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POLISH OUTDOOR LEARNING CURRICULUM

aimed at activating women at risk of exclusion directed to Outdoor Trainers.

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POL CURRICULUM

Polish Outdoor Learning Curriculum

1st Edition – April 2023

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This publication was developed by *the Center for Innovative Education* in the scope of the Polish Outdoor Learning project, in partnership with Western Norway Research Institute (WNRI) under Grant Agreement no. **EOG/21/K4/W/0069**.

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Spis treści

CHAPTER I OUTDOOR LEARNING IN GENERAL

1.1 Embedded in CIE

The Center for Innovative Education – CIE is a foundation established in 2015. CIE's mission is to support the development of the society's quality of life by creating and finding, promoting and implementing good practices in the field of social innovation, mainly educational, in the following areas:

- activating people, especially those who are not active in the labour market or in education or who are at risk of exclusion;
- promoting entrepreneurship: mainly among social minorities and inhabitants of rural areas;
- protecting nature through active environmental education and cooperation with other institutions;
- supporting the development of employees and improving the quality of the labour market.

Our vision is to support people in such a way that they would be able and willing to make more conscious decisions about their own development path based on a better knowledge of themselves, their own strengths and talents, the ability to strengthen internal motivation and create an environment conducive to self-development. We believe that thanks to this, each of us will live better lives, and thanks to this we will be more engaged both socially and professionally.

CIE has 3 main recipients for its activities:

- groups at risk of social and/or economic exclusion - direct recipients (in the FOLM, Siła Bieszczad, Moc Warmii, Agrogen projects) and indirect recipients (in the New Education Forum events);
- educators, especially teachers of primary and secondary schools - direct recipients (trained as part of the Academy of Trainers Outdoor Learning (OL - Outdoor Education) and the MENTOR program and co-creating the content in the NEF+, SPARKS and MENTOR 2.0 projects);
- decision-makers at the local, regional and European level - direct recipients (e.g. those present at New Education Forum events) and indirect recipients (e.g. recommendations closing our projects).

CIE believes there is room for systemic solutions introduced at the level of regions, communes, villages or individual marginalized groups, their families and friends. Thanks to such approach, not only the individual, but the entire community learns, and the effects of learning (such as changes in attitudes, increased motivation, better communication, the ability to face changes) are maintained for a longer period of time. Further, such changes, if effective, should be supported by the governments at the national level.

The graphic below indicates the main end beneficiaries to which CIE addresses its main activities: people at risk of social exclusion, especially from rural areas and smaller towns. In orange we marked those groups with which CIE has the most experience working with.

In order to effectively help such diverse groups of beneficiaries stimulate their self-development, CIE needed to find a solution which we could apply directly when working with these target groups. An intensive outdoor course, embedded in a community learning concept seemed to provide the answer. It is informed by research from neuroscience, sociology and other disciplines. Also, thanks to its wilderness settings, this method was seen as more appealing than traditional courses. Further, authentic challenges faced in the outdoors require enhancement of responsibility, self-management, and other basic skills.

1.2 Polish Outdoor Learning traditions

Poland has a rich history of outdoor learning traditions passed down from generation to generation. These traditions, rooted in the culture and landscape of the country, played an important role in shaping the Polish national identity. One of the most popular of these is hiking, which is enjoyed by people of all ages and skill levels. Poland has a vast network of hiking trails that wind through its mountains, forests, and valleys. Hiking is not only a way to stay active and healthy, but it also provides an opportunity to experience the natural beauty of Poland.

Two of the most important outdoor learning traditions embedded in Polish education are the "wycieczki", or field trip and "kółko przyrodnicze," or nature club. Trips are usually chosen by students and include visits to historical sites, natural sites and cultural events. These trips give students the opportunity to learn about Polland's history, culture and natural environment outside the classroom. The

clubs are organized by schools and community groups and focus on exploring the natural world. Members of nature club go on hikes, learn about local flora and fauna, and participate in conservation activities. These clubs are an important way for young people in Poland to connect with nature and develop an appreciation for the environment.

The scouting has played the most important role in the development of outdoor learning capabilities among the Polish youth and has contributed to the country's national identity. The first scouting organizations in Poland were established in the early 20th century, shortly after the country regained its independence in 1918. The most prominent of these organizations was the Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego (ZHP), or the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association, which was founded in 1918.

The ZHP was initially inspired by the British scouting movement and focused on teaching young people practical skills, such as camping, hiking, and first aid. However, the organization quickly developed its own unique traditions and customs, which were influenced by Polish culture and history.

One of the most important scouting traditions in Poland is the "harcerski szlak," or scouting trail. This trail is a network of hiking routes that wind through Poland's mountains, forests, and valleys. The scouting trail is used by ZHP members as a way to connect with nature and develop their hiking and camping skills. The trail also provides an opportunity for scouts to learn about Poland's history and culture by visiting historical sites and cultural landmarks.

The ZHP also places a strong emphasis on community service and volunteerism. Scouts are encouraged to participate in service projects that benefit their local communities, such as cleaning up parks, planting trees, and assisting with local events. This focus on community service has helped to instill a sense of civic responsibility in Polish youth and has contributed to the country's strong tradition of volunteerism.

1.3 Norwegian friluftsliv tradition and the development of Outdoor learning

Outdoor learning can be understood through different perspectives. The way we behave and understand nature is formed through cultural practice and understandings. Outdoor learning as academic theory and practice is thus formed by the cultural context and has different forms in different nations.
In Norway, outdoor learning has its starting point in the cultural practice of friluftsliv. The concept of friluftsliv literally means “life in the free air” but is a collective term covering a variety of practices and meanings. The Government describes friluftsliv as a source of health and life quality and want more people to be involved in friluftsliv regularly. In Government White papers friluftsliv has been defined as: *«stay and physical activity in the open air in leisure time for the sake of change of milieu and nature experiences»* (White paper nr 18, 2015-2916).

Breivik (1978) has described friluftsliv as having two historical roots: The first root is tied to industrialization and the modern understanding of leisure, where an urban population influenced by international tourists started to use nature as a source of recreation. They started to go hiking and skiing for its own sake, for recreation. The second strand of the friluftsliv tradition is the continuation of pre-modern activities such as fishing, hunting and harvesting. Understanding Norwegian friluftsliv traditions thus means having an eye on both the traditional and the modern. This duality is still relevant in 2023 where the traditional activities have maintained their high level of participation, whilst modern activities such as river kayaking, backcountry skiing, kiting and ice climbing are increasingly becoming more popular, particularly among the younger generation (Dervo et al, 2014).

Norway is a country of big geographical area, with a rich and varied nature. A precondition for Norwegians' use and understandings of nature is the Allemannsrett- A public right to access uncultivated land. The right was built on old norms of travelling through nature in Norway and was ensured through an Act of Parliament from 1957, the Friluftsliv Act. It can be seen as a democratic right to wander over and use the wild lands for foraging and for recreation, but also comes with duties such as leaving no trace and respecting the local wildlife. The Allemannsrett has through generations formed a taken-for-granted relationship to moving freely in nature. It gives us the right bring our kids into the woods or mountains anywhere without considering who owns this place.

Friluftsliv is today integrated in kindergartens and schools at all levels, and there are large and active friluftsliv organizations. 91 % of the population answer that they are very (48%) or pretty (43%) interested in friluftsliv (Natur og miljøbarometeret, 2020), and 9 out of 10 Norwegians go hiking or other forms of friluftsliv (Natur og miljøbarometeret, 2020).

As friluftsliv is a wide concept, it is challenging to define its characteristics, but in academic research friluftsliv has been tied to «the practice of simplicity, enjoyment, recreation and aesthetic experiences» (Humberstone & Pedersen, 2001:27). The experience of nature is central, and there is a shared understanding that being in nature, silence and contemplation is good for you. The attitude is that you should not try to overcome nature, but rather to adapt to and understand nature. This can be seen as a bit of opposition to particularly an Anglo-American tradition in which mastery and survival is idealized. Friluftsliv has been part of higher education in Norway since 1968 and is today being taught at universities and colleges throughout the country. While friluftsliv in an educational setting was first oriented towards nature protection, fields of research today include pedagogical perspectives on friluftsliv, friluftsliv as a sociocultural phenomenon, friluftsliv and environmental protection and friluftsliv and health/outdoor learning.

While the government recognises that nature experiences and friluftsliv has health promoting effects and urges more hospitals and treatment institutions to use nature and friluftsliv activities as part of their treatment (White paper, nr 18, p. 79), outdoor learning/outdoor therapy is still new to more systematic investigations. A report from the Nordic council of Ministers (2007) describes that there have been many projects and aspirations but that the effects need to be better documented both from the perspective of health-promotion and rehabilitation.

There has been a growing professionalism since then, and more recent experiences are summed up in a forthcoming book by Fernee, Palucha, Olsen & Gabrielsen. They describe how outdoor therapy in Norway is formed not only by our friluftsliv traditions but also by our health services that are characterized by social democratic governance and values, plus the Allemansrett, giving us the right to move wherever we want to whenever we want to. They further argue that nature experience is central in Norwegian outdoor therapy, where the aim is not to overcome nature but rather to discover and take part in its rhythms (p.26). To have good experiences requires that we adapt to the environment we are in, and that we have the skills that are being demanded of us (p.27). The authors sum up the three main factors of outdoor therapy as being:

1. Spending time in nature (the ecological self)
2. Bodily mobilization (the physical self)
3. Relational processes (the psycho-social self).

1.4 Genesis of Outdoor Learning in CIE

In 2015 CIE first reached out to the University of Edinburgh, after learning about the outdoor learning model this university has developed and studies for over the last 20 years. Scotland has a leading position in using outdoor learning as a pedagogical principle to nurture social and personal growth (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010). The social and personal 'key competences' defined by the OECD (2005) as predictors for success in private and professional life are mirrored in the main objectives of the Scottish school curriculum (Curriculum for Excellence – 4 capacities). These same competences are also broadly accepted to be effectively developed through Outdoor Learning - OL (Fiennes et al, 2015; Rickinson et al., 2004) – rendering outdoor-based interventions ideal for promoting workforce-oriented skills.

Prof. Peter Higgins and his staff of the Outdoor Environmental Education section at the University of Edinburgh have been a core driver to have OL integrated into the Scottish curriculum and policy. The the University of Edinburgh has for over 40 years maintained an international reputation as one of the leading providers of outdoor and environmental education in the world. Their work focusses on developing academic understanding of the discipline through teaching, programme development at MSc and PhD levels, research, consultancy and advisory roles in the UK and internationally. The collective publication output of the Outdoor Environmental Education section is over 250 articles, books, research reports, and policy papers. Over the past decades, they developed and refined the *Edinburgh Model of Personal and Social Development Through Outdoor Learning* in partnership with Venture Trust.

In 2016 CIE conducted a study visit to Scotland to learn first-hand about the *Edinburgh Model of Personal and Social Development Through Outdoor Learning.* Further, in 2017 CIE engaged the Outdoor Environmental Education section at the University of Edinburgh in preparation of a proposal for a joint project “From Outdoors to the Labour Market” – FOLM, which was to pilot implementation of Outdoor Learning in Poland, Ireland and Spain. As recommended by Prof. Pete Higgins, CIE also invited Venture Trust as a second expertise partner to a project as an international leader in implementing OL with NEETs.

Venture Trust added value to the FOLM project as Europe’s largest and most experienced provider of early-stage employability support to NEET individuals using the innovative outdoor-based learning methodologies inherent to the project. Venture Trust has a track record over more than 30 years of successfully engaging & progressing individuals aged 16-60 with multiple barriers to employment (including drug/alcohol issues; offending behaviours; fragmented families/relationships; unstable accommodation; social isolation; underlying lack of confidence, motivation and life skills) through carefully designed wilderness-based development programmes, using experiential learning techniques and cognitive behavioural approaches.

In the years 2018-2022, under coordination of CIE, the FOLM project was implemented. It commenced with the University of Edinburgh and Venture Trust offering expert advice and practical, ‘hands on’ training support to newly recruited staff of CIE and three other FOLM partners. Venture Trust organized project partners’ shadowing at outdoors based courses. This was followed with training trainers in Poland, Spain and Ireland and shadowing their work with NEETs. Throughout FOLM project, CIE trained 25 of its Outdoor Learning trainers.

FOLM's most important result was engagement of 990 Polish, Spanish and Irish youth in the Outdoor Learning. After the experience in the outdoors, they were motivated to participate in coaching and mentoring activities offered within the project. Such model of work with beneficiaries was further repeated by CIE in the projects it ran in Poland for different groups of recipients: persons of 25 years or older, lacking basic skills. Two more projects engaged jointly 140 participants.

Based on this experience, CIE has modified the Edinburgh model of Outdoor Learning into its own Curriculum. At the same time CIE benefited from the continuous evaluations conducted by Venture Trust, but more importantly the University of Edinburgh, to ensure that the original values embedded in Outdoor Learning are maintained and any refinements are introduced to the benefit of the individual participant and the group joining the expedition.

1.5 Outdoor Learning at WNRI

WNRI's unique location by the Sognefjord, in the western part of Norway, made it natural from the beginning of the institute's history, over 30 years ago, to work with active tourism and outdoor living (nor. *friluftsliv)*. Those topics are also present and important in Norwegian culture and traditions, an that is why research ion these topics, closely related to outdoor learning and using nature as a classroom, is one of WNRI's prime competence areas. This gives the opportunity to carry out in-depth studies, transfer knowledge and share experience within the fields og friluftsliv and outdoor learning. WNRI has a very close cooperation with Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (also placed in Sogndal), which offers courses within 'Outdoor Education and Nordic Friluftsliv', giving the opportunity for expending knowledge and sharing experiences in the academic environment. WNRI's researchers involved in this project secure access to relevant expertise.

1.6 The main aims of OL by CIE

Mastering outdoor challenges raises positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, with transformational effect on the motivation of participants towards seeking employment Lasting impact of outdoor experiences leads to a high success rate of CIE's method. In our projects, especially in FOLM ("From Outdoors to the Labour Market" financed by EEA&Norway Grants which engaged 990 participants), Siła Bieszczad and Moc Warmii (both financed by PO WER and both engaged 70 participants), we observed the transformation of many people who gave up their confinement for self-development. Such cooperation made sense because it had a medium-term character: 1 week of OL - Outdoor Education, followed by 8-10 group Coaching sessions (up to 2 months from the end of OL - Outdoor Education), and at the same time and later individual sessions with a mentor (4 -6 months from the completion of OL -Outdoor Learning). On the other hand, most activities aimed at activating people at risk of exclusion are of action and/or declarative nature.

The formula of an expedition to the forest consists in practical and specific activities (not theory and not abstraction), related to such areas as safe functioning in the forest regardless of weather conditions, effective organization of the camp, including the necessary kitchen and hygiene installations and shelters for the night. This also includes effective group navigation with a map and compass between successive camp locations, gathering and preparing fuel, starting a fire and cooking meals together on a campfire. These are actions which effects are immediately noticeable and their effectiveness is easy to verify. They require the cooperation of the entire team of participants and trainers, including:

- proper management by the leader,
- delegating tasks,
- proper communication, and above all,
- positive relations and good contact in the group

based on mutual respect, acceptance of weaknesses and readiness to support.

Against this background, an excellent platform for individual and group work is created, focused on discovering strengths as well as defining and working on areas for self-development. For one of the participants, it may be a challenge to build a sufficient level of openness to new people to be able to take on the role of a leader during the following days. For another participant, who has always functioned as a self-sufficient, resourceful and independent person, it may be a completely new challenge, to an unknown extent, to develop openness, e.g. to ask for help.

These are just examples that illustrate the wide range of phenomena that always occur in a diverse group of people who jointly undertake a multi-day trip to the forest. All participants are going beyond the comfort zone, often cope with surprising circumstances, based on the available potential. This happens in an atmosphere of acceptance and non-judgment.

An additional aspect of the work methodology is the impact of nature itself, which happens "by the way". The participant of the program finds herself/himself in an environment that is significantly different from her/his everyday world. The forest and nature calm down, encourage reflection and stimulate physical activity and the gradual adaptation of man to the rhythm of nature, which is noticeable after about three days of uninterrupted being in nature. The feeling of well-being that appears at the same time encourages participants to transfer similar activities (even if they were just walks in the forest) to their everyday life after the program ends.

1.7 Benefits of OL for individual participants

Outdoor Learning can help people find new strength and self-esteem by showing them that they can be part of a group that works well and which is built on equality and nonviolent communication. It shows participants that they understand teamwork, have adaptive skills and they are able to learn new things quite fast and easy. It is empowering people to believe in themselves but also in others, it shows that you can ask for help and become self-efficient thanks to it.

The benefits of OL will depend on the individual. We can only provide the experience, but it is up to the individual to decide what he or she wants to change. There may be those who only experience the Outdoor Learning and a time of reflection. It is up to the individual to decide how this will affect his or her life. It is important to see what benefits the participants actually want in the situation they are in. There is a list of some examples of what can be gained during excursions:

- Self-knowledge and self-esteem are important for personal growth and development. Activities and exercises that focus on self-discovery and the development of new skills can help to enhance those values. Effective communication: It is important for group members to communicate clearly and openly to ensure that everyone is aware of what is happening and can work together efficiently.

- Teamwork is essential on the excursion. Group will require members to collaborate and work together to achieve goals. It is important to foster a trusting and supportive environment so that everyone feels comfortable contributing and relying on each other.
- Responsibility and respect are important for all group members to know what is expected of them and to take responsibility for contributing to the success of the excursion. It is also important for everyone to respect the leader's decisions and the opinions of other members.
- Getting to know new skills and understanding that learning is not something hard and scary but fun and satisfying.
- Discovering existing skills and appreciating who you already are.
- Support and help within the group is essential for the success and well-being. This can include offering emotional support, providing resources and information, and helping to facilitate the achievement of goals.
- Sharing knowledge, experiences and feelings can be a valuable way to learn from one another and to build stronger relationships. Encouraging open and honest communication can help to create a supportive and collaborative environment.
- Challenge by choice is an approach that encourages individuals to take on challenges that are meaningful to them, with the support and encouragement of the group. This can be a powerful way to build confidence, resilience, and a sense of accomplishment. Achieving a challenge or overcoming a fear with the help and support of the group is invaluable.
- Quality time spend together outside includes activities such as eating together, telling stories around a campfire, or simply enjoying the landscape together.

Outdoor Learning is just a great tool but it is the person that is capable of a change. Everything that one can get from such experience depends on what she needs or wants. For example, the final stage of field work is the "solo walk," which is the independent passage of participants from the last campsite to the termination site. During the march, the participant, after spending several days in intensive contact with the group and the OL trainers' team, has the opportunity to be alone with his thoughts and work through the experience while walking alone, unhurriedly, at a pace that suits him. The transition is also intended to "close" the process of the trek from the start of the excursion to its conclusion, to provide a sense of continuity and coherence to the experience, so it also has a symbolic dimension, however it only depends on the individual participant how much he/she gains from this experience.

1.8 Group experience in OL

When working with groups indoors – e.g., using workshop methods and tools – it is common to find participants who, for various reasons, undermine the method, claiming that the conditions are artificial and therefore the conclusions have no application in their real life. Outdoor settings on the other hand afford the participants with real and practical tasks in which their actions and decisions have immediate 'real' impact on themselves and their surroundings. A typical example is to put on rain gear before it starts raining – or to choose not to do so and having to deal with wet clothes as the consequence. Or if a group dallies and does not get their camp set up before nightfall, it will be more cumbersome to set up tents, find firewood, start a fire and cook their meal, plus they are likely to experience more discomfort by being hungry and cold at that point. Research as well as our own experience show that these immediate and tangible causal relationships of one's own actions have significant positive effect on one's self-efficacy and sense of agency – which are widely acknowledged as cornerstone in an

empowerment approach and the development of *executive functioning* and *transformative competencies* (OECD, 2019; also *transversal competencies*, UNESCO, 2015)

Another factor contributing to the effectiveness of OL is related to the temporary detachment from one's usual surroundings, such as amenities of comfort, established social roles one has taken one, or exposure to unhealthy behaviour (e.g., addictive behaviours, unhealthy eating or sleeping patterns, toxic relationship patterns)

While spending a few hours in the forest might not seem a challenge for most people, spending a week in the forest, having to manage one's time, shelter, meals and hygiene is quite another. For most participants, it is an experience that is new and outside their usual scope of competence and comfort. This factor is of paramount importance here, because when operating in new conditions, the patterns and mental defence mechanisms used in life lose some of their influence and our susceptibility to changing attitudes increases.

In summary, the effectiveness of OL comes from a combination of the factors described above - the soothing effect of nature, the realism of the challenges and venturing into one's *zone of proximal development* (after Lev Vygotsky), i.e. the next step forward. Having an OL expedition duration long enough to allow immersion is key here. It should be made clear that there are different expedition options in the world. e.g. 1-day, cyclical, 3-day, 3-week but CIE opts for 7-day options In CIE's experience, seven days is sufficient to experience the full extent of such a change.

OL research continuously argues that as a general rule, longer is better, with Hattie et al. (1997) highlighting 3 weeks as an optimal duration for impact. However, the most important is to design the program in relation to the needs and goals e.g. strengthen the particular class/community.

"TaN in Norway, organizes short "expeditions" with groups of youths. They meet every third week for one night (24 hours), but then altogether 8-10 nights. This means that the youth will have time to look forward to and prepare for the next meeting and get to know each other in school and spare time outside the project. One of TaNs main aims here is social; to have some consistency to make friendship form and last."

It seems that a positive effect of the above-described factors should be expected from the first full day of OL and given the life and work realities of the participants, a 72h model could be considered, but this requires systematic research to answer this question.

A week-long outdoor expedition for a group of several people; participants in a project specified in terms of recruitment key, diagnosis and objective, takes place with three or four experienced OL trainers. This particular form of development work is based on shared, real experiences of participants and trainers, experienced in a psychologically safe space, in which mutual respect, openness and, in time, trust are built from the first to the last minute.

CIE's model of Outdoor Learning is based on the synergy of several overlapping factors:

- The environment we are in.
- For how long.
- With what equipment and supplies.
- What we are doing at that time and in those places.
- Who surrounds us and with whom we share these experiences.

1.9 Universal values of OL exercised by CIE

Our outdoor work is based on the core values of:

- making a positive contribution to our society - locally, regionally and globally;
- results-based work;
- respect and active protection of nature;
- being humble, offer our skills and experience to support our beneficiaries in an individual way that serves them best, while being open to their uniqueness and the new ideas and perspectives they present to us so that we can also develop thanks to them;
- relationship building;
- mutual assistance;
- striving to be professionals through continuous and multi-directional development of our staff, critical assessment of our practice and active involvement of experts in our activities;
- transparency in operation (financial and substantive reports, articles of association, information on the method of operation and ongoing projects available to all).

Thanks to maintaining these values, the method of "work in nature" is a rediscovery of oneself. It is the essence of personal development because it is authentic - supported by evidence from the previous day. Each day is therefore a set of authentic new experiences, which meet with reflection and summary made by each participant.

The above listed values further transfer into the following rules applied in the Outdoor Learning:

- **Creating a safe space** - this space is created thanks to the method of work of the OL trainers in terms of building relationships with participants of the field trip and is a goal in itself on the first day of joint activities during expedition. It allows to start the process of creating a team that will face various difficulties together over the next few days; from living and weather conditions, through substantive issues regarding safe functioning in the outdoors, to interpersonal challenges. Safe space - that is, getting to know each other, gradually dispelling doubts about the expedition itself and other participants, as well as the beginning of building trust in the OL trainers and the team, with no pressure of evaluation or competition, is the foundation for further, effective work.
- **Problem solving** – it is a universal, simple and easy-to-use scheme, enabling learning based on trial and error, as well as drawing conclusions and implementing them in subsequent stages of activities. This learning experience is embedded in the context of strengthening the willingness to take on challenges, safe experimentation and the belief that every action and every effect, by definition, can be improved. Such a belief, combined with a systematic approach to solving problems, will bear fruit both in the narrowly understood technical activities, as well as in the process of learning, building relationships, or using soft skills.
- **Changing roles, relationships** - going beyond the usual patterns of functioning in society, as well as beyond the routine of the same activities and based on the same habits, forces oneself to reach for a new set of skills, and thus contributes to self-development. Constantly undertaking new tasks

within various scopes and duties (e.g. resulting from the functions performed in the camp or during the journey) contributes in a special way to discovering the resources of individual participants (their strengths) and defining areas for personal development.

- **Navigator / ecologist** - Working in groups - sensitizing participants to the issues of the broadly understood attitude of optimal use of resources. In concrete terms, it is easiest to relate this scope to care for the environment and proper management of its goods. In a broader, abstract sense, this also applies to the balanced functioning of a human being as such - with the optimal involvement and use of one's own internal mental and emotional forces. The whole, therefore, allegorically refers to personal development.
- **Effective behaviour in a team** - a workshop focused on supporting participants in developing the so-called effective attitude. It boils down to getting to know the model of behaviour with which one can influence the environment in a constructive way, improving the quality of interpersonal relations, and on practical attempts to implement it during a field trip.
- **Constructive relations** – a wide range of issues relating, on the one hand, to recognizing which relations are conducive to human development, based on partnership, constructive conflict resolution, and which block such processes, and on the other hand, relating to the creation of one's own attitude based on proper communication, assertiveness and empathy.
- **Setting milestones** - getting to know the significant personal development of a person, both on a macro and micro scale. Individual steps leading a man to work on his development planes, as well as no less important steps leading to skilful reliance on one's own resources, are subject to general systematization, with a clear indication that such a process is long-lasting. Milestones, i.e. critical points in human development, enable not only an overview of the work done so far, but also contribute to the ongoing improvement of one's self-esteem and motivation for further work.
- **The right environment for self-development** - going beyond the "internal" zone of human personal development, one should realize how this process is also influenced by external factors. What and to what extent contributes to supporting the achievement of the chosen goal, and what may work in the opposite way. This range allows an individual to consciously create favourable conditions around herself/himself, while removing or minimizing the impact of destructive factors.
- **Action Planning** – personalization of the entire outdoor work process, in relation to verbalized plans, dreams, ambitions and areas for the development of a given expedition participant. It is a possibly precise description of a person's goal or development goals, together with the exact way of their implementation, made with the support of an instructor.

1.10 Eco-perspective in OL

We have traditions related to nature in Poland, i.e. mountain tourism and numerous mountain festivals. many people in their childhood participated in the scout movement, which has a strong patriotic and religious flavour ("subdue the earth"). People go to the forest, pick mushrooms or berries for their own use or for sale as a way to improve the household budget. The allotment movement in Poland is strongly present - the tradition of cultivating mini gardens in housing estates that are a springboard and a place of rest for city dwellers, but also a source of production of their own healthy food (potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, strawberries, etc.). For people living in houses, the garden is often a key place, designed, well-maintained, used for relaxation, but also functional, and more and more often a place with an aesthetic function (flowers, decorative plants). A very influential group in Poland are hunters, whose hunting interests limit access to the forest. survival and bushcraft are also popular. However, the fashion for herbalism, preparing meals and supporting home treatment with collected herbs is also coming back, as our grandmothers did.

In the context of climate change, we are currently looking for a new paradigm in the approach to nature. hence the selective only drawing on Polish traditions (e.g. picking herbs, mountain tourism), and reaching for approaches related to deep ecology or ecopsychology.

The OL approach is fundamentally environmentally oriented and sensitive to ecological issues. It is based on field work, in contact with the forces of nature. It emerges from the knowledge about the influence of the environment on the psychophysical condition of man. Camping in the forest, "out of civilization" is often a challenge (e.g. sudden weather changes, heavy rains). At the same time, being in the forest becomes an unforgettable adventure. Staying outdoors has health-promoting properties, provides satisfaction and pleasure from encountering nature. It allows you to relax, calm down and have a deeper contact with yourself. We believe that direct exposure to nature is essential for optimal human development and physical and emotional health. OL promotes an environmentally friendly lifestyle, leading towards a more sustainable society.

Being-in-a-group, being-alone, and being-in-nature are the underlying context of OL programs. Nature is a significant point of reference and a working tool here. We treat the OL as a chance to reimagine how we can be outdoors - with more ecological consciousness, with respect for nature, keeping forests healthy. OL can be a space to build the deeper environmental awareness.

OL works for climate protection and sustainable development, which is manifested in many ways during our programme. We can think about group context of eco-perspective eg.
1. one of the rules of the group contract is to take care of the campsite and forest itself - we camp in the forest and we are guests there knowing that the forest is a shelter for various life forms;
2. one of the huge effect of our programs is discover the value of being together in nature - at the end of the camps, young people often declared an increase in the sense of joy and freedom (despite the lack of access to new technologies such as a telephone or laptop). We can also indicate logistic context of ecology (see at Chapter 5).

One of our projects was called "Strength from Nature" - it talks about the energy that comes from experiencing yourself in nature. Nature is the basic context for outdoor activities. The experiential learning process takes place in a natural environment. This experience is being with others, but also bodily experiences, sensual and mental feelings related to being in nature. OL classes have a positive impact on shaping the relationship with nature. The involvement of the senses, authentic experiences, getting to know nature - all this helps to rebuild the natural bond with the environment.

It has been known for a long time that contact with nature brings therapeutic benefits and is an element of prevention of lifestyle diseases. Communing with nature improves well-being and mental health. Being in green and blue spaces, observing plants, listening to the sounds of the forest - helps to calm down, calm your thoughts and focus on being here and now, appreciating the benefits of the nature around us. Using all the senses helps in reducing stress and tension. Focusing on your senses, feelings and needs surrounded by nature - helps to reduce fear and anxiety and regulate difficult emotional states. Working with breath and body in nature - by being in the forests every day, it helps to calm down thoughts, calm down and be with yourself here and now. Being outdoors has a positive effect on the health and mental condition of a person, strengthens well-being and a sense of satisfaction with life, brings a better mood, optimism and self-confidence. Fresh mornings boost energy and awaken the body.

Fire, which needs patience, energy and attention - provides aesthetic impressions, but also builds commitment and a sense of responsibility. The sky above your head gives you a wider perspective. Just being in the field improves the quality of psychophysical well-being. Synchronization with natural cycles (day/night, seasons) restores man to nature, evokes positive feelings in the participants, offering the opportunity to relax, forget about everyday problems, calm down and have deeper contact with oneself. It allows you to minimize negative emotional states and calm thoughts related to everyday problems and worries.
However, we can go much further. Ask yourself: How do we think about ourselves? how do we understand the place and role of man in nature? Consider the relationship between man and nature. Give yourself a chance to redefine the place of man in the world and expand the axiology to include non-human living beings and their environments. Find common places between "I" and "nature", arriving at a holistic perspective by eliminating the opposition of nature and culture, or recognizing oneself as a part of nature (see Górka, 2010).

During expeditions, we operate the model of comfort zones. While in the comfort zone a person feels competent, knows their strengths and strategies, behaves routinely and habitually, feels self-confident, in the learning/development zone they can experiment with new versions of themselves. Man breaks new ground, faces new challenges, seeks and creates new rules, tries, plans and experiments. In supportive conditions, the participant can expand his comfort zone with new ways of experiencing, communicating and acting – also those related to new forms of feeling, being and acting in nature. Increases self-esteem, personal power, but also sensitivity to nature. The circle of empathy, personal identification and responsibility for the world around us is expanding.

The inspiration for supporting personal transformation in nature is for us ecopsychology, based on the assumption that the "I" includes all forms living on Earth, ecosystems and the entire planet. Such a self (the term "ecological self" was introduced by Prof. Arne Naess) allows us to empathize with other forms of life (empathy) and actively act to defend endangered life. Ecopsychology reminds us of the eternal relationship between man and nature, the balancing influence of nature on our lives, and the fact that man destroys the environment by taking away his precious asylum. It makes people sensitive to the fact that nature satisfies our biological, aesthetic and cognitive needs, and the lack of contact with it causes deformations in the human psyche (Roszak, Gomes, Kanner, 1995). Sensitizing the participants to the relationship between man and nature in the OL program is particularly important in the context of the current ecological crisis. It means including ecological awareness in the processes of forming one's own identity, shaping ecological sensitivity, embracing oneself, others and the Earth. Discovering yourself as part of the web of life.

Expeditions help you reconnect with nature and participate in its cycles in an integral way. Experience an adventure in nature and with nature. Make contact with the outside world of wildlife as well as with your own interior. Train attention and expanded self-awareness - in a sense of belonging to nature. Participation in workshops can result in a greater respect for nature, greater awareness of the body and the choice of an ecological lifestyle. It can open people to care for the natural and friendly environment, care for the earth, respect for the non-human world. Being in nature gives a chance for a conscious, sensitized approach to nature, going beyond the instrumental, thoughtless use of the natural environment. It allows to shape pro-environmental attitudes, promote an environmentally friendly lifestyle, leading towards a "sustainable society". It gives a sense of community with others (altruism) and with nature (environmentalism). The OL program in the deepest individual dimension opens man to

thinking about himself as a part of nature - it reminds of the eternal relationship between man and nature. It promotes outdoor ethics, pro-ecological attitudes, respect for nature and human responsibility towards nature - changing the mentality and promoting a pro-environmental life-style which is essential to build a „balanced society".

Our projects include the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, spending free time in nature, outdoors and actively. We emphasize respect for nature - the importance of a harmonious relationship with nature, care for the natural environment and care for the common good. And this change of mentality and lifestyle is one of the most significant one - together with the personal and social development of participants.

1.11 OL Trainers

When beginning its journey with the Outdoor Learning, CIE focussed on training of the OL Trainers and offering them guidance and support within diverse projects CIE obtained, respecting intercultural factors and the need to adapt the Model in dialogue with local environment. Therefore:

- CIE recruited persons to train them to become Outdoor Learning Trainers, taking into consideration their personal predispositions necessary to work with people, mainly their high level of self-awareness, as well as the ability to observe participants and support them in a way that is not exhausting with tasks, but inclusive and activating.
- Scottish Venture Trust instructors and a researcher from the University of Edinburgh, working with groups in the outdoor learning formula, tested the effectiveness of the method and passed on their know-how to a team of Polish trainers in the course of trainings conducted both in Scotland and in Poland, combined with a full 24-hour visit, assessment and substantive support during week-long camps (in direct work with groups of participants) and as part of three multi-day theoretical and workshop training.
- The program of Outdoor Learning expeditions, thanks to the use of a set of thematic modules, remained flexible, which allowed to create compilations of topics most appropriate for a given group in particular environment. These topics were included in individual scripts, and the methods of their implementation were aimed at the most activating message for the participants.
- To ensure high-quality educational support in Outdoor Learning, CIE's Head OL Trainer, survival expert for 15 years, was responsible for selection and logistical support for CIE's OL Trainers during the projects involving outdoors expeditions.
- All CIE educators who participated in the Outdoor Learning projects received the OL training either with Venture Trust and University of Edinburgh and/or CIE's own Academy of Trainers. These enabled OL trainers to:
    - conduct the session,
    - moderate the discussion,
    - create a sense of security, openness and belonging to the group,
    - follow the needs of the beneficiaries' groups and
    - react on an ongoing basis with regard to the dynamics of the group, its processes and reported needs.
- CIE's OL Trainers are prepared for work not only based on the experience gained so far, but also through tools directly implemented in their work. This is achieved thanks to the system of briefings

before the meeting with the group of participants, discussing the challenges and difficulties in the group on an ongoing basis, and thanks to the summaries of individual camps after their completion.

- CIE's Academy of Trainers is composed of three blocks: Introduction to the OL – 3 days, Exercise of the OL – 7 days in the wilderness, Leadership in OL – 3 days practise in and outdoors. The content of the Academy of Trainers is standardized, many points deriving from the Edinburgh model, but adapted to the Polish environment. The Academy of Trainers covers safety standards, logistics, individual meetings with the participants, group sessions, manoeuvrer in the wilderness, solving crisis situations and enhancing transversal competencies of the OL Trainers, with a separate session on the leadership.

The Norwegian approach to OL is often „messier", with a less set schedule, more room for the initiatives of the participants, more time for just being in nature and a clear emphasis on situational learning.
The Norwegian approach can at times be experienced as confusing and even frustating for people who are used to more structure and predictability.

1.12 Modules of CIE's OL Curriculum

CIE's model of Outdoor Learning is based primarily on the method of working "in nature" - that is, during a multi-day field trip. During the excursion, two group sessions (morning and evening) and one individual session are carried out each day, in which each participant talks to their trainer. In order to describe the Curriculum used by CIE in detail, it is divided into the following modules, which constitute individual Chapters:

1. Curriculum's day-by-day schedule;
2. Focus on **individual participant**, including but not limited to, individual sessions corresponding to the challenges of the day;
3. Focus on **group work**, including but not limited to, group sessions taking the form of short theoretical introduction to the topic, followed by active exercises, consisting in performing a given task individually or in a team;
4. **Logistics**, including but not limited to ensuring safety, preparation stage, moving through the forest, building a campsite every day, cooking;
5. Description of characteristics of particular **group of beneficiaries** (in this case – women at the risk of exclusion);
6. Quality assessment – why it is needed and how it is exercised.

Chapter 1 Literature

Literature:
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Humberstone, B. and Pedersen, K. (2001). Gender, class and outdoor traditions in the UK and Norway. *Sport, Education and Society*, 6 (1), 23-33.

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CHAPTER II CIE's OL CURRICULUM

The below is a scheme for a typical 7-days journey into the wilderness. This schedule is used for the overview of all activities than a precise schedule hour by hour.

DAY 1 out of 7

Hour	Activity
10am	Staff meeting
11am	Last minute checks & Prep
12 noon	Participants arrive and check in
12:30	**Introduction and icebreakers**
1pm	**Safe space contract**
	Route overview – animation/visual
	Food briefing and choose for 3 days
2pm	*Lunch*
3pm	Gear check and fitting
	Meds / valuables
4pm	Depart centre
5pm	Arrive on hills and hike in (1.5hrs)
6.30pm	Set up camp – tent talk
7pm	*Prepare meal – **Tranga Talk***
8pm	Evening walk - explore
9pm	**Evening meeting**
10pm	Retire to tents
	Supervision

DAY 2

Hour	Activity
7:30am	Staff meeting
8am	*Breakfast*
9am	Morning meeting - energiser
9:30	**Morning meeting: Solving Problems**
10am	Pack up and prepare to leave
10:30am	Navigator/environmentalist Group work or 1 to 1's
11am	Depart for hike
1pm	*Lunch stop*
2pm	Continue walk
3pm	**Afternoon session: Solving Problems**
3:30pm	Continue walk
5pm	*Arrive at campsite*
6pm	*Prepare meal*
8pm	**Evening meeting – Role swaps**
9pm	Fire
10pm	Retire to tents
	Supervision

DAY 3

Hour	Activity
7:30am	Staff meeting
8am	*Breakfast*
9am	Morning meeting - energiser
9:30	**Morning meeting: Relationships**
10am	Pack up and prepare to leave
10:30am	Navigator/environmentalist Group work or 1 to 1's
11am	Depart for hike
1pm	*Lunch stop*
2pm	Continue walk
3pm	**Afternoon session: Relationships**
3:30pm	Continue walk
5pm	Arrive at campsite
6pm	*Prepare meal*
8pm	**Evening meeting – Positive Relationships**
9pm	Fire
10pm	Retire to tents
	Supervision

DAY 4

Hour	Activity
7:30am	Staff meeting
8am	*Breakfast*
9am	Morning meeting - energiser
9:30	**Morning meeting: Effective Behaviours**
10am	Pack up and prepare to leave
10:30am	Navigator/environmentalist Group work or 1 to 1's
11am	Depart for hike
1pm	*Lunch stop*
2pm	Continue walk
3pm	**Afternoon session: Effective Behaviours**
3:30pm	Continue walk
5pm	Arrive at campsite
6pm	*Prepare meal*
8pm	**Evening meeting – Effective Behaviours**
9pm	Fire
10pm	Retire to tents
	Supervision

DAY 5

Hour	Activity
7:30am	Staff meeting
8am	*Breakfast*
9am	Morning meeting - energiser
9:30	**Morning meeting: Stepping stones**
10am	Pack up and prepare to leave
10:30am	Navigator/environmentalist Group work or 1 to 1's
11am	Depart for hike
1pm	*Lunch stop*
2pm	Continue walk
3pm	**Afternoon session: Stepping stones**
3:30pm	Continue walk
5pm	Arrive at campsite
6pm	*Prepare meal*
8pm	**Evening meeting – Stepping stones**
9pm	Fire
10pm	Retire to tents
	Supervision

DAY 6

Hour	Activity
7:30am	Staff meeting
8am	*Breakfast*
9am	Morning meeting - energiser
9:30	**Morning meeting: Action Planning**
10am	Pack up and prepare to leave
10:30am	Navigator/environmentalist Group work or 1 to 1's
11am	Depart for hike
1pm	*Lunch stop*
2pm	Continue walk
3pm	**Afternoon session: Action Planning**
3:30pm	Continue walk
5pm	Arrive at campsite
6pm	*Prepare meal*
8pm	**Evening meeting – Action Planning**
9pm	Fire
10pm	Retire to tents
	Supervision

DAY 7

Hour	Activity
7:30am	Staff meeting
8am	*Breakfast*
9am	Morning meeting - energiser
9:30	**Morning meeting: Positive Goodbyes**
10am	Pack up and prepare to leave
10:30am	Navigator/environmentalist Group work or 1 to 1's
11am	Depart for centre
12noon	Return to centre Clean and return equipment
1pm	Certificate presentation and slide show
2pm	**Goodbyes**
3:00pm	Staff review and wrap up

CHAPTER III THE INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT

This Chapter describes the Level of individual work in a week-long Outdoor Learning (OL) excursion according to CIE's model of Outdoor Learning. The subchapters 3.1 and 3.2 are about the general vision of OL including the significance of individual perspective in OL and the general assumption about a way of singular person oriented work with the participants. Subchapter 3.3 is the description of Individual Development Plan (IDP) and subchapter 3.4 describes the individual (one to one) talks (OL Trainer and participant). Subchapter 3.5 is about working on an individual level in the context of group process.

3.1 Introduction

Nowadays, knowledge of the benefits of nature engagement on the human body and mind is becoming more and more widespread. Spending time in green (and 'blue', i.e., water-relating) spaces – particularly in connection with moderate physical activity and/or mindfulness activities – has numerous positive effects on our health and wellbeing, as well as our cognitive and socio-emotional functioning. This includes changes in our brain waves and relaxation level in response to natural sounds, vistas and patterns (e.g.drumming of rain fall, rustling leaves). Hence natural surroundings provide a good basis for development work, as a person's sense of security increases at a deeper relaxation level, and this effect should be considered when planning development processes - both individually and in groups.

At this point, we focus on very important and sometimes overlooked aspect of the OL. For most people living in the cities as well as in the bigger villages, natural environments are no longer regarded as biological settings in their own right, but as resources and amenities of civilisation. The OL program allows participants to rediscover nature. They can feel that it is a real and challenging space (e.g. designing a shelter or preparing a meal on a bonfire). The realism of immersion in nature is also an attractive formula that triggers greater commitment and motivation. The reality of nature expands the depth of experience, allows for effective learning from experience and the transfer of these experiences to the participants' own lives.

Consequently, the Outdoor Learning is an attractive alternative to traditional indoor workshops and training. Compared to these traditional methods, OL is more effective in many settings. The reason for this is the fact that for most participants natural environments place them in completely new situations, the reality of the place itself is profound and this means the necessity to be more careful and aware, using "mindful thinking" and involving cognitive processes which directly increases motivation.

The forest is a 'context' and a trigger for phenomena, often ones that are physically felt 'on and in' the human body, and this places participants outside their daily routine, their thought patterns, their comfort zones and potentially out of a learned helplessness. The period of a week in the forest, on the other hand, is a time perspective that not enables a mental and emotional detachment from everyday life conditions. It also facilitates multi-level developmental work on both fundamental levels: group and individual.

Neither of the two levels of work with participants - group and individual - can fully achieve their potential benefits if isolated from the other. They are closely interlinked and augment each other, in a manner in which the Participant can perceive, feel and sometimes understand social phenomena, the people who co-create these phenomena and themselves.

Thus, the following can also be added to the list of factors that contribute to the synergetic core of OL interventions:

- "Me in the group" (me towards the group, the group towards me);
- "Me with myself here and now";
- "Me with myself in the future", i.e. after the excursion has been completed.

In the case of most CIE's projects based on the OL method, the OL Trainers are given key information about each participant before the excursion began and before the first group meeting and the outdoors experience. In the simplest case, this is a short note containing information gathered in the course of previous work with the person or during the recruitment and registration for the project (depending on the project design and stages). In CIE's practice to date, we have encountered different styles of OL Trainers' work with this regard. Certain personal information might impact the safety of the participants, hence the OL Trainers need to be informed about these issues (e.g. information about certain physical or mental health conditions). Apart from the safety-related information, if the project in question does not require gathering comprehensive information about the participant, some OL Trainers decide to join without being given prior such data. This makes it possible to approach participants with a 'clean sheet', i.e. reducing the risk of subconscious associations towards individuals. This illustrates the importance in OL to separate the person from their behaviour, even more so the perception of the person through the prism of the environment, the individual strengths, talents, difficulties experienced so far, the limitations reported, etc.
The recruitment procedure for Outdoor Learning is described in detail in Chapter 5 below.

3.2 Individual work with the participant

The first contact with an individual participant takes place during the recruitment process. Participant of the OL programme is a person qualified for the project who meets the indicated conditions specified in the project's regulations, (e.g. is of a certain age, lives in a certain place or has a special status on the labour market or educational level). Apart from these regulations, recruitment of participants is carried out in accordance with the principle of equal opportunities for men and women, non-discrimination, including accessibility for people with disabilities.

Each participant reads the regulations and confirms with their signature its reading and their status allowing them to take part in the project. The regulations contain information about OL, necessary preparedness to outdoors excursion, as well as the scope and organization of other support delivered within the particular project. Each project includes different forms of support such as online trainings tailored to the individual needs of participant, mentoring, therapeutic support and additional assistance - carried out by the OL Trainer, coach, mentor or other CIE staff.

During the OL phase the individual work is promoted with a specific OL Trainer who is permanently assigned to a participant for the duration of the excursion. This work is carried out in several different ways and with different tools provided in outdoors. During an OL week, each OL Trainer is usually assigned 3 to 4 participants. The team leader, due to the nature of their function and the burden of additional organisational tasks, should ideally be assigned a maximum of 2 participants.

The most important tools used to support individual work with participants are:

- Creation of an Individual Development Plan (IDP) – (description of IDP in subchapter 2.4);
- One-to-one talks - called "1to 1" – (description of 1to 1" in subchapter 2.5);
- Any activity in which participants and OL Trainers undertake micro- and macro- tasks and have shared outdoor experiences;
- Camp setting roles;
- Giving and receiving feedback;
- Conclusions of group meetings;
- OL Trainers' debriefing.

One-to-one work is the daily, gradual building of a partnership between the OL Trainer and the participant, at a pace and level of intimacy and openness that is natural to the individual. It includes the daily observation of the participant as they perform some of the tasks independently (e.g. erecting their own shelter, carrying out specific tasks resulting from the impact of nature, e.g. drying clothes, taking care of hygiene, etc.), while other tasks are performed in interaction with others. The extent of these activities arises from the outdoor context; the construction of the camp, the planning of the trekking route between successive camps, the daily routine e.g. joint preparation of meals on the campfire. The tasks' scope may also be due to the occurrence of events beyond the participants' control, e.g. a changing weather conditions or a sudden necessity to take over someone else's duties at the camp.

This type of participant-oriented work, carried out by the OL Trainers - practically continuously from the wake-up moment to lights-out at night - allows to collect valuable reflections on the participants. This is the starting point for a spontaneous conversation during the day or during the next 1to1 talk. Observations of the day, in relation to the themes raised by the participant in the previous 1to1 talks, automatically lay the foundations for subsequent conversations, during which topics of participant's importance can be defined and deepened. The information gathered by the OL Trainer can be further supplemented by other OL Trainers during their evening briefings.

Thanks to the daily evening debriefings within the OL Trainers' team, held somewhere slightly away from the camp, they can exchange important details from the day about each participant, e.g., their attitude, interaction, communication, fulfilment of assigned tasks, reported difficulties, successes, or moments of laughter and joy.

The coupling of joint activities throughout the day with the direction of the work in the individual talk is two-way. That is, over the course of successive talks and conversations, the OL Trainer, who gets to know their assigned participant better, and at the same time watches and spends time with them over the week of the OL course, may propose to the participant to gradually take on various challenges, tasks, or exercises. Such OL Trainer's suggestion is conducted on the basis of a proposal that closely relates to the personal goals set by the individual participants themselves.

For example, a participant might express the desire to become more open and assertive in the presence of other people. Such a need can be translated into agreeing on the task/challenge to speak at a campfire forum during a group meeting or to take on a camp function that requires speaking to the team members. There is no set key or rigid measure of what would be 'within the capacity' of a participant. The crucial point is that the participant makes their own decision about the challenge. Therefore the word 'challenge' can be substituted by 'a safe experiment the participant carries out in a friendly environment'. An additional incentive can certainly be the resources and successes noticed by the OL

Trainers or other excursion members, or the indicated value that the person has really brought to the functioning of the team.

In order to implement the individual workflow correctly, it is most crucial that OL trainers stimulate creation of a 'safe' space in which the participant can talk openly about issues that are important to them – which can relate to being in the forest, everyday OL excursion conditions, dreams, difficulties, fears, etc. Thus, each individual workflow is in its own way unique.

OL means going beyond the usual patterns of functioning in society, as well as beyond the routine reliance on the same habits and old fears, looking at a new set of skills and possibilities for self-development. It is a perfect environment for growth - creating favourable conditions around participants with significant reduction of the impact of destructive factors. It is about setting individual milestones - learning the steps leading to skilful reliance on one's own resources, defining novel goals and setting new boundaries. It also a space for Individual action planning - personalization of the outdoor work process, in relation to verbalized plans, dreams, ambitions and areas for individual development of the particular participant.

3.3 Individual Development Plan (IDP)

CIE's regulations for participating in the OL indicate inclusion of the action planning, which means personalization of the outdoor work process, in relation to verbalized plans, dreams, ambitions and areas for individual development of the participant. A precise description of the person's development goal or goals, along with the method for their implementation, is made with the support of the OL Trainer in the form of a document titled "Individual Development Plan" (IDP).

IDP aim is to support the participant in the individual reflection. IDP is a user-friendly document in the printed form handed out in the course of OL excursion that guides the participant through different themes and questions. The participant can fill answers to them individually in relation to the impressions and experiences also gained during outdoors excursion. Working on this document gives a more complete picture of the individual's educational, vocational and lifelong path. It gives a deeper insight into oneself, participant's strengths and weaknesses, one's needs and values and one's personal potential recognised before and during OL experience.

The specific direction of an individual's work of a given participant, which is finally reflected in the IDP, depends on their particular person's needs - either expressed directly by the participant during the 1to1 talk or discovered during the week in the forest. This approach - by positively directing attention to the future - refers to personal coping strategies - cognitive regulation of emotions - positive priming and future orientation and refocus on planning. It may also be worthy to participant to complete IDP with other aspects, such as a positive re-evaluation.

Creating an IDP is more of a process, rather than a one-off task to be 'filled in and filed'. Principally, the IDP is for participants. However in the later phase of working with the OL Trainer on the transfer of the Outdoor Learning experience and constructive change in life, the IDP can be a point of reference and a basis for generating further actions (he or she decides what to share).Therefore, using this tool allows one to understand and apply the conclusions of the excursion to one person's life, to analyse the knowledge one has gathered about oneself, one's needs, strength, talents, abilities and limitations, but also to organise information about the necessary steps to take - after the excursion is over. It can also

be the basis for further work with a personal trainer. Depending on the assumptions of a given project, the IDP can constitute a "link" between the outdoor phase and further stages of work with the participant, e.g. group coaching phase, individual mentoring phase.

3.4 Individual talks (1to1)

These dialogues are also called 'one-to-ones' - 1to1. 1to1's are scheduled talks throughout the OL course of just two persons: a participant and their assigned OL Trainer. The 1to1s complement the group meetings and allow the participants to talk in a safe setting about any topic of concern. They provide an opportunity to build a more personal relationship with one of the OL Trainers. In the OL excursion programme, one-to-one talks also support the participant in preparing their IDP.

In addition to all the objectives and benefits of 1to1 talks indicated here, another objective should be mentioned. We can call it a meta-goal. CIE experience indicates that for many participants, a situation where someone gives time and kind attention only to them is a completely new situation. 1to1 talks send the message 'you are important' or 'what you think is important and matters' to the participant of OL trip. Conversation as a tool begins to be part of the toolbox they will reach for in real life.

It is important to note, however, that one-to-ones are NOT therapy. The nature of these talks is closer to counselling or coaching or a simple supportive talk. The duration of the 1to1 is 30- 45 min. In the concept of the 7-day OL trip there is time to carry out a maximum of 5 such talks.

The 1to1 talks are intended to support the participants' opening up to see the opportunities that surround them (use of tools, people) and the resources they have within themselves (sense of self-efficacy and agency, individual strengths), so that they have the perseverance to take the first step towards newly set milestones when they return home. CIE foresees many purposes for conducting one-to-one talks with participants. The most important ones are:

1. Supporting participants to step out of their existing roles/schemes/habits/concepts about themselves and about other people;
2. Creating a safe ground for self-knowledge, self-reflection and defining and recognizing one's own development needs (e.g. understanding that sometimes it is useful to get professional help to solve one's problems after returning home);
3. Building in the participant a sense of responsibility for their self-development;
4. Conversation as a joint activity helping the participant to "open up" in an alternative way outside the group meetings;
5. Making the participant aware of the role of emotions, what are the sources of emotions, what are the functions of emotions;
6. Supporting the transfer of experience - translating the experience gained in the wilderness setting into personal and professional life, decision making after returning to home context (working out an action plan, a list of solutions, a plan to use the new skills);
7. Supporting the fulfilment of the IDP (dreams, goals, resources - help in their discovery/identification);
8. Preparing the participant for a key individual task to be carried out during the last afternoon of the excursion. This task involves formulating constructive conclusions about oneself and realistic goals for the future or, if this is not possible, naming needs or making a list of ways to deal with specific challenges that the participant expects to face upon returning to everyday life.

The individual attention allows a deeper insight into the person's world, their possibilities, resources, strengths, but also challenges to support the person's constructive being in the group and to strengthen their sense of worth. It is important to emphasize that a crucial factor of 1to1 talks' value is the successful building of a positive relationship between the OL Trainer and participant. These conversations constitute an additional accompaniment of the person in the phase of being in the forest - a space for an in-depth discussion (from the level of the individual, with reference to specific situations, behaviours, reactions and emotions) in an atmosphere of openness and trust.

3.5 Working on an individual level against the background of group cooperation

The work with individual is conducted in a setting composed of one-on-one talks with OL Trainer, elaboration of Individual Development Plans and all other tools made available throughout the outdoors excursion. This means that the individual work with participant takes place 'in-between', i.e. when participants and OL Trainers are performing various activities in the course of experiencing outdoors together.

Concentration on individual in the natural settings makes it possible to organize and carry out excursions considering and responding to the uniqueness of particular participants in terms of their capacities, skills, talents, abilities and needs, and creating the conditions to support their self-development. The staff aim to practice Carls Roger's 'unconditional positive regard' by being present, attentive, kind and encouraging in each single encounter with a participant. The OL Trainers encourage establishment of contact and conversation with everyone and organize the activities in such a way as to adapt them to the capabilities of everyone. In this way, each person senses they are important, listened to and feels that their presence in the group is relevant and needed.

Individualisation involves OL Trainers recognition of particular differences between participants in terms of interests, skills, abilities and needs, and taking these into account in the group process (e.g. by deliberately avoiding creation of subgroups or appropriately dividing roles).

OL Trainers should ensure a space for individualization in the stimulated learning situations, so as to allow each participant to actively develop their self-knowledge and skills according to their current abilities. Individualisation can take place through activities such as:

- Initiating particular meaningful experiences (e.g. choosing a specific camp role, being invited to perform a task, taking on a challenge);
- Reviewing and self-reflection activities, e.g. after completing a task, at the end of the day - inviting individual reflections and conclusions from the field experience;
- Combining individuals into mixed teams - varying the tasks in terms of difficulty and adapting them appropriately to the abilities of each group member (by doing different tasks as a team, they work together, helping each other and learning from each other, and they reach the sensation that the achieved result of each participant's work is equally important, needed and appreciated);
- Individual constructive feedback from the OL Trainer or other participants to individuals at the bonfire forum, e.g. those who played a specific role in the camp (with reference to specific examples, proactive behaviours, supporting goal achievement, etc.; possibly with indication of development areas).

The OL Trainer promotes self-initiated experiences, reinforces a proactive attitude, uses statements such as "maybe you want to try", "do you want to experience", "how about giving yourself a chance", "see it as an opportunity to learn something new" (and appreciates the attempts made, even if they were not entirely successful). Such approach supports questioning, self-discovery and experimentation. It activates and motivates, sets tasks and inspires independent solutions according to one's own ideas, so that everyone can take a 'step forward'.

3.6 Additional remarks

Complementing the individual workflow from the perspective not of the OL Trainer but of the participant, there are also specific moments that recur constantly within each excursion. These are:

- The participant's personal daily routine (a wide range of technical activities around themself concerning thermal comfort, health, hygiene, consumables);
- Giving and asking for help (in different circumstances, interactions with different people);
- Moments spent alone with oneself, in the immediate vicinity of the camp, but far away enough to be with one's own thoughts;
- The moment of assuming responsibility as a result of rotating camp functions ("fire", chef, leader, "fuel", "time", navigator, "boiling water", housekeeper, helper, etc.) and continuing to perform this function for a period of one day;
- Finding oneself faced with an unexpected challenge by taking part in a team surprise exercise, which usually takes the form of a mini search and rescue operation, carried out close to camp;
- Completing the Individual Development Plan - IDP, in which the participant can write down everything they have experienced and learnt about themself, as well as define their further goals, ways to support the development process and the realisation of tasks in the area important to them;
- Obtaining feedback from OL Trainers and participants, which takes place on an ongoing basis through various forestry activities, as well as during one of the last group meetings, in which they write a *postcard to themselves*, which has a great reinforcing value for each member of the excursion.

Although some of the above-mentioned points may appear to be tools of typical group work, each of them translates strictly into the individual development of the respective participant. Its embedding in the context of a team activity is essential for the emergence of certain specific scopes which, from the perspective of the person concerned, may often appear at first sight to be mutually contradictory. This applies, for example, to the need to take care of oneself when, at the same time, the whole team needs support. This may also apply to the need to assertively communicate one's boundaries, which at first sight for some participants may seem to contradict provisions of created social contract, which are the lack of judgement of people, mutual respect, values of difference etc. The diversity of the group and the unusual context - an excursion to the forest - always leads to interesting discoveries about oneself. Some of these may challenge one's previous self-image or what is sincerely said by participants as feedback to their colleague at the end of the day. It is worth mentioning at this point the typical OL specificity, which translates into the unwritten rule "the worse the better". The more difficult the day - e.g. full of rain, frustration, sometimes interpersonal tensions, an undercooked lunch - the more development value the OL staff team can create with the participants at group level. These subtle phenomena are then picked up by the OL Trainer from the group level and transferred to the individual level in the form of questions in one-on-one talks, in a friendly and non-judgmental manner.

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CHAPTER IV FOCUS ON GROUP

After providing definition of a group, this Chapter further focuses on discussing the process of forming a group. First discussed are the purpose and goals of an Outdoor Learning – OL and of an OL group within it because these terms are crucial to understand the meaning of every OL project. The remaining subchapters of this Chapter (from 4.3 to 4.6) follow the schedule and development of excursion. Creating the group is a natural beginning of the process. The first day is very important for what will come next, so there is a subchapter devoted to this topic, proposing the tools which are helpful to create healthy atmosphere of mutual trust and safety. Further in the Chapter IV, we explain the group processes happening during the main part of an excursion, describing activities of participants and afterwards we focus on role of the OL Trainer. The last subchapter focuses on the advantages of the method for the team and how to transfer these benefits to everyday life of OL excursion participants.

4.1 Definition of a group

A group of people is a set of individuals who relate to and meet each other with a common purpose. Groups can be formal or informal and can be small or large. In case of the POL project and in general practice of CIE, the number of participants taking part in OL excursion is between 6 and 12. Usually the groups are quite homogenous, with common educational, age or domicile background or defined by their situation on the labour market. Such definition of the particular group is imposed in each OL project in which CIE in engaged. However it should be noted that CIE believes that the less homogeneous the group is the more stimulating the environment is for learning. Particularly in the POL project led by CIE, a common purpose and interests aiming at the activation of women, aged 18 to 35, at risk of exclusion are set in the POL proposal (stipulated more in detail in Chapter VI).

In the particular project's settings, it is ascertained that each of such participants comes with their own objectives they want to achieve and is able to make their personal contribution to the rest of the group. For example, women at risk of exclusion would be joining the OL experience as any other OL participant not belonging to any formal nor hierarchical structure, but joining an informal group with common characteristics of its components and certain rules. The only formal aspect of the group is provided by the OL Trainers in their role of accompaniment and facilitation. However, such quality is minimalized as much as possible. Most importantly the development of group's structures depends on participants' needs and is created by them throughout the experience of outdoor learning, so it can benefit them in a way that fits them the best. In any group there is a need for belonging and acceptance. Group should provide a sense of community and support. In each case seeking the differences and similarities of its members, its members can help with facilitating its formation, its wellbeing and fruitful cooperation. This may lead to a sense of belonging, protection and security within the group, being beneficial to individuals. However, groups can also have disadvantages, such as the exclusion of certain individuals or the creation of internal conflicts. Therefore, from the very beginning it is important to facilitate dynamics and tools for unity and insertion.

4.2 Purpose and goals of an Outdoor Learning group

The first step in developing a curriculum within the OL group is to establish the common purpose of the group and the goals that each group member wants to achieve. This action helps determine the activities and topics that will be covered in the curriculum. Needs of participants should be the main concern so the OL Trainers should stay flexible and give as much as possible of the decision making to them. The process development and taking the pathway are in essence more important than the final goal. Further, taking into account the natural surroundings, it is important to ensure the space for contemplating the nature and one's inner self within it. It helps persons to feel safe and meaningful and gives the healthy space for their learning and progress.

Our groups are created with the purpose of achieving a common goal, such as improving employment insertion, discovery of strengths and acquisition of new skills such as digital, as well as enhancing social and group relationships. Although some of the goals of some individuals may be varied and depend on each member, we try to mark and direct the main and common goal. Below are enlisted different objectives of the group in the Outdoor Learning process:

- Achieving a Specific Outcome: refers to achieving a specific project outcome, such as "to improve the employment opportunities and motivation towards actively seeking employment" of the group members. This will be achieved through the acquisition or discovery of new skills or personal values, even if they have gone unnoticed by the person until now.
- Workflow: refers to working on a project, where the results will be achieved through teamwork and the sharing of many factors on which the success of the project depends upon.
- Sharing Interests or Activities: all members of the group have a common goal, but also start from a very similar starting point, which helps them identify with the group and increases their sense of belonging.
- Providing Support to Members: refers to providing support to other participants. As mentioned, the group will have common goals, but there will also be individual goals. Understanding, supporting, and sharing within the group will be key factors for the subsequent achievement of the individual goals of each group member.
- Adapting to Changes: it is important to build awareness of possible changes in terms of some group's aims as well as particular goals of the group members, as these can evolve or change over time. It is important to take these changes into account and adapt to them in order to maintain the cohesion and success of the group and build on acceptance rather than frustration.

4.3 Creating a group

There are basic aspects of creating the group that are crucial for its further healthy functioning. It is important that everybody in the group gets to know each other. It helps to gain trust, work together and ask for help when it is needed. OL Trainers join the group and aim to work together with project participants on the same level. It is important that all group members respect each other and that the individual priorities of the OL Trainers are met as well. In order to achieve this aim, OL Trainers communicate this to participants at the very beginning of the OL experience.

At **the first meeting** prior to an outdoor excursion, it is important to establish a solid foundation for a successful completion of the planned program. To achieve this, activities are carried out to create a friendly and trusting environment within the group. The goal is for each participant to feel free and comfortable within the group and to establish basic rules of coexistence for a positive experience. These rules include taking care of the environment and the equipment, avoiding physical or verbal violence, not establishing exclusive relationships, and refraining from alcohol or drugs. Additional rules may be

set by agreement among all members of the excursion, allowing each person to contribute their ideas and opinions to be accepted by the group.

It is important to keep in mind that participation in the excursion is voluntary and each participant can choose to leave at any time. It can also be a good time to share the reasons why each participant has decided to participate in this activity. In summary, the first meeting is crucial in creating a positive, open environment and a successful experience for all participants in the outdoor excursion.

To help people relax, laugh together and have possibility to cooperate with each other without necessarily leaving comfort zone (well, sometimes you have to find some distance to yourself and freedom to play like a child) there are techniques called **ice-breakers**. They are used also in OL, not only at the beginning of group's existence but throughout the OL to find a common tongue. These activities are designed to encourage participation, help bonding process and facilitate the formation of relationships within the group. Examples of ice-breaker dynamics include name games and communication exercises and are included in the POL Handbook. While staying in a one place together, participants are doing something funny but challenging in the same time. They often forget about their roles and try to connect with others. It is important to ensure safe space for everybody in the group, try to maintain communication and to encourage members to express their needs and boundaries as well as sum up each ice-breaker exercise.

When a trusting and friendly atmosphere is established in a group, people feel free to share their ideas, fears, worries, and uncertainties about the future. Often, participants find that those group members who appear to be very different from them actually have similar thoughts, wishes and concerns. This helps to create a sense of identification and belonging to the group, overcoming stereotypes and fostering greater participation by each member of the excursion. With a deeper understanding and unconditional support among participants, both individual and collective goals can be achieved together.

Social agreement, also addressing safekeeping of participants' boundaries, is a very important tool to introduce at the beginning of the OL experience. Such contract might change a little throughout experience in nature and it is the role of OL Trainers to ensure participants can revise the social agreement. Nevertheless, the purpose of this contract is to provide pace and time for everybody to say what is important for them to feel safe. It helps with enhancing comfort of all participants and it is essential for good work flow too. The social agreement are clear guidelines, however it is for participants to decide what rules should be included. For some these could be: no stealing, no physical or verbal violence or no drugs. For some groups this is obvious social guarantee. However for the correct development of the social agreement, all norms need to be established by common agreement by all the participants. Asking everyone to participate in creating a contract and expressing their needs is crucial for wellbeing of all members. After participants actually get to know each other, they will establish their own ways of being together.

"From a Norwegian approach: there is less emphasis on rules and instead more emphasis on a sense of trust; that everyone will contribute to the well-being of the group. In the outdoor learning example, the organization actively downplay rules."

On the first day in the nature, OL Trainers help participants to asses what actions they have to do and what equipment to have to survive safely, healthy and to enjoy the journey. OL Trainers invite participants to undertake important roles being responsible for a task with a actual impact on group life, such as navigating, cooking, erecting tents, fire keeping, keeping the common space clean.

4.4 Activities of an OL group

Participants and OL Trainers **organise their camps** and everyday life by themselves. They are supplied with all necessary equipment but still: they are in nature and they have to build a roof out of a tarp, dig a fireplace remembering about respecting the nature, collect wood, cook dishes and so on. For doing that, each of the participants usually joins in to become productive in their task so that the group can reach its targets. To help the process, on the very first day group is informed that each day different participants may be responsible for one of activities essential for everybody; each of them can fulfil a different role. To eat, the group has to prepare meals, so the cook is needed. Cooking requires a bonfire, so there is a person or persons who start it and take care of it until the fire is put out. Another person or persons can collect wood, sort it and keep dry, someone can take care of water and keeping the place clean etc.

In each group the **leader** may be elected. Such person can keep the bird's eye view on the group processes, enhance better group communication, check if particular camp tasks are ready, support maintenance of groups' goals and preserve the longer-distance tasks of the group. This role is demanding because the leader needs to focus on everybody else and their tasks, understand their work, motivate other to contribute their work and help where needed. Each day a different person within the group may try fulfilling the leader's role. Person who think they can't cook or lead, may try each and every role, learn its aspects in order to better understand them. Such approach helps to gain individual overview and be more empathetic towards other roles and persons within the group. It is also very important to try to keep any demanding or blaming out of communication between participants. OL Trainers encourage approach within which everybody is in the learning process, OL Trainers as well. It is therefore the role of the whole group to help each person fit in and fulfil their duties. Establishing roles can help to ensure that the group functions effectively and efficiently. OL Trainers help stimulate this process as much as needed, in the same time trying not to impose any roles on any particular person. CIE practice also finds it important to consider the transfer of duties from OL Trainers to participants as the OL excursion and the group itself progress.

Except for everyday tasks, within the CIE's OL Curriculum there is also a part of **group coaching**. Each morning and evening the whole group is meeting, having a conversation moderated by one of the OL Trainers. Main topic of each morning meeting is determining the wellbeing of the group members after the night in the woods and individual goals for particular day. The evening conversations focus on the individual evaluations of the day that has passed. Each of these meetings has also another topic (like motivation, teamwork, needs etc.). Such meetings can last from 30 minutes, up to 90 minutes or longer – depending on the workflow and the participants' needs to discuss issues. The conversations may be supported with some thought experiment, a game or an exercise There is also usually a time for learning new skills: starting fire, chopping wood, making knots, cooking in rough conditions and many others that participants may find useful and want to learn. CIE OL Trainers may teach such basic skills required for surviving in the nature, but it is very important for OL Trainers to maintain safety as first priority, and

then let participants try new things even if they're making some minor mistakes. It is not about training specialist but giving people new skills and faith in themselves.

The OL Curriculum is filled with important tasks which need to be taken care of to maintain the wellbeing of the group and its individual members, there is group coaching and a program of 1to1 talks and some survival technics participants may be interested in. However, it is very important to remember about just **having nice experience in the nature**. Spending time in a peaceful surrounding where person can reattach to their roots, forget for a while about everyday routine may also be very beneficial. Hence CIE's OL Trainers remember not to overload participants with new skills and topics. What could be most important is that proximity with nature and some time when one can focus on themselves directly, not on roles, tasks or responsibilities. Going to nature can whip person out of usual perspective, give time for a deep breath and help with letting go off stress, thinking out of the box and finding new solutions. Also living according to natural laws - waking up with the sun, hiding from rain and appreciating sunny moments – can help understanding how easy it is to find joy in everyday life and to feel that we all are parts of bigger, wonderful world.

4.5 Roles of the OL Trainers

During all the group process, OL Trainers watch the participants closely trying to facilitate the process the group is going through. They also try to reduce their impact to the minimum so participants can establish their own ways of dealing with challenges. Hence it is important for OL Trainers to **intervene only when needed** or asked. OL Trainers take care of the main logistics tasks (so that there is enough food and water for everyone, and all equipment is safe and ready to use), check the weather, make sure the group is aware of the timelines and lead the group to set and move forward towards the next steps that are planned by the group. When participants are establishing their everyday routine, OL Trainers transfer some of the responsibilities to them so the participants become co-responsible for what they achieve as group, develop their self-sufficiency, also through raising awareness of their own strength. Whenever the group struggles, the OL Trainer may help moderate process of finding solutions to the challenge encountered. There are a lot of risks which may occur during the excursions, including changes of weather, accidents or conflicts within the group. Those are the moments when OL Trainers first listens to the conversation, secondly stimulate discussion to reach the solution and – only if the group needs such interference - step in to moderate jointly reaching save result.

If the safety is maintained, interpersonal relationships within the group are an important topic for the OL Trainers. Good relations between participants, including OL Trainers, are essential for stimulating learning process. Strong bonds are empowering, and they help the group to succeed in their tasks and goals. Activities and exercises that focus on building trust, communication and support strengthen these relationships. OL Trainer are guardians of **good manners and equality**, however rather making participants be co-responsible for establishing and keeping them rather than imposing them on the group. OL Trainers observe if any participants becomes the underdog and that there are no smaller gangs within the group, making other participants less welcome. Nonviolent communication, with everybody having same rights is giving wider perspective and helps all participants to feel understood and needed, leading to better understanding the problems that occurred.

Last, but not least, the responsibility of OL Trainers is to take care of **natural environment** by raising awareness of participants that being in nature requires special thinking not only about their comfort but also about the wildlife around them. OL activities are held in places intentionally chosen for such

purposes to lessen the impact of humans on their surroundings. Therefore, there should be no problem with setting the campfire safely or putting tents. However, the weather and climate conditions may change and participants' sensitivity over environmental protection may vary. It is OL Trainers' task to assure that the wildlife is impacted as little as possible and all the OL places and pathways visited are left clean by the group.

4.6 Transferring the experience to everyday life

It is essential that the skills and abilities developed and acquired during an outdoor excursion are transferable to the everyday life of the participants. To ensure this transfer, it is necessary to provide opportunities to apply and practice what they have learned in real-life situations. This can be done through activities and challenges that simulate real-life scenarios, allowing participants to test and improve their competencies, skills and abilities. Providing resources and other perspectives can help persons reflect on how they can apply their new skills and abilities to their personal and professional lives. Such mentorship support serves as a guidance in the process of transferring the skills acquired during the OL excursion to their daily life. OL Trainers and other group members may provide regular feedback and evaluations to help participants track their progress and identify areas for improvement. Moreover, in the last day of the OL experience there is a special space assured for summing up all of experiences.

After a time in wilderness participants of CIE's OL need a passage to their regular routines that are awaiting them at home. Last night of the OL journey they spend in a shelter where they can take a shower, eat meal prepared in a regular kitchen sitting by a table and talking with each other and sleep in a regular bed. Before they say goodbye to OL Trainers and other participants on the next day, there is a last meeting, sort of a celebration, on which all OL excursion days are discussed. Everyone has a chance to say something about individual challenges that were the hardest for them but also about events that were the most joyful and brought the biggest change in their perspective. This is also the time when everyone can share a feedback about others, focusing on their strengths and positive experiences with others, i.e. things that they did, that helped the group or the individual the most. It is important for OL Trainers to encourage participants to think how the, competencies, skills and abilities they have strengthened or acquired in the wilderness can be applied to their personal, professional and educational goals.

OL Trainers facilitate incorporating the IDP (Individual Development Plan) described in detail in Chapter II) into the participants' everyday lives and help to follow it after the OL excursion, to maintain, practice and improve the skills and abilities acquired. Flexible approach is needed so that IDP is adapted to the needs and characteristics of each participant, avoiding overwhelming them with upcoming future and plans connected with it. To ensure a successful transfer, it is important to establish a follow-up mechanism that allows to monitor the progress and the results. Providing participants with resources and tools that allow them to continue learning and improving after the excursion is very helpful. Encouraging them to share their experiences and reflections with others will make the process of integrating the new information and skills acquired easier. Supportive and encouraging environment allows participants to take risks and make mistakes, without fearing negative consequences. Reflecting on their own learning process will help them understand how they learn and what strategies they can use to continue practicing and improving their skills and abilities. It is helpful to use a comprehensive approach that includes the development of both technical and soft skills, to ensure a successful transfer of the skills and abilities acquired during the OL excursion to the daily life of the participants. The good

practice mentioned above should be maintained during whole OL experience, however emphasising it on the last day is crucial. The same applies to giving a long-term perspective, to ensure that the skills and abilities acquired during the excursion are maintained and improved over time.

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CHAPTER V LOGISTICS

Logistics is an important aspect of an excursion. To make the OL method go smoothly and without disrupting the method, a whole background of logistic must be properly fixed. For the easier understanding of this chapter we divided it on three subchapter the OL logistics must have: 5.1 before the Ol trip; 5.2 during the Ol trip; and 5.3 after the excursion.

5.1 Before

To the part that must be done before, following activities are included:

1. Recruitment process (strategies, different target groups, formal and legal regulations and project requirements, finances, accounting, communication flow between the project coordinators, CIE trainers, OL trainers involved in the particular excursion, recruiters and the participants to make all the information clear, and to avoid misunderstandings and provide all the necessary information to the trip participants).
2. Preparing for the excursion (choosing camp sites and routes - what they should look like, what to pay attention to when choosing a camp and route in terms of method with safety in mind, what natural resources, terrain, transportation, resources like wood for a campfire are needed, etc.);
3. "Day Zero" (a day before the excursion given to the OL trainers to close the final preparations and final adapting to such circumstances as weather, terrain obstacles and equipment checking, buying food, and other necessary stuff and products, discuss the strategy for ongoing excursion.
4. Depot: principalities, organization and usage of the space. The depot is the place where you will find all the equipment you need to complete a field trip, as well as specimen documents. Its good organization will guarantee easy and quick use and efficient preparation and execution of the excursion. It will also allow you to keep the place in order.

5.1.1 Some aspects of recruitment before the excursion

Adequate preparation of the OL Trainers' team to receive the group and work with excursion participants in a way that meets their needs is only possible if there is an efficient flow of communication between project coordinator, recruiters, OL Trainers, and participants. Basic information about the group and its individual members, especially those pertaining to the specific needs of some participants, should reach the OL Trainers' team early enough to make such preparation possible and thus avoid unpredictable situations (health issues of particular participants or of a group, conflicts, security threats or otherwise difficult) as much as possible. General aspects of particular group's recruitment within POL project – women at risk of exclusion – is described in subchapter 5.

5.1.2 Excursion preparation

The process of logistics preparation for an excursion includes activities that largely determine its success. Undertaking preparations early enough and taking care of the details with proper attention allows OL

Trainers to focus all their attention on working with participants and avoid getting distracted from the process during the excursion. Adequate attention to the quality of preparation undertaken improves the sense of security and order among OL Trainers and participants. Good preparation can also be a kind of group work model for excursion's participants giving them a space to co-decide how to better ensure the trip is going well. Detailed tips for OL Trainers on how to effectively organise the excursion's logistics are contained in the Handbook addressed to the OL Trainers.

5.1.3 Day Zero

The allotted time for realization of OL Method takes 5 days with participants, however, in order to prepare and organize whole excursion, Trainers meet each other one day before the proper start with participants. This day is so called "Day Zero". This time is given a specially to the OL Trainers (who are choosing the leader for the OL trip among themselves), the project coordinator and the person responsible for logistics to set forth details of the excursion. During this time the OL Trainers are also acquainted with the repository to get to know with group and individual characteristics, check the route, weather, and adjust or modify plan of the week to the current conditions. Detailed Check List used by the OL Trainers on Day Zero constitutes part of the Handbook addressed to the OL Trainers.

5.1.4 Depot

CIE is in possession of the whole set of equipment, both individual (sleeping bags, tents, sleeping pads, outdoor clothing, individual cooking sets, etc.) and for the common use (big shelters, ropes, kitchen utensils, fire and navigation accessories, other tools for workshops). Detailed list of the individual and group OL equipment is contained in the Handbook addressed to the OL Trainers. Such equipment is stored in a depot located nearby the campsites and routes, or in the agritourism farm where the final activities take place. The most comfortable solution is when the whole excursion starts and closes in such a spot. One can say that the Depot is the heart of the OL logistics.

5.2 During

This part of the logistic aspect is focused on the excursion itself, safety, and role of the OL Trainers in the logistics process. Once the whole process of preparation is done properly, it is important to follow and control:

1. The plan of the week with the OL method in the centre;
2. Safety;
3. OL Trainers: their roles and tasks' sharing during the excursion;
4. Organization of the campsite;
5. Ecology – taking care of nature, "leave no trace" philosophy.

5.2.1 Plan of the week

An example of the weekly plan in the context of CIE's OL Method has been introduced already in Chapter 1. In the context of OL logistics it is reminded particularly with an emphasis on the first day. This is the day, in which most of the logistics is happening in cooperation with participants.

5.2.2 Safety

Apart from the general frame and scheme of the OL excursion, the situation in which group of people spend few days in the nature is very dynamic. There are plenty of factors, that may affect the change of plans or interrupt the OL process and method. Starting from the human factor, ending on the weather phenomena, OL Trainers are constantly making decisions focusing on health and safety of all participants. This is also the most important topic during morning staff meetings and evening supervisions allowing them to react up to date. In the extreme cases, some of the OL excursions may eventually end up with evacuation. There are many causes that may lead to the evacuation. OL Trainers do their best to avoid them, and for this reason special safety procedures have been studied, practiced and described in details in a Handbook addressed to the OL Trainers.

5.2.3 OL Trainers and their roles

In order to lead effectively the group of maximum 12 participants through the OL process, at least three OL Trainers are assigned to the excursion. There is also an additional person assigned responsible for outer logistics. This means that the excursion is secured in terms of last night reservations at agrotourism accommodation, camp sites, logistics vehicle, safety points along the OL pathways, food and water supply, participants arrival and departure, but also some aspects of supply delivery and safety procedures and evacuations. This role of the logistics may also be assumed by one of the OL Trainers.

Among three of the OL Trainers, one of them is the leader of whole excursion and takes responsibility for all the crucial decision during the excursion, and coordinates whole work of the OL Trainers, the trip process, and OL method implementation. However other OL Trainers cooperate and support the leader in every aspect of the excursion. It is the mutual trust and common goal to lead the whole group through the OL process.

For the benefit of the OL methodology implementation by CIE, most of the daily camping decisions and tasks are being done by and with the participants. They are assigned to the specific temporal roles which are changeable as they see it. Through carefully observing the group and individuals, the team of OL Trainers just coordinates the excursion process and supports individuals with their tasks. Main tasks of the OL Trainers are: assuring health and safety conditions during the whole excursion and its particular activities and minimalizing the danger within specific situations, controlling legal and ecological aspects of the OL excursion, leading the group sessions, leading individual sessions, providing thematic workshops, coordinating group processes and conflict solving, being watchful and reacting on the dynamics of the excursion, controlling the basic supplies such as water, grocery, first aid kit content, technical condition and fuel of the logistics car and evacuation if necessary.

5.2.4 Eco-perspective in OL

OL works for climate protection and sustainable development, which is manifested in many fields during CIE's programs. We promote the minimum impact practices inspired by the 'Leave No Trace' approach. 'Leave No Trace' consists of seven principles:

- plan ahead and prepare;
- travel and camp on durable surfaces;
- dispose of waste properly;
- leave what you find;
- minimize campfire impacts;
- respect wildlife;

- be considerate of other visitors.

This means e.g. proper preparation, a decision about where to camp (selecting an appropriate campsite of low-impact use, minimizing ecological and social impacts, camping in a fixed place, the "don't destroy the ground" approach). CIE wants to minimize the likelihood of wildlife disturbance (e.g. camping on a separate part of the pasture). Also we try to restore the original appearance of the area when leaving the camp.

5.3 After

This part addresses the logistics activities after the excursion is over. Such undertakings aim at ensuring that all the equipment is retrieved either from the participants or the OL Trainers, that its condition is checked, all necessary repairs are made or potential replacing equipment is purchased, all OL supplies are returned to the Depot, the final report from the OL excursion is made, including cost calculations and other formalities. More information on this subject given in the Handbook, however herein we want to underline the role of logistics at the end of the excursion for the OL method as implemented by CIE.

Since CIE is used to borrowing OL individual supplies to its participants, we also engage them in the equipment maintenance. This happens to some extent before and during the OL trip, however the most important is the preservation which takes place upon participants' completion of the excursion. By then, they know they contributed to the smooth experience everyone shared in the last few days, so OL Trainers leverage this sentiment to ask for everyone's help. This regards cleaning kitchen utensils, disinfecting shoes, reporting on and separating equipment which needs repairing, preparing clothing and sleeping bags for washing, etc. For a group of 12, such maintenance takes approximately 2 hours. It serves as prolonging the team work and team spirit effect and is generally a very positive experience for everyone taking part in it.

CHAPTER VI - GROUP OF POL PARTCIPANTS

6.1 Definition

Social exclusion is the consequence of a series of problems affecting an individual or group. Such challenges can include unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low income, poor housing, high crime, ill-health and family breakdown. When such problems combine, they can create a vicious cycle. Social exclusion has complex and multi-dimensional causes and consequences, creating deep and long-lasting problems for individual families, for the economy, and for the society as a whole.[1] In this Chapter we focus on describing specific group of OL excursions' participants: women and girls aged 18-35, at risk of exclusion, mostly from rural areas, who have been chosen as the participants of the excursions piloted in the POL project.

6.1.1 Characteristics

Women who are at risk of economic and/or social exclusion or is already excluded, is described by one or more characteristics:

- low self-esteem;
- social isolation;
- fear of undertaking any activity, including social activity;
- difficulties in satisfying her own needs;
- fatigue;
- lack of agency and sense of influence over one's own life;
- health, including mental problems;
- reduced intellectual, physical or mental capacity.

Outside factors such as domestic violence, economic violence, living in areas distant from urban agglomerations, communication discrimination with low access to public services also have a negative impact. Such women are more likely to experience educational, cultural and social deprivation, and lack methods to increase their self-esteem. High levels of social exclusion and marginalization are accompanied by specific family dynamics, often dominated by multi-generational unemployment, at risk of long-term unemployment. Often these women cannot or do not know how to return to the labour market after parental leave. Lack of involvement in training courses, internships and job search-oriented apprenticeships are further factors undermining their position. Sometimes they are at risk of social exclusion due to multiple births or single motherhood. They often live in an environment where violence is normalized - 'a slap is not a beating', this is combined with a their lack of awareness of what psychological or economic violence is.

There is a high probability that such potential POL project participant is using social welfare benefits and/or taking part in activation projects (paid for participation, European Social Fund programme).

[1] https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/social-exclusion - 27.03.2023

However, these activation projects do not bring lasting change and the purpose of such women's participation is not to change one's life situation, but to feed the household budget in the short term.

6.1.2 Data

According to the 2021 National Census, the number of unemployed women under the age of 34 in Poland was 133.8 thousand, accounting for as much as 42.8 percent of all unemployed women. According to the Central Statistical Office (CSO), the "very high territorial differentiation of unemployment" persisted. The highest unemployment rate was recorded in the provinces of Warmia-Masuria (8.7%), Subcarpathia (8.3%), Kuyavia-Pomerania (7.9%), Świętokrzyskie (7.5%) and Lublin and West Pomerania (7.3% each). The lowest unemployment rates were in the Greater Poland (3.3%), Silesia (4.5%), Masovia and Lesser Poland (4.8% each). The CSO reported that at the end of the third quarter of 2021, the share of women in the total number of unemployed stood at 54,3% - 0,3 percentage points higher than in the corresponding quarter of 2020.

"Unemployed women were characterized by a different educational structure than men, as 58% of unemployed women had secondary and tertiary education, while the percentage of men with this level of education was 38,1%." - the CSO reported. One of the main reasons undermining women's employability is traditional attitudes towards the division of labour and family responsibilities, which make women less attractive employees for most employers. Employers treat women's social privileges as one of the considerations in selecting job applicants, preferring to hire more available men - even with lower qualifications. Increasingly, they restrict the employment of women by, among other things, limiting the upper age limit (35 years). Another issue is the duration of working life, which is often interrupted by motherhood. Women very often give up returning to work to raise children, which is relatively rare for men. This in turn often results in financial dependence on the partner and greater exposure to various forms of violence.

Typical for this group is a passive and demanding attitude towards social assistance benefits. Long-term unemployment can cause changes in the psyche - depression, apathy, discouragement and lack of self-confidence. "If the extent of mental health problems are compared by gender, it is the youngest women (16-22 years) who are suffering the most. Here, the proportion has risen from 12 to 25% over a ten-year period. In comparison, 5% of men in this age group report mental health problems. In the general population, 7% of men and 12% of women report mental health problems. A number of studies on mental health confirm that far more women than men suffer from slight mental health disorders like anxiety and depression. Wichstrøm (1999) found that two of every three young people with depression symptoms are girls. Only drug-related disorders are far more common among men than women (Norwegian Institute of Public Health, 2011). These studies suggest that young men and women express and manage difficult emotions in different ways. It is also interesting to note that gender differences in the prevalence of mental health disorders change during puberty (Mykletun et al. 2009). Before puberty there are more boys than girls who have mental health disorders, often behavioural problems, and who are treated for these. However, after puberty, the girls dominate with increasing emotional problems. Furthermore, before puberty, behavioural and developmental disorders occur about as frequently as emotional problems. After puberty, the incidence of emotional problems doubles, while behavioural disorders are actually reduced (ibid)" (Sommer, 2017, 13).

Women's with such a problems, provide a negative role model for children and the community, resulting in generational use of social assistance. Observations by social workers show that for women who have not taken up employment before the age of 35, it becomes virtually unattainable later on.

Pandemic also has increased such likelihood as women have been disproportionately and negatively affected by the COVID-19 crisis. A consequence of the pandemic in relation to other member states, women ceased to work at almost a double rate than men. Female employment rates (20-64 years of age) in selected EU member states compared to other countries, the female employment rate in Poland is one of the lowest in Europe[2]

The long-term unemployed stop believing in their abilities (cognitive deficit) and do not initiate new activities (motivational deficit). So the behaviour of the long-term unemployed is fundamentally different from the short-term unemployed. They can be described as: atrophy, i.e., the disappearance of active attitudes about seeking employment. Unsuccessful search causes discouragement and lack of faith in the possibility of changing this difficult situation. This does not completely block the activity of the unemployed, but only limits it and makes it more difficult to look for a job. Despite this, the unemployed are still able to take the trouble of activation and do not accept professional unemployment. Prolonged unemployment poses the threat of social pathology, reduces the chance of finding employment, and thus causes material degradation and social isolation of the individual. The unemployed can then independently experience structural poverty [3].

Different roles and life functions of women mean that they are in the group of people at risk of exclusion. Women's professional activity is affected by the decision to start a family or motherhood. Some women, after finishing their education, immediately enter the labour market, some only during or after raising children. However, the longer the period of such deactivation, the more difficult it is to return to professional activity. This can be seen when analyzing the economic activity rate and the structure of the unemployed, which also take into account the division by sex and age. The largest percentage of professionally active men is in the 25-44 age group (about 90%). The share of women in the same age group is much smaller (about 71%)[4].

6.2 Recruitment

Information flow in recruitment process.is one of the crucial terms, which should be fulfilled in order for the OL trip to be successful.

At the stage of constructing the information flow model, it is worth considering the following:

- The form filled out by the participant should be available for review by the OL Trainers' team at least one week (two weeks is much better) before the planned excursion- It should include information on areas that are or may be relevant to the health and life of the participant and other members of the excursion (diagnosed mental disorders that may significantly affect the change

[2] P. PROFETA, X. CALÓ, R. OCCHIUZZI, *"COVID-19 and its economic impact on women and women's poverty"*, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 693.183 – May 2021

[3] https://gazeta.sgh.waw.pl/po-prostu-ekonomia/jak-bezrobocie-wplywa-na-czlowieka - 27.03.2023

[4] Selected aspects of the labor market in 2018, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2019, pp. 21-23

of the participant's behaviour during the excursion, ongoing psychiatric treatment with psychoactive drugs, past suicide attempts, substance addictions, diseases and other medications taken, the withdrawal of which may pose a threat to life and health).

- The recruiter should have a clear and complete information procedure and be trained in it before the recruitment process, so that potential participants receive the most consistent and completely consistent description of the rules, conditions of operation during the excursion and its objectives (for an elaboration of the topic, see subsection. b) of this section).
- The recruiter, having familiarized him/herself with the guidelines (conditions, rules and objectives of the excursion), should present them according to the established order at the information meeting with potential participants and be able to answer their questions and concerns, if any. If there is a lack of data in any area or questions arise after the meeting, it is good if participants can contact the recruiter (or another person designated by the recruiter if necessary, such as the excursion leading OL Trainer) by email/phone even before the excursion.
- Once the list of participants is closed, the recruiter should forward the information forms to the excursion leading OL Trainer (optimally up to 2 weeks before the excursion)
- After receiving information about the participants, the OL trainer -leader organizes a meeting at which the OL Trainers' team gets acquainted with them and prepares for the activity in terms of the individual needs of each participant and, consequently, with the specifics of the group.

6.3 Specific challenges of working with women at the risk of exclusion

This subchapter deals with potential challenges, with which women at the risk of exclusion experience, such as:

- Psychological problems;
- Caring for dependent persons (children, elderly, partners, persons with disabilities);
- Lack of a driving license;
- Lack of access to a car;
- Lack of public transport, especially in the rural areas;
- Poor quality of communication - not answering phones, not calling back, no service;
- Their own disabilities;
- Lack of trust in people outside their own environment;
- Lack of knowledge about outdoor education and lack of habits to spend time outdoors;
- Reaching the target group with information about the project.

Below are CIE's good practices - solutions in the context of these enlisted challenges.

6.3.1 Psychological problems, disabilities

An additional OL Trainer/mentor enables the full realization of the excursion's objectives in cases of people with mobility impairments, having difficulties with movement or people with neurological disorders. In our CIE experience, certain types of participant difficulties, whether cognitive or physical, require the work of a '1-on-1' OL Trainer.

In order to make both the participants and the OL Trainers' team comfortable and to ensure the highest possible level of service quality, it is worthwhile, in such cases, to provide an additional person to the OL Trainers' team - depending on the reason for the difficulty - an OL Trainer (neurological disorders, cognitive disorders) or simply a supporter who is experienced in supporting particular person with disability. It is very challenging for the OL methodology implementation with the whole group, in case when one OL Trainer focuses all of his/her attention on one participant. In order to ensure participants' safety and for the participants to share this feeling of safety, they need to be taken care of and feel that they have a safe space to talk through their worries and problems with the individual OL Trainer.

6.3.2 Lack of driving license/ lack of access to a car/ lack of public transport/ reaching the target group with information about the project

An effective solution is to launch mobile recruiters who can get to the participants themselves. In the rural areas where communication is difficult, drawing on or collaborating with additional resources – social actors, can bridge this access gap successfully:

- Social support services
  Cooperation with Social support institutions, e.g. Municipal Social Welfare Centre (MOPS), Communal Social Welfare Centre (GOPS), County Family Support Centre (PCPR) works well. However, the effectiveness of such cooperation depends on whether the partner's participation is officially included in the project and whether it also involves remuneration for the project staff (salary supplements). Such an arrangement also helps to get a really detailed diagnosis of the participants before they join the project - their family situation, their actual state of health, etc.

- NGOs focused on the particular target group or region
  Another solution is to engage as a partner an NGO focused on working with people at risk of social exclusion or in particular rural areas of the province we are to engage in. Here too, we can benefit from the knowledge of those working directly with potential participants by preparing a pre-excursion diagnosis - however, there is a risk that the NGO works with a particular participant within the framework of a project, which in some Call regulations automatically excludes such person from the possibility of participation in other activation projects.

- Outreach community workers
  Another proposed solution is to hire a recruiter, preferably from the community from which we are looking for female participants. In this situation, in addition to recruiting a potential participant, the recruiter's task would also be to ensure that the participant reaches the meeting point and to hold the recruiter accountable for the number of participants who actually start the OL excursion.

The role of the recruiter should fall to a trusted person because, unfortunately, there is a real danger that the recruiter will not give a true picture of the OL excursion or will conceal certain information in order to recruit a participant. The recruiter's desire to gain a participant may result in selective presentation of information about the project to potential participants. As participants often have children and/or dependents living with them, the message about not using phones during the trip needs to be clear and straightforward so that the participant can prepare her relatives for this situation before the trip.

6.3.3 Caring for dependents children

For children aged 5 and over, it is possible to organize an excursion of adults and children with the support of a dedicated person - an animator who is responsible for looking after children during the excursion. More detailed information, also including logistics of such solution, is provided in the Handbook addressed to the OL Trainers.

6.3.4 Lack of knowledge about outdoor education and lack of habits to spend time outdoors

For many participants, going out into the forest for such a long time as 5-7 days is the first such experience in their lives and this additionally intensifies their doubts. Although the costs of their entire trip are covered by the organizer, the participants do not receive any financial gratification for their presence at the OL excursion. The recruiters as well as OL Trainers make sure they are aware that the greatest value of participating in the excursion is that they can focus on themselves, self-reflection and for their personal development, and this may be the greatest value resulting from their decision to participate in OL.

6.4 Diversity versus homogeneity in groups

There are pros and cons with both of the solutions regarding the composition of the group going for an OL excursion. In diverse groups participants can benefit from interacting with persons who have already solved their current issues (e.g. diversity in age) or face different challenges. In homogenous group, activities can be better tailored to the specific needs of participants and it is more effective in terms of logistics organization and additional costs, such as the involvement of an additional trainer – animator.

Factors that help to decide on the constellation of particular participants' groups may include:

- Objectives (e.g. individual self-reflection/learning vs. social skills, other objectives to be achieved);
- Specific logistic needs (childcare, mobility barriers);
- Availability (and costs) of specialised OL Trainers, facilities, travel arrangements, special equipment;
- Specification imposed by the funder of the OL experience.

The creation of a relatively homogeneous groups – as it is in the case of POL project - allows the level of particular activities to be adapted to the cognitive abilities of the participants. The programme is easier to be followed, while the proposed exercises are adapted to the level of all the participants. This element is particularly important in the case of short field trips, where OL Trainers are much more limited by the time and conditions of the trip. The proposal for homogeneity of the group stems from the concern not to have a situation where a participant shuts down or does not integrate with the group because he or she cannot keep up with the others - for such a person the excursion may be counterproductive.

6.5 Topics for elaboration with women at the risk of exclusion

As it is foreseen in the CIE's OL Curriculum, in the morning and evening of each excursion day, OL Trainers organise group meetings on which they stimulate discussions. These talks can be dedicated to

motivation, needs, habits, comfort zones, boundaries, destructive conditions and other important issues that might be helpful to all participants. In the precise group which POL project addresses – activating women on the labour market – such topics as the group's attitude towards employment or importance of education and training, current and future job might give participants useful opportunities that will help individuals to prepare to enter/re-enter the labour market. It is very important to transmit this information in a way that suites the group, so to keep topics simple when there are children in the group or when the particular theme seems new to majority of the group, but go deeper whenever group seems bored. It is also important to not over-talk the subjects. Also, it is better to use imagination or exercise and give space to others so they can understand ideas within their own lives or experiences of another person.

CHAPTER VII: QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Quality assessment is an ongoing process where the aim is to improve the quality of performance. Outdoor Learning (OL) for groups with special needs is still a new method of intervention in Poland. CIE has built on the Edinburg model of outdoor learning and gained significant experience since they first started taking people out on excursions in 2020 To make sure that outdoor learning with CIE actually benefits the participants and that CIE as organization improves it's operations, measures of quality assessment including different forms of evaluation need to be developed. In this Chapter we discuss issues concerning quality assessment (i.e. evaluation) of the OL experiences. We draw heavily on a recent book on *Outdoor therapy in Norway* (Fernee, Palucha, Olsen & Gabrielsen, 2023) as well as on CIE's experience with evaluation from the FOLM project and quality assessment tools developed for the latter.

Evaluation are important tools when working on quality assessment, and we start out by looking at different ways to evaluate specific outdoor learning experiences and programs. We then move on to explore two other aspects concerning the quality of outdoor learning experiences in Poland, namely (i) the education and quality of the OL Trainers, and (ii) the recruitment process.

7.1 What do we want to evaluate?

Evaluation is about looking back at what we have been through in the OL experience. Well-structured evaluations make us better understand and communicate the effects of the outdoor learning excursion, and to adjust and improve future outdoor learning excursions and finally, to make us better in the role of OL Trainers (Ferneeh et al, 2023).

To ensure the quality of an outdoor learning program several perspectives need to be evaluated. Feedback from participants on degree of functioning, health and well-being after the intervention is naturally most important, but it is also valuable to have the reflections of the OL Trainers or therapists involved. Others that are close to the participants on daily basis, such as relatives or health care providers may provide additional relevant information.

In the evaluation of an outdoor learning experience we are interested in capturing the first- hand experience of the participants. A main aim of the evaluation is to gain an understanding of how they experienced their own development, their improvement process, goal achievement and their evaluation of outdoor learning as an intervention. We also want to know about their relational experiences on the excursion, both to themselves, the nature, the other participants and the OL Trainers (Fernee et al, 2023).

While the participants' evaluation is about their own experiences, the OL Trainers can contribute with a wider perspective of the experience of the group as a whole, as well as the individual participants. They have experience from previous excursions and will be able to compare with previous group processes and be able to recognise how framework conditions such as bad weather or challenging group dynamics may have influenced the effectiveness of the intervention.

Evaluations can be both formal and informal. As outdoor learning is still new in Poland it is necessary to document effects formally, not only to beneficiaries but also to local and national authorities and/or

founders of particular projects implementing OL. Formal evaluation is also important for the sharing of experience and competences with others interested in the topic of outdoor learning, such as educational institutions or public and private health organizations. Good routines for formal evaluation are thus necessary but too many questionnaires and interviews can be exhausting both for the participants and the OL Trainers in the long run, and it is therefore important to find a level of evaluation that is sustainable over time.

Informal evaluation routines can be less exhaustive, but still provide beneficial information. The challenge here is to make sure that the input received during informal evaluation is not lost but included in future manuals or instructions. In any evaluation an open and humble attitude to both constructive and critical feedback is needed if the evaluation is to contribute to learning and quality improvement.

7.2 Formal and informal evaluation of the participants' experience

The experience of the participants can be captured through different formal and informal methods. Here we will emphasise formal evaluation through the use of systematic research. In the following we will describe a mixed-method approach combining the use of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Through qualitative research we aim to learn more about the subjective experience of the participant. The aim is to increase our understanding, develop theory and get more in-depth knowledge about how outdoor learning is experienced by the participants. Interviews with participants is the most used method to gain this type of knowledge.

In quantitative research the aim is to measure the effects of an intervention, such as an outdoor learning excursion. By handing out a questionnaire at the beginning and in the end of an outdoor learning experience, differences in e.g. self-assurance or sense of belonging can be measured. By again handing out the questionnaire a period after the intervention, we can also gain information on whether the outdoor learning experience had any long-term effects. With standardised measures it is also easier to compare findings across different groups and interventions.

In the POL project we will make use of quality assessment tools that were developed for the FOLM (From Outdoors to Labour Market) project, which was led by CIE. These include:

- Questionnaires with participants before and after the programme, in order to assess changes in participants. This was originally developed by Jule Hildmann (PhD) from The University of Edinburgh, UK
- In-depth interviews with participants after the end of the programme, in order to assess its contributions for the participants. The interview guide was originally developed by Jule Hildmann (PhD) from The University of Edinburgh, UK;
- End-of-project Survey with Recruiters and OL Trainers, in order to evaluate the programme. The survey was developed by Jule Hildmann (PhD) from The University of Edinburgh, UK.

There are several differences between the FOLM and POL projects, that are needed to be mentioned. FOLM was dedicated to young people defined as NEETs (not in employment, education or training) from 18 to 29 years old from Spain (Cantabria), Poland (Warmia-Masuria and Masovia) and Ireland (Mid-West region), while POL focuses on women at risk of exclusion from Warmia-Masuria or Masovia regions in Poland aged 18-30. These women are in danger of social exclusion, and the outdoor learning proposed

to them aims at helping them at focusing to change the situation. Because of the similarities, regarding the approach of the programme (outdoor learning) and the characteristics of the group (persons disengaged from employment, education and/or training in both projects), we consider adapting quality assessment tools from FOLM to POL a good idea, and an opportunity for further development and evaluation of those tools. We therefore aim at using the same set of tools as presented above. Nevertheless, we propose some adjustments, so that they suit POL project better. Those adjustments include mainly the change in participants characteristics (only women from one country) and the fact that in POL project, as it is much smaller than FOLM, we only conduct evaluation before and right after the programme.

Questionnaires before and after the programme assess the self-esteem and attitudes of the participants and can therefore be directly transmitted from FOLM to POL. In FOLM, part of the evaluation was conducted some time after the programme, and several questions in the participant interview concerned that. Those are removed from the POL interview guide. The questions are about motivation, experiences and impact the programme and outdoor learning as a concept had on the participant.

End-of-project Survey with OL Trainers and recruiters in POL project is also based on FOLM, but questions regarding the pandemics are removed, as well as questions about the different FOLM groups and their country of origin (in POL there is one group of participants). The remaining questions concern the respondent's experience, skills and role, as well as opinion on the different parts of the programme. However, we decided that in POL project we will conduct a group interview: a conversation with all involved OL Trainers and recruiters, asking questions similar to those used in FOLM.

These formal evaluation methods can be combined with more informal methods. Fernee et al (2023) describe how participants may not be used to express their emotions verbally and suggest starting out carefully with getting the participants opinion on specific activities or issues just by showing thumbs up or down. This way the participants are able to express themselves without formulating reflections verbally. Other informal evaluations can take place e.g. with a round of reflection in the evening when people are warm and comfortable, or by drawing curves by the end of the week where the participants can express the ups and downs of the outdoor learning experience by drawing a graphic representation. Informal evaluation can be valuable both during the excursions, for the OL Trainers or therapists to check on the well-being of the participants, and at the end of the excursion.

7.3 Structuring OL Trainer evaluation around different phases of the outdoor learning experience

The evaluation of the OL Trainers can also be carried out in different ways. One way of structuring evaluation is through looking at different phases of the intervention. Fernee et al (2023) suggest the use of what they have called *the facilitation wave of Outdoor therapy*. The model is based on a revision of *the facilitated wave* by Alvarez et.al (2021). The main phases of the wave follows the steps in either a full outdoor excursion or another full therapeutic setting which includes outdoor therapy. The phases are called mapping, planning, implementation, ending and evaluation. While the phases are well described in previous Chapters, Fernee et al (2023) argue that our evaluations should be related to the different phases, as a way of making sure that we cover the whole outdoor learning process in our evaluation. The authors have developed some central questions that can be used to evaluate the role of the OL Trainers or therapists in the outdoor learning experience. The questions can be used at the level

of the group of OL Trainers in a more informal evaluation after an excursion, or at the level of the individual OL Trainer/ therapist.

1. Questions related to the *mapping phase*, in which we try to get pre-trip information about the participant:
    a. To what degree did we understand the level of functioning and needs in the pre-trip planning?
    b. To what degree did we understand their challenges and resources, their motivation, values and relation to nature?
    c. To what degree did we understand the surrounding conditions and us in the role of OL Trainers before the excursion?
2. In the *planning phase* the specific intervention, or outdoor learning excursion, should be adjusted to findings from the mapping of the participants in the recruitment phase. Framework conditions, choice of route, structure of the excursion and activities should be adjusted to the needs, aims and prerequisites of the participants. Questions related to the *planning phase* of the outdoor learning experience:
    a. To what degree did we succeed in adjusting the excursion to our findings in the mapping phase?
    b. To what degree did our structure, framework and the chosen activities of the excursion work?
3. Questions related to the *implementation phase* or the actual excursion:
    a. To what degree did we manage to create a safe and including environment?
    b. How well did we work in the role of facilitators of different activities?
    c. How well did our approaches work for the individuals and for the group?
4. Questions related to the *ending* of the outdoor learning experience:
    a. To what degree did we succeed in creating a good ending of the excursion?
    b. To what degree did we understand the participants' experience and benefits through our choice of evaluation?
    c. To what degree did we succeed in understanding both what worked well and things that did not work out so well in the excursion and in our role as OL Trainers?
5. Questions related to the *reflections and processing* during the outdoor learning experience:
    a. To what degree did we succeed in promoting reflection and processing throughout the excursion?
    b. To what degree did we manage to use different aspects of communication skills in the excursion and specifically during the group and individual meetings?
    c. To what degree did we manage to transfer positive changes to the daily life of the participant, and if so, how did this become evident?

OL Trainers may naturally also have their experiences more formally evaluated through interviews or questionnaires. This should be seen in relation to the resources available and to the value of the documentation for other OL Trainers.

7.4 OL Trainer qualifications as part of quality assessment

The OL Trainers in outdoor learning are in many ways crucial in the facilitation of positive changes. The outdoor learning OL Trainer need to develop a wide range of skills. The OL Trainer must be experienced in a wide range of practical outdoor skills such as setting up an effective campground, navigation, risk management, first aid and cooking. The OL Trainer must also be able to facilitate nature experiences, the building of including social relations and be able to lead both individual and group meetings with the participants. Educating qualified OL Trainers are thus a central part of quality assessment in outdoor learning. In Poland there are so far few educational routes to become OL Trainers for outdoor learning. The OL Trainers of CIE have been through the outdoor learning academy. One way of ensuring the quality of the one-to-one meetings between participants and OL Trainers could e.g. be to bring in healthcare personnel to have practical training sessions on health-promoting communication.

7.5 Assessing the recruitment process

The recruitment of participants is an important first step in the outdoor learning experience in Poland. This is perhaps the first time that participants hear about outdoor learning and its potential health promoting benefits. The idea of being in nature for several days, sleeping in tents and hiking from camp to camp may be very strange and perhaps even scary for potential participants. The recruiters must be able to both provide truthful information both about the practical sides of the excursions and about the potential benefits of the trips.

The recruiters also need to get important information about the participants, as described in the mapping phase above. This include getting information about their resources and challenges, motivation, expectancies and aims. By knowing more about the participants, the outdoor learning intervention can be adjusted and fine-tuned to suit the specifics of the group and thereby increase the effectiveness of the intervention.

The recruiters' job is challenging, and it is important to learn more about how they work, the challenges they meet as well as how they succeed in recruiting participants for the projects. Through either individual interviews or focus group interviews with recruiters we learn what can be improved and also how the resources van be spend in the best manner.

Information about how the recruitment process is experienced by the participants is also needed. This can be examined by including questions about the recruitment process in the qualitative interviews described above.

Chapter VII bibliography

Fernee, C. R., Palucha, V., Olsen, I. A. & Gabrielsen, L. E. (2023). *Utendørsterapi. En introduksjon.* Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk

POL-ID: _____ data: _____

Annex 1: Kwestionariusz POL

Jak bardzo zgadzasz się lub nie zgadzasz z następującymi stwierdzeniami?

Zaznacz jedno w każdej linijce:

Zdecydowanie się **z**gadzam → zZ
Zgadzam się → Z
Ani się zgadzam, ani nie zgadzam → O
Nie zgadzam się → N
Zdecydowanie się **n**ie zgadzam → zN

		Zdecydowanie się **z**gadzam	**Z**gadzam się	Ani się zgadzam, ani nie zgadzam	**N**ie zgadzam się	**Z**decydowanie się **n**ie zgadzam
Przykład: Stwierdzenie: „Nikt mnie nie lubi“. Jeśli myślisz: *„niektórzy ludzie mnie lubią“* → zaznacz: Nie zgadzam się		**zZ**	**A**	**N**	D	**zN**
1	Jeśli się staram, mogę osiągnąć to, co chcę.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
2	Potrafię zorganizować siebie i stojące przede mną zadania, tak aby dotrzymać terminów ich realizacji.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
3	Otrzymanie dobrej posady zależy w głównej mierze od znalezienia się w odpowiednim miejscu w odpowiednim czasie.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
4	Trudno mi pracować efektywnie z ludźmi, których tak naprawdę nie lubię.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
5	Nie mam kontroli nad swoją przyszłością.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
6	W nowej lub trudnej sytuacji potrafię szybko znaleźć rzeczy, które wymagają mojej uwagi i wykonania.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
7	Czasem myślę, że nie powinnam się urodzić.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
8	Jestem skłonna ciężko pracować, aby osiągnąć zamierzony efekt.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
9	Gdy ktoś mnie nie lubi, niewiele mogę na to poradzić.I	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
10	Jestem zadowolony/a z moich umiejętności i talentów.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
11	Często czuję się nikim.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
12	To głównie ode mnie zależy, czy zmienię swoją obecną sytuację.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
13	Potrafię w sposób jasny i zrozumiały dla innych wyrażać swoje myśli i oczekiwania.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN

POL-ID: _____

	Zaznacz jedno w każdej linijce.	**Z**decydowanie się **z**gadzam	**Z**gadzam się	Ani się zgadzam, ani nie zgadzam	**N**ie zgadzam się	**Z**decydowanie się **nie** zgadzam
14	Jestem zadowolony/a z moich osiągnięć.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
15	Często czuję się niepewnie co do swoich zdolności i umiejętności.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
16	Los jest przeciwko mnie.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
17	Jestem pewna, że mogę osiągnąć swoje cele.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
18	Kiedy sprawy nabierają niepomyślny obrót i nie idą po mojej myśli z łatwością dostosowuję się do nowo zaistniałych okoliczności.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
19	Nikt mnie nie lubi.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
20	Szczęśliwe zrządzenie losu ma znikomy lub nie ma żadnego wpływu na to czy odniesiemy sukces, zależy on od ciężkiej pracy, którą włożymy w jego osiągnięcie.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
21	Osiągam to, co sobie postanowię.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
22	Często myślę, że moje życie nie ma sensu ani celu.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
23	Kiedy działam w grupie, zwykle mój wkład jest ważny dla osiągnięcia wspólnego celu.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
24	Znajduję rozwiązania na większość moich problemów. I	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
25	Jest za dużo barier w moim życiu.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
26	Posiadam sposoby i strategie, które pomagają mi skutecznie radzić sobie ze stresem.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
27	Nie podoba mi się to, jak bardzo inni ludzie określają moje życie. I	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
28	Zazwyczaj osiągam to, czego chcę.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
29	Kiedy zadanie jest nużące lub nudne, wciąż mogę zmotywować się do jego wykonania.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN
30	To czy jestem lubiany/lubiana zależy od mojego zachowania.	zZ	Z	O	N	zN

Dziękujemy i powodzenia!!

Annex 2: POL Participant Interview Guideline

Based on the interview guide developed by Jule Hildmann (PhD)
FOLM Lead researcher; The University of Edinburgh, UK
Kristin Løseth (PhD), Anna Maria Urbaniak-Brekke (PhD), WNRI

Explanation:

1. = Interview phase

grey = topic / intention

- = Key point or interview question
  - = potential follow-up questions (where suitable)

During the interview, aside from the questions below: **Please note anything else that the participant talks about that you think might be of importance.**

Pre-recording

- Take note of interviewee's POL-ID
- Explain voluntary participation and ask for consent to record. – If participant says 'yes', start recording the session.

Start recording

1. Formalities
   - State the date and first name of interviewee.
   - State that this session is being recorded, and ask participant to confirm that they are giving their consent for that.

2. Conversation starters

[These are options, and should not take more that 5 min total. Potentially not even needed, if conversation is already in flow / asked pre-recording]:

- What were you doing before you joined POL?
- What motivated you to join?

  In one sentence, describe your experience of the POL-trip

  What did you hope to get out of POL – Expectations met?

3. Key topics & questions

Open reaction to the POL experience

- **What experience or session sticks out in your memory?**
  - What was special about this?
  - How did that influence your personal development?
  - Any other experiences or sessions that stick out?

Key learning/development / change through participation in POL
This is the most important topic. Feel free to explore in a bit of depth.

- **What difference has POL made for you – from before participation to now?**

- Do you feel any different about yourself? How/in what way?
- **What is the main skill or insight you have gained from participating in POL?**
- What influence has your participation in POL had on your life so far? (e.g. relationships, view on self or life, ambitions, attitudes towards work/society/…?

Factors that lead to this learning & development

- **What factors or experiences during POL were most significant for you** (i.e. your development and learning)**?**
  - [Only if prompt is needed:] e.g. certain places, people, thematic sessions, group activities,…
  - **In what way was it significant? What impact has this had?**
  - Any other factors or experiences that were very significant?

- **What did the TR/CO/MEs (Outdoor Trainer / Coaches / Mentors) do that was helpful for your learning and growth?**
  - [Only if prompt is needed:] e.g. anything they said or did, how they acted towards you or the group,…

- **What was most challenging for you in or during POL?**
  - Were those helpful or hindering challenges (at the time)?
  - How do you view / interpret them now?

- **What part has being outdoors and in nature played in your development?**
  - Anything specific that sticks out or was particularly relevant?
  - What difference does it make that this is outdoors rather than in the classroom?

- **What meaning does nature and being outdoors have for you / people in Poland?**
  - What do people do outdoors?
  - With whom?
  - Does this relate at all with a cultural or national identity of the Polish PEOPLE? If yes, in what way?

Perspective on the group / other participants

- **Was there anything surprising or memorable from the other participants?**
  - Something they said or did, any noteworthy changes in them, etc.
  - What was surprising or memorable about that? What meaning do you make of it?

Observations of changes development in the other peers?

- **What part has the group played in your personal development?**
  - Anything in particular that they or someone did or said?
  - Do you think you will keep in touch with any of the participants after the expedition?

4. Wrapping up

- [Only if there is time:] **What would you recommend to people who think about participating in POL or other outdoor learning programme?**

- **Any recommendations for improvement of the programme?**

- **Is there anything else you would like to add to what you have said?**
  - Anything you would like to say about POL in general or as feedback?

- **Thank you for your time and for sharing your story.**
- **All the best for your future.**
  - What are you moving on to now/after POL? What are your next steps?

End recording

Post recording

- Save file to Teams
  - In the following format: [date].[POL ID or email address].
  - Date: Year.Month.Day (e.g. Feb 13, 2020 → 20200213)

- Log interview in overview files + questions asked

- If you feel there are themes emerging or topics coming up in interviews that we are not (sufficiently) focussing on yet, let us know asap, and we can adapt the interview guidelines.

- Transcribe interview
  - as soon as possible after the interview (then it's easiest to fill in distorted sound bits by memory)