multisensory learning, problem solving, experiential learning, a part of your own learning – active participation, collaboration, hands-on, wellbeing – health, creative, culture, nature, trust, fun, developing, health, experiences and knowledge.

Outdoor learning was defined as learning with the whole body and with all senses, in interaction with others, with experiences and reflections and to learn about places, at the places.

The fact that everyone learns and takes in information in different ways is the base for Outdoor Education and has been in focus in this project. We agreed of the definition: *Outdoor learning is a creative use of the surroundings for learning processes.*

References

Beard, C and Wilson, J P (2006) *Experiential Learning – a Best Practice Handbook for Educators and Trainers* Great Britain: MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall

Gardner, H (1993) *Multiple intelligences: The Theory in Practice* New York: Basic Books

Higgins, P and Nicol, R (2002) *Outdoor Education: Authentic Learning in the context of Landscapes (Volume 2)*

Kolb, D (1984) *Experiential learning* Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Linköping University: Definition of Outdoor Education www.liu.se/ikk/ncu

Szczepanski, A (2008) *Handlingsburen kunskap* Linköping: LiU-tryck

A Methodological Analysis of the LINC Actions

By Alessandro Bortolotti and Francesca Agostini

Introduction

This essay wants to introduce readers to the miscellaneous of categories the LINC project had to deal with, for *educational*, *pedagogical* and *research* purposes. The cluster of approaches is brought together, and their implications for the project undertaking are addressed and studied; in particular, goals and tools adopted are discussed. However, the main principle is here the *fitness for purpose*: it means that we used different tools for different ends, but paying attention on setting out the whole programme in a coherent way.

In our endeavour to achieve our goals, we created a one-day programme, which is the product of (at least) three categories of analysis. These broad categories are: *experience*, *reasoning* and *research* (Mouly, 1978), who can be connected to, in order: *educational*, *pedagogical* and *research* dimensions. Let's have a look at these dimensions.

Educational Analysis

Firstly, the LINC project has been carried out for educational purposes. Its fundamental goal was to find a better way to introduce newly arrived immigrants to the culture of their host country, by creating an educational tool for communicators. So the LINC consortium, formed by academic researchers, decided to create and then implement their product (a day programme) to different groups of communicators in every country involved in the project.

What was really important, at this peculiar level, was to let the communicators have a good experience, for example enjoying the silence and the great freedom nature can offer, perhaps accompanying them to discover it, instead of just telling it or showing it with some (horrible) Power Point presentations. In other words, if it is true that a picture is worth a thousand words, in all likelihood the same can be said for outdoor experience: far better to have a hands-on out-of-doors experience, than to just imagine it. Bearing in mind how essential is to have a nice experience, the consortium decided to offer an Outdoor Learning day programme, which has been carefully improved through many actions. Important attention has been paid on building some proper activities, made by tested and selected *best practice*. Many other guidelines had been discussed, such as: activity flow, social interactions, best timing for each exercise.

The activity flow has to take account of the following; usually, at the beginning nobody knows everybody, so it is important to do some exercises for both physical and social warming up; it is also very important to blend exercises with different interpersonal relations, such as: solo, in a couple, small group and all together activities, and taking care of placing them at the right time.

Pedagogical Analysis

Usually, an educator is happy when their pupils are happy, or when they learn something and even change

their behaviours in a positive way. These are the most important educational tasks, when pupils come to get them it means they have had some very good teaching. But this is not enough to carry out a pedagogical analysis: in this case, there is the need for a clear examination about which are the best ways for achieving the educational goals, so a much more deep methodological understanding is required.

At that level the consortium had to discuss a lot, since because we come from various European countries and scholastic contexts, so we have different backgrounds. These different perspectives lead, for example, to some slightly different meanings (and even denominations) of Outdoor Learning¹. Anyway, taking into account both our beliefs and professional knowledge, we first shared and then agreed on some educational dimensions for the elaboration of our one-day programme. Thanks to this common elaboration the LINC programme can be considered as having a pedagogical structure, that is to say is not randomly conceived, but deliberately set up to reach particular and expressed goals. The main goals we agreed are about the following points, which were the ones to pay careful attention to for the programme design:

- Creative use of different places for learning
- Use body and senses
- Concrete tools
- Interactions with people and places
- Active and curious participants
- Minimize the cultural difference within the group
- Ways to meet native people
- Present different approaches to learning
- More effective use of time for the communicators
- Small group more than big group
- The learner must be active, the teachers facilitator
- Understand new learning perspectives

From this list it is easy to recognize which were our principal guidelines: creativity, multisensory, interactivity; but we were also absolutely aware of how culturally relevant is Outdoor learning for educational purposes. Finally, the LINC one-day programme we created was far away from being just an educational tool, we can state that it is the fruit of our pedagogical thinking and therefore it precisely reflects that rich common background.

The research planning

There is not a single blueprint for planning research, which is governed by the notion of *fitness for purpose* (Coen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Since the purposes of the LINC project planning were to design, implement and evaluate a specific intervention, a kind of action-research model has been the most appropriate research tool.

The way the LINC programme has been elaborated reflects both our educational and pedagogical

¹ Outdoor education in Scandinavian Countries is called *Frilustliv* (Free Air Life), in Finland putting the suffix *Erä* means something linked with the "Wilderness", in Italy *Educazione all'aria aperta* means literally "Open Air Education".

knowledge and beliefs, but that is not enough for reaching valid, reliable and tested results. In order to validate our work, we had to get some data. Once again, likewise in the relationship between educational and pedagogical dimensions, here we must be aware that data does not come up like mushrooms. Data comes through a precise methodology or design, which follows both ontological and epistemological assumptions, and also taking account of the constraints and opportunity under which the research take place. At the end of the day, we had a kind of *Testing and Assessment* model research (see Box 1 below), focused on design and implementation of a teacher/learning practice, empower participants, and evaluate the efficacy of our programme.

Purposes	Foci	Key Terms	Characteristics
To measure achievement and potential	Academic and non-academic, cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains	Reliability	Materials designed to provide scores that can be aggregated
To diagnose strengths and weakness		Validity	
To assess performance and abilities		Criterion-referencing	Enables individuals and groups to be compared
	Performance, achievement, potential, abilities	Formative	
		Diagnostic	In-depth diagnosis

Box 1: Model of Testing and Assessment Method (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 85)

In fact, we do not only propose activities to suggested a global approach, but also asked participants to give some feed-back opinions about that, and collected them twice: to every participant just at the end of each national and international test-run with a specific questionnaire, and later on through in-depth interviews, asking them about specific results they had using Outdoor Learning activities, in their own practice, as communicators with immigrants. Questionnaires and interviews have been the instruments used to collect some accurate idea on the efficacy of the LINC programme, in order to test its value and transferability. Anyway, the results were quite positive and gave us a hopeful feeling about the future.

Finally, some words about the political level. Every educational project is connected to other important political issues, for example it is widely recognised that a formal scholastic system has an incredible impact on building future civilization and citizenship. In this case we are proud of our contribution for a more inclusive society, open to immigrants, which so far is a growing political challenge in the Western world.

References

- Coen, L., Mannion, L. & Morrison K. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mouly, G. J. (1978) *Educational Research: the Art and Science of Investigation*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Europe's Immigration Challenge and Outdoor Education

By Alessandro Bortolotti and Francesca Agostini

Abstract

Little is known about the role of Outdoor Education for immigrants' inclusion in Europe. This brief article tries to fill the gap on this poorly recognized topic, presenting researches and experiences which are able of bridging issues such as: immigration policy, use of green public spaces, and Outdoor programmes. A theoretical framework is also needed, to recognize a structurally relevant function of Outdoor experiences in several dimensions like inclusion, health and learning. Outdoor Education can be effective not only for recreational use, but also for culturally relevant learning tasks, so that, by means of specific Outdoor Learning programmes, it can improve immigrants' inclusion within European societies.

Key issues: Migration, Outdoor Learning, Nature, Culture, Inclusion.

We can argue that migration flows is as old as the human history, but that it is also pretty far from having a conclusion: according to United Nation assessments, actually it is estimated that there are 214 million international migrants worldwide, around 50 million living and working abroad with irregular status, and 740 million internal migrants. Migration is really a complex phenomenon, caused by different factors: economic, political, social and so on. For example, the modern stability and prosperity of the EU, are thought to have exerted a strong "pull effect" to the country of destination; the opposite and complementary "push effect" is caused by problems lived in the origin countries.

Europe's Immigration Challenge

Peter Sutherland and Cecilia Malmström² argued that migration is totally changing, so the EU must forge systems and approaches that respond to new realities. If we do not solve problems, we allowed immigrants to be considered the scapegoat for other and unconnected problems.

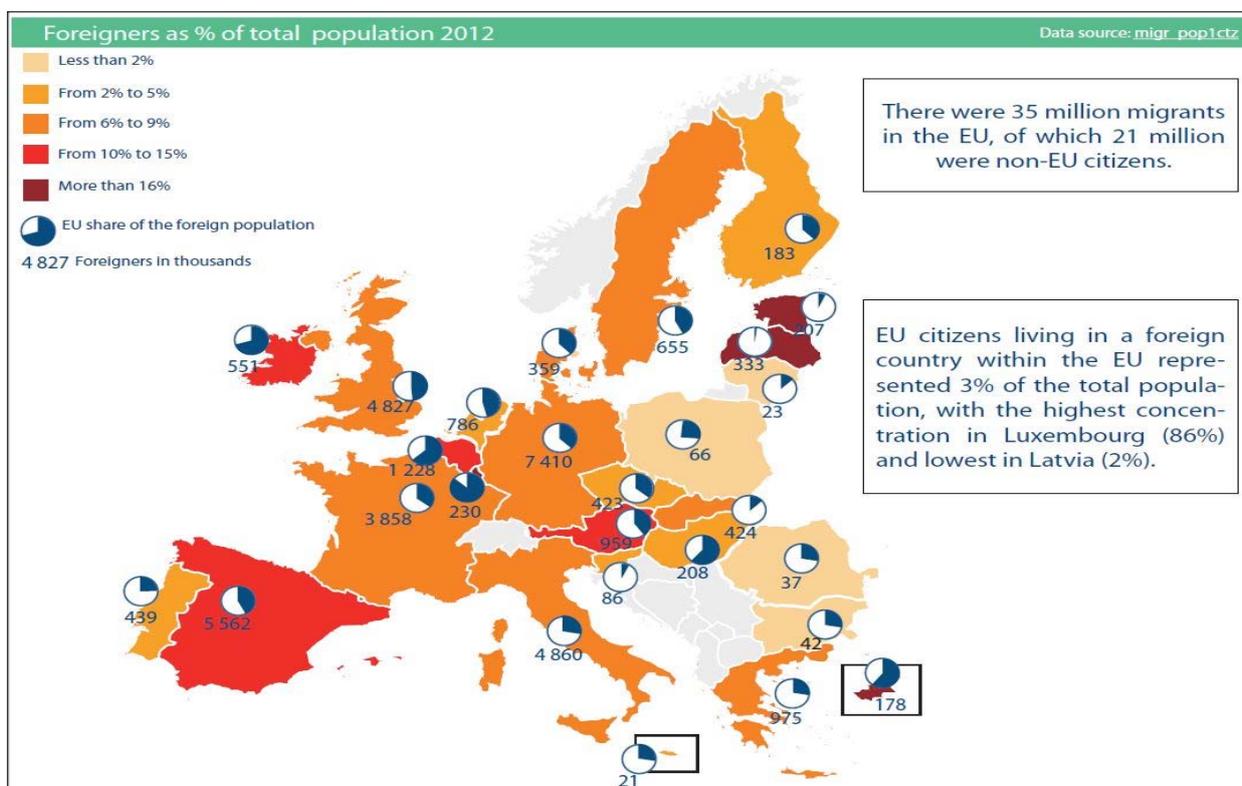
Studies that examine changes in national and ethnic stereotypes in European countries, supply very interesting results: Poppe (2001) discussed results of an investigation conducted in Central Europe, with several theoretical frameworks (such as relative deprivation, social identity and scapegoat theories). He found that stereotypes of foreign national groups are affected by changes in perceived economic and relational features of the national states. Furthermore, foreign out-group stereotypes became more negative, in terms of morality, as a function of the economic deterioration in the perceivers' country.

² Peter Sutherland, chairman of Goldman Sachs Int. and the London School of Economics, and a UN special representative for migration and development, was director general of the World Trade Organisation, EU commissioner for competition, and attorney general of Ireland. Cecilia Malmström is EU commissioner for home affairs and was Sweden's minister for Europe.
<http://www.theguardian.com/business/economics-blog/2012/jul/24/europe-immigration-challenge>

But this is partial and unfair, and it distracts us from taking effective solutions to real problems too. European countries must honestly acknowledge that, like the US, they are lands of immigrants. The percentage of foreign-born residents in several European countries – including Spain, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and Greece – is similar to that in the US (see picture “Foreigners as % of total population 2012; source: European Parliament Research Service³).

As yet, neglecting this, we do not make enough investments to integrate newcomers into our schools and workplaces. The discourse is not how many immigrants we recognize to have into the EU, but acknowledge that we have a totally new composition of our society, the one in which we are living right now. Human mobility is surely one 21st century main issue, and is endlessly changing in many ways, so we must proceed to devise approaches that face to new realities.

For example, Europe has had recent attempts to create a common EU immigration policy. This “harmonized” policy, despite being seen by most observers as necessary if the EU is to meet its goal of free movement of people, has faced political blockages. Because of this resistance, immigration harmonization has delayed behind other EU policy areas. To explain how it works, it is the intensity of political prominence of a given immigration issue, combined with political partisanship and institutional capacity to protect migrant rights, that determine one of three national orientations toward harmonization: total blockage, restrictive, or expansive (Givens, Luedtke, 2004). We are, of course, fans of expansive and harmonized policy, so attempting to follow this route in our project.

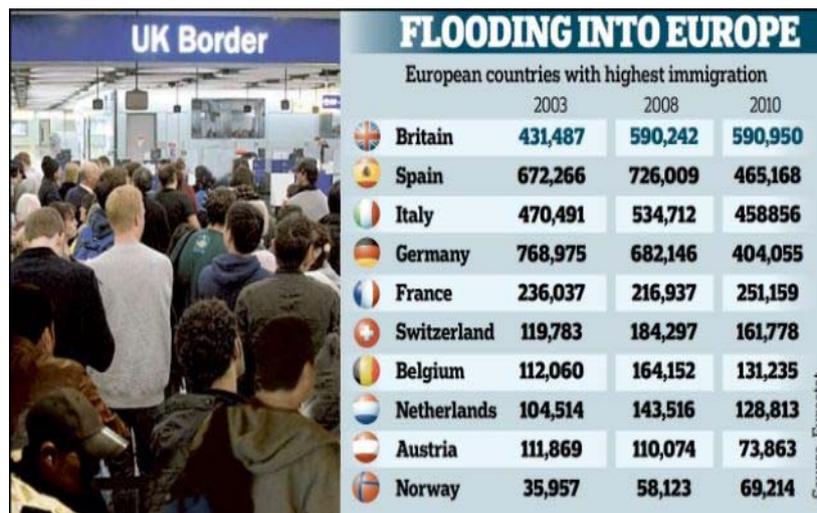


3 <http://epthinktank.eu/2013/07/09/migration-in-the-eu/foreigners-as-of-total-population-2012/>

Immigration Flows into Europe

In order to catch the dimension we are having in Europe immigration, it is important to give some data⁴: during 2012 there were an estimated 1.7 million immigrants to the EU-27 from countries outside the EU-27 Member States. In addition, 1.7 million people previously residing in one of the EU Member States migrated to another Member State. Thus, about 3.4 million people immigrated to one of the EU-27, while at least 2.7 million emigrants were reported to have left an EU-27 Member State.

In 2010, United Kingdom reported the largest number of immigrants (590 950), followed by Spain (465 168), Italy (458 856), Germany (404 055) and others (see illustration “Flooding into Europe” here under; source: Eurostat).



Acquisition of Citizenship

The number of people acquiring citizenship in 2012 of an EU-27 Member State was 817 000, corresponding to a 4.3% increase with respect to 2011. In absolute terms, the highest increases were observed in the United Kingdom (16 300 more persons were granted British citizenship compared with 2011), followed by Ireland (14 300), Sweden (13 500) and Italy (9 200). By contrast, the largest decreases in absolute terms were observed in Spain (20 500 less persons were granted Spanish citizenship compared with 2011) and France (18 500 less).

Globalisation, demographic change and societal transformation are at a present time heavily touching the European Union. Dialogue at global level can address some of these challenges. However, it is at national and local levels that each individual, and each stakeholder, will take the possibilities brought by migration. Migration is now firmly at the top of the European Union’s political agenda. The Arab spring and events in the Southern Mediterranean further highlighted the need for a coherent and comprehensive migration policy for the EU.

The human rights of migrants are a cross-cutting dimension, of high relevance to the EU. Special attention must be paid to protecting and empowering vulnerable migrants, such as unaccompanied minors and asylum-seekers. Respect for the fundamental rights of the EU is a key component of EU policies on

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics

migration. This has an impact on EU context, and initiatives to be done can be inspired by GAMM (Global Approach to Migration and Mobility⁵) advice and suggestions.

The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) recommendations

• The GAMM should be migrant-centred. It is to be based on the principle that the migrant is at the core of the analysis and all action and must be empowered to gain access to safe mobility.

The GAMM should be migrant-centred. In essence, migration governance is not about 'flows', 'stocks' and 'routes', it is about people. In order to be relevant, effective and sustainable, policies must be designed to respond to the aspirations and problems of the people concerned. Migrants should, therefore, be empowered by gaining access to all the information they need about their opportunities, rights and obligations.

• The human rights of migrants are a cross-cutting issue in the GAMM, as this dimension is relevant to all four pillars. The GAMM should strengthen respect for fundamental rights and the human rights of migrants in source, transit and destination countries alike.

The GAMM should be based on four equally important pillars:

- 1 - organising and facilitating legal migration and mobility;
- 2 - preventing and reducing irregular migration and trafficking in human beings;
- 3 - promoting international protection and enhancing the external dimension of asylum policy;
- 4 - maximising the development impact of migration and mobility.

The EU is affected by a multitude of challenges and opportunities in the area of migration and mobility. The EU Commission is convinced that it is now time to consider how to consolidate the overarching framework of the external migration policy, in order to make the EU more prosperous. EU needs to become more competitive, attracting talent and investments. To manage mobility in a secure environment, the EU needs to continue its prioritised dialogue and cooperation with partner countries in the EU Neighbourhood. To offer international protection to those in need, and to improve the development impact of migration and mobility for its partners, the EU must be a leading actor in global governance.

Specific policy measures introduced to attract non-EU citizens, included:

- fast tracking procedures for entry and stay;
- unrestricted access to the labour market;
- awareness-raising and information provision;
- more favourable conditions for family reunification;
- tax incentives;
- access to social security benefits; and
- integration measures.

Especially within the last point, Outdoor learning programmes could hold an important function: education

⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0743>

and training play a crucial role in successfully integrating migrants into society and the labour market. Consequently, should be taken of account lifelong learning policies in the context of migration and mobility, to improve at the least two factors such as *acculturation* and *citizenship*, cited in the Asylum and Migration Glossary 3.0⁶.

Immigrant integration through Outdoor education

In any case, if it is true that all humans have an intrinsic connection with nature, it should important to give immigrants opportunities for improving relation with green spaces and their benefits: health promotion, recreation and learning opportunities. Unfortunately, this important task finds several limitations, both for cultural and social-economic reasons. Moreover, little is known about the role of outdoor education in immigrants, disregarding the fact that Europe is rather coming ethnically diverse. Anyway, relations between green spaces, immigration and society are emerging issues in policy and science, so it is possible to mention some research shown interesting results about issues such as:

- immigrants' recreational use and perceptions of natural places,
- use of green spaces and social health inequalities,
- Outdoor projects aiming at social inclusion.

Gentin (2011) in her review on the field of outdoor recreation and ethnicity in Europe, identifies the main research topics on this field, such as: leisure activities, outdoor recreation patterns, access and distance to green space, and non-Western immigrants' perception of nature have been investigated. It means that other topics, such as wilderness use and learning opportunities of Outdoor education for immigrants, simply are not in research agenda. For example, a study conducted in the Netherlands demonstrates that 'having a picnic or a barbecue' or 'meeting other people' are much more important for non-Western immigrants (Turks and Moroccans) than to native (Peters et al., 2010). Most common immigrants' activities in parks varied also significantly with time of life: the higher the age, the more important is socialising and meeting friends; so, for example playing football become less important for men with increasing age (Seeland et al., 2009). Very interesting is a study about beneficial effect on the health on pregnancy outcomes (Kihal-Talantikite et al., 2013). The research took place in Lyon, France, studying the spatial distribution of infant mortality within the first decade of the second millennium. The infant deaths positioning was not random, but located in the metropolitan area with the highest greenness and socioeconomic deprivation levels. Discussing this results, following 3 hypothetical reasons by which green spaces may have a significant effect (psychological, physiological, and environmental), although further research are required, it seems clear the existence of a deep relationship between green spaces access and pregnancy outcomes.

Last but not least, can be mentioned successfully Outdoor for All programme run by Natural England (2012-14). The projects have the power of break down barriers and involve different groups in society, engaging them with practical outdoor experiences. These include members of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities, people from urban deprived areas and people with disabilities. These studies recognise that many connect strongly to their outdoor experiences in their countries of origin rather than in the UK, few

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/docs/emn-glossary-en-version.pdf

having ventured very far outside of their local area in England, with many not even visiting their local green spaces.

If this kind of investigations would be increased, that could lead to a more comprehensive picture of ethnic minorities' outdoor learning patterns in Europe, as well as enhancing possibilities for inter-cultural understanding. There is, however, very limited research which explores using outdoor pedagogy with adults, so whilst the value of this in practice can be noted, it is difficult to find a distinct theoretical basis for this kind of programmes.

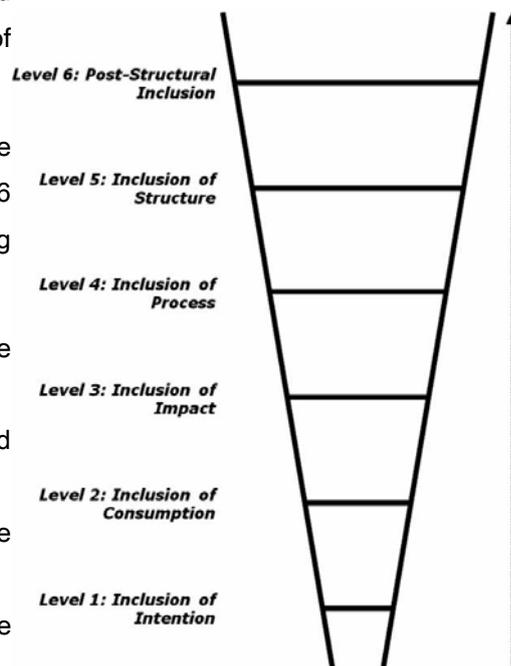
Searching for a common European Union (EU) immigration framework

As scholars and academic researchers, we are absolutely aware of the necessity of bonding our narrow educational field, with a far broad theoretical understanding. Briefly, we need a hypothetical framework to link Outdoor Learning programmes to more complex issues: how improve a better integration for immigrants and, ultimately, to build a better society with confident people.

The human development and capability approach (in brief: "capability approach"; Apsan Frediani et al., 2014) aims to change approaches to public policy. Instead of paying attention to economic growth and professed well-being as the predominant goals, the tendency is to improve the personal capability, in order to allow people to consider that they have reason to have a worth life. The contribute is in change the conventional attention in project planning only on production and effectiveness, and to adopt an approach influencing the lives of people to development projects.

Another crucial contribution is the 'ladder of inclusive innovation' (see Figure of 6 levels ladder, Heeks et al, 2014), which describes 6 different levels of inclusiveness innovation. Following this interesting model, an innovation is inclusive if:

- Level 1/Intention: the intention addresses the needs of the excluded group.
- Level 2/Consumption: it is adopted and used by the excluded group.
- Level 3/Impact: it has a positive impact on supporting the excluded group.
- Level 4/Process: the excluded group is involved in the innovation development.
- Level 5/Structure: it is created within a structure that is itself inclusive.
- Level 6/Post-Structure: it is created within a frame of knowledge and discourse that is itself inclusive.



The levels are similar to steps on a stairs, where each level refers to widening possibilities of the inclusion for the excluded group. For the most part, each level is relating to the levels at a lower place, but promotes the extent of inclusion.

Another crucial topic in Outdoor programmes is Experiential Education (EXE), so it is logical to find

connections, on a theoretical basis, from EXE itself and inclusive education. Laevers (2011) indicates four core outcomes of well-being and involvement levels:

- Emotional health, a foundational feature that refers to social-emotional conditions captured by the Rogerian concept of the “fully functioning person” which connects with self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience.
- Nurturing the learner’s exploratory drive, which can lead to lifelong learning. The challenge for education is not only to keep intrinsic source of motivation alive, but also to make it encompass all domains that are relevant to functioning in society. The aim is to encourage deep-level learning as opposed to superficial learning that does not affect the basic competencies and has little transfer to real life situations.
- Valued competences and dispositions in a range of relevant domains, such as communication, the understanding of the physical world, social competence and self-organization (including entrepreneurship). It fits into the paradigm of holistic approach, and views competences as life skills.
- Preserving the attitude of “linkedness” expresses a concern for the development of a positive orientation towards reality. A basic sense of “connectedness” can prevent destructive and anti-social behaviour; in fact there are five parts to this basic linkedness attitude: with oneself; with other(s); with the material world, with society and with the entirety of the cosmos (transcendence).

This is relevant to Outdoor education and learning, where motivation, self-organization and social competence continue to remain essential goals.

Conclusions

In conclusion, LINC project has several aspirations: to explore an approach that can contribute to the limited body of research literature available about effective outdoor programmes for adults, and to give immigrants with relevant information about the society they live in. The main aim of the project is to provide information to immigrants through immersion in the outdoor environment, with the hope to actively engage the participants in a social and culturally relevant experience. Through outdoors learning, is possible to have an inner comprehension of this culture of the countries. This approach is consistent with the work of Rogoff (2003) on ‘guided participation’, relating to groups who develop in social and cultural contexts where there is a mutual bridging of understanding between people. For some people, the effect of OL is absolutely transformative: our evaluations indicate that these experiences are physically and intellectually stimulating, interactive and motivating, with high levels of involvement. A major challenge in contemporary scenarios is how to construe education not only in terms of socialization, but also in terms of new forms of understanding, undergoing, and moving in the world, and a reflective openness to the new. This task is consistent to a “cosmopolitanism on the ground” agenda, focussed on the recognition that many teachers can build common learning practice for the entire world (Hansen, 2010). Our hope is, in fact, to give an effective contribution for a more inclusive society. Policy and practice must investigate further the framing of inclusive innovation models for all, immigrants included.

References

- Apsan Frediani A., Boni A. & Gasper D. (2014) Approaching Development Projects from a Human Development and Capability Perspective. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal for People-Centered Development*, 15:1, 1-12 DOI: 10.1080/19452829.2013.879014
- Gentin S. (2011) Outdoor recreation and ethnicity in Europe-A review, *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 10, 153– 161
- Givens T., Luedtke A. (2004) The Politics of European Union Immigration Policy: Institutions, Salience, and Harmonization. *The Policy Studies Journal*, 32 (1)
- Hansen D.T. (2010) Cosmopolitanism and Education: A View From the Ground. *Teachers College Record*, 112 (1), 1-30. <http://www.tcrecord.org> ID Number: 15411 [Accessed: 3/28/2015]
- Heeks R., Foster C. & Nugroho Y. (2014) New models of inclusive innovation for development, *Innovation and Development*, 4 (2), 175-185, DOI: 10.1080/2157930X.2014.928982
- Kihal-Talantikite W., Padilla C.M., Lalloué B., Gelormini M., Zmirou-Navier D. & Deguen S. (2013) Green space, social inequalities and neonatal mortality in France. *Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 13:191. <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2393/13/191>
- Laevers F. (2011) *Experiential education: Making care and education more effective through well-being and involvement*. Bennett J, topic ed. In: Tremblay RE, Boivin M, Peters RDeV, Barr RG, eds. *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*. Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, 1-5
Available at: <http://www.childencyclopedia.com/documents/LaeversANGxp1.pdf>.
- Natural England Outdoors for All (2014) *Monitor of engagement with the natural environment survey: Difference in access to the natural environment between social groups in the adult English population*. <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6502695238107136>
- Peters, K., Elands, B., Buijs, A. (2010) Social interactions in urban parks: stimulating social cohesion? *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* 9, 93–100
- Poppe, E. (2001) Effects of Changes in GNP and Perceived Group Characteristics on National and Ethnic Stereotypes in Central and Eastern Europe. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. 3 (8), 1689–1708.
Published online: 31 JUL 2006 DOI: 10.1111/j.1559-1816.2001.tb02746.x
- Rogoff, B. (2003) *The cultural nature of human development*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Seeland, K., Dübendorfer, S., Hansmann, R. (2009) Making friends in Zurich's urban forests and parks: the role of public green space for social inclusion of youths from different cultures. *Forest Policy and Economics* 11, 10–17

Get out! – Place Based Integration

By James Simpson

Newly arrived immigrants face many challenges and barriers to their integration: from learning a new language and culture, finding employment to monetary problems and anxiety over the wellbeing of relatives left behind and personal traumatic experiences.

When there are so many immediate concerns and an uncertain future ahead, integration through outdoor learning may not have the highest priority. Is it appropriate to take immigrants outdoors to their local environment to aid integration and is there a clear need and benefit in doing so?

In this article I will compare the findings and best practice of our own LINC project to a number of projects and reports in Finland and Sweden that have worked in some way with outdoor education and immigrants either as a method of integration or as a means of promoting physical or mental well-being.

Why do we use outdoor spaces? In their book *Det gröna finrummet* (The Green Lounge) Jensen and Ouis identified five main categories in the Nordic tradition of outdoor life (*friluftsliv*).

1. Utilitarian outdoor life where participants use the outdoors for practical self-sufficiency in picking mushrooms, berries and wild plants, fishing and hunting. This is carried out in familiar places or gardens where the purpose is functional use of natural resources but also for pleasure.
2. Romantic outdoor life where one walks or travels through nature using non-motorized transport often in iconic landscapes away from cities. There is a personal, spiritual aspect to being in nature away from civilisation.
3. Scientific outdoor life is based around specific interests in the natural world such as bird watching and carried out in specific sites for this hobby and there are often defined goals for the trip.
4. Social outdoor life is done in a group in visits to local nature areas and parks for picnics, socialising, rest and relaxation.
5. Physical outdoor life focuses on sporting activities, and challenge. Nature is the forum for the activity where the focus is primarily somatic.

By understanding motivational factors for visits to outdoor areas we can offer programs that more closely fit the user's interests and needs.

Various reports from EU countries show that immigrants use outdoor natural spaces less than native-born citizens. This implies that they are disadvantaged in being able to access the many widely publicised and free health-promoting effects of visits to natural surroundings as described in reports such as *Terveyttä Luonnosta* (Health from nature).

Attitudes and relationships to nature are not always positive and do not necessarily reflect the predominate attitudes of the new country. Nature in the home country can be associated with danger: dangerous animals and remnants of war and conflict. Many of the participants in our workshops stated a misunderstanding of

the over implied dangers of Finnish nature when being told of the existence of bears and snakes. This was a factor that had prevented those entering wilder spaces in their initial time in Finland until experience gave them a safer relationship to their new natural surroundings. Indeed numerous participants stated nature related experiences as significant moments in their integration process in Finland.

Also lack of knowledge of where to go and what to do is a barrier. Relevant information of the rights and responsibilities of everyman's right are not easy to access or are better understood hands-on in nature. Nordic countries have clearly distinct seasons that define the activities and associated equipment needed. Suitable clothing was a limiting factor in a few of the projects as was a need to provide both clothing and equipment in order to attract participants.

Interestingly many projects found that a natural environment minimised the need for a common language or translator. Luonto Liikuttamaan took out groups of mothers with young children to a national park and had very limited possibilities of direct language communication. However the experience was a positive meeting of cultures between the participants, local volunteers and leaders. Songs were sung and communal food making was enjoyed. Overcoming practical difficulties brought the group together creating a mutual cultural meeting place.

We also found that in practical activities participants with weak language abilities could express very deep thoughts and emotions through help of reflection in natural materials whilst becoming rather passive in more orally based activities. They both had an ability to show their own knowledge whilst expressing needs and interests they wished to develop.

Both in our own experience and the experiences of other project managers that I interviewed the most successful programs were the most simple. Many such as Vihreä Veräjä and Luonto Liikuttamaan stated that activities like fishing and berry picking were popular, activities which would fit the utilitarian outdoor life model.

Picking wild foods and fishing is further more an extra element that can be utilised when making food or snacks over an open fire or camping kitchen. An activity that was always successful, either as an activity to be done together or as a service provided. It is an activity that is common across all cultures and creates a good space for reflection and sharing of experiences. Gråsten and Hokkanen working with Muslim women recount the amusement of the group when male fishing guides prepared the meal, an incident that provoked discussion of gender roles.

A social driving force is also strong in immigrant groups and their interest in being in nature; it is often a social affair. We also saw this at one of our courses in Turku where the majority of participants had regularly attended networking meetings and other cooperation events. They stated that after the outdoor workshop was the first time they really started to know each other. Indeed the social element of outdoor activities is vital for both learning and well-being processes.

One part of Luonto Liikuttamaan, a project run by Parks and Wildlife Finland worked with special needs classes from local vocational colleges. The classes were a mix of nationalities and experienced behavioral problems. They worked on improving paths in the national park during short camps. The group experienced

significant improvements in social relations and abilities to cooperate. Their teacher was surprised by the extent of change, something that could not have been achieved in the classroom.

In “The last child in the woods”, Richard Louv argues of the importance of childhood experience in nature to create a basis for a continued connection to nature when older. If some immigrant groups, both adult and child lack the opportunity to have direct contact with natural surroundings it places a greater responsibility on other actors to initiate an opportunity for it.

Initiatives working with families such as the Pro-Family project have also found that common experiences in nature can be a catalyst to enable the families to come together. Many immigrant families experience disruption and change in their traditional structure that leads to conflict. Time spent in self-chosen activities in nature with other families reinforced mutual trust and a sense of self-determination that many were pacified from.

Immigrants cannot be regarded as a homogenous group with similar needs and backgrounds. It is also difficult to generalise individual relationships to nature according to culture or ethnicity. There are many more factors that influence how a person regards his or her natural environment such as social and cultural factors in their place of origin as well as the environment where they grew up.

By going outdoors are immigrants fulfilling our Nordic expectation of what is a good citizen. Is this a relevant activity for immigrant groups? Jensen takes up the polemic in her book implying that all initiatives however well-intentioned must place a clear focus on the needs of the target group. Moshtat takes this discussion further with the critic that the majorities of initiatives are run by native-born citizens and provide services for immigrant communities. A more participatory process would be welcomed.

The target of the LINC project was communicators, themselves of immigrant background. The rationale being that they can themselves implement and innovate outdoor learning with their own communities and groups. Thereby becoming outdoor leaders in their own right, an end supported by Moshtat.

As part of the Vihreä Veräjä project Gråsten and Hokkanen working with a homogenous group and found that practical issues such as facilities for washing before prayer were important. This was then provided in an uncomplicated mobile way. Jensen and Ouis also discuss that if one’s home environment is so far removed from the one experienced in the new country immigrants have no frame of reference to place their new experiences. This can be facilitated by interpreting the new experiences through reflection in the supportive environment of a group.

It is important that immigrants such as Fatbardhe Hetemaj a Finnish politician originally from Kosovo come forward in their support of nature as an element of integration. She said on a visit to Koli National Park in 2012 in her role as a national park ambassador “There are many proven physical and psychological well-being effects of being in nature. Being in nature and moving in nature relaxes and improve one’s mind and creates well-being in every way.”

Our project’s activities were focused on easily accessible natural areas where public transport can be used at a reasonable cost and the direct benefit being a familiar place which participants can easily bring their own groups and families to.

Whilst using elements of nature in creative processes we often observed that participants expressed strong connections to their home environments and could show great knowledge in the use of natural materials in their home countries. It was irrelevant that the specific species were not the same but the similarity triggered open the door to understanding the new environment. Leikkilä in her Master's thesis also found that many immigrants use the natural environment in the same way they did in their home country, which can be a good basis and starting point for further integration into the culture of the new country.

Although the experience of supporting newly arrived immigrants integration through outdoor education is patchy, there is a great deal of evidence to support its benefit. Creating opportunities for immigrant communities to go out to establish a sense of place in their local environment in a globalised world is valuable. But it needs to start with a participatory process which is inclusive of that community. The natural environment is a neutral arena that can promote mutual understanding and a sharing of cultures.

References:

- Faehnle, M. Jokinen, J. Karlin, A & Lyytimäki, J. (2010). Kaupunkiluonto ja monikulttuurisuus – maahanmuuttajat luontoalueiden kokijoina ja käyttäjinä. Finnish Environment Institute
- Gråsten, T. & Hokkanen, I. (2014). Green Care – Nature Assisting Integration of Aging Somali Women. Bachelor Thesis. Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Degree Programme in Social Services
- Jensen, E & Ouis, P. (2014). Det Gröna Finrummet. Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag
- Leikkilä, J. (2010). Kaupunkiluonto maahanmuuttajien kotoutumisessa. Master's Thesis. University of Tampere, Degree Programme in Social Sciences
- Lieksan maahanmuuttajat tutustuivat luontoon Kolin kansallispuistossa (2012)
<http://www.metsa.fi/sivustot/metsa/fi/ajankohtaista/Tiedotearkisto/tiedotteet2012/Sivut/LieksanmaahanmuuttajattutustuivatluontoonKolilla.aspx>
- LINC project website: <http://www.liu.se/linc>
- Louv, R. (2006). The Last Child in the Woods. North Carolina: Algonquin Books
- Luonto liikuttamaan project website
<http://www.metsa.fi/sivustot/metsa/fi/Hankkeet/Rakennerahastohankkeet/Luontoliikuttamaan/Sivut/default.aspx>
- Moshtat, Y. (2008). Med andra ögon – Naturmöten med invandrare. Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
- Tourula M. & Rautio A (2014) Terveyttä Luonnosta, Thule Institute, University of Oulu
- Vihreä Veräjä project website <http://www.vihreaveraja-hanke.fi>

Outdoor Learning as a Context for Adult Learning in Higher Education in England

A reflection on the LINC project: Outdoor Learning for Integration through Nature and Cultural Encounters

By Victoria Brown, Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom

During a recent Erasmus funded visit to Sweden (September 2014) there was an opportunity to participate in an outdoor learning experience which was part of the LINC project which is being run by Linköping University in cooperation with VIA University College in Denmark, Bologna University in Italy and Novia University of Applied Sciences in Finland. This project has the ambition to provide newly arrived immigrants with relevant information about the society they now live in. As the outdoors is such a large part of the culture of the countries involved; the aim of the project is to provide this information to immigrants through immersion in the outdoor environment with the hope to actively engage the participants in a social and culturally relevant experience.

In Sweden, newly arrived immigrants are entitled to 60 hours of information about their new society delivered in their home language. The method of delivery is usually theoretical and mostly given indoors. In an evaluation of the traditional methods, Stenberg Fou (2012) has demonstrated that it is very difficult to reach the target group with social information which may be poorly adapted to their needs. The outdoor learning experience day was designed to enable the 'Social Communicators' who will be working directly with the immigrants, to consider the rich possibilities afforded by the outdoors to support their work (Gibson 1986). In so doing it is hoped to broaden the skills of the communicators through exploring ways to use the outdoor environment as a creative resource for teaching and learning in order to achieve their objectives and give them the skills to reach their target group in a more effective and engaging manner. Dillon et al (2005) note the opportunities that outdoor education can provide to support teacher-student interaction in relaxed, more informal environments. Beard (2009:3) describes such spaces as possessing 'ambience for learning, thinking and collaboration' and Waite and Pratt (2011) suggest that new learning places may allow for the redistribution of traditional power relationships.

Through actively engaging with the experiences on a first hand basis, the educators could see the purpose and potential for the application to their work. This approach echoes the work of Rogoff (2003) on 'guided participation' in communities where learning and development is situated within social and cultural contexts and where there is a mutual bridging of understanding in encounters between people. Considering this experience through Rogoff's *interpersonal lens*, this experience was an opportunity for participants to interact and bond with each other in a neutral environment where conventional student and tutor relationships are overturned and where the balance of power can be redressed, resulting in freer communication and exchange of ideas. Thomas and Harding (2011) suggest that the natural elements control the outdoor environment more than humans ever can. The outdoor environment is less influenced by humans than the indoor and as such is as a prime environment to support learner autonomy and meaning making; a useful resource then for using as a meaningful context for learning with any age group.

The benefits of using the outdoor pedagogy with children and young people are well documented (Murray

and O'Brien 2005). Dillon et al (2005) note the range of impacts provided by outdoor experience across cognitive, affective, interpersonal and social, physical and behavioural domains. Whilst O'Brien (2009) states that learning in nature provides a distinctly different experience from indoor classroom based learning and highlights the role it can have in developing positive attitudes to life-long learning. There has been an increase in outdoor learning opportunities for young children in the last ten years. Building on the strong traditions of Margaret Mc Millan and Susan Isaacs, outdoor learning is part of early years curriculum guidance nationally (Great Britain, Department for Education 2014, Welsh Assembly Government 2008, Learning and Teaching Scotland 2010, Northern Ireland Curriculum 2011). In England, curricular pressures and the discourse of the standards agenda, has reduced the status of play and outdoor play in schools causing it to become relegated to the realms of relaxation (Wood 2013, and Anning et al 2009). Fortunately there are many primary schools and early years settings who see the value of incorporating the outdoors into their everyday practice.

One approach which has gained moment in recent years in the UK and which can be used with all ages is Forest School. O'Brien (2009:45) defines Forest school as an 'inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences in a woodland environment.' Central to this approach is the notion of experiential and sensory learning where 'conceptions of situation and interaction are inseparable from each other' (Dewey 1938:43). Knight (2011) presents case studies on the benefits of using the Forest School approach with teenagers and young adults and the impact on their emotional and social development. Brady (2011) also discusses the success of using the natural environment to break down barriers, overcome apprehension and secure group cohesion when working with addicts. Murray and O'Brien (2005) identify the 'ripple effects' where the influence of Forest school spreads outwards and begins to involve families and friends. This was also the case in Brady's study where clients were observed sharing their newly found knowledge with their wider families, adopting the same techniques as the leaders who had been working closely with them. These findings demonstrate the potential for generating a sense of community and wider cultural involvement with any age group. Lugg (2007) considers how outdoor experiential pedagogy might also cause a 'ripple' effect' in developing sustainability-literate citizens.

There are case studies such as those presented by the Outdoors for All programme run by Natural England (2012-14) which chart the success of projects to break down barriers and involve different groups in society to engage with practical outdoor experiences. These include the involvement of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, people from urban deprived areas and people with disabilities. These studies recognise that many members of BAME communities connect strongly to their outdoor experiences in their countries of origin rather than in the UK, few having ventured very far outside of their local area in England, with many not even visiting their local green spaces. There is however, limited research and literature which explores using outdoor pedagogy with adults or within Higher Education, so whilst the value of this in practice can be noted, it is difficult to find a distinct theoretical basis for the work. Rickinson (2001) notes the limited reference to learning theory in the literature about outdoor learning. Pedagogical approaches outdoors can be seen to be influenced by experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and theories of embodied and situated learning (Wenger, 1998) and from environmental psychology (Gibson 1986, Kaplan 1989). Indeed, Rea and Waite (2009) suggest that socio cultural and learning theories widely applied to research

with young children are now appearing in research in the field of outdoor education. Thus interdisciplinary approaches become established and boundaries become blurred as we move beyond the dualisms of outdoors/inside and childhood/ adulthood (Lester and Maudsley 2007, Prout 2005). If play in the natural environment can be recognised to contribute to a child's sense of identity and belonging in their world, then we should consider the extent that this influence could pervade into adulthood.

Despite the growth in the UK of outdoor and adventure degree courses, the opportunity to harness the natural world as a resource for teaching and learning with adults in Higher Education in England has not been widely taken up outside of outdoor and environmental programmes. The outdoor environment is ripe for developing social, interactive, active, sensory and creative learning approaches, as well as providing a context for teaching about environmental and conservational issues. Lugg (2007) however, suggests that the extent to which Education for Sustainable Development is incorporated into initial teacher education is entirely dependent on the motivation of individual institutions. Rickinson et al. (2004) acknowledge the importance of higher education institutions utilising outdoor pedagogical approaches in the training of undergraduates and student teachers, yet the necessity of developing the understanding of trainee teachers in these approaches is not represented in the Teachers' Standards (2011). Dillon et al (2005) and Nundy, Dillon and Dowd (2009) identify the importance of supporting teacher confidence in using the outdoors as an environment for learning. It is undeniable that the education of those working most closely with the next generation is vital if we want to break down negative cycles and transmit positive approaches to the outdoors.

At Nottingham Trent University, three education related courses utilise the natural environment to teach students about the importance of nurturing and supporting children's interaction with nature and natural play spaces. Many students on these courses note the restricted nature of their own contact with nature as children. The paucity of many young adult's engagement with the outdoors is noted by Moss (2012) who cites the work of Key in charting the decline in the natural history knowledge of young people at all levels from primary through to postgraduate students. Indeed, Bebbington (2005) has found that most 'A Level' Biology students can identify no more than three wild plants.

As university tutors, we attempt to provide engaging experiences which embrace challenge, risk, and opportunity, and which provide discursive space indoors and outside. These ideas resonate with the pedagogical approaches adopted by educators in Reggio Emilia and New Zealand. We imbue the environment with such significance that it becomes 'the third teacher' provoking a wealth of possibilities as learners interact with people, places and things (Malaguzzi, 1993, Craft et al 2007). Waite and Pratt (2011) propose a relational pedagogical model where learning opportunities are created through the interaction of people, place and other. Thus place is credited with an active role in contributing to learning. People form close attachments and associations with places which make them meaningful, to individuals and groups. As tutors we believe that natural resources, available in abundance in outdoor environments, enable more creativity to take place. Nicholson's (1971) theory of loose parts suggests that features that are moveable and malleable are more open ended and can be combined in many different ways and therefore possess more potential. Fundamental to the discussion about environments is the idea that what is provided by the learning environment has the potential to influence, extend and support the type of learning that takes place.

It is important that students on these courses spend a significant amount of time immersed in the outdoor environment, and to feel safe and secure enough to be able to begin to engage in, and with the space as a 'site for democratic and ethical practice' (Moss and Petrie 2002:2). Our overall aim is to create a teaching and learning space in which we are able to gently disrupt student's thinking, thereby "*opening up new possibilities and expectations, alternative enquiries and solutions, opportunities for new understandings and new ways of seeing*" (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 1999:17)

We are concerned to transmit values about how we hope the students will work with children through our pedagogy. Adopting a socio constructivist approach, tutors act as facilitators, sharing power with the learners and engaging in dialogue to develop shared meaning in the learning experiences offered. There is a high degree of responsiveness in sessions with tutors acting to model practice, observe interactions and support the development of technical skills, all of which encourage students to develop positive attitudes to the outdoors. For some students, the effect of these sessions is transformative. Student evaluations indicate that these experiences are physically and intellectually stimulating, interactive and motivating. Indeed, observations of students working outdoors demonstrate high levels of involvement (Laevers and Moons 1997) and concentration. At times students can be seen to have achieved a 'flow-like' state (Csikszentmihályi 1990). Such sessions can allow students to expend a lot of physical energy yet can also afford 'thinking space' and time for students to deeply relax, reflect and free their imagination. Beard et al (2007) suggest that educators in Higher Education need to pay closer attention to the affective aspects of education and attempt to further understand the role of emotion in educative encounters in order to fully support the social integration of students and thereby secure their full engagement. Waite (2010) explores the pedagogical value of enjoyment and its affective and motivational qualities. She cites research which demonstrates how positive emotional states enhance learning and retention of memory and consider that the outdoors has rich potential to support high levels of personal engagement and enjoyment.

In conclusion then, it would appear that the LINC project has the potential to contribute a cross disciplinary approach to the limited body of research literature available which concerns the exploration of effective outdoor pedagogy with adults. It is certain that the outdoors environment possesses immense potential for all age groups as an innovative learning and teaching space. It allows children, students and teachers to transcend the boundaries and hierarchies of the classroom walls and foregrounds active exploration, interaction and genuine communication and connection with place, people and ideas and can be a useful tool to facilitate cultural transmission and the exchange of values.

References

- Anning, A., (2009) The Co-construction of an early childhood curriculum *In* Anning, J. Cullen and M. Fleer (eds) *Early Childhood Education: Society and Culture* London: Sage 2009 pp 67-80
- Beard, C. Clegg, S. and Smith, K., (2007) Acknowledging the affective in higher education. *British Educational Research Journal* 33:2 pp235-252
- Beard, C. (2009) *Space to Learn? Learning Environments in Higher Education* . Hospitality, leisure, Sport

and Tourism network . http://www-new1.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/Documents/subjects/hlst/e3_space_to_learn.pdf

Bebbington, A. (2005) The Ability of A Level students to name plants. *Journal of Biological Education* 39:2 pp63-67

Brady, M., (2011) Addicts and Forest School. In Knight, S., *Forest School for All*. London: Sage 2011 pp181-194

Craft, A.; Cremin, T.; Burnard, P. and Chappell, K. (2007). Developing creative learning through possibility thinking with children aged 3-7. In: Craft, A.; Cremin, T.; and Burnard, P. eds. *Creative Learning 3-11 and How We Document It*. London: Trentham 2007

Csikszentmihályi, M., (1990) *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* New York: HarperCollins

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P. & Pence, A. (1999) *Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care: Postmodern Perspectives*. London: Falmer Books

Dewey. J., (1938) *Experience and Education*. New York: Touchstone

Dillon, J. et al (2005) *Engaging and learning with the outdoors*. National Foundation for Educational Research <http://www.bath.ac.uk/cree/resources/OCR.pdf>

Gibson (1986) *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum

Great Britain. Department for Education (2014) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. Runcorn: Department for Education.

Great Britain. Department for Education. (2011). *Teachers' Standards* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

Kaplan, R. and Kaplan, S. (1989) *The Experience of Nature: A psychological perspective*. New York: Cambridge

Kolb D. A., (1984) *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Knight, S., (2011) *Forest School for All*. London: Sage

Laevers F. and Moons J., (1997) *Enhancing well-being and involvement in children. An introduction in the ten action points* [videotape]. Leuven, Belgium: Centre for Experiential Education.

Learning and Teaching Scotland (2010) *A Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum*. SQA. Available via: www.scotland.gov.uk

Lester, S. and Maudsley, M., (2007) *Play Naturally: A review of children's natural play*. London: National Children's Bureau on behalf of Play England

Lugg. A., (2007) Developing Sustainability-literate citizens through outdoor learning: possibilities for outdoor education in Higher Education. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning* 7:2 pp97-112

Northern Ireland Curriculum., (2011) *Understanding the Foundation Stage* Belfast: CCEA Available via: http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/foundation_stage/

- Malaguzzi, L. (1993). For an education based on relationships, *Young Children*, 49(1), 9-12
- Moss, S. (2012) *Natural Childhood*. National Trust. www.nationaltrust.org.uk
- Moss, P. & Petrie, P. (2002) *From Children's Services to Children's Spaces. Public Policy, Children and Childhood*. London: RoutledgeFalmer
- Murray and O'Brien (2005) *Such enthusiasm-a joy to see: An evaluation of Forest school in England*. Report to the Forestry Commission by the New Economics Foundation and Forest Research
- Nicholson, S., (1972) The Theory of Loose Parts, An important principle for design methodology. *Studies in Design Education Craft & Technology*. Vol. 4, No. 2
- Nundy, S. Dillon, J. and Dowd, P., (2009) Improving and encouraging teacher confidence in out-of classroom learning: the impact of the Hampshire Trailblazer project on 3-13 curriculum practitioners', *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education* 37:1, pp61-73
- O'Brien, L., (2009) Learning Outdoors: the Forest School approach. *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 37:1. pp 45-60
- Monitor of engagement with the natural environment survey: Difference in access to the natural environment between social groups in the adult English population. Outdoors for All* (2014) Natural England
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6502695238107136>
- Prout A. (2005) *The Future of Childhood*. Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Rea, T. and Waite, S., (2009) International Perspectives on outdoor and experiential learning. *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 37:1, pp.1-4
- Rickinson, M. (2001). Learners and learning in environmental education: a critical review of the evidence. *Environmental Education Research*, 7(3), 207-320.
- Rickinson, M., J. Dillon, K. Teamey, M. Morris, M.Y. Choi, D. Sanders, and P. Benefield. 2004. *A review of research on outdoor learning*. Preston Montford, UK: Field Studies Council.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Stenberg Fou, R., (2012) Samhällsorientering på modersmål i Östergötland
www.squooosh.se/images/uploads/content/pdf/rapport_1_ver5.pdf
- Thomas, S. and Harding F. (2011) The role of play: play outdoors as the medium and mechanism for wellbeing, learning and development. In White, J., *Outdoor Provision in the Early Years*. London: Sage 2011, pp12-22
- Waite, S., (2010) Teaching and learning outside the classroom: personal values, alternative pedagogies and standards. *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 39:1, pp.65-82
- Waite, S. (2011) *Children Learning Outside the Classroom from Birth to eleven*. London: Sage
- Welsh Assembly Government (2008) *Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year olds in Wales*. Available via:

http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/earlyyearshome/foundation_phase/foundationphasepractitioners/frameworkchildlearning/?lang=en

Wenger, E.,(1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Wood, E., (2013) *Play, Learning and the Early Childhood Curriculum*. 3rd edition London: Sage

Evaluation of the LINC Project

By Lis Reinholdt Kjeldsen

Evaluation of the project has been valued highly in order to ensure the results and choice of methods and activities for the test-runs and the syllabus. The evaluation has been systematic, valuating, focusing and targeted toward future decisions, which reflects the four fundamental dimensions in the room of evaluation theory (Dahler-Larsen, 2010). It has been of great importance to make sure that the evaluation data in each country had a good standard of reference for the project to get reliable statements. The evaluation results are gathered, analyzed, interpreted and concluded in order to produce a syllabus usable for future education of communicators working in the field of training newcomers with the use of nature and cultural encounters.

The evaluation in the project had a focus on three levels:

- Participants' level: background, experience, usability and satisfaction with the relevance of the course in the test-runs
- Partners' evaluation in relation to the goals of each test-run
- External evaluation in relation to the goals of each test-run and the project

This description of the evaluation work in the project will be following the chronological order of the project work from preparation and completion of the national test-run, preparation and completion of the international test-run, and the additional interviews.

Interview with future participants in the national test-run

In order to have good background knowledge about the communicators, it was decided to do an interview in each country to get to understand the communicators' work with newcomers. The interview had a focus on background, education and use of the outdoors in their daily work. These interviews were semi-structured in order to be able to compare the answers from the four countries, but also to give room for national differences. The semi-structured interview gives the interviewer a possibility to follow the informant into stories and statements not expected, but also to return to the prefabricated questions designed for the interview. (Brinkman, 2010)

An interview guide was designed to give both exact answers as well as open up the interview to unexpected answers for the project partners to use in planning the national test-runs. All countries performed at least one interview and several countries did more. The interview provided the project with valuable information, which the partners analyzed, compared, translated into English and discussed at a meeting. The results made the consortium decide the actual goals for the national test-run.

National test-run

The goals for the national test-runs are to enlighten and inspire the communicators to understand how Outdoor Learning can enhance learning processes. To reach these goals we will work with approaches such

as:

- Creativity
- Variation in methods
- Interaction
- Creative use of different places for learning
- Multi-sensory

Expected outcomes for communicators:

- Positive experience and inspiration
- Tools and methods for Outdoor learning
- Ability to develop Outdoor learning in own practice

In each country, the national test-run was performed in relation to the common goals and evaluated with an evaluation form designed to answer questions about the participants' background, teaching experience and interest in using nature and cultural encounters in their future work. The form was a multiple choice, because this design leads to comparable answers. There was also a possibility to supplement in own words in order for the participant to deliver ideas or comments to the project. The partners translated the joint designed evaluation form into the national language before use.

All participants filled out the form in the end of the course, and the partners gathered the information and made a summary in English to the consortium to use in the development of the international test-run.

The external evaluator Lucie Kalkusová from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport at Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic visited the national test-run in Italy and did observations, which she shared with the consortium at the meeting in Italy in June 2014.

International test-run

To develop the goals for the international test-runs and didactical framework, all experiences and new knowledge from the four national test-runs were included. The goals were adjusted to respond to the overall focus of the project:

The goals for the international test-runs are to enlighten and inspire the communicators to understand how Outdoor learning can enhance learning processes. To reach these goals we will work with variation in teaching approaches such as:

- Creative use of different places for learning
- Multi-sensory learning
- Experiential learning
- Interactive learning

Expected outcomes for communicators:

- Positive experience and inspiration
- Knowledge about some outdoor activities that can be used in their daily practice

International partners were participating in each country with an activity, which led to four activities tested in all countries.

The evaluation form used in the national test-run, were evaluated and developed to give better answers and clear statements. All participants filled out an evaluation form at the end of the course.

At the international test-run in each country, the partners contributed with observations in an informal form. The participant observation took place actively and the partners were a part of the course as well as observants. This gave the partners a good understanding of the participants' experiences and expressions in the activities. (Thagaard, 2003)

In order to value each activity, the consortium developed an activity grid, to value the activities' ability to fulfill the goals for the international test-run. The partners filled in the activity grid after each test-run.

The external evaluator from Charles University, Prague visited the international test-run in Sweden and did observations, which she shared with the consortium after the event.

In each country, the partners gathered the evaluation forms from the participants, the observations from partners and external evaluator and the activity grid to a summary presented to the consortium at a meeting in Denmark in December 2014. Information gathered from the evaluations of both the national and international test-runs as well as the interview showed to be very useful to make the syllabus and other course materials.

Interview after the test-runs

After the final gathering of the evaluation materials, it was decided to ask some participants in each country for their experience from the course, and to find out if they actually used the new knowledge of Outdoor learning perspectives. The interviews were semi-structured with an interview guide. The intention was to open up for deep reflections and thoughts, for the consortium to be able to understand the perspectives for the participants and the future value for the other communicators.

References:

Brinkmann, S., & Tanggaard, L. (2010). *Kvalitative Metoder*. Hans Reitzels forlag.

Dahler-Larsen, P. (2010). 8.Evaluering. I S. Brinkmann, & L. Tanggaard, *Kvalitative metoder - en grundbog*. Hans Reitzels forlag.

Thagaard, T. (2003). *Systematik og indlevelse- en indføring i kvalitativt arbejde*. Akademisk forlag.

Guidelines and Didactical Material

There is a huge interest in descriptions of exercises or activities that can be developed and adapted. We will here present some exercises that have been selected. We have tried them, developed them after evaluations and made them adaptable for the target groups. Remember that all persons are individual and that all groups are different, with different needs. Implement both in- and outdoor activities slowly and continuously. It is important that you as a teacher/leader of the group listen to the group, let them talk, let them try new things and of course most importantly, let them grow into the new society – be a part of it by visiting, learning and getting information about the new society and different environments as culture, nature and history. One example can be to get information about the right of public access; out in nature and in practice, being informed and working with what you are allowed to do and what you are not allowed to do. Communication – the dialogue – is important as well as “learning by doing” in different settings.

Examples of exercises

1. Geographical map

Description

Use a long rope and work on the ground. Make a map of the new home country with the rope. Show by standing on different places what you know about the new country. What places have you visited and can tell something about and what places do you want to visit? Work with the map in a lot of areas, for example with the cardinal points, counties, provincial flowers, the capital, historical sites, etc.

Subject aims

The aims of this exercise are conversing and using the new language in interaction with others, and getting knowledge about and from each other, getting awareness about the influences places have on our personal and social identity and education, and about values places have in them. It is a good ice-breaking activity, useful to share personal information in a playful way; facilitators can participate in the activity as well. It is also a good opportunity to get to know the new home country in a more concrete way.

Preparation

You need a long rope and a flat area.

Time and group size

Half an hour, 5–20 participants

Implementation

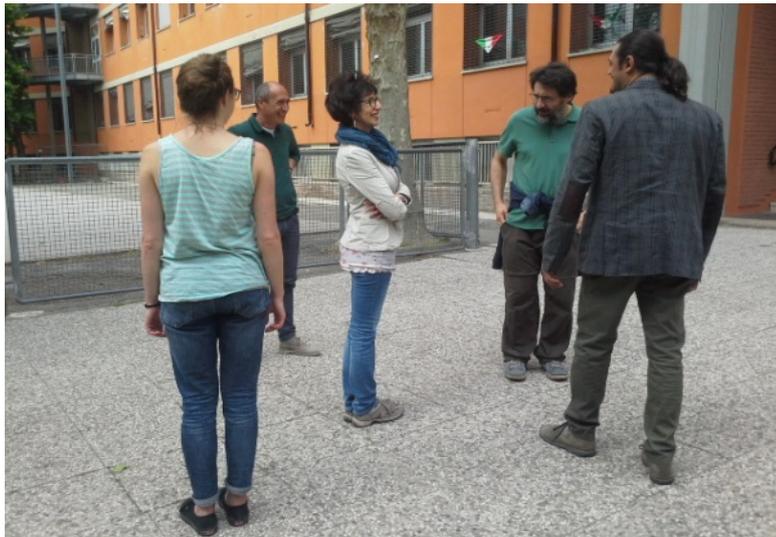
Everyone stands in different places on the map. Discussions about where you stand, and why, are important. The teacher asks everybody to tell the group where he/she is and to briefly comment on it. Everyone has to explain and work with the new language and with the places.

After that, the participants are asked to move to a place where they have not been – a place they want to see or know more about.

Conclusion

Finally participants are encouraged to have a circle-time and comment more in depth; usually it comes up how important places are in building personal story. This is a very social task, where the participants get to know each other and can enjoy interesting personal stories.

It is an easy exercise. There are multiple learning outcomes: raised awareness and knowledge about place-based values and their educational influences; a better understanding about self and others. It is an excellent team-building activity. The opportunity to express something about ourselves through our bodies, just standing on a place. Last but not least, a common group experience is created and can be shared.



2. The rope

Description

The participants are behind a rope lying on the ground. The facilitator asks everybody to stand in a row all along the rope, e.g. from left to right, following a precise indication. For example, the facilitator can ask participants to put themselves in alphabetical order or by number of siblings, or by distance from home to workplace, and so on.

Subject aims

Facilitate communication, interpersonal knowledge, wellbeing. The activity does not require good language knowledge, so every participant can express his/her characteristic through standing. It gives the opportunity to know each other in a short time, and we can also feel how staying outside lends a nice feeling of freedom.

Preparation

It's very simple: find a private area, unfold a rope on the ground and bring the participants there.

Time and group size

20 minutes, 5–20 participants

Implementation

Can be implemented in urban or natural environments, in an accessible area where people feel safe, comfortable and free to express themselves; the facilitators can participate in the activity as well, giving their leader role to the participants who wish to catch both common and particular feature from people in the group.

Conclusion

It is a good ice-breaking activity; an easy way to get information. Participants can discover a lot about others in a short time, and if there is some curiosity they can ask the person in order to get more in-depth details. Participants can also be encouraged to enjoy the experience by taking the facilitator role, who can in his/her turn take part in the activity.

3. Cooking

Description

Make your own bread and a warm soup outdoors.

Subject aims

The aims for this exercise are, for example, collaboration with others, discussion about how to cook food and how to bake, conversing and using the new language in interaction with others, reading recipes and getting knowledge about and from each other.

Preparation

All the materials for cooking and baking as bowls, ladles and ingredients must be prepared. You need wood and matches and a nice and safe place to have a fire on and of course water to extinguish the fire with.

Time and group size

About 1,5–2 hours, 5–15 participants

Implementation

If possible, let the group make a list of what ingredients they need and let the participants buy the ingredients. Inform them about safety and rules regarding fire and fireplaces. Decide who will be the fire guard/responsible. Everyone has a task, but let the participants try both the bread baking and the soup cooking, and decide how long the preparation takes so that everything is ready at the same time.

Conclusion

This is a social task, where the participants get to know each other and can enjoy a good meal together outside in the fresh air. It involves personal, social, multi-sensory and creative learning, where the environment makes participants feel relaxed. Eating outdoors is one of the most interesting things you can do with a group, because it tells you a lot about the different people you have in the group. They talk about themselves and about their interests, they have ideas of how to bake and about cooking and how it works it in the countries they come from. It is a task that really builds a group and everyone can do something. It is about trust in one's own ability, sharing knowledge and having fun together.



4. Finding objects

Description

Pick up two objects from nature. The first one is something that reminds you of your home country/childhood and the other object is something in the new country that you know something about or want to know about.

Subject aims

To work with the present and the future. Connect things to your own life, detect new things and get a feeling of relation to the new environments that are presented. Get knowledge about the new places and get to know other people's life stories about what they for example use a herb for, in their home country.

Preparation

No preparation at all. Just being outdoors in an environment that you have decided that the group gets to know and get knowledge about.

Time and group size

1–2 hours, 15–20 participants

Implementation

You can be in a forest, in town, in a park or at a lake – anywhere. Take the time to implement this exercise. The participants are given time for telling the group their stories about the objects. There may be a doctor or someone else interested in medicinal plants for example – give the participants time to explain and share their knowledge. Everyone can say something.

Conclusion

Be prepared that it could be very emotional, many laughs, many thoughts but also wellbeing and feelings of belonging.

5. Nature Lottery

Description

With sticks or chalk, the group makes 9 spaces in a lottery plate. Participants find objects in nature for each space. Now switch with another group and find the objects on the new lottery plate. This game can be played

in many different places.

Subject aims

To get knowledge and awareness of details in the specific surroundings

Preparation

None

Time and group size

10–20 minutes. 2–20 participants, divided in small groups. Time to create the plate: 5–10 min. Time to solve the plate is the same, or you can make a competition.

Implementation

Make sure that each lottery plate is placed with a little distance to others. Show how the Lottery plate should look like with different objects. Point out the area where objects can be collected, and give a timeframe.

Conclusion

Easy to do, and gives the participants time to focus on details in nature.



6. Community walk

Description

Walking slowly through a short bit of street, you can learn a lot about history, community and individuals' influences on the street and the city. In smaller groups, max. 3 persons in each, participants find objects in the street that reflect the topic for the walk, for example history, community, individual creativity and so on. Ask questions about your find and suggest answers. Collect your finds with photos, drawings or write them down to present to the group or to work with later.

Subject aims

To see learning subjects in practice and discover details which are usually not seen

Preparation

Bring camera or paper and pencil

Time and group size

15–30 minutes per subjects and groups of 3 people

Implementation

Explain the task and present examples, like the drain cover tells about the community solving a problem for the inhabitants. How many are there? The shape and aesthetic form can also be discussed.

Conclusion

The activity can be presented in different places with a different focus for learning. It points out that details in the street can tell us a lot.

7. Time travel

Description

The group will together tell the story about a historic item, place or building. You start by telling a very short story about the place or item you are going to work with. If it is an old tree you can start by asking how old they think this tree is and you can discuss how you can estimate the age. When you agree on a reasonable age you can start.

Divide the group into smaller groups and ask each group to use drama to illustrate what can have happened here during the centuries.

For example; if we have gathered close to an old oak, maybe 600 years of age, you can ask the first group to show us what may have happened here when the oak was still an acorn. The next group can show us what happened when the tree was 100 years old and so on.

The groups work on their presentations for 10-15 minutes and then we start from the beginning and make the time travel together.

Subject aims

The aim is to get a connection to the place and what you can find there and to create an interest in the local history. It is also a group task and helps the group get together.

Preparation

It is important in this activity that the starting point is something interesting and that you know or can estimate the age of the item or the building. If you work with a building it is good if you have a story to tell about it. It has to include elements of passing time.

Time and group size

Approximately 9–30 participants. You have to be able to divide the group in at least 3 smaller groups.

Implementation

For someone not familiar with the area, it is important to create relations to the surroundings. This is one way to work with interesting places and items to create these relations. It is also a good starting point for learning more about the area.

Conclusion

In our experience, this is a very good activity for making people familiar with the surroundings and to create an interest in local history and society.

8. What is a home?

Description

Divide the participants into smaller groups, 3–5 persons in each group. During a walk and talk the groups

have to decide how to describe a home. What are the three most important words? The group has to discuss until they can agree. This part takes approximately 10–15 minutes. When the participants in the smaller groups have found the three words and have returned to the starting point, they will get the next task. They will have to find a place where they can show what is the most important in a home by using their three words. They can show it by using drama, pantomime, song or other creative ways.

Subject aims

The aim is to show that we often have common ideas of what is most important to be able to call a place a home. Most of us need shelter, love and food as similar things. This exercise can also be the starting point for interesting discussions about needs and expectations when you arrive in a new place.

Preparation

Not much preparation is needed, you have to find a nice place where the groups can take a walk and find places where they can show their ideas of a home.

Time and group size

6–30 participants. Approximately 45 minutes to one hour. It is also possible to do it with bigger groups but it will take quite a long time.

Implementation

This kind of activity can be the starting point for discussions about needs and expectations in different situations as well as creating a feeling of common understanding in a group.

Conclusion:

After trying this activity in different groups, we found that talking about a home and what is necessary to call a place a home gives the participants a possibility to talk about important things such as feelings and safety in a new country. It also opened for creativity and group development.

9. Making your own nature CD

Description

Many people are so busy in their everyday lives that they seldom sit and do nothing, listen and really absorb their surroundings. This activity encourages noticing details in the environment and, depending on the type of group you have, can be a mindful or more fun exercise. It is always surprising how many participants find it difficult or impossible to be alone and silent for 5 minutes.

Subject aims

The activity focuses on being in the now, to be mindful. It makes us aware of the sounds that surround us, making us sit and listen and contemplate.

Preparation

The activity can be implemented in both natural and urban surroundings. Minimal and portable materials are used, pens and small papers. Using the device of a paper CD helps participants focus upon the task. Sit mats can make the group more comfortable in natural areas if they are unused to sitting on logs or the ground.

Time and group size

The entire activity takes around 20 minutes and can be implemented with any size of group.

Implementation

Can be implemented in urban or natural environments and if possible, in diverse, varied soundscapes. It is important to make the group feel comfortable with the activity; facilitators should participate in the activity as well.

The participants walk silently behind the facilitator and are silently shown an area where to sit (or stand). If possible the participants should be placed so that they barely see the others or if they need more confidence; seen but well-spaced out. Participants are encouraged to relax and enjoy the experience and listen closely to the dimensions of the soundscape surrounding them.

The participants record on their paper CD the sounds they hear around them, not by writing names but by onomatopoeic letters, words and pictures in a circular fashion.

The group is left for approximately 5 minutes and then silently collected by the facilitator. It is good to remain silent until the end point is reached.

A concert in a public or more private area where the group collectively sing (play) their CDs. This can be recorded and played back to the group or sent to them later.

Conclusion

The strongest memories we have are connected to our senses: smells, tastes and sounds. These are often the senses we consciously use the least in our daily lives. The activity does not require a common language and all participants can express themselves through sound. We are made mindful of our surroundings – are we always aware of our surroundings – what do they sound like – did we hear something surprising? We explore where we are through sound. Is it familiar to us? We can connect to the place. It gives the opportunity to stop and be silent, mindful and inactive. Although five minutes is a short time, many participants can find it challenging. A common experience is created and can be shared. We can implement

the sharing in a public arena, thereby becoming '*seen*' in a public space. What are we doing – is it theater, a performance or something else?

10. NETworking your group – exploring your new home environment

Description

This activity can be adapted for a variety of purposes. In this example, it is possible for participants to express themselves through a visual medium. Participants are free to reveal how much or how little of themselves according to how comfortable they feel in the group. Deeper meaning is gained when the group feels comfortable and can share issues with each other.

Subject aims

To work collaboratively in a tactile way exploring the local surroundings and appropriate themes given by the facilitator. Here we can also give a narrative to the group if we wish to develop the activity around storytelling.

Preparation

A long length of thin rope/strong string. Prepare the exercise so that a thicker string is at the top tied between two trees. Hang 3m long strands doubled-up (therefore hanging 1.5m downwards) at 10-15 cm intervals along the top. A suitable net length is around 2 meters.

Time and group size

If the group is large, many nets can be made in smaller groups and then sewn together to create a large colourful display. For good active participation, a suitable good group size is 8 people per net. Depending on the amount of reflection you wish to involve in this exercise you can use 25–45 minutes on the exercise.

Implementation

Ask the group to knot the rope so that each nearest string is knotted with a simple knot (such as a figure of 8 knot) forming triangles along the top and sides and diamonds in the centre. It is important to progress together in horizontal levels, taking care to make uniform sized holes for aesthetic reasons.

At the same time as the group is working kinaesthetically tying the knots, they can discuss 2–4 appropriate questions/problems/issues given by the facilitator. The discussion should then be caught in the net either by:

- a) writing key words and hanging them in the net or
- b) using natural materials from the surroundings make an aesthetically pleasing display woven into the net

representing the discussion and conclusions made.

Examples of issues discussed in the project are: the meaning of “home”, “safety”, “new home country” or other topics deemed relevant and meaningful.

When all groups have completed the task, they can introduce the individual nets to each other.

Conclusion

The result is a visually pleasing artistic representation of issues and concerns of the participants. The net can be left for a short time whilst other activities are taking place in the park area as an exhibition of the group’s work and then taken back to their place of work as a reminder of the workshop and discussion.

If relevant questions are given, many of our groups have made quite powerful statements and reflections. Similarities in experience and backgrounds are made apparent whilst still keeping the choice of openness firmly on the individual participants without pressure.

The beautiful visual creations when displayed in a public natural setting attract attention from passers-by turning the participants into displaying artists developing pride and societal participation.

We have also used this activity to display photographs taken by participants on previous workshops or at home.



Deep Interviews – Follow-up Questions

Goal:

We expected that the project would lead to a better integration in the long term, thereby creating greater equality among the population.

To find out what the target groups liked about the exercises, all project partners made deep interviews with some of the communicators, to find out if they had used exercises in their daily work with the newly arrived immigrants and if so, in what way.

Summary of the deep interviews

Have you been teaching outdoors since the Outdoor education days took place?

In all partner countries, the target group had taken the newly arrived immigrants outdoors and tried to implement some of the exercises that were practiced in the test-runs. They liked it a lot and thought the methods had opened their eyes in many ways. They had used the senses and nature objects but also the whole society by, for example, visiting museums and working both with in- and outdoor activities/ information in a mix.

What exercises have you used?

Sweden: We have visited market places, recycling stations, been to the forest, and worked with the right of public access. We have also built a map of Sweden with ropes and have talked about places they know and places they would like to visit. We have worked with nature materials and have implemented some collaboration exercises such as “turn the tarp”.

Italy: We have oriented in the city center, walked around with a city map and visited historical environments to investigate and find out more about the places, museums and a 2000 years old Roman Villa. We have also visited parks for outdoor living and picnics. For cultural experiences, we have tried to get free tickets to bring the groups to the theater.

Denmark: We have walked in the forest to talk about difficult subjects – stories from the participant’s childhood. Dreams for the future have also been discussed. The dialogue has been important and we have also done, for example, “Nature Lottery” to find out more about the local nature.

Finland: We have worked with a boys' club, and we have made two trips to the great outdoors landscape. Once we went for a relaxed picnic and once for an exploration of nature and a big cave.

Why have you used Outdoor learning in your work?

To create good relations between the participants, to learn at the “right” places, to get the participants to open themselves in a group and discuss, ask questions and learn from each other. Outdoor learning is a complement to traditional learning where the participants' needs are in focus and it gives opportunities to

have enough space, peacefulness, a freedom to perform the tasks and it gives the participants a chance to let some extra energy out.

How have you worked?

By walking around in different environments and asking questions from the real world, exploring, observing, and using nature objects and other materials as ropes, the information about society has been easier to deliver. It has been a "walk and talk", with discussions along the way, and the newly arrived immigrants have got the chance to ask questions about what they have seen, heard, and what they could feel and smell. We have tried some minor hiking and discussions of the importance of fresh air. In the exploration of a cave, we had with us a semi-pro who helped us in and out.

What outdoor places have you used?

We have been outdoors in the nearest area behind the building, in a schoolyard, on a football field, in the forest, at a market place, at a recycling area, in a garden between bushes, downtown, in city parks, in the woods and in a cave.

What values do you see in Outdoor learning?

We can see a connection to reality and it is good for the health to be outdoors. It is interesting, encouraging and exciting. It is good for the learning process to be outdoors; it opens for new areas in learning and it is an opening to each other. Relationships can become much more effective and supportive. Outdoor learning is an active and informal process and can lead to interesting levels of cognitive reflections. It is also a good chance to understand that there is a lot to be explored and understood.

What obstacles and possibilities can you see with Outdoor learning?

By communicating well, you can overcome most obstacles. You must be aware that not all people come from the same culture, and they have different attitudes to outdoor life. You have to be interested as a teacher, to use Outdoor learning and be aware of its values. Time can be an obstacle and the weather can make it harder to use outdoor settings, but the possibilities are endless, and we would have explored them even further if we had the time.

Are you planning to use Outdoor learning in the future? In what way can you use Outdoor learning?

Much in the same way, but more often. Yes, I have a plan to go to the forest, continue and develop the work – not only talk indoors. I would like the newly arrived immigrants to get more active by doing, discussing and learning in different places. I think that some more guidelines and didactic material, descriptions of exercises or activities should be proposed, even if they are not appropriate as they are, but to develop and adapt. It would be more than welcome!

Final Reflections

By Katarina Johansson

The two years we have worked with this project are over. We have learned a lot from each other, we have got a view of integration and Outdoor learning together and we have planned, implement and evaluated the different parts of the project in order to keep the progress going on. Integration is a big discussion area in all of Europe and we have worked with one perspective of how integration and the information about the society can be more effective for the newly arrived immigrants, by using Outdoor learning.

One of the most important parts when we are working with integration and information about the society is that it has to be based on individual needs and on health. The definition of health from the WHO is: health is a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing (Lavesson and Nilsson, ref. Jensen et al. 201, p. 92) which presupposes the presence of the person. Many of the new arrivals are not present, they come from a war-affected area, they are traumatized and do not feel well. The information about the society is hard to give and to take in because the communicators do not reach the newly arrived immigrants. Antonovsky (1987) developed theories about SOC – a sense of coherence in a context where we feel needed, feel that we are part of the context and that the world seems comprehensible, easy to handle and that there is a meaning. Based on the feeling of understanding, you can then process and manage your own difficulties.

The motivation to learn about a new society can be different. Some newly arrived immigrants have chosen to stay and build a new life in the new country, and some people want to return back home. The motivation for learning is important. Gärdenfors (2010) argues that internal motivation is achieved by exploring and that curiosity inspires feelings of joy and pride in their learning and their skills, and that in group interaction they feel involved in the pursuit of common goals.

Nature settings affect our ability to concentrate. In nature we talk about spontaneous attention, which is easier to handle than focused attention.

In spontaneous attention, the brain takes only what it wants and that stimulate recuperate (Tenngart Ivarsson, ref. Jensen et al. p. 79). Here is an example of the society and health information in Sweden, divided in different themes as:

1. Getting to Sweden
2. Living in Sweden
3. To support themselves and develop in Sweden
4. To start a family and to live with children in Sweden
5. Individual rights and obligations
6. To influence in Sweden
7. To nurture their health in Sweden (health communicators)
8. Ageing in Sweden
9. Internet and payment services
10. Library

These themes are used in Östergötland, Sweden. For *To nurture their health in Sweden* – number seven –

the newly arrived immigrants only have two hours of physical activities with health communicators, for example. Here is a good reason why Outdoor learning can be useful, integrated into the society information.

In the national and international test-runs, we have met calm and nice people, who have been a little cautious before they know what is going to happen and then become more relaxed when they had worked for a while. There have been many laughs, discussions, and interaction in smaller groups and it has been useful to see how different places and objects can affect the possibilities to receive information. The nature and cultural environments that we have used in this project have also been a good opportunity for the communicators to learn new things about different places that they can use in the information to the newly arrived immigrants.

One conclusion is that Outdoor learning can be more effective to reach newly arrived immigrants and as Fägerstam points out; the educational potentials of experience- and place-based learning can be a link between outdoor and indoor learning (Fägerstam 2012)

Result

The results of this project are this handbook and the new syllabus we have developed. The course is available for communicators/teachers to apply for at Linköping University in Sweden, VIA University College in Denmark, NOVA in Finland and Bologna University in Italy. Here is the syllabus. Do not hesitate to contact us for more information.

www.liu.se/linc

References

Antonovsky, A (1987) *Unraveling the Mystery of Health: How People Manage Stress and Stay Well*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Fägerstam, E (2012) *Space and Place- Perspectives on Outdoor Teaching and Learning* Linköping University: LiU-tryck

Gärdenfors, P (2010) Gärdenfors, P (2010) *Lusten att förstå- om lärande på människans villkor* Stockholm: Natur och Kultur

Lavesson, L and Nilsson, K (ref. Ottosson, J m fl. 2011 s. 92) *Naturupplevelse och hälsa – forskningen visar vägen*, Malmö: Printus

Tengart Ivarsson, C (ref. Ottosson, J m fl. 2011 s. 79) *Naturupplevelse och hälsa – forskningen visar vägen*, Malmö: Printus

SYLLABUS

Outdoor Learning for Integration through Nature and Cultural Encounters

COURSE CATEGORY Single Subject Course

MAIN FIELD OF STUDY Outdoor Education

AIM OF THE COURSE

After completing the course student should have:

- knowledge about the theoretical foundations of Outdoor learning
- insight in and knowledge about using Natural and Cultural landscapes as resources for learning
- understanding of the benefits of exposure to Natural environments
- competence to plan, implement and evaluate Outdoor learning in their own practice

CONTENTS

The content of the course is Outdoor learning in theory and practice. Research about health and wellbeing by using Outdoor settings is a central part. By using Outdoor learning the participants will get experiences through creative, multisensory and experiential activities. Methods are introduced on how to use the surroundings, for understanding of the society, history, nature and culture. The students will get knowledge about how to plan, implement, develop and evaluate the activities in a practical way.

TEACHING

Instruction is given in the form of lectures, seminars and group work. The major part of the education is located in different outdoor landscapes. We make use of countryside settings close to centers of population as well as fully natural settings. The course assignments are carried out as group or individual work.

COURSE LITERATURE

The course literature is decided upon by the department in question.

Welcome to apply!